

## SUMMARY REPORT – 2008 COMMUNITY SURVEY

### Synopsis

This report includes the detailed results of the Community Survey 2008, which is based on a telephone survey of 600 residents undertaken by an independent research firm, who concluded that *"satisfaction is high and significantly higher than the developed LGA Benchmark. Importantly, the research indicates that residents' satisfaction has increased from 2007."*

### Background

The Community Survey is Council's key instrument to measure community satisfaction with services and general community priorities. The survey complements Council's extensive community consultation which includes our network of consultative committees, the Citizens' Panel and the general consultative approach in dealings with the community. The conducting of the annual survey and its linkages to the development of the Annual Management Plan & Budget is in keeping with Council's commitment to innovative and efficient management, community leadership and promotion of active citizenship.

### Discussion

#### **Community Survey 2008 - Key Points**

The survey canvassed the views of 600 residents (over 18 years old) by telephone on a broadly demographically representative basis. The survey was conducted 1-15 December 2008.

The key indicator showed that 77% of respondents were satisfied with the overall delivery of Council services (18% Neither, 5% Dissatisfied).

According to Micromex Research who conducted the survey, the community's satisfaction with the way Council handles their contact with residents is very high *and significantly higher than the developed LGA Benchmark*.

When comparing the residents' satisfaction ratings with the 2007 results, Micromex identified that residents' perceptions of Council's performance had increased markedly, particularly in relation to:

- *Overall satisfaction with Council's performance in the last 12 months*
- *A Council that informs residents about its activities and services*
- *A Council that works in the best interests of the community*
- *A Council that is effective and efficient*
- *A Council that encourages community involvement in decision making*

According to Micromex Research, the key points emanating from the 2008 Community Survey were:

#### **Highest priority criteria to be addressed by Council (Top 3 from Gap & Quadrant analysis)**

- I feel safe in the area at night\* (new question in 2008)
- Well maintained footpaths
- Encouragement of alternative transport options such as cycling and walking

### Other key points

- *High levels of satisfaction with Resource Recovery (recycling and waste) services.*

Note: Marrickville Council was rated 4.5 for '**garbage services**' which was higher than the benchmark of 4.2 from more than 24 other State LGAs (2007/08).

- *There was high level of satisfaction with Council which was marginally higher than in 2007.*

Note: Marrickville Council was rated 3.8 in '**overall satisfaction**' which was significantly higher than the benchmark of 3.5 from more than 24 other NSW LGAs (2007/08).

- *High level of satisfaction with local parks.*

Note: 88% of respondents stated that they had visited a local park in the past 12 months. Of these, 93% considered the park to be tidy and well maintained.

### What Council could do differently or improve on (main category)

(Determined by analysis of response to 'open' question with no prompting)

	Count	Column N %
Cleanliness, littering and dumping of rubbish	76	12.7%
Road improvements and maintenance	48	8.0%
Garbage collection and bins	43	7.2%
Swimming pools	39	6.5%
Maintenance and repair of footpaths and lanes	33	5.5%
Children and childcare services	23	3.8%
Development and building	24	4.0%
Communication and community consultation	21	3.5%
Cycleways and paths	21	3.5%
Parking	21	3.5%
Parks, maintenance and provision of services	21	3.5%
Planting and maintenance of trees	21	3.5%
Water conservation and use	14	2.3%
Aircraft and other noise	15	2.5%
Traffic management	11	1.8%
Public transport	10	1.7%
Anti social behaviour and crime	13	2.2%
Dog and animal management	9	1.5%
Other	127	21.2%
Total	600	100.0%

### What Council did well and should be continued (Open question) - Top 3

- Waste and recycling services
- Parks
- Celebrations and festivals

### Highest priorities for the next 12 months (Open question)

	Count	Column N %
Traffic management	58	9.7%
Environmental issues	49	8.2%
Cleanliness, littering and dumping of rubbish	48	8.0%
Public safety	32	5.3%
Road improvements and maintenance	25	4.2%
Maintenance and repair of footpaths and lanes	21	3.5%
Development and building	19	3.2%
Swimming pools	17	2.8%
Aircraft and other noise	14	2.3%
Community	14	2.3%
Services	13	2.2%
Cycleways and paths	12	2.0%
Children and childcare services	11	1.8%
Parks, maintenance and provision of services	11	1.8%
Water conservation and use	10	1.7%
Garbage collection and bins	8	1.3%
Planting and maintenance of trees	8	1.3%
Other	110	18.3%
Total	600	100.0%

### Tidiness of Streets and Lanes

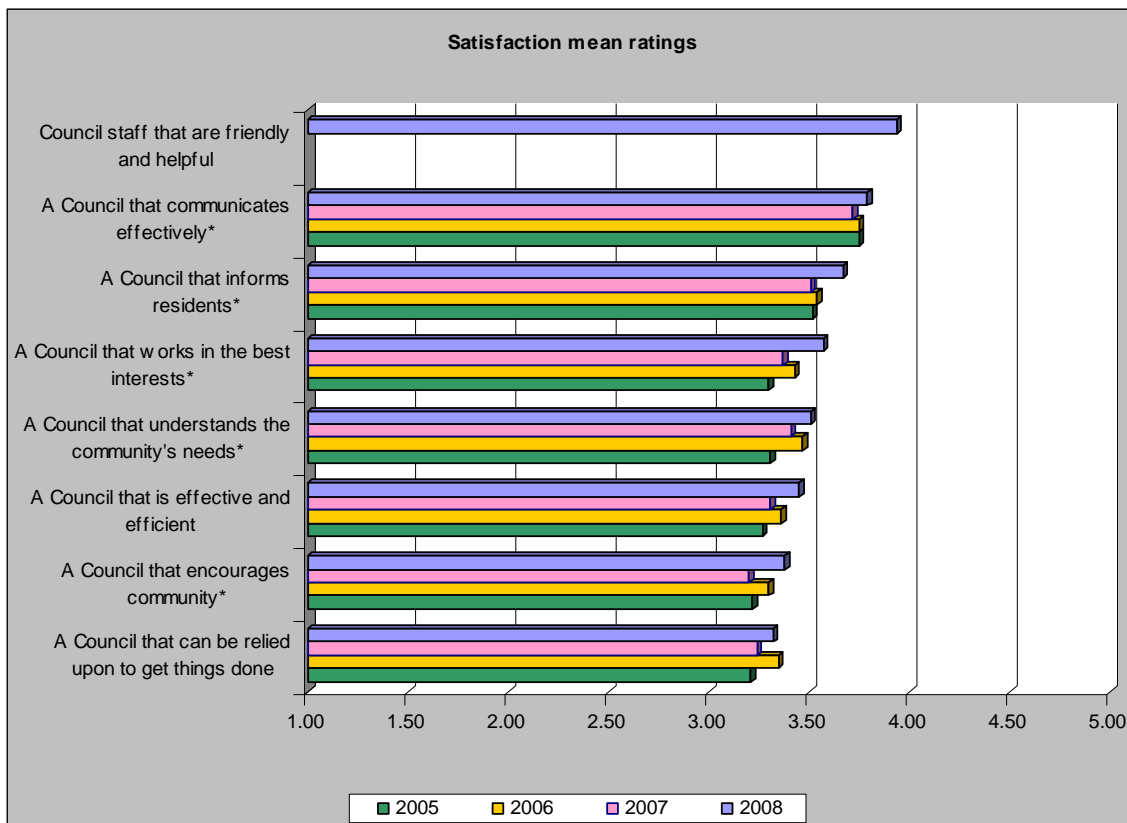
A new question was added to the 2008 Survey, seeking perceptions on efforts to improve the tidiness of streets and lanes.

- 25% of respondents believe that the area's streets and lanes are tidier than they were a year ago, whilst 9% believe that they are worse
- 66% of respondents believe that they are about the same

## Satisfaction with Council

Satisfaction	Low 1-2	Medium 3	High 4-5	Mean ratings	
				2008	2007
Council's performance	5%	18%	77%	3.84*	3.75

Overall satisfaction with the performance of Council over the past 12 months (to December 2008) increased marginally from 73% (2007) to 77%. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, a set of 8 criteria. Each of the 8 criteria was considered to be of “very high importance” by respondents. Satisfaction levels ranged from moderate (a Council that can be relied upon to get things done) to high (Council staff that are friendly and helpful). Satisfaction levels were higher than in previous years for all criteria except *A Council that can be relied upon to get things done*.



### Using the Community Survey for driving service improvement and effective communication

This type of survey provides statistically valid data and is a powerful management tool for Council. Analysis by cross tabulation of demographics allows for identification of issues and areas for improvements.

This form of data analysis allows more effective operational planning. For example, Council staff will utilise survey results on internet users (82% of respondents) and visitors to Council’s website (58% of surveyed internet users) as part of efforts to promote and fine tune Council’s website and Council’s e-newsletter service.

Respondents had seen or read information relating to Marrickville Council in a wide variety of media, with the most predominant being:

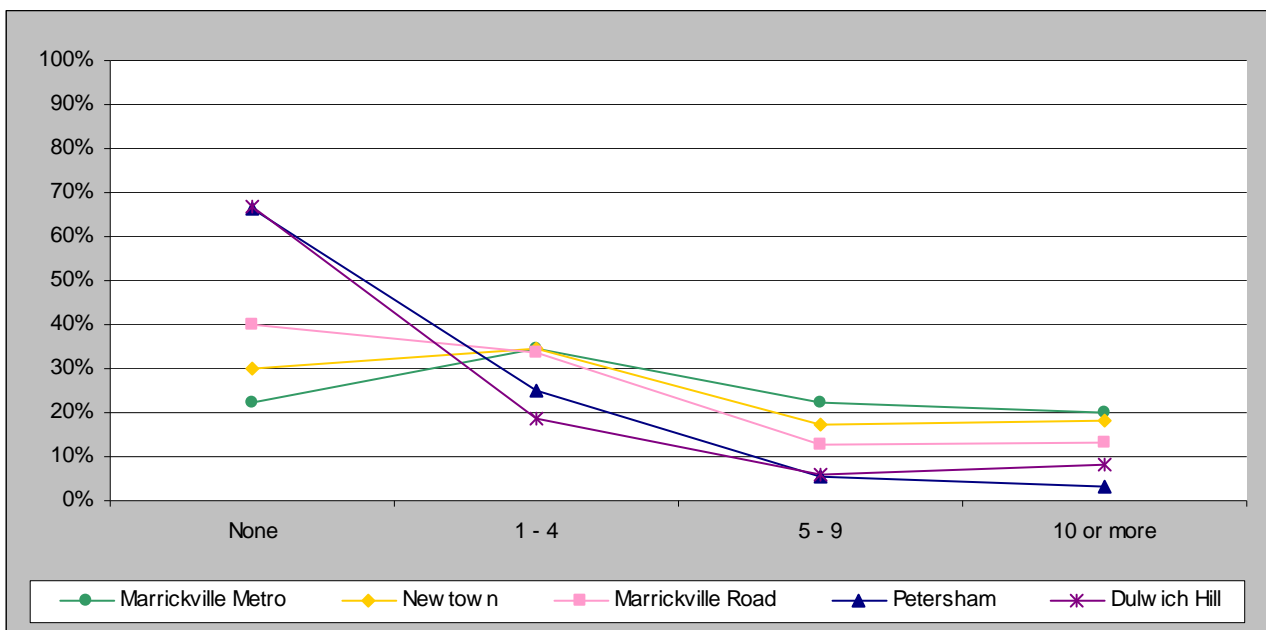
- Marrickville Matters 71%
- Advertisements in local papers 60%
- Promotional flyers 47%
- Quarterly rates newsletter 47%
- Council column in the Glebe 46%

### Shopping in the local area

According to the survey, the most popular regular shopping areas were:

- Marrickville Metro 68%
- Marrickville shops 27%
- Newtown/King St 20%
- Broadway 18%

Marrickville Metro and Newtown were the most frequently visited areas for shopping or dining.



### **Acting on Feedback from Citizens**

Results from these surveys are used to measure satisfaction with services by providing data for performance indicators in the Annual Management Plan and Managers' performance agreements, and used as intelligence to identify community priorities and drive management planning.

Whilst surveys are just one source of information that needs to be considered when developing resource allocation policy, professionally conducted surveys with large sample sizes do provide a valuable snapshot of the attitudes of the community at the time of the research.

When combined with analysis of Census 2006 data and Council operational databases such as MERIT, survey data is a useful management tool to drive service improvement and policy development.

Marrickville Council has for some years utilised surveys to help shape Council's Strategic Plan and Annual Management Plan & Budget. The first Councillor Planning Conference for the 2009-13 planning year held on 15 December 2008 included a range of presentations on the Community Survey 2006 and 2007 results, preliminary results from the 2008 Survey, budget issues, and a session identifying priorities for the Annual Management Plan & Budget 2009-13. Council Managers also met on 25 November 2008 to begin the process of drafting of Annual Management Plan and Budget for the next 4 years, and met again on 29 January where they were provided with an initial briefing on the 2008 Survey Report.

### **Next Steps**

Councillors will again meet on the 24th of February and the 11th and 24 of March to further develop the Draft Annual Management Plan & Budget 2009-13. The results detailed in this paper and attached reports help inform Councillors when assessing community's priorities for the next planning period.

Council management will continue analysis of community feedback and continue assessment and action as appropriate on the 600 views, suggestions and requests for service contained in the surveys.

### **Conclusion**

The results of these surveys should be considered both a source of pride and source for building further improvement. The feedback received from the Community Survey 2008 provides valuable information for Councillors in assessing Council performance and in framing the Draft 2009/13 Annual Management Plan & Budget.