

Appendix 6.7

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES





'Fit for the Future'
Communication & Community Engagement Report, June 2015

SUMMARY REPORT



1. Overview

Community involvement has played an integral role in the development of Auburn City Council's position. Council has undertaken significant community engagement to date, including engagement of *Micromex Research* to seek community input and feedback via telephone interview. This method was selected as it provides an accurate and robust indicator of the community's attitudes via engagement of an 'effective sample size.'

The following table outlines Council's community engagement program which has informed the development of the Council Merger Proposal:

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	TIMEFRAME
Stage 1	Report to Council	To seek Council's position regarding 'Fit for the Future'.	November 2014
Stage 2	Biannual Community Priorities Survey Sample Size= 1000	To understand the community's priorities in relation to Council activities, services and facilities and identify the overall level of satisfaction with Council's performance as well as areas for improvement.	January 2015
Stage 3	Fit for the Future Survey: 'Awareness & Support' Sample Size= 500	To understand the community's awareness and support of the amalgamation of Councils proposed by the NSW Government following provision of an amalgamation information pack.	March 2015
Stage 4	Fit for the Future Survey: 'Preferred Amalgamation Options' Sample Size= 500	To ask local residents their opinions about Council amalgamations being proposed by the NSW Government and further understand the community's preferred amalgamation option, particularly in light of the NSW Government's 'scale and capacity' requirements.	May 2015
Stage 5	Public Exhibition of Draft Merger Proposal	To communicate to the community about the Draft Merger Proposal and its contents, including explaining the benefits and costs of the proposal throughout the public exhibition period.	27 May to 24 June 2015

2. Results

More than 2000 residents have participated in the community engagement process to date with further community awareness and involvement anticipated throughout the public exhibition phase, which is detailed in section 3 of this report.

Key findings of the *Fit for the Future Survey: 'Awareness & Support'* completed in March 2015 with 500 residents highlighted:

- Satisfaction with Council's performance is significantly higher than the average NSW score.
- Awareness of the proposed Parramatta/Holroyd amalgamation was low.
- Support for the proposed Parramatta/Holroyd amalgamation was also low with 47% indicating that they were 'not at all supportive'.

The results of the consultation with the Auburn community indicated a strong community preference for opposing a Council merger as per the recommendation of the ILGRP Report (Auburn amalgamating with Parramatta, Holroyd, and parts of Ryde and The Hills Councils), with 64% of residents opposing any amalgamation, and only 15% indicating support for the proposal.

Following this outcome, Council engaged *Micromex Research* to undertake a further telephone survey with a new sample of 500 residents to further explore the community's preferred amalgamation option, particularly in light of the NSW Government's 'scale and capacity' requirements. Key findings of the *Fit for the Future Survey: 'Preferred Amalgamation Options'* completed in May 2015 with 500 residents highlighted:

- A greater proportion (46%) of residents were now aware of the NSW Government's recommendation that neighbouring councils should merge to create larger, but fewer, local government areas.
- The option to merge with Parramatta, Holroyd, and parts of Ryde and The Hills Councils was not very popular with residents, with less than half of the population prepared to indicate any level of support for this option (46%).
- The option to merge with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood Councils was more palatable to residents, with 71% indicating support.
- When given the choice between the 2 different merger options, residents strongly elected to merge with 'Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield Councils' as their preference.

Further information on community engagement results and outcomes is attached in the *Fit for the Future Survey: 'Awareness and Support' Report* and the *Fit for the Future Survey: 'Preferred Amalgamation Option' Report*.

3. Community Engagement Plan

(Public Exhibition Period Only, May – June 2015)

The Merger Proposal was placed on public exhibition for 28 days from 27 May to 24 June 2015 as per the requirements of the NSW Government guidelines for completing Template 1.

The overall aim of the public exhibition period was to communicate to the community about the Merger Proposal and its contents, including explaining the benefits and costs of the proposal.

During the public exhibition period, Council implemented the following community engagement program to ensure the community was well informed.

The Program for informing the community included:

Method of Engagement	Total Reach	Timeframe/Key Dates
Advertisements in Local Paper (Auburn Review)	Circulation of 25,000	26 May, 2 June, 9 June, 16 June and 23 June.
Media releases	Sydney Metropolitan electronic and print media	From 27 May (ongoing and as required throughout public exhibition period)
Website	On average 85,000 hits per month	From 27 May (ongoing throughout public exhibition period)
Social Media Campaign (including Facebook and Twitter)	Total monthly reach over 40,000	From 27 May (ongoing throughout public exhibition period)
Weekly Council E-News	As per website; subscribers	From 27 May (weekly throughout public exhibition period)
Quarterly Newsletter	28,000 copies delivered to all households in Auburn City with additional copies provided via Council venues and online (includes translations in top 4 languages).	Distributed to all households in Auburn City from 8 June 2015.
Advertisements in Mayoral Columns (including 4 community language papers)	Circulation of 100,000	2 June, 9 June, 16 June and 23 June (Auburn Review) and weekly in Zaman Australia (Turkish), Korean Herald, Australian Chinese Daily and An-Nahar (Arabic) papers over the public exhibition period.
Email alerts to Council's community groups e-networks	Targeted Council e-groups include 397 community groups and community services agencies, including community leaders of 'hard to reach' communities.	From 27 May (twice over the exhibition period).
Provision of copies of Council's proposal and further information at Council Libraries, Community Centres and	On average 49,000 community members access these venues per month.	From 27 May (ongoing throughout public exhibition period)

Method of Engagement	Total Reach	Timeframe/Key Dates
at Council's Customer Service Centre (including digital information screens across all venues)		
Delivery of information to Council partners and community groups via Council interagency networks and committees	The following networks are scheduled to meet in the public exhibition period and will be informed about Council's proposal: Auburn Community Sector Networking Forum (27 May), Auburn Youth Interagency (28 May), Auburn Employment Working Group (2 Jun), Auburn Artists Network (13 Jun), Auburn Youth Advisory Collective (23 June).	From 27 May (ongoing throughout public exhibition period).

The Program for involving the community also included delivery of the following 'Fit for the Future' information stalls:

Date and Time	Activity	Location
Sunday 31 May 2015, 11am-3pm	Autumn Colours Festival (Auburn City wide event based in Auburn)	Auburn Botanic Gardens, Cnr of Chiswick & Chisholm Rds, Auburn
Tuesday 2 June 2015, 10am-11am	Involving the Berala Community	Berala Town Centre (in front of Woolworths) Woodburn Rd, Berala
Thursday 4 June 2015, 10am-11am	Involving the Lidcombe Community	Lidcombe Town Centre (South) Cnr of Joseph & Bridge Streets, Lidcombe
Saturday 6 June 2015, 9.30am-10.30am	Involving the Wentworth Point Community	Wentworth Point Piazza (in front of the Pulse Club) The Crescent, Wentworth Point
Saturday 6 June 2015, 11am-12pm	Involving the Newington Community	Newington Marketplace 1 Avenue Of The Americas, Newington
Friday 12 June 2015, 3pm-5pm	Regents Park Reach Program (Scheduled quarterly engagement event in Regents Park)	Guilfoyle Park (located behind the Regents Park Library and Community Centre) Entry via Regent Street or Amy Street, Regents Park

Council's 'Fit for the Future' information stalls enabled Council to reach and communicate to a broad cross-section of community members over the public exhibition phase, and discuss, explain and answer any questions about the proposal.

Additional community feedback received by Auburn City Council via 'Fit for the Future' information booths during the public exhibition phase of the Merger Proposal indicated a further increase in support. Of 76 face to face conversations held explaining the benefits and costs of the Merger Proposal to local residents, 93% indicated support.

It should be noted that Council did not receive any formal submissions from the community arising the public exhibition period.



Merger Proposal

Media and Social Media Collateral

May-June 2015



THE FUTURE OF AUBURN CITY

Information on Council's Merger Proposal

The NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' Program for Council Amalgamations

In 2012, the NSW Government appointed an Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate the need for changes to ensure Councils are sustainable, efficient and effective.

The NSW Government then released the 'Fit for the Future' reform program which recommended reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from 41 to about 15.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, and an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the community's needs and local issues.

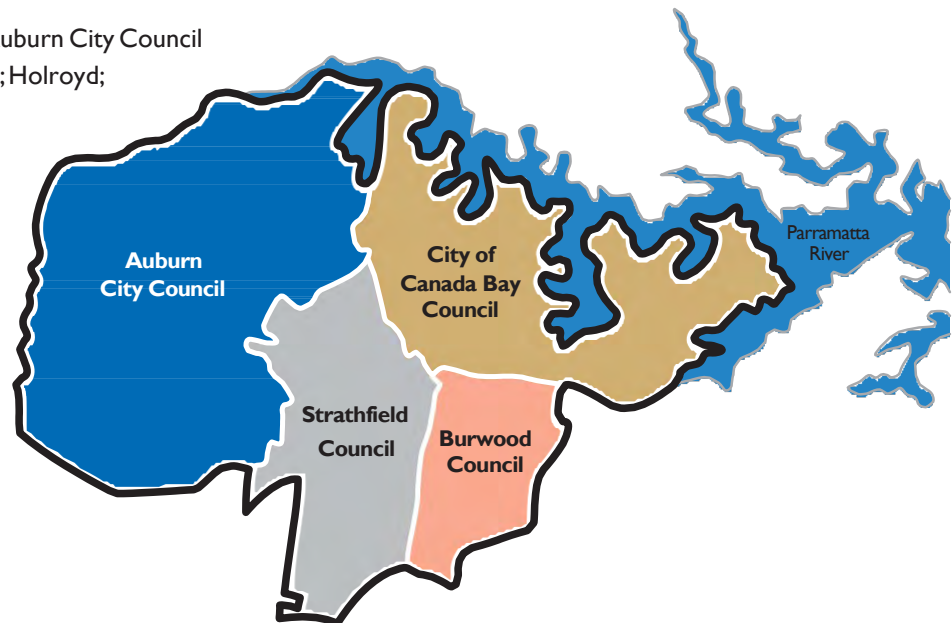
What it means for Auburn City Council

Despite Auburn City Council's excellent financial and asset management position, the option to stand alone does not meet the requirements of the Government's Fit for the Future program primarily due to its population size.

The Review Panel has made recommendations for Auburn City Council to be amalgamated with 4 other councils: Parramatta; Holroyd; and small parts of Ryde and The Hills. This would ultimately create a large council with a potential population of over 558,500 residents, 7 times larger than the current Auburn City Council area.

Auburn City Council has voted unanimously to adopt an alternate merger proposal including Auburn City Council (blue), Burwood Council (pink), City of Canada Bay Council (light brown), with possible inclusion of Strathfield Council (grey).

This would create a smaller council that still meets the minimum population size being suggested by the NSW Government.



Benefits of this Merger Proposal include:

- ✔ Meets NSW Government minimum population size for Councils
- ✔ Significant long term savings of \$140m over 10 years
- ✔ Protects local town centres and villages
- ✔ Same level of services provided
- ✔ Combined financial strength which meets 'Fit for the Future' benchmarks, including low debt
- ✔ Cultural synergies – cosmopolitan communities
- ✔ Investment in community facilities and infrastructure
- ✔ Strong connectivity between the Councils through Parramatta Road and extensive river frontage
- ✔ Powerful local economies that build on existing industry and business, strengthening employment opportunities
- ✔ Key strategic centres, including Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Burwood
- ✔ Equal footing of merged Councils



**An Alternate
Council
Merger
Proposal**



How did we arrive at our position?

Auburn City Council has undertaken extensive research and commissioned some independent studies to determine its position and prepare its 'Fit for the Future' Merger Proposal.

Community involvement has played an integral role. This included a series of 3 telephone surveys involving a total of 2000 local residents from January to May 2015, each time involving an accurate sample size covering all suburbs and age groups across Auburn City. When given the choice between the 2 merger options, residents strongly elected to merge with Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield Councils, with 71% indicating support.

How does this affect me as a ratepayer?

Auburn City already has an efficiently run Council with some of the lowest rates in Sydney. This merger proposal aims to protect residents against unnecessary rate increases that may follow an ill-advised merger. The merger process, if approved by the NSW Government, could be initiated prior to the next Local Government elections in 2016.

How do I provide feedback on the Merger Proposal?

The Merger Proposal has been placed on public exhibition until 24 June 2015 prior to Council lodging its final 'Fit for the Future' submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal by 30 June 2015.

Any person who wishes to lodge a submission may do so in writing until 4.00pm on Wednesday 24 June 2015. All written submissions must be addressed to the General Manager, Auburn City Council, PO Box 118, Auburn NSW 1835.

How do I find out more?

For further information or to view a copy of the Merger Proposal please visit the Auburn City Council Website at: www.auburn.nsw.gov.au

The Merger Proposal may also be inspected at Council's Customer Service Centre at the Civic Precinct, 1 Susan Street, Auburn, and Council's Libraries at Auburn, Lidcombe, Newington and Regents Park.



"It has become quite clear that NSW State Government policy does not entertain the idea of councils standing alone if they do not meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks. Auburn City would prefer to stand alone but this is not a viable or logical proposition."

Auburn City Councillors have acted solely in the best interests of our community by supporting this merger proposal which is vastly superior to the Sansom option of Auburn City being subsumed by Parramatta.

All of the work we have done shows that a merged Auburn, Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield would be the best outcome for our community."

**Mayor of Auburn City,
Ronney Oueik**

For further enquiries please phone **9735 1222** or email auburncouncil@auburn.nsw.gov.au

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**An Alternate
Council
Merger
Proposal**





MEDIA RELEASE

27 May 2015

Council Merger Proposal

On Tuesday 26 May Auburn City Councillors voted unanimously to adopt a merger proposal between Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council and Auburn City Council. The proposal has been placed on public exhibition until 24 June 2015 prior to Council lodging its final 'Fit for the Future' submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal by 30 June 2015.

"Auburn City Councillors have acted solely in the best interests of our community by supporting this merger proposal which is vastly superior to the Sansom option of Auburn City being subsumed by Parramatta," Mayor of Auburn City, Ronney Oueik said.

"It has become quite clear that NSW State Government policy does not entertain the idea of councils standing alone if they do not meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks and the underlying population threshold. Auburn City would prefer to stand alone but this is not a viable or logical proposition.

"We appreciate that our potential merger partners, Burwood Council and City of Canada Bay Council must also carefully consider the views of their communities as they deal with this very important issue. We also remain hopeful that Strathfield Council will also positively engage with this proposal.

"Auburn City is changing and has a lot to offer. Our community is thriving, and the sheer scale of our planned growth will see further positive changes. We offer strong employment growth and growing employment centres.

"Our Council has also ensured a solid investment in our community facilities and infrastructure. All of our capital works projects underway or about to start are fully funded.

"Auburn City continues to be enthusiastic about this merger proposal, which was supported by our community as the best option for our future, as it:

- Meets the population threshold of Fit for the Future – if the four councils merged they would have a population of 250,000 immediately and over 290,000 by 2021
- Demonstrates a cultural synergy between the four councils
- Creates financial strength – the councils bring a relatively strong financial position to the merger which meets the fit for the future benchmarks
- Has logical connectivity between the councils through Parramatta Road and an extensive river frontage
- Contains powerful local economies that would build on existing industry and businesses, strengthening employment opportunity
- Boasts enviable strategic centres, such as Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Burwood.
- Does not favour one council area over the other.

For media information, contact Shane Wells. Phone: (02) 8745 9715 / 0437 870 818.

Email: shane.wells@auburn.nsw.gov.au. Web: www.auburn.nsw.gov.au. Facebook: facebook.com/AuburnCityCouncil



MEDIA RELEASE

“We will continue to work towards this solution as it has great merit and meets all of the NSW Government’s objectives. All of the work we have done shows that a merged Auburn, Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield would result in perhaps one of the only Councils that would be deemed fit under the IPART assessment methodology.

“I am hopeful, over the next few weeks Auburn City will continue to engage positively with its potential merger partners, allay concerns where necessary, and work within a spirit of cooperation,” Mayor Oueik said.

Members of the public have until 4pm Wednesday 24 June 2015, to make submissions in respect of the Fit for the Future proposal, following which it will be submitted, together with any comments received, to the NSW Government by 30 June 2015.

Any person who wishes to lodge a submission in respect of the above may do so in writing until 4.00pm on Wednesday 24 June 2015. All written submissions must be addressed to the General Manager, Auburn City Council PO Box 118 Auburn NSW 1835.

Announcement on Amalgamations to be made next Wednesday

"An announcement on the future of Auburn City Council will be made next Wednesday following a special Council meeting on Tuesday night 26 May, says Mayor Ronney Oueik .

"While Auburn City Council preferred to stand alone it has become evident that the NSW State Government will not support this option.

"We have developed an alternate proposal to the State Government's original amalgamation recommendations, that is in the best interests of our residents. Consequently we have entered into discussions with the City of Canada Bay Council and Burwood Council to consider an amalgamation proposal. A report will be put to Council for a vote next Tuesday, 26 May.

"Once a decision has been made we will inform the public," Mayor Oueik said.

Click [here](#) to view the Business Paper for the Extraordinary Meeting of Council – 26 May 2015.

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, Auburn City Council Sydney



Published by Shane Wells · 27 May at 10:07 --"

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"Auburn City Councillors have acted solely in the best interests of our community by supporting this merger proposal which is vastly superior to the Sanson option of Auburn City being subsumed by Parramatta," Mayor of Auburn City, Ranney Ouek said.

For further information www.auburn.nsw.gov.au

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671 people reached

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Published by Shane Wells 1J - 1 June at 11:57 - -'

Download a copy of the Auburn City Council's information sheet detailing a proposal to merge with Canada Bay Council and Burwood Council. Just click on the media release -council Merger Proposal' on our website - www.auburn.nsw.gov.au

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The proposal has been placed on public exhibition until 24 June 2015. For more info see our website auburn.nsw.gov.au [#amalgamations](#)



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Auburn City Council e-news 18 June 2015



Council Continues to Communicate to the Community on Merger Proposal

Over the past 2 weeks Council staff have delivered a series of 'Fit for the Future' information booths across 6 suburbs to provide information to the local community and seek additional feedback on Council's Merger Proposal including Auburn City Council, Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council and Strathfield Council.

SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FROM INFORMATION BOOTHS:

- 76 conversations across 6 suburbs
- 93% support for Council's Merger proposal (Auburn City Council, Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council and Strathfield Council).

Community involvement has already played an integral role in the development of Council's 'Fit for the Future' Merger Proposal. This included a series of 3 telephone surveys involving a total of 2000 residents from January to May 2015, each time involving an accurate sample size covering all suburbs and age groups across Auburn City. Council has continued to communicate the contents of its Merger Proposal to the local community prior to lodging a final 'Fit for the Future' submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal by 30 June 2015.

Any person who wishes to lodge a submission in relation to Council's Merger Proposal may do so in writing until 4pm on Wednesday 24 June 2015. All written

submissions must be addressed to the General Manager, Auburn City Council, PO Box 118, Auburn NSW 1835.

For further information please view:

[Merger Proposal Information Sheet](#)
[Report to Council – Fit for the Future Proposal](#)



Mark Brisby
General Manager - Auburn City Council

AUBURN CITY COUNCIL Community News

Auburn City Council is the 2014 Sustainable Cities Energy Efficiency Award Winner



JUNE 2015 – WINTER EDITION

What's On

Refugee Camp in my Neighbourhood

Tue 9 – Fri 26 June @ Auburn Centre for Community

Regents Park Reach

Fri 12 June @ Guilfoyle Park

Auburn City Children & Families Conference

Sat 20 June @ Auburn Town Hall

Clean Up the Streets

Sat 27 June @ Wentworth Point

Exhibition Launch

Sat 4 July @ Peacock Gallery

National Tree Day

Sun 26 July @ Auburn Botanic Gardens

Auburn Welcomes You

Wed 29 July @ Auburn Town Hall

Berala Park Reach

Fri 7 August @ York Park

Mayoral Art & Photography Awards

Sat 8 August @ Peacock Gallery

Cherry Blossom Festival

22, 23 & 29, 30 August @ Auburn Botanic Gardens

Auburn City Business Awards

Wed 2 September @ DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

In September 2014, the NSW Government released the 'Fit for Future' report which proposed reducing the number of Councils in Sydney from 41 to approximately 15. The report recommended that Auburn City merge with Parramatta City and Holroyd City to form a Council with an estimated population of 558,000 by 2031, 7 times larger than the current Auburn City Council area.

Auburn City Council voted to pursue an alternate proposal in the interests of the community. After a lengthy process of research and consultation with residents Council resolved to submit an alternate proposal to the NSW Government that would see Auburn join with Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council and Strathfield Council. We sought the views of our community across the City through extensive telephone polling and the



Mayor Oueik discussing the merger proposal with residents in Auburn

overwhelming preference was the proposal as opposed to being taken over by Parramatta.

This proposal aims to protect the interests of residents against an ill-advised merger with a much larger council. Council believes that the alternate proposal will produce a much better outcome for the community as it has a host of advantages, including: significant long term savings, the protection of local town centres and villages, the maintenance of a strong financial position, the protection of our unique cultural identity.

Mayoral Art & Photography Awards – It's Your Chance!

If you reside, or are employed, in the Auburn City area then this is your chance to exhibit your work in the 2015 Mayoral Art and Photography Awards. The Awards are open to persons aged 15 years and over and there are a number of categories to enter into for both photography and art. New to this year's awards is the Sustainability Art Award for work that best represents and typifies "our community", and the Parks, Gardens and Natural Areas Award for the best photo taken in a park or open space. As always, the People's Choice Award will require the visitors to vote for their favourite Artwork or Photograph. Prizes up to \$1,500 are available for Art entries and up to \$1,000 for Photographs. Entries are due between 17 – 18 July and the art and photography will be



Mayor Oueik with Mazin Ahmad's 'Landing at Auburn, 2009 winner'

on exhibition for the public to view at the Peacock Gallery from 8 August to 5 September.

The Mayoral Art & Photography Awards will be held:

Where: Peacock Gallery, Auburn Botanic Gardens, Corner Chiswick and Chisholm Roads, Auburn

When: Saturday 8 August 2015, 11am – 1pm

AUBURN CITY COUNCIL

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Auburn City Council

Fit for the Future:

'Awareness & Support' Survey

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: March 2015

Background



Methodology & Sample

Research Design

This study consisted of a three-stage methodology:

- **Stage 1:** Initial recruitment of 750 Auburn residents via random phone survey, collection of several 'pre' measures
- **Stage 2:** Mail-out by Council of a brochure (and A4 summary sheet) explaining the different categories of local asset condition
- **Stage 3:** Recontact telephone interviews with 500 of the initial 750 recruits, collection of numerous 'post' measures.

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Auburn City Council, developed the questionnaire. Council developed the information pack.

Data collection period

- Initial telephone recruitment: 9th – 14th February 2015
- Telephone recontact interviewing (CATI): 21st February – 3rd March 2015.



Methodology & Sample

Sample

N=500 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 500 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.4% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=500 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.4%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.4%. This means, for example that the answer "satisfied" (42%) to the overall satisfaction question could vary from 38% to 46%.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in two phases. During the recruitment phase, residents were screened for eligibility and their details were taken in order to post the amalgamation information pack. The recontact phase comprised the remainder of the survey questions, with residents responding to the information pack they had received. Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.



Sample Profile



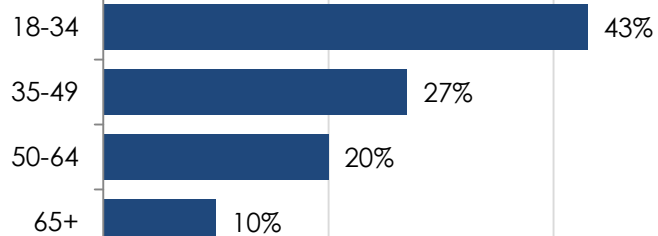


Sample Profile

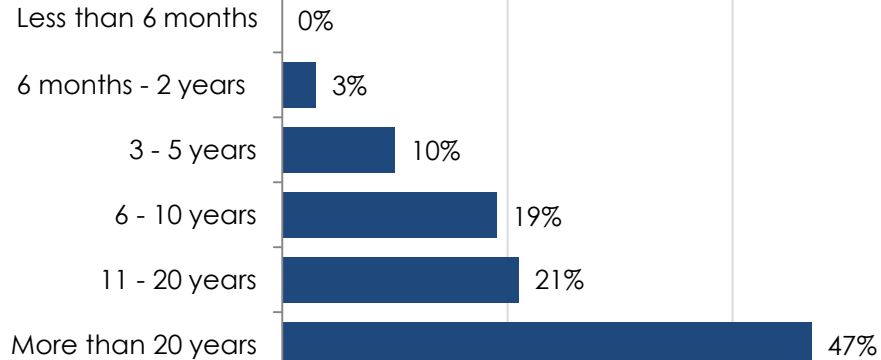
Gender



Age



Time lived in the area



Ratepayer status



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

A sample size of 500 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.4% at 95% confidence

Detailed Findings



Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

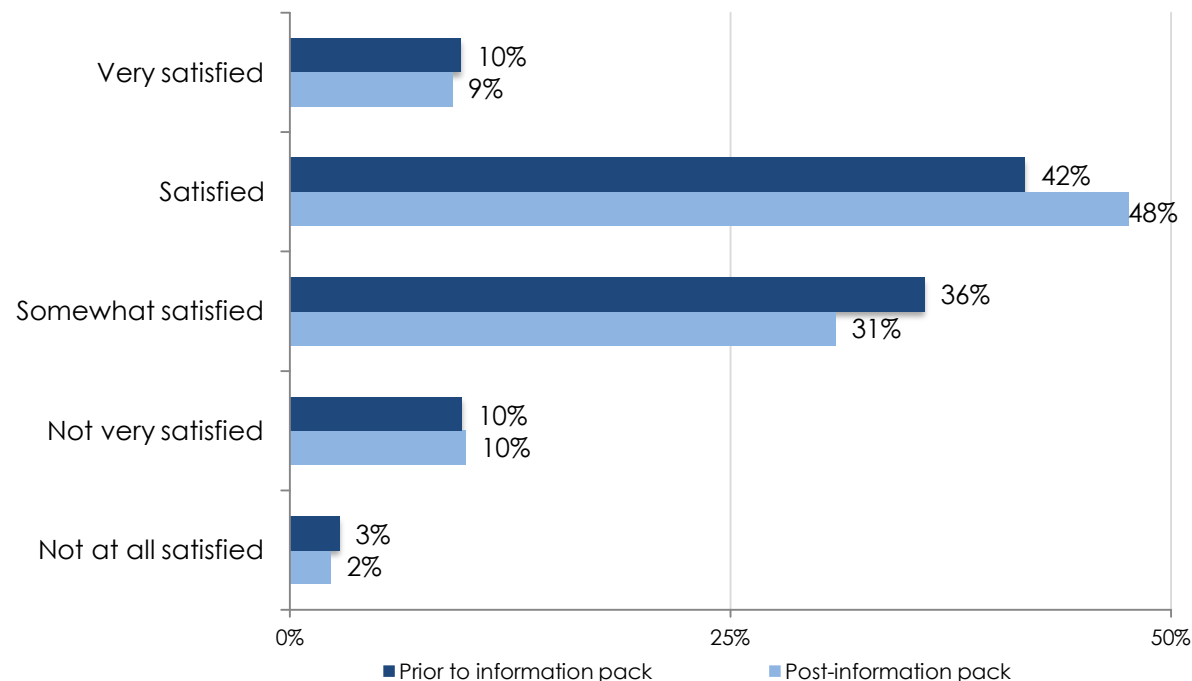
Prior to receiving the information pack v Subsequent to receiving the information pack

Q2. (Recruitment survey)

In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

Q3. (Recontact survey)

Overall for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



NSW LGA BRAND SCORES	Overall 2015	Overall 2014	Metro LGA Brand Scores	NSW Overall Brand Scores
Prior to information pack	3.46▲	3.48	3.45	3.31▼

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Prior to information pack	3.46	3.51	3.40	3.42	3.50	3.41	3.59	3.41	3.63
Post-information pack	3.51	3.55	3.48	3.55	3.48	3.43	3.63	3.48	3.63

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

*Note: For a detailed list/table, please see Appendix

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction than the overall

Prior to receiving the information pack, residents reported a level of overall satisfaction with Council significantly higher than the NSW LGA brand score, a result which was consolidated after residents received the pack

Fit for the Future – Awareness and Support

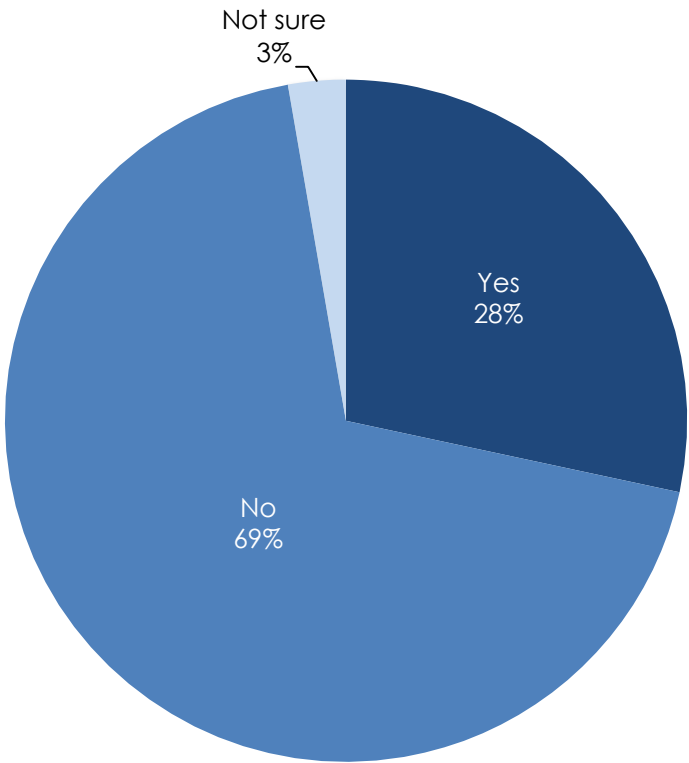




Awareness of Potential Amalgamation

Auburn City Council with Other Councils

Q1a. (Recruitment survey) Prior to this call were you aware of the potential amalgamation of Auburn City Council with other councils?



28% of residents were aware of the potential merger – residents aged over 50 and ratepayers were significantly more likely to be aware, while those aged 18-34 were significantly less so

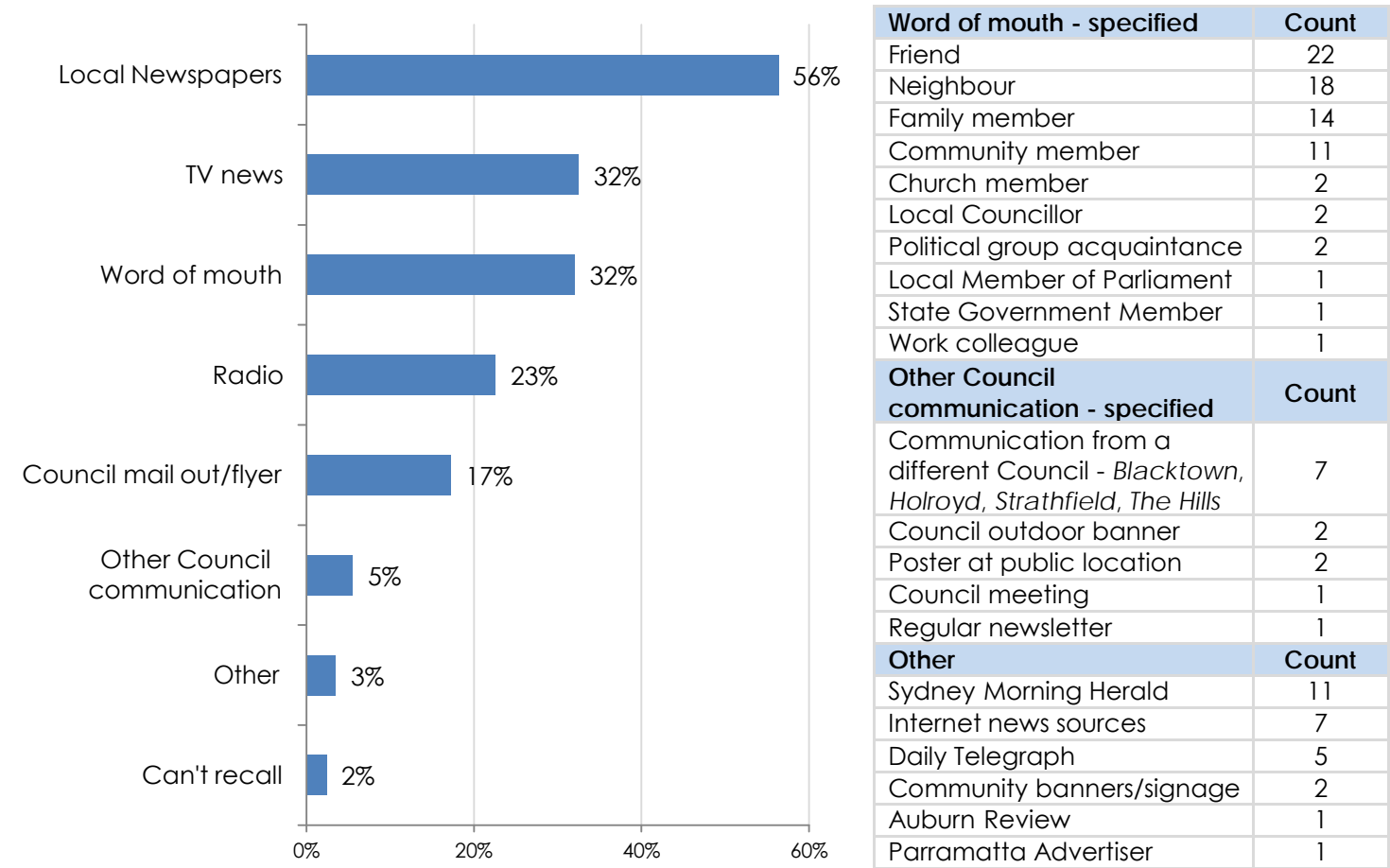
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Yes	28%	31%	25%	16%▼	30%	37%▲	60%▲	33%▲	12%▼
No	69%	66%	72%	83%▲	67%	59%▼	35%▼	64%▼	87%▲
Not sure	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%	3%	1%

▲▼= A significantly higher/lower level of awareness (by group)

Means of Becoming Aware of Amalgamation Proposal

Auburn City Council with Other Councils

Q1b. (Recruitment survey) Where did you first hear about the proposal to potentially amalgamate Auburn City Council with other Councils?



Residents aged 65 and over were significantly more likely to have heard about the amalgamation proposal via 'local newspapers', and less likely to have heard through 'word of mouth'*

Ratepayers were significantly more likely to have become aware of the proposal via 'local newspapers' than non-ratepayers*

Base: n = 142

*Note: For a detailed list/table, please see Appendix

Over half of residents (56%) heard about the amalgamation proposal via 'local newspapers'. The next most common means of becoming aware of the proposal were through 'TV news' and 'word of mouth', with 32% of residents indicating that they had heard via each of those means

Concept Statement

The NSW State Government appointed an Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate the need for changes that will ensure councils are sustainable, efficient, and effective.

Based on the Review Panel's findings, the State Government has recommended changes, including reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from 41 to about 15. This is to be achieved through merging/amalgamating councils.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, and an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the community's needs and local issues.

The Review Panel has made recommendations for Auburn City Council to be amalgamated with 4 other councils: Parramatta; Holroyd; Ryde (part) and The Hills (part). This would ultimately create a large council with a potential population of over 558,500 residents and in all likelihood, increased rates. However, this is only a recommendation, and there is also the option to oppose amalgamations, or to propose an alternative idea.

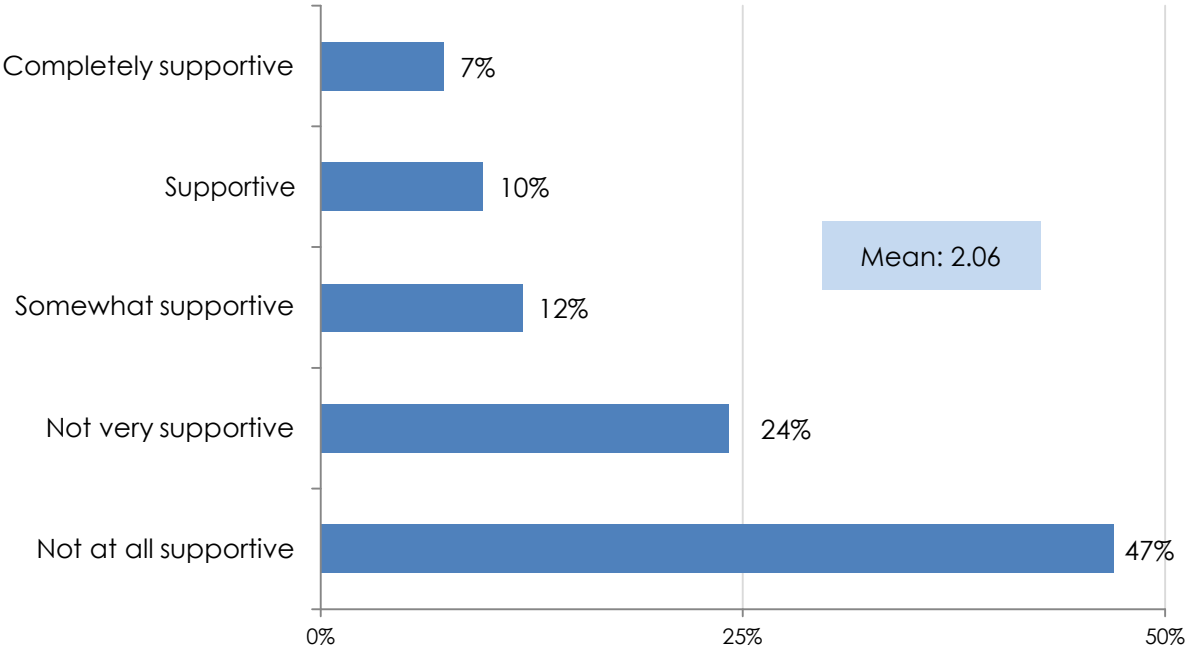
Auburn City Council is a strong and sustainable council from both a financial and service delivery perspective. Auburn City Council does not support the merged council proposal as it believes a larger council will make it much harder for residents to be heard and for local issues to be addressed.

Auburn City Council is seeking our community's views to form its position on the recommendations.



Support for Auburn City Council Merging with the Proposed Councils

Q7. How supportive would you be of Auburn City Council being merged with Parramatta, Holroyd, Ryde (part) and The Hills (part) Councils?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Mean rating	2.06	2.19	1.92	2.11	2.16	1.96	1.76	2.04	2.15

*Note: For detailed percentages, please see Appendix
Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

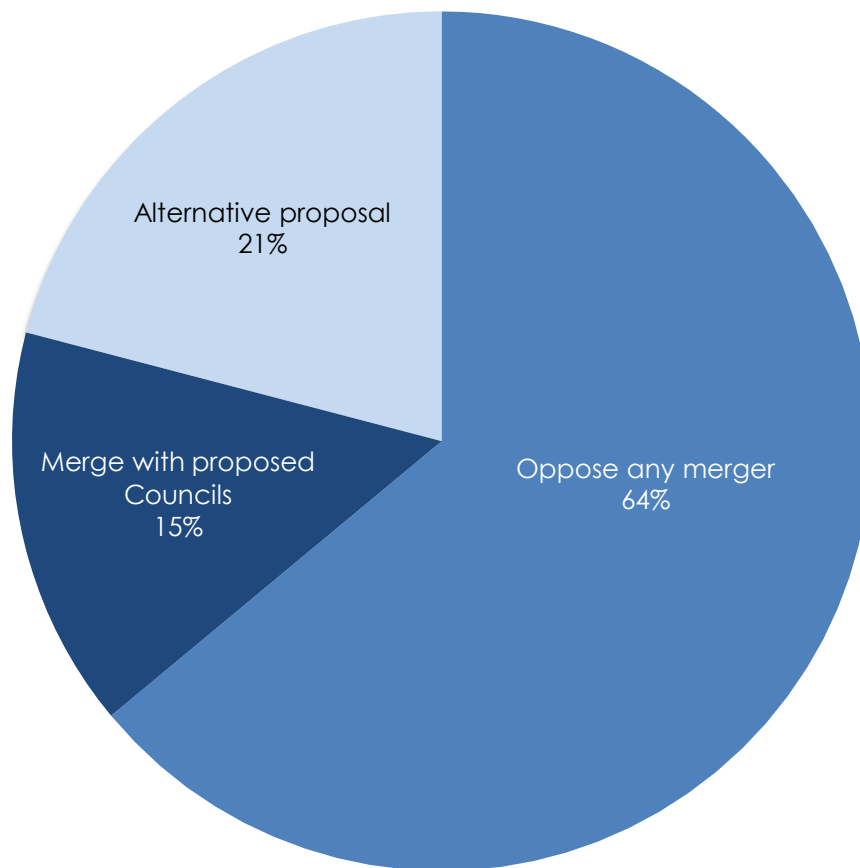


Support for the proposed amalgamation was low, with 29% of residents expressing some degree of support for the merger



Preferred Amalgamation Option

Q8a. Which of the following options would be your preference?



The predominant preference was to 'oppose any merger', with 64% of residents indicating that this was their preferred option

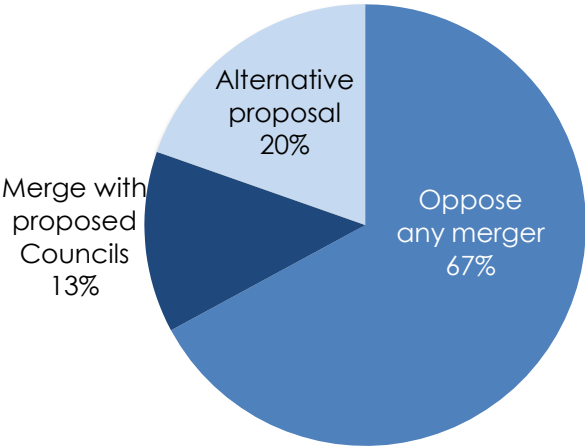
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Merge with proposed Councils	15%	20%	10%	11%	20%	17%	14%	15%	15%
Oppose any merger	64%	59%	69%	64%	65%	59%	73%	66%	58%
Alternative proposal	21%	21%	21%	25%	15%	24%	13%	19%	27%

Base: n = 500

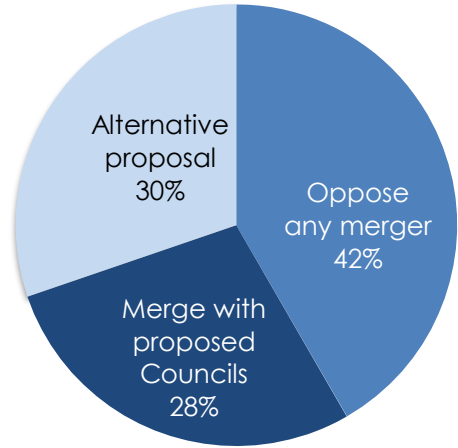
Preferred Amalgamation Option by Level of Satisfaction with Council

Q3. Overall for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?
 Q8a. Which of the following options would be your preference?

Somewhat satisfied/Satisfied/Very satisfied



Not at all satisfied/Not very satisfied



	Overall	Oppose any merger	Alternative proposal	Amalgamate with proposed Council
Base	500	320	105	76
Mean satisfaction rating	3.51	3.61 ▲	3.47	3.17 ▼

Satisfied base: n = 439, dissatisfied base: n = 61

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction than the overall
 Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

There was a marked correlation between opposition to merging and satisfaction with Council. Those who opposed any merger were significantly more satisfied with Council's performance than the average resident, and those who supported the proposed amalgamation significantly less so than the average



Reasons for Preference

Amalgamation, Opposition to Amalgamation, or Alternative Proposal

Q8a. Which of the following options would be your preference?
Q8b. Why do you say that?

Oppose any amalgamation	Count
Responsiveness to local issues would decline under an amalgamated Council	213
Strong performance of Auburn Council makes any merger unnecessary	75
Overall service provision would decline in a larger merged Council area	59
Amalgamation would result in increased rates/a worse financial position	45
Insufficient evidence of the benefits of amalgamation has been provided	26
Current size/population of Auburn is appropriate for one Council area	17
Lack of demographic/socio-economic compatibility with proposed Councils	5
Unsatisfactory performance/policies of proposed Council for merger	5
Dealing with amalgamation would inhibit current Council projects	4
Concerned over the potential for job losses in an amalgamation	2
Larger Councils are more susceptible to corruption	2
Alternative merger arrangements would be better	1
Previous negative experience with Council merger	1
Supportive of Council policy	1

Residents who
opposed any
merger
typically felt
that Council
would be less
able to provide
services
at a local level
in an
amalgamation



Reasons for Preference

Amalgamation, Opposition to Amalgamation, or Alternative Proposal

Q8a. Which of the following options would be your preference?
Q8b. Why do you say that?

Amalgamation	Count
Current overgovernment/ excessive bureaucracy problems would be improved	18
Larger Council will be better able to provide services/facilities	16
Economic efficiency would improve in a merged Council	15
Corruption/lack of transparency would be reduced in a merged Council	14
Current inadequate performance of Auburn Council makes amalgamation appealing	9
Amalgamation would encourage better management/operational efficiency	8
Merged Council would ensure consistent consultation/service provision throughout the area	6
Generally supportive of change	5
Proposed Councils for amalgamation are effective/successful/compatible with Auburn	3
Larger Council will have more power	2
Previous experience with successful Council amalgamations	2
Larger Council would be more concerned with environmental issues	1
Proposed amalgamation avoids undesirable merger with Strathfield Council	1
Supportive of ensuring a good outcome due to perceived inevitability of merger	1

Alternative proposal	Count
Alternative Council(s) is/are geographically close to Auburn	32
Proposed amalgamation would be too large/decentralised/poorly reflect community	18
Alternative Council(s) is/are demographically/culturally compatible with Auburn	17
It would be beneficial for Auburn to merge with a more effective/successful Council	17
Merging on smaller scale would be more effective in reducing inefficiency/decreasing expenditure	13
Smaller scale amalgamation would allow current standards of local service to be maintained	12
Opposed to involvement with Parramatta due to its size/independent nature/financial status	10
Service and financial benefits of larger merger have not been adequately explained	7
Alternative Council(s) is/are similar to Auburn in terms of management/outlook	6
Alternative Council(s) is/are appropriately focused on providing services to residents	3
Abolishing local government would encourage greater community consultation	2
Abolishing local government would ensure government transparency	2
Abolishing local government would avoid rates increases	1
Proposed amalgamation Councils are not sufficiently financially secure	1

Residents who supported the proposed merger largely did so because they felt it would improve services and efficiency, while those who suggested an alternative amalgamation most frequently favoured merging with nearby Councils

Conclusion and Recommendations



Conclusion

Satisfaction with Council's performance is significantly higher than the average NSW LGA brand score, and at a moderate level overall. 88% of residents are at least 'somewhat satisfied', a result in line with the 2014 community survey.

There was overwhelming support for Council's continued strategic planning of infrastructural issues, with 96% of residents indicating that this was either 'important' or 'very important'. Furthermore, when prompted for their support for increasing investment into roads, kerb and guttering, and footpaths, 92% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of each.

Awareness of the proposed amalgamation was low, at 28%. However, there was an observable correlation between awareness and age – older residents were significantly more likely to have heard about the proposal prior to the survey, reflected in the fact that the most common means of becoming aware was via 'local newspapers'.

Support for the proposed amalgamation was low, with 29% of residents expressing some degree of support for the merger, and 47% indicating that they were 'not at all supportive'.



Recommendations

Consultation with the Auburn community has indicated a strong community preference for opposing a Council merger, with 64% of residents opposing any amalgamation whatsoever, and just 15% indicating support for the proposal. The most common reasons given for this opposition include:

1. Responsiveness to local issues would decline under an amalgamated Council
2. Strong performance of Auburn Council makes any merger unnecessary
3. Overall service provision would decline in a larger merged Council area
4. Amalgamation would result in increased rates/a worse financial position

Local infrastructural assets were confirmed as a key driver of resident satisfaction, with consistently high (90+%) ratings of 'somewhat important' or higher ascribed to roads, footpaths, and kerb and guttering.

A comparison of residents' satisfaction with Council against their preferred amalgamation option revealed that those who are more satisfied with Council are significantly more likely to oppose amalgamation.



Appendix



Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

Prior to receiving the information pack v Subsequent to receiving the information pack

Q2. (Recruitment survey) In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

Q3. (Recontact survey) Overall for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

<i>Prior to receiving the information pack</i>	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Mean rating	3.46	3.51	3.40	3.42	3.50	3.41	3.59	3.41	3.63
Very satisfied	10%	11%	8%	8%	8%	11%	18%▲	8%	14%
Satisfied	42%	43%	40%	37%	48%	41%	45%	41%	45%
Somewhat satisfied	36%	35%	37%	44%	31%	33%	22%▼	37%	32%
Not very satisfied	10%	8%	11%	11%	10%	8%	7%	10%	9%
Not at all satisfied	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%	7%▲	7%▲	4%▲	0%

<i>Subsequent to receiving the information pack</i>	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Mean rating	3.51	3.55	3.48	3.55	3.48	3.43	3.63	3.48	3.63
Very satisfied	9%	9%	9%	9%	7%	8%	15%	8%	14%
Satisfied	48%	50%	45%	48%	47%	46%	50%	46%	52%
Somewhat satisfied	31%	28%	34%	31%	35%	30%	21%	34%	19%
Not very satisfied	10%	12%	7%	9%	9%	11%	12%	9%	12%
Not at all satisfied	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%

▼▲= A significantly lower/higher than the overall



Means of Becoming Aware of Amalgamation Proposal

Auburn City Council with Other Councils

Q1b. (Recruitment survey) Where did you first hear about the proposal to potentially amalgamate Auburn City Council with other Councils?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	142	82	60	34	40	37	30	128	14
Local Newspapers	56%	58%	54%	40%	49%	64%	75%▲	61%▲	18%▼
TV news	32%	37%	27%	41%	24%	35%	31%	32%	33%
Word of mouth	32%	34%	29%	40%	40%	30%	14%▼	31%	40%
Radio	23%	21%	25%	20%	12%	32%	28%	21%	35%
Council mail out/flyer	17%	17%	17%	20%	19%	12%	17%	18%	11%
Other Council communication	4%	1%	8%	9%	2%	3%	2%	5%	0%
Can't recall	2%	2%	3%	0%	6%	0%	3%	1%	11%
Other	4%	4%	4%	2%	5%	7%	4%	5%	1%

▼▲= A significantly lower/higher than the overall



Support for Auburn City Council Merging with the Proposed Councils

Q7. How supportive would you be of Auburn City Council being merged with Parramatta, Holroyd, Ryde (part) and The Hills (part) Councils?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	500	260	240	215	135	100	50	387	113
Mean rating	2.06	2.19	1.92	2.11	2.16	1.96	1.76	2.04	2.15
Completely supportive	7%	12%▲	2%▼	6%	9%	7%	6%	8%	5%
Supportive	10%	9%	10%	11%	8%	10%	7%	8%	16%
Somewhat supportive	12%	10%	14%	11%	18%	8%	9%	11%	14%
Not very supportive	24%	22%	27%	31%	20%	20%	14%	25%	20%
Not at all supportive	47%	47%	47%	41%	45%	54%	64%▲	47%	45%

▼▲ = A significantly lower/higher (by group)





Alternative Amalgamation Proposals

Q8a. Which of the following options would be your preference?

Council(s)	Count
Parramatta	13
Strathfield	12
Bankstown	9
Unsure – merge with another small Council	7
Strathfield and Bankstown	5
Holroyd	4
Parramatta and Holroyd	4
Unsure - supportive of merger but more information is required before deciding which Councils would be best to merge with	4
Strathfield and Canada Bay	3
Unsure - merge with fewer Councils	3
Canada Bay	2
Ryde	2
Strathfield and Burwood	2
Strathfield and Parramatta	2
Strathfield or Holroyd	2
The Hills	2
Unsure - abolish Council level and replace functions with state government	2
Unsure - only one other Council	2
Avoid merging with Parramatta	1
Bankstown, Canterbury, and Liverpool	1
Burwood	1
Holroyd (part) and Canada Bay (part)	1
Holroyd (part) and Parramatta (part)	1
Parramatta (part)	1
Parramatta and Ryde	1
Parramatta or Ryde	1
Parramatta, Strathfield, and Fairfield	1
Strathfield and Ryde (part)	1
Strathfield, Bankstown, and Parramatta	1
Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood	1
Unsure - Councils other than those proposed	1
Unsure - nearby Council on the southern side of the Parramatta River	1

Base: n = 105

Residents who put forward alternative merger proposals were most likely to suggest merging with the single other Councils of Parramatta, Strathfield, or Bankstown



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Auburn City Council

Fit for the Future:

'Preferred Amalgamation Option' Survey

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: May 2015



Background



Methodology & Sample

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Auburn Council, developed the questionnaire.

Data collection period

Telephone recontact interviewing (CATI): 6th – 12th May 2015.

Sample

N=502 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 502 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.4% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=502 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.4%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.4%. This means, for example that the answer “satisfied” (47%) to the overall satisfaction question could vary from 43% to 51%. As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the real community profile of Auburn City Council, the outcomes reported here reflect an ‘effective sample size’; that is, the weighted data provides outcomes with the same level of confidence as unweighted data of a different sample size. In some cases this effective sample size may be smaller than the true number of surveys conducted.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.

Word Frequency Tagging

Verbatim responses for open questions were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis ‘counts’ the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned.



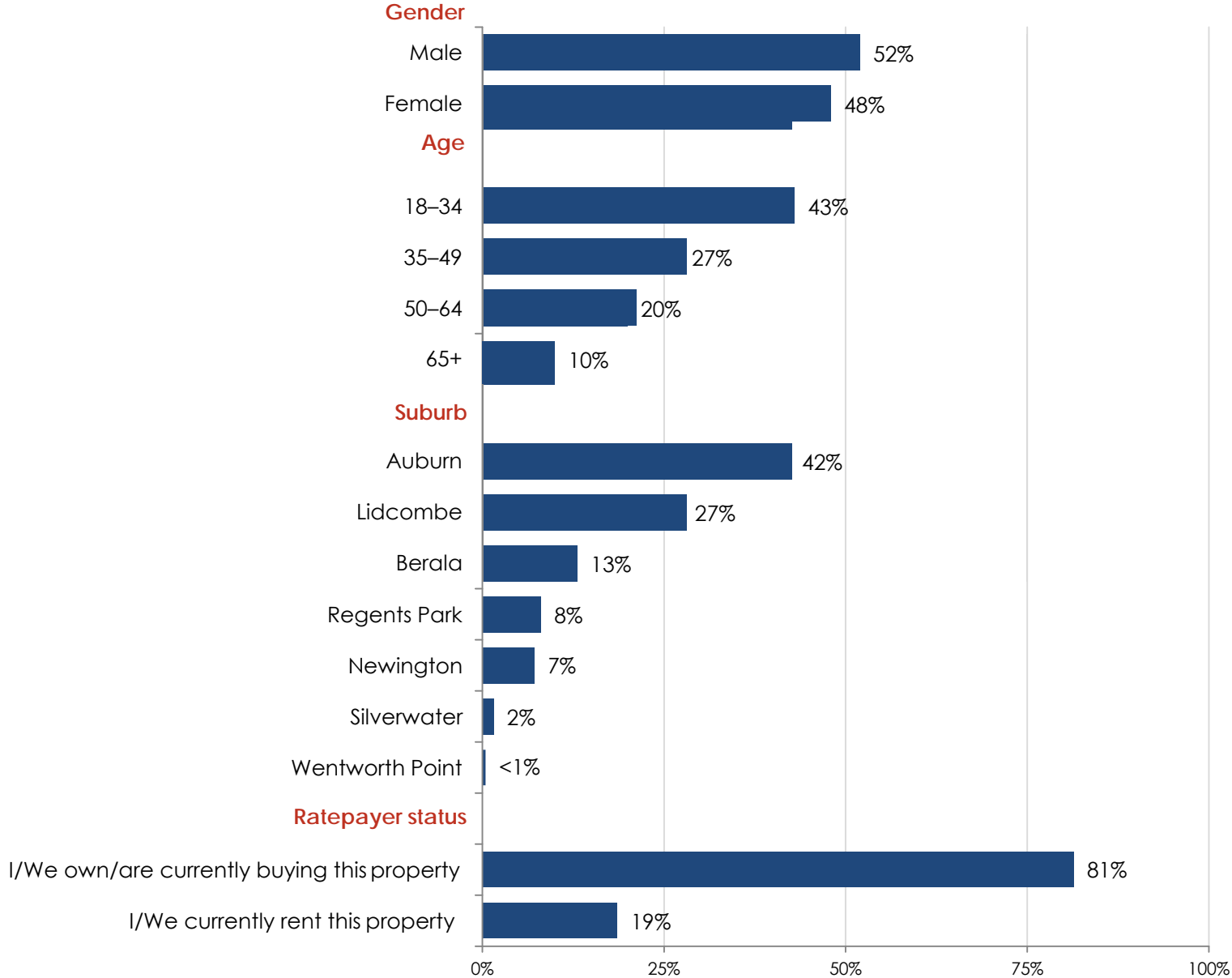
Sample Profile





Sample Profile

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Auburn City Council

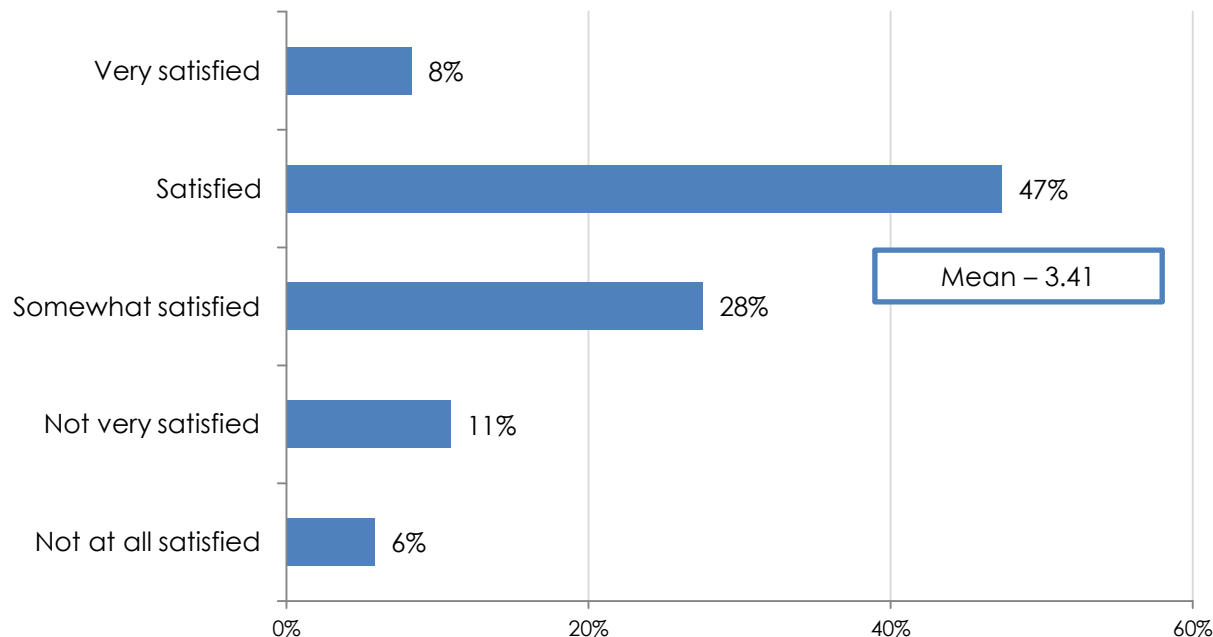


Results



Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

Q4. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non ratepayer
Satisfaction mean rating	3.41	3.52	3.30	3.42	3.32	3.40	3.65	3.42	3.39

Base: Overall N=502

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

83% of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' overall with Council's performance.
This was a consistent result throughout the community demography

Concept Statement

Residents were read this statement before being asked additional questions

The NSW State Government appointed an Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate the need for changes that will ensure councils are sustainable, efficient, and effective.

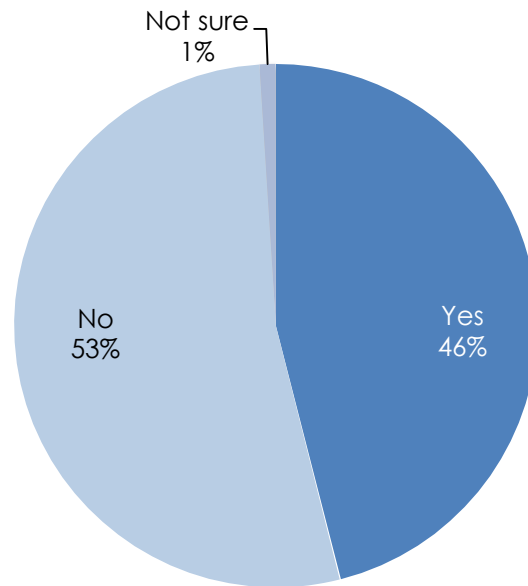
Based on the Review Panel's findings, the State Government has recommended changes, including reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from 41 to about 15. This is to be achieved through merging/amalgamating councils.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, and an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the community's needs and local issues.



Prior Awareness of the Potential Amalgamation

Q5. Prior to this call were you aware of the potential amalgamation of Auburn City Council with other councils?



	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non ratepayer
Yes	46%	47%	45%	31%▼	51%	62%▲	67%▲	50%▲	31%▼
No	53%	50%	55%	68%	49%	34%	31%	49%	69%
Not sure	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	4%	1%	2%	1%

Base: Overall N=502

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)



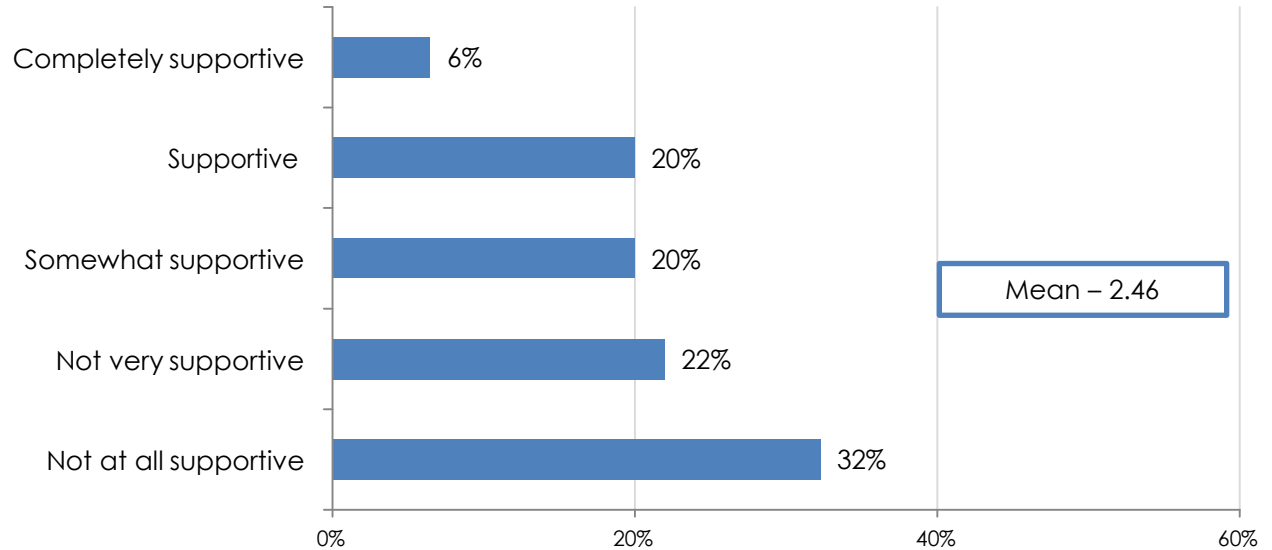
Almost half of the residents had prior awareness of the potential amalgamation, with ratepayers and those aged 50+ significantly more aware

Auburn City Merging with Neighbouring Councils

Support for Merging with Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde & The Hills Councils

Q6. How supportive would you be of Auburn City Council being merged with Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde and The Hills Councils?

The Review Panel has made recommendations for Auburn City Council to be amalgamated with 4 other councils: Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde and The Hills. This would ultimately create a large council with a potential population of over 558,500 residents, 7 times larger than the current Auburn City Council area.



	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non ratepayer
Supportive mean rating	2.46	2.50	2.41	2.62	2.36	2.40	2.14	2.47	2.43

Base: Overall N=502

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive



There was minimal support for merging with Parramatta, Holroyd, and parts of Ryde & The Hills Councils, with this response being constant across the community

Explanation of an Alternate Option

Residents were read this statement before being asked additional questions

As we indicated, the Review Panel has recommended some options for Auburn City Council; however, there is also the option to propose alternative ideas.

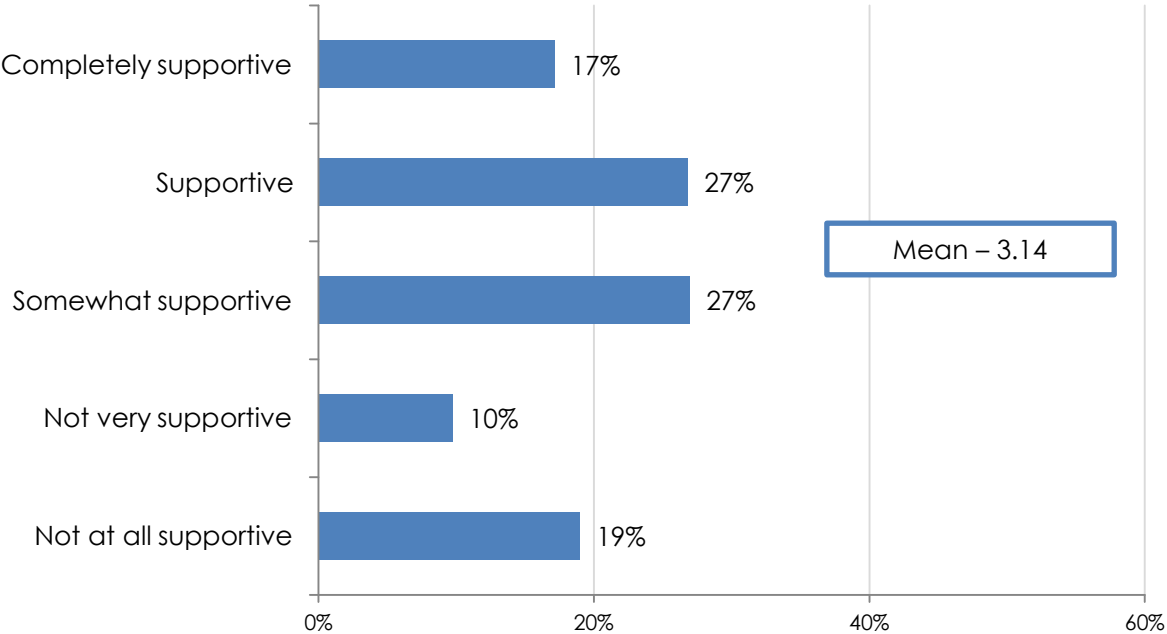
Auburn City Council has identified an alternate option for Auburn City Council to be amalgamated with a number of Councils to its east (this could include Councils such as Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood). This would create a smaller council that would still meet the minimum population size being suggested by the NSW Government with a population of over 250,000 residents. This alternate option is only 3 times larger than the current Auburn City Council area, enabling the council to remain responsive to the community's needs and local issues and taking advantage of the similarities and links between these areas.



Auburn City Merging with Neighbouring Councils

Support for Merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood Councils

Q7. How supportive would you be of Auburn City Council being merged with some of its neighbouring councils to the east (such as Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood)?



	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non ratepayer
Supportive mean rating	3.14	3.19	3.09	3.21	3.09	3.29	2.72▼	3.14	3.15

Base: Overall N=502

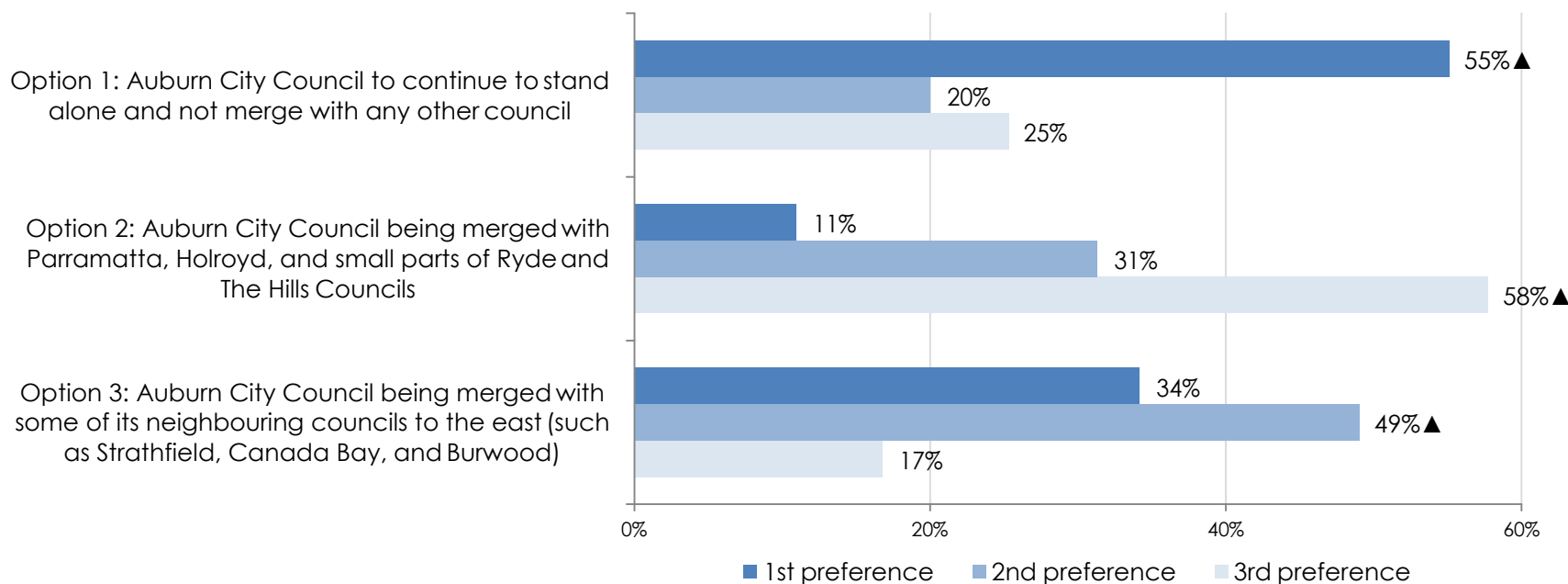
Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



71% of residents supported the proposed merging with their eastern neighbouring councils, however, those aged 65+ were significantly less supportive

Ranking Options in Order of Preference

Q8. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.



	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non ratepayer
Option 1	1.70	1.76	1.64	1.71	1.61	1.84	1.64	1.73	1.57
Option 2	2.47	2.47	2.46	2.46	2.52	2.42	2.45	2.45	2.54
Option 3	1.83	1.76	1.90	1.82	1.86	1.73	1.92	1.81	1.88

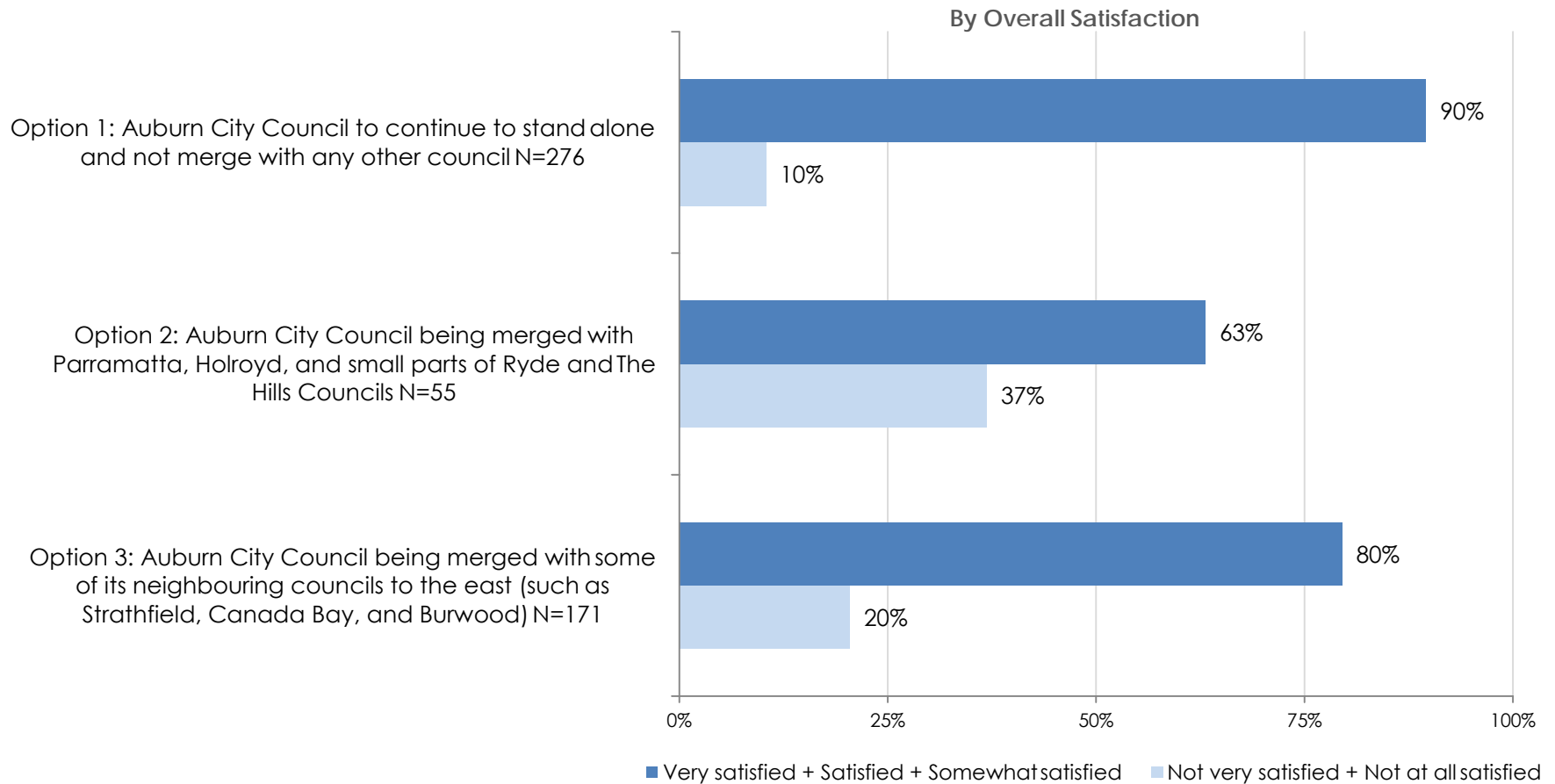
Base: Overall N=502

Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 3 = 3rd preference

The majority of Auburn LGA residents, 55%, would prefer to see their Council stand alone, not merging with any other councils

Ranking Options by Overall Satisfaction

Q8. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.
Q4. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



Base: N=502

Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 3 = 3rd preference

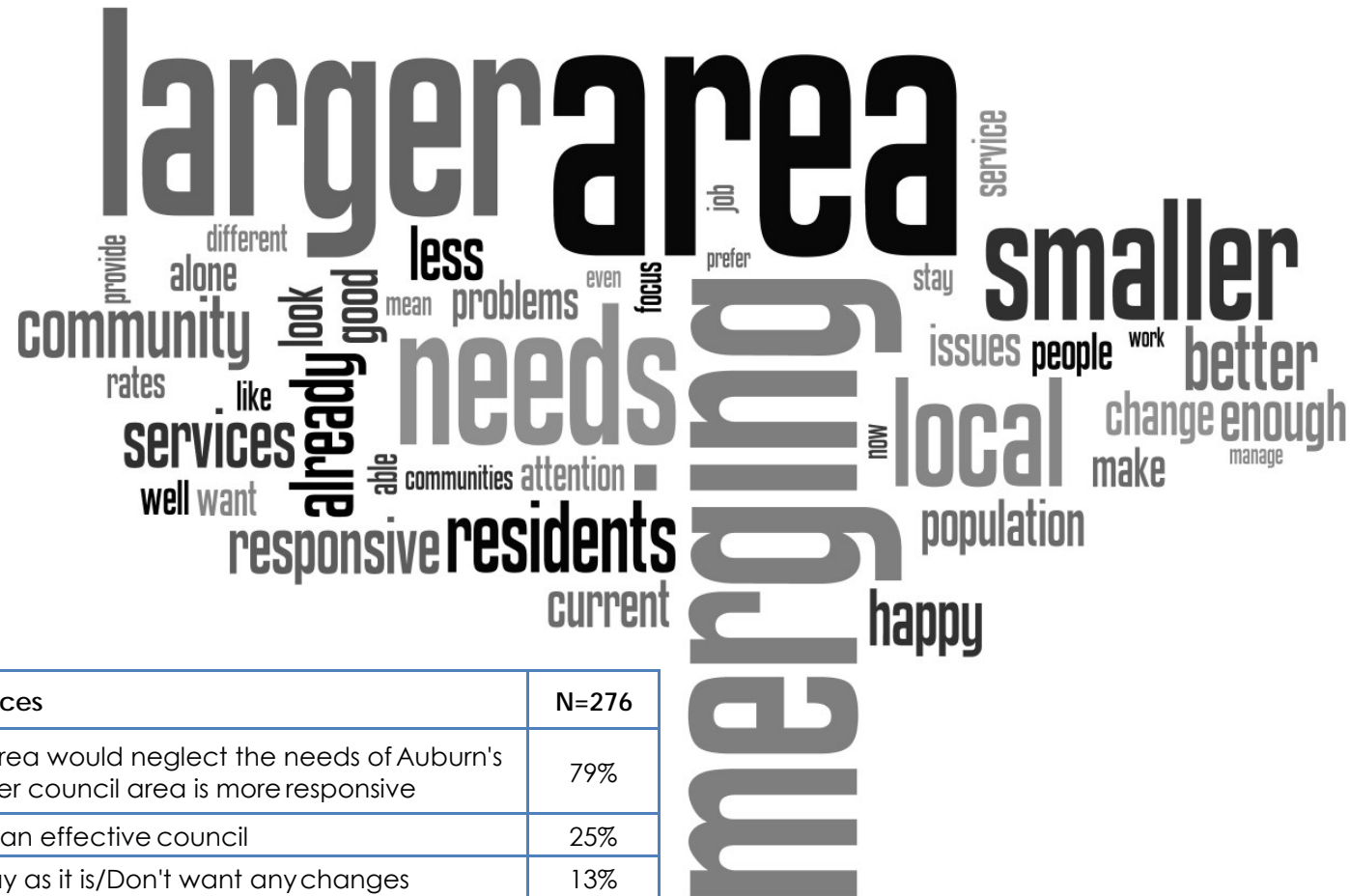
Of those who opted to support Auburn Council not merging with any other councils as their first preference, 90% had indicated they were at least 'somewhat satisfied' overall with Council's performance

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 1: Auburn City Council to continue to stand alone and not merge with any other council

Q8a. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.

Q8b. Why do you say that?



55% of 1 st Preferences	N=276
A larger council area would neglect the needs of Auburn's residents/Smaller council area is more responsive	79%
Auburn is already an effective council	25%
Council should stay as it is/Don't want any changes	13%
Different councils have different priorities	10%
Concerned about financial detriment	8%
Other	8%

Residents who selected to 'stand alone' as their first preference were primarily concerned with the increased size of the area having a detrimental effect on Auburn's residents

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 1: Auburn City Council continue to stand alone and do not merge with any other council

Q8a. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Verbatim Responses
"A council the size of half a million people will not be able to look after the needs of the Auburn area because they will have too many people to worry about"
"Already such a large Council area, if it gets larger service delivery will be damaged"
"Auburn Council is doing a good job for local residents and does not want to lose services by merging"
"Auburn is a cultural community and other areas would not gel"
"Auburn might be neglected or not have enough attention paid to it if there was to be a merge, even if it was a smaller merging"
"Believe there's still a lot of work to be done in Auburn, won't be done by merging"
"By standing alone, Auburn could continue to focus on and address local issues, which wouldn't be possible after merging"
"Concerned Auburn City local issues are different than other councils whether it be councils from option 2 or 3"
"Council is a very friendly and understanding community"
"Council merging would not work as services might not be delivered properly"
"Each area has different priorities so this could cause friction between the areas when decisions need to be made"
"Happy with the current standard Auburn City Council provides and I would not want it to change"
"Having a smaller area and a smaller population would mean that Auburn Council could be a lot more efficient, and focus on local issues a lot better than a larger council would be able to"
"If Council merges then rates will be increased to cover costs of amalgamation and newer services"
"Larger council would lead to less focus on the smaller communities and their needs"
"Merging with other councils could mean rates and prices go up and I would rather stay as we are so there are no changes in rates"
"Needs of Auburn's community cannot be met if one larger council has to look after over half a million people"
"Scope of council will be three or seven times larger and it's not able to cope now, let alone when larger"
"Smaller council provides a more personal touch and higher quality service to local residents"
"The more area an amalgamated council has to look after, the less effective that council will be"
"Too much already happening in the Auburn without bringing in other councils"

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 2: Auburn City Council being merged with Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde and The Hills Councils

Q8a. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.
Q8b. Why do you say that?



11% of 1 st Preferences	N=55
Similarity of areas to be merged	56%
A larger council would be more efficient and better funded	36%
Auburn needs to be part of a bigger area, seen and heard on a broader scale	27%
Lack of trust for Auburn Council	16%
Auburn will benefit from becoming a part of these councils	9%

There was little support for this option, however, for those who did select this as their first preference, the main reason was the similarity of the areas



Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 2: Auburn City Council being merged with Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde and The Hills Councils

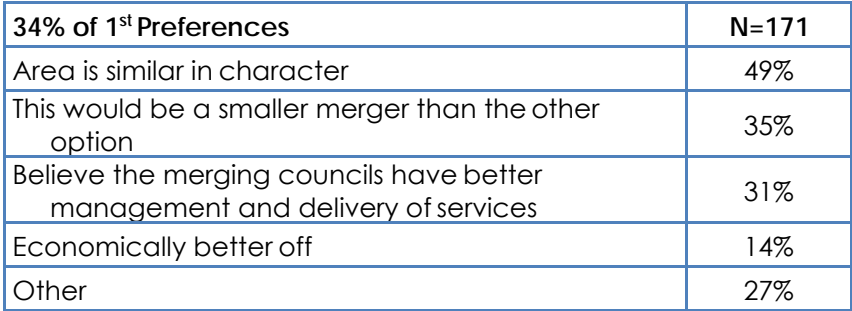
Q8a. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Verbatim Responses
<i>"A larger council would be more efficient and better funded"</i>
<i>"Auburn by itself is very restricted and there are not many people in the area, if more people are involved they will be forced to listen"</i>
<i>"Auburn is a lot more similar to Parramatta and the councils to the west, as that's where most residents in Auburn spend their time, doing things such as working, shopping and playing sports"</i>
<i>"Because of their similarities, Auburn merging with the western councils would be a lot more logical than merging with the eastern councils"</i>
<i>"Merging will increase the services that we get and it will be better for the residents"</i>
<i>"Merging would be good for Auburn, there areas are all linked very well already"</i>
<i>"Parramatta is an area that is growing fast and amalgamating with them will help Auburn to take off"</i>
<i>"Parramatta is the closest and most linked council to Auburn, more so than the eastern councils"</i>
<i>"Those councils have more in common and similar demographics as Auburn Council"</i>

This was the more popular of the 2 merger options. Ironically, residents prefer this option for the same reason the other merge option was selected, which is the perceived similarity of the areas to Auburn

8b. Why do you say that?



Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 3: Auburn City Council being merged with some of its neighbouring councils to the east (such as Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood)

Q8a. Now that you have been informed about the different options, please rank the following options in order of preference.

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Verbatim Responses
"Councils should merge, there are too many at the moment, merging with the East is the best option for Auburn"
"Feel residents would have more of a say in regards to representatives"
"Feel this option is most economic for the future"
"Having a larger council area would mean that the local government could have a greater financial capacity and be a lot more organised and efficient"
"It would be preferable to be merged with similar councils, as it would be more logical to have the region merged into one, centralised government"
"Merging with the councils to the East would benefit the Auburn community as those councils would be a positive influence on the Auburn Council"
"Other councils manage their budget better than Auburn Council"
"People in the councils to the east are very similar with Auburn"
"Smaller merger is the better option, it should lower costs but keep the council a manageable size"
"Strathfield, Canada Bay and Burwood are much nicer areas than Auburn so hopefully a new council would look after the Auburn area"
"The councils are much closer and the demographics are more relevant to Auburn City Council"
"These areas are closer geographically to Auburn and have a similar demographic of people"
"These council areas are small and closer to Auburn demographically and geographically compared to Parramatta"
"These councils have similar responsibilities and would therefore deliver similar services"

Recommendations



Conclusion

Overall Satisfaction with Council

- 83% of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the overall performance of Council, with the remaining 17% expressing some degree of dissatisfaction

Awareness of Amalgamation

- 46% of residents were previously aware of the NSW Government's recommendation that neighbouring councils should merge to create larger, but fewer, local government areas

Support for Proposed Options

- The option to merge with Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde & The Hills Councils was not very popular with residents, with less than half of the population prepared to indicate any level of support for this option (46%)
- The option to merge with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood Councils was more palatable to residents, with 71% indicating they were at least 'somewhat supportive'

Ranking of Preferred Options

- More than half of the residents selected to stand alone and not merge with any other councils as their first preference, the main reason for which is that 'a larger council would neglect the needs of Auburn's residents/smaller council is more responsive' (79%, 43% of the total sample)
- Again, when given the choice of merging with 2 diverse areas, residents elected to merge with 'Strathfield, Canada Bay and Burwood Councils' as their next preference because these areas are very similar, however, this could be a location disparity, as those who selected to merge with 'Parramatta, Holroyd, and small parts of Ryde and The Hills, Councils' also gave their predominant reason as 'the areas are very similar'



Respondent Breakdown by Subcell

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	502	261	241	216	136	100	50	409	93





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COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

June 2015



Burwood Council
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Purpose

The purpose of the Communication Plan was to define a framework for engaging with the community on the NSW Government's FFF package.

The Communication Plan was devised in line with Council's Community Engagement Strategy to increase community confidence in Council decision-making and improve the quality of decisions.

The FFF package has been determined as a 'high level impact' issue for the community in accordance with the *International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)* terminology. This means that the potential reforms will affect the whole of the Burwood LGA. As a result, Council has undertaken the communication activities for the high impact spectrum of the Engagement Activity Index.

Summary of consultation

Burwood Council commenced its consultation with the community in October 2014. Initially, Burwood sought feedback on the NSW Government's recommendation of the merger of Ashfield, Burwood, City of Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield.

The consultation included a range of traditional and innovative communication methods in order to raise awareness across Burwood's diverse community.

A telephone survey was undertaken in October 2014 by an independent research company to gauge residents' knowledge of the reform agenda and determine their perception of the proposal.

In December 2014, Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils engaged an independent consultant, Morrison Low, to undertake a feasibility study on the potential impacts and benefits of the Panel's proposed inner west council. The study revealed that an inner west council comprising the abovementioned councils would not create a council that is 'fit for the future'. As a result, the five councils also undertook a joint communications campaign in order to highlight the outcomes of the study and raise awareness on a regional level.

In addition to a region wide consultation, Burwood also undertook extensive consultation with its residents and stakeholders. This included a series of media releases, newsletters to residents, information on the benefits and impacts of mergers on Council's website, social media, advertisements in local publications, and information at Council's facilities. Residents were also given the opportunity to provide feedback through numerous channels.

During this process, Burwood also investigated the option of a smaller scale merger between Auburn, Burwood and City of Canada Bay. The three councils undertook an independent study on the potential benefits and impact of the merger which revealed that a smaller scale merger would provide a more superior model than a large inner west council. Following the study, the three councils undertook their own consultation, which included comprehensive telephone surveys, in order to gauge the level of support for this option in each community.

The merger option between Auburn, Burwood and City of Canada Bay was endorsed by all three councils at meetings in May and June following the outcomes of the survey. Since this endorsement, Council has continued to provide information to residents. A newsletter was distributed across the LGA in the week commencing 22 June 2015 providing further information on Council's decision to merge with Auburn and City of Canada Bay Councils. The newsletter was consistent with Auburn and City of Canada Bay's newsletters in order to provide objective and uniform information across the region. This information is also available on Council's website.

The three councils will continue to provide joint communication to residents across the region following the lodgement of their submission in order to keep the community informed and aware of the next steps.

Figure 1 – State Government timeline for FFF



Figure 2 – Consultation timeline

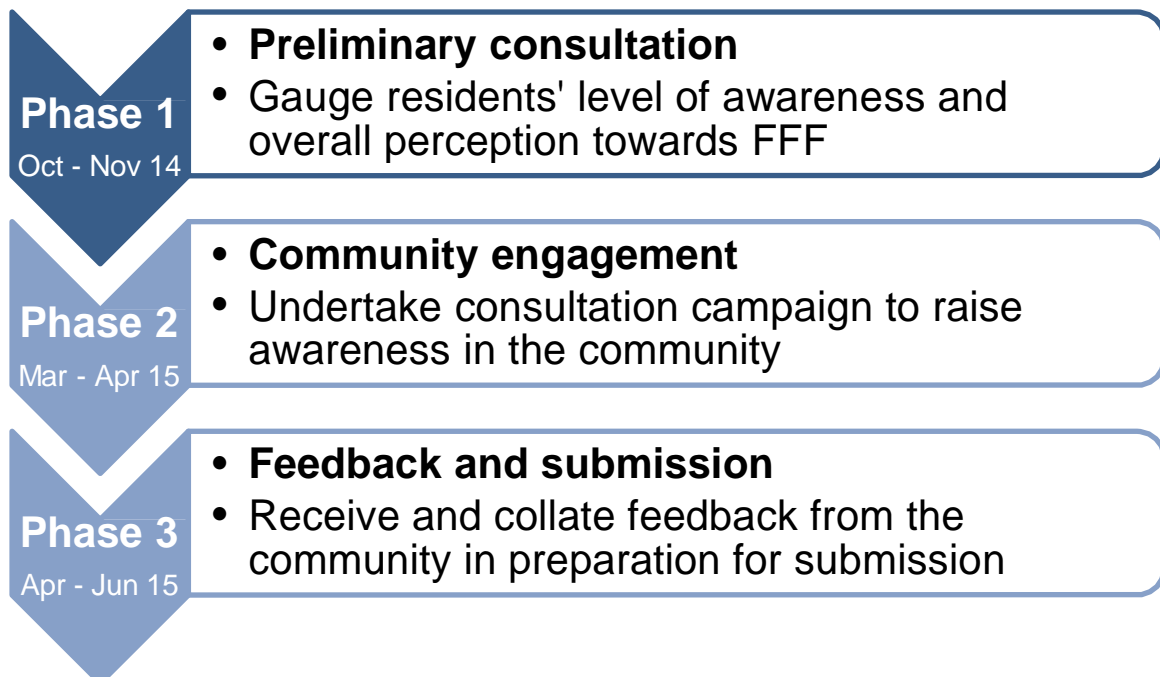


Figure 3 – Summary of actions

Timeframe	Method of Engagement	Target Audience	Action
October 2014 - May 2015 February - Current Ongoing	2 x Micromex Survey	Sample size of residents	Phone survey to gauge residents' perceptions towards FFF
	Website	Online users	Dedicated website/microsite on FFF including all information
	Media releases	Local publications (combined circulation of 150,000) - Burwood Scene - Inner West Courier	Media releases will be distributed to media outlets
May – June 2015	Advertisements in local publications	Local publications: - Burwood Scene - Inner West Courier	Advertisements including information and directing traffic to website
April – June	2 x Special residents newsletters	Burwood LGA (36,000 residents and 4,727 businesses)	2 designated newsletters delivered across LGA with information on merger proposals
Ongoing	Social media	Social media users who may not engage with Council through traditional methods	Social media campaign which links back to dedicated FFF website to generate discussion
Ongoing	Information at facilities	Visitors to Council's facilities: - Chambers - L&C Hub (60,000/month) - EAC - Woodstock	Signage at facilities to raise awareness on FFF
Ongoing	Online feedback	Online users	Link to feedback included on website/social media/newsletters

Examples of information distributed to residents

Screenshot of information on Council's website

 [Text Version](#) | [Home](#) | [Contact Council](#) | [Burwood Library](#) | [Enfield Aquatic Centre](#) | [Forms and Factsheets](#) | [Online DA Tracking](#) | [Payments](#)

Burwood
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Burwood's future Have your say

To amalgamate or not to amalgamate?

The NSW Government has announced one of the most significant reform proposals in our State's history with the intention to reduce the number of Sydney Metropolitan councils from 41 to 18.

[Click here to have your say.](#)



Welcome
Heritage. Progress. Pride

Mayor's Message
From Councillor John Faker

Our Community
The year in review

Burwood's future
Have your say

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NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

Have your say on Local Government reforms

BURWOOD'S FUTURE

To amalgamate or not to amalgamate? Find out more about the NSW Government's proposed reforms for Local Government.

The future of Parramatta Road

The NSW Government has now released the Draft Parramatta Road Urban Renewal Strategy which outlines its intentions to renew the Parramatta Road corridor from Sydney CBD to

WHAT'S ON

MEETING CALENDAR

6:00PM Mon, 09 March 2015
Building and Development Committee Meeting - Monday 9 March 2015

6:00PM Mon, 23 March 2015
Council Meeting - Monday 23 March 2015

Quick Links

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Public Exhibitions
- Positions Vacant
- Burwood Local Environmental Plan 2012
- Access to Council Information
- DA Forms and Factsheets
- Tenders
- Feedback


You are here: [Home](#) > [Our Burwood](#) > [Have your say on Local Government amalgamations](#) [Email this](#) | [Printer-friendly](#) | [Text size: Increase](#) | [Decrease](#)

OUR BURWOOD

- Funding Our Future
- Have your say on Local Government amalgamations**
- History
- Traffic and Transport
- Parking and Permit
- Parking Scheme
- Future Directions
- About Council
- Burwood 2030
- Community Strategic Plan
- Maps
- Parks and Reserves
- Sister Cities
- Where to find Us
- Major Projects

Have your say on Local Government amalgamations

INNERWEST REGION



THE FACTS

POPULATION

Area	Population
BURWOOD	35,300
ASHFIELD	44,200
CANADA BAY	84,900
LEICHHARDT	57,300
MARRICKVILLE	82,500
STRATHFIELD	38,400

PROPOSED INNER WEST COUNCIL POPULATION
336,000

PROJECTED INNER WEST COUNCIL POPULATION 2031
432,400

The NSW Government has announced one of the most significant reform proposals in our State's history with the intention to reduce the number of Sydney Metropolitan councils from 41 to 18.

In September 2014, the State Government released its Local Government reform package named "Fit for the Future". The package is based on the final recommendations of the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Taskforce which put forward the case of merging Sydney Metropolitan councils.

Keeping it local

Sydney's inner west is a diverse region filled with many vibrant cultures and lifestyles. What makes the area such an attractive destination for people to call home or visit is the many unique communities within the region and their interconnectivity.

In particular, the Burwood LGA is a mixing pot of culture with a thriving business and retail centre surrounded by leafy villages, each with their own distinct character and charm, including Croydon, Enfield, Burwood Heights, Croydon Park and Strathfield.

Burwood Council currently provides a range of services and initiatives to ensure that we meet the needs and desire of our diverse community which may be compromised under the proposed reforms. These include:

Our community

Providing more than 80 key community services including Home and Community Care, Community Podiatry Service, the Volunteer Network, support services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and people with a disability, youth advisory group and numerous civic events and memorial services.

Our local infrastructure

Upgrading and maintaining local infrastructure including roads, footpaths, kerbs and gutters, parks and drains as part of our comprehensive capital works program to ensure accessibility and safety in the community.

Our safety

Improving safety in the area through a comprehensive CCTV network and joint initiatives with Burwood Police which has led to a significant reduction in crime since 2010.

Our streets and shopping districts

Keeping our town centres and suburbs clean through our Safe and Clean initiative, regular street sweeping services and inspection of food and hygiene premises.

Our events

Hosting a range of civic events which attract over 350 000 visitors a year to foster a sense of

BURWOOD'S FUTURE

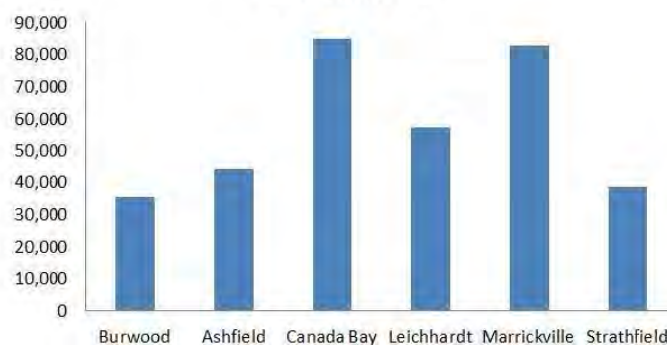


The Inner West region: The facts

The NSW Government has proposed the amalgamation of the six inner west councils: Burwood, Ashfield, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield.

Sydney's inner west is a diverse region made up of many different communities, with each council providing their own services and initiatives catered to meet the needs of their residents. Below you will find a breakdown of the six Local Government Areas.

Population



Residents per Councillor (1)





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BURWOOD'S FUTURE

Proposed council amalgamations

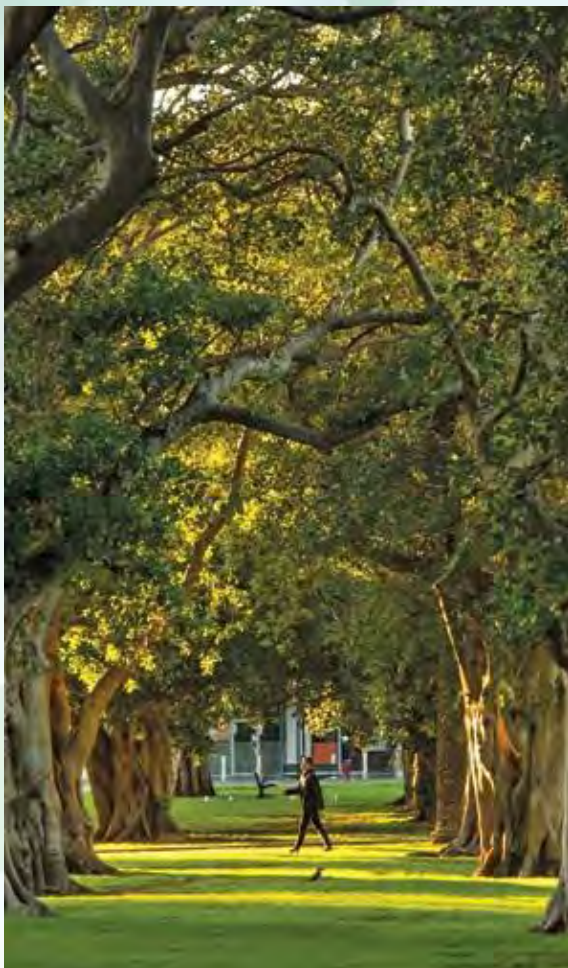
The NSW Government has announced one of the most significant reform proposals in our State's history with the intention to reduce the number of Sydney Metropolitan councils from 41 to 18.

In September 2014, the NSW Government released its Local Government reform package named "Fit for the Future" which puts forward the case of merging Sydney Metropolitan councils.

In particular, "Fit for the Future" proposes the merger of Burwood, Ashfield, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield Councils to form one Inner West council.

What will this mean?

- **Loss of local representation with 1 councillor per 22,413 residents**
- **\$60 million shortfall**
- **10 years to break even**



Mayor's Message:



In 2014, the NSW Government released its Local Government reform package Fit for the Future proposing the merger of councils in NSW including the creation of a super council in the Inner West of Sydney comprising Burwood, Ashfield, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield Councils.

Burwood Council is against forced amalgamations as we firmly believe we are fit for the future under our current structure. Our strong financial and strategic position is confirmed by the NSW Treasury Corporation which has given Council a positive outlook in financial sustainability and the new NSW Government planning strategy which has identified Burwood as a strategic centre in Sydney.

Although this is one of the most significant reform proposals in our State's history, the NSW Government has remained tight-lipped on the entire process. Recently, Council engaged an independent firm to conduct a survey in our community which revealed that 55 per cent of residents were unaware of these proposed amalgamations.

I believe it's important for our community to understand the impact of amalgamations which is why we will continue to provide updates on this matter over the coming months.

In the meantime, I encourage you to share your thoughts with us on this important issue by emailing fitforthefuture@burwood.nsw.gov.au.

CR JOHN FAKER
Mayor of Burwood

The boundary of the proposed Inner West council as indicated by the NSW Government

THE FACTS

POPULATION

BURWOOD	35,300
ASHFIELD	44,200
CANADA BAY	84,900
LEICHHARDT	57,300
MARRICKVILLE	82,500
STRATHFIELD	38,400

PROPOSED

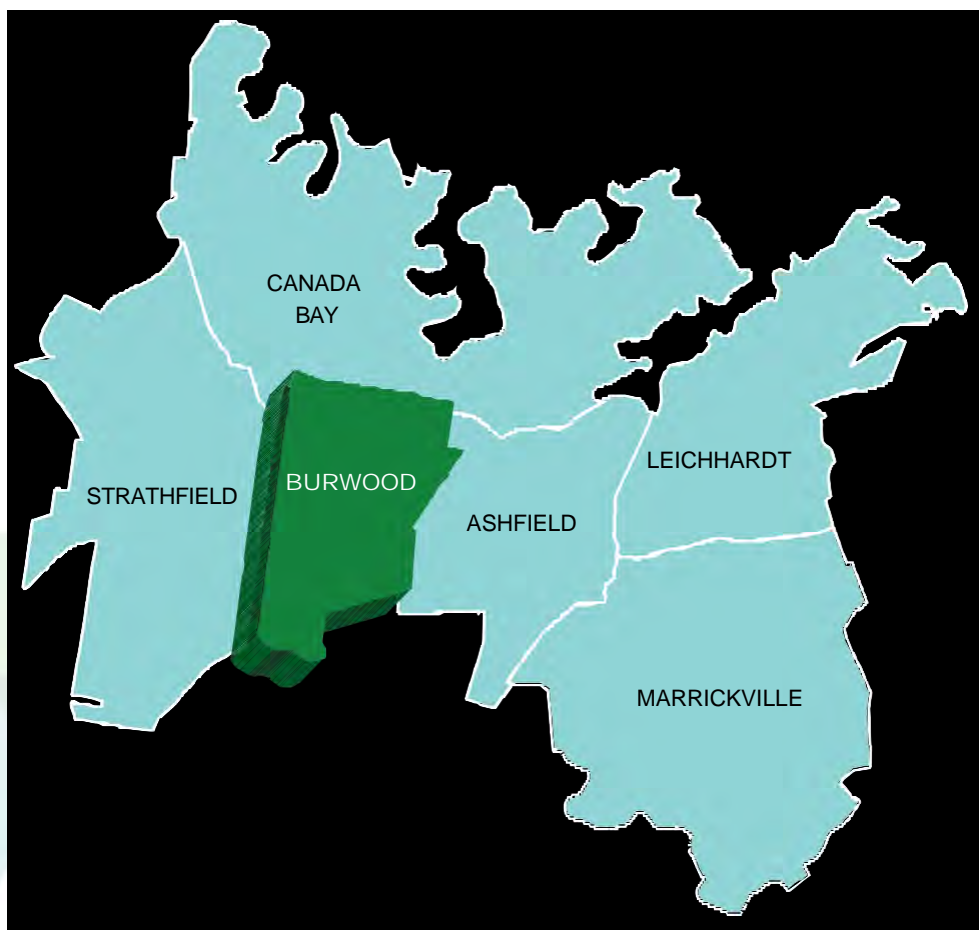
INNER WEST COUNCIL
POPULATION

336,000

PROJECTED

INNER WEST COUNCIL
POPULATION 2031

432,400



FIT FOR THE FUTURE: FAQ

Is bigger better?

There is little evidence that a bigger council will be more efficient. In Queensland, councils are undergoing de-amalgamations and in Western Australia the Premier has now stopped the amalgamations of councils.

The significant increase in population and land area will mean a decrease in local representation, and therefore your voice on important local issues, with one Councillor representing 22,413 residents. Currently, Burwood Council has one Councillor per 5,000 residents.

What is the cost of amalgamations?

The NSW Government has proposed \$10.5 million for each newly merged council which is an immediate shortfall of more than \$60 million required to fund the proposed Inner West super council.

Will there be savings?

If the proposed councils were merged, it will take up to 10 years for the new super council to break even.

What is council doing?

Burwood Council is currently in discussions with surrounding councils to evaluate the six-council merger option and identify alternative models.

What can you do?

You can write to Council or the Local State Member to let us know what your thoughts are on amalgamations.

What's next?

Council will make a submission to the NSW Government by 30 June 2015 based on our community's feedback. We will continue to provide updates on the matter once a submission has been lodged.

Please visit Council's website for more information and to have your say.



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BURWOOD'S FUTURE

Information on Council's Merger Proposal

The NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' Program for Council Amalgamations

In 2012, the NSW Government appointed an Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate the need for changes to ensure Councils are sustainable, efficient and effective.

The NSW Government then released the 'Fit for the Future' reform program which recommended reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from 41 to about 15.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, and an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the community's needs and local issues.



The NSW Government's recommended merger option

What does this mean for Burwood Council?

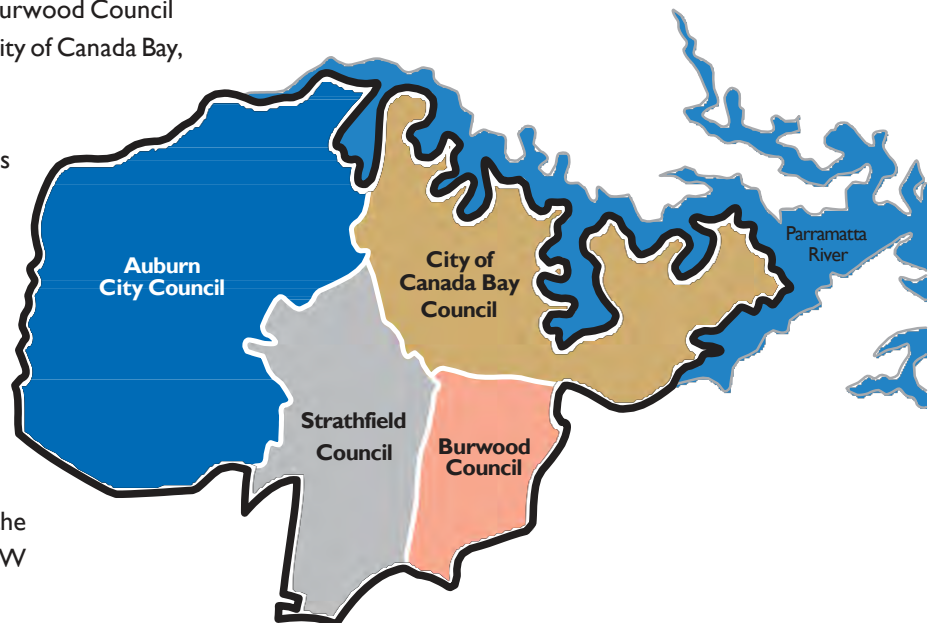
Despite Burwood Council's strong financial outlook (as identified by NSW Treasury), the option to stand alone does not meet the requirements of the Government's Fit for the Future program primarily due to its population size.

The Review Panel has made recommendations for Burwood Council to be amalgamated with 5 other councils: Ashfield, City of Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield. This would ultimately create a large council with a potential population of over 336,000 residents, almost 10 times larger than the current Burwood Council area.

The Burwood alternative

Burwood Council has voted to adopt an alternate merger proposal including Auburn City Council (blue), Burwood Council (pink) and City of Canada Bay Council (light brown).

This would create a smaller council that still meets the minimum population size being suggested by the NSW Government.



Burwood Council's proposal

Benefits of this Merger Proposal include:

- ✓ Meets estimated minimum population size for Councils
- ✓ Significant long term savings of \$140m over 10 years
- ✓ Protects local town centres and villages
- ✓ Same level of services provided
- ✓ Combined financial strength which meets 'Fit for the Future' benchmarks, including low debt
- ✓ Cultural synergies – cosmopolitan communities
- ✓ Investment in community facilities and infrastructure
- ✓ Strong connectivity between the Councils through Parramatta Road and extensive river frontage
- ✓ Powerful local economies that build on existing industry and business, strengthening employment opportunities
- ✓ Key strategic centres, including Burwood, Rhodes and a city based around Sydney Olympic Park
- ✓ Equal footing of merged Councils



**An Alternate
Council
Merger
Proposal**



How did we arrive at our position?

Burwood Council has proposed the following option in the event that the State Government proceeds with forced amalgamations. In the event that it does not go ahead with the reform proposal, then Burwood Council will opt to stand-alone.

Council has undertaken extensive research and commissioned some independent studies to determine its position and prepare its 'Fit for the Future' Merger Proposal.

Community involvement has played an integral role. This included a series of telephone surveys to local residents from October 2014 to May 2015, each time involving an accurate sample size covering all suburbs and age groups across Burwood. When asked about the option to merge with Auburn and City of Canada Bay Councils, a majority of respondents stated they were supportive of the proposal.

How does this affect me as a ratepayer?

This merger proposal aims to protect residents against unnecessary rate increases that may follow an ill-advised merger. The merger process, if approved by the NSW Government, could be initiated prior to the next Local Government elections in 2016.

How do I provide feedback on the merger?

Information on the proposed mergers will be available prior to Council lodging its final 'Fit for the Future' submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal by 30 June 2015.

Any person who wishes to provide feedback may do so by writing to Council, sending an email (fitforthefuture@burwood.nsw.gov.au), engaging on social media or by visiting our website at www.burwood.nsw.gov.au.

How do I find out more?

For further information please visit our website at www.burwood.nsw.gov.au or phone 9911 9911.



For further enquiries please phone 9911 9911 or email fitforthefuture@burwood.nsw.gov.au

To stay informed and involved with important Burwood Council news and events, sign up to Council's E-News by visiting our Website at www.burwood.nsw.gov.au or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BurwoodCouncil



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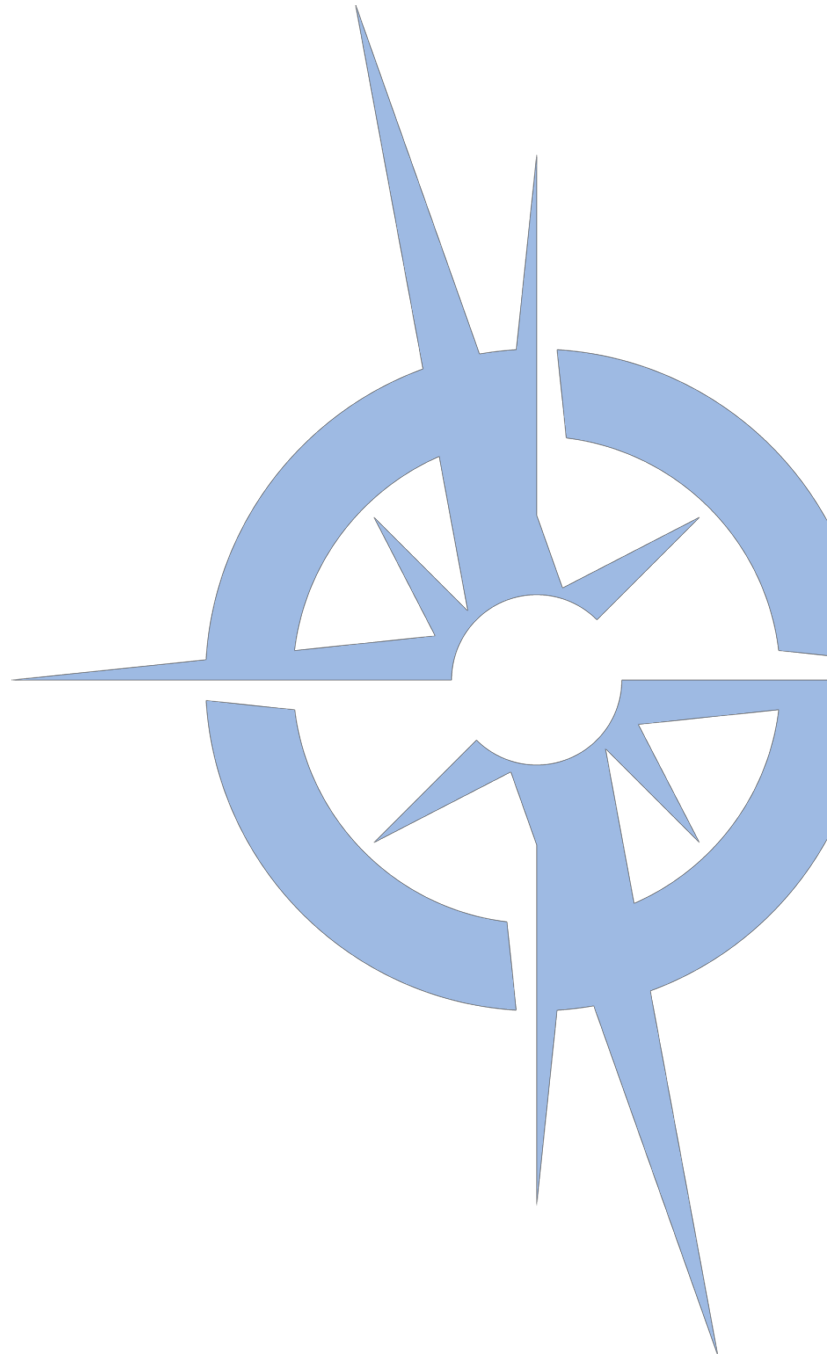


**An Alternate
Council
Merger
Proposal**



Section D

Our Future



Awareness of the State Government Reviewing the Local Government System

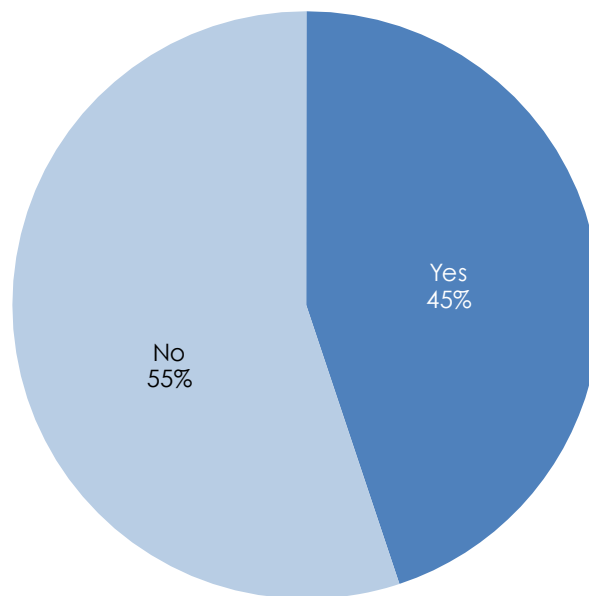
Summary

45% of residents stated they were aware that the State Government is reviewing the Local Government system.

Residents aged 35+ were significantly more likely to be aware of the State Government reviewing the Local Government system than were those aged 18-34.

Males were significantly more likely to be aware of the State Government reviewing the Local Government system than were females.

Q12. Are you aware that the State Government is reviewing the Local Government system?



Base: n = 501

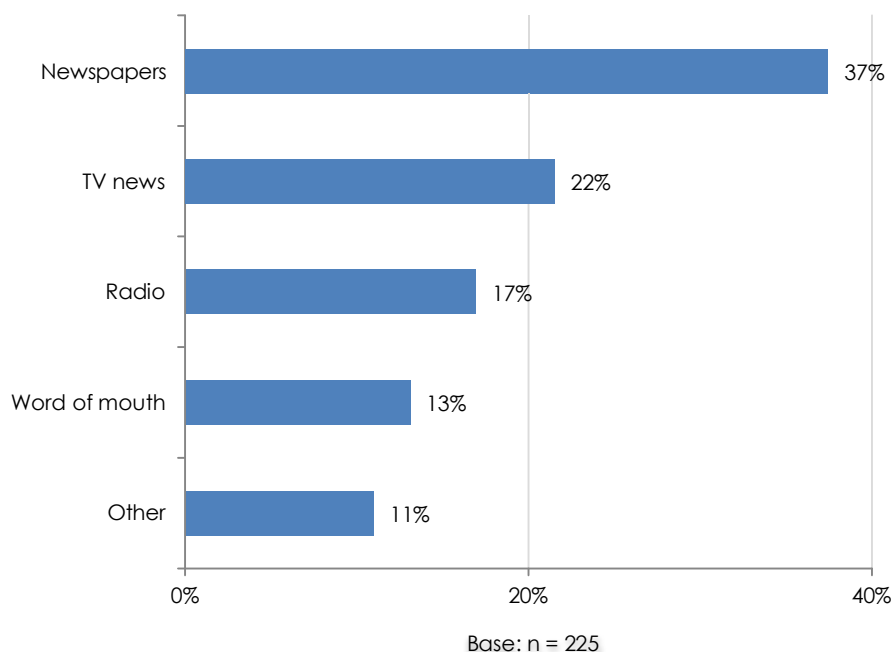


First Awareness of the Proposed Amalgamations

Summary

37% of residents heard about the proposed amalgamations via 'newspapers'.

Q13. Where did you first hear about the proposed amalgamations?



Newspapers – specified	Count
Sydney Morning Herald	60
Inner West Courier	35
Daily Telegraph	16
Burwood Scene	7
Unspecified local newspaper	5
The Australian	1
Unspecified national newspaper	1
Word of mouth – specified	Count
Friend	8
Councillors/Mayor	6
Neighbour	5
Council staff	4
Family member	2
Spouse	1
Study colleagues	1
Work colleagues	1
Other	Count
Paper mail – brochure, flyer, letter from Council, newsletter	9
Website – ABC, State Government site, socialmedia	6
Signage	4
Do not recall	3
Visited Council offices	1



Support for Amalgamation

Summary

29% of residents were 'supportive' to 'completely supportive', 21% were 'somewhat supportive', and '50% were 'not very supportive' to 'not at all supportive' of Burwood Council being amalgamated with the five other nearby councils.

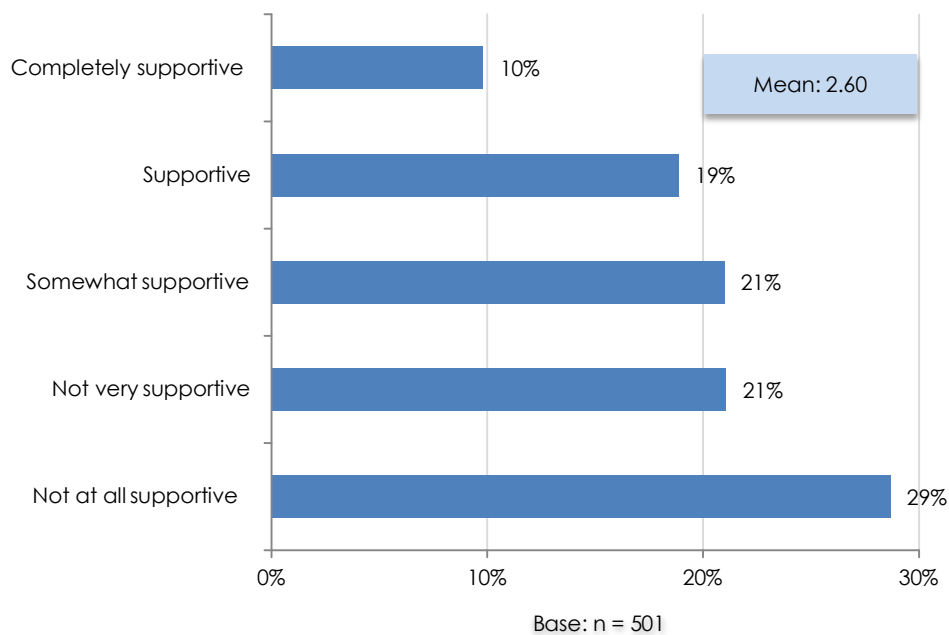
Males were significantly more supportive of an amalgamation than were females and residents born Overseas were significantly more supportive of an amalgamation than were those born in Australia.

Q14a. How supportive would you be of Burwood Council being amalgamated with those five other nearby councils?

	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Australia	Overseas	Overall
Satisfaction mean ratings	2.60	2.68	2.74	2.50	2.43	2.79▲	2.42	2.45	2.90▲	2.60

Scale: 1= not at all supportive, 5= completely supportive

▼▲= A significantly lower/higher level of satisfaction (by group)



Support for Amalgamation

Q14a. How supportive would you be of Burwood Council being amalgamated with those five other nearby councils?

Q14b. Why do you say that?

Supportive/Completely supportive	%
Amalgamation would increase Council's economic efficiency	17%
Greater capacity to provide services if larger in size and staff	9%
Larger council area/fewer total councils would be more accountable	3%
Proposed councils for amalgamation are effectively run	1%
Supportive of amalgamation despite some concerns over implementation	1%
Similarity of areas would make merger effective	1%
Somewhat supportive	%
Amalgamating with all proposed councils would result in too large an area to service effectively	8%
Unsure of level of support for amalgamation at this stage with the information available	5%
Not confident that a merger would lead to significant benefits	3%
Amalgamation would increase Council's economic efficiency	3%
Concerned about loss of local identity in amalgamated council	2%
Would prefer alternative amalgamation model	1%
Increased council area would allow more effective service provision	1%
Not very supportive/Not at all supportive	%
Local issues would be neglected under an amalgamated council	31%
Management of such a large area would be ineffective	17%
Larger council area would result in worse management - corruption, job losses, rates rises, poor developments	5%
Good performance of Burwood Council makes merger unnecessary	4%
Proposed councils are too diverse to effectively amalgamate	3%
Do not feel that benefits of amalgamation have been communicated enough to form an opinion	1%
Alternative government structure should be implemented rather than council restructuring	1%
Previous amalgamations have been ineffective	1%

Base: n = 498

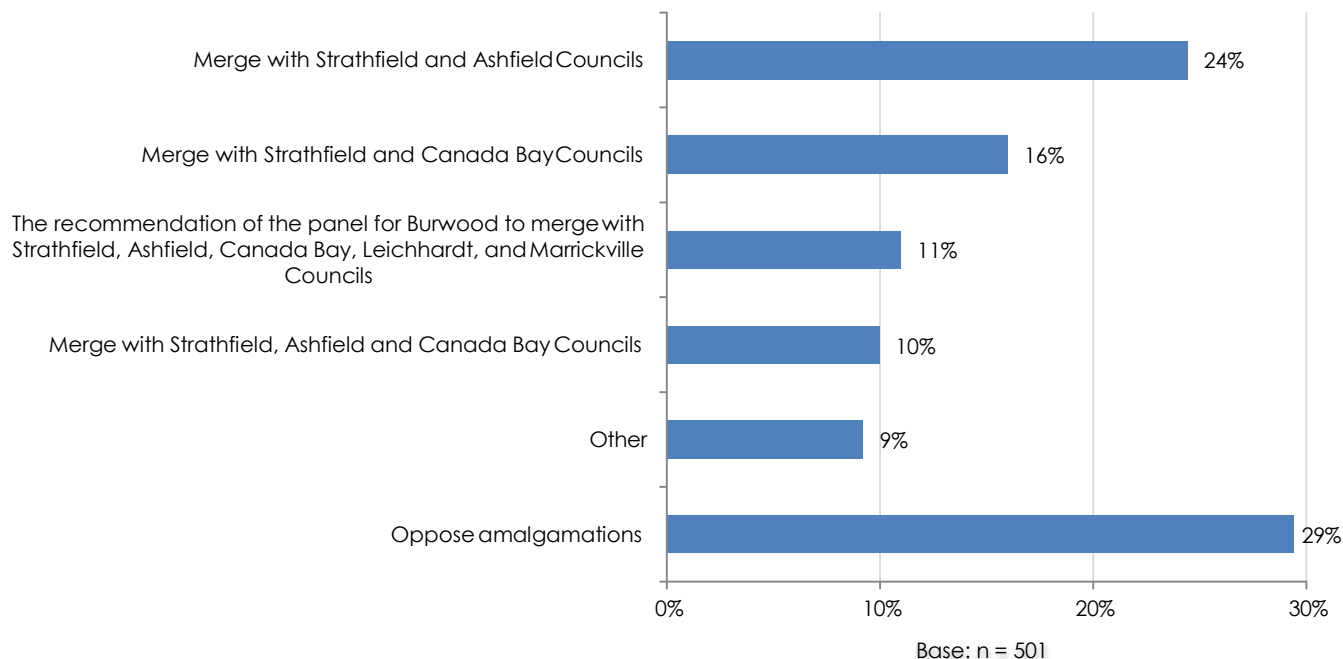


Preference for Alternative Options

Summary

Residents' preferred amalgamation option was to 'merge with Strathfield and Ashfield Council' (24%), whilst 29% of residents oppose the amalgamations altogether.

Q15a. As we indicated, the Panel has recommended some options for Burwood, however, there is also the option to oppose amalgamations or to propose an alternative idea. Which of the following options would be your preference?



Q15b. Why do you say that?

Merge with all five councils	%
Larger Council would ensure economic efficiency	7%
Greater capacity to provide services if larger in size and staff	6%
Councils suggested for amalgamation are similar and compatible	2%
No reason to object to the proposal	1%
Positive repercussions for local community	1%
Supportive of reduction in councils in general	1%
Experience with previous successful mergers	1%
Merge with Strathfield and Ashfield Councils	%
Burwood, Strathfield and Ashfield Councils are particularly compatible – location, demographics, issues	23%
Smaller amalgamation allows Council to service local needs	8%
This solution would ensure economic efficiency/effectiveness	2%
Strathfield/Ashfield appear to be well run	2%
Merge with Strathfield and Canada Bay Councils	%
Burwood, Strathfield and Canada Bay Councils are particularly compatible – location, demographics, issues	17%
Strathfield and Canada Bay are more successful/nicer areas than the other proposed councils	6%
Smaller amalgamation allows Council to service local needs	4%
Merging with these councils may help address issues in those areas	1%
Merge with Strathfield, Ashfield and Canada Bay Councils	%
Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield and Canada Bay Councils are particularly compatible – location, demographics, issues	10%
Any further merger would create too large an area	3%
Strathfield, Ashfield and Canada Bay Councils perform well/are nice areas	2%
Moderately-sized amalgamation would ensure best level of service provision	1%
Leichhardt/Marrickville Councils do not have a significant relationship with these councils	1%



Preference for Alternative Options

Q15a. As we indicated, the Panel has recommended some options for Burwood, however, there is also the option to oppose amalgamations or to propose an alternative idea. Which of the following options would be your preference?

Q15b. Why do you say that?

Other	Reason	Count
Merge with Strathfield only	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	15
	Location/links between councils would make amalgamation easy	7
	This amalgamation would create a council of effective size	7
	Strathfield is a well run council area	2
	Not satisfied with the performance of other proposed councils	1
Merge with Ashfield only	Location/links between councils would make amalgamation easy	2
	Not satisfied with the performance of other proposed councils	1
	This amalgamation would create a council of effective size	1
Merge with Canada Bay only	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	2
	Canada Bay is a well run council area	1
	Location/links between councils would make amalgamation easy	1
Merge with either Strathfield only or Ashfield only	Strengthening local councils at the expense of states would allow better service provision	1
	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
	This amalgamation would create a council of effective size	1
Merge with Ashfield and Canada Bay	Ashfield is a well run council area	1
	Canada Bay is a well run council area	1
Merge with Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville	Strengthening local councils at the expense of states would allow better service provision	1
	This amalgamation would create a council of effective size	1
Merge Ashfield and Canada Bay with one another, without including Burwood	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
Merge with Ashfield and Canterbury	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
Merge with Ashfield, Leichhardt and Canada Bay	Not satisfied with the performance of other proposed councils	1
Merge with Canada Bay and Marrickville	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
Merge with Canada Bay and Strathfield	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
Merge with Councils on a merit basis	Specific issues take precedence over council amalgamation details	1
Merge with Strathfield, Ashfield, Canada Bay and Leichhardt	These councils are particularly compatible – <i>location, demographics, issues</i>	1
Revise local government structure/representation overall	Burwood Council performance can be best improved without an amalgamation	1
	Specific issues take precedence over council amalgamation details	1
	Strengthening local councils at the expense of states would allow better service provision	1
No preference between options	Not enough information is available outlining how a merger would occur	5
	Specific issues take precedence over council amalgamation details	2



Burwood Council

Fit for the Future

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: May 2015



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Background



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Methodology & Sample

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Burwood Council, developed the questionnaire.

Data collection period

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during the period 18th – 21st May 2015.

Sample

N=403 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 403 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=403 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.9%. This means, for example that the answer “completely supportive” (34%) to the option to stand alone, with no merger could vary from 29% to 39%. As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the real community profile of Burwood Council, the outcomes reported here reflect an ‘effective sample size’; that is, the weighted data provides outcomes with the same level of confidence as unweighted data of a different sample size. In some cases this effective sample size may be smaller than the true number of surveys conducted.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.

Word Frequency Tagging

Verbatim responses for open questions were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis ‘counts’ the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned.



Sample Profile



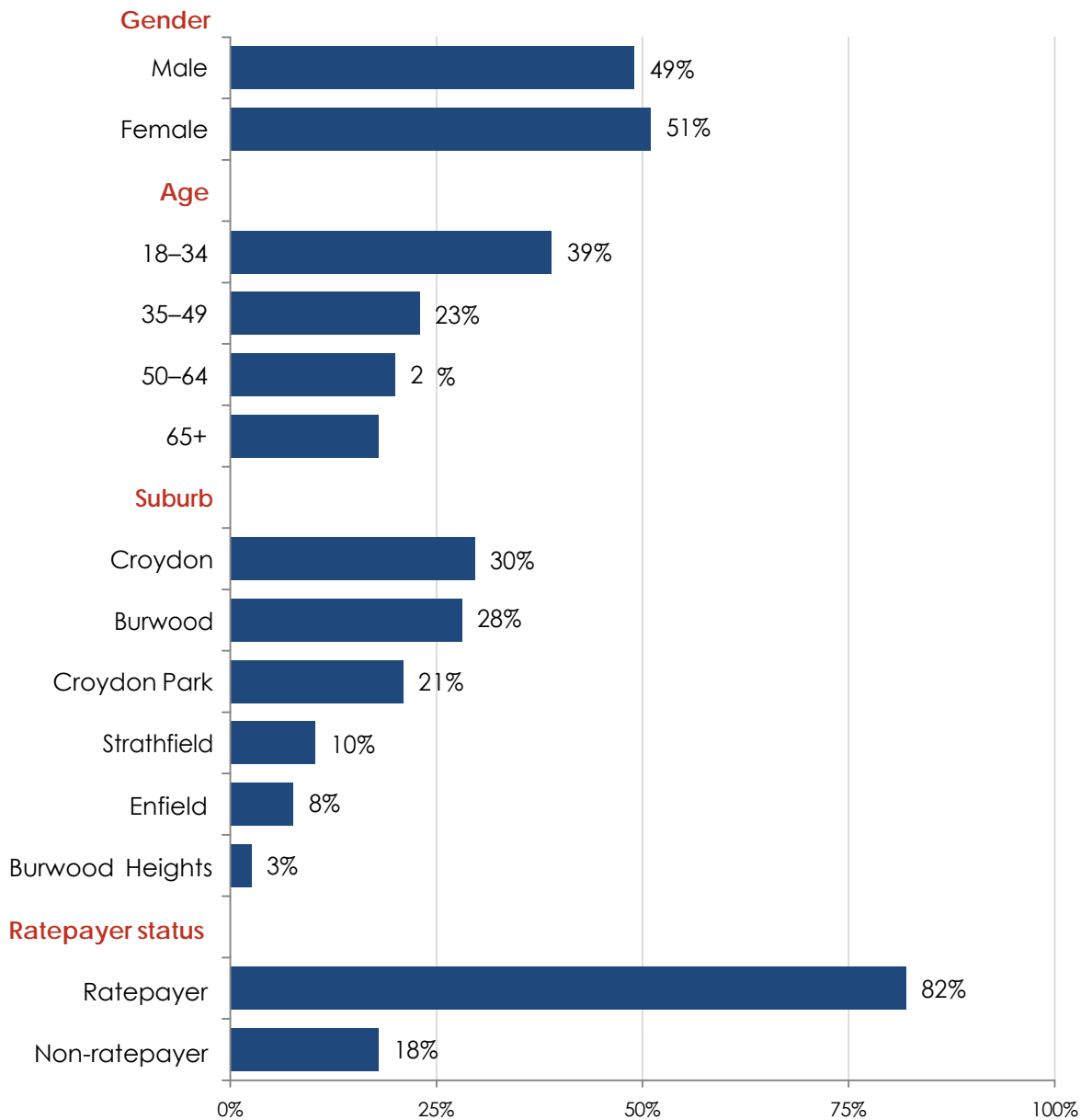
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The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Burwood Council

Sample Profile



Results



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Concept Statement

Residents were read this statement before being asked the relevant questions

The NSW State Government is promoting sweeping changes across local government including reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from about 40 to 15. This is to be achieved through merging/ amalgamating councils.

The recommendation from the State Government is for Burwood to merge with Strathfield, Ashfield, Canada Bay, Marrickville, and Leichhardt.

Following initial community consultation and feasibility studies, Burwood Council does not believe this is a good option. In particular, Council is concerned about the potential loss of community representation, where one councillor will need to represent up to 30,000 residents.

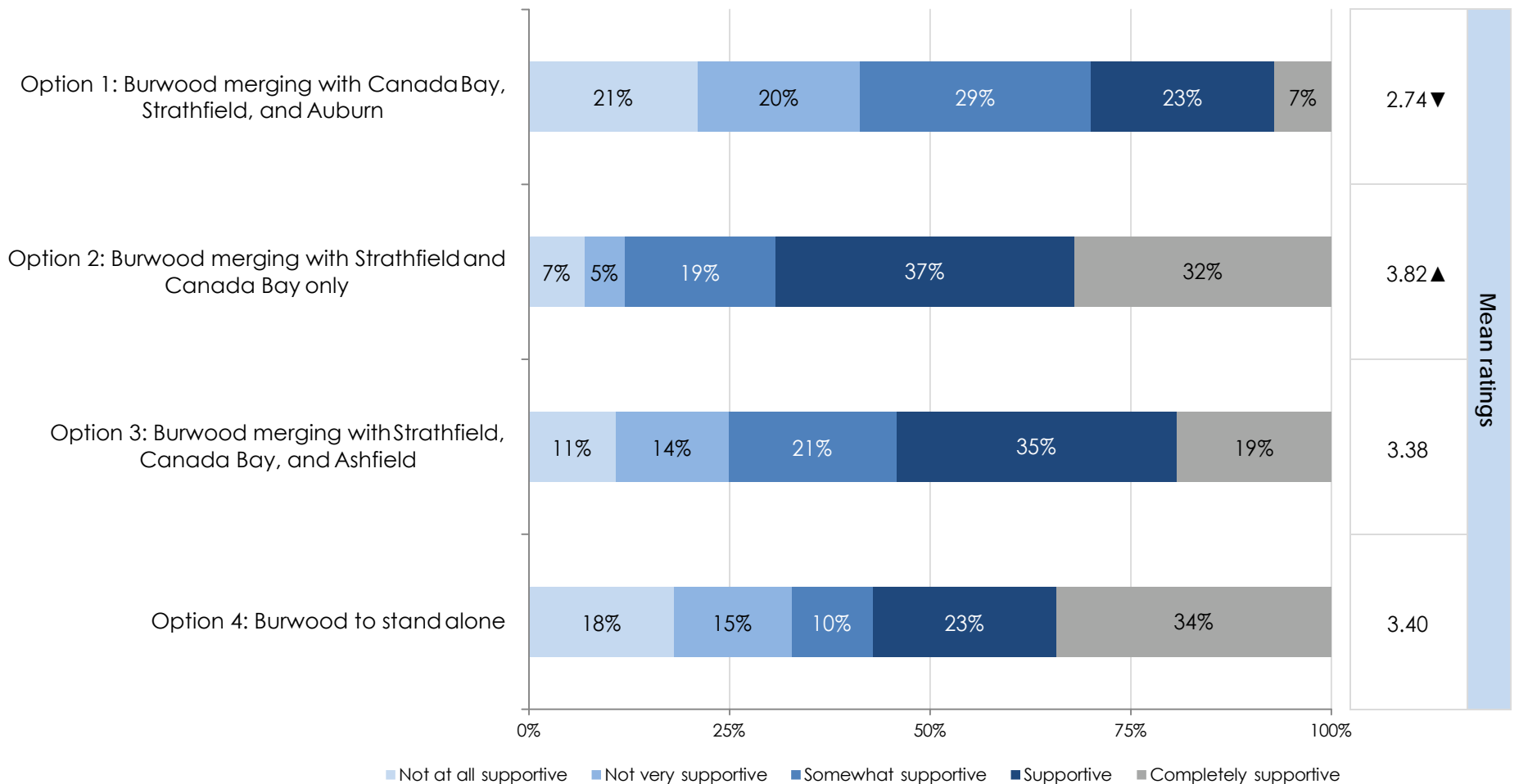
However, the Minister for Local Government has recently declared that standing alone will not be possible, so Burwood Council has been communicating with its neighbours to identify an alternative solution.

The preferred option currently considered by Council is the amalgamation of Burwood with Canada Bay, Strathfield, and Auburn.

Council feels this will provide a manageable and sustainable model, with good representation, as well as a strong economic base thanks to future growth areas that will contribute to the infrastructure replacement needs.



Summary of Support for Prompted Options



Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

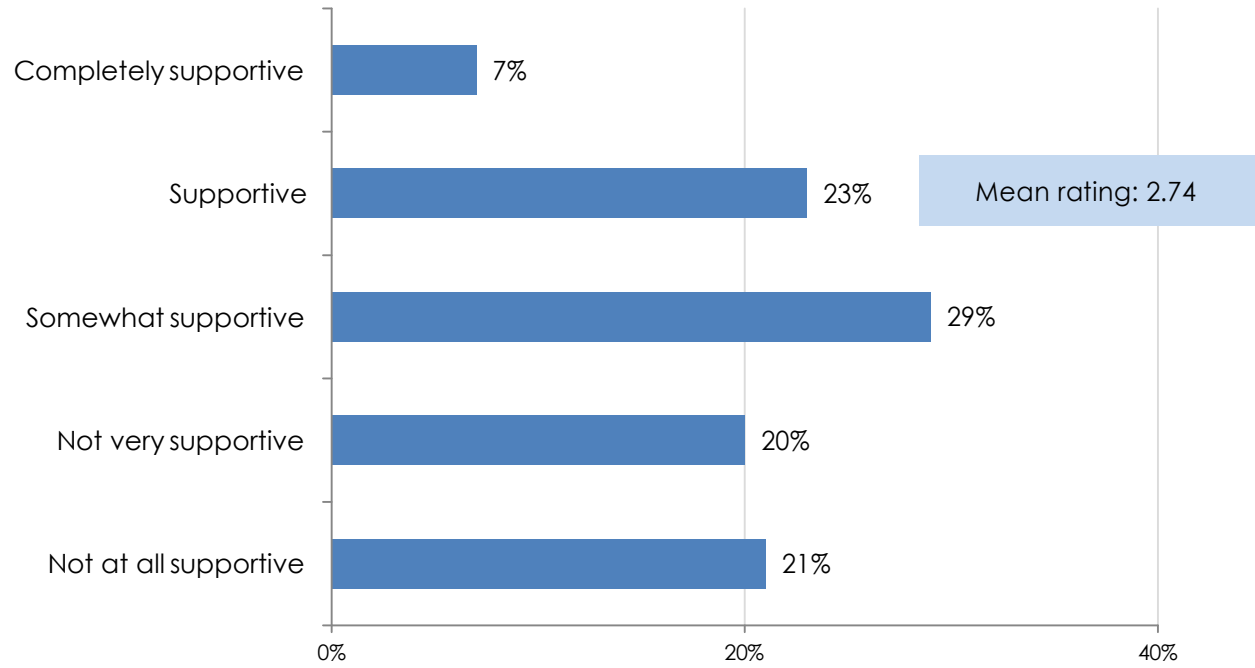
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by option)

Base: n = 403

Option 2: Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only, received the highest level of support from the community, whilst Option 1: Burwood merging with Canada Bay, Strathfield, and Auburn received the lowest

Support for Merging with Canada Bay, Strathfield, and Auburn

Q2. How supportive would you be of this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Mean ratings	2.74	2.86	2.62	2.80	2.49	2.96	2.70	2.68	3.04

	Burwood	Burwood	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Mean ratings	2.44	2.32	2.85	2.81	3.02	3.02

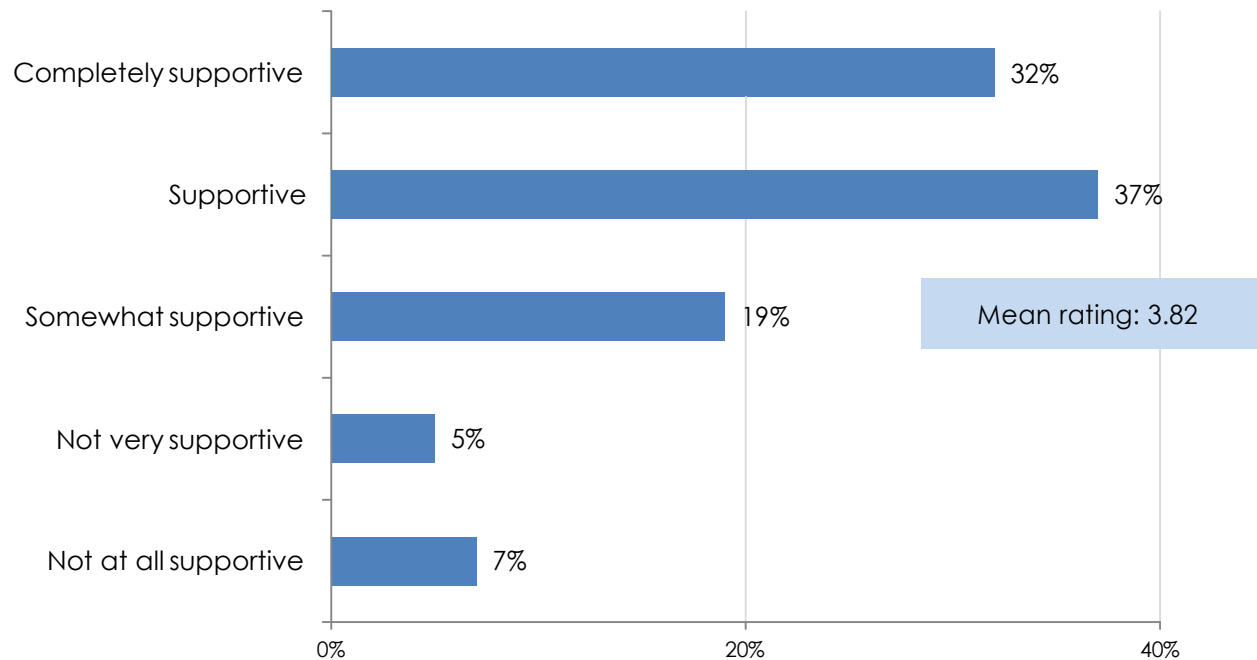
Base: Overall n = 403

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

59% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of the proposed merger with Canada Bay, Strathfield, and Auburn

Support for Merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay

Q3. How supportive would you be of this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.82	3.85	3.80	3.91	3.54	3.90	3.92	3.79	3.95

	Burwood	Burwood	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Mean ratings	3.71	3.29	3.89	3.93	3.88	3.82

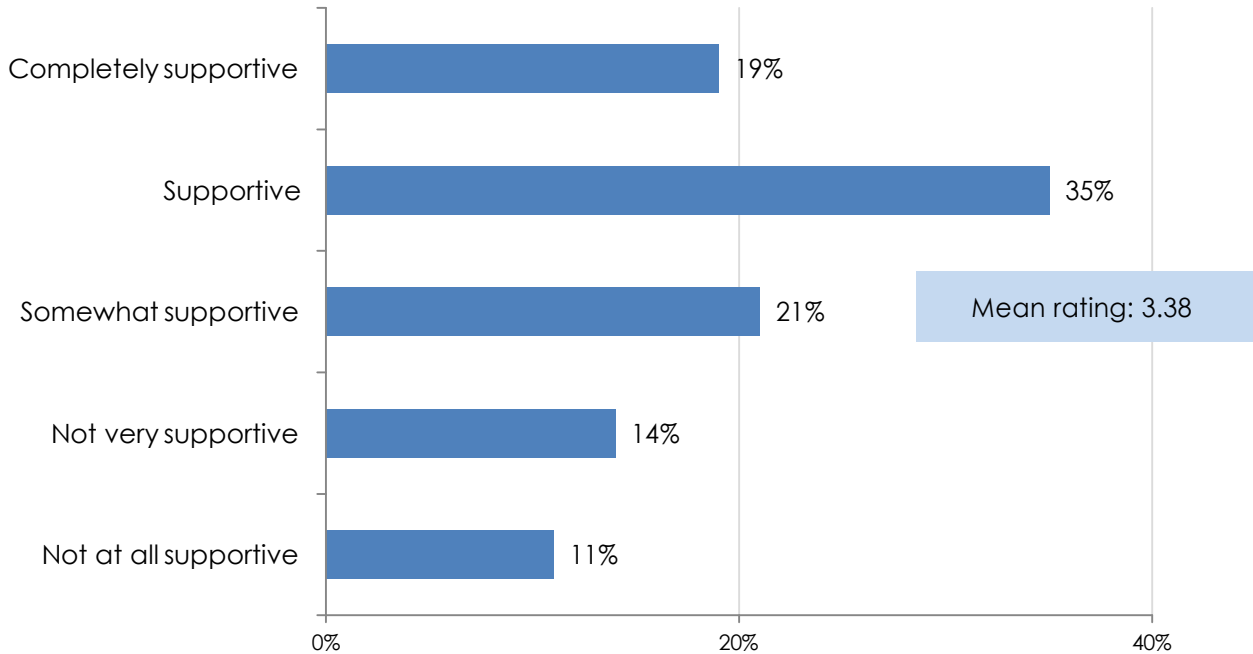
Base: Overall n = 403

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

88% of residents expressed they at least 'somewhat support' an amalgamation with Strathfield and Canada Bay

Support for Merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield

Q4. How supportive would you be of this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Mean ratings	3.38	3.46	3.30	3.65	3.17	3.39	3.04	3.28	3.81

	Burwood	Burwood	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Mean ratings	3.21	2.85	3.61	3.33	3.28	3.49

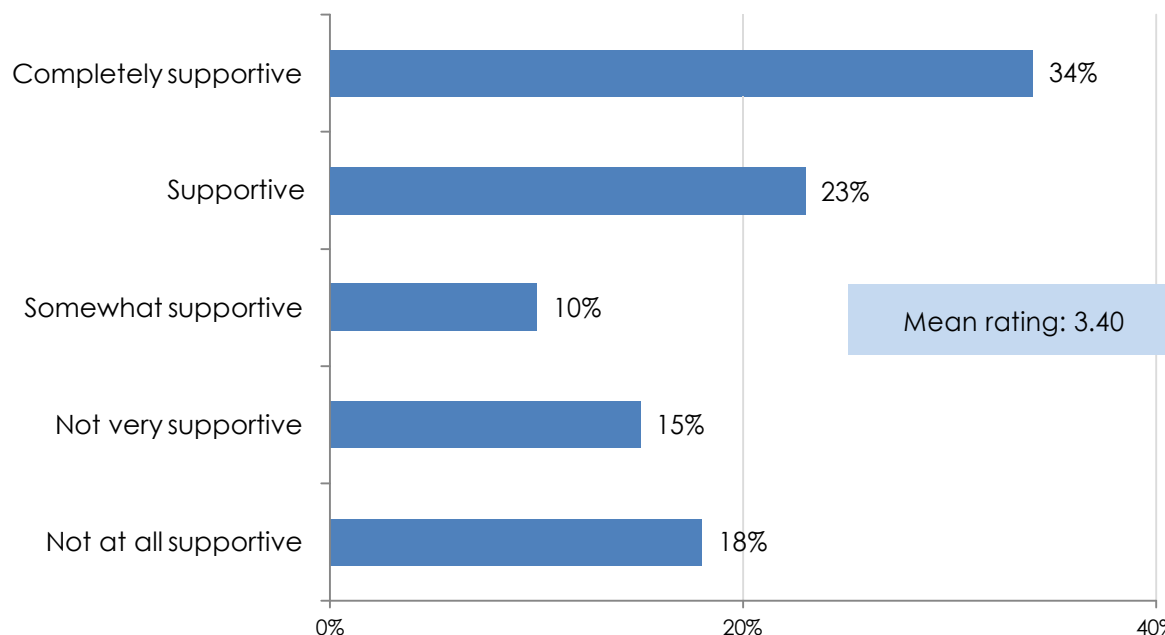
Base: Overall n = 403

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

The majority (75%) of residents indicated they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of an amalgamation with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield

Support for Burwood Standing Alone

Q5. How supportive would you be of this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Mean ratings	3.40	3.19	3.60	3.70	3.45	2.92▼	3.22	3.44	3.50

	Burwood	Burwood	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Mean ratings	3.56	3.78	3.43	3.44	2.89	3.11

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = completely supportive

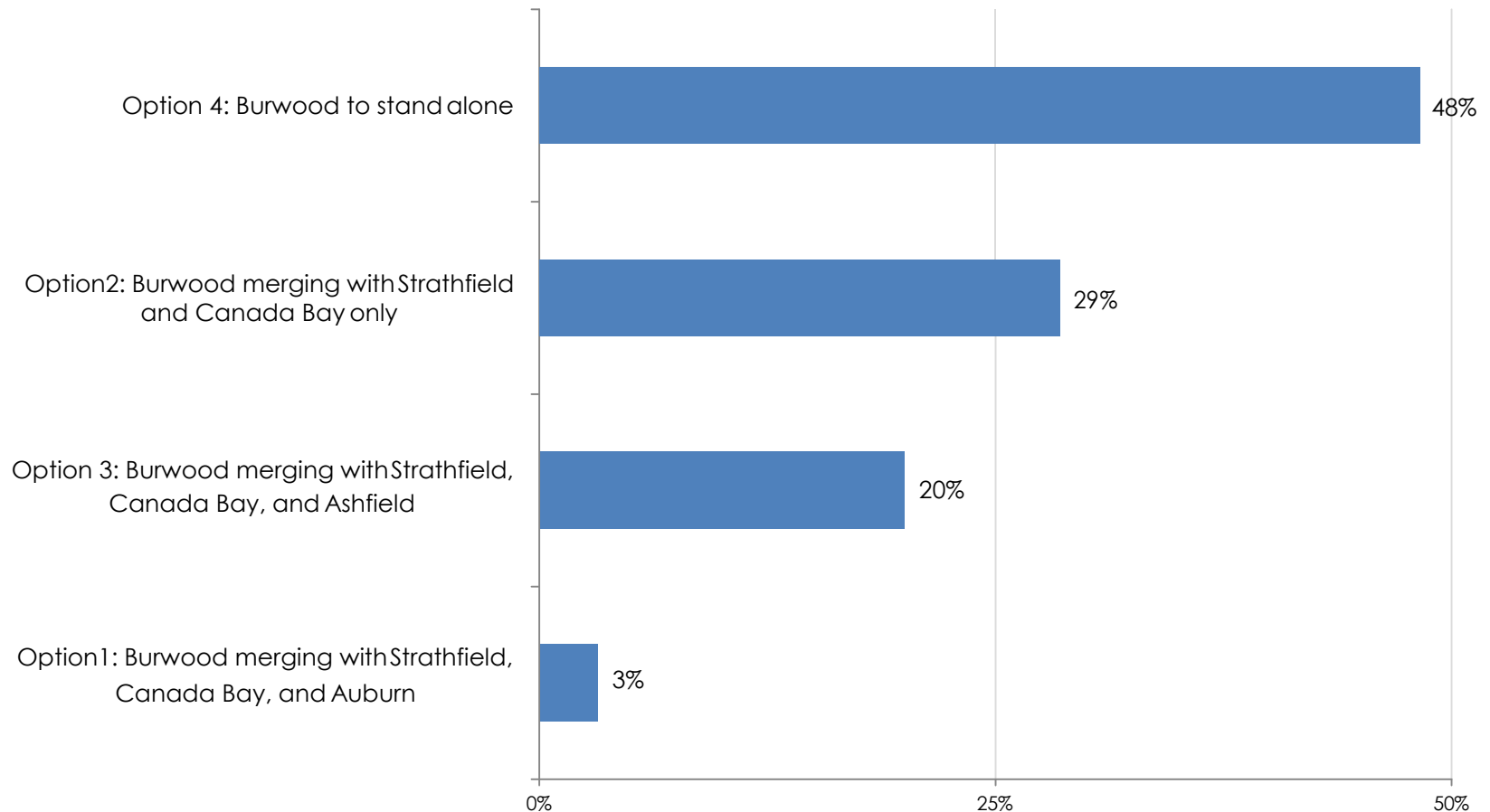
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

Base: Overall n = 403

67% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Burwood standing alone.
Residents aged 50-64 were significantly less likely to be supportive of Burwood standing alone

Preferred Option – FIRST Choice

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option?

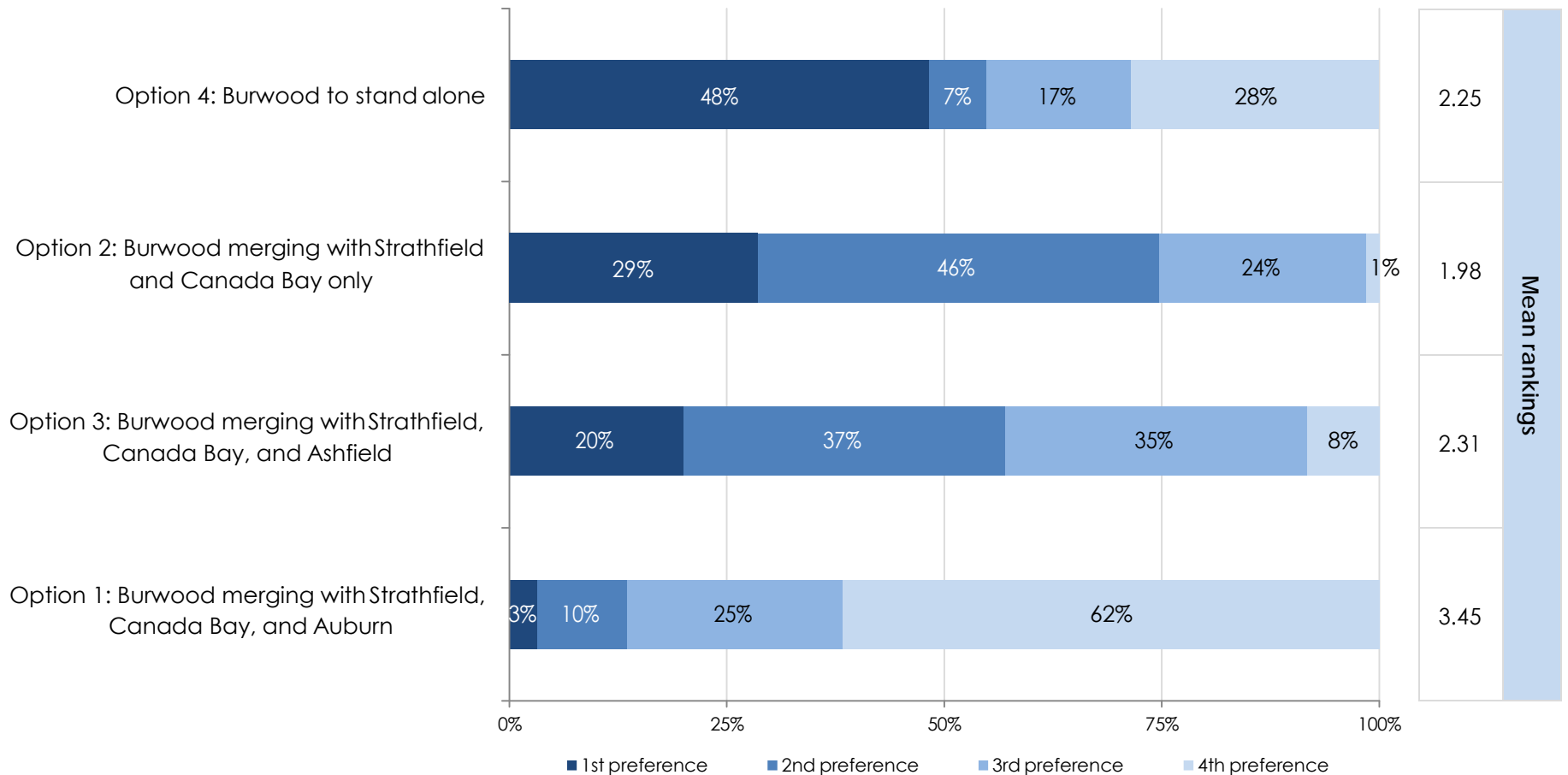


Base: Overall n = 403

Almost half (48%) of the Burwood residents selected 'stand alone' as their first preference. Residents under the age of 35 (61%) were significantly more likely to select 'stand alone' as their first preference, whilst a considerably lower number of residents aged 50-64 selected 'stand alone' as their first preference (only 28%)

Preferred Option – All Rankings

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?



Base: Overall n = 403

Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 4 = 4th preference

The most common first preference was for Burwood to stand alone, however, option 2 a merger with Strathfield and Canada Bay received a higher mean ranking suggesting broader general support for this option

Preferred Option – All Rankings by Demographics

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepaye
Option 4: No merger	2.25	2.39	2.12	1.91▲	2.23	2.79▼	2.44	2.23	2.37
Option 2: Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only	1.98	1.94	2.02	2.11	2.01	1.90	1.76▲	1.97	2.05
Option 3: Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield	2.31	2.25	2.37	2.38	2.34	2.06▲	2.43	2.35	2.15
Option 1: Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Auburn	3.45	3.41	3.48	3.60	3.42	3.25	3.37	3.45	3.44

	Burwood	Burwood	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Option 4: No merger	1.89▲	1.80	2.39	2.35	2.56	2.56
Option 2: Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only	1.99	2.31	1.99	1.93	1.82	2.09
Option 3: Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield	2.48	2.20	2.12	2.48	2.35	2.07
Option 1: Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Auburn	3.63	3.70	3.50	3.25	3.28	3.28

Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 4 = 4th preference
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of preference

Base: Overall n = 403



Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 1 – Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Auburn

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?



3% of 1st Preferences

	% n = 13
Economically efficient to merge	46%
Geographically appropriate to merge with proposed Councils	31%
Dissatisfaction with current Council's performance makes amalgamation attractive	23%
Believe a large council would be beneficial	15%
Amalgamation removes the duplication of services	8%
Appropriate combination of Councils	8%
Believes Council requires growth and this option allows it without merging with too many other councils	8%
Burwood is a progressively growing area	8%
Dissatisfied with Council underrepresenting the community	8%
Do not like the Ashfield area	8%
Most effective way for Council to progress	8%
Provides more accountability	8%
Will have more transparency and processes in place for development	8%

The most frequently mentioned reason for selecting Option 1 as their 1st preference was 'economically efficient to merge'



Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 1 – Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Auburn

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?

Verbatim responses
<i>"I prefer a merger because it would be better for the economy"</i>
<i>"Strengthen local economy"</i>
<i>"Fairly close to one another"</i>
<i>"We're further west than the other suburbs so we should get a more 'western suburbs' identity"</i>
<i>"I really hate Burwood Council and their lack of quality services"</i>
<i>"I think we've got a very, very inefficient Council"</i>
<i>"The bigger the councils are the better"</i>
<i>"The more councils the merrier"</i>
<i>"Merging allows economy of scale and also removes the duplication of services"</i>
<i>"Excellent combination, information from survey has justified my answer"</i>
<i>"Growing area with potential for more advancement"</i>
<i>"Burwood are supposed to be representing us and they don't"</i>
<i>"Do not like Ashfield area"</i>
<i>"Largest possible merging of Councils is the most effective way to move forward"</i>
<i>"Provides more accountability to councils"</i>
<i>"Have more transparency and processes in place for development"</i>

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 2 – Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?



Residents' primary reason for selecting Option 2 as their 1st preference was 'proposed Councils in this option are the most demographically/geographically compatible with Burwood'

29% of 1 st Preferences	% n = 115
Proposed Councils in this option are the most demographically/geographically compatible with Burwood	77%
A smaller council provides better service quality/representation and a merger is required to be sustainable	28%
Positive opinion of these Councils' management/ability to work together effectively	23%
Consistency of development/services/facilities throughout the region would improve under this option	8%
Personal appreciation of these specific Council areas - convenience, politics, residential focus, services	6%
Dissatisfaction with current Council's performance makes amalgamation attractive	5%
Believe this option is the best available for Burwood	4%
Fewer councils involved in merging will ensure financial stability	4%
Wish to avoid merging with Auburn despite support for amalgamation in general	3%
Enacting a smaller merger makes further future mergers possible if necessary	1%
Lowest risk option while carrying out a necessary amalgamation	1%

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 2 – Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?

Verbatim responses
<i>"Areas are similar demographically"</i>
<i>"Councils are in close proximity so it'll be easy to merge"</i>
<i>"Have similar needs and a smaller council area"</i>
<i>"Lower population so council can look after residents"</i>
<i>"All three councils are well structured and would work well together"</i>
<i>"Proposed Councils may be able to positively influence Burwood Council"</i>
<i>"Better stability in development decisions"</i>
<i>"No duplication of administration"</i>
<i>"Burwood needs a merge due to the current longstanding leadership of the Council which has become biased"</i>
<i>"Not satisfied with Council and would like to see a merge to improve Council"</i>
<i>"Best choice for the area"</i>
<i>"Best option available"</i>
<i>"Merge will provide secure rates that don't increase dramatically"</i>
<i>"Will save money and resources that can be used elsewhere"</i>
<i>"I do not want anything to do with Auburn"</i>
<i>"I don't have enough information on Auburn to want to merge with them"</i>
<i>"Future mergers are still an option after merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay"</i>
<i>"Minimal change for some possible benefit"</i>

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 3 – Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?



'Proposed Councils in this option are the most demographically/geographically compatible with Burwood' was the predominant reason for residents' who selected Option 3 as their 1st preference

20% of 1 st Preferences	% n = 81
Proposed Councils in this option are the most demographically/geographically compatible with Burwood	78%
Positive opinion of these Councils' management/ability to work together effectively	20%
A larger merger would be beneficial for residents/allow greater service provision	17%
Positive opinion of/desire to be associated with Ashfield Council	15%
Necessity for major changes to Burwood Council	14%
Would prefer the State Government recommendation, and perceive this option to be the closest	9%
Amalgamation with several councils would be financially beneficial for Burwood	7%
Personal appreciation of these specific Council areas - <i>convenience, diversity, environment</i>	7%
This option would create a Council of an appropriate size	6%
Wish to avoid merging with Auburn despite support for amalgamation in general	6%
Perceived simplicity/logic of this merger option	5%
Least dissatisfied with this option despite desire for a different outcome	2%
Belief that this option would meet Fit for the Future criteria	1%
Experience of previous successful amalgamation	1%
Did not wish to give reason	1%

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 3 – Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?

Verbatim responses
<i>"Best demographically and socially"</i>
<i>"Close proximity and similar demographics"</i>
<i>"Already use the services in proposed areas so a merge would make it easier to do that"</i>
<i>"Other councils perform better than Burwood"</i>
<i>"Create a better, bigger community"</i>
<i>"The bigger the council the more resources residents will have"</i>
<i>"Ashfield is a logical choice as it is closer to Burwood"</i>
<i>"Ashfield is a progressive suburb"</i>
<i>"Council does not perform well as a stand-alone council"</i>
<i>"Burwood Council is mismanaged and it would be best to merge with as many councils as possible"</i>
<i>"Would prefer the State Government recommendation, but this option comes closest"</i>
<i>"Prefer the option recommended by the Government, but this is the most similar available"</i>
<i>"I want the merger to be with strong economic councils"</i>
<i>"I presume a merger would save money"</i>
<i>"I like the combination of cultures"</i>
<i>"To be a more diverse Council, environmentally"</i>
<i>"Good sized area to manage"</i>
<i>"Not too big an area to manage"</i>
<i>"Auburn is going through too much development"</i>
<i>"Socio-economic groups are very similar to Strathfield and Canada Bay, but not Auburn"</i>
<i>"The proposed Council locations are logical to merge with"</i>
<i>"Same electoral boundary"</i>
<i>"Most preferred of all options"</i>
<i>"Not entirely happy with Strathfield as a suburb but it is in all options and this is the best out of all"</i>
<i>"Meets criteria for merging"</i>
<i>"Holroyd Council merged a few years ago, where I moved from, and the services did improve slightly so a merger is preferred to standing alone"</i>

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 4 – Burwood to Stand Alone

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?



48% of 1 st Preferences	% n = 195
Good current performance of Council makes amalgamation unattractive	35%
Smaller councils are better able to provide for the needs of their local community	29%
A merger would create an area too large for Council to manage effectively	16%
Lack of local representation in a merged council would not be acceptable	15%
Burwood Council's current problems should be addressed rather than compounded by merging	7%
Don't believe that any benefits to merging have been shown	6%
Proposed Councils for amalgamation are not demographically/socially compatible with Burwood	6%
Burwood is a viable area without the need for a merger	4%
Concerned over financial implications of merging	3%
Resources would be unfairly directed away from Burwood in a merged Council	3%
Local identity/uniqueness of area would be lost in an amalgamation	2%
Reject amalgamation on principle	2%
Not happy with the Councils suggested for merging	1%
Likelihood of job losses in an amalgamation	1%
Merging could impact on processes already underway	1%

Residents who opted for Burwood to stand alone as their 1st preference primarily stated 'good current performance of Council makes amalgamation unattractive'

Reasons for Preference Selection

Option 4 – Burwood to Stand Alone

Q6a. Thinking of the 4 options we have indicated, what is your preferred option? And your second? And your third?

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as preference?

Verbatim responses
"Burwood Council does a good job providing services to residents"
"Burwood is a strong Council and should be proud to be a local, independent council"
"Better managed when kept as a small, local area"
"If we stand alone, the Council will remain focused on the local residents"
"Quality of services may decrease with a merger"
"Council merge decreases efficiencies"
"Concerned that representation will decrease with a merge"
"Local representation will be lost in a merged council"
"Council is already struggling to manage a community of its current size, merging would not benefit anybody"
"Council is having a hard enough time looking after the area currently, a larger area under one council would run even worse"
"Feel there is no need for merging at all"
"Prefer to stand alone because it's what I know and don't know if a merge is for the better"
"Burwood Council have nothing in common with proposed Councils"
"Proposed Councils are too diverse and have a different cultural base than Burwood"
"Population is big enough to manage alone"
"Council should be looking after their area and their area alone"
"Rates could possibly go up, which, as a pensioner, is an area of concern for me"
"Worried about a rate increase"
"Focus will be on the affluent suburbs in a merged council"
"Merge will have poorer councils utilise the resources of councils with good management"
"To maintain the independence of the area"
"Unique area with heritage listings that may not be managed by a merged council"
"State Government should not interfere with local issues like councils merging"
"NSW State Government only wants the generated revenue from all the high-rise buildings they intend to develop in Burwood after they change the building codes"
"Want to stand alone - happy with the Inner West suburbs only"
"Acceptable if merger was with two other councils, but none of the proposed, particularly Auburn"
"Loss of employment"
"Been through a DA recently and a merger could impact that"

Conclusion



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Conclusion

To understand community support for amalgamation, residents were asked to rate their level of support for 4 proposed merger options. Prior to their assessment, residents were informed that the Minister for Local Government had ruled out the possibility of Burwood Council standing alone. Despite this, there was still a high level of support for the option to 'stand alone', where 67% of residents expressed they were 'somewhat supportive' or more and 48% selected this as their first preference out of all options.

Perhaps due to the constraints of Burwood not being permitted to remain as a stand-alone Council, 'Option 2: Burwood merging with Strathfield and Canada Bay only' received the highest level of support from the community, with 88% of residents indicating they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of this option. Option 2 was also the smallest scale merger available to residents, which was a contributing factor as to why it saw the greatest level of support.

Although standing alone obtained almost half of Burwood residents' 1st preference rankings, Option 2 gained 46% of residents' 2nd preference rankings and received the highest mean ranking, with residents referring to the proposed Councils in Option 2 as the most demographically/geographically compatible with Burwood.

'Option 3: Burwood merging with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Ashfield' was perceived to be the next best option after 'Option 4: Burwood to stand alone', with 75% of residents at least 'somewhat supportive'. The community's reason for selecting this option as their 1st preference (20%) was the proposed Councils are demographically and geographically suited with Burwood Council, as well as a number of residents having positive opinions of these Councils' management/ability to work together effectively.

Receiving the lowest level of support was the merger with Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Auburn (Option 1), with 59% of residents showing some level of support and 3% ranking this as their 1st preference. Of those who selected this as their first preference, residents were most likely to feel it would be economically efficient to merge with this group of Councils.

Overall, residents used the demographic and geographic similarities with Burwood as their reason for more than one option when selecting their 1st preference, i.e. people's individual perceptions of what other areas are like are not consistent/reliable but quite personal.



Appendix



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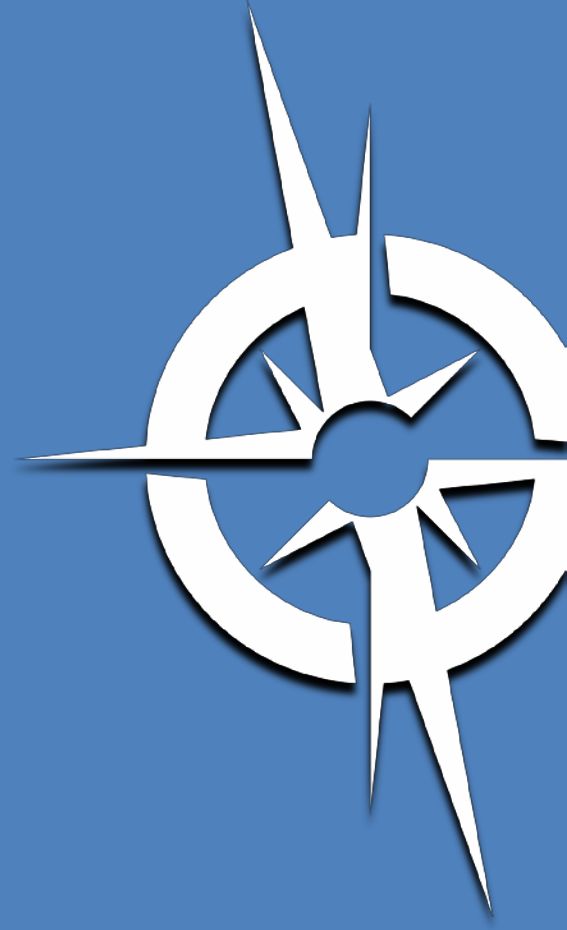
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Respondent Breakdown by Subcell

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	403	197	206	157	93	81	73	332	71

	Burwood	Burwood Heights	Croydon	Croydon Park	Enfield	Strathfield
Base	113	11	120	87	31	42





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Fit for the Future

Communication and Community Engagement Report



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1. Communication and Community Engagement Plan

1.1 Approach to Community Engagement

The City of Canada Bay Council fosters an active partnership with the community providing information and opportunities to participate in a wide range of Council decision making processes. Council has a Communications Policy and a Community Engagement Policy which guide how Council officers ensure a genuine partnership is achieved.

The principles of each of these policies are outlined below:

Communication Policy

- Informing the community of key Council decisions, services, programs and initiatives using plain English;
- Promoting transparency and accountability in Council's decision making processes;
- Promoting opportunities for community engagement in appropriate circumstances; and
- Representing the views of the City of Canada Bay community and act as advocate to other tiers of government and in all appropriate forums.

Community Engagement Policy – these principles are adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

- Community engagement activities are based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process and that in many instances inclusive decision making achieves a better outcome that might otherwise be reached.
- Council recognises that in a system of representative democracy, it is neither practical nor possible to undertake community engagement on every issue, however when a decision has the potential to impact the local community significantly, Council will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or with an interest in the decision.
- When undertaking community engagement, Councillors and staff will present their views and professional recommendation in an open and respectful manner to inform the community and assist to reach a knowledgeable outcome from an engagement opportunity.
- All material and methods developed by Council to support community engagement will be genuine, unbiased, understandable and appropriate to ensure the community can participate in a meaningful way.
- When undertaking community engagement (consultation and higher on the spectrum), Council's commitment is that the community's contribution will influence the decision. Council will also communicate to engagement participants how their input can and did affect the decision.

Community Engagement Spectrum

Council recognises the level and extent of engagement must vary according to the nature of the decision in question. In line with IAP2 principles, Councils intent is reflected in the following table.

	<i>Level of community engagement →</i>				
	<i>Inform</i>	<i>Consult</i>	<i>Involve</i>	<i>Collaborate</i>	<i>Empower</i>
<i>Council's goal</i>	To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the community.
<i>Council's intention</i>	Council will keep the community informed.	Council will keep the community informed, will listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Council will work with the community to ensure concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Council will look to the community for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate advice and recommendations into decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Council will implement what the community decides.
<i>Example of type of activity or decision which could be involved</i>	Scheduled operational activities.	Consideration of a new program or project.	Development of Plans of Management or Master plans.	Development of Community Strategic Plans, Delivery Plans and Operational Plans.	Responding to externally initiated engagement.

Table adapted from the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2 © 2007 www.iap2.org).

Council has a history of undertaking engagement across all levels of the community engagement spectrum from providing information about Council activities to the establishment of a Citizen's Panel recommending service levels for future ongoing service provision.

1.2 Background

In September 2014, the NSW State Government announced a proposed reform package for the NSW local government sector. Known as 'Fit for the Future', the package outlines a road map of expectations for NSW Councils with the intent for them to remain strong and sustainable into the future.

Central to this is, for a Council to be considered 'fit for the future' it must demonstrate that it has the scale and capacity to delivery to its community first and then must demonstrate that it is sustainable, can effectively manage infrastructure and services, and is efficient.

Based on the findings of the Independent Local Government Review Panel, the City of Canada Bay was recommended to amalgamate with Ashfield, Burwood, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Strathfield Councils. This is the starting point for Council in preparing its Fit for the Future response to state government.

All Fit for the Future proposals must be submitted by 30 June 2015.

Council has been working with the information provided by state government and although a 10 month window was provided for submissions, details on the assessment methodology was not released until late in the program.

This Communication and Engagement Plan has been tailored to align with key decisions made by the state government in the Fit for the Future timeline.

The following decision milestones of the state government as well as key research activities of Council have influenced the timing of information provision.

Dates	Milestones	Information Provision
September, 2014	Fit for the Future Package Announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about the packageCouncil position of 'No forced Amalgamations'
September, 2014	Review of Criteria for Fit for the Future undertaken by Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about proposed criteriaCouncil position of 'No forced Amalgamations'
February, 2015	Inner West Councils Shared Modelling Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about outcomes of modelling and Council achievement against criteria from a stand-alone and merger perspective
April, 2015	IPART Draft Methodology for Assessment of Fit for the Future Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about draft methodologyInformation about merger options
June, 2015	IPART Final Methodology for the Assessment of Fit for the Future Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about final methodologyInformation about FFF proposal and recommended merger

It was only with the release of the Final Assessment Methodology in June, only one month prior to the submission deadline that Council was clear on assessment criteria and the state government's

expectations. It is only at this point Council has been able to provide details about the proposal it will be submitting.

In line with Council's communications and community engagement principles, Council will continue to inform the community of key decisions and seek feedback as appropriate.

1.3 Purpose

This Communication and Engagement Plan for the Fit for the Future Program has been prepared to guide the co-ordination of communication and engagement activities of the working group in the preparation of Council's Fit for the Future Program Proposal.

This Plan has been prepared to achieve outcomes on the Community Engagement Spectrum from the 'Inform – Involve' level.

1.4 Aim

The City of Canada Bay Council will maintain a position of 'No forced Amalgamations' but will listen to the community on options moving forward. Council will acknowledge the criteria for scale and capacity and although IPART have outlined in the Final Assessment Methodology that councils can submit their proposal irrespective of progress with community consultation, Council will endeavour to keep people informed.

The aim of the Communication and Engagement Plan for the Fit for the Future Program is:

1. To inform local residents of the Fit for the Future Program and the Independent Local Government Review Panels recommendation for Council mergers.
2. To seek feedback from local residents on a proposed response to the Fit for the Future program including merger options and identify benefits and concerns of potential options.

1.5 Communication and Community Engagement Plan

Council's communication and community engagement plan for the Fit for the Future program extends on various planning initiatives undertaken in recent years as part of broader long term planning processes.

A two-phased approach has been developed to reflect the staged decision making activities that would occur as part of Council's response to Fit for the Future.

Phase one engagement aims to provide residents with balanced and objective information about the Fit for the Future program to assist them in understanding the local government reform program and the request by the State Government to consider Council mergers in line with the Independent Local Government Review Panel Final Report and proposed assessment criteria.

Various engagement activities will be undertaken to support this phase of engagement.

Phase two engagement aims to seek direct feedback regarding preferred Council merger options so that these details can strengthen Council's understanding of what the community see as the benefits and areas of concern regarding the merger options.

Phase One Communication and Engagement

The aim of phase one engagement is to inform residents of the local government reform program and in particular the proposal to merge the City of Canada Bay Council with surrounding Councils.

Level of Community Engagement: Inform and Consult

Communication and engagement objectives:

- To work with neighbouring inner west Councils to ensure there is an informed debate and to share communication messages where appropriate for this phase of the program;
- To raise community awareness about the *Fit for the Future* program and its potential impacts on local communities;
- Develop clear simple public information about the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* agenda;
- To generate and encourage community debate on *Fit for the Future* and potential amalgamations;
- To encourage the State Government to inform our community about why amalgamation will be of benefit;
- To present a clear picture to our community about all of the impacts – positive and negative – on potential amalgamations.

Communication and engagement methods and tools:

- Council communications (newsletters, website, Mayoral column, social media, media releases);
- Joint communication methods with inner west Councils (website, joint media releases, social media);
- No forced merger logo on all material;
- Fit for Future regular community flyers;

Phase One timeline:

When	Rationale	What
November – December, 2014	Reform Package Announcement	Joint communication with other inner west Councils
January, 2015 – March, 2015	Following Independent Modelling and as impacts were known	Joint communication with other inner west Councils; Community engagement focusing on Canada Bay, including public meeting, regularly communication to entire community
April, 2015 – June, 2015	As Final Methodology became known	Continued communication

Phase Two Communication and Engagement

The aim of phase two engagement is to seek direct feedback regarding Council merger options.

Level of Community Engagement:

Inform, Consult and Involve

Communication and engagement objectives:

- To work with neighbouring inner west Councils to ensure there is an informed debate and to share communication messages where appropriate for this phase of the program;
- To raise community awareness about the *Fit for the Future* program and its potential impacts on local communities;
- Develop clear simple public information about the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* agenda;
- To generate and encourage feedback on *Fit for the Future* and potential amalgamations;
- To present a clear picture to our community about all of the impacts – positive and negative – on potential amalgamations.

Communication and engagement methods and tools:

- Telephone survey of local residents gauging awareness of potential Council merger and merger options
- Council communications (newsletters, website, Mayoral column, social media, media releases);
- Joint communication methods with inner west Councils (website, joint media releases, social media);
- No forced merger logo on all material;
- Fit for Future regular community flyers;

Phase Two timeline:

When	Rationale	What
April, 2015 – June, 2015	As Final Methodology became known	Community engagement and statistical feedback via telephone survey; continued communication

Communication and Engagement Plan of Action:

Date	Objective	Action/activity	Outcome
Dec 2014	Raise community awareness	Open letter to the community distributed in Bayside Brief	Distributed to 36,000 households across LGA
Dec 2014	Raise community awareness	Develop "no forced mergers logo"	Used on all communication in relation to forced mergers
Jan 2015	Work with neighbouring inner west Councils to ensure there is informed debate	Developed working group with 5 of 6 inner west Councils	Joint website and communications
Jan 2015	Work with neighbouring inner west Councils to ensure there is informed debate	Joint media release developed and pitched to local and metro media	Media coverage in local Inner West Courier and Sydney Morning Herald
Jan 2015	Raise community awareness	Weekly message in the Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West
Jan 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in January with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter
Feb 2015	Raise community awareness	Developed flyer outlining what an inner west mega Council could mean for the Canada Bay community, based on independent research.	Distributed to 36,000 households across LGA
Feb 2015	Raise community awareness	Created specific FFF section on Council's website and developed specific email address to encourage community feedback	Website regularly updated and around 100 emails received on the issue.
Feb 2015	To generate and encourage public community debate	Created tag line and participated in "twitter storm" regarding no forced mergers and to get the message out there that local government wants reform but does not want to be forced to merge	A total of 464 tweets across NSW, with a reach of 170,715 twitter users. Message delivered online to around 472,568 via a range of different online platforms (as retweets; copying & pasting on Facebook etc)
Feb 2015	Raise community awareness	Weekly message in the Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West

Date	Objective	Action/activity	Outcome
Feb 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in February with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter
Feb 2015	Raise community awareness	Media release distributed to announce public meeting	Story in Inner West Courier (86,000 distribution)
March 2015	Raise community awareness Develop clear and simple information Generate and encourage community debate	Flyer communicating a public meeting on the issue	Delivered to 36,000 households in LGA
March 2015	Raise community awareness; Develop clear and simple information; Generate and encourage community debate; Encourage the State Government to inform our community	Public meeting	Around 100 community members attended
March 2015	Raise community awareness	Media release about outcomes of public meeting	Story in Inner West Courier (86,000 distribution)
March 2015	Raise community awareness	Weekly message in the Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West
March 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in March with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter
April 2015	Raise community awareness; Develop clear and simple information	Flyer to community encouraging them to find out about Fit for the Future	Delivered to 36,000 households in LGA
April 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in April with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter
April 2015	Raise community awareness	Weekly message in the Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West

Date	Objective	Action/activity	Outcome
May 2015	Generate and encourage debate; Present a clear picture to our community; Seek feedback regarding options	Independent telephone survey asking our community about Fit for Future and merger option preferences	66% of those surveyed were aware of the State Government's potential amalgamation plan; 40% were aware via media and 30% as a result of Council information; 70% of those surveyed supported Canada Bay standing alone; 57% were not in favour of the potential merger Key benefits and concerns identified
May 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in May with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter
May 2015	Raise community awareness	Weekly message in the Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West
May 2015	Raise community awareness	Updated media release about why decision was deferred by Council	Story in Inner West Courier (Distribution 86,000)
June 2015	Raise community awareness	Updated information where appropriate published in Mayor's Council column in the Inner West Courier	Reaching 86,000 households across the Inner West
June 2015	Encourage community debate	Regular social media posts in June with updated FFF information	Reaching on average around 2,000 people via Facebook and Twitter

2. Engagement Outcomes

In line with the aim of the Communications and Community Engagement Plan to inform local residents of the Fit for the Future Program in particular potential Council mergers and to seek feedback on potential Council merger options, the following outcomes were achieved.

2.1 Community Awareness of Fit for the Future Program

A wide range of communication tools were used across phases one and two of the engagement program. The awareness level was tested in the telephone survey conducted during phase two where the following questions were asked:

“(Q7a) Prior to this call were you aware that the State Government is looking to merge the City of Canada Bay Council with a number of its neighbouring councils?”

“(Q7b) Where did you hear about the proposal to potentially merge the City of Canada Bay Council with the other councils?”

It was found that

- 66% of those surveyed were aware of the State Government’s potential amalgamation plan. This result was skewed towards older residents, with 80% of those aged over 49, but just 51% of those aged under 35, aware of the plans
- The most common means by which residents became aware of the proposal was via ‘local newspapers’ - 40% were aware representing 26% on the total sample. Council information achieved 30% penetration among those who heard of the proposal, this was higher among older residents

2.2 Feedback on Proposed Merger Options

A telephone survey of 607 randomly selected residents was conducted during the period 11-14 May, 2015. The survey conducted by Micromex Research explored awareness levels and specifically sought feedback on merger options. Residents were asked to provide reasons for their merger option preferences. Responses to this question provided Council with a better understanding of the benefits and concerns of a particular option.

Surveyed residents were asked to consider level of support for four merger options. Responses to this along with the benefits and concerns that residents raised are outlined below

Option 1 – City of Canada Bay Council Stand Alone

Level of Support: 74% supportive or completely supportive

Community identified benefits

- Satisfaction with council performance
- Smaller council more responsive to community needs

- Unique characteristics of the area retained
- Better representation
- Rates will stay the same

Community Identified concerns

- Less efficient in terms of cost structure and service provision

Option 2 – City of Canada Bay Council merge with Burwood and Strathfield Councils

Level of Support: 44% at least somewhat supportive

Community identified benefits

- Compatible values, demographics and identity
- Improved efficiency /economies of scale - financial position and service provision

Community Identified concerns

- Reasons given were not statistically significant

Option 3 – City of Canada Bay Council merge with Burwood, Strathfield and Auburn Councils

Level of Support: 14% at least somewhat supportive

Community identified benefits

- Increased efficiency without compromising local service provision

Community Identified concerns

- Incompatible demographics and needs
- Poorer service provision

Option 4 – City of Canada Bay merge with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils

Level of Support: 21% at least somewhat supportive

Community identified benefits

- More effective and efficient service provision
- Compatibility of proposed Councils in terms of demographics and issues
- Increased economic stability and generation of savings

Community Identified concerns

- Council would be too large to administer services effectively
- Unable to deal with local issues and provide for the diversity of residents
- Cost of amalgamation and financial situation of merging councils

Conclusion on Merger Options

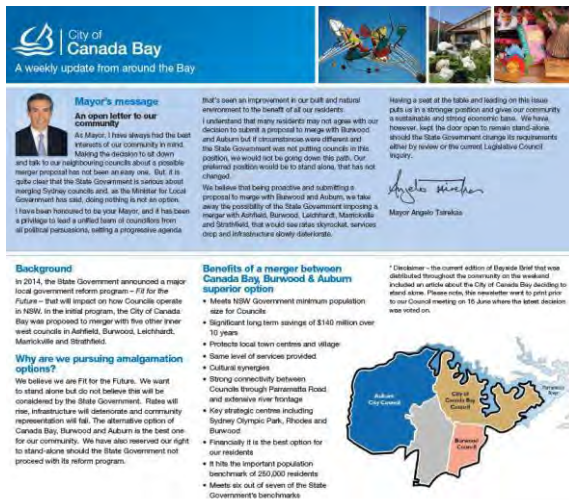
The most preferred option of those that were surveyed was for the City of Canada Bay Council to stand alone. Residents cited satisfaction with Council's performance and the belief that smaller councils can provide localised services more effectively.

Options 3 and 4 were the least preferred option and the most common justification for rejecting this was a sense of incompatibility between merged councils and a feeling of those surveyed that the size of the new Council would be too great to effectively administer services.

These findings will be taken forward into Council's Fit for the Future proposal.

3. Communications and Community Engagement Collateral

3.1 Examples of Communications Material



17 June 2015

CANADA BAY TO ENTER IN DISCUSSIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

The City of Canada Bay has over-turned a decision to submit a stand-alone proposal to the State Government and will re-enter discussions with its neighbours at Burwood and Auburn regarding potential amalgamations.



30 March, 2015

COMMUNITY RALLIES TO SAVE CANADA BAY

An overwhelming sense of community was on display at a public meeting last night (Thursday 19 March) to discuss the State Government's proposed local government amalgamations, says City of Canada Bay Mayor Angelo Tsirekas.

Around 100 people attended the meeting at Concord RSL to hear the mayor's views on the State Government's plans for local government and how it would impact Canada Bay.



3.2 Fit for the Future Community Survey



Methodology & Sample

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with City of Canada Bay, developed the questionnaire.

Data collection period

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during the period 11th – 14th May 2015 from 4:00pm – 8:30pm.

Sample

N= 607 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 607 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.0% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=607 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.0%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.0%. This means, for example, that the answer "satisfied" (55%) to the overall satisfaction question could vary from 51% to 59%.

As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of City of Canada Bay Council, the outcomes of statistical tests reported here reflect an 'effective sample size'; that is, the weighted data provides outcomes with the same level of confidence as unweighted data of a different sample size. In some cases this effective sample size may be smaller than the actual number of surveys conducted.

Interviewing

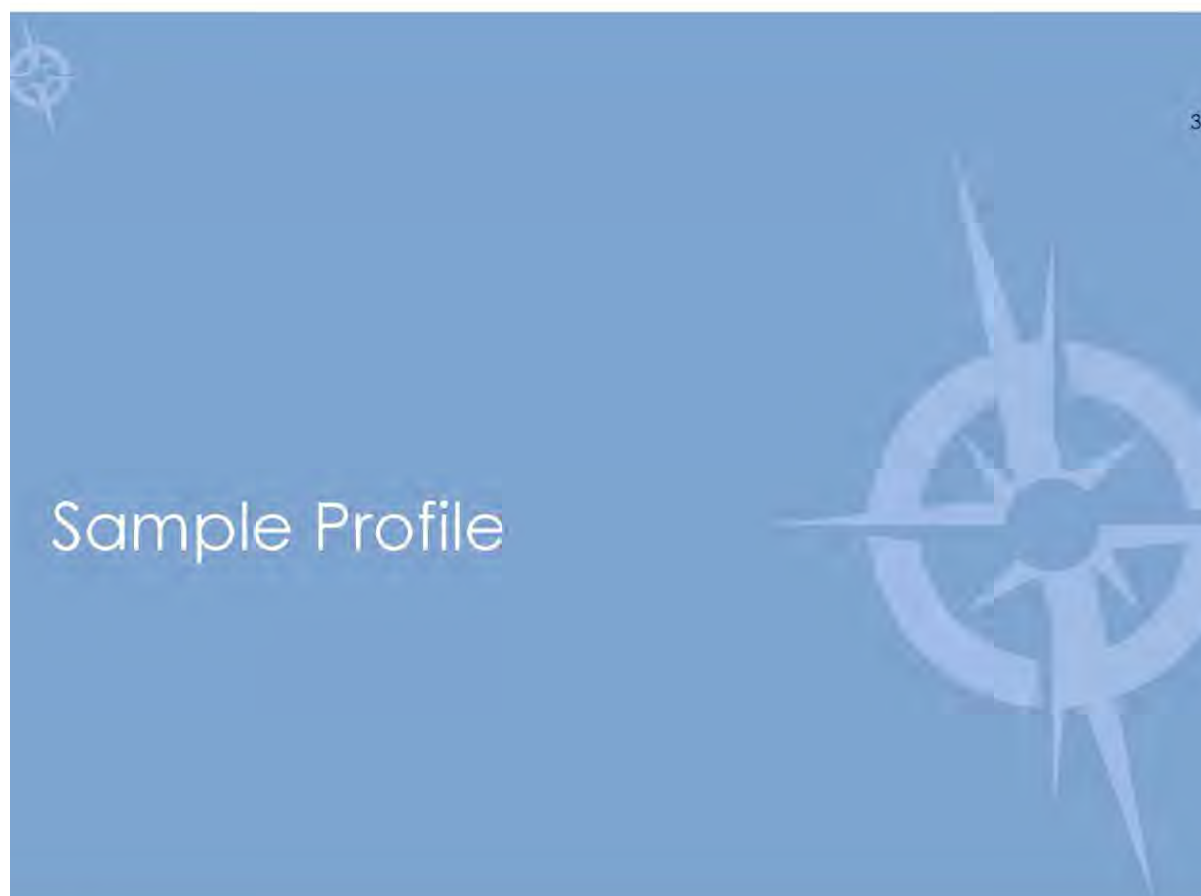
Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

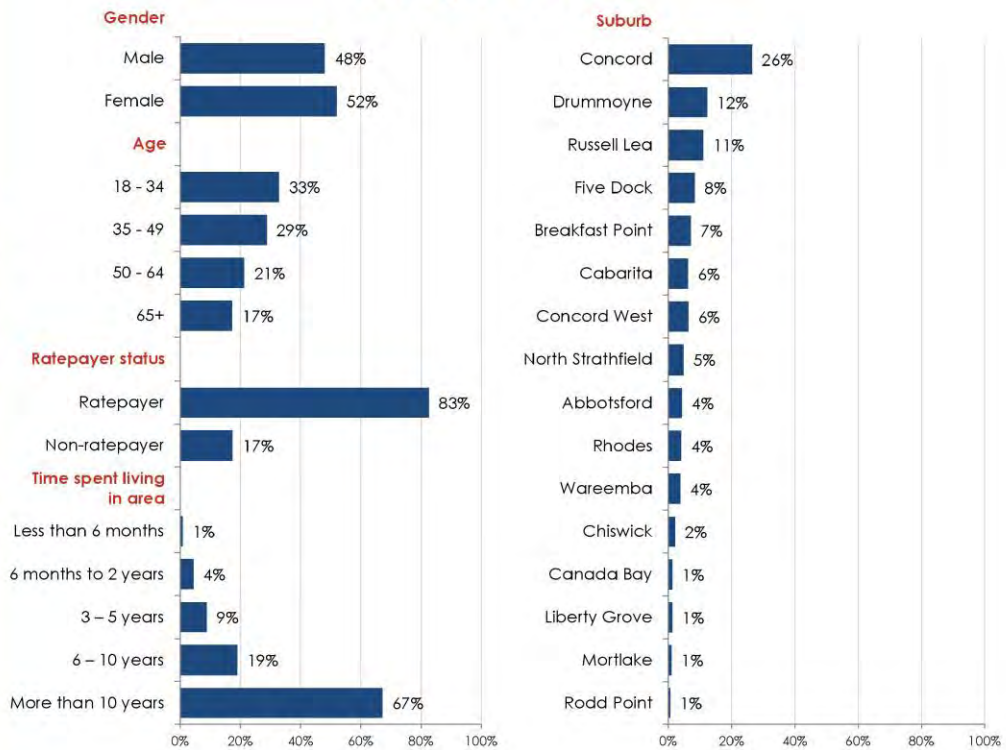
Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.



The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of City of Canada Bay Council

Sample Profile



Base: N=607

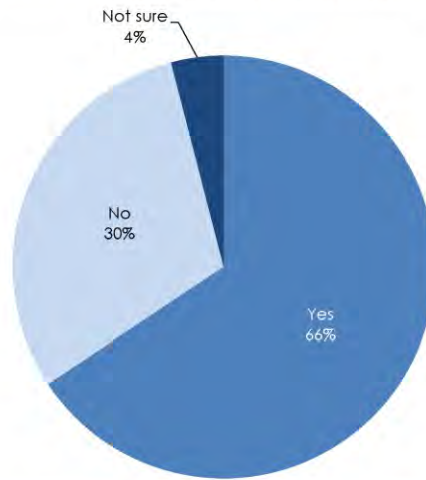
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Detailed Findings:

1. Awareness of Potential Amalgamation

Awareness of Potential Amalgamation

Q7a. Prior to this call were you aware that the State Government is looking to merge the City of Canada Bay Council with a number of its neighbouring Councils??



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106
Yes	66%	71%	60%	51%▼	62%	80%▲	81%▲	69%	49%
No	30%	25%	36%	47%▲	31%	17%▼	15%▼	27%	46%
Not sure	4%	4%	4%	2%	7%	4%	4%	4%	6%

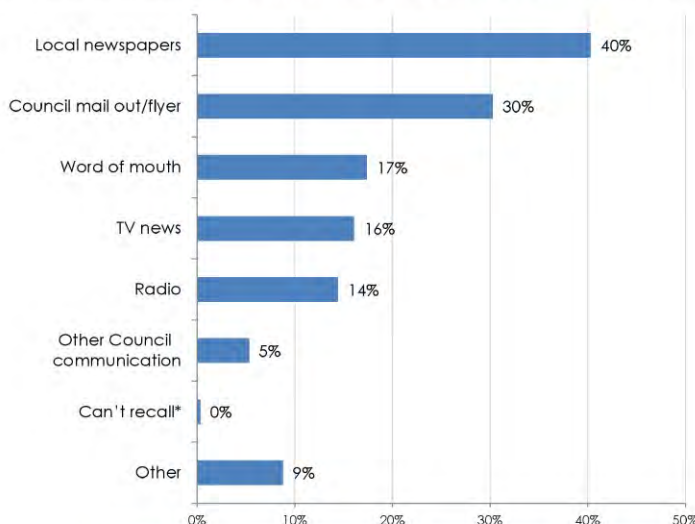
▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

While 66% of residents overall were aware of the State Government's amalgamation plan, this outcome is skewed towards older residents – those aged 50 and over were significantly more likely to be aware, while those aged under 35 registered markedly lower awareness (51%)

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Means of Becoming Aware of Amalgamation Proposal

Q7b. Where did you hear about the proposal to potentially merge the City of Canada Bay Council with the other councils?



Residents aged 65+ were significantly more likely to have heard via 'local newspapers' or a 'Council mail out/flyer', while those aged 18-34 were less likely to have heard via the latter. Ratepayers were significantly more likely to have been aware via all media other than 'Council mail out/flyer' and 'word of mouth'

Base: N=398

Other	Count
Sydney Morning Herald	15
Website/Internet	8
Community banners/signage	6
Communication from a different Council	5
Made aware through work	2
Bus advertisement	1
Leichhardt Library	1
Local newsletter	1
National newspapers	1
Other Council communication	Count
Council banners/signage	11
Attendance at a Council meeting	9
Face-to-face contact with Councillor/Mayor	6
Council newsletter/email	4
Canada Bay Council Facebook Page	2
Spoke with Council staff	2
Council website	1
Council's coverage of NSW state election	1
Political party membership	1
Word of mouth	Count
Friend	42
Neighbour	31
Family member	19
Personal interaction with Council staff member/Councillor/Mayor	10
Work colleague	10
Local resident	7
Community/volunteering group	6
Sporting group	1
Strata representative	1

*Note: this response was returned by 2 respondents

The most common means of becoming aware of the proposals was via 'local newspapers' (40% of those aware), while 30% of those aware had heard via a 'Council mail out/flyer'. 'TV news' and 'radio' also achieved moderate penetration (16% & 14%)

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Detailed Findings: 2a. Initial Rating of Options

For these initial ratings of standing alone versus amalgamating, little information/detail of the options was provided. So in a sense, these initial ratings reflect the current community opinion, based on whatever knowledge residents have collected to date.



First Concept Statement

The NSW State Government is currently reviewing the Local Government system. The review, known as Fit for the Future, is looking to reduce the number of councils in NSW, and to make local government sustainable, efficient, and effective for future generations. The estimated population required by the State Government of each newly merged Council entity is 250,000 people.

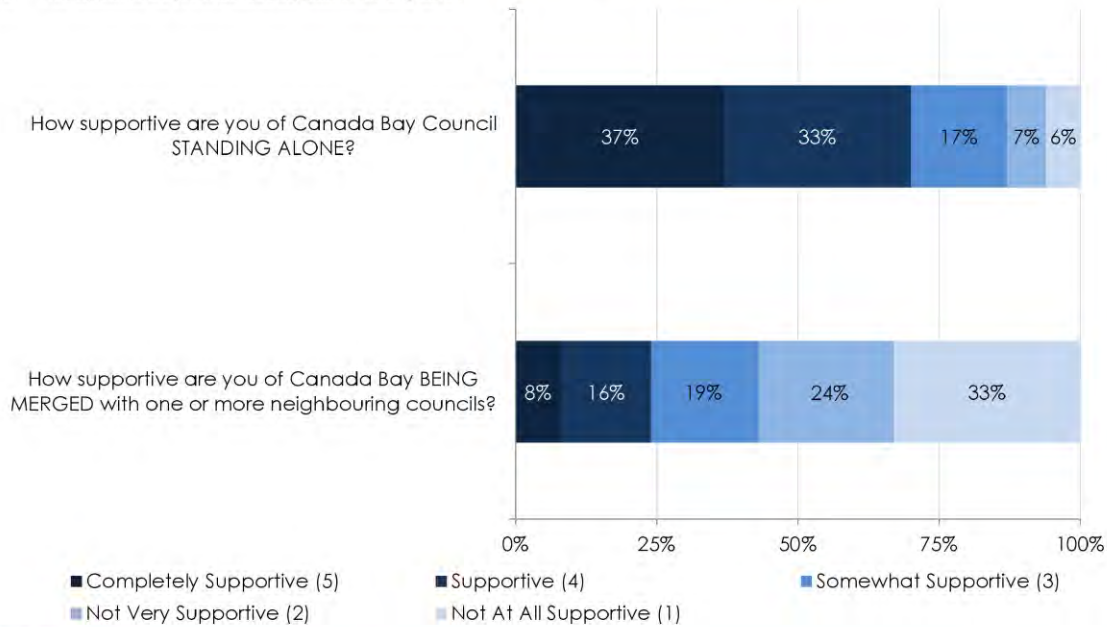
The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, whilst an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the local community's needs and local issues.

Under the review, councils need to demonstrate how they will become sustainable, provide effective and efficient services, create the scale and capacity needed to meet the needs of communities, and partner with the NSW Government.



Initial Ratings - Comparison

Q4a. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council being merged with one or more neighbouring councils?
Q4b. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council standing alone?

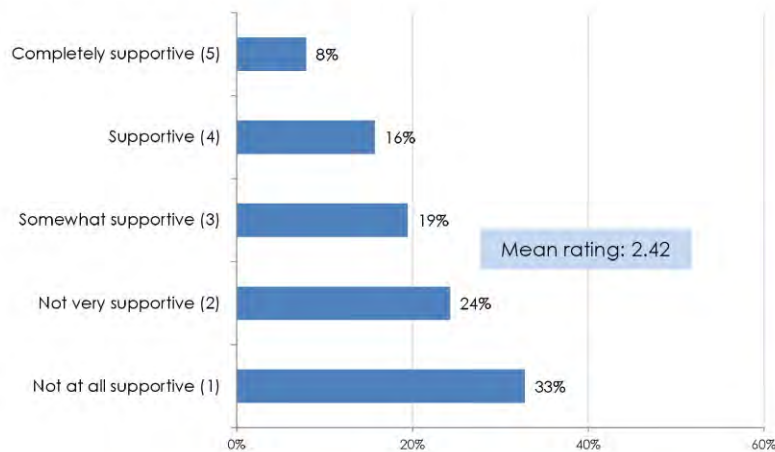


Current community attitudes are very much in favour of standing alone, with a total of 70% of residents saying they were 'Supportive' or 'Completely supportive' of this option, compared to 24% for the merge option.

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Support for Council Being Merged

Q4a. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council being merged with one or more neighbouring councils?



Residents who had already been aware of the amalgamation proposals (10%) were more likely than those who were not (4%) to be 'completely supportive' of this option. And those who had heard via a 'Council mail out/flyer' (14%) were significantly more likely than were others, to be 'completely supportive' of this option.

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	2.42	2.83▲	2.04▼	2.58	2.37	2.49	2.10▼	2.40	2.50	2.46	2.34	2.34

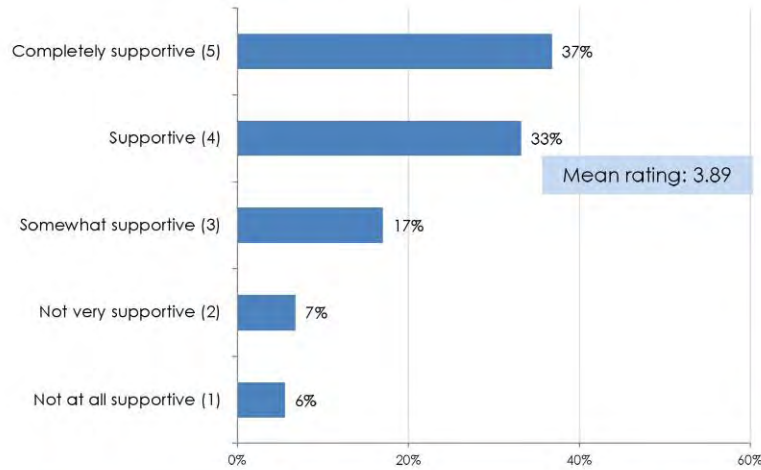
▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

Support for a merger was relatively low, with a majority (57%) of residents indicating that they were 'not very' or 'not at all' supportive. Significantly lower support was reported from female residents and those aged 65 and over

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Support for Council Standing Alone

Q4b. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council standing alone?



Interestingly, those who had been made aware of the proposal via a 'Council mail out/flyer' were significantly more likely than were others to be both 'completely supportive' (46%) and 'not at all supportive' (11%) of this option – prior awareness has seemingly lead to more definitive attitudes.

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	3.89	3.57▼	4.19▲	3.78	3.97	3.75	4.13	3.91	3.78	3.84	3.98	3.89

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

70% of residents were 'supportive' or 'completely supportive' of Council standing alone, with more than a third (37%) committing to the top 'completely supportive' code. Males registered a significantly lower level of support for this option than did females

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Detailed Findings: 2b. More Considered Rating of Options

For these more considered ratings of standing alone versus amalgamating, more information/detail about the options was provided. So these ratings potentially reflect how the broader community may respond if they were provided more information.

Second Concept Statement

Council's position is that it is in the best interests of our residents that the City of Canada Bay stands alone and remains as City of Canada Bay Council.

Our concerns about amalgamating with other councils include the following:

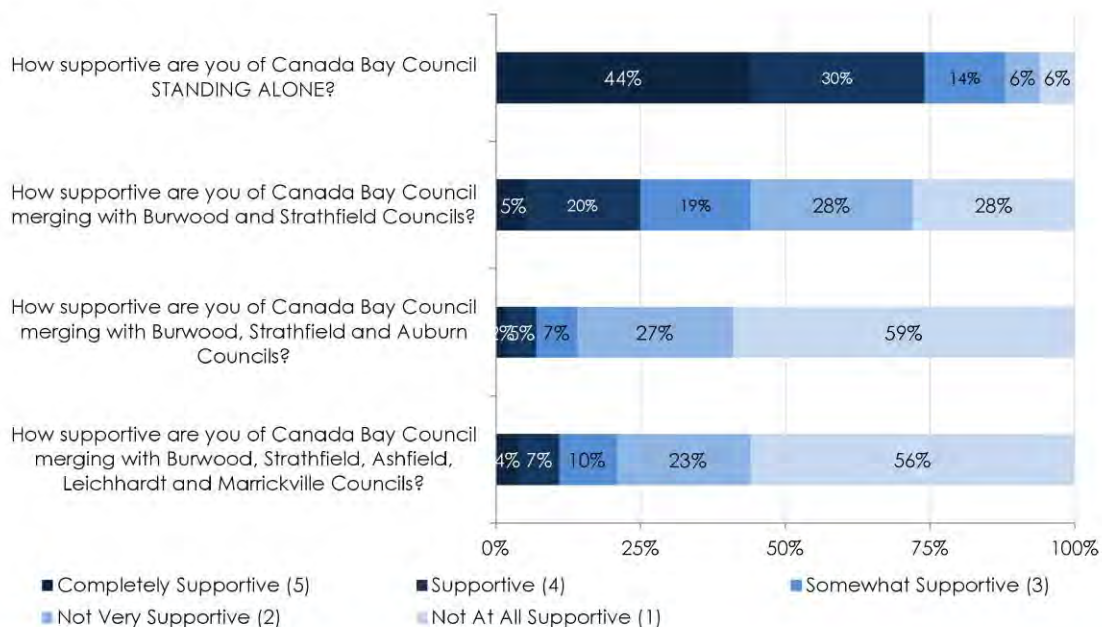
- The State Government has not demonstrated how amalgamations will better deliver local services, including libraries, infrastructure and roads maintenance, upkeep of parks, sporting fields, community centres, childcare centres, etc.
- There is no clear evidence that forced amalgamations will save money, so council rates are unlikely to reduce
- Our community could grow to a population of around 342,000. If we are forced to amalgamate – will our residents' voices be heard?

Council is committed to listening to your opinion of the future of our City. Notwithstanding the State Government's criteria for scale being around 250,000 people, Council is considering four options and they would like to obtain your views on each of the four options to assist in preparing their submission to the Government.



More Considered Ratings - Comparison

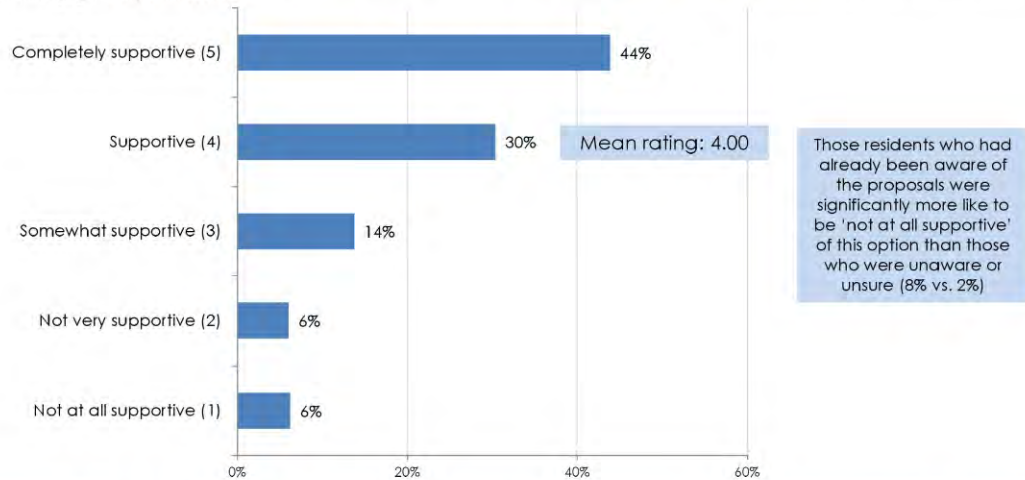
Q5a-d. How supportive are you of each option?



After providing more background on Council's position, 74% of residents were 'Supportive' or 'Completely supportive' of the standalone option – up marginally from 70% on the earlier general rating. Of the three merger options, merging with Burwood and Strathfield generated the most commitment (25% 'Supportive' or 'Completely supportive') – followed by 11% for the six-council option and 7% for the Burwood Strathfield Auburn option.

Support for Council Standing Alone

Q5a. Canada Bay Council could stand alone and not merge with any other council. Our population is around 87,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council standing alone and not merging with any other councils?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	4.00	3.72▼	4.25▲	3.99	4.12	3.72	4.14	4.02	3.91	3.94	4.10	4.04

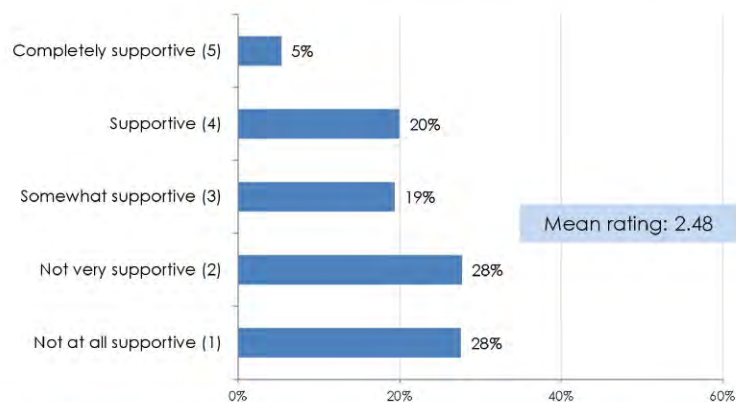
▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

Support for Council standing alone rose marginally after Council's position had been explained (74% 'Supportive' or 'Completely supportive', up from 70% on the initial broader rating), while females remained significantly more supportive than males

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Support for Council Merging with Burwood and Strathfield Councils

Q5b. Canada Bay Council could merge with Burwood and Strathfield Councils. This would result in a population of around 161,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood and Strathfield Councils?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	2.48	2.78▲	2.20▼	2.56	2.49	2.46	2.32	2.37	3.00	2.47	2.50	2.37

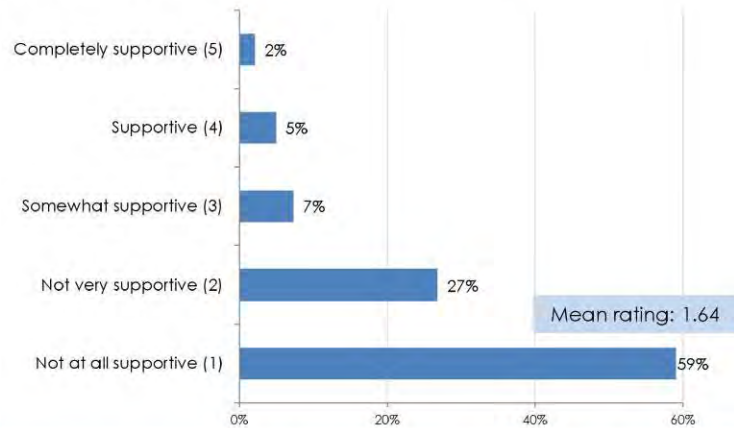
▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

There was an ambivalent response to a merger with Burwood and Strathfield, with 44% indicating they were at least 'somewhat supportive' and the remainder reporting a negative reaction. Support for this merger option was similar to the initial level of support for general amalgamation before the options had been outlined

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Support for Council Merging with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils

Q5c. Canada Bay Council could merge with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils. This would result in a population of around 240,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils?



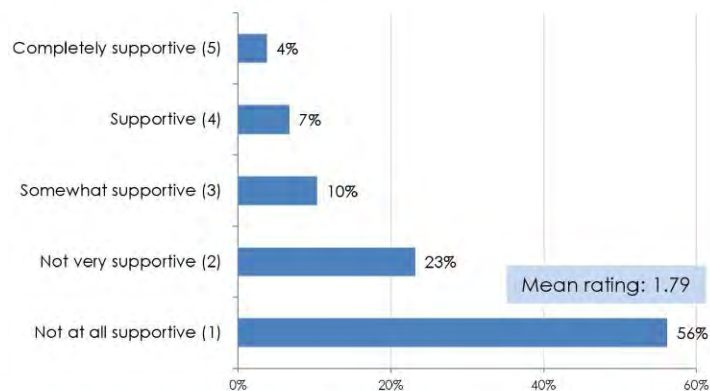
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	1.64	1.81	1.48	1.76	1.53	1.62	1.63	1.60	1.83	1.67	1.59	1.63

86% of residents indicated that they were 'not very' or 'not at all' supportive of a proposed merger with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn. The mean rating of 1.64 is the lowest of all four options. Rejection of this outcome was largely consistent across the community despite marginally higher support from males, non-ratepayers, and those aged 18-34

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Support for Council Merging with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils

Q5d. Canada Bay Council could merge with five other councils; Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils – this is the recommendation of the NSW State Government for Canada Bay. This would result in a population of around 342,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	1.79	2.09▲	1.50▼	1.83	1.73	1.91	1.63	1.75	1.94	1.83	1.71	1.81

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

Support for the largest proposed amalgamation was low throughout the community, with 79% of residents reporting that they were 'not very' or 'not at all' supportive. While still generally opposed, males were significantly more likely than were females to express support for this option

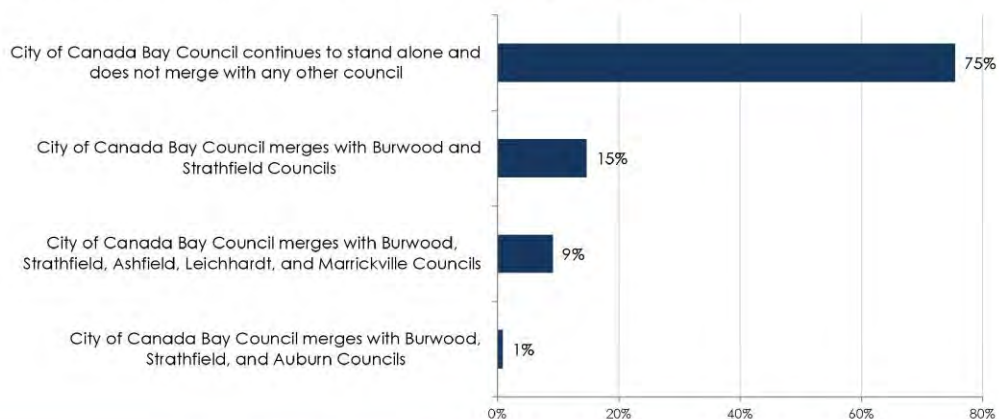
20

Detailed Findings:

2c. Preferred Options

Preferred Option – FIRST Preferences

Q6a. Now that you have been informed about the different options that Council is considering, which is your preferred option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Standing alone	75%	65%▼	85%▲	81%	75%	67%	75%	77%	68%	71%	83%	74%
Burwood and Strathfield	15%	20%	10%	13%	15%	16%	16%	12%	25%	16%	12%	13%
Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%▲	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville	9%	14%▲	4%▼	6%	10%	14%	8%	10%	5%	12%	4%	12%

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower (by group)

Three-quarters of residents selected City of Canada Bay Council standing alone as their first-preferred outcome.

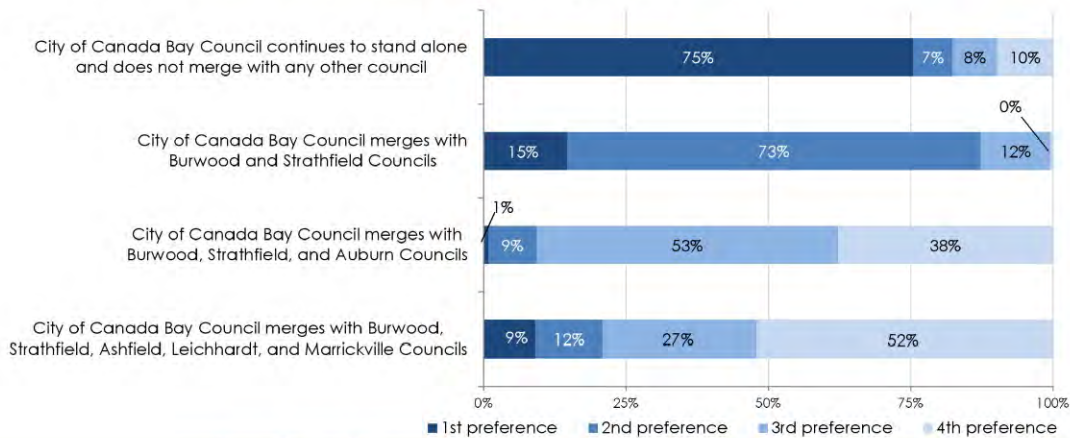
A significantly higher number of females selected this option as their first preference (85%).

There was minority support for amalgamation with Burwood and Strathfield, and for the State Government's proposed merger, and negligible first-preference support for a merger with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn

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Preferred Option – ALL Preferences

Q6a. Now that you have been informed about the different options that Council is considering, which is your preferred option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?	Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209
Standing alone	1.52	1.79	1.27▲	1.42	1.51	1.72	1.49	1.49	1.65	1.60	1.37
Burwood and Strathfield	1.98	1.98	1.99	2.02	1.95	2.01	1.94	2.01	1.87	1.96	2.03
Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville	3.22	2.96▲	3.46	3.22	3.20	3.10	3.41	3.23	3.19	3.18	3.30
Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn	3.28	3.27	3.28	3.34	3.34	3.17	3.16	3.27	3.29	3.26	3.30

Base: N=607

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower preference (by group)

Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 4 = 4th preference

The Burwood/Strathfield merger option was selected by most residents as their second preference. The six-council option (at bottom) has seemingly polarised residents, with 21% selecting it as first or second preference – and 52% making it their last preference.

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Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Option 1: Canada Bay to Stand Alone and Not Merge with Any Other Council

The predominant reason given by those favouring the Standalone Option was satisfaction with current performance of Council, while a significant minority cited the perceived benefits of smaller, more localised government.

Those rating this option as least preferred tended to give dissatisfaction with Council as their reason.

1 st preference (75% of all respondents)	Count	%
Happy with performance of Canada Bay Council	159	26%
Smaller council is better able to deal with local issues/maintain connection with the community	126	21%
Easier to manage/provide quality services to a small council area	82	14%
Do not want quality of services and facilities to decline	50	8%
Other amalgamations have not been successful	46	8%
Area is large enough as it is	35	6%
Don't want to take on problems/debts of other councils	20	3%
Council area has been amalgamated already in the past	16	3%
Character/identity of other areas are too different	12	2%
Will lose the unique identity of the area	12	2%
Not enough evidence to support a merged council area	11	2%
Unhappy with performance of other Councils	11	2%
Benefits of any merger have not been communicated	10	2%
Less representation in a large council area	10	2%
Bigger may not be better	5	1%
Amalgamations will not save money for the area	4	1%
Best option for residents	4	1%
Do not like the proposed merger options	4	1%
Rates will increase	4	1%

Base: N=607

4 th preference (10% of all respondents)	Count	%
Unhappy with Canada Bay Council performance	13	2%
More efficient	12	2%
Councils need to be larger	7	1%
Amalgamation will benefit residents	6	1%
Best option for the future of the area	6	1%
Cost savings will come with a merger	6	1%
Will stop the duplication of services	6	1%
Not sustainable enough to stand alone	4	1%

Note: only responses returned by 1% of residents (rounded to the nearest percentage point) are recorded here. The remaining minor responses are listed in the Appendix.

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Residents selecting a merger with Burwood and Strathfield as their preferred option were most likely to cite the similar demographics or identities of those areas as a reason

Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Option 2: Canada Bay to Merge with Burwood and Strathfield Councils

1 st preference (15% of all responses)	Count	%
Councils' identity/values/demographics are compatible/similar	42	7%
Councils are geographically similar/close in proximity	17	3%
The merger provides an optimal population size for service provision	13	2%
Happy with the performance of other council areas	12	2%
Prefer to merge with the smallest number of councils	10	2%
Financially beneficial/more efficient	10	2%
Would benefit Canada Bay area to merge with Burwood and Strathfield	7	1%
Economy of scale	4	1%

3 of 607 respondents (0.5%) gave this option as their 4th, or least, preferred. As such, no individual reason given for selecting this option was statistically relevant – these responses are recorded in the Appendix

Note: only responses returned by 1% of residents (rounded to the nearest percentage point) are recorded here. The remaining minor responses are listed in the Appendix.

Base: N=607

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The sole significant reason given for preferring the Burwood/Strathfield/Auburn merger Option 3 was a belief that this merger would bring the benefits of a large council area without sacrificing local services (Caution: Very small sample)

The larger contingent who placed this outcome as their last preference tended to cite an objection to merging with Auburn specifically

Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Option 3: Canada Bay to Merge with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils

1 st preference (1% of all respondents)	Count	%
Would allow for increased efficiency without compromising local service provision	5	1%

Note: only responses returned by 1% of residents (rounded to the nearest percentage point) are recorded here. The remaining minor responses are listed in the Appendix.

4 th preference (38% of all respondents)	Count	%
Opposed to merging with Auburn Council specifically - incompatible demographics/needs, low opinion of the area, too far away	145	24%
Council areas are not compatible/have little in common demographically	25	4%
Proposed council area would be too large geographically/lead to poorer service provision	25	4%
Low opinion of other Councils' management/financial situations	11	2%
Merger will be detrimental to Canada Bay Council's accessibility/management/services	9	1%

Base: N=607

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Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Option 4: Canada Bay to Merge with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils

The minority of residents who preferred the State Government's proposed merger predominantly felt that a larger council could operate more effectively and efficiently

Those for whom this option was the least preferred most frequently cited a concern that such a large area could not be effectively serviced by one council

1 st preference (9% of all respondents)	Count	%
A larger council area would allow services to be provided more effectively/efficiently	26	4%
Proposed Councils for merger are compatible with Canada Bay - demographics, issues, preferable to association with other proposed Councils	17	3%
Greater council size would increase economic stability/generate savings	9	1%
Some/all of the proposed Councils operate well/are superior to Canada Bay	8	1%
Dissatisfaction with Canada Bay Council makes largest possible amalgamation attractive	6	1%
Amalgamation would move focus from regional issues to more major ones	5	1%
In favour of merging local government areas on principle to reduce government	5	1%

Note: only responses returned by 1% of residents (rounded to the nearest percentage point) are recorded here. The remaining minor responses are listed in the Appendix.

4 th preference (52% of all respondents)	Count	%
Population/size of region would be too great for Council to administer services effectively	222	37%
Larger council would be unable to deal with local issues/maintain connection with the community	98	16%
Merged council would not be able to provide for diversity of residents' needs/differing priorities	77	13%
Low opinion of some/all of proposed Councils for merger - poor financial situation, poor management, unhappy with level/type of development	33	5%
Wish to maintain current situation in Canada Bay and avoid major changes	15	2%
Other Councils proposed for merger are too far away/different to be compatible	8	1%
Financial cost of amalgamation for Canada Bay residents would be unacceptable	6	1%
Merging would generate confusion/exacerbate existing problems	6	1%

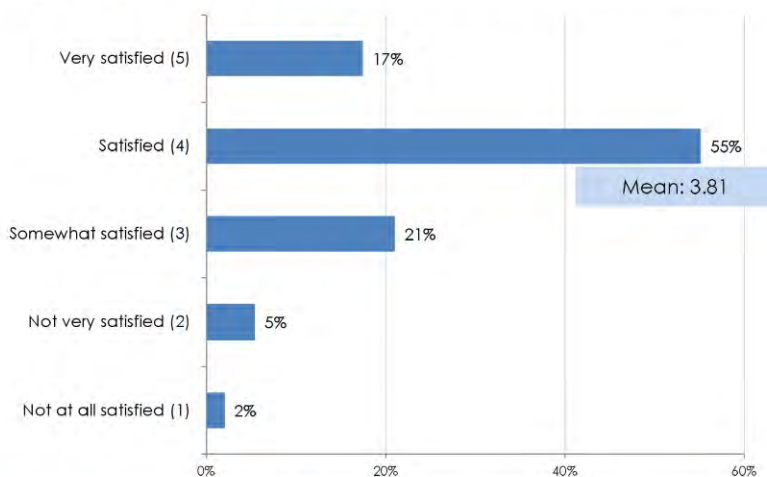
Base: N=607

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Detailed Findings: 3. Satisfaction

Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

Q3. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of the City of Canada Bay Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Aware of proposal?		Aware via mail out/flyer
										Yes	No/not sure	
Base	607	292	315	199	174	129	105	501	106	398	209	184
Mean rating	3.81	3.71	3.90	3.80	3.86	3.71	3.84	3.77	3.99	3.75	3.92	3.84

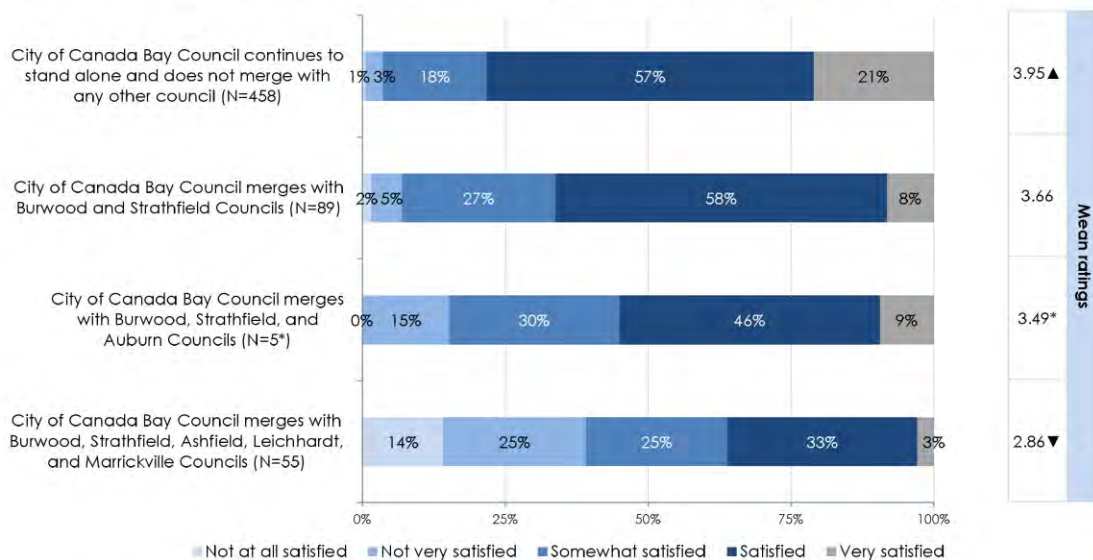
93% of Canada Bay residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with Council's performance, a positive outcome which was consistent across the whole community. The overall mean of 3.81 is above our NSW Metro norm of 3.45. Those who claimed to have received information about mergers via Council brochures gave a similar satisfaction rating to the total resident sample

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Overall Satisfaction (2) by Preferred Amalgamation Option

Q6a. Now that you have been informed about the different options that Council is considering, which is your preferred option?

Q3. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of the City of Canada Bay Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?



Base: N=607

*Note: The apparent discrepancy between the base and percentages shown is a result of the weighting applied to individual respondents. Furthermore, due to the small sample size of this measure, these outcomes are not statistically valid and should be viewed from a point of interest only

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (than the overall)
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Those in favour of standing alone were more likely to be 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with Council (combined 78%) than were those who selected any of the merger options (combined scores range from 36% to 66%). This suggests satisfaction with Council may play a part in shaping resident satisfaction towards standing alone or merging.

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Conclusion & Recommendations



Conclusion

Awareness of Fit for the Future Amalgamation Proposal

- 66% of residents were aware of the proposed amalgamation of Canada Bay with other councils. This result was skewed towards older residents, with 80% of those aged over 49, but just 51% of those aged under 35, aware of the plans
- The most common means by which residents became aware of the proposals was via 'local newspapers' (40% of those who were aware; 26% of the total sample). The 'Council mail out/flyer' achieved 30% penetration among those who heard of the proposal, a proportion significantly higher among older residents and lower among younger residents

Initial Support for Standing Alone/Merging

- Prior to being provided with detailed information regarding different amalgamation options, residents tended to indicate minimal support for a merger, with only 43% reporting that they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of a merger:
 - However, some groups of residents were more amenable to an amalgamation; for example, a majority of males (55%) and those aged 18-34 (52%) indicated they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of a merger in general.
- 87%, on the other hand, were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Canada Bay standing alone at this stage. This result was reasonably consistent across the community, ranging from 81% of males to 94% of both females and those who had not previously been aware of the merger plans

Satisfaction with Council

- Satisfaction with Council's performance was strong, with 93% of residents indicating that they were at least 'somewhat satisfied', and a mean satisfaction rating of 3.81 out of 5, which is higher than the Micromex LGA Metro benchmark of 3.45. This outcome was consistent across the community.

Conclusion

Support for Various Amalgamation Options

- After residents were provided with more specific information regarding the various possible outcomes, support for Council standing alone increased marginally, possibly reflecting Council's stated concerns over a merger. Females remained significantly more supportive of continued autonomy than did males.
- Support for a merger with Burwood and Strathfield Councils was very similar to the earlier unprompted support for amalgamation in general (44% cf. 43% at least 'somewhat supportive') This result implies that residents' top-of-mind perceptions of what a 'merger' would involve were closest to this proposed option. Once again, male residents registered a significantly higher level of support for this amalgamation
- Option 3, a merger with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn, was ascribed very low support, with only 14% of residents reporting any degree of support whatsoever and 59% indicating that they were 'not at all supportive', in a result consistent across the community
- The State Government's recommended option, merging with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville, was ascribed a higher level of support than the proposal to include Auburn; however, community backing remained low, with 21% registering any level of support. While males were statistically significantly more likely to back this option, those indicating that they were 'somewhat supportive' or greater still totalled only 30%

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Conclusion

Ranking of Preferences

- As expected from the individual support levels given to each option, City of Canada Bay Council standing alone was the preferred option of a significant majority of residents, with 75% backing this outcome over the others. Significantly more females than males selected this option as first preference (85% cf. 65%), in line with the general observed trend of stronger merger support from male residents/stronger stand-alone support from females
 - ❖ The predominant justifications for assigning this option first preference were satisfaction with the current performance of Canada Bay Council, and belief that smaller council areas can more effectively provide localised services
 - ❖ Significant numbers of residents named Options 3 and 4 as their least preferred option (38% & 52%). The most common justification for rejecting outright a merger with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn was a sense of incompatibility with Auburn specifically, cited by 24% of all respondents. Those whose least preferred option was the State Government's larger merger tended to feel that the size or population of such an area would be too great to effectively administer services, with 37% of all respondents citing a reason in this vein
- Analysis of residents' full ranking of the proposed options revealed that Options 2 and 4 actually received higher and lower support respectively than their first-preference rankings alone would suggest:
 - ❖ Option 2, an amalgamation with Burwood and Strathfield, had the highest top-2 rating of all options despite only 15% first-preference support, with 88% selecting it as one of their first two preferences, and a negligible number ascribing it their lowest ranking
 - ❖ Option 4, the State Government's recommended merger, received first-preference support from 9% of residents (cf. only 1% for Option 3 involving Auburn), but was the least preferred option of a majority (52%) of residents. This outcome suggests polarisation, with broad community rejection despite some strong minority support
- A correlation emerged between the attitudes towards standing alone/merging and current satisfaction with the City of Canada Bay Council's performance – residents preferring that Council stand alone registered significantly higher levels of satisfaction than average (96% 'somewhat satisfied' or better), while those whose first preference was the State Government's recommended larger merger were observably less satisfied with Council (61%)

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Appendix A – Additional Data

Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Minor Responses for Each Amalgamation Option

Option 1: Council continues to stand alone and does not merge with any other council

1 st preference	Count
Area is growing quickly without amalgamation	3
Negatively impacts community spirit/identity	3
Canada Bay Council is in a better financial position than other councils	2
Cost of merging is too high	2
Do not think funds would be equally distributed across the region	2
Integrity of Council may decline with merger	2
Larger area may result in overdevelopment	2
Loss of jobs	2
Need more information	2
Not supportive of amalgamation	2
NSW Government reasoning for amalgamations is flawed	2
Merging will negatively impact some businesses/home businesses	1
Smaller councils are more accountable	1

4 th preference	Count
Easier to lobby with State and Federal Government	2
Financially improves the area to merge	2
Need to reduce the number of levels of government	2
Larger council will better serve residents	1
Less bureaucracy	1
Need growth in the area	1
Standing alone isn't an option	1

Option 2: Council merges with Burwood and Strathfield Councils

1 st preference	Count
Will reduce duplication of services	3
Already share services/facilities	2
Council area needs to be larger	2
Hopefully will result in rate reduction	2
Administrative savings will occur	1
Concerned about job losses with too large of a merger	1
Quality of services and facilities will improve	1
Unsure/Can't say	1
Will not lose local identity	1

4 th preference	Count
Unhappy with other councils' performance	2
Believe Canada Bay can effectively stand alone	1
Canada Bay area is too different from Burwood and Strathfield	1
Do not want to take on the issues of other council areas	1
Will stop the duplication of services	1

Base: N=607

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Reasons for 1st and 4th Preferences

Minor Responses for Each Amalgamation Option

Option 3: Council merges with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils

1 st preference	Count
This merger provides an optimal population size for service provision	3
Councils suggested in this option are compatible with Canada Bay	2
Meets the State Government's required population size and so is a viable option	1
Positive opinion of the Auburn Council area	1
Would provide a large enough Council to combat overdevelopment	1

4 th preference	Count
Opposed to merging with Burwood Council specifically	3
Canada Bay should look to retain Inner West status rather than merge with Western Suburbs councils	2
Insufficient information available regarding other Councils' suitability	2
Desire to avoid high-rise development present in proposed other Councils	1
Lack of diversity throughout the proposed Councils	1

Option 4: Council merges with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils

1 st preference	Count
Merging would allow for fairer, more balanced representation	3
Multiple areas represented in one council would encourage competition	2
Larger merger would benefit Leichhardt Council area	1

4 th preference	Count
Council job losses would occur	3
Insufficient information has been provided explaining any benefits to amalgamation	3

Base: N=607

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Appendix B – Questionnaire

**City of Canada Bay
Fit for the Future
May 2015**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _____ from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of the City of Canada Bay Council with residents about the future of your Local Government area.

For demographic purposes we ask if there might be someone in the house aged 15-34 who would be able to assist us.

If no: We encourage everyone 15 years and over to participate, would you be willing to assist with this please?

If no: Thank you anyway for your time.

If yes: Can I please confirm that you do live in the City of Canada Bay Council area?

If no: Unfortunately you are not eligible for the research, Thank you for your time.

Q1. Before we start I would like to check whether you or an immediate family member work for the City of Canada Bay Council?

- ☐ Yes (If yes, terminate survey)
☐ No

Q1. Which of these age groups do you fit into?

- ☐ Under 18 (If under 18y/o, terminate survey)
☐ 18 – 34
☐ 35 – 49
☐ 50 – 64
☐ 65+

Q2. Which suburb do you live in? (where suburb crosses into another LGA, double-check that respondent lives in Canada Bay LGA)

- ☐ Abbotsford
☐ Breakfast Point
☐ Cabarita
☐ Canada Bay
☐ Chiswick
☐ Concord
☐ Concord West
☐ Drummoine
☐ Five Dock
☐ Liberty Grove
☐ Marlake
☐ North Strathfield (crosses into another LGA)
☐ Road Point
☐ Rhodes
☐ Russell Lea
☐ Strathfield (crosses into another LGA)
☐ Woremba

Q3. In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of the City of Canada Bay Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas? Prompt

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Somewhat satisfied
☐ Not very satisfied
☐ Not at all satisfied

Concept Statement 1 (General)

The NSW State Government is currently reviewing the Local Government system. The review, known as Fit for the Future, is looking to reduce the number of councils in NSW, and to make local government sustainable, efficient, and effective for future generations. The estimated population required by the State Government of each newly merged Council entity is 250,000 people.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services, whilst an argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will be less responsive to the local community's needs and local issues.

Under the review, councils need to demonstrate how they will become sustainable, provide effective and efficient services, create the scale and capacity needed to meet the needs of communities, and partner with the NSW Government.

Q4a. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council being merged with one or more neighbouring councils? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

Q4b. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council standing alone? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

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Concept Statement 2

Council's position is that it is in the best interests of our residents that the City of Canada Bay stands alone and remains as City of Canada Bay Council.

Our concerns about amalgamating with other councils include the following:

- The State Government has not demonstrated how amalgamations will better deliver local services, including libraries, infrastructure and roads maintenance, upkeep of parks, sporting fields, community centres, childcare centres, etc.
- There is no clear evidence that forced amalgamations will save money, so council rates are unlikely to reduce
- Our community could grow to a population of around 342,000. If we are forced to amalgamate – will our residents' voices be heard?

Council is committed to listening to your opinion of the future of our City. Notwithstanding the State Government's criteria for scale being around 250,000 people, Council is considering four options and they would like to obtain your views on each of the four options to assist in preparing their submission to the Government.

The first option is (Rotate options):

Q5a. Canada Bay Council could stand alone and not merge with any other council. Our population is around 87,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council standing alone and not merging with any other councils? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

Q5b. Canada Bay Council could merge with Burwood and Strathfield Councils. This would result in a population of around 161,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood and Strathfield Councils? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

Q5c. Canada Bay Council could merge with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils. This would result in a population of around 240,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood, Strathfield and Auburn Councils? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

Q5d. Canada Bay Council could merge with five other councils: Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils – this is the recommendation of the NSW State Government for Canada Bay. This would result in a population of around 342,000. How supportive are you of Canada Bay Council merging with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils? Prompt

- ☐ Completely supportive
☐ Supportive
☐ Somewhat supportive
☐ Not very supportive
☐ Not at all supportive

Q6a. Now that you have been informed about the different options that Council is considering, which is your preferred option? And your second preference? And your third preference? Prompt - Rotate

- ☐ Option 1: City of Canada Bay Council continues to stand alone and does not merge with any other council
☐ Option 2: The City of Canada Bay Council merges with Burwood and Strathfield Councils
☐ Option 3: The City of Canada Bay Council merges with Burwood, Strathfield, and Auburn Councils
☐ Option 4: The City of Canada Bay Council merges with Burwood, Strathfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Marrickville Councils

Q6b. You nominated [First preference from Q6a] as your first preference, why do you say that?

Q6c. And you nominated [Last preference from Q6a] as your last preference, why do you say that?

Q7a. Prior to this call were you aware that the State Government is looking to merge the City of Canada Bay Council with a number of its neighbouring Councils?

- ☐ Yes (Go to Q8)
☐ No (Go to Q8)
☐ Not sure (Go to Q8)

Q7b. Where did you hear about the proposal to potentially merge the City of Canada Bay Council with the other councils? Please answer yes or no as I read each one. Prompt (MR)

- ☐ Council mail out/flyer
☐ Other Council communication (please specify)
☐ TV news
☐ Radio
☐ Local newspapers
☐ Word of mouth (please specify)
☐ Other (please specify)
☐ (Do not read) Can't recall

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Q8. Do you own or rent the property you are living in?

- ☐ I/We own/are currently buying this property
- ☐ I/We currently rent this property

Q9. How many years have you lived in the City of Canada Bay Council Local Government Area? Prompt

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 months to 2 years
- ☐ 3 – 5 years
- ☐ 6 – 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

That completes our interview. Thank you very much for your time.

Q10. Gender (determine by voice):

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used only for research purposes. Just to remind you, I am calling from Micromex Research on behalf of the City of Canada Bay Council



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