

## **Environmental Awareness Survey of Manly Council Residents**

### **Prepared for:**

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# 1. Executive Summary

A telephone survey of 516 Manly Council residents was conducted in July 2002 to explore their attitudes, skills and behaviours with regard to environmental protection issues. The key findings are summarised below.

## Key Findings:

- The issue most frequently mentioned as one of the two most important issues for the attention of Manly Council was roads and traffic by 26 percent of residents. A close second was environmental issues mentioned by 23 percent of residents.
- The environmental issue believed to be the single most important environmental issue in Manly today by almost one-half of residents (48%) was pollution of beaches and oceans. A distant second was litter, mentioned by 18 percent of residents.
- One-third (34%) of residents said they were concerned 'a great deal' about environmental problems. A further 56 percent said they were concerned 'a fair amount'.
- The main reasons which residents nominated as why they were concerned about the environment included:
  - Concern for future generations (30%)
  - Sustainability of ecosystem – nature, plants and animals (23%)
  - Quality of life (18%)
  - Health effects of pollution (16%).
- Almost all residents (99%) said that they had recycled bottles, cans, paper or plastic on a regular basis in the last 12

months. Almost all residents (93%) also said that they avoid putting oils, fats, turps or paint down the sink.

- One of the environmentally friendly activities which residents were least likely to engage in was composting of food, performed by less than two in five residents (39%).
- Almost one-third of residents (31%) were not sure about how to undertake household composting and a further 36 percent were unsure about how to go about making an environmental complaint.
- The newspaper (54%) and Manly Council (30%) were the two most commonly mentioned sources for environmental information.
- Although 60 percent of residents said they had heard of the Manly Environment Centre, only 20 percent of residents said they had actually visited the Centre. The main ways which residents had found out about the Centre were through the Manly Daily (32%) or having walked past it (25%).



## 2. Background

Manly Council is seeking to prepare an Environmental Education Strategy to help tailor programmes to the specific needs of the local community.

To assist with the development of the Strategy The Council commissioned a telephone survey to explore the local community's knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours in respect to environmental protection in order to assist in the development of a suitably targeted Environmental Education Strategy for the Council.

The specific objectives of the survey were to:

- Provide information about specific aspects of knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours of a cross section of the population of Manly local government area;
- Provide information relevant to planning, implementation and evaluation of Manly Council's programmes and initiatives;
- Provide information which is able to be benchmarked/assessed against the NSW Environment Protection Authority's "Who Cares about the Environment" survey series;
- Provide a local benchmark of a statistical time series, which can be used to track social dimensions of environment awareness for inclusion Council's State of Environment Report;
- Promote discussion and wider awareness of the social dimensions of environmental protection.

The benchmark telephone survey is modelled on, but less comprehensive than, the NSW Environment Protections Authorities "Who Cares about the Environment" survey series.

This report focuses on the results of the Manly Councils Survey, with comparisons made to the NSW Survey where appropriate.

The full 2001EPA "Who Cares about the Environment" report is available through the EPA Website at:  
[www.epa.nsw.gov.au/publications/whocareswc2000txt.pdf](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/publications/whocareswc2000txt.pdf)



### 3. Methodology

In July 2002, a telephone survey of 516 Manly Council residents was conducted by TAVERNER Research Company on behalf of Manly Council.

#### Sample

Telephone interviews for the survey were conducted with a representative sample of 516 Manly Council residents between 15 and 70 years of age.

In order that the findings would be properly representative of the Manly Council residential population, the data were weighted by location, age and sex to bring the data into line with known population distributions in the Council area. The weightings are shown in the Demographic Section of this report.

Telephone numbers were randomly selected using the electronic version of the White Pages directory

#### Community Survey Notice

Prior to residents being contacted by telephone, 1500 notices were mailed to randomly selected residents to notify them that they may be contacted to participate in a survey commissioned by Manly Council.

This methodology has been found to improve the response rate, which in turn, reduces the error variance, hence increasing the reliability of responses. The **achieved response rate was 61 percent** which is well above that which can normally be expected from telephone surveys of this nature.

The response rates achieved in each individual suburb are shown in the table below:

Manly LGA Suburb						
	Balgowlah	Manly	Fairlight	Western Harbour Suburbs		
				Clontarf	Seaforth	Balgowlah Heights
Response Rate:	64%	57%	61%	70%	65%	65%

#### Error Variance

Based on the sample size and response rate achieved, the sample error variance for the survey results at a 95 percent confidence interval is approximately  $\pm 4\%$ . This implies that for a response figure of 50 percent, the true figure will be between 46 and 54 percent in 19 cases out of 20.

#### Analysis and Report

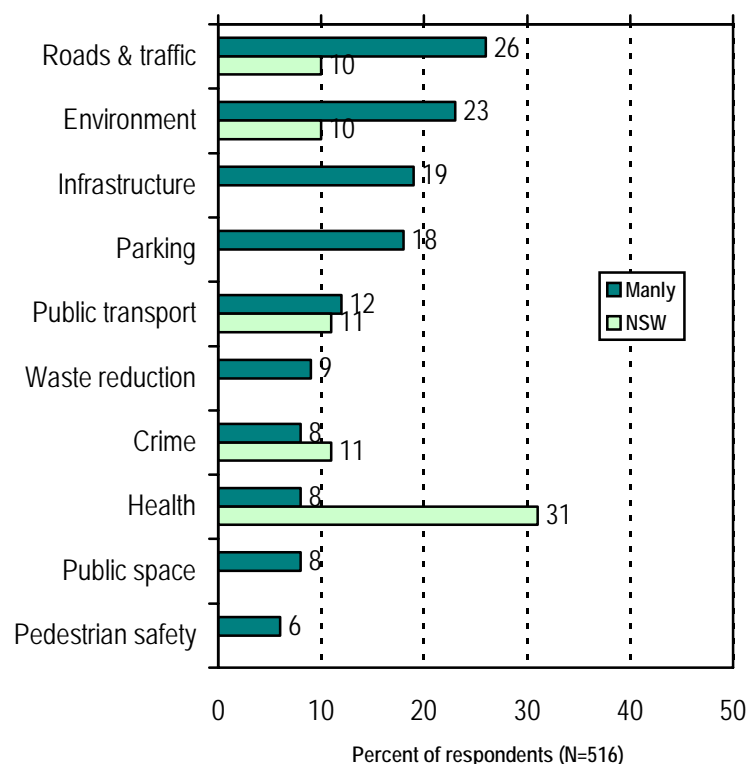
The current report summarises the overall findings, reporting simple percentages and statistically significant differences between demographic groups where appropriate.

Results are presented in graphical and tabular format.



## 4. The two most important issues for attention by Manly Council

Figure 1: Issues for attention by Council



Manly Council residents were asked what they considered to be the two most important issues for the attention of Manly Council.

As shown in the graph opposite, a little over one in four residents identified roads and traffic as one of the two most important issues. Manly residents were less likely than residents from other suburbs to identify roads and traffic as an important issue with 17 percent identifying this as an issue compared with 29 percent of Balgowlah residents, 27 percent of Fairlight residents and 42 percent of residents from the western harbour suburbs.

Slightly fewer than one in four identified the environment as one of the two most important issues for attention. Once again, Manly residents were less likely than residents from the other Manly Council suburbs to identify this as an issue with 18 percent identifying environmental issues compared with an average of 28 percent of residents from other suburbs.

Conversely, Manly residents were far more likely than other residents to identify parking as one of the two most important issues for attention with 27 percent mentioning this compared with 13 percent of Balgowlah and Fairlight residents and only seven percent of residents in the western harbour suburbs.

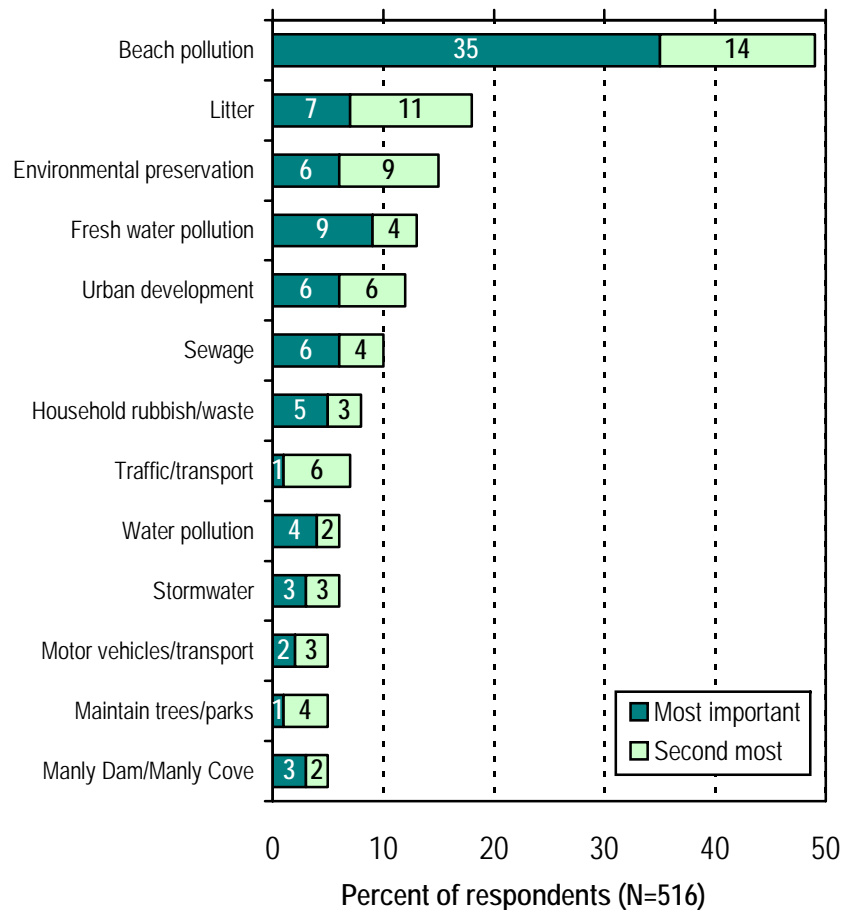
Infrastructure and in particular, urban development was identified as an important issue by almost one in five residents, with residents in the 35 to 54 year age bracket being the most likely to mention this issue (29%).

For the NSW survey residents were asked what the two most important issues for attention by the State Government. Therefore many of the differences in Manly and NSW results can be attributed to perceived responsibilities of the different levels of government. The main issues for State Government were education (34%), health (31%), unemployment, (11%), crime (11%), public transport (11%) and environment (10%).



## 5. The most important environmental issue in Manly today

Figure 2: The most important environmental issues in Manly



Residents were asked what they believed to be the single most important environmental issue in Manly today. They were then asked what they believed to be the second most important environmental issue.

The most commonly nominated issue by almost one-half of residents (48%) was pollution of beaches and oceans, mentioned by over one-third as the single most important issue and a further 14 percent as the second most important issue. Residents in the 25 to 34 year age group were more likely to nominate beach and ocean pollution as the most important environmental issue with 60 percent nominating this issue compared with an average of 45 percent of residents in other age groups.

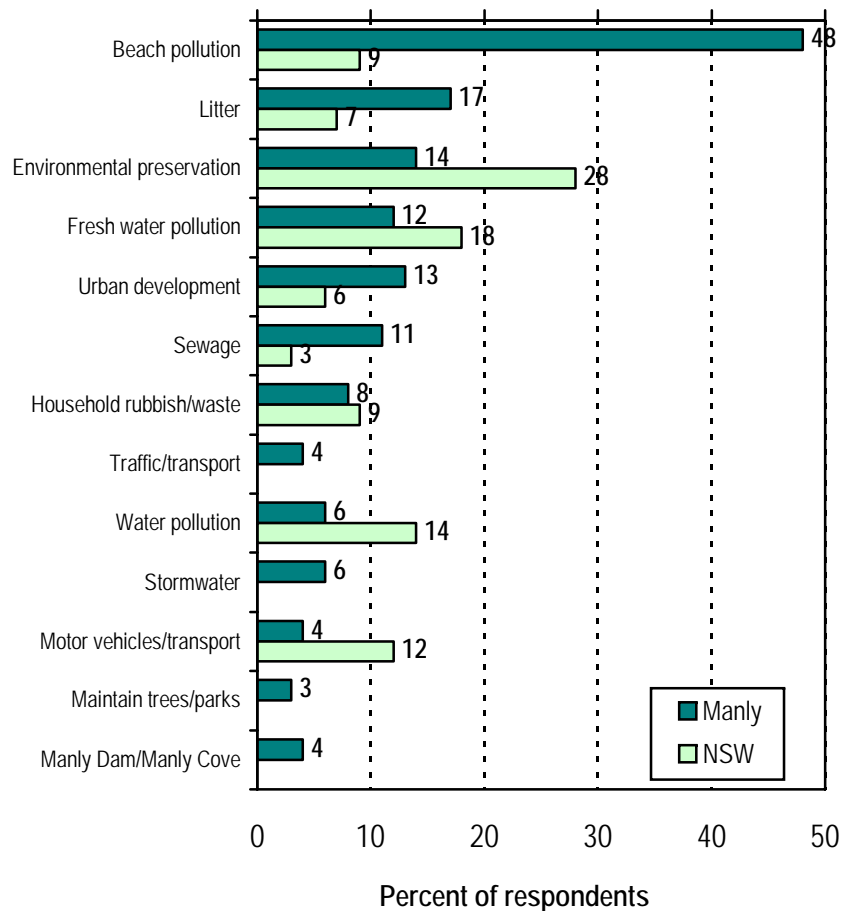
The 25 to 34 year olds were also more likely to nominate fresh water pollution as the most important issue with 20 percent nominating it compared with only six percent of other residents.

Residents from the western harbour suburbs were also more likely than residents from other suburbs to nominate fresh water pollution as the most important issue (23% versus 6% of other residents).



## 6. The most important environmental issue in Manly & NSW today

Figure 3: The most important environmental issues in Manly & NSW



The Figure opposite shows the most important environmental issues in Manly in comparison to NSW.

Manly residents focus much more heavily on beach related issues than NSW residents in general who consider freshwater and general water pollution more important.

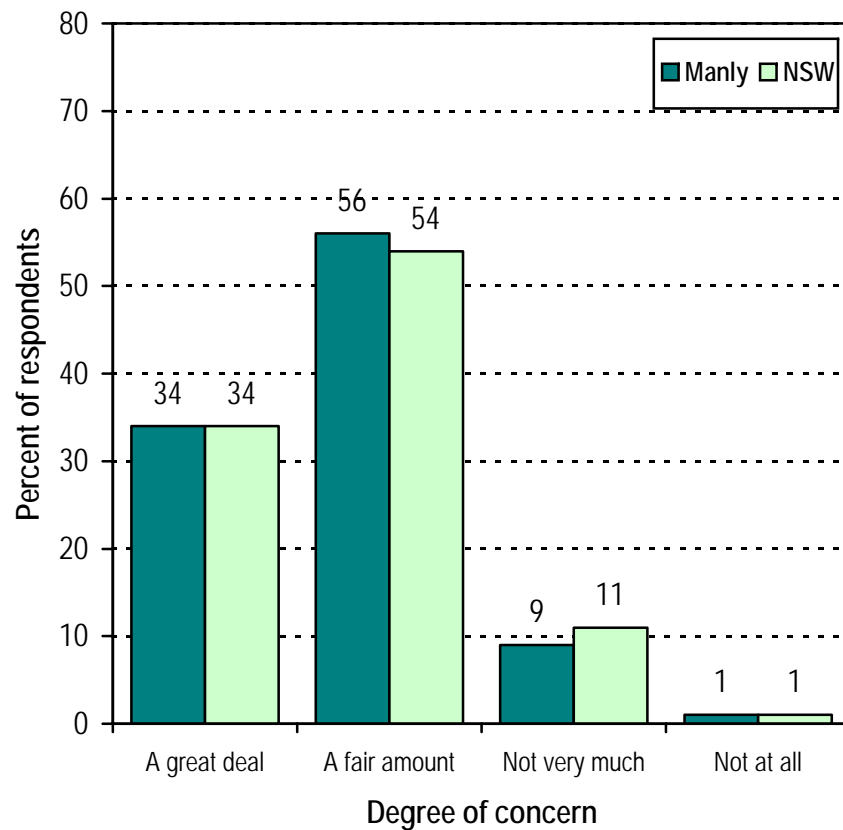
Litter, urban development, sewage, stormwater and traffic are also more important at the local level than as state issues.





## 7. Level of concern about environmental issues

Figure 4: Level of concern about environmental issues



Manly Council residents were asked how concerned they were about environmental problems. As shown in the graph opposite, the majority (90%) said they were concerned 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal'. Manly residents were more likely than residents of other suburbs to say they were concerned 'a great deal' with almost two in five (39%) saying this compared with less than one third (30%) of other residents.

Residents in the 55 to 64 age group were more likely than other residents to say they were 'not very' or 'not at all' concerned, with almost one in five (18%) choosing one of these ratings compared with less than one in ten (9%) residents in the other age groups who expressed this lower level of concern.

The level of concern about environmental issues among Manly residents is similar to that of all NSW residents.



## 8. Reasons for concern about the environment

Reason for concern	Percent of respondents Concerned about Environment	
	Manly	NSW
Concern for future generations	30%	29%
Sustainability of ecosystem – nature, plants and animals	23%	17%
Quality of life	18%	20%
Health effects of pollution	16%	18%
Long-term economic sustainability	9%	15%
All of the above	2%	0%
Other	1%	1%
Total <sup>1</sup>	100%	100%

Residents were asked about the main reasons they were concerned about the environmental. They were provided with seven options which are shown in the table opposite.

Almost one in three residents (30%) identified 'concern for future generations' as the main reason for their concern about the environment. Residents who were 65 years of age or older were more likely than younger residents to identify this as the main reason for their concern with 40 percent saying this compared with an average of 28 percent of other people.

Female residents were slightly more likely than male residents to say that they were concerned for future generations (33% compared with 26% of males).

Concern for the sustainability of the ecosystem was the next most commonly nominated reason for concern by almost one in four residents. Residents aged 15 to 54 were all equally likely to nominate this as a concern (28%). Concern for the ecosystem declined significantly in the 55 to 64 year old age group with only 17 percent nominating this as a concern and declined again in the over 64 age group with only nine percent nominating it as a reason for concern.

Residents in the 25 to 34 year age group were more likely to nominate the health effects of pollution as a reason, with more than one in four (26%) nominating this compared with only nine percent of 15 to 24 year olds and an average of 14 percent of residents over the age of 34.

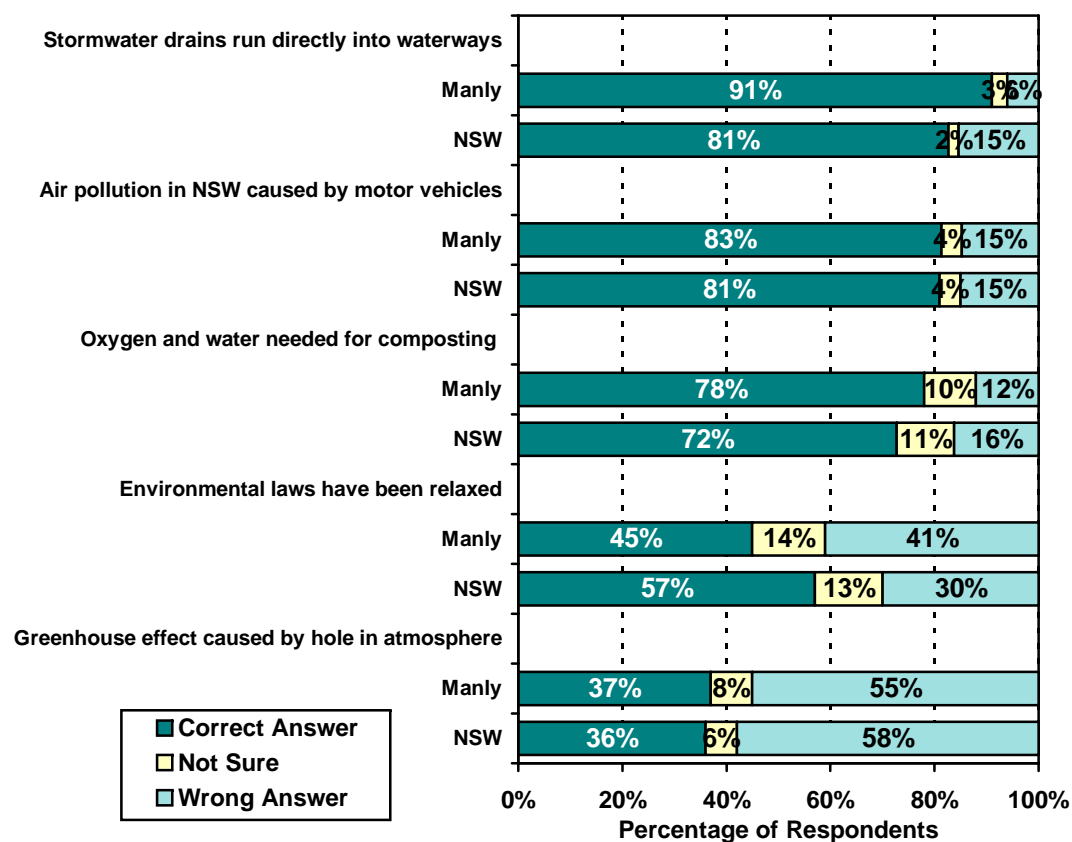
Manly residents responses were similar to those of NSW residents.

<sup>1</sup> Total may not add to exactly 100% due to rounding of percentages.



## 9. Knowledge of environmental facts

Figure 5: Level of knowledge about environmental facts



Residents were asked to rate five statements about the environment as either true or false. The five statements with the percent of correct responses are shown in the table opposite. The level of environmental knowledge is similar among Manly and NSW residents.

The majority correctly believed that most stormwater drains run directly into waterways or the ocean. The majority of residents also correctly believed that most of the air pollution in NSW is caused by motor vehicles. Most residents were aware that oxygen and water are needed for composting to work effectively.

Residents of different demographic groups did not differ in their knowledge of the above three issues.

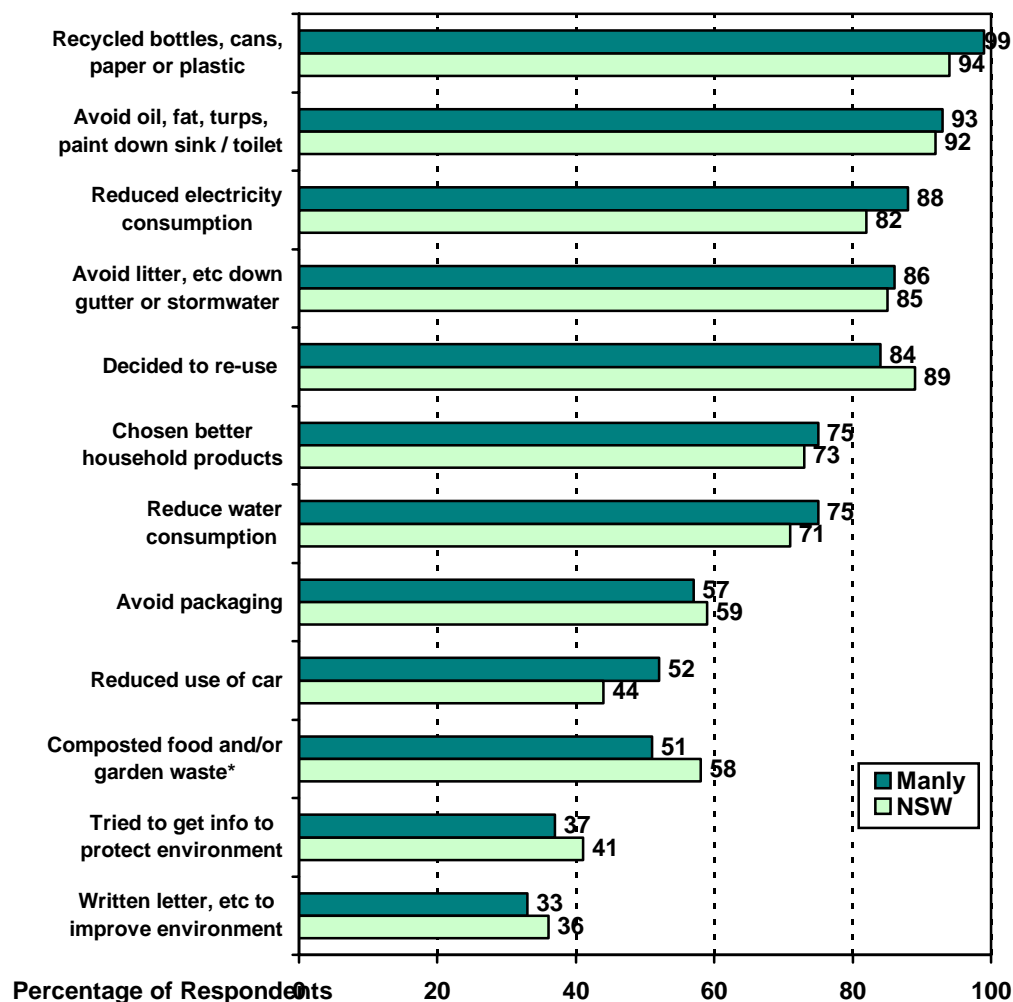
Residents were divided in their beliefs about whether laws effecting environmental offenders have been relaxed with an almost equivalent percentage responding true or false to this statement. Female residents were more likely than male residents to incorrectly say that this statement was true (48% compared with 33% of males) while the majority of males believed this statement to be false (59%) compared with less than one in three females (32%).

Residents were not as consistent in their responses with regard to knowledge about the greenhouse effect. More than one-half of residents under 35 years of age (61%) wrongly believe that the greenhouse effect was caused by a hole in the earth's atmosphere compared with 54 percent of those between 35 and 64 years of age and only 44 percent of residents over 64 years of age. Older residents were far more likely to say they were not sure (31% compared with 2% of other residents).



## 10. Environmentally friendly activities performed regularly

Figure 6: Proportion of Residents Performing Environmentally Friendly Activities



Residents were asked whether they had personally done any of the environmentally friendly activities (listed in the adjacent figure) on a regular basis in the last 12 months.

The majority of residents indicated that they had done most of the activities. In particular, almost all residents (99%) said that they recycle bottles, cans, paper or plastic instead of throwing them away. Almost all residents (93%) also said that they avoid putting oils, fats, turps or paint down the sink.

Note that the NSW "Who Cares" Study asked about composted food and garden waste in the same question while these issues were separated for the Manly study. 39% of Manly Council residents report composting food and 45% compost garden waste. The figure shows that 51% compost food and/or garden waste.

Residents in semi-detached dwellings and units were less likely to compost food with more than one-half (55%) saying they did not compost food.

Even though only 45 percent of residents indicated that they composted garden refuse, when this figure was broken down according to type of dwelling, two out of three (67%) residents in detached dwellings indicated that they composted garden refuse on a regular basis.

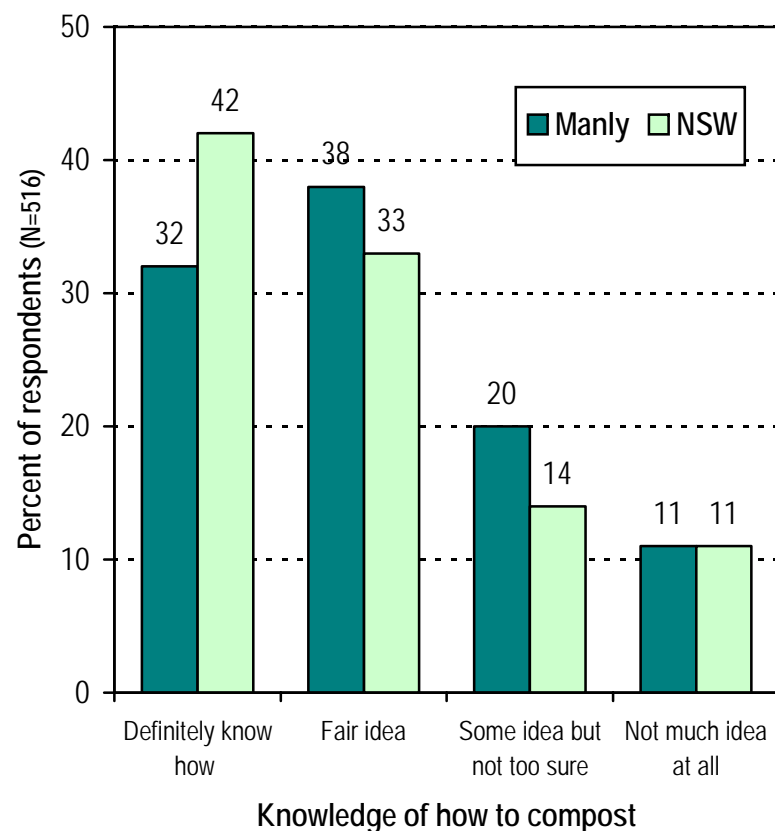
Manly residents were slightly more likely to participate in most activities than NSW residents in general.



\* Manly Survey separated food and garden waste into two statements – a total of 39% had composted food and 45% composted garden waste.

## 11. Knowledge about household composting

Figure 7: Level of knowledge about household composting



Residents were asked how much they knew about how to start a household compost. One-third of residents (32%) said they definitely knew how to go about doing that. Residents in detached and semi-detached dwellings were more likely than unit residents to say they definitely knew how to go about it (38% compared with 23% of unit residents).

Almost one-third of residents (31%) said they either weren't too sure or wouldn't have much idea about how to go about it. Manly residents were more likely than residents of other suburbs to say this (37% compared with 25% of other residents).

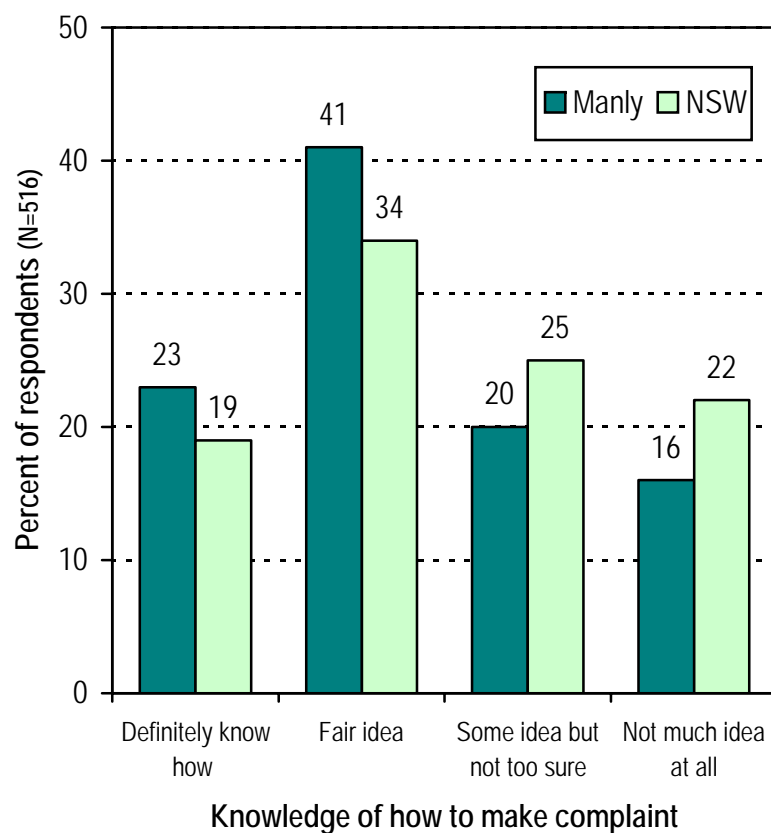
Younger residents were also less confident with 41 percent of 15 to 24 year olds saying they were not too sure or had little idea about how to compost. This percentage declined steadily with increasing age to a low of 24 percent of residents over 64 years of age.

This question was not asked in the 2000 NSW Survey, but was asked in the 1997 NSW Survey. These results are shown in the Figure opposite. Manly residents in 2002 were less likely to definitely know how to compost than NSW residents in 1997.



## 12. Knowledge about how to make an environmental complaint

Figure 8: Level of knowledge about how to make complaints



Almost two out of three residents (64%) said they definitely knew, or had a fair idea about how to go about making an environmental complaint.

Just over one-third of residents (36%) said they were not too sure or didn't have much of an idea how to go about doing this.

Self-reported knowledge about how to make an environmental complaint increased steadily with age, with three out of four (74%) residents over 64 years of age saying they definitely knew or had a fair idea how to go about it.

Younger residents were less confident, with 50 percent of 15 to 24 year olds saying they were not too sure or had not much of an idea about how to go about it. This declined to 41 percent of 25 to 34 year olds and then steadily declined to only 25 percent of over 64 year olds who said the same.

This question was not asked in the 2000 NSW Survey, but was asked in the 1997 NSW Survey. These results are shown in the Figure opposite. Manly residents in 2002 were more likely to definitely know how make a complaint than NSW residents in 1997.



### 13. Information about environmental issues

Source of information	Percent of respondents (N=516)
Newspaper	54%
Manly Council	30%
Television	25%
Internet	20%
Radio	8%
Leaflets/brochures	8%
Word of mouth	7%
Manly Environment Centre	6%
EPA	5%
Magazines	4%
Library	4%
Council Newsletter	2%
Greenpeace	2%
Manly Daily	2%
Formal study/school	5%
Media	3%
Government Agency (e.g. National Parks, Sydney Water)	2%
Precinct meetings	1%

Residents were asked where they get their information about environmental issues. More than one response was allowed.

The majority of residents mentioned the newspaper. Residents of Balgowlah and suburbs of the western harbour (60%) were more likely than Manly (51%) and Fairlight residents (44%) to identify the newspaper as a source of information.

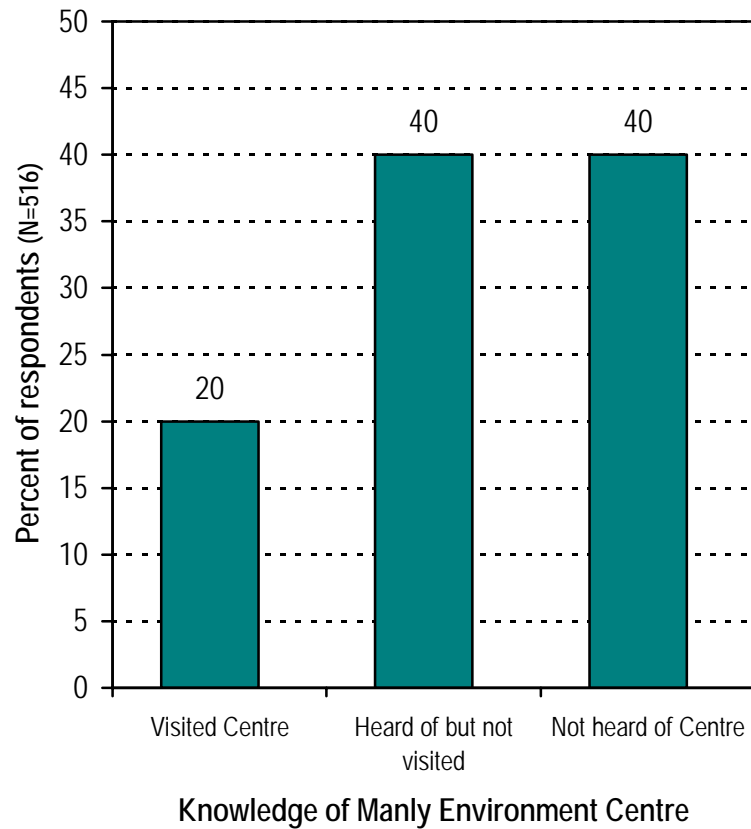
Older residents were also more likely than residents in the 15 to 24 year old age group to mention the newspaper (55% compared with 46% of 15 to 24 year olds). Conversely, the use of the internet declined steadily with increasing age, with 32 percent of 15 to 24 year olds mentioning the internet as an information source compared with only three percent of residents over 64 years of age.

Almost one-third of residents (30%) said they got their information from Manly Council, although only six percent mentioned the Manly Environment Centre. The Council was more likely to be mentioned as a source of information by residents over 24 years of age. Only 14 percent of 15 to 24 year olds mentioned Manly Council compared with an average of 32 percent of older residents.



## 14. Knowledge of Manly Environment Centre

Figure 9: Awareness about Manly Environment Centre



Residents were asked if they had visited or heard of the Manly Environment Centre.

One in five residents (20%) said they had visited the Centre. Residents between 15 and 24 were the least likely to say they had visited the Centre, with only ten percent having done so compared with an average of 22 percent of older respondents.

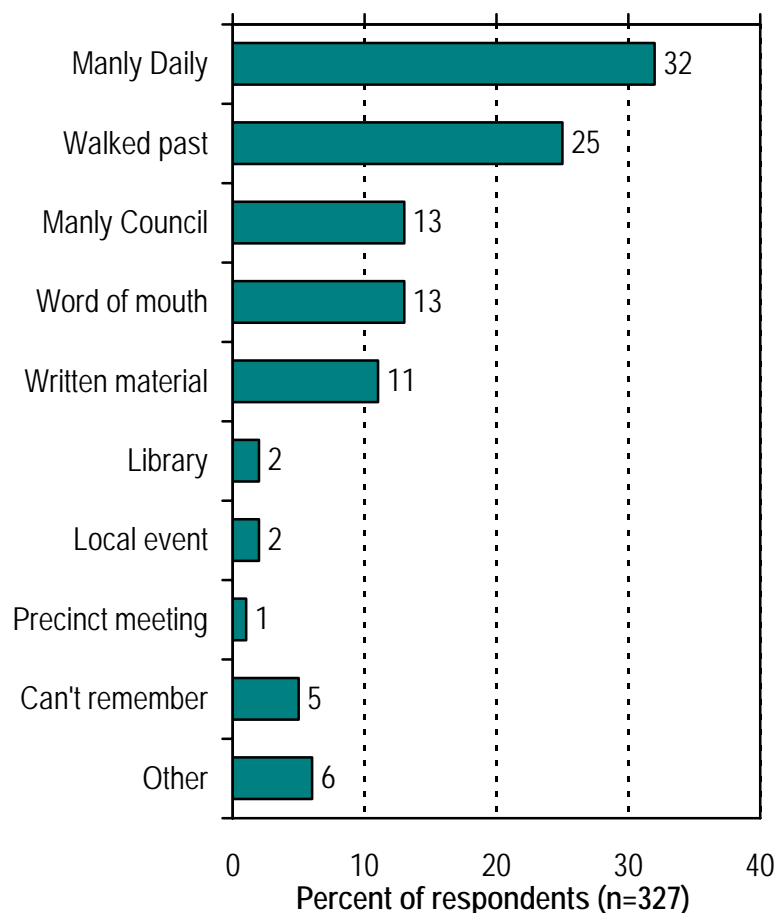
Of those who said they had not heard of the Environment Centre, the majority were between 15 and 34, with an average of 56 percent of residents in that age group saying they had not heard of the Centre compared with only 30 percent of older residents who said the same.





## 15. Information sources about Manly Environment Centre

Figure 10: How residents found out about Centre



Residents who knew about the Manly Environment Centre were asked where they had heard about the Centre.

Of the 80 percent of residents who said they knew about the Centre, one-third (32%) said they had heard about it through the Manly Daily.

The next most common method of having heard about it was by having seen it or walked past it, mentioned by one in four people. Manly residents were more likely than residents of other suburbs, to say they had found out about it in this way (32% compared with 20% of other residents).

Older residents were more likely to say that they had heard about it through Manly Council, with almost one in five (19%) residents over 44 years of age mentioning the Council compared with only nine percent of 25 to 44 year olds and no residents under the age of 25 mentioning the Council.

Younger residents were more likely to indicate word of mouth as an information source



## 16. Demographic information

Demographic information was obtained to allow the data to be weighted according to the current distribution of residents by age and gender in each of the four key areas of Manly Council (Manly, Balgowlah, Fairlight and western harbour suburbs). The weightings applied to the presented in the table opposite.

All survey participants were asked at the conclusion of the questionnaire for the following demographic information:

- Age group
- Gender
- Amount of time lived in the Manly Council area
- Type of dwelling residing in
- Main language spoken at home
- Suburb in which reside.

Manly Council residents were very homogenous regarding the main language spoken, with 97 percent indicating that their main language was English. Of the 1579 calls made to residents to participate in the survey, only nine residents (0.6%) were unable to participate due to a language barrier.

The remaining demographic information collected is presented in graphical form in the following sections.

Demographic	UNWEIGHTED %	WEIGHTED %
<b>Base:</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Age:</b>		
15-24 years	7	14
25-34 years	18	23
35-44 years	23	19
45-54 years	16	16
55-64 years	14	10
65 and over	22	18
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	44	48
Female	56	52
<b>Dwelling type:</b>		
Detached	45	43
Semi-detached	16	15
Unit	39	41
<b>Suburb:</b>		
Balgowlah	17	23
Fairlight	20	15
Manly	40	42
Western Harbour	23	20



Figure 11: Weighted age distribution of survey participants

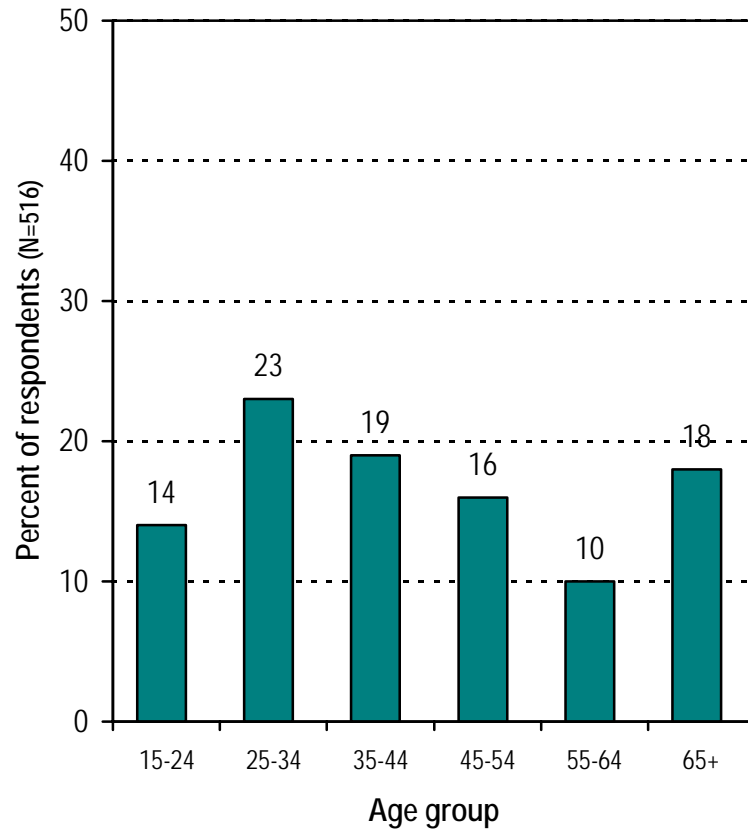


Figure 12: Suburbs in which survey participants resided

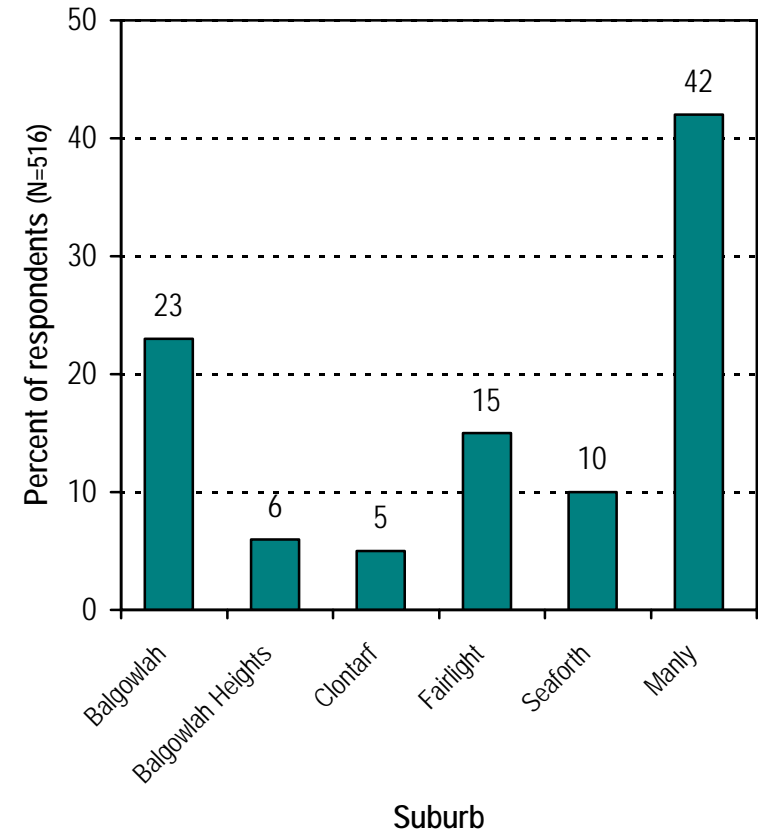
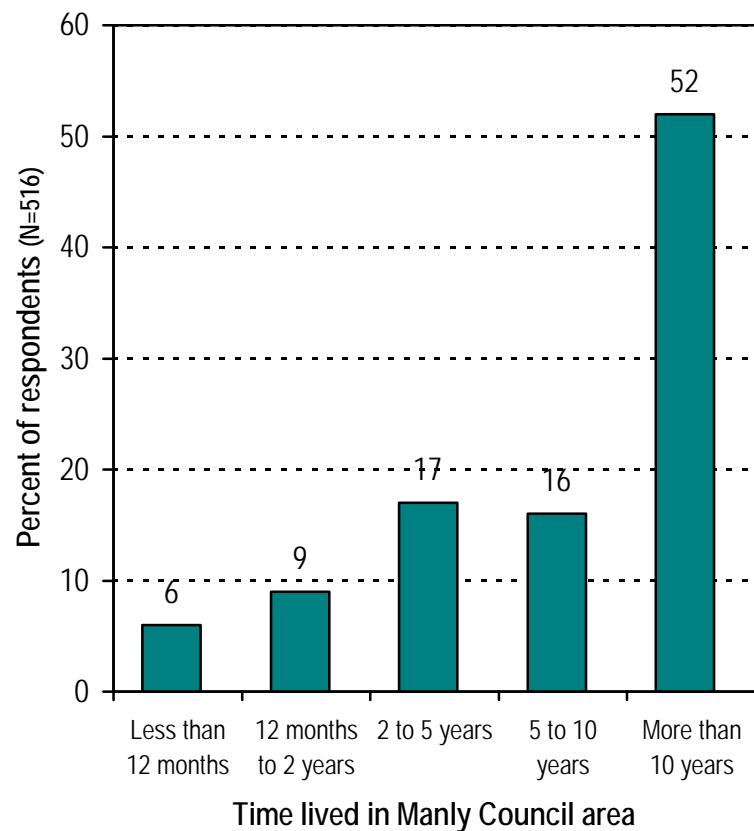


Figure 13: Length of time lived in Manly Council area

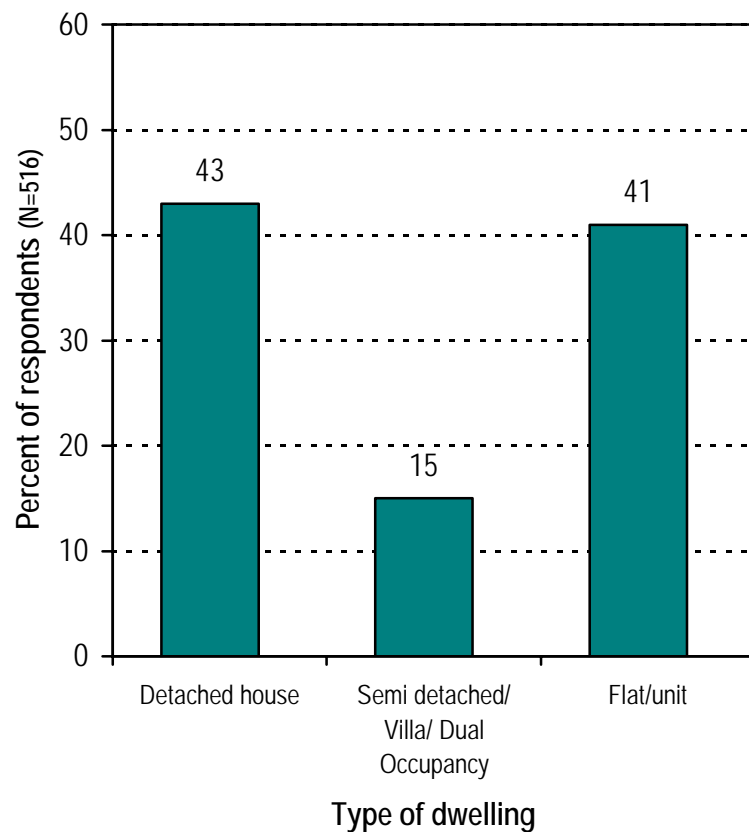


Residents were asked how long they had lived in the Manly Council area.

The majority of residents (52%) said they had lived in the Council area for more than ten years. This was particularly the case for residents of the western harbour suburbs where two out of three (66%) said they had lived in the area for more than 10 years. This compares with 48 percent of residents in Balgowlah, Fairlight and Manly who said the same.



Figure 14: Type of dwelling lived in by survey participants



Residents were asked what type of dwelling they lived in. Responses were almost evenly divided between detached dwellings and units.

The vast majority of residents in the western harbour suburbs lived in detached dwellings (89%) compared with only 19 percent of Manly residents, 40 percent of Fairlight residents and 50 percent of Balgowlah residents.

The majority (64%) of Manly residents lived in units. This compared with 45 percent of Fairlight residents, 29 percent of Balgowlah residents and a low of only five percent of western harbour suburb residents who said they lived in units.

