



A random telephone survey of 1,200 Sydney northern beaches residents in relation to local government reform and community attitudes regarding a single Northern Beaches Council



Conducted by Jetty Research on behalf of **Warringah Council**

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Executive summary

In response to the NSW government's Fit for the Future program, Warringah Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random telephone survey of 1,200 adult residents living on Sydney's northern beaches. The survey, which covered the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater local government areas (LGAs), was designed to better understand community views on issues such as their relationship with the region, their LGA and their Council, and initial attitudes towards the concept of a new Northern Beaches Council

Interviews were conducted between Wednesday October 29th and Wednesday November 5th. Final sample size was 1,215.

Among the survey's major conclusions:

1. The major things respondents valued about living on the northern beaches revolved around the beaches themselves. The natural environment and bushland, and the balanced lifestyle afforded by the region were also seen as key attributes, along with the strong sense of community on the Northern Beaches. Likewise, the northern beaches were seen as a great place to raise a family.
2. When asked what they valued most about living in their own LGA, the majority of respondents in Warringah, Pittwater and Manly struggled to articulate a different response to that provided previously for the northern beaches generally. Those that could pointed to the quiet or safe lifestyle, the merit of their own beaches, and the "holiday feel" of their area. Manly residents also identified convenient access and proximity to the city.
3. Regarding their contact with Council, half of those surveyed had contacted their council (for a reason other than paying rates) over the previous 12 months. Between 12 and 5 per cent had contacted an elected councilor or the mayor over this period. When asked to rate their own local council on different attributes:
 - a. Residents of all three LGAs were broadly satisfied with the quality of services delivered, however Manly was the lowest-rated of the three councils;
 - b. Pittwater and Warringah LGAs were rated highly on financial strength by their residents, while Manly LGA residents were split;
 - c. Pittwater and Warringah LGA residents were, on the whole satisfied with the way their council consulted with the community. However Manly residents were more likely than not to class their council as performing poorly in this regard.
4. Three-quarters of those surveyed claimed to be aware of Local Government Reform. Meanwhile around 70 per cent of those surveyed said they were "very" or "quite" interested in the subject of Council reform. (In both cases, results were consistent between LGAs. However awareness and interest were significantly higher among ratepayers, older residents and males.)
5. In terms of their attitude towards council amalgamations generally, overall 39 per cent of respondents were supportive, 32 per cent were opposed and 29 per cent unsure or neutral. Excluding those who were neutral or unsure, the split was 55/45 in favour of amalgamations. Respondents in the Warringah LGA were strong supporters of amalgamations, while those in Manly were almost evenly split. Pittwater residents were the most likely to be opposed to the notion of amalgamations generally.

6. When asked whether they preferred the creation of a new Northern Beaches Council to the status quo, 37 per cent of respondents chose the new council and 50 per cent the status quo (with the balance unsure). However there were sharp differences between LGAs: 49 per cent of Warringah supported a new council compared to 35 per cent of those in Manly and 27 per cent of Pittwater residents. Excluding “unsures”, this indicates strong support in Warringah, some support in Manly and reduced support among Pittwater residents.
7. Those supporting a single Northern Beaches Council pointed to the perceived efficiencies and/or economies of scale as the main reason for their belief. Less bureaucracy, removal of duplication and improved services were also seen as potential benefits. Among those preferring the status quo, there were three dominant themes: the first that “if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it”, the second that the northern beaches would be too big an area for one council to manage and thirdly that they have a better level of representation under the status quo.
8. With the status quo and a new Northern Beaches Council being the main options to test, respondents were not asked specifically about other possible alternatives. They were asked however if there were any other options that they would prefer. Among other suggestions, only 5 per cent of respondents saw appeal in the “Mosmanly” or “North/South” options. There was also some mention of a combined Manly and Warringah council model.
9. Perceived advantages of a single Northern Beaches Council were reduced costs, more efficient use of resources, reduced bureaucracy and staff numbers, better services and facilities and that it would help unify the northern beaches. Perceived disadvantages included loss of identity and/or attention to local issues, loss of representation, and fears that a combined council would be less efficient or more bureaucratic. There were also concerns about resource-shifting between regions.
10. Many respondents struggled to articulate their single biggest personal benefit arising from a Northern Beaches council. Of those that could, reduced costs, more efficient use of resources, a combined parking scheme, and a more unified northern beaches were the major themes. In terms of personal concerns, loss of local identity and loss of representation were the dominant issues raised. However almost one-third of those surveyed had no personal concerns.
11. When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on four possible outcomes of a unified Northern Beaches Council (excluding unsure or neutral responses):
 - a. Many Warringah residents thought that it would deliver better services. However Manly and Pittwater residents were less likely to agree;
 - b. Residents of all three LGAs – and particularly those in Pittwater and Manly – felt it would make it harder for the new Council to adequately represent residents;
 - c. Residents across all areas felt (on balance) that it would be more financially stable. This view was held most strongly by Manly and Warringah residents;
 - d. With the exception of Warringah, a majority of residents expressed concern that a combined Northern Beaches Council may not reflect the “unique” character of their local area.

Introduction

Background

In response to the NSW government's Fit for the Future program, Warringah Council has commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random telephone survey of 1,200 adult residents living on Sydney's northern beaches. The survey, which covered the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater local government areas (LGAs), was designed to better understand community views on issues such as their relationship with the region, their LGA and their Council, and initial attitudes towards the concept of a new Northern Beaches Council.

Specific survey objectives comprised:

1. Understanding what residents valued about living in the northern beaches and their own local area;
2. Identifying perceived advantages, disadvantages and concerns relating to amalgamations;
3. Establishing how residents of three northern beaches councils felt about their own council, amalgamations, and the concept of a new Northern Beaches Council;
4. Rating the Northern Beaches Council model compared to the status quo;
5. Ensuring all questions were simple, neutral and objective.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a random fixed line telephone survey of 1,200 residents in the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater LGA's – i.e. a minimum of 400 per LGA. Respondents were selected at random from a verified random sample residential telephone database of 6,000 records covering all postcodes within the three LGAs¹. A survey form was constructed collaboratively between Council management and Jetty Research (see Appendix 1), based on satisfying the survey objectives listed above.

Fieldwork commenced on the evening of Wednesday October 29th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI² call centre, in association with Adelaide-based New Focus Research. Thereafter a team of 12 researchers in Coffs Harbour and 10 in Adelaide called northern beaches residents on weekday evenings from 3.30 to 8pm, and on Saturday from noon to 5pm. Where phones went unanswered, were engaged or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to five occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

The survey was conducted on a random basis, though aiming to achieve a robust mix of ages and genders within each LGA.

¹ These numbers were supplied by Sampleworx, a respected source of random valid residential numbers for the social and market research industries. As with any postcode-based source, some records may lie outside LGA boundaries. Any such respondents were removed from consideration during the pre-survey screening process.

² Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

Respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 18 or over, lived within the Manly, Warringah or Pittwater LGAs, and had done so for at least six months. Local government councillors and permanent council employees were also excluded from participating.

Surveying was completed on the evening of Wednesday November 5th. The final sample size was 1,215, split approximately equally between the three LGAs.

Survey time varied from 5 to 25 minutes, with an average of 9.7 minutes. Response rate was satisfactory, with 40 per cent of eligible households reached agreeing to participate.

Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores, Chi-square or other analysis of variation (or ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone. Unless indicated otherwise, significant differences are typically highlighted in the tables as blue (above mean) and pink (below mean).

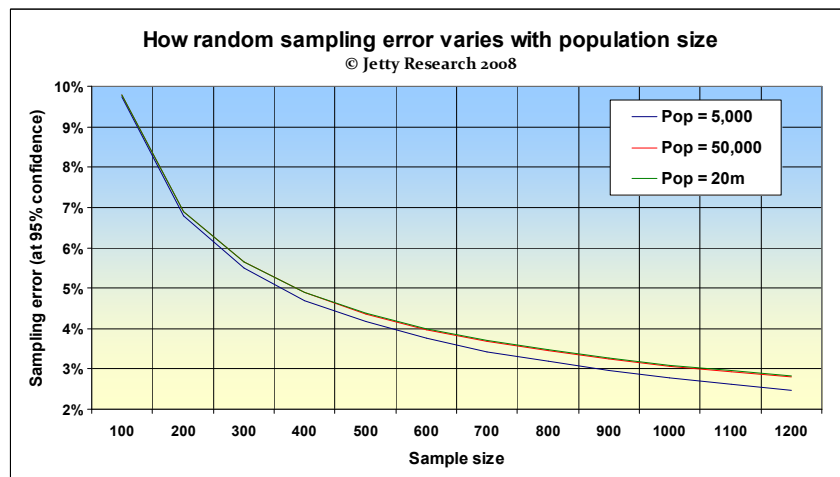
As the survey was random in nature (i.e. other than ensuring a minimum of 400 completed surveys per LGA), data has been post-weighted by age and gender to reflect the demographic profile of the three northern beaches LGAs as per the 2011 ABS Census (usual resident profile). **Note that while all data shown in this report is weighted, in no instance did key results (e.g. those relating to changes in council structure) vary from weighted by more than +/- 5 per cent.**

Sampling error

A random sample of 1,200 adult northern beaches residents implies a random sampling error of +/- 2.7 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. (This means that if we conducted a similar survey 20 times, results should reflect the views of the overall survey population to within +/- 2.7 per cent in 19 of those surveys.)

As Graph i shows, margin for error falls as sample size rises. Hence sub-groups within the sample will create higher margins for error than the overall sample. For example, sample sizes for each of the three LGAs (n=405) exhibit a random sampling error of +/- 4.8 per cent (again at the 95 per cent confidence level).

Graph i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size



In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include respondents without fixed line phones, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.) and/or imperfections in the sampling frame (i.e. database of households contacted.).

Sample characteristics

The survey sample exhibited the following demographic characteristics by age, gender and LGA:

Table i: Weighted breakdown of survey sample by age, gender and LGA

Age * Gender * LGA Crosstabulation

LGA				Gender		Total
				Male	Female	
Manly	Age	18-39	Count	84	87	171
			% of Total	20.8%	21.5%	42.3%
	40-59	Count	68	70	138	
		% of Total	16.8%	17.3%	34.2%	
	60+	Count	43	52	95	
		% of Total	10.6%	12.9%	23.5%	
	Total	Count	195	209	404	
% of Total		48.3%	51.7%	100.0%		
Warringah	Age	18-39	Count	71	76	147
			% of Total	17.5%	18.8%	36.3%
	40-59	Count	73	76	149	
		% of Total	18.0%	18.8%	36.8%	
	60+	Count	49	60	109	
		% of Total	12.1%	14.8%	26.9%	
	Total	Count	193	212	405	
% of Total		47.7%	52.3%	100.0%		
Pittwater	Age	18-39	Count	63	60	123
			% of Total	15.6%	14.9%	30.4%
	40-59	Count	75	82	157	
		% of Total	18.6%	20.3%	38.9%	
	60+	Count	58	66	124	
		% of Total	14.4%	16.3%	30.7%	
	Total	Count	196	208	404	
% of Total		48.5%	51.5%	100.0%		

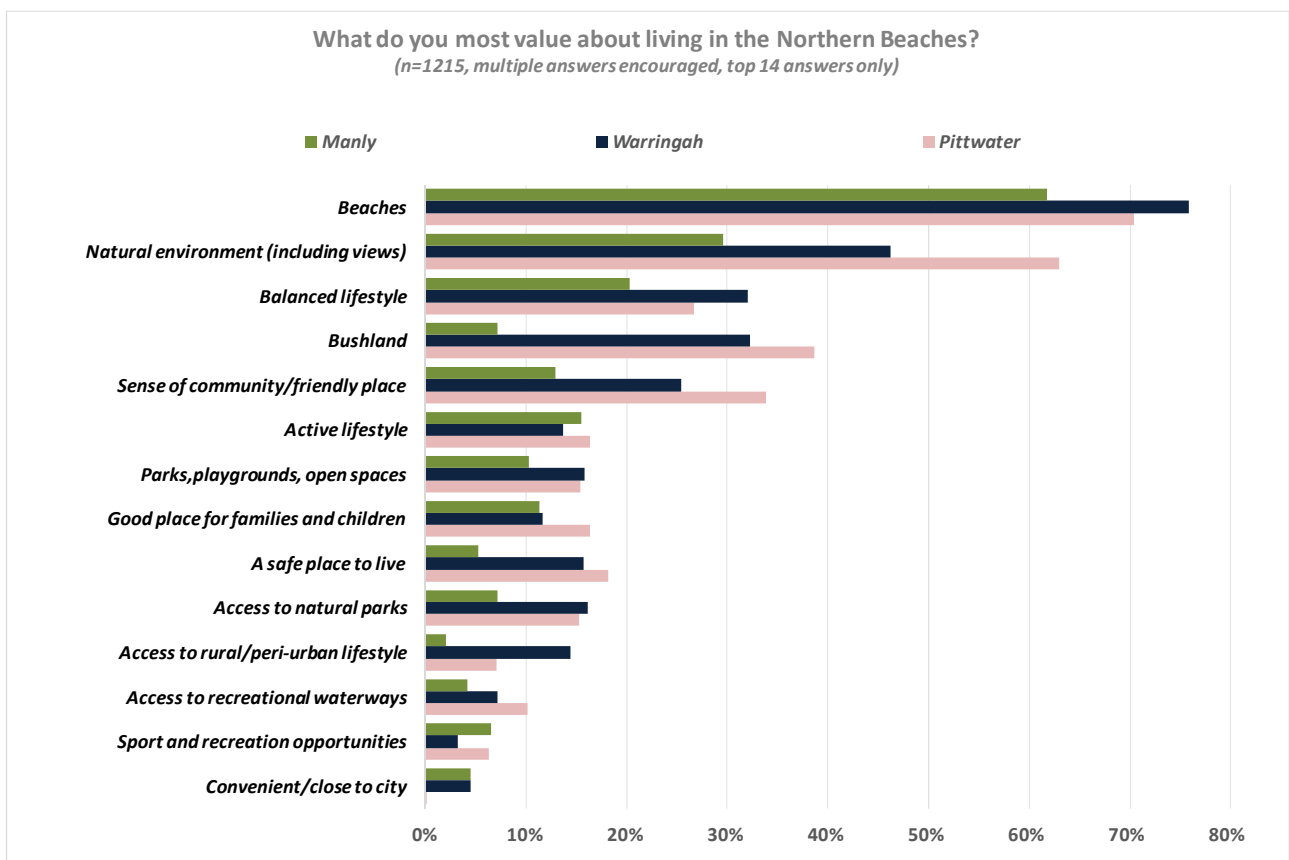
In addition, 81 per cent of respondents were ratepayers: this varied from 77 per cent of Manly respondents, to 85 per cent of those in Pittwater.

Part 1: Appeal of Northern Beaches

The survey commenced with two unprompted and open-ended questions asking respondents what they valued most about living: (a) on the northern beaches; and (b) within their own local area. The questions were designed to understand what makes the northern beaches special, and to see how these general values are different from those in specific council areas.

Responses have been coded (i.e. themed), and the most popular answers for each question are shown in Graphs 1.1 and 1.2, below. (Note in each case that up to three responses were encouraged.)

Graph 1.1: Can you briefly tell me what you value most about living on the Northern Beaches?

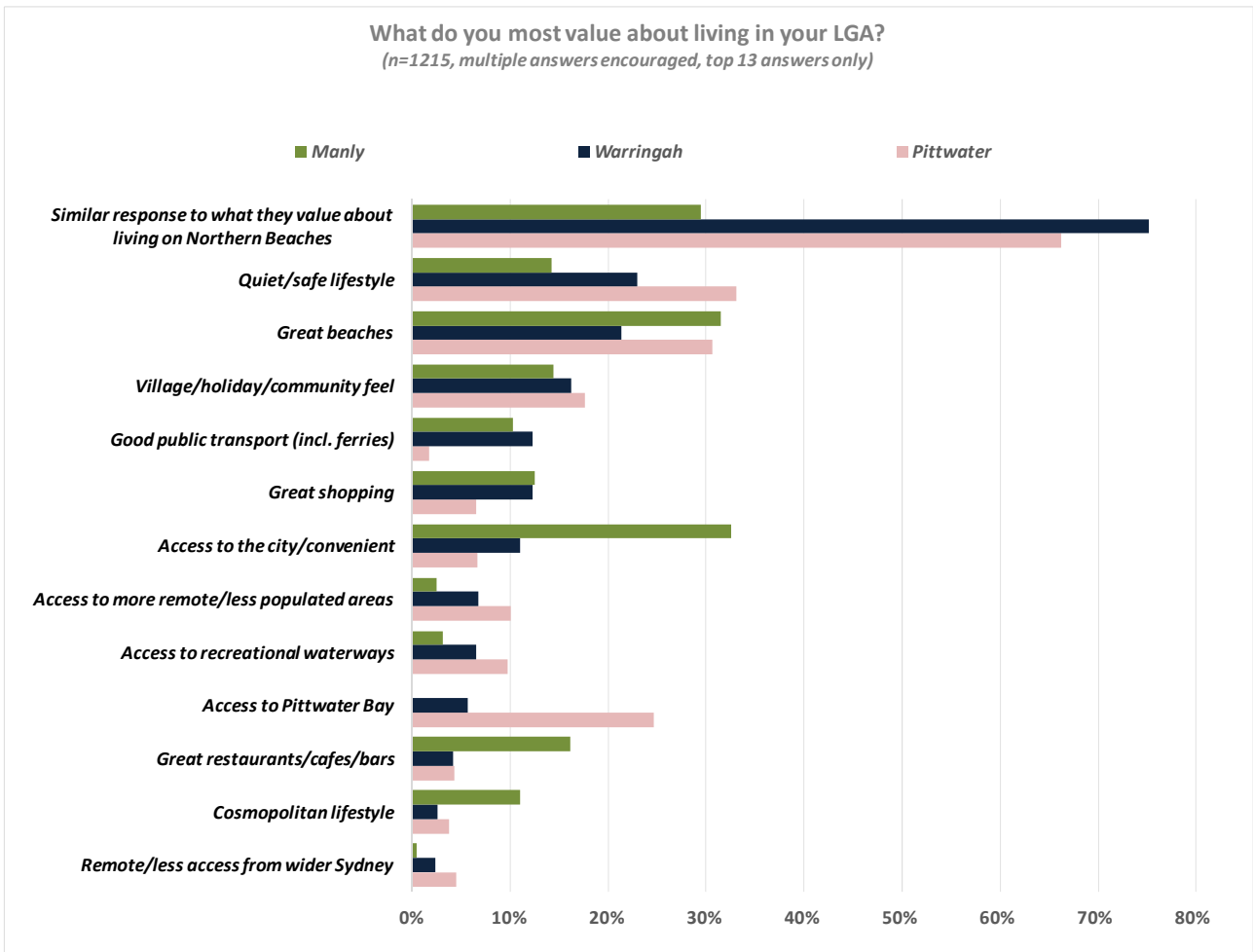


In relation to the northern beaches generally, beaches were unsurprisingly the dominant value noted across the region. This was followed by the beauty of the natural environment.

Other prominent values included a balanced lifestyle, natural bushland, the sense of community, and the active lifestyle it afforded residents.

It was also commonly noted that the northern beaches was an excellent place to raise a family, that it contained an abundance of parks, playgrounds and/or open spaces, and that it was perceived as a safe place to live.

Graph 1.2: Similarly, what do you value most about living in the Manly/Warringah/Pittwater area?



When asked what they valued about living in their local area specifically, three-quarters of Warringah respondents and two-thirds of Pittwater residents provided the same answer as they had given previously (or noted that it was difficult to distinguish between the two). Across all three LGAs, 57 per cent of those surveyed acknowledged that the two were partially or largely the same.

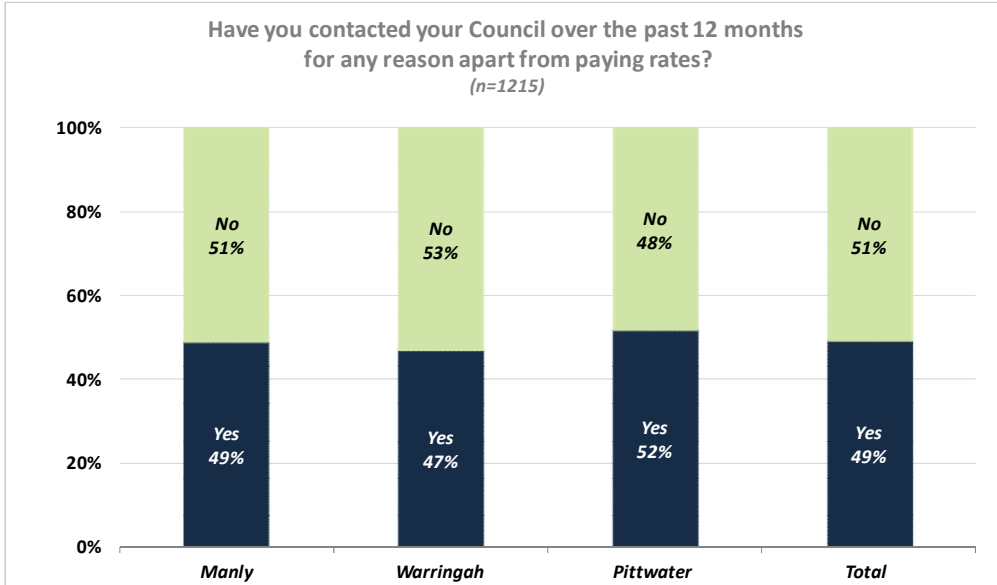
Of those that were able find a different local value, Pittwater residents noted aspects such as the quiet or safe lifestyle, the more peaceful beaches, the village or holiday feel of their peninsula, and the access it afforded to Pittwater.

In addition, Manly residents focussed more on beaches and convenient location (including access to the city), while Warringah respondents also spoke of the quiet and/or safe lifestyle, lovely beaches and “holiday feel” they enjoyed.

Part 2: Contact with and attitude towards your local council

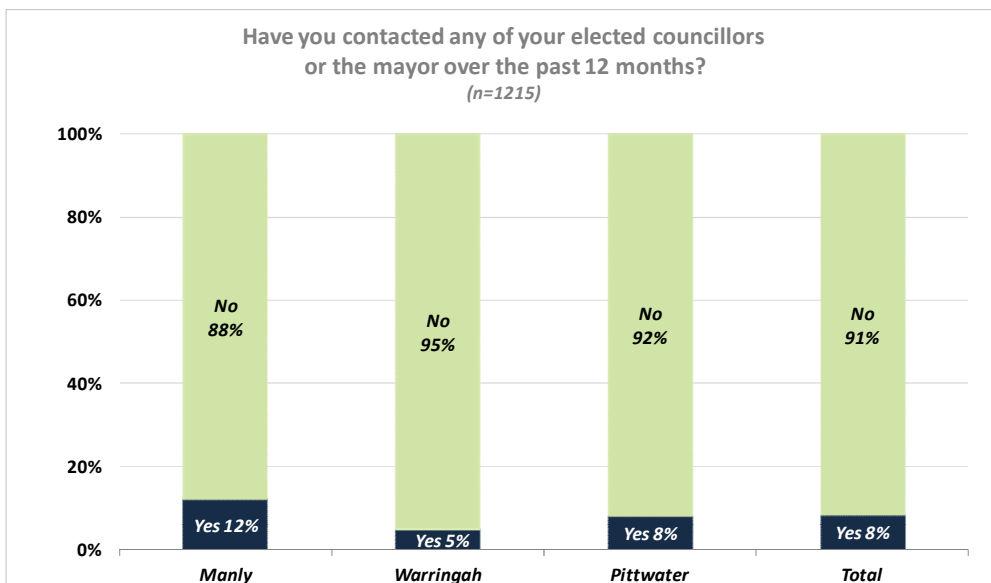
The survey next attempted to understand the relationship residents had with their local council.

Graph 2.1: Have you contacted your Council over the past 12 months apart from paying rates?



Around half of all respondents had contacted their council over the previous 12 months for a reason other than paying rates. This was broadly consistent across all LGAs - and also by age and gender.

Graph 2.2: Have you contacted any of your elected councillors or the mayor over the past 12 months?



Meanwhile between five and 12 per cent of respondents had contacted an elected councillor or their mayor within the previous 12 months. Across all three LGAs, older residents were significantly more likely to have made contact (at 13 per cent for those aged 60-plus, compared to 3 per cent of those aged 18-39).

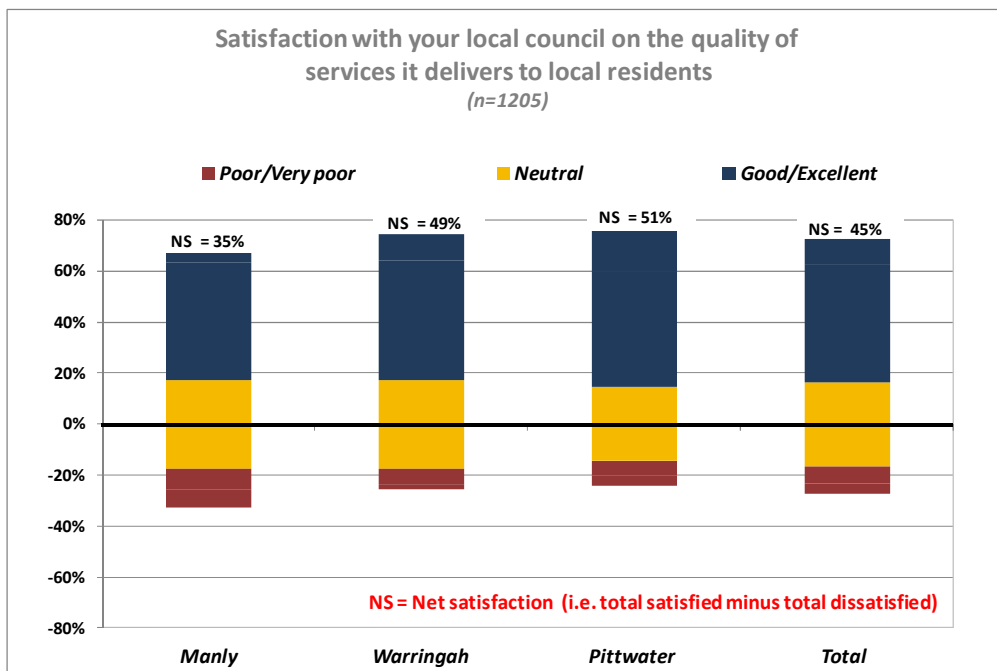
(As an aside, ratepayers were significantly more likely than non-ratepayers to have contacted both council, and/or their councillors. Given that the paying of rates was specifically excluded from the first of these questions, this may suggest that non-ratepayers do not feel they enjoy the same level of representation.)

Respondents were then asked to rate their local council on three different criteria: the quality of services delivered to local residents; financial strength; and the way it consulted with the community. Results are shown in Graphs 2.3a to 2.3c, below.

N.B. Good/excellent scores and half of all neutral scores are shown above the dark black (zero) line, with poor/very poor and half of the neutral scores shown below it. Hence the higher the bar sits in the graph, the more satisfied those respondents are. The full list of scores is shown in Table 2.1, immediately following the three graphs. "NS", or net satisfaction, indicates the proportion of respondents scoring good or excellent less the proportion scoring poor or very poor.

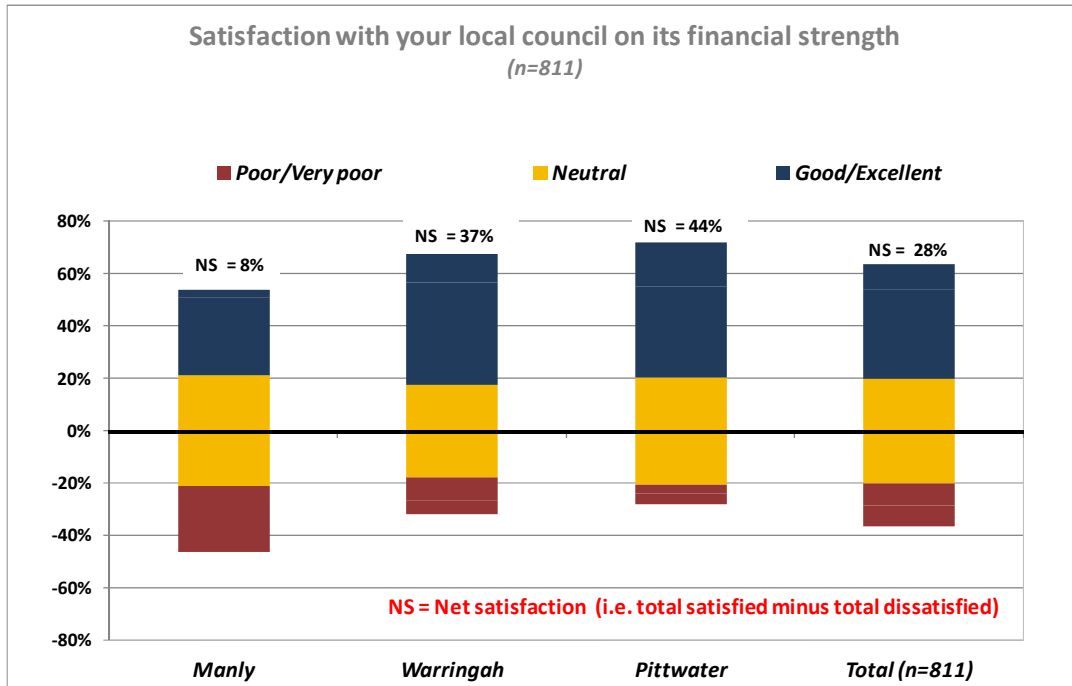
Note that "unsure" have been excluded, hence the different sample size for each question.

Graph 2.3a: How would you rate your local council on the quality of services it delivers to local residents?



This suggests that respondents within each of the three LGAs were broadly satisfied with the level of services provided by their Councils. However the satisfaction was most pronounced in the Warringah and Pittwater LGAs, with only 8 and 10 per cent respectively being dissatisfied on this measure.

Graph 2.3b: How would you rate your local council on its financial strength?

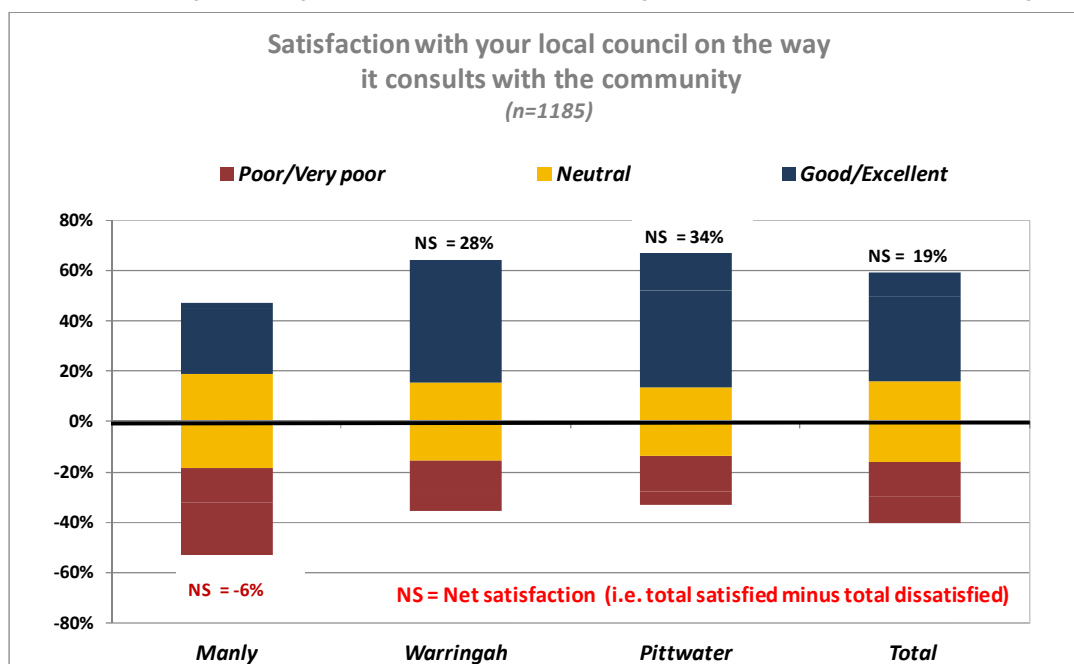


There were greater fluctuations in regard to perceived financial strength. Net satisfaction among Manly respondents was only 8 per cent (33 per cent good/very good, vs. 25 per cent poor/very poor) while for Warringah and Pittwater residents it was significantly higher.

(Note also the smaller sample size, with approximately one-third of respondents unable to offer a view.)

(Continued next page)

Graph 2.3c: How would you rate your local council on the way it consults with the community?



Warringah and Pittwater both scored reasonably well on the quality of their consultation, with less than 20 per cent of respondents dissatisfied in each instance. Less so Manly Council, with 34 per cent dissatisfied and a net satisfaction score of -6 per cent.

Table 2.1: Summary of satisfaction scores

How would you rate your LGA on:	LGA	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent	Mean	Net satisfaction
The quality of services it delivers	Manly	7.1%	7.9%	35.0%	45.8%	4.2%	3.32	35%
	Warringah	2.0%	6.2%	34.8%	46.8%	10.2%	3.57	49%
	Pittwater	4.0%	5.8%	29.0%	45.1%	16.1%	3.63	51%
Its financial strength	Manly	12.5%	12.2%	42.5%	29.7%	3.1%	2.98	8%
	Warringah	5.2%	8.8%	35.5%	39.0%	11.6%	3.43	37%
	Pittwater	4.2%	3.3%	40.8%	35.0%	16.7%	3.57	44%
The way it consults with the community	Manly	20.7%	13.5%	37.4%	26.2%	2.2%	2.76	-6%
	Warringah	6.9%	13.5%	30.8%	36.1%	12.7%	3.34	28%
	Pittwater	5.1%	14.3%	27.1%	38.6%	14.8%	3.44	34%

(N.B. Cells marked blue indicate a statistically significant difference above the overall mean. Those marked in pink show a statistically significant difference below the overall mean.)

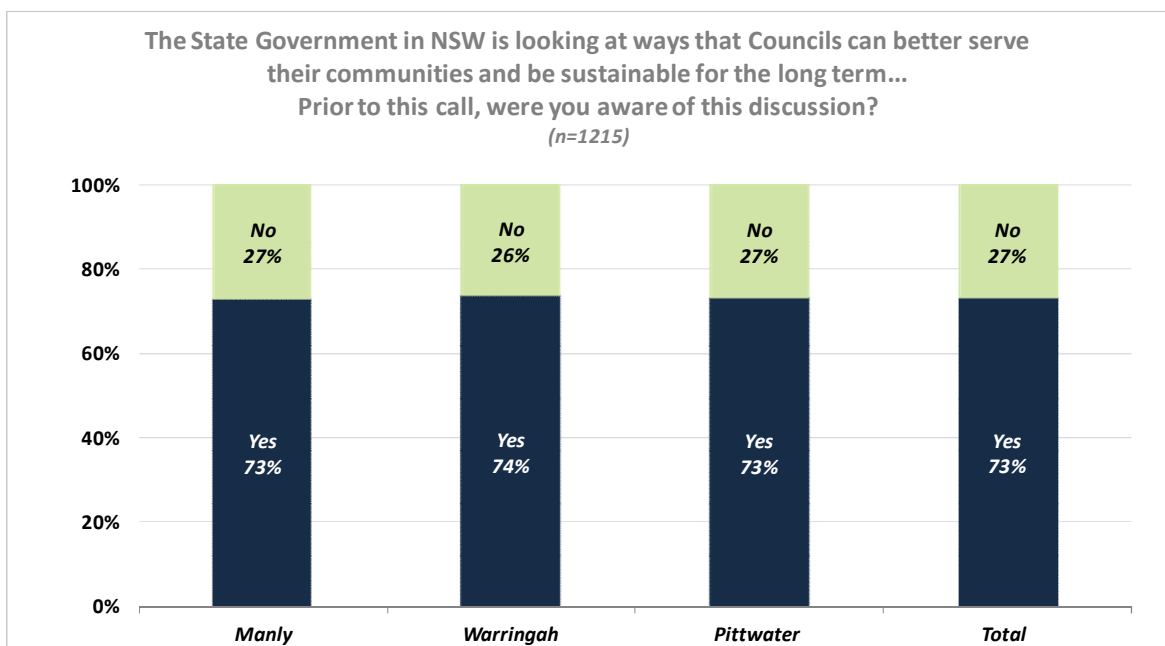
Part 3: Awareness of, and interest in FFF

Council was also interested in the levels of awareness and interest in the Fit for the Future program.

Prior to these questions, respondents were told that: **“As you may know, the State Government in NSW is looking at ways that Councils can better serve their communities and be sustainable for the long term. This includes amalgamations, creating a new council, or other ideas.”**

They were then asked if, prior to the call, they had been aware of this discussion.

Graph 3.1: Prior to this call, were you aware of the (Fit for the Future) discussion?

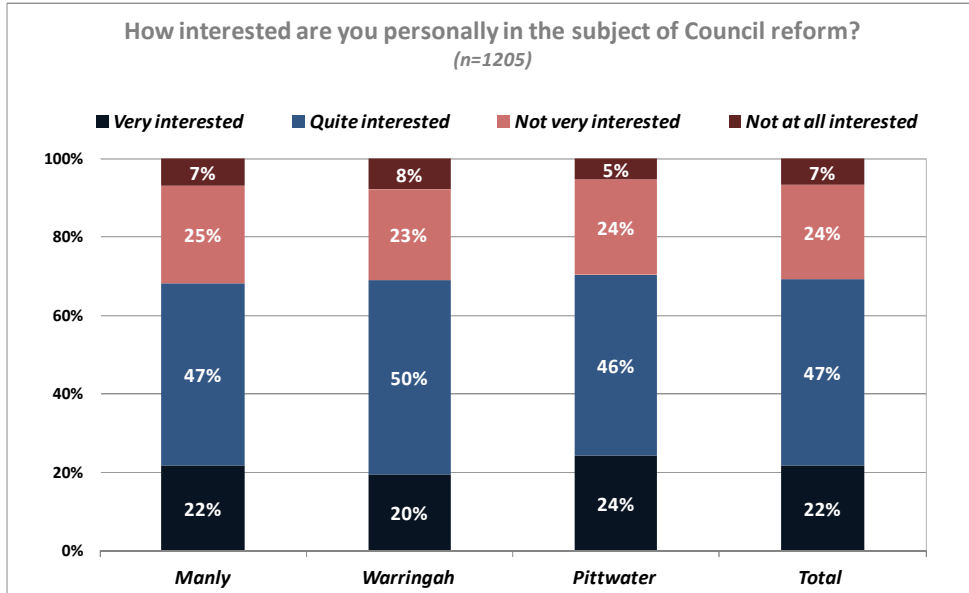


Just under three-quarters of respondents claimed awareness of this discussion, a proportion that was consistent by LGA. However there were big differences by other demographic groupings:

- 79 per cent of ratepayers were aware, compared to 50 per cent of non-ratepayers;
- 80 per cent of those aged 40-59, and 89 per cent of those aged 60-plus claimed awareness, compared to 54 per cent of respondents 18-39; and
- 79 per cent of males said they were aware, compared to 68 per cent of females.

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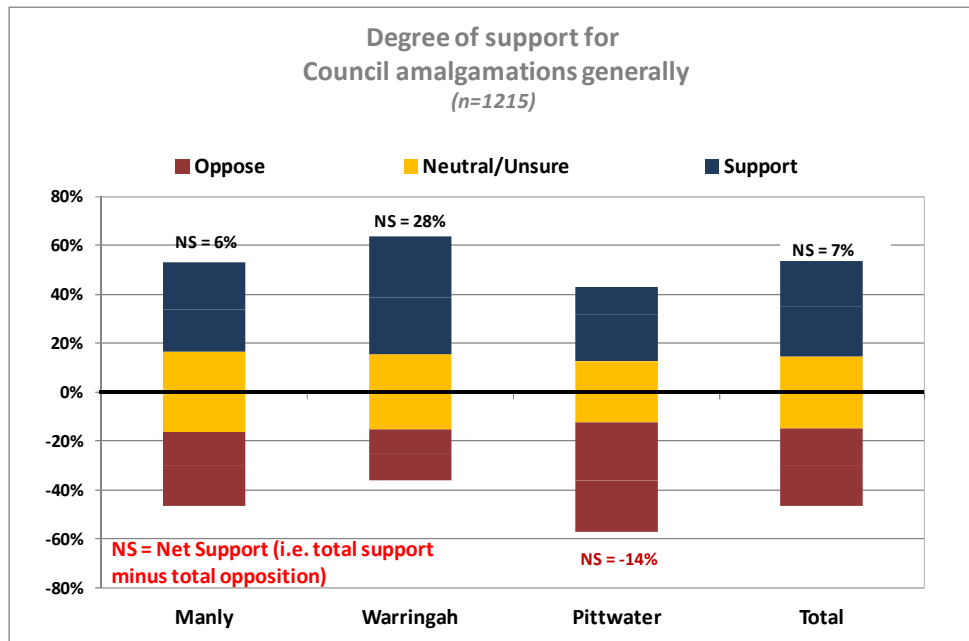
Graph 3.2: And how interested are you personally in the subject of Council reform?



The total proportion of people claiming to be “very” or “quite” interested in the subject of Council reform was again almost identical between the LGAs, at approximately 70 per cent each. As with the previous question, interest was significantly stronger among ratepayers, males, and older residents.

The very last question in the survey asked respondents their general view on Council amalgamations³. This is shown in Graph 3.3, below, with “NS” representing the net support scores⁴:

Graph 3.3: To what extent do you support or oppose Council amalgamations generally?



³ This question was asked last to avoid biasing response on the Northern Beaches-specific amalgamation questions.

⁴ i.e. Total proportion strongly or slightly supportive, less the proportion strongly or slightly opposed

Table 3.1: Summary of support scores

Statement:	LGA	Strongly oppose	Slightly oppose	Neutral/ Unsure	Slightly support	Strongly support	Mean	Net support
To what extent do you support or oppose Council amalgamations generally?	Manly	13.8%	16.7%	32.5%	17.5%	19.5%	3.12	6%
	Warringah	9.5%	11.2%	31.0%	22.9%	25.4%	3.44	28%
	Pittwater	23.5%	21.0%	25.3%	19.3%	11.0%	2.73	-14%
	TOTAL	15.5%	16.3%	29.6%	19.9%	18.7%	3.10	7%

(N.B. Cells marked blue indicate a statistically significant difference above the overall mean. Those marked in pink show a statistically significant difference below the overall mean.)

This indicates that in both Manly and Warringah LGAs, the balance of residents favour amalgamations generally. In Manly the proportions supportive and opposed were similar (at 37 and 31 per cent respectively). In Warringah, some 48 per cent supported amalgamations whereas 21 per cent were opposed.

However in Pittwater 30 per cent supported amalgamations generally and 44 per cent were opposed.

In Warringah and Manly LGAs, almost one-third of those surveyed were unsure or had no opinion on council amalgamations generally. Statistically, this proportion was significantly lower in Pittwater, at 25 per cent.

Among all respondents 39 per cent were supportive, 32 per cent opposed and the balance neutral or unsure. Excluding this neutral/unsure group, support split 55/45 in favour of amalgamations generally.

Table 3.2: Support scores for Council amalgamations (generally) by age and gender

Statement	Age/ Gender		Strongly oppose	Slightly oppose	Neutral/ Unsure	Slightly support	Strongly support	Mean	Net support
To what extent do you support or oppose Council amalgamations generally?	Age	18-39	7.0%	20.1%	44.3%	17.6%	10.9%	3.05	1%
		40-59	16.0%	14.9%	21.8%	22.5%	24.8%	3.25	16%
		60+	26.4%	12.8%	20.1%	19.5%	21.3%	2.96	2%
	Gender	Male	11.1%	16.2%	21.7%	25.6%	25.4%	3.38	24%
		Female	19.5%	16.3%	36.8%	14.8%	12.5%	2.84	-9%

Meanwhile support was significantly stronger among males than females, at 51 per cent (across all three LGAs) compared to just 27 per cent. This was partially because women were more likely than men to be neutral or unsure, at 37 and 22 per cent respectively.

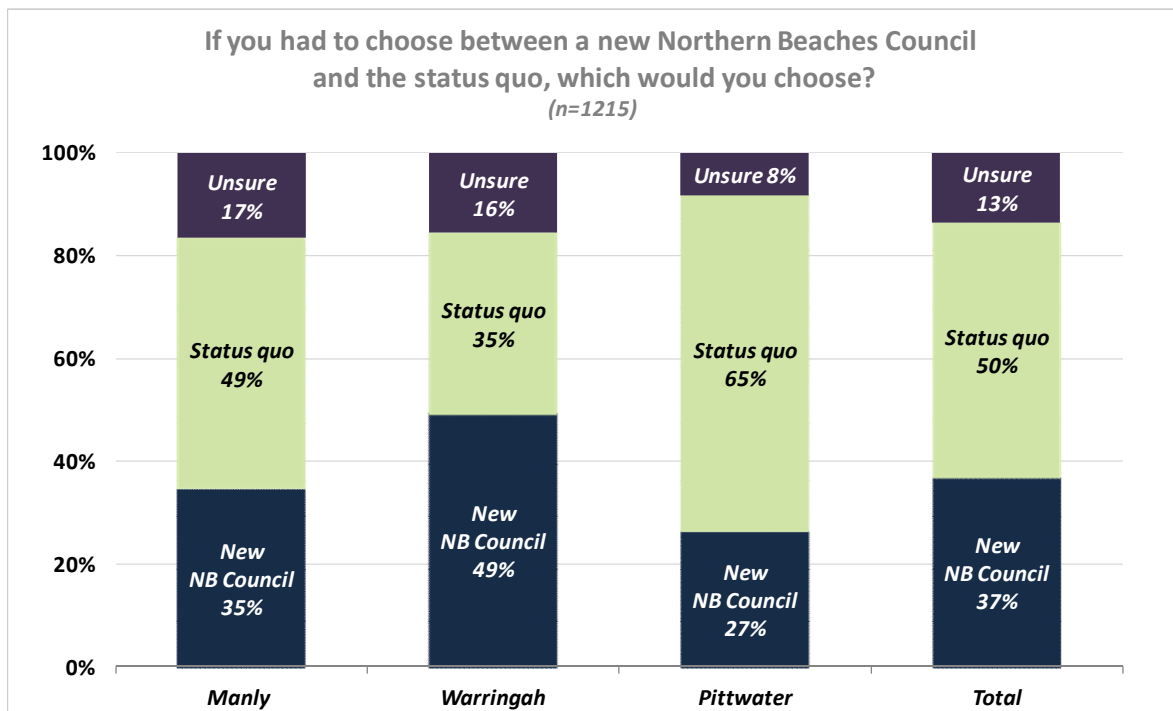
Also as shown in Table 3.2, overall support for amalgamations rose with age. However this was largely because almost half of those aged 18-39 (i.e. 44 per cent) were neutral or unsure. Net support was highest among respondents aged 40-59.

Part 4: Opinions regarding a new Northern Beaches Council

As a preface to the next phase of questions, respondents were told that “For residents on the northern beaches, there are two main options being discussed. One is a new Northern Beaches Council covering Palm Beach to Manly. The other is to maintain the status quo - that is, keep the three existing northern beaches councils in their present form.”

They were then asked to nominate which of these two options they preferred:

Graph 4.1: If you had to choose between a new Northern Beaches Council and the status quo, which would you choose?



As shown in Graph 4.1, there were significant differences in opinion between the three LGAs. Warringah residents were most supportive of a single Northern Beaches council (NBC), with 49 per cent preferring the NBC and 35 per cent the status quo. There was also solid support in Manly (35 per cent supporting NBC and 49 per cent status quo). However Pittwater residents favoured the status quo over a new NBC, with 65 and 27 per cent support respectively.

Support for the status quo was significantly stronger among older respondents (with 56 per cent of those aged 60-plus opting against change, compared to 47 per cent of respondents aged 18-39) and females (at 56 and 45 per cent respectively).

Table 4.1: Preference for new Northern Beaches Council vs. status quo and unsure, by LGA and stated level of interest in local government reform

New Northern Beaches Council vs. Status Quo by LGA and level of interest in Council Reform			Interest x 2		Total
			Interested	Not interested	
Manly	New Northern Beaches Council		111	29	140
			40.2%	22.5%	34.6%
	Status quo		109	89	198
			39.5%	69.0%	48.9%
	Unsure		56	11	67
		20.3%	8.5%	16.5%	
Total			276	129	405
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Warringah	New Northern Beaches Council		147	50	197
			52.9%	40.7%	49.1%
	Status quo		87	53	140
			31.3%	43.1%	34.9%
	Unsure		44	20	64
		15.8%	16.3%	16.0%	
Total			278	123	401
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Pittwater	New Northern Beaches Council		80	31	111
			28.0%	25.4%	27.2%
	Status quo		188	77	265
			65.7%	63.1%	65.0%
	Unsure		18	14	32
		6.3%	11.5%	7.8%	
Total			286	122	408
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(N.B. Cells marked blue indicate a statistically significant difference above the overall percentage. Those marked in pink show a statistically significant difference below the overall percentage.)

Table 4.1, above, indicates that within the Manly and Warringah LGAs those residents with a higher level of interest in the subject of local government reform were significantly more likely to support the new Northern beaches Council than those with a low level of interest.

Pittwater LGA residents however were consistent in their views regardless of interest level.

Interestingly, there was no difference in views - in any of the three LGAs - depending on whether or not the respondent had contacted their council (for any reason other than paying rates) within the past 12 months.

Meanwhile Table 4.2, below, shows the relationship between support for a new Northern Beaches Council or the status quo, and support/opposition to council mergers generally:

Table 4.2: Relationship between support for new Northern Beaches Council, and support for amalgamations generally

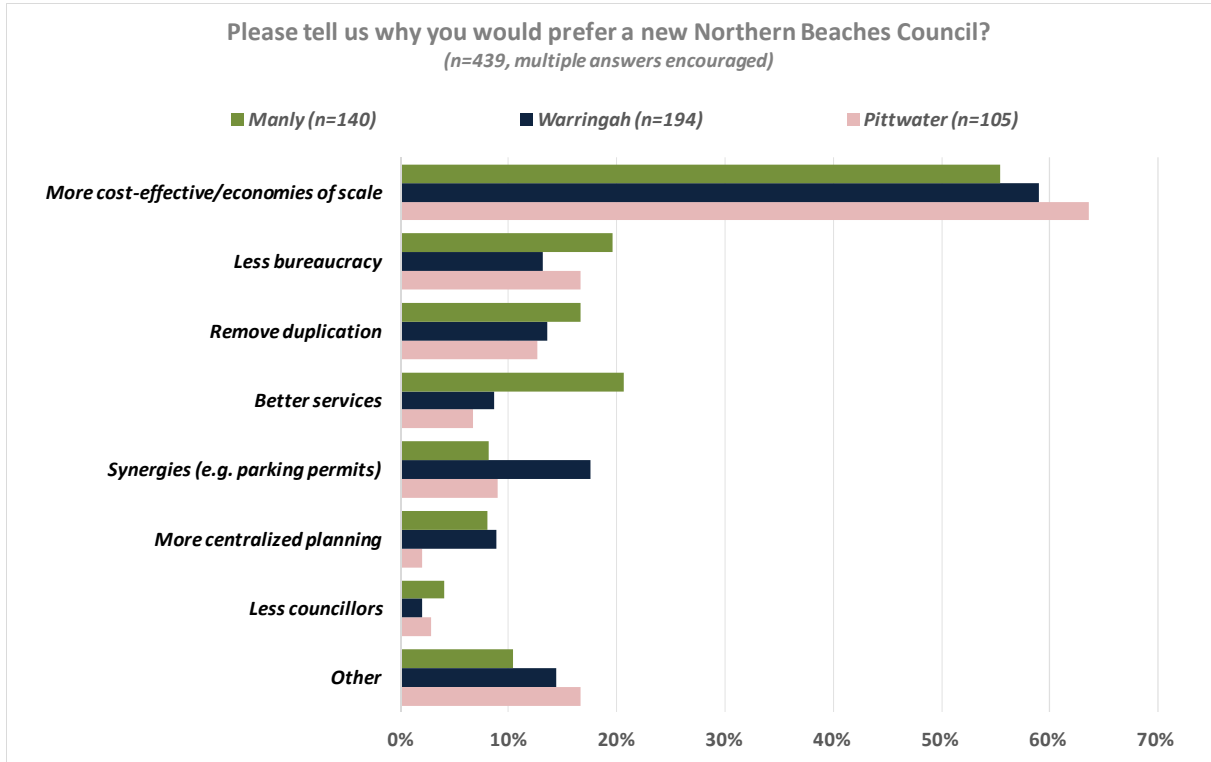
Support for new Northern Beaches Council vs. status quo			Oppose/support council amalgamations generally			Total
			Oppose	Neutral/unsure	Support	
Manly	New Northern Beaches Council		1	24	115	140
			.8%	18.2%	76.2%	34.6%
		Status quo	110	62	26	198
		90.2%	47.0%	17.2%	48.9%	
Manly	Unsure		11	46	10	67
			9.0%	34.8%	6.6%	16.5%
		Total	122	132	151	405
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Warringah	New Northern Beaches Council		5	30	163	198
			6.0%	24.2%	84.0%	49.3%
		Status quo	66	62	12	140
		78.6%	50.0%	6.2%	34.8%	
Warringah	Unsure		13	32	19	64
			15.5%	25.8%	9.8%	15.9%
		Total	84	124	194	402
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Pittwater	New Northern Beaches Council		9	13	89	111
			5.1%	12.5%	70.1%	27.1%
		Status quo	165	73	27	265
		92.7%	70.2%	21.3%	64.8%	
Pittwater	Unsure		4	18	11	33
			2.2%	17.3%	8.7%	8.1%
		Total	178	104	127	409
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(N.B. Cells marked blue indicate a statistically significant difference above the overall percentage. Those marked in pink show a statistically significant difference below the overall percentage.)

As one might expect, it shows a strong and direct correlation between support for council mergers, and support for a new Northern beaches Council (and vice versa). This is consistent among all three LGAs under study.

Respondents (excluding those unsure) were then asked to briefly explain why they preferred their chosen option. These open-ended responses have been coded, and themes are shown in Graphs 4.2a and 4.2b:

Graph 4.2a: Can you briefly explain why you prefer this option? (for those preferring new council)



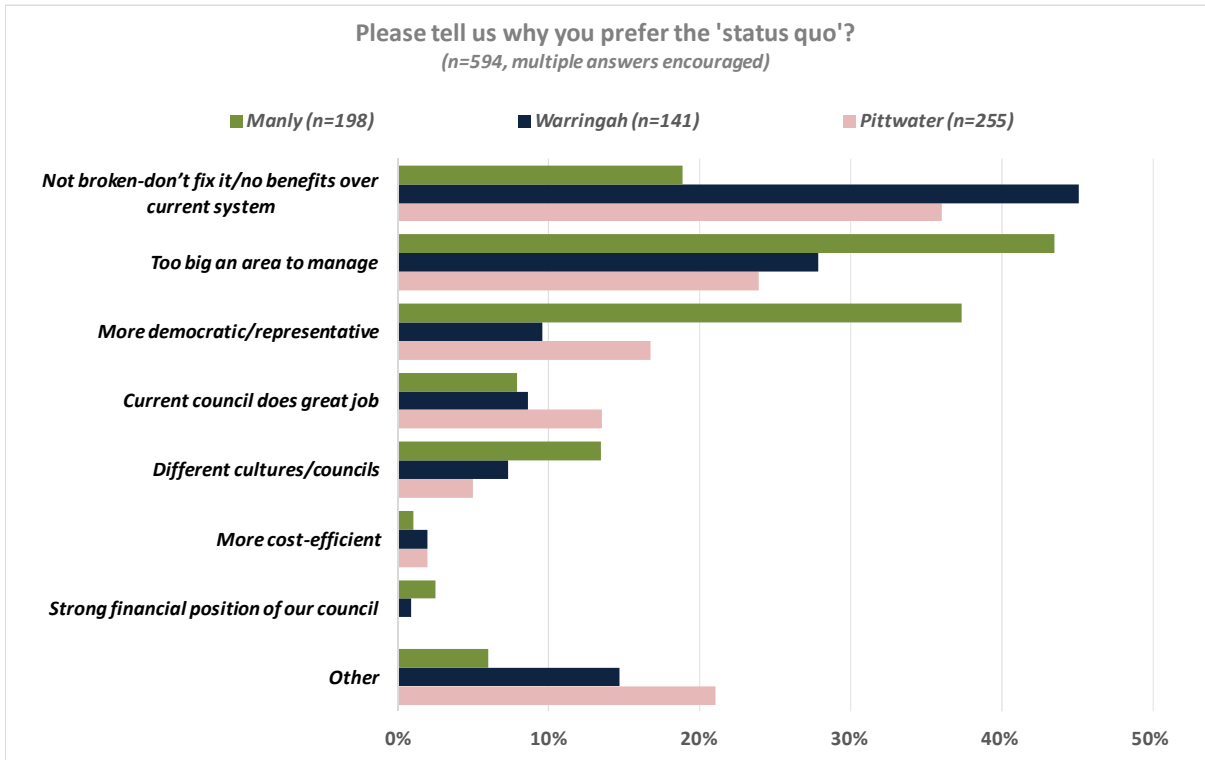
Of those preferring a new council, the overwhelming reason given (in all three LGAs) was a perception that a single council would be more cost-effective and/or enjoy greater economies of scale than the three current councils.

Other main reasons given were a reduction in bureaucracy and a removal of duplication. Manly residents in particular felt it would lead to better services, while Warringah residents noted the potential for synergies between the three councils – particularly in relation to parking permits.

Other themes included the benefits of centralised planning, and of reducing councillor numbers.

(Continued next page)

Graph 4.2b: Can you briefly explain why you prefer this option? (for those preferring status quo)



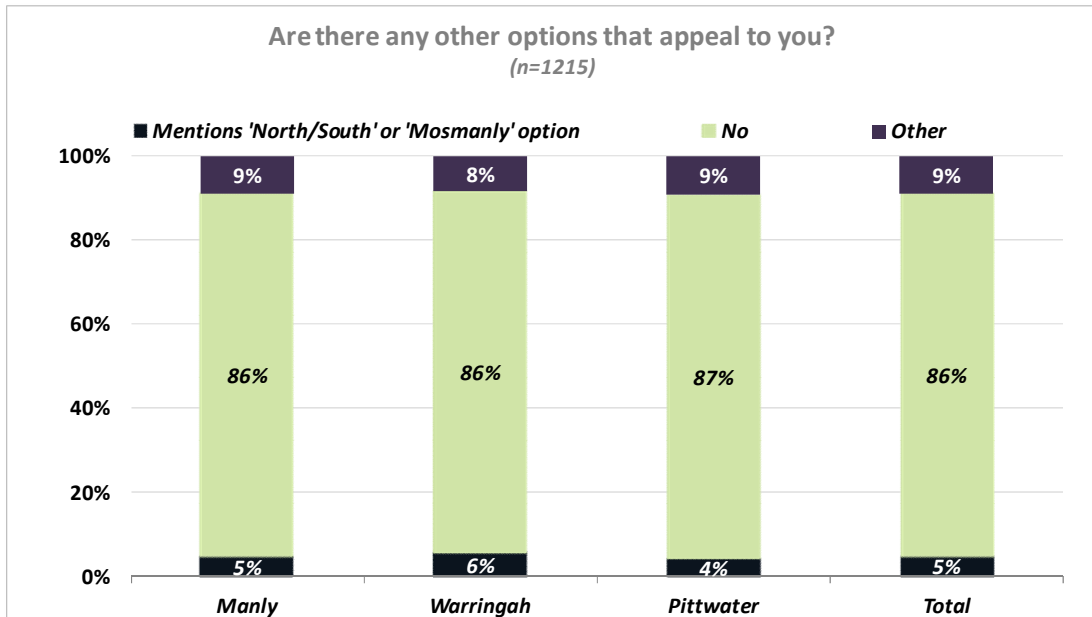
Among proponents of maintaining the status quo, the major argument – particularly among Warringah and Pittwater residents – was that “if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it”.

Among those Manly respondents opposed to change, the major reasons were that a Northern beaches Council would be too big to manage, and that the current system was more representative of local residents.

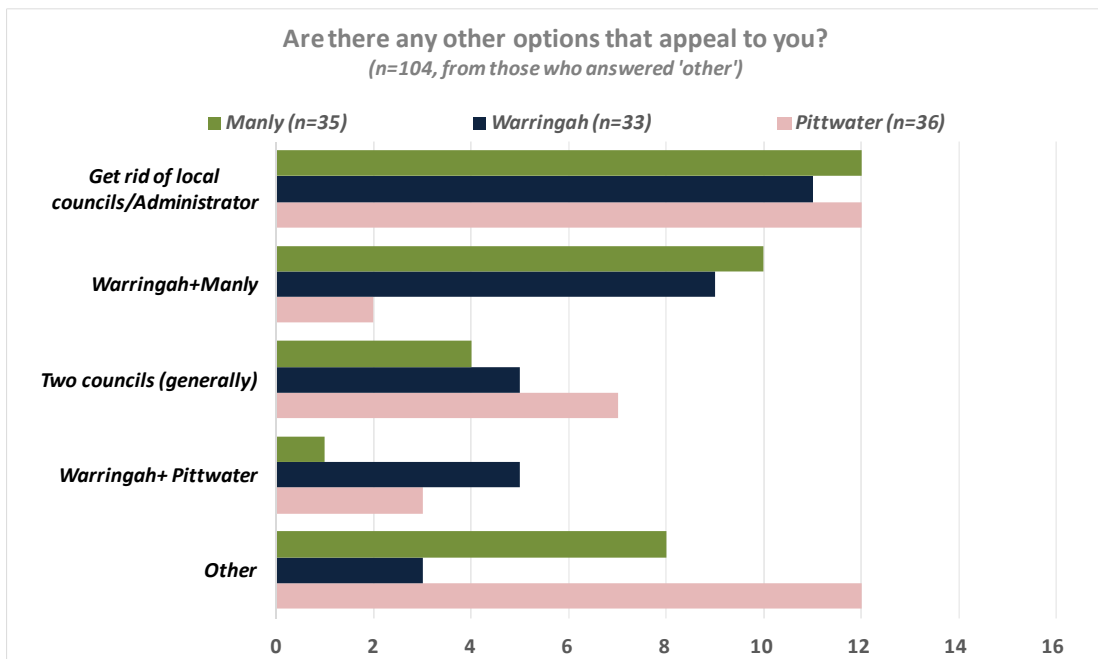
A number of residents felt their current council already did a good job, or that the cultures were quite different between the different council areas. A minority argued the existing boundaries was more cost-efficient, and/or that change might adversely impact the strong financial position of their council.

In a follow-up question, respondents were also asked (unprompted) if there were any other reform models that appealed to them. The results are shown in Graph 4.3a, with “other” categorised in Graph 4.3b, overleaf:

Graph 4.3a: Are there any other options that appeal to you? (unprompted)



Graph 4.3b: Breakdown of “other”



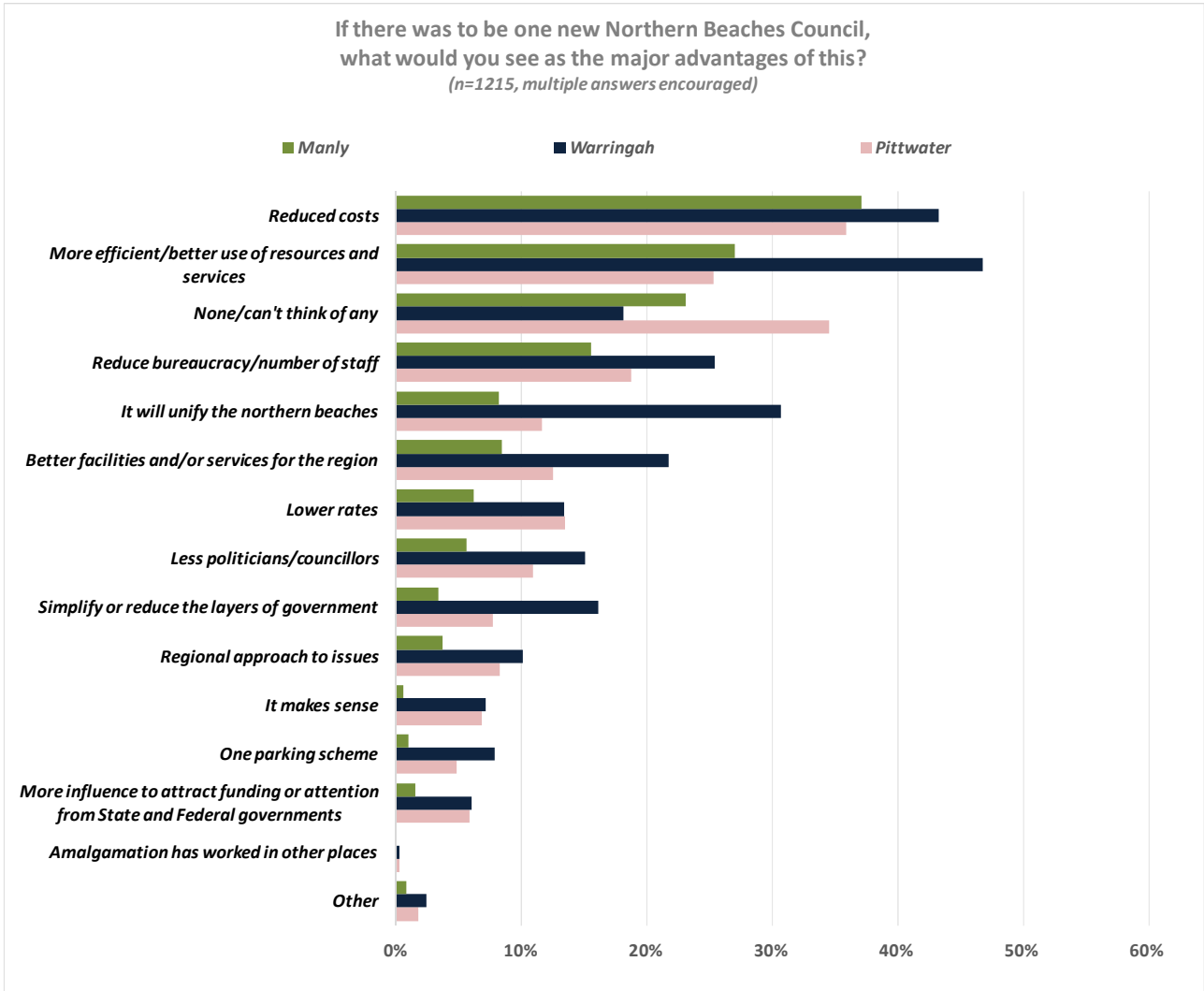
N.B. Due to small sample size (n=104), results shown as numbers rather than percentages

Approximately 14 per cent of those surveyed proposed a different model. Five per cent mentioned the so-called “Mosmanly” or “North/South” options, while 9 per cent had a different idea again.

The most popular of these (35 responses, or 3 per cent of the sample) related to the abolition of local councils or the replacements of councillors with administrators. However there was also limited support for a merger between the Manly and Warringah LGAs.

Respondents were then asked, in another unprompted question, what they thought would be the major advantages and disadvantages of having a new Northern Beaches Council. Looking first at the advantages:

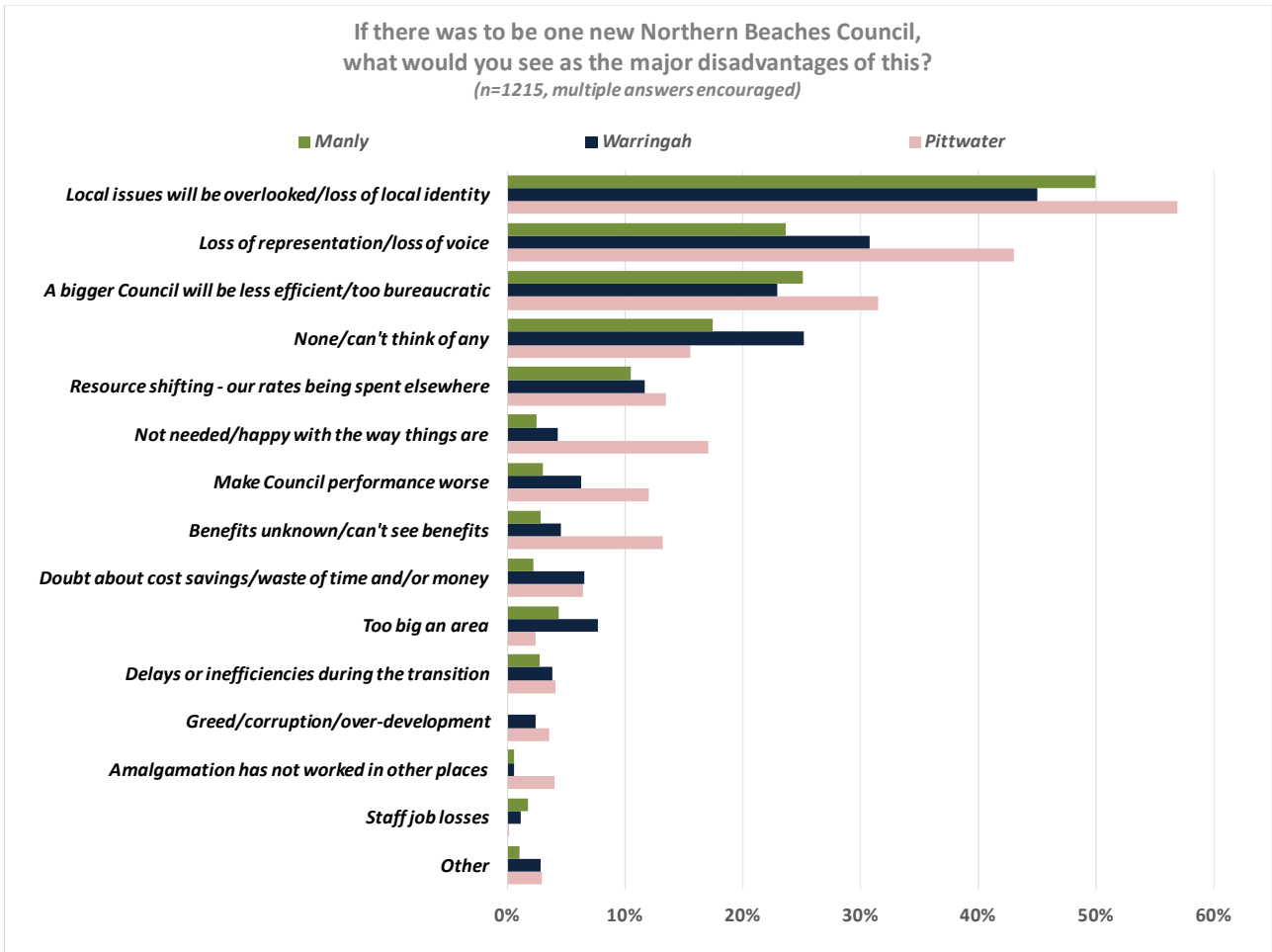
Graph 4.4: If there was to be one new Northern Beaches Council, what would you see as the major advantages of this? (unprompted)



Over one-third of respondents, across all LGAs, believed that a single council would mean reduced costs. And more than one-quarter each felt it would lead to a more efficient use of council resources. (Reducing bureaucracy and staff numbers was also a popular choice.) And almost a third of Warringah residents felt having one council would help unify the northern beaches.

However approximately 20 per cent of Manly and Warringah respondents, and 36 per cent of those in Pittwater, couldn't think of any advantages to a single council.

Graph 4.5: And what would you see as the major disadvantages? (unprompted)



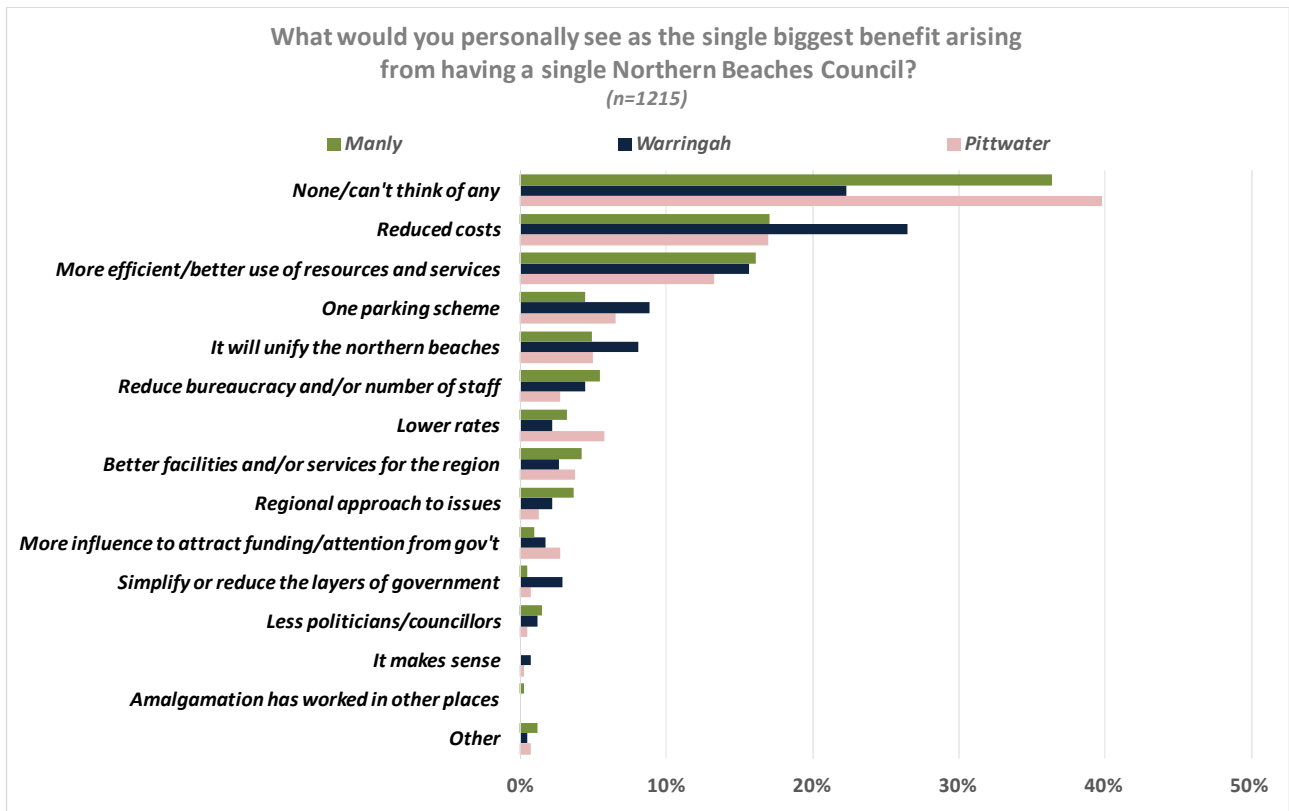
The major perceived disadvantage – voiced by almost half of Manly- and Warringah-based respondents, and almost 60 per cent of those in Pittwater – was that a single Northern Beaches Council would mean a loss of local identity and/or that local issues would be overlooked. (Note however that this result is potentially at odds with the finding of Graph 1.2, which indicated that what people value about living in their LGA is largely what they value about living on the northern beaches generally.)

Less representation was also a dominant theme, particularly among Pittwater residents. And around a quarter of those surveyed were concerned that a single council would be more rather than less bureaucratic. The possibility of rate-shifting was raised by around one in ten respondents.

Conversely, just under one in five, and one in four Warringah residents, couldn't think of any disadvantages.

Respondents were next asked (again unprompted) what would be the single biggest benefit to them personally, and their single biggest personal concern, from having a single Northern Beaches Council. Their responses are shown in Graphs 4.6 and 4.7, below:

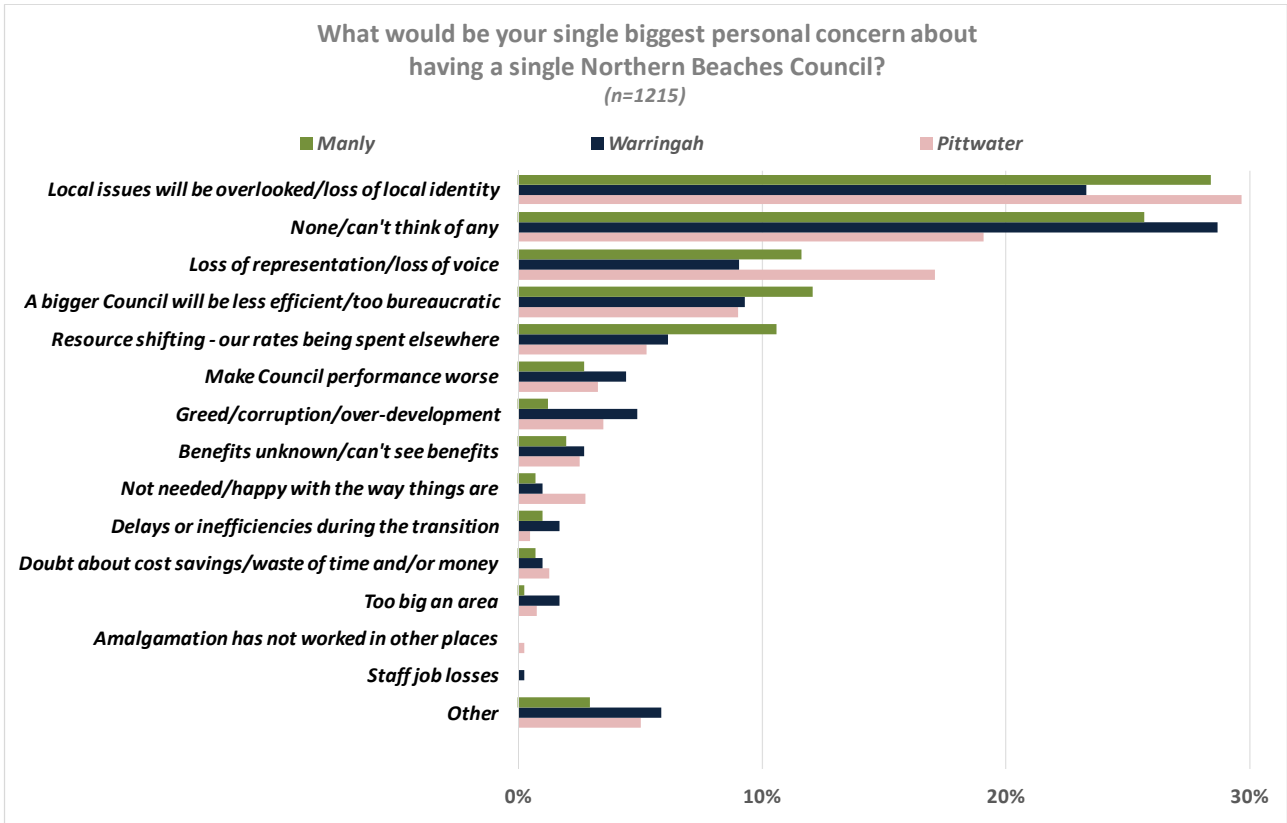
Graph 4.6: What would you personally see as the single biggest benefit arising from having a single Northern Beaches Council? (unprompted)



As shown in Graph 4.6, many respondents struggled to think of personal benefits from a single council. Of those that could, reduced costs and more efficient services were seen as the key benefits. Around 8 per cent saw advantages in a single northern beaches parking scheme, while a similar proportion felt it would help unify the northern beaches.

(Continued next page)

Graph 4.7: And what would be your single biggest personal concern about having a single Northern Beaches Council? (unprompted)



The major personal concern from having a single Northern Beaches Council was loss of local identity and/or the possibility of local issues being overlooked. Associated with this, about 10 per cent of Manly and Warringah residents – and almost 20 per cent of those in Pittwater – were concerned about a loss of local representation.

Conversely, one in four respondents had no personal concerns with the single council concept.

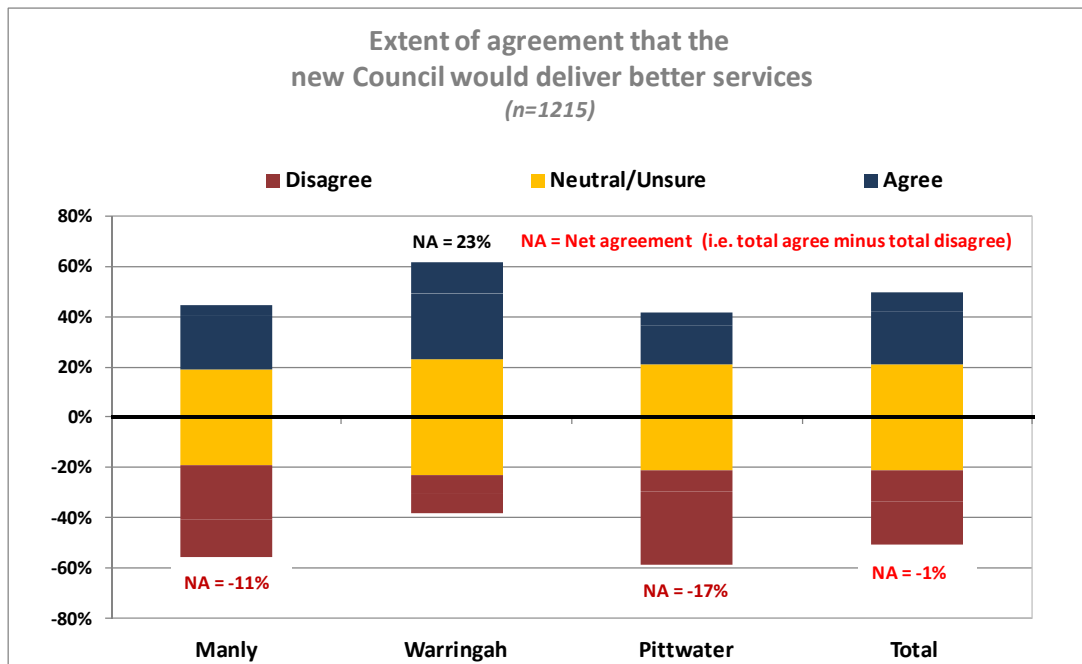
The survey concluded with respondents being asked to what extent they would agree or disagree with four different statements relating to having a single Northern Beaches Council:

- Its ability to deliver better services;
- Whether it would be harder to adequately represent residents;
- Its impact on financial sustainability; and
- Its ability to reflect the unique characteristics of each LGA.

Results for each of the four statements are shown in Graphs 4.8a to 4.8d, below:

N.B. Agree/strongly agree scores and half of all neutral scores are shown above the dark black (zero) line, with disagree/strongly disagree and half of the neutral scores shown below it. Hence the higher the bar sits in the graph, the more likely those respondents are to agree with that statement. “NA”, or net agreement, indicates the proportion of respondents scoring agree or strongly agree less the proportion scoring disagree or strongly disagree. The full list of scores is shown in Table 4.1, immediately following the three graphs.

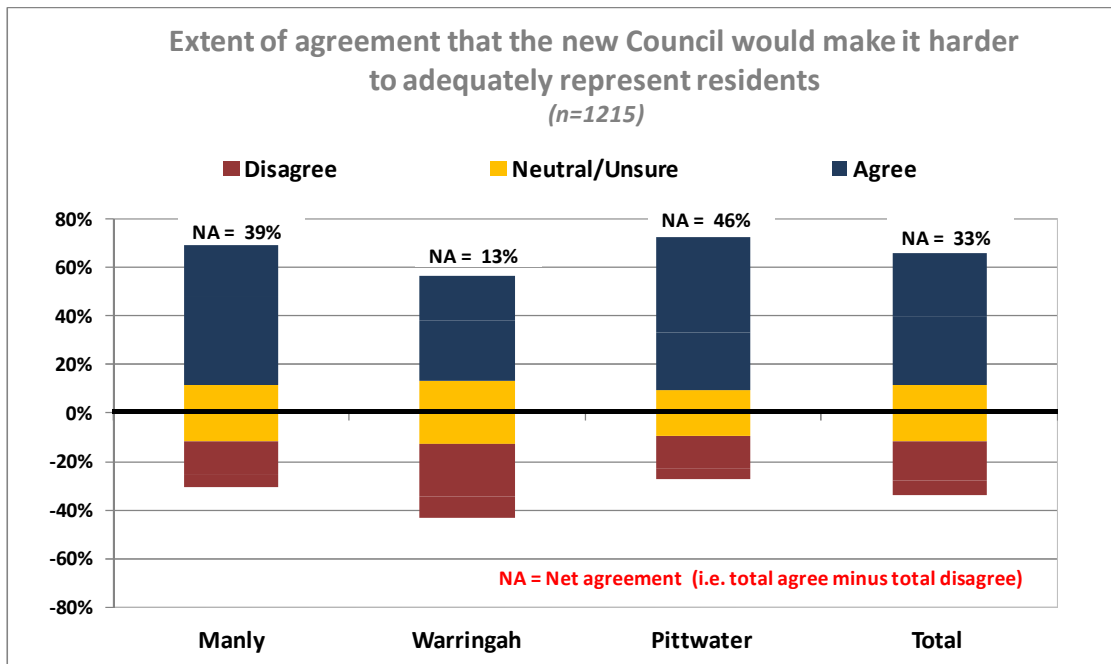
Graph 4.8a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that that a new Northern Beaches Council would deliver better services?



This indicates that Warringah respondents felt that a new Northern Beaches Council would deliver better services. However Manly and Pittwater residents were less convinced on this score.

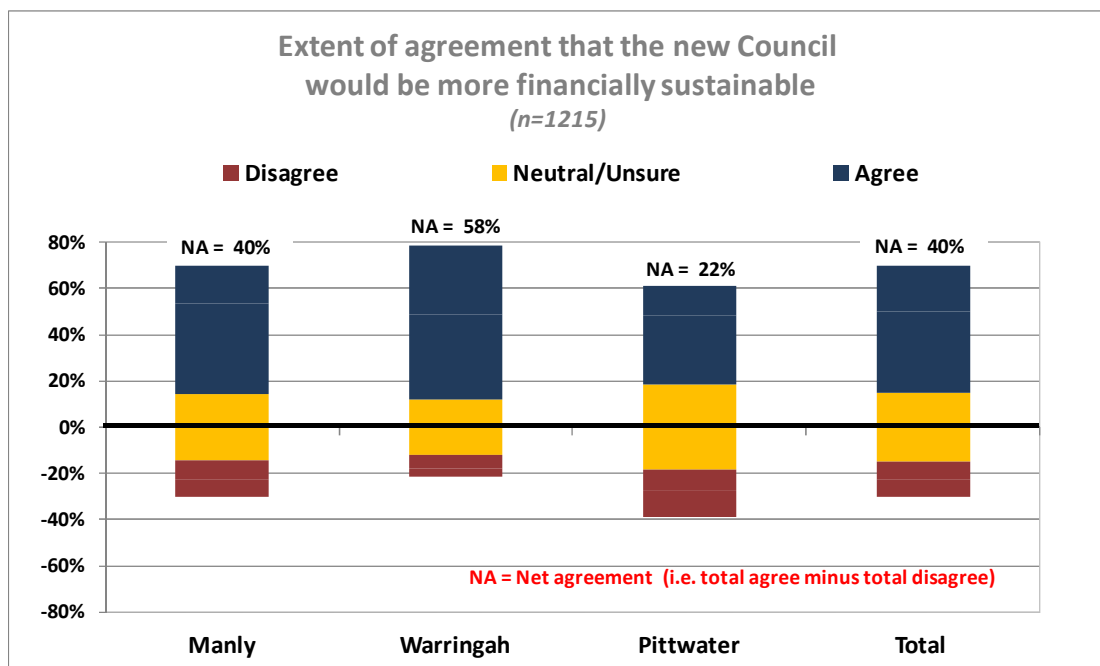
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Graph 4.8b: To what extent do you agree or disagree that that a new Northern Beaches Council would make it harder to adequately represent residents?



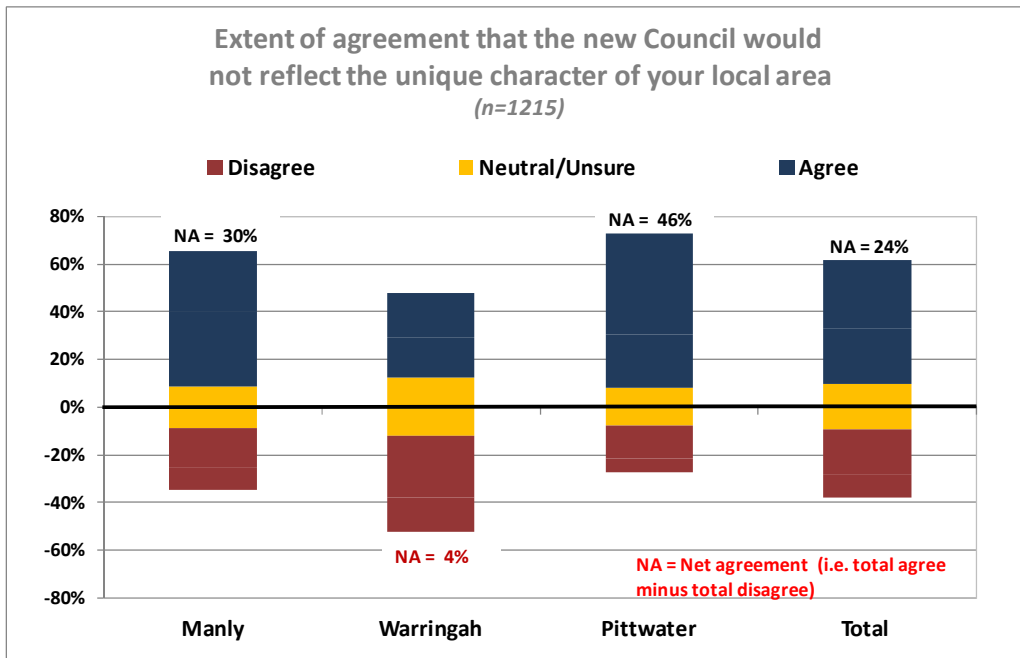
On balance, residents from all three LGA felt that a new Council would make it harder to represent local residents. This view was particularly strong among Pittwater respondents.

Graph 4.8c: To what extent do you agree or disagree that that a new Northern Beaches Council would be more financially sustainable?



Again, respondents in all three LGAs believed, on balance, that having one Northern Beaches Council would be more financially sustainable. This view was particularly strong among Manly and Warringah residents.

Graph 4.8d: To what extent do you agree or disagree that a new Northern Beaches Council would not reflect the unique character of your local area?



Manly and Pittwater residents were in strong net agreement that a new Northern Beaches Council may struggle to reflect the unique character of their local area. However Warringah-based respondents did not see this as such an issue.

Detailed results are shown in Table 4.1, next page:

(Continued next page)

Table 4.3: Summary of agreement scores

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to a new Northern Beaches council?	LGA	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral /Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Net agreement
The new Council would deliver better services	Manly	14.6%	22.0%	37.6%	21.5%	4.2%	2.79	-11%
	Warringah	8.0%	7.3%	45.9%	26.1%	12.7%	3.28	23%
	Pittwater	29.0%	8.5%	42.0%	15.5%	5.0%	2.59	-17%
	TOTAL	17.1%	12.6%	41.8%	21.1%	7.3%	2.89	-1%
The new Council would make it harder to adequately represent residents	Manly	4.7%	14.1%	23.5%	36.3%	21.5%	3.56	39%
	Warringah	8.8%	21.7%	26.0%	25.1%	18.5%	3.23	13%
	Pittwater	4.3%	13.3%	19.3%	23.8%	39.5%	3.81	46%
	TOTAL	5.9%	16.4%	22.9%	28.4%	26.4%	3.53	33%
The new Council would be more financially sustainable	Manly	7.7%	8.2%	28.7%	38.9%	16.6%	3.49	40%
	Warringah	3.4%	6.1%	23.5%	37.2%	29.8%	3.84	57%
	Pittwater	11.8%	9.0%	36.8%	30.0%	12.5%	3.22	22%
	TOTAL	7.6%	7.7%	29.6%	35.4%	19.7%	3.52	40%
The new Council would not reflect the unique character of your local area	Manly	9.7%	16.6%	17.1%	31.4%	25.2%	3.46	30%
	Warringah	14.4%	25.6%	24.4%	17.1%	18.5%	3.00	-4%
	Pittwater	5.5%	13.8%	15.8%	22.8%	42.3%	3.82	46%
	TOTAL	9.9%	18.7%	19.1%	23.7%	28.6%	3.42	24%

(N.B. Cells marked blue indicate a statistically significant difference above the overall mean. Those marked in pink show a statistically significant difference below the overall mean.)

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Version 2.1 Warringah_Council_2014

Last modified:27/10/2014 @ 3:23 PM

- Q1. Hi my name is (name), and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of a local council. We are currently surveying residents in your area about an important local issue. The survey takes no longer than 8 minutes, we are not trying to sell anything, and any answers you provide would be confidential. Would you be willing to assist us with a brief research survey this afternoon/evening?

Offer a CALL BACK. If needed COULD YOU TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT LIVING ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES, THE SERVICES THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDES AND WHAT YOU MIGHT LIKE FOR THE FUTURE. Ensure resident is aged 18 or above - if not, ask if there is an adult available to complete survey. If respondent wants to check survey is official, ask them to call 9942 2111 during business hours and speak to Fiona van Dort or Kate Lewis. Then arrange callback.

Yes	1
No	2

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

- Q2. Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening.

End

- Q3. Thanks, that's great. Can I just confirm which local government area you live in?

UNPROMPTED. If necessary, ask which their local council is or where they would go to pay their rates or had a council issue. Otherwise ask for their suburb and supply their LGA based on supplied list. If OTHER, thank and terminate.

Manly	1	
Warringah	2	
Pittwater	3	
Other	666	TERMINATE

Q3

Q4. I just have a few quick qualifying questions. Firstly, are you a local Councillor or Council employee within the Northern Beaches area?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	2	

Q4

Answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q4 is SELECTED

Q5. I'm sorry but in that case you don't qualify for this survey. Thank you for your time and have a great afternoon.

End

Q6. And have you lived on the Northern Beaches for at least the last 6 months?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	2	Go to Q5

Q6

Q7. And into which of the following age ranges do you fall?

PROMPTED except refused. If refused, thank and terminate.

18-39	1	
40-59	2	
60+	3	
Refused	888	TERMINATE

Q7

Q8. Gender?

Don't ask

Male	1	
Female	2	

Q8

Q9. And which suburb do you live in?

Answer If Attribute "Manly" from Q3 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED. Manly LGA(If not listed ask which suburb their nearest to)

Balgowlah	1
Balgowlah Heights	2
Clontarf	3
Fairlight	4
Manly	5
Seaforth	6

Q9

Q10. And which suburb do you live in?

Answer If Attribute "Warringah" from Q3 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED. Warringah LGA(if not listed ask which suburb their nearest to)

Allambie/Alambie Heights	1
Beacon Hill	2
Belrose	3
Brookvale	4
Collaroy	5
Collaroy Plateau	6
Cottage Point	7
Cromer	8
Curl Curl	9
Davidson	10
Dee Why	11
Duffys Forest	12
Forestville	13
Frenchs Forest	14
Freshwater	15
Killarney Heights	16
Manly Vale	17
Narrabeen	18
Narraweena	19
North Balgowlah	20
North Curl Curl	21
North Manly	22
Oxford Falls	23
Queenscliff	24
Terrey Hills	25
Wheeler Heights	26

Q10

Q11. And which suburb do you live in?

Answer If Attribute "Pittwater" from Q3 is SELECTED

UNPROMPTED. Pittwater LGA (if not listed ask which suburb nearest to)

Avalon	1
Bayview	2
Bilgola	3
Bilgola Plateau	4
Careel Bay	5
Church Point	6
Clareville	7
Coasters Retreat	8
Currawong Beach	9
Elanora Heights	10
Elvina Bay	11
Ingleside	12
Lovett Bay	13
Mackerel Beach	14
McCarrs Creek	15
Mona Vale	16
Morning Bay	17
Newport	18
Narrabeen North	19
Palm Beach	20
Scotland Island	21
The Basin	22
Warriewood	23
Whale Beach	24

Q11

Q12. May I have your first name for the survey?

Type NA if not willing to give name

Q12

Q13. Thanks [Q12]. Are you a ratepayer within the [Q3] Council area?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	2

Q13

Q14. To kick things off [Q12], can you briefly tell me what you value most about living on the Northern Beaches?

UNPROMPTED - tick any that apply, or write as OTHER

Beaches	1	Q14_1
Natural environment	2	Q14_2
Bushland	3	Q14_3
Sense of community/friendly place	4	Q14_4
A safe place to live	5	Q14_5
Good place for families and children	6	Q14_6
Lots of community events	7	Q14_7
Sport and recreation opportunities (incl surfing)	8	Q14_8
Balanced lifestyle	9	Q14_9
Active lifestyle	10	Q14_10
Parks, playgrounds, walking trails and open spaces	11	Q14_11
Access to natural parks	12	Q14_12
Access to rural/peri-urban lifestyle	13	Q14_13
Access to recreational waterways (Narrabeen Lagoon, Manly dam etc.)	14	Q15_14
OTHER		Q14_O

Q15. And similarly, what you value most about living in the [Q3] area?

UNPROMPTED - tick any that apply, or write as OTHER

Access to the city	1	Q15_1
Cosmopolitan lifestyle	2	Q15_2
Plenty to do at night/weekends	3	Q15_3
Great restaurants/cafes/bars	4	Q15_4
Access to recreational waterways (e.g. Narrabeen Lagoon/Manly Dam)	5	Q15_5
Access to Sydney Harbour	6	Q15_6
Access to more remote/less populated areas	7	Q15_7
Quieter beaches	8	Q15_8
Areas of affordable housing	9	Q15_9
Good public transport (incl ferries)	10	Q15_10
Quiet lifestyle	11	Q15_11
Remote/less access from wider Sydney	12	Q15_12
Access to Pittwater Bay	13	Q15_13
Great shopping (e.g. Warringah Mall)	14	Q15_14
Village feel	15	Q15_15
Same as Northern Beaches answer	16	Q15_16
Nothing much	17	Q15_17
OTHER		Q15_O

Q16. Now [Q12], have you contacted your Council over the past 12 months for any reason apart from paying rates?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	666

Q16

Q17. And have you contacted any of your elected councillors or the mayor over the past 12 months?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	666

Q17

Q18. And using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent, how would you rate your local Council on the following?

Note DON'T KNOW option if needed

	1 Very poor	2	3 Neutral	4	5 Excellent	Don't know
The quality of services it delivers to local residents	1	2	3	4	5	999
Its financial strength	1	2	3	4	5	999
The way it consults with the community	1	2	3	4	5	999

Q18_1

Q18_2

Q18_3

Q19. [Q12], as you may know, the State Government in NSW is looking at ways that Councils can better serve their communities and be sustainable for the long term. This includes amalgamations, creating a new council, or other ideas.

Prior to this call, were you aware of this discussion?

UNPROMPTED. Use NO if unsure.

Yes	1
No	2

Q19

Q20. And how interested are you personally in the subject of Council reform?

PROMPTED

Very interested	1	
Quite interested	2	
Not very interested	3	
Not at all interested	4	

Q20

Q21. For residents on the Northern Beaches, there are two main options being discussed. One is a new Northern Beaches Council covering Palm Beach to Manly. The other is to maintain the status quo - that is keep the three existing northern beaches councils in their present form. Now [Q12], if you had to choose between a new northern beaches council and the status quo, which would you choose?

Repeat options if necessary

New Northern Beaches Council	1	
Status quo	2	
Unsure	666	Go to Q23

Q21

Q22. Can you briefly explain why you prefer the [Q21] option?

PROBE for a response if necessary

Q22

Q23. And are there any other options that appeal to you?

UNPROMPTED

Mentions 'North/South' or 'Mosmanly' option	1	
No	2	Go to Q25
OTHER		

Q23

Q23

Q24. And can you briefly explain why you like that option?

Q24

Q25. Now [Q12], if there was to be one new Northern Beaches Council, what would you see as the major advantages of this?

UNPROMPTED - Tick any that apply or write as OTHER

Reduced costs	1	Q25_1
More efficient/productive/better use of resources and services	2	Q25_2
Better facilities and/or services for the region	3	Q25_3
It makes sense	4	Q25_4
Regional approach to issues (health, crime, public transport etc.)	5	Q25_5
Reduce bureaucracy and reduce number of staff	6	Q25_6
Less politicians/councillors	7	Q25_7
Amalgamation has worked in other places	8	Q25_8
It will unify the northern beaches	9	Q25_9
Lower rates	10	Q25_10
More influence to attract funding or attention from State and Federal governments	11	Q25_11
Simplify or reduce the layers of government	12	Q25_12
None/Can't think of any	13	Q25_13
OTHER		Q25_O

Q26. And what would you see as the major disadvantages?

UNPROMPTED- Tick any that apply or write as OTHER

Benefits unknown/can't see benefits/unnecessary	1	Q26_1
A bigger council will be less efficient/too bureaucratic	2	Q26_2
Not needed/happy with the way things are	3	Q26_3
Make Council performance worse	4	Q26_4
Doubt about cost savings/waste of time and/or money	5	Q26_5
Delays or inefficiencies during the transition	6	Q26_6
Local issues will overlooked/loss of local identity	7	Q26_7
Loss of representation/loss of voice	8	Q26_8
Amalgamation has not worked in other places	9	Q26_9
Resource shifting -our rates being spent elsewhere	10	Q26_10
None/can't think of any	99	Q26_11
OTHER		Q26_O

Q27. What would you see as the single biggest benefit arising from having a single Northern Beaches Council?

UNPROMPTED - one only If unsure what it means, looking at biggest benefit for them personally.

Reduced costs	1
More efficient/better use of resources and services	2
Better facilities and/or services for the region	3
It makes sense	4
Regional approach to issues (health, crime, public transport etc.)	5
Reduce bureaucracy and reduce number of staff	6
Less politicians/councillors	7
Amalgamation has worked in other places	8
It will unify the northern beaches	9
Lower rates	10
More influence to attract funding or attention from State and Federal governments	11
Simplify or reduce the layers of government	12
None/can't think of any	13
OTHER	

Q27

Q28. And what would be your single biggest concern about having a single Northern Beaches Council?

UNPROMPTED - One only. If unsure what it means, looking at biggest concern for them personally.

Benefits unknown/can't see benefits	1
A bigger Council will be less efficient/too bureaucratic	2
Not needed/happy with the way things are	3
Make Council performance worse	4
Doubt about cost savings/waste of time and/or money	5
Delays or inefficiencies during the transition	6
Local issues will be overlooked/loss of local identity	7
Loss of representation/loss of voice	8
Amalgamation has not worked in other places	9
Resource shifting -our rates being spent elsewhere	10
None/can't think of	99
OTHER	

Q28

Q29. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to a new Northern Beaches council? In each case we'll use a 5 point scale, where 1 means you strongly disagree, 3 is neutral or unsure, and 5 means you strongly agree.

PROMPTED - rate each option

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3 Neutral/unsure	4	5 Strongly agree
The new Council would deliver better services	1	2	3	4	5
The new Council would make it harder to adequately represent residents	1	2	3	4	5
The new Council would be more financially sustainable	1	2	3	4	5
The new Council would not reflect the unique character of your local area	1	2	3	4	5

Q29_1

Q29_2

Q29_3

Q29_4

Q30. And finally, to what extent do you support or oppose Council amalgamations generally?

PROMPTED

Strongly oppose	1
Slightly oppose	2
Neutral or unsure	3
Slightly support	4
Strongly support	5

Q30

Q32. Thanks so much [Q12], that is the end of the survey, which has been commissioned by Warringah Council as part of regional studies in response to the State Government review. Did you have any questions or comments about the survey? Thank you for your time. . . . RESEARCHER: Only give out if asked. Contact Warringah Council switch on 9942 2111 and speak to Fiona van Dort or Kate Lewis if they have any queries

End