

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

IN THE MANLY LGA

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<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>Page No</i>
1.0 Definition	3
2.0 Demographics	3
2.1 Children by Suburb	5
2.2 Family Types	7
2.3 Family Incomes	8
2.4 Education	8
2.5. Demographic Trends	11
3.0 Consultation Method	13
3.1 Focus Groups	13
3.2 Surveys	14
3.3 Service Providers	15
3.4 Literature Review	16
4.0 Review of Services for Children	16
4.1 Service usage/ awareness	16
4.2 Gaps	17
5.0 Consultation Results	18
5.1 Why do children & families like Manly	18
5.2 Summary of Issues	18
5.3 Consultation sources	18
5.4 Issues, Needs and Strategies	19
6.0 References	32
7.0 Summary of Needs Assessment for Children & Families	33
• Appendix 'A' - Survey of Children's Services mailing list recipients	36
• Appendix 'B' - Survey of Children's Service Providers	38
• Appendix 'C' - Summary of main findings from the survey of children's services mailing list recipients.	40

1.0 DEFINITION

The Department of Local Government identifies children as a mandatory target group in their Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines (2002). Children aged from 0 to eleven years are included in this group. The issues relevant to families are also relevant to children; hence much of the consultation conducted for the 2004 Manly Social Plan has focused on families as a means to identify the issues of children. In today's society, families are also diverse in nature, ranging from sole parent families (including both men and women as primary carers), to gay and lesbian families to extended families.

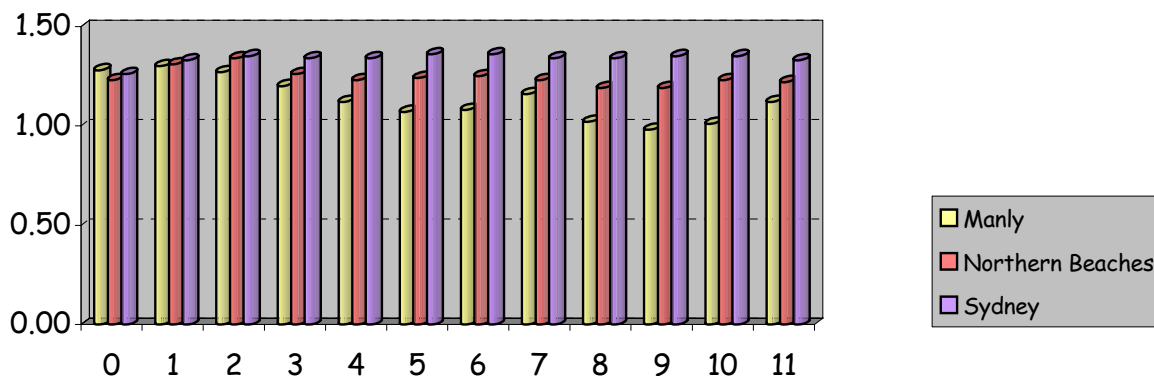
2.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2001 Census there are 5,114 children aged 0-11 in Manly, representing 13.61% of the total population. Manly has a lower percentage of children than Northern Beaches and Sydney, as shown in Table 1 and Graph 1.

Table 1: Number of Children 0-11 years Manly, Northern Beaches and Sydney, 2001

	Manly				Northern Beaches				Sydney			
	Male	Female	Persons	%	Males	Female	Persons	%	Male	Female	Persons	%
0	243	238	481	1.28	1,410	1,284	2,694	1.23	25,957	24,509	50,466	1.26
1	238	250	488	1.30	1,458	1,410	2,868	1.31	27,347	25,946	53,293	1.33
2	238	241	479	1.27	1,463	1,470	2,933	1.34	27,762	26,234	53,996	1.35
3	239	211	450	1.20	1,458	1,307	2,765	1.26	27,518	26,219	53,737	1.34
4	211	211	422	1.12	1,401	1,296	2,697	1.23	27,575	26,108	53,683	1.34
0-4yrs	1,169	1,151	2,320	6.17	7,190	6,767	13,957	6.37	136,159	129,016	265,175	6.63
5	228	174	402	1.07	1,422	1,305	2,727	1.24	27,958	26,255	54,213	1.36
6	205	200	405	1.08	1,384	1,346	2,730	1.25	27,774	26,539	54,313	1.36
7	232	204	436	1.16	1,417	1,290	2,707	1.23	27,613	26,098	53,711	1.34
8	211	174	385	1.02	1,395	1,218	2,613	1.19	27,529	26,094	53,711	1.34
9	185	182	367	0.98	1,343	1,273	2,616	1.19	27,701	26,348	53,711	1.35
10	199	180	379	1.01	1,376	1,323	2,699	1.23	27,785	26,266	54,051	1.35
11	223	197	420	1.12	1,381	1,293	2,674	1.22	27,269	25,782	53,051	1.33
5-11yrs	1,483	1,311	2,794	7.43	9,718	9,048	18,766	8.56	193,629	183,382	376,761	9.43
	2,652	2,462	5,114	13.61	16,908	15,815	32,723	14.93	329,788	312,398	641,936	16.07

Graph 1: Percentage of Children aged 0-11 yrs, Manly, Northern Beaches and Sydney, 2001

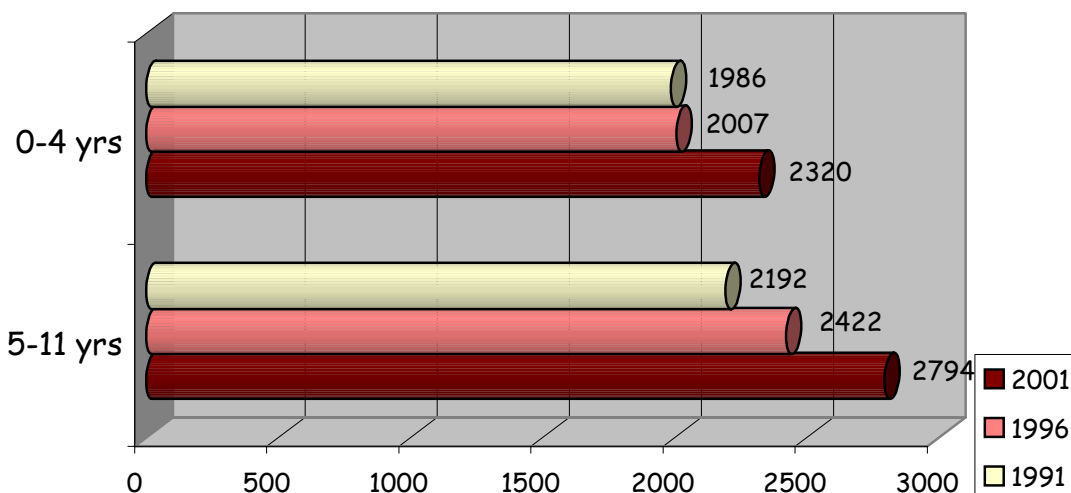


Between 1991 and 2001 Manly LGA experienced an increase in the population of children aged 0-11 years. The total number of children in this age group has increased by 1.6%, from 11.97 % in 1991 to 13.61 % in 2001.

The Number of children aged 0-4 has dramatically increased from 2,007 in 1996 to 2,320 in 2001.

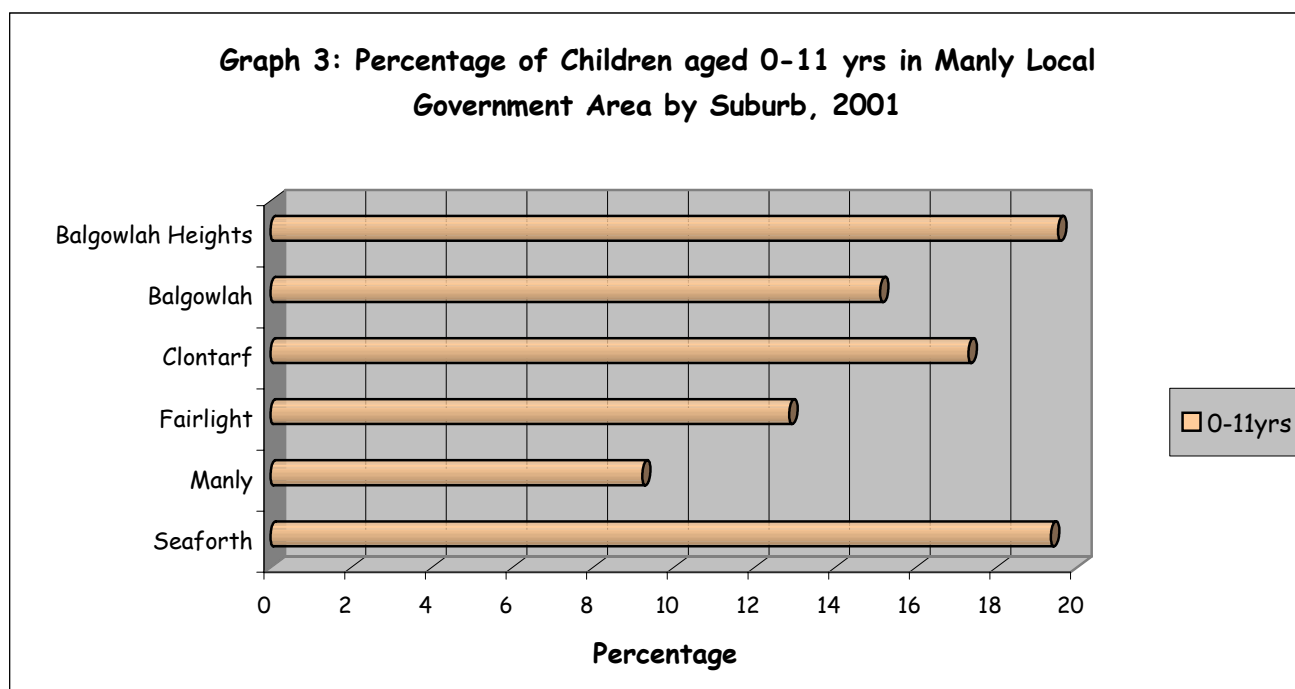
The 5-11 year age group has steadily increased over the 10year period from 2,192 in 1991 to 2,794 in 2001. This is indicated in Graph 2

Graph 2: Comparison of 0-4 and 5-11 year olds 1991 to 2001 in Manly



2.1 Children by Suburb

As indicated in Graph 3, Balgowlah Heights and Seaforth have the highest percentage of children aged 0-11 years, (as a proportion of the total population) with over 19 %. Manly has the lowest percentage of children aged 0-11 with 9.22%.

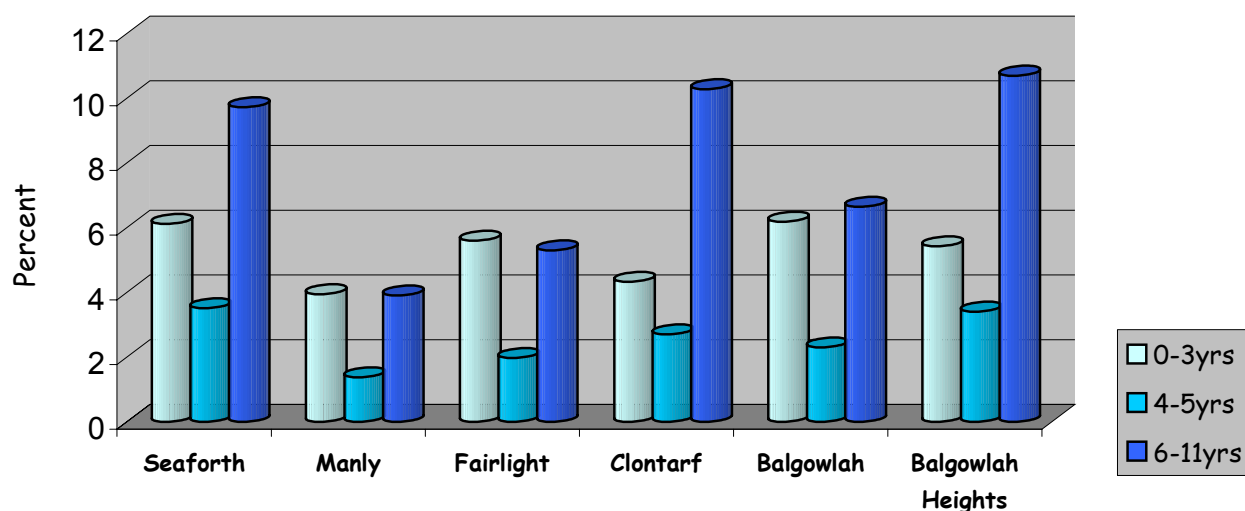


Graph 4 indicates that the 0-3 year age group is evenly spread throughout the suburbs, with only Manly and Clontarf having a smaller proportion of this age group.

The 4-5 year age group is mainly represented in Seaforth and Balgowlah Heights with over 3%.

The majority of children aged 6-11 years live in the suburbs of Seaforth (9.73 %), Clontarf (10.28 %) and Balgowlah Heights (10.70 %).

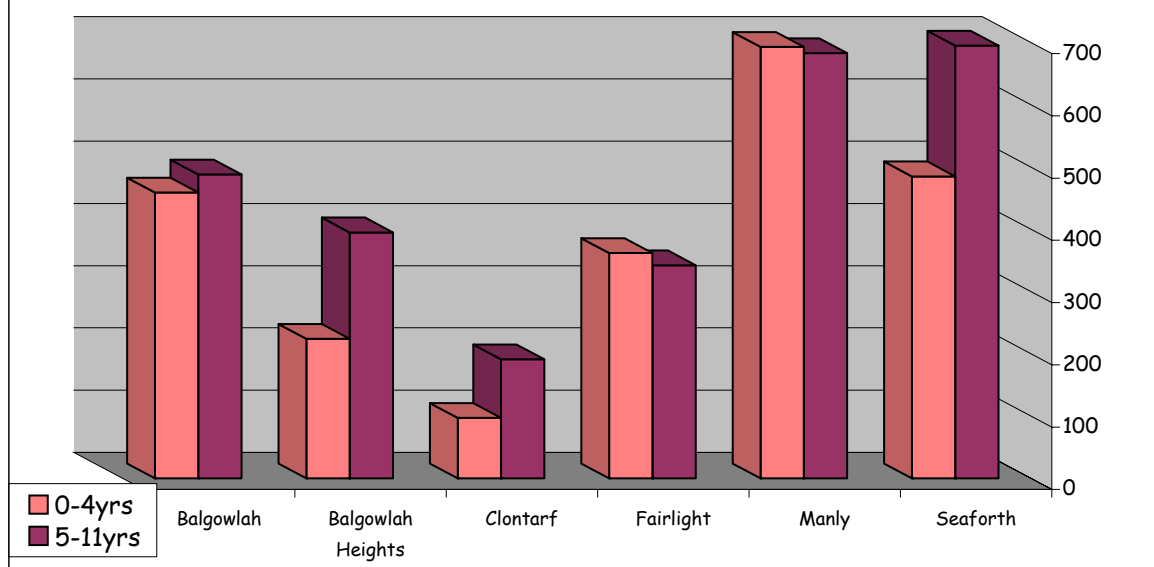
Graph 4: Age Breakdown of Children by Suburb, 2001



Graph 5 shows that by comparing the number of children in each suburb, it is evident that Manly, Seaforth and Balgowlah have the highest number of children.

Manly has the highest population and highest number of children (0-11years), but smallest proportion of the total population (9.22 %).

Graph 5: Number of Children by Suburb, 2001

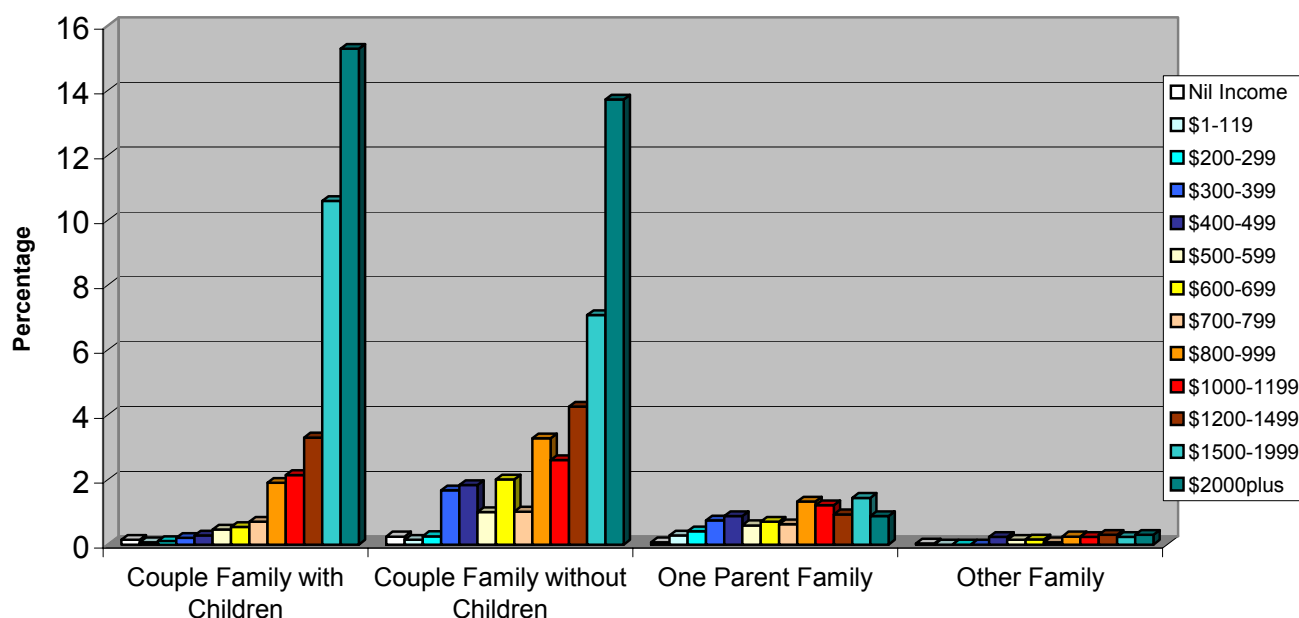


2.2 Family Types

Couples without children are the most common family type in the Manly LGA with 43.39 %, which is higher than the Northern Beaches with 37.61 %. The next most common family type is couples with children with 25.71 %, followed by couples with no dependant children (6.94 %).

Table 2: Family types in Manly LGA and Northern Beaches 2001

	Manly LGA		Northern Beaches	
Family type	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Couple Family				
Dependant children	2377	25.71	15233	26.00
Dependant children and others	440	4.76	3648	6.23
Dependant students	465	5.03	3599	6.14
Non-dependant children	642	6.94	5905	10.08
Total	3924	42.44	28385	48.45
Couples without children	4012	43.39	22036	37.61
One Parent Family				
Dependant children	360	3.89	2325	3.97
Dependant children and others	70	0.76	671	1.15
Dependant students	157	1.70	1016	1.73
Non-dependant children	514	5.56	3143	5.36
Total	1101	11.91	7155	12.21
Other Family	209	2.26	1016	1.73
Total Families	9246	100	58592	100

Graph 6: Weekly Income by Family Type - Manly LGA 2001**Table 3: Weekly Income by Family type in Manly LGA 2001**

INCOME													
	Nil	\$1-119	\$200-299	\$300-399	\$400-499	\$500-599	\$600-699	\$700-799	\$800-999	\$1000-1199	\$1200-1499	\$1500-1999	\$2000 plus
Couple Family with Children	0.15	0.08	0.11	0.21	0.28	0.47	0.54	0.70	1.90	2.14	3.30	10.59	15.29
Couple Family without Children	0.25	0.15	0.26	1.68	1.84	1.01	2.01	1.02	3.28	2.61	4.25	7.08	13.72
One Parent Family	0.08	0.28	0.41	0.75	0.88	0.60	0.70	0.63	1.33	1.21	0.93	1.44	0.88
Other Family	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.15	0.16	0.08	0.25	0.24	0.30	0.24	0.30

2.3 Family Incomes

Graph 6 and Table 3 highlights that in 2001, Manly had a significant percentage of couple families (15.29% with children, and 13.72% without children) who were earning over \$2,000 per week. In comparison, only 0.88% of one parent families were earning over \$2,000 per week.

2.4 Education

The 2001 census indicated that 587 children, or 1.56 % of the total population, were attending pre-school and 2,465 children, 6.56 % of the total population, were attending primary school (see Table 4).

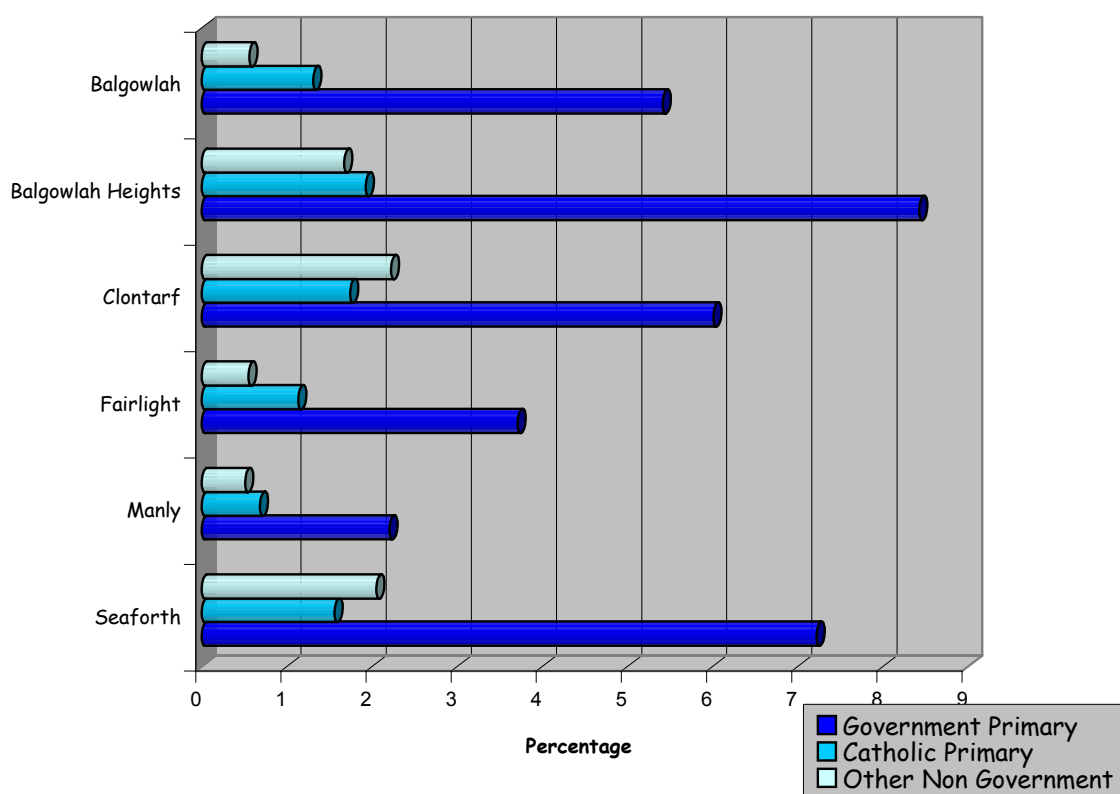
Table 4: Number of Children in Pre-school and Primary education in Manly LGA in 2001				
	Male	Female	Persons	% of Total Manly Population
Pre School	326	261	587	1.56
Government Primary	881	797	1678	4.46
Catholic Primary	235	196	431	1.15
Other Non Government Primary	187	169	356	0.95
Total Primary	1303	1162	2465	6.56

Three types of primary schooling were identified, with government primary schools being the most attended, followed by the catholic primary schools and other non-government schools.

Table 5 and Graph 7 illustrate a breakdown in the percentage of schools attended by children by suburb in Manly LGA.

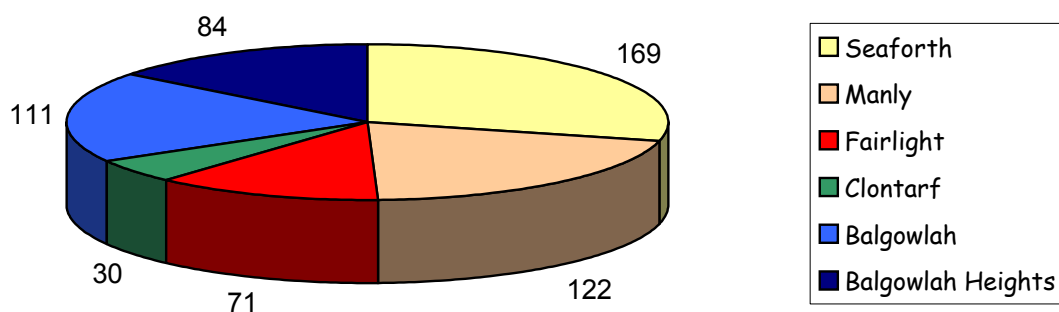
Table 5: Type of school attended in the Manly LGA by suburb, 2001			
Suburb	Government Primary %	Catholic Primary %	Other Non Government %
Balgowlah	5.41	1.31	0.56
Balgowlah Heights	8.43	1.93	1.67
Clontarf	6.01	1.74	2.22
Fairlight	3.71	1.13	0.55
Manly	2.20	0.68	0.51
Seaforth	7.22	1.56	2.05

Graph 7: Type of Primary Schools attended in Manly in 2001



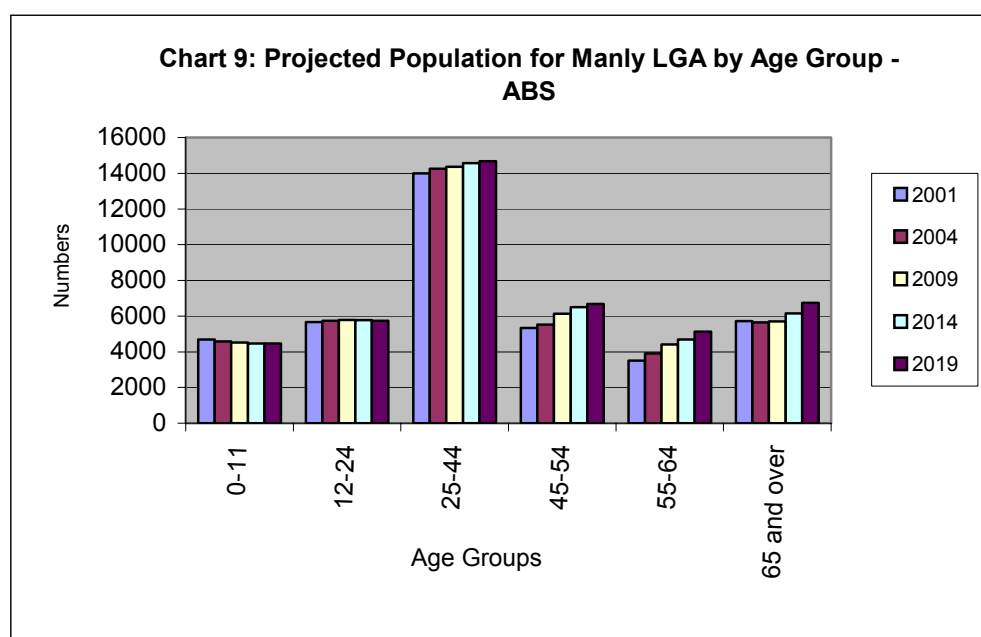
Graph 8 shows that the number of children attending pre-school was highest in Seaforth, Manly and Balgowlah, which can be explained by high numbers of children in these three suburbs.

Graph 8: Number of Children attending Pre-school, by suburb



2.5 Demographic Trends

Whilst the number of children (0-11 years) has increased over the last decade, the ABS population projections (2002) shown in Graph 9 predict fairly static levels in the 0-11 year age group.



National projections by ABS (2000, p. 21) actually predict a decrease in the proportion of children in Australia: "In 1999, children aged 10-14 years represented 21% of the New South Wales population. By 2051 this age group is projected to represent between 14% and 16%".

Trends in the total fertility rate (TFR) show a decrease from 3.5 babies per woman before the end of the baby boom in Australia in the mid-1960s, to a TFR in 1998 of 1.76 babies per woman, the lowest ever recorded in Australia (ABS, 2000, p. 46). The current low level of fertility in Australia is a result of increasing proportions of women remaining childless and couples restricting their family size to one or two children. Both trends are related to the fact that partnering and childbearing are occurring at later ages than in the past, reducing opportunities to have children and limiting the likelihood of larger families. Economic factors, such as the availability of employment, and access to affordable housing and childcare, also have an impact on fertility (ABS, 2002, p. 13).

Couple families with children are projected to increase slowly, reflecting a gradual trend away from this type of family. Conversely, couple families without children are projected to rapidly increase by 2021. The growth in couple only families is related both to declining fertility among younger couples and to the ageing of the

baby boomers as they become 'empty nesters' (ABS, 1999).

The other major change in family structure which ABS discuss is that one-parent families are projected to increase between 30% and 66% from 1996 to 2021, with the number of female one-parent families being more than five times the number of male one-parent families (ABS, 1999). In the 2001 Census, 61.6% of Manly residents in one-parent families were female.

3.0 CONSULTATION METHOD

Consultation to assess the needs of children and families included a range of methods, both qualitative and quantitative:

1. Focus groups
2. Surveys
3. Service providers
4. Literature review

3.1 Focus groups

Four focus groups were conducted, with Parents as Teachers, with the Manly Council Children's Services Parents Consultative Committee, with lone parents and with the Indonesian Women's Support Group. Issues identified are common to several target groups (i.e. children & families, women, CALD and youth).

- **Parents as Teachers**

This focus group, held at the Manly Village Public School on 11 October 2003 attracted eight new mothers. The group ranged from mothers in their early 20s, to early 40s, with half of the women being in the 31-35 year age group. Half of the participants had only one child, the rest having two or three children. The majority of children were aged between one and two years. One woman spoke a language other than English at home (Swedish). The consultation addressed the following questions, allowing an open forum for discussion:

- What are the good things about living on the Northern Beaches?
- What do you think are the issues facing children and families in Manly?
- Can you identify any strategies to address these issues?
- Have you used Council services before? If so, tell us about your experiences and whether you encountered any barriers to accessing these services.

- **Manly Parents Consultative Committee**

This focus group was conducted with three parents at the Kangaroo Street Childcare Centre on 18 November 2003. Two fathers and one mother attended, aged from early 30 to mid 40s. One of the fathers spoke a language other than English at home (French). Due to time restraints, the consultation addressed the following two questions only:

- What are the issues facing you as a family in Manly?
- How can Council address or improve these issues?

- **Single Parents**

A focus group was conducted with four single parents at the Lone Parents Support Service, Dee Why on 11th November 2003. This was a joint consultation by Manly

and Pittwater Councils. All parents were female, ranging from 40 years of age to 56 years of age. Their children were aged from two years of age to 20 years of age. Two parents had just one child, and the other two parents had two children. One woman spoke a language other than English at home (Arabic). The consultation addressed the following questions:

- What are the good things about living on the Northern Beaches?
- What do you think are the issues facing single parents on the Northern Beaches?
- What are the issues facing your children?
- Can you identify any strategies to address these issues?
- Have you used Council services before? If so, tell us about your experiences and whether you encountered any barriers to accessing these services.

- Indonesian Women's Support Group

A focus group was conducted on 12th October 2003 with thirteen Indonesian women at St Kevins Hall in Dee Why as part of the consultation for the Northern Beaches Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Social Plan. This was a joint consultation by Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Councils. The majority of women were aged between 25 years and 54 years, with one woman over 55 years of age. Eleven of the thirteen women were married with children, two were married without children. The majority of women had lived in Australia between six and 20 years. The consultation addressed the following questions:

- What are the good things about living on the Northern Beaches?
- What are the not so good things about living on the Northern Beaches?
- Have you used Council services before? If so, tell us about your experiences and whether you encountered any barriers to accessing these services.
- What can Council do to help your community?

3.2 Surveys

Several existing groups were accessed to take part in a survey to assess the needs of children and families. Standard questions were used in all surveys (see Appendix A), with slight adaptations, depending on group accessed and return instructions. Open ended questions were deemed most appropriate, to ensure participants were provided the opportunity to freely identify and discuss their concerns.

Surveys were distributed to:

- Manly Council Children's Services Mailing List Recipients

In early November 2003, 900 surveys were sent out to Manly Council's Children's Services mailing list recipients. Each survey was accompanied with a reply-paid envelope, and a period of three weeks for completion and return was allowed. The results were analysed using SPSS. There were 168 respondents to this survey,

who were predominantly female (70.8%). Respondents were mostly between the ages of 25 and 54 (96.5%). Respondents were mainly from an English speaking background with only 8.9% indicating that they spoke a language other than English at home. The majority lived in the Manly LGA (72.6%) with 21.4% living in the Warringah LGA and 0.6% living in Pittwater LGA.

For a detailed report on survey findings, please refer to the supporting document ***'Manly Social Plan 2004 Survey Analysis'***.

- Brazilian Playgroup

20 surveys were distributed to the coordinator of the Brazilian Playgroup for distribution at their November meeting at Manly Village Public School. Five completed surveys were returned and were analysed qualitatively.

- Parents as Teachers Community Advisory Committee

10 surveys were sent to the Parents as Teachers Community Advisory Committee, Manly Village Public School, for completion at their November 2003 meeting. None were returned.

3.3 Service Providers

Key service providers in the area were contacted to provide context and crucial input to the issues facing children and families in Manly. These included representatives from:

Northern Sydney Health
Manly Community Centre
Women's Resource Centre

- Manly Social Plan Implementation Committee (SPIC)

Consultation also occurred through a focused discussion of children and families issues at the Manly Social Plan Implementation Committee (SPIC) held in May 2003. Members of the Committee include several local service providers, community representatives, key council staff (children's services, open space planning and community services), and Manly Councillors. Representatives from Northern Sydney Health Promotion and the Manly Community Centre took part in the discussion.

- Northern Beaches Child at Risk Committee

Manly and Pittwater Councils combined to conduct a survey (see Appendix B) of children's service providers. 25 surveys were distributed to the Northern Beaches Child at Risk Committee for completion at their November 2003 meeting. Four surveys were returned.

- Northern Beaches Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Social Plan consultation

To develop the 2004 Northern Beaches CALD Plan, Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Councils jointly consulted the Indonesian, Serbian and Tibetan community through focus groups, the Northern Beaches Multicultural Network and key service providers. Outcomes relevant to children and families have been included in this needs assessment.

- Women's Resource Centre

Consultation with key workers from the Women's Resource Centre at Dee Why was conducted on 20th November 2003. This was a joint consultation coordinated by Manly and Pittwater Councils. Four workers contributed to the discussion, which focused on women's issues, but obviously a key component was discussion regarding caring for children. Semi-structured interview questions led the discussion, including:

- What do you think are the issues facing women on the Northern Beaches?
- Can you identify any strategies to address these issues
- Any comments on Council services?

- Dr Michael Zilibowitz, Section Manager, Child & Adolescent Team, Queenscliff Community Health Centre.

A presentation by Dr Zilibowitz to key Council staff and members of the Manly Social Plan Implementation Committee discussed the implications of early brain development, and what role Council could play in improving outcomes for children aged 0-3 years of age.

3.4 Literature Review

Several relevant sources of literature were reviewed, in conjunction with analysing consultation results. One of the key documents to support the issues presented, was the report on the Families First Planning workshops held with service providers (including councils) in the Northern Sydney area in early-mid 2003.

4.0 REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

4.1 Service usage/awareness

One of the survey questions in the survey sent to the Children's Services mailing list recipients addressed service usage or awareness (question 5 of survey in Appendix A).

The question listed seven Manly Council Children's Services and asked respondents to indicate which particular service/s they had used.

Of the 168 respondents, the frequency of services used in order of most used to least used, is as follows:

	Service	Number of users	Percent
1.	Vacation Care	94	56.0
2.	Family Day Care	58	34.5
3.	Pre-school service	58	34.5
4.	Occasional Care	52	31.0
5.	Before & After School Care	43	25.6
6.	Immunisation	41	24.4
7.	Long Day Care	37	22.0

4.2 Gaps

Briefly, the following gaps in services for children were identified:

- Long day care
- Family day care
- Affordable housing
- Local children's health services
- Respite support services
- Support playgroups
- Fathers support group
- Outdoor adventure play areas
- Family accessible toilets
- Bicycle lanes/corridors to schools

5.0 CONSULTATION RESULTS

5.1 Why do children and families like Manly?

Consultation through focus groups and surveys indicate that participants like living in Manly because of the following:

- Natural environment (including the beach, harbour and parks) - **43.9% of those surveyed using children's services indicated this as their top like.**
- Lifestyle and sense of community - **33% of those surveyed using children's services indicated this as their second most liked aspect.**
- Proximity and quality of services and facilities (including services and amenities for children) - **23.1% of those surveyed using children's services indicated this as their third most liked aspect of Manly.**
- Safety

5.2 Summary of Issues

The key issues facing children and families, arising from consultation have been summarised as:

- Childcare
- Accommodation
- Health
- Education
- Parenting
- Services & Facilities
- Safety

5.3 Consultation sources

As issues have been discussed, the following abbreviations have been used to note their consultation source:

CSP	Children's service provider survey
SPIC	Manly Social Plan Implementation Committee
NSH	Northern Sydney Health
PCC	Parents Consultative Committee
FF	Families First consultation in Northern Sydney 2003
PaT	Parents as Teachers
WRC	Women's Resource Centre
LP	Lone parents
NBCALD	Consultation for the 2004 Northern Beaches CALD Plan
BP	Brazilian Playgroup
IWSG	Indonesian Women's Support Group
MYC	Manly Youth Council
MCCS	Manly Council Children's Services survey

5.4 Issues, Needs and Strategies

ISSUE:	1.0	CHILDCARE
Need:	1.1	<i>Increase childcare places</i>

In line with the issues raised during the consultation for the 1999 Social Plan, the demand for affordable childcare remains high.

In 1999 the demand for before and after school and part time care was seen to be expanding, while the number requiring long day care options had dropped. However since then, there has been a reverse in demand for school aged services e.g. Before and After School Care and Vacation Care, due to an increase in service providers. However, this is not the case for 'part time care' which is still in high demand (e.g. needing Long Day Care, like the Roundhouse or Family Day Care, for part of the week).

Childcare was raised as a concern at all consultations held (SPIC, PCC, LP, WRC, PaT). This related to affordability and the inability to access childcare services because of the length of current waiting lists.

Analysis of the Children's services survey (MCCS) revealed that 'childcare - availability generally' was the top issue (16.5%) for parents. When participants were asked what Council could do to improve the issues identified, 'create more childcare overall' was the main response (13.5%). When participants were asked if there was anything that had stopped them accessing Children's Services, 27.4% of respondents answered "yes". The top three reasons were:

- No places available – Long Day Care (31.4%)
- Childcare – no places available generally (23.5%)
- No places available – Family Day Care (9.8%)

One mother reported she had been on the Roundhouse waiting list for 3 years for long day care for her child (BP). Obtaining a childcare place for one child was bad enough, but as one parent pointed out, multiple placements (e.g. twins) at the same childcare centre was virtually impossible (PCC).

Whilst the preference of many families was to secure childcare places within Council operated services (because of a perception of higher standards, and more affordable fees), many parents had to accept places in private childcare operations. Parents also were concerned about the high turnover in Council childcare staff, and believed this was due to the low salaries in the childcare industry. They stated they would be more than happy to pay more for their childcare if it meant that staff were retained, and quality of care for their children was consistently high (PCC).

Waitlists for Manly Council children's services as at end of November 2003 were:

Pre-school:	150
Family Day Care:	230
The Roundhouse Long Day care:	
0-2 years	266
2-3 years	100
3-5 years	105
Harbour View	187

Manly Council is currently involved in a regional planning initiative with SHOROC to develop common guidelines (detailing standards and planning mechanisms) to encourage the entry of new private childcare operators to the region

There are also three proposed private childcare centres which are either in the planning process, or currently being constructed in the Manly area. These centres will provide a total of 270 long day care places, presumably for under-3 year olds. This should go some way towards relieving the pressure on childcare waiting lists.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Continue to pursue regional initiatives through SHOROC to increase the provision of private childcare services***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>CHILDCARE</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>Increase family day care provision</i>

In 1999, the number of day carers in Manly was considered to be inadequate. This remains a key concern, with Council's Children's Services struggling to recruit new carers.

Analysis of the Children's services survey revealed that when participants were asked if there was anything that had stopped them accessing Children's Services, 27.4% of respondents answered "yes". The top three reasons were:

- No places available – Long Day Care (31.4%)
- Childcare – no places available generally (23.5%)
- No places available – Family Day Care (9.8%)

SPIC report that the lack of family day carers could be due to:

- the high cost of housing in Manly, with many mothers having to return to work;
- some women choosing to return to the workforce to progress their careers; and
- Downsizing of the Department of Defence facility at North Head, and the resulting loss of women willing to be family day carers

Currently, local promotion is through school newsletters, National Association promotion through magazines or TV. Word of mouth has proven to be the most

successful form of recruitment.

Manly Council has recently commenced involvement in a regional planning initiative with SHOROC which will focus regional promotion to recruit family day carers.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Continue involvement in regional promotion through SHOROC to recruit family day carers***

ISSUE:	1.0	CHILDCARE
Need:	1.3	Maintain equity and affordability for those most in need

Single parents particularly were concerned about the higher fees of private operators. One example cited was a single mother working part-time, but having to access private childcare, and taking home only \$40 in the hand. In these cases, many single parents would choose to stay at home with their child, contributing to an existing view of the 'bludging sole parent' on welfare. Single mothers were concerned that many families accessing Council childcare services could easily afford the cost of private childcare, and felt that they, as single parents should be given priority, as an incentive for them to return to work. In fact, not being able to access childcare, whether it is for issues of waiting lists, or affordability, could often lead to social isolation for single parents (LP).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Ensure Council's waiting list criteria for childcare is in line with equity and access principles, supporting those most in need***

ISSUE:	1.0	CHILDCARE
Need:	1.4	Encourage childcare for non-Council services

Childcare was also identified as an issue for women needing to access health or educational services, (e.g. counseling sessions at Queenscliff Community Health Centre, or studying at Brookvale TAFE) (WRC).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Lobby Brookvale TAFE & Queenscliff Health Centre to provide childcare for women accessing their services***

ISSUE:	2.0	ACCOMMODATION
Need:	2.1	Increase affordable housing

Accommodation is a concern for most target groups in the community, including young families, young single women, single parents, older women and those

escaping domestic violence (MYC, LP, CSP). Many people are forced to move out of the Northern Beaches to areas with more affordable rental prices, however this can lead to social isolation, as it is often away from their community, friends, family and service support networks.

Single parents in particular are under considerable stress relating to affordable housing. Private rentals are expensive, and rent assistance is not proportional. One single parent was told by the Department of Housing she would have to wait 14 years for a DoH property (LP).

There is an obvious need to investigate ways to increase affordable housing in the area, particularly for those in need. The Manly Warringah Local Government Housing Initiatives Programme (LGHIP) is in the first year of this two year project, and aims to identify innovative ways to alleviate this issue.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Investigate options of attachment housing (e.g. granny flats) to accommodate young mothers/ families, who could provide support for existing older occupants***
- ***Continue to support regional initiatives such as the Manly Warringah LGHIP project***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>ACCOMMODATION</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>Increase medium-term accommodation</i>

The Women's Resource Centre reported a significant lack of medium-term accommodation. At present, emergency accommodation on the Northern Beaches is provided in the form of the Bringa Women's Refuge. However, women only qualify for accommodation at the Refuge if they are escaping domestic violence, and have children. Once women have left the Refuge, there is no local medium-term accommodation, and often they are forced to move out of the area, or stay in temporary/ transient accommodation. The Women's Resource Centre also reported a lack of emergency accommodation locally for single women. This places women at significant risk of homelessness.

According to a workshop on homeless women hosted by Manly Council in February 2003, women could be at risk of homelessness if they found themselves in any of the following situations:

- Temporary or unstable accommodation
- Escaping domestic violence
- International students in unstable homestay arrangements
- Older women unable to pay housing costs when retire
- Young people unable to afford housing costs in the Northern Beaches
- Middle-aged/middle-class women unable to leave their partners as not in control of financial arrangements
- Women who do not meet Department of Housing criteria for accommodation

- Women who are not aware of other support or accommodation options
- Upper/middle-class women who do not wish to go to a 'refuge'
- Women not wishing to move out of the Northern Beaches area (i.e. most refuges/shelters are out of area)
- Women at risk of eviction due to the stress of housing costs
- Female migrants/refugees who cannot stay with their family
- Women from CALD backgrounds on a spouse visa

To exacerbate these issues, certain characteristics could result in a woman being at risk of homelessness, including:

Low economic status	Mental illness
Poor health	Alcoholism/drug addiction
Family breakdown	Crisis situation
Interpersonal crisis	

These issues are compounded by the loss of boarding houses in Manly. Over the past two decades, Manly has lost many of its boarding houses, with the direct effect of diminishing the supply of low-cost accommodation.

The following information was provided through the licensing system which ceased in 1992, and tracks boarding house numbers over the last two decades:

1983 - 88 1984 - 82 1985 - 80 1986 - 74 1987 - 69 1988 - 58
1989 - 55.

In 1989 these 55 premises provided 1,013 bedspaces.

In April 2003, information collated by Council's Fire Officer identified less than 20 Guest / Boarding Houses.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Support funding applications by relevant agencies for medium-term and emergency accommodation for women based on the Northern Beaches***
- ***Develop a policy on the provision and retention of boarding houses for occupation by long term residents disadvantaged by the private rental market***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>HEALTH</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>Increase locally based health services for children</i>

Consultation highlighted a range of service gaps for children. Service providers talked about long waiting lists for health services for children (including those with special needs or a disability) (WRC, CSP, SPIC).

Consultation for the 1999 Manly Social Plan revealed that services catering to children with special needs, including those aged 0-2 years, were in demand with long waiting lists. This demand for services for the 0-3 year age group remains

high.

Service providers highlighted a lack of respite care for children with disabilities, a lack of crisis foster care placements for children in need of temporary care, lack of weekend respite care for children in families at risk, long waiting list for speech pathology (6-9 months) for children over 5 years old, and a lack of low cost autistic support services for children, a long waiting list for speech pathology, and lack of counseling support for children involved in family breakdown (WRC, CSP). The Integration and Resource Team (IRT), which operates from Warringah, provides assistance and support to Childrens Services for children with additional needs, although currently their resources are stretched, and they have long waiting lists (WRC, SPIC).

There is obviously a need to ensure that Council is consulted on any future planning for services relevant to Manly Hospital (SPIC).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Support funding applications by relevant organizations to secure provision of services for children with special needs***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>HEALTH</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>Improve children's health</i>

Northern Sydney Health advised of the following key health issues for children and families:

- ***Overweight or obese children***

In the ten year period from 1985 to 1995 the level of combined overweight/obesity in Australian children more than doubled, whilst the level of obesity tripled in all age groups and for both sexes. Obese children have a 25-50% chance of progression to adult obesity and it may be as high as 78% in older obese adolescents. Data from the NSW Child Health Survey 2001 found 40% of children, aged 5-12 years, reportedly watch two hours or more of television or videos a day on average and 15% are reported to play computer games for an hour or more a day on average. Such sedentary leisure time pursuits are now widely available to children and are replacing more traditional active pastimes (NSW Childhood Obesity Secretariat, NSW Department of Health, 2002, p. 3)

Of the recommendations resulting from the 2002 NSW Childhood Obesity Summit (NSW Childhood Obesity Secretariat, NSW Department of Health, 2002, p. 20), three are relevant for Council's implementation:

- Provide safe and accessible footpaths and bicycle paths;
- Protect open spaces; and
- Improve access to safe and inclusive extracurricular physical activity programmes.

It is obviously important that Council continues to ensure opportunities for regular physical activities for children and families to counter the growing rates of childhood obesity. Considering that many families are choosing to live in high-density dwellings in Manly, without private play areas, Council's open space planning and playground management strategy should allow for innovative and creative play areas for children.

- ***Injury prevention***

Northern Sydney Health report that falls, burns, poisoning are the top 3 hospitalisation rates for children.

- ***Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)***

A report by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) found important associations between passive smoking (ETS) and the following major health issues for children:

- An increased risk of SIDS;
- An increased risk of glue ear, with the potential for long term hearing problems;
- A greater risk of reduced lung function;
- Contributing to the symptoms of asthma in 46,500 Australian children each year;
- Causing lower respiratory illness in more than 16,000 Australian children each year;
- A 60% increase in the chance that a child will develop lower respiratory illness such as croup, bronchitis, bronchiolitis and pneumonia in the first 18 months of life;

(http://www.smokefreezone.org/index.cfm/page_id/1014)

Whilst Council cannot enforce the issue of smoking in local eateries, it does report on breaches of smoke-free zones to the NSW Department of Health. Council can also work with Northern Sydney Health and other agencies to raise parents' awareness of the risks associated with passive smoking through its Children's Services.

- ***Breastfeeding***

According to the Australian Breastfeeding Association, research shows that breastfed babies have the potential for a higher intelligence. Unlike infant formula, breastmilk contains the Omega-3 fatty acid DHA, important in brain development. Breastmilk contains all the nutrients a baby needs for at least the first six months of its life. The colostrum the baby receives in the first few days and later breastmilk, contains antibodies which will help increase the baby's resistance to infection. Ensuring that a baby has only breastmilk for at least six months may help lessen allergy problems. Infants' eyesight, speech and jaw development are all known to be enhanced by breastfeeding. Breastfed babies have a higher resistance to disease and are less likely to become sick - apart from the health

benefits, this means fewer doctor's visits and less time in hospital. Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS. Breastfeeding may lower the risk of your baby developing diabetes. It may also reduce the incidence of heart disease (<http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/general.html>).

Northern Sydney Health report that there is high initiation rates for breastfeeding, but still short of their target of 80% still breastfeeding at 6 months. Whilst Council is not directly responsible for this issue, its Children's Services staff can ensure they continue to raise awareness of parents to the health benefits of breastfeeding their children.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Continue Council's commitment to ensure safe outdoor play areas to encourage active lifestyles for children***
- ***Support initiatives of Northern Sydney Health and other agencies to address key health issues for children***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>EDUCATION</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>Improve access and reduce bullying in schools</i>

Several education-related issues were raised through the consultation process. Parents were concerned about the standard of facilities in public high schools, and that there were few single-sex schools on the Northern Beaches (PCC).

Service providers were particularly concerned about the lack of access to mainstream schools for children with disabilities; they claimed that there are still children being excluded from pre-school and schools on the basis of disability. Bullying at schools also remained an issue (CSP).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Liaise with Education Department to investigate access issues for children with disabilities;***
- ***Lobby Education Department to ensure active anti-bullying campaigns are present in local schools***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>PARENTING</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>Improve respite services</i>

There is a lack of respite support services for women with children who may have health problems (WRC).

Single mothers also reported the need to access respite services, to provide some relief from being at home with their child 24-hours a day. The pressures placed on single parents, are many, such as the sole responsibility for protecting children from harmful influences (e.g. drugs). Single parents stated that they needed high

levels of energy to keep their children safe, however this often leads to burn-out, as there are too many responsibilities for one parent to deal with. When a single parent does get sick, they cannot rely on a partner, and if they lack a support network, they have to cope alone (LP).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Lobby NSW Department of Health for respite support services locally***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>PARENTING</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>5.2</i>	<i>Increase support networks</i>

There was an identified need to extend parenting support and education, particularly with a greater focus on the first three years of a child's life (SPIC, WRC, NSH). This supports the recent research on early brain development which is also supported by the Families First initiative. Evidence shows that children and parents from all socioeconomic groups need support from birth if there are to be improvements in children's outcomes in behaviour, learning and health over the life cycle.

A key area of concern was that some mothers with children were not accessing any childcare services, mostly due to cost. Service providers believed this was particularly evident with families from a CALD background. The concern was that if any learning or developmental issues arose during the first three years of a child's life, it often led to behavioral issues later in school (WRC). Service providers identified the lack of supported playgroups and venues locally, particularly for CALD families.

Participants in the 2003 Families First planning workshops in the Northern Sydney area suggested that support should be provided for mothers groups and early family groups over a more extended time, particularly where networks and connections were unlikely to be sustained by the parents themselves. Generally service providers felt there was a need for more ethno-specific playgroups. Supported playgroups should:

- Have a professional person providing an information and support role
- Bring in existing resource services
- Provide educational resources
- Introduce parents to community support people and mentors
- Foster collaboration with a range of early childhood professionals.

Consultation for Families First also revealed that families in the Northern Sydney region were often quite isolated, especially older parents who have workforce networks rather than community based networks, high mobility, lack of extended family supports and both parents working. Other reasons for isolation were geographic isolation and lack of transport, a wide range in socio-economic circumstances - affluence and pockets of disadvantage, those who were newly arrived in the area, those who had no English language, and were culturally isolated.

Participants consistently identified CALD communities, particularly those from emerging communities who did not yet have established community networks. This also applies to ATSI families who may have moved to the area from rural or regional communities. Also those who move into the area from overseas, migrants, work placement families and refugees. Refugees also may have little trust of government.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Work closely with the Families First initiative and support funding applications for supported playgroups at more venues on the Northern Beaches***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>PARENTING</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>Increase support for male primary carers</i>

Male primary carers often feel isolated from 'traditional' mothers groups. As one father claimed, "it's a female world in children's playgroups...you feel like you're an outsider" (PCC).

Fathers also wanted children's service providers to recognise fathers often do play a primary role in their children's care. Most promotional or information resources were worded towards mothers as primary carers (PCC).

Fathers would welcome the introduction of support groups for male primary carers, but those which involved outside physical activities, such as nature walks, or safe bike tracks for children so fathers could meet, socialize and supervise their children (PCC).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Investigate establishing a fathers support group focused on outdoor activities***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>SERVICES & FACILITIES</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>Improve and maintain play areas</i>

The need for better playground facilities was identified during consultation for the 1999 Manly Social Plan. Since then, all major playgrounds have been renovated, and the 'pocket' playgrounds are being upgraded. Ensuring playgrounds meet the current rigorous safety standards and are provided with shade cloth is a priority. Council's Open Space Planner advises that the following needs have also been identified:

- more adventurous play facilities and equipment;
- a greater demand on children's playgrounds with increasing number of families choosing to live in apartments with no private play areas or gardens

This was supported by consultation, when parents expressed the desire for more

playgrounds along the harbour foreshore (BP), and more outdoor facilities for children under five years, especially bike tracks (PCC).

There was a particular concern for children's safety, concerning the cleanliness and maintenance of some open space areas with instances of broken glass and cigarette butts found in some playgrounds, parks and beaches (PCC, PaT, IWSG). Parents also felt that North Harbour Reserve was polluted and dirty, especially by the present number of dogs which used the reserve and swam in the water (BP). Several parents felt that North Harbour Reserve and the Ocean Beach playground should be properly fenced, to ensure the safety of their children (PCC, PaT).

Ensuring Council improves and maintains play areas will also go some way towards reducing the incidence of childhood obesity (see 3.2) by encouraging active outdoor activities for healthy children.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Investigate increasing the provision of outdoor adventure facilities for children***
- ***Instigate a regular regime of playground maintenance and cleansing***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>6.0 SERVICES & FACILITIES</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>6.2 Improve toilet facilities for children and families</i>

Consultation revealed the need for more family accessible toilets, which could be used by people with a disability, or as a family changing area (SPIC, PCC). Parents discussed how inappropriate (and potentially unsafe) it was for fathers to take their young children into a men's toilet, or send them alone into a female toilet. It was also necessary for the toilets to be large enough to be able to fit a child's stroller. The toilets could be non-gender specific, to allow for the use of fathers or mothers.

Suggested strategy:

- ***Investigate the provision of family accessible toilets***

<i>ISSUE:</i>	<i>6.0 SERVICES & FACILITIES</i>
<i>Need:</i>	<i>6.3 Provide child-friendly eating and entertainment venues</i>

Consultation revealed that parents often felt alienated from late night Manly, that there was a need for a safe and comfortable place for families to gather in the evenings. The suggestion was that somewhere in the Manly CBD a contained area and surrounding cafes and restaurants could be targeted towards families. Examples were given of The Forum in Leichhardt, which is safe for children to play in a pedestrian area (PCC, PaT). Other parents also felt that cafes in Manly were not always child-friendly, and sometimes lack high chairs (PaT).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Council to investigate options for family-friendly open spaces in the Manly CBD for evening entertainment***
- ***Lobby Manly Chamber of Commerce to provide a more child-friendly environment in local cafes***

ISSUE:	6.0	SERVICES & FACILITIES
Need:	6.4	Raise awareness of available services

Parents voiced concern that it was difficult knowing how and where to access information on services (PCC, PaT). The feeling was that there should be a centralised information source on childcare options, especially for new residents to Manly, or newly arrived migrants to Australia (PaT).

The Report on the Families First Planning workshops in the Northern Sydney area (2003) highlighted that service providers wanted to see an information strategy developed to ensure new parents and those new to the area gained information about services and community supports. Participants thought that families usually received excellent service support once they were linked into the network, but they were concerned about the fairness of access. Access often reflects specific services (e.g. childcare), awareness of Australian human service systems, and English language and literacy. Participants were concerned that the most vulnerable or isolated families were less likely to be accessing services.

Families First consultation participants also believed there was a wide range of information available, but that it is uncoordinated – specific strategies were suggested such as a local directory and a Family Expo fun day. There was also a need to link people who are new to the area and provide information about community supports, children's services applications and waiting lists, e.g. an information day for new migrants.

Parents suggested information resources could be located on Council's website, and that the website could perhaps be interactive, e.g. families could enter a profile of their children's ages and needs, and could be directed to the range of information resources and local service available (PCC).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Investigate communication strategies, including the development of a comprehensive directory of children's services to be made available at early childhood centres, children's services, libraries and hospital maternity clinics***
- ***Support Families First initiative of linking families to community supports and services***

ISSUE:	7.0	SAFETY
Need:	7.1	Improve road safety

Parents expressed concern for their children's safety when they were riding bicycles to school. They felt there was a need for safe corridors or bicycle lanes for cyclists, and at the very least, a more stringent policing of 40km zones around schools (PCC).

Suggested strategy:

- ***Liaise with Council's Community Safety Committee, Bicycle Committee and Traffic Committee to investigate road safety issues***

6.0 REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999) "Household and Family Projections Australia: 1996 to 2021". ISBN: 0642 25756 6.

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) "Regional Profile - Manly Local Government Area"

Australian Bureau of Statistic (2002) Australian Social Trends 2002; ISSN 1321-1781, catalogue no: 4102.0

NSW Childhood Obesity Secretariat, NSW Department of Health (2002), "Childhood Obesity NSW Summit - Background Paper"

7.0 SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES			
Issue	Need	Strategy	Responsibility
1.0 CHILDCARE	1.1 Increase childcare places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to pursue regional initiatives through SHOROC to increase the provision of private childcare services 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
	1.2 Increase family day care provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue involvement in regional promotion through SHOROC to recruit family day carers 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
	1.3 Maintain equity and affordability for those most in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Council's waiting list criteria for childcare is in line with equity and access principles, supporting those most in need 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
	1.4 Encourage childcare for non-Council services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby Brookvale TAFE & Queenscliff Health Centre to provide childcare for women accessing their services 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
2.0 ACCOMMODATION	2.1 Increase affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options of attachment housing (e.g. granny flats) to accommodate young mothers/ families, who could provide support for existing older occupants Continue to support regional initiatives such as the Manly Warringah LGHIP project 	Council: Community Services Planner
	2.2 Increase medium-term accommodation for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support funding applications by relevant agencies for medium-term and emergency accommodation for women based on the Northern Beaches Develop a policy on the provision and retention of boarding houses for occupation by long term residents disadvantaged by the private rental market 	Council: Community Services Planner/ Branch Manager Planning & Strategy/ Regional Housing Coordinator

7.0 SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES			
Issue	Need	Strategy	Responsibility
3.0 HEALTH	3.1 Increase locally based health services for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support funding applications by relevant organizations to secure provision of services for children with special needs 	Council: Community Services Planner
	3.2 Improve children's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Council's commitment to ensure safe outdoor play areas to encourage active lifestyles for children Support initiatives of Northern Sydney Health and other key agencies to reduce key health issues for children 	Council: Open Space Planner Community Services Planner
4.0 EDUCATION	4.1 Improve access and reduce bullying in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Education Department to investigate access issues for children with disabilities; Lobby Education Department to ensure active anti-bullying campaigns are present in local schools 	Council: Community Services Planner/ Children's Services Coordinator
5.0 PARENTING	5.1 Improve respite services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby NSW Department of Health for respite support services locally 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
	5.2 Increase support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with the Families First initiative and support funding applications for supported playgroups at more venues on the Northern Beaches 	Council: Community Services Planner/ Children's Services Coordinator

7.0 SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES			
Issue	Need	Strategy	Responsibility
	5.3 Increase support for male primary carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate establishing a fathers support group focused on outdoor activities 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
6.0 SERVICES & FACILITIES	6.1 Improve and maintain play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate increasing the provision of outdoor adventure facilities for children Instigate a regular regime of playground maintenance and cleansing 	Council: Open Space Planner
	6.2 Improve toilet facilities for children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the provision of family accessible toilets 	Council: Open Space Planner
	6.3 Provide child-friendly eating and entertainment venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to investigate options for family-friendly open spaces in the Manly CBD for evening entertainment Lobby Manly Chamber of Commerce to provide a more child-friendly environment in local cafes 	Council: Open Space Planner/Community Services Planner
	6.4 Raise awareness of available services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate communication strategies, including the development of a comprehensive directory of children's services to be made available at early childhood centres, children's services, libraries and hospital maternity clinics Support Families First initiative of linking families to community supports and services 	Council: Children's Services Coordinator
7.0 SAFETY	7.1 Improve road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Council's Community Safety Committee and Traffic Committee to investigate safety issues 	Council: Crime Prevention Coordinator/Road Safety Officer

Appendix 'A' - Survey of Children's Services mailing list recipients



<p><i>2004 MANLY SOCIAL PLAN Survey of Children and Families</i></p>

Manly Council is currently consulting a range of groups in the community, including children and families for the 2004 Social Plan. As a parent or carer, we would appreciate your input to this process. The information gathered will help to develop strategies that Council is capable of implementing or facilitating.

Please take the time to complete this two-page survey and return to Council before Friday 28th November 2003 in the reply paid envelope provided.

1. What are the three things you most like about living on the Northern Beaches?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
2. Tell us what three things you believe would be important to keep for future generations...
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
3. What do you see as the top 3 issues for children and families on the Northern Beaches?

Issue 1

Issue 2

Issue 3

4. What can Council do to improve the issues you raised in question 3?

Issue 1

Issue 2

Issue 3

5. Have you used any of the following Manly Council services? (please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/> Long Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Before and After School Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-school service
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasional Care
	<input type="checkbox"/> Immunisation

6. If you have not used any of the above, was there anything that stopped you?

☐ No

☐ Yes - what was it that stopped you?

7. Do you think the Northern Beaches is lacking in any activities or services for children and families?

☐ No

☐ Yes - what activities or services?

How old are you?

☐ Under 12 years

☐ 12-24 years

☐ 25-39 years

☐ 40-54 years

☐ 55-69 years

☐ 70-80 years

☐ 80 years +

Are you:

☐ Male

☐ Female

Do you speak a language other than English at home?

☐ No

☐ Yes - what language?

What suburb do you live in?.....

Thanks for your time!

Please complete this form prior to Friday 28th November 2003 and return to Council in the reply-paid envelope provided.

Your comments will go towards developing the 2004 Manly Social Plan.

If you have any questions about the Social Plan, please call Sue Ladd on 9976 1566.

Appendix 'B' - Survey of Children's Service Providers



2004 MANLY SOCIAL PLAN Survey of Children's Service Providers

Manly Council is currently consulting a range of groups in the community, including children and families for the 2004 Social Plan. As a key service provider in the area, we would like your input to this process. The information gathered will help to develop strategies that Council is capable of implementing or facilitating.

Name of service: _____

Location: _____

1) What do you see as the top 3 issues for children and families on the Northern Beaches?

Issue 1

Issue 2

Issue 3

2) Can you identify any strategies to address the issues you have raised?

Issue 1

Issue 2

Issue 3

- 3) Do you believe the existing services on the Northern Beaches meet the needs of children and families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If NO, what improvements/ additions could be made to the provision of these services?

- 4) Is there anything that could be done to allow greater access to services for children and families on the Northern Beaches?

- 5) What area does your service cover?

☐ Northern Beaches ☐ Northern Sydney ☐ NSW ☐ Other

- 6) Approximately what percentage of your clients are from:

.....% Manly% Warringah% Pittwater

- 7) Any other comments?

Thanks for your time!

*Please complete this form and return to Sue Ladd, Manly Council,
PO Box 82, Manly, NSW 1655, Fax: 9976 1400.*

If you have any questions about the Social Plan, please call Sue Ladd on 9976 1566.

Appendix 'C' - Summary of main findings of survey of children's services mailing list recipients

There were 168 respondents to this survey (see Appendix A for survey), who were predominantly female (70.8%). Respondents were mostly between the ages of 25 and 54 (96.5%).

Respondents were mainly from an English speaking background with only 8.9% indicating that they spoke a language other than English at home.

The majority lived in the Manly LGA (72.6%) with 21.4% living in the Warringah LGA and 0.6% living in Pittwater LGA.

Question 1:

Respondents were asked to list the three things they most liked about living on the northern beaches. These responses fell into three main categories, as follows:

- Environment – 43.9%
- Lifestyle and community – 33.0%
- Services and facilities – 23.1%

These broad categories were cross-tabulated with age and sex of respondents. It was found that there were no major differences in responses according to age or sex across these categories.

When all 25 subcategories identified for Q1 were analysed together, it was found that respondents liked the following three “things” most about the northern beaches:

1. Beaches and waterways – 28.3%
2. Transport access to city (ferries/jetcats) - 9.7%
3. Open spaces (parks, reserves, walks etc) – 9.5%

The “Beaches and waterways” were by far the most liked attribute of the northern beaches, with over a quarter of responses in this one subcategory alone.

The 25 subcategories were cross-tabulated with respondents' age and sex. No major differences were found according to sex. However, there were some variations according to age as follows:

- For the “Open spaces” subcategory, the 25-39 age group had a lower number of responses than expected whereas the 40-54 age group had a higher number of responses than expected.
- For the “Family/community atmosphere” subcategory (which was ranked fourth), the 25-39 age group had a higher number of responses than expected whereas the 40-54 age group had a lower number of responses than expected.

(Note: a low number of responses across some subcategories made it difficult to observe

differences in some instances).

Question 2:

Respondents were asked to list three things they believed would be important to keep for future generations. Responses fell into three main categories (categories same as for Q1):

- Environment – 51.0%
- Lifestyle and community – 23.3%
- Services and facilities – 25.7%

It is interesting to note that the “Environment” category increased from having 43.9% of responses in Q1 to 51.0% in Q2. The “Lifestyle and community” category decreased from having 33.0% of responses in Q1 to 23.3% of responses in Q2.

The three main categories were cross-tabulated with age and sex of respondents. It was found that there were no major differences in responses according to these respondent characteristics across the main categories.

When all 32 subcategories for Q2 were analysed together, respondents identified the following as the three most important “things” to keep for future generations:

1. Open spaces – 18.4%
2. Clean environment – 16.2%
3. Uncrowded/not overdeveloped character of area – 8.5%

It is interesting to note that the “Beaches and waterways” subcategory, which accounted for more than a quarter of responses in Q1, is now in fourth place with 8.3% of responses.

The 32 subcategories were cross-tabulated with respondents’ age and sex (within their main category grouping). No major differences were found according to sex. However, there were some variations according to age as follows:

- For the “Clean environment” subcategory, the 25-39 age group had a higher number of responses than expected whereas the 40-54 age group had a lower number of responses than expected.

(Note: a low number of responses across some subcategories made it difficult to observe differences in some instances).

Question 3:

Respondents were asked to list the top three issues for children and families on the northern beaches. Responses fell into three main categories:

- Childcare – 22.9%
- Other Council services/facilities - 24.1%

- Other services/facilities - 53%

The three main categories were cross-tabulated with age and sex of respondents. No major differences were found in responses according to sex. However, some differences were found according to age as follows:

- For the “Childcare” main category, the 25-39 age group had a higher number of responses than expected whereas the 40-54 age group had a lower number of responses than expected. This suggests that the younger group had greater concerns about childcare issues generally than the older group.

The 33 subcategories identified for Q3 were analysed together. It was found that respondents’ top three issues for children and families on the northern beaches were:

1. “Childcare – availability generally” – 16.5% of responses
2. “Access to quality education” – 12.4%
3. “Public transport/traffic management” – 8.1%

All 33 subcategories were cross-tabulated with age and sex. No major differences were found according to these respondent characteristics across the subcategories. (Note: a low number of responses across some subcategories made it difficult to observe differences in some instances).

Question 4:

Respondents were asked what Council could do to improve the issues listed in Q3. Responses fell into three main categories, as follows (categories same as for Q3):

- Childcare – 24.8% of responses
- Other Council services/facilities – 30.0%
- Other services/facilities – 45.2%

These broad categories were cross-tabulated with age and sex. It was found that there were no significant differences according to sex across the main categories. However, there were differences according to age as follows:

- For the “Childcare” main category, the 25-39 age group had a higher number of responses than expected whereas the 40-54 age group had a lower number of responses than expected. A similar trend was found in Q3, suggesting that the younger group had greater concerns with childcare issues and solutions than the older group.

The 34 subcategories identified for Q4 were analysed together. It was found that the top three “improvements” for the issues identified in Q3 were:

1. Create more childcare overall – 13.6%
2. Increase public transport/fix traffic problems – 10.9%
3. Better policing and community safety initiatives – 7.3%

Note that these three “improvements” do not necessarily correspond with the top three issues raised in Q3. The “Childcare” issue does correspond and is ranked first both in Q3 and Q4. However, the corresponding issue for “Increase public transport/fix traffic problems” is ranked third in Q3. Also the corresponding issue for “Better policing and community safety initiatives” is ranked fourth in Q3. “Access to quality education”, ranked second in Q3, has its corresponding “improvement” ranked fourth in Q4.

The 34 subcategories were cross-tabulated with age and sex. No major differences were found according to these respondent characteristics across the subcategories. (Note: a low number of responses across some subcategories made it difficult to observe differences in some instances).

Question 5:

Children’s Services usage for this respondent group was as follows:

Vacation Care (56%), Family Day Care (34.5%), Pre-school service (34.5%), Occasional Care (31.0%), Before & After School Care (25.6%), Immunisation (24.4%), and Long Day Care (22.0%).

Question 6:

When asked if there was anything that had stopped them accessing the above Children’s Services, 27.4% of respondents answered “yes”. The top three reasons were:

- No places available – Long Day Care (31.4%)
- Childcare – no places available generally (23.5%)
- No places available – Family Day Care (9.8%)

Question 7:

When asked if the northern beaches was lacking in any activities and services for children and families, 54.2% of respondents answered “yes”. The top three services/facilities that were identified as lacking were:

- Childcare - generally (20.7%)
- Long Day Care (15.3%)
- Children’s activities - generally (10.8%).

It is pertinent to note that “Childcare – generally” was the most frequently mentioned service that was lacking.

This was also reflected in Q3, where “Childcare – availability generally” was ranked as the top issue for children and families on the northern beaches, and in Q4 where “Create more childcare” was the most frequently stated “improvement” to Council services.