

PITTWATER COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Appendix 2

MICROMEX RESEARCH REPORT
FIT FOR THE FUTURE
RANDOM SAMPLE TELEPHONE SURVEY

Pittwater Council

Fit for the Future

Random Sample Telephone Survey

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: June 2015



Background



Methodology & Sample

Data collection

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

Data collection period

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during the period 29th May to 1st June 2015.

Sample

N=405 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 405 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=405 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 "yes" (57%) to receiving Council's information pack could vary from 52% to 62%. As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the real community profile of Pittwater 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%.



Sample Profile



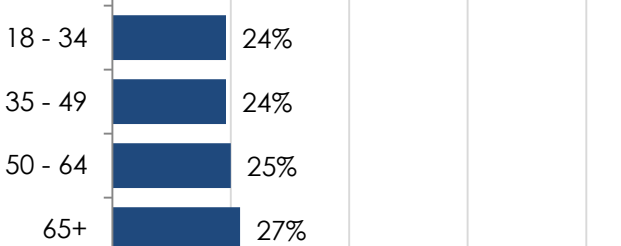
Sample Profile



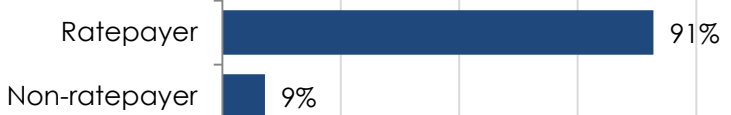
Gender



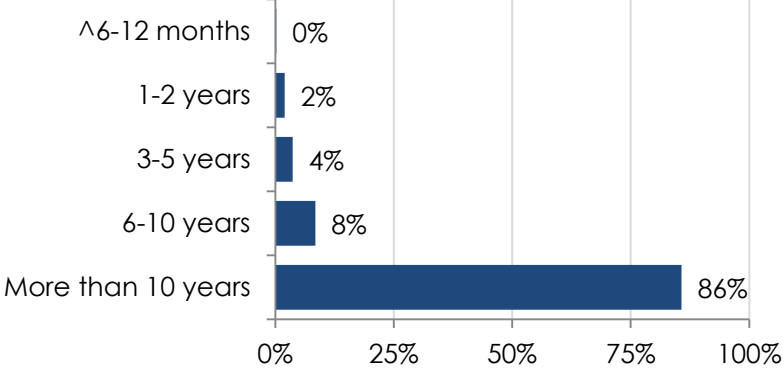
Age



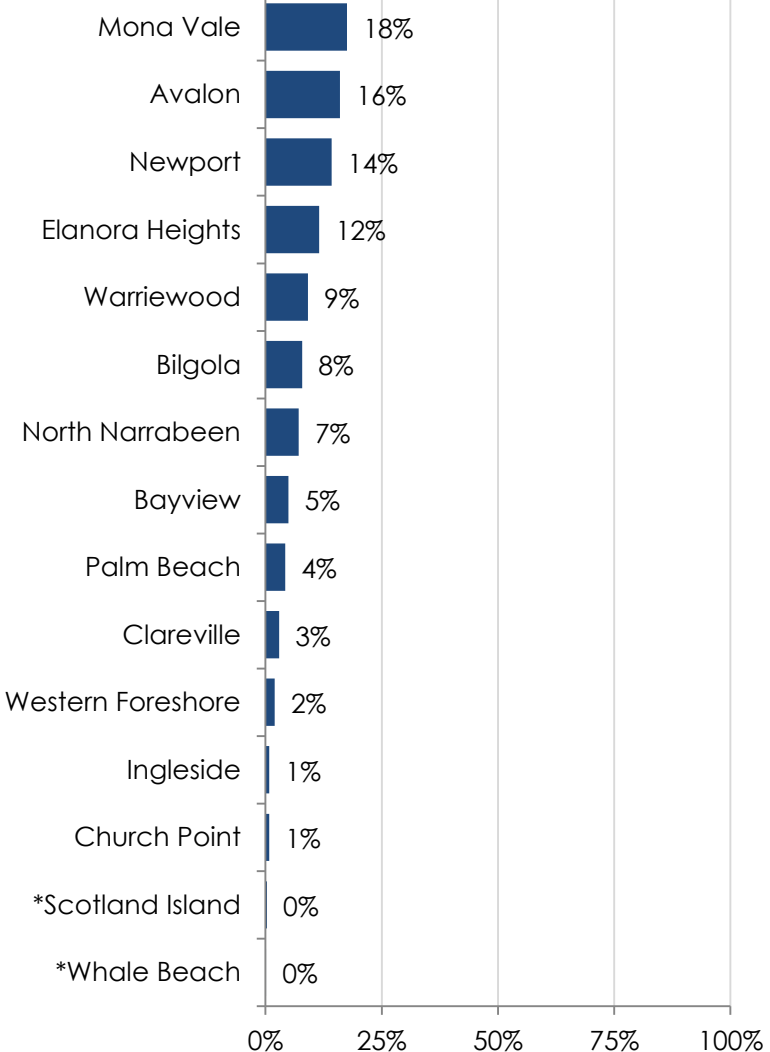
Ratepayer status



Time lived in area



Suburb lived in

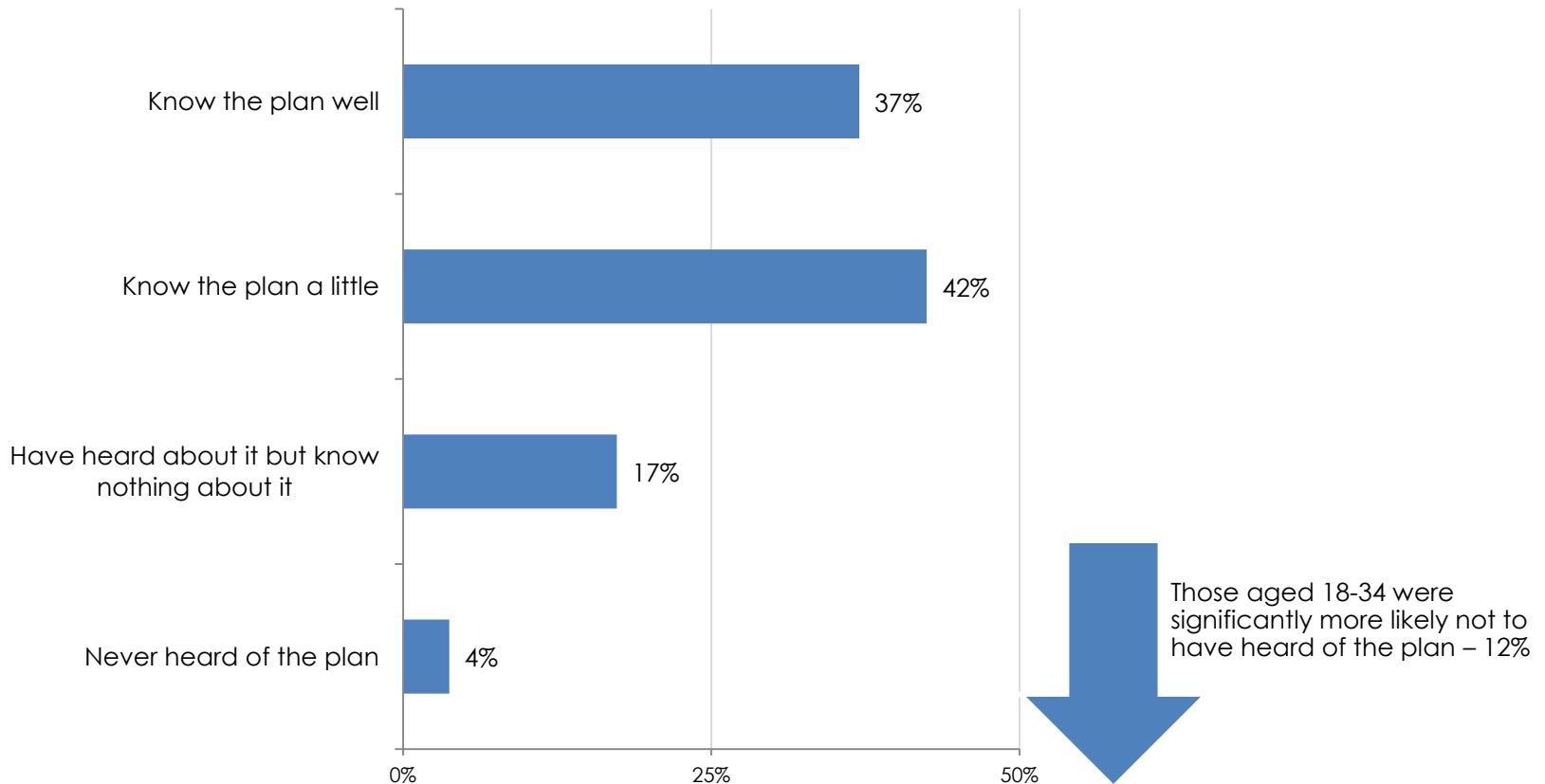


Detailed Findings – Awareness of the Local Government Review



Knowledge of the NSW Government's Review of the Local Government System

Q4. The NSW Government is reviewing the local government system and is encouraging NSW local councils to merge, forming new, larger councils. How aware are you of this plan?



Base: N=405

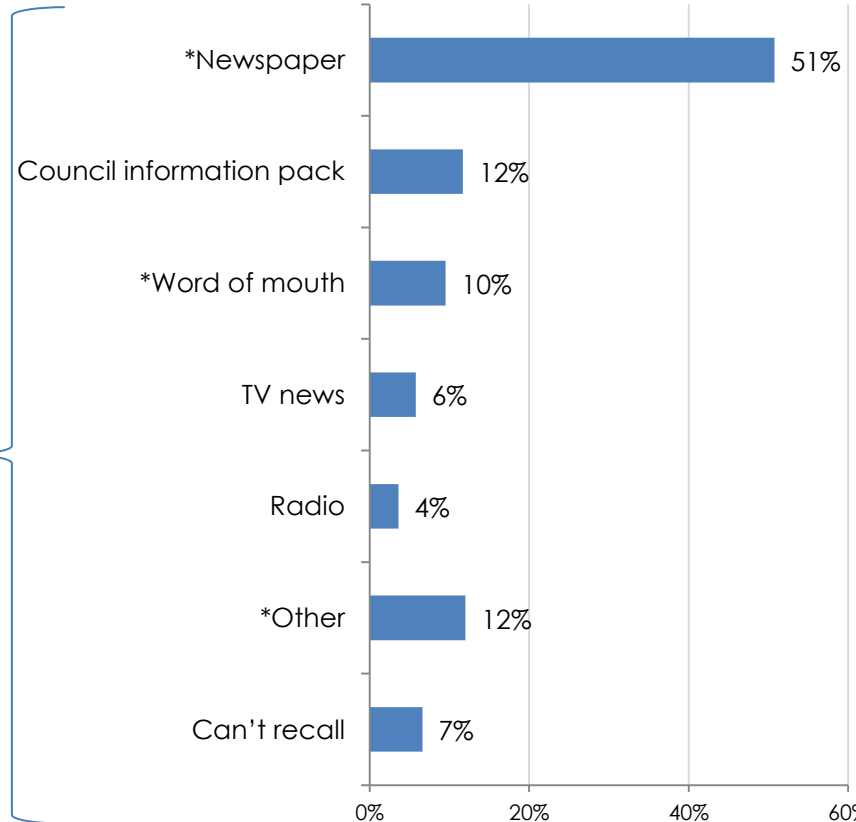
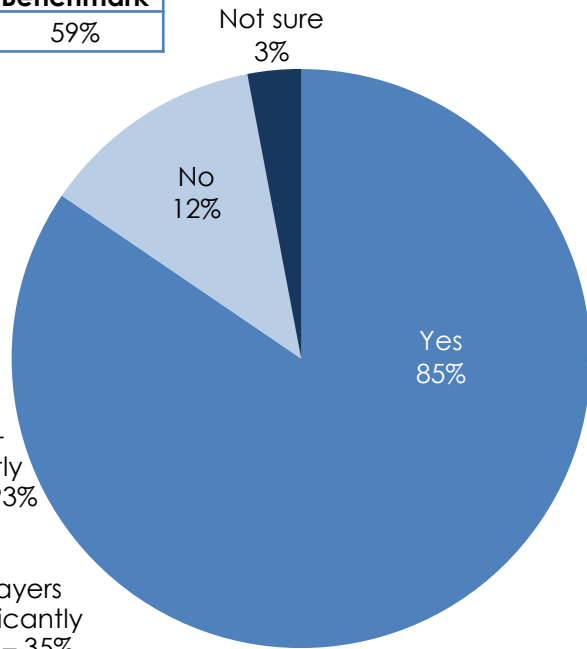
37% of residents claim to 'know the plan well' and a further 42% 'know the plan a little'. Whilst there were few who hadn't heard of the plan at all, those aged 18-34 were significantly less aware

Prior Knowledge of the Possible Merger of Pittwater, Warringah and Manly Councils

Q5a. Prior to this call were you aware of the NSW Government Fit for the Future announcement regarding changes for local government, which included the recommendation that Pittwater merge with Warringah and Manly into one single council?

Q5b. Where did you first hear about this proposal?

	Pittwater Council	Micromex's Awareness Benchmark
Awareness	85%	59%



Those aged 65+ were significantly more aware – 93%

Non-ratepayers were significantly less aware – 35%

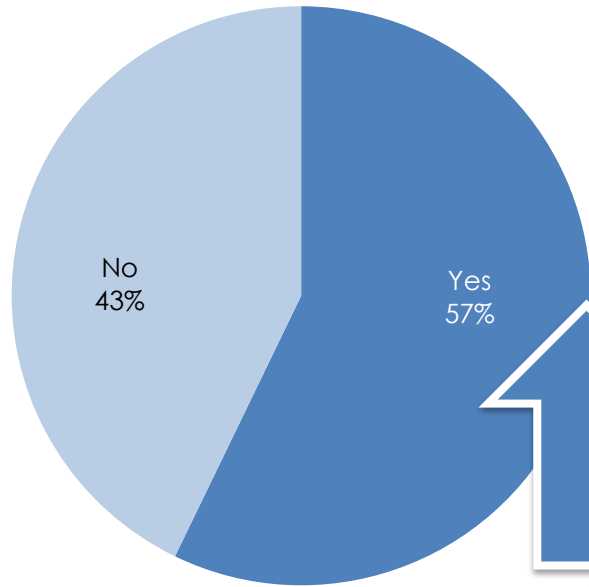
Base: N=405

* Please see the Appendix for detailed lists
Base: N=342

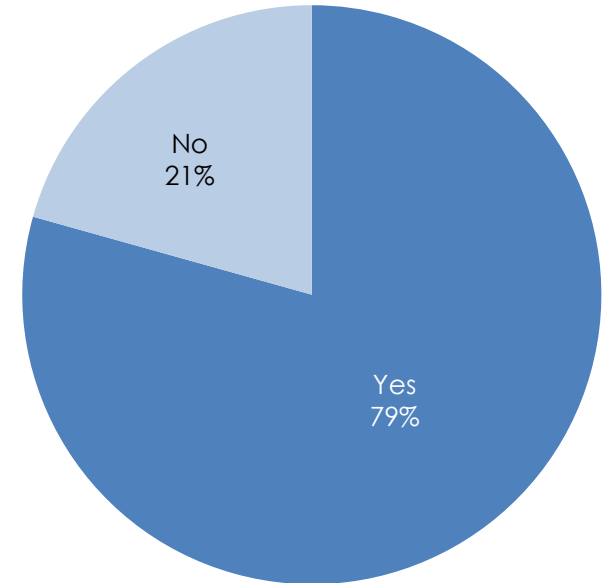
A very high result for awareness, with 85% stating they had prior knowledge of the possible merger. This is significantly higher than the Micromex Fit for the Future Benchmark of 59%. The most informative medium was the 'newspaper', through which 51% of those with prior knowledge became aware

Receipt and Perusal of Council's Information Pack

Q6a. Do you recall receiving a Council information pack on this issue?



Q6b. Did you read the Council information pack on this issue?



Those aged 50+ were significantly more likely to recall having received the pack – 70%

Those aged 18-34 were significantly less likely to remember receiving the pack – 35%

Base: N=405

Base: N=232

The majority of residents recalled receiving Council's information pack, more than three-quarters of whom actually read it.

Whilst those aged 50+ were significantly more likely to recall receiving the pack, readership levels were similar across the demographics

Detailed Findings – Attitudes to Merger Options



Concept Statement

Fit for the Future is the name given to the review of local government being carried out by the NSW Government, in an effort to reduce the number of councils in NSW.

The argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils might 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.

The NSW Government Fit for the Future announcement made a recommendation that Pittwater be merged with Warringah and Manly into one Council with a population of around 259,000 residents.

Pittwater Council is opposed to the option of one Council for the northern beaches as Pittwater Council is completely sustainable and Fit for the Future in its current form and structure according to the NSW government Fit for the Future criteria. **Pittwater remains committed to a strong independent Pittwater Council providing local representation and delivery of local services to the people of Pittwater on the existing boundaries.** Pittwater Council would, however, like to seek the community's feedback on all three options outlined in the recent KPMG report and Council brochure sent to households in Pittwater.

The three options for consideration are:

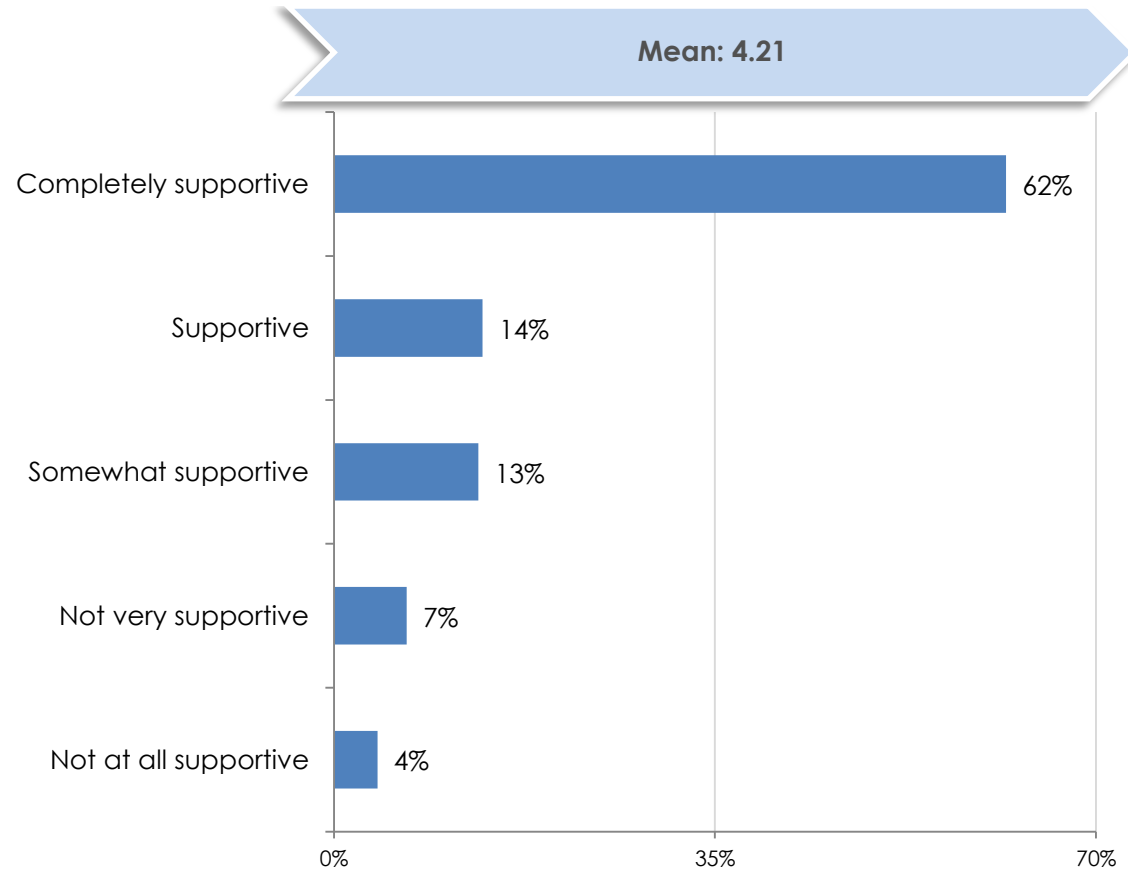
- Option 1 – Pittwater to maintain the status quo, to remain as they are without any boundary changes
- Option 2 – Greater Manly/Greater Pittwater – This option involves boundary changes and splits the existing Warringah Council, creating two councils of approximately equal population size
- Option 3 – A single council – comprising the current areas of Pittwater, Warringah and Manly



Support for Pittwater to Stand Alone

Option 1: Pittwater Council to maintain the status quo, to remain as they are without any boundary changes

Q7a. How supportive are you of Pittwater Council staying as it is?

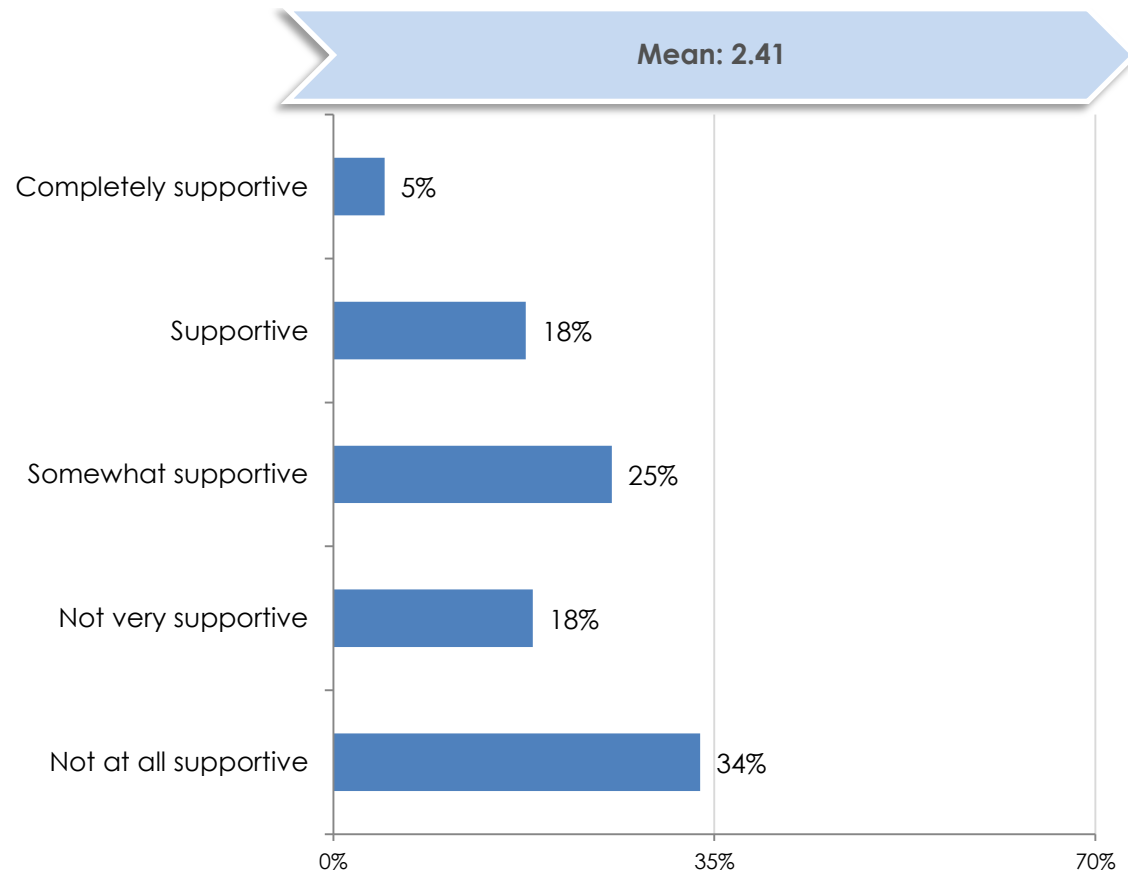


Support for Pittwater to retain its status quo was high, with 62% stating they were 'completely supportive' and a further 27% indicating they were 'somewhat supportive' or 'supportive'. This result was consistent across the community

The Formation of Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly

Option 2: Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly – This option involves boundary changes and splits the existing Warringah Council, creating two councils of approximately equal population size

Q7b. How supportive are you of the formation of Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly?



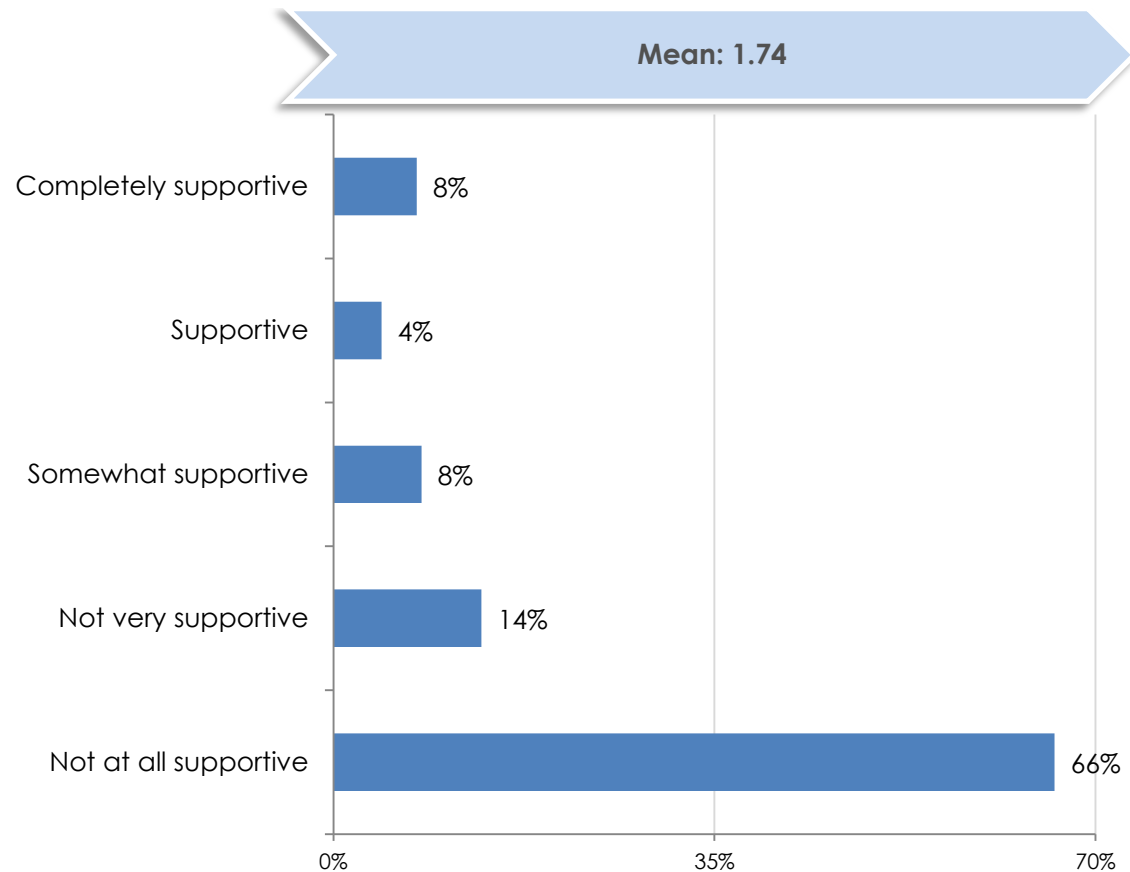
Nearly half the residents were at least somewhat supportive of the formation of two councils of approximately equal size, achieved by splitting the existing Warringah Council. Conversely, the remainder chose to be unsupportive.

Those aged 65+ were significantly less supportive of this option (2.00)

A Single Council Comprising Pittwater, Warringah and Manly

Option 3: A single council comprising the current local government areas of Pittwater, Warringah and Manly

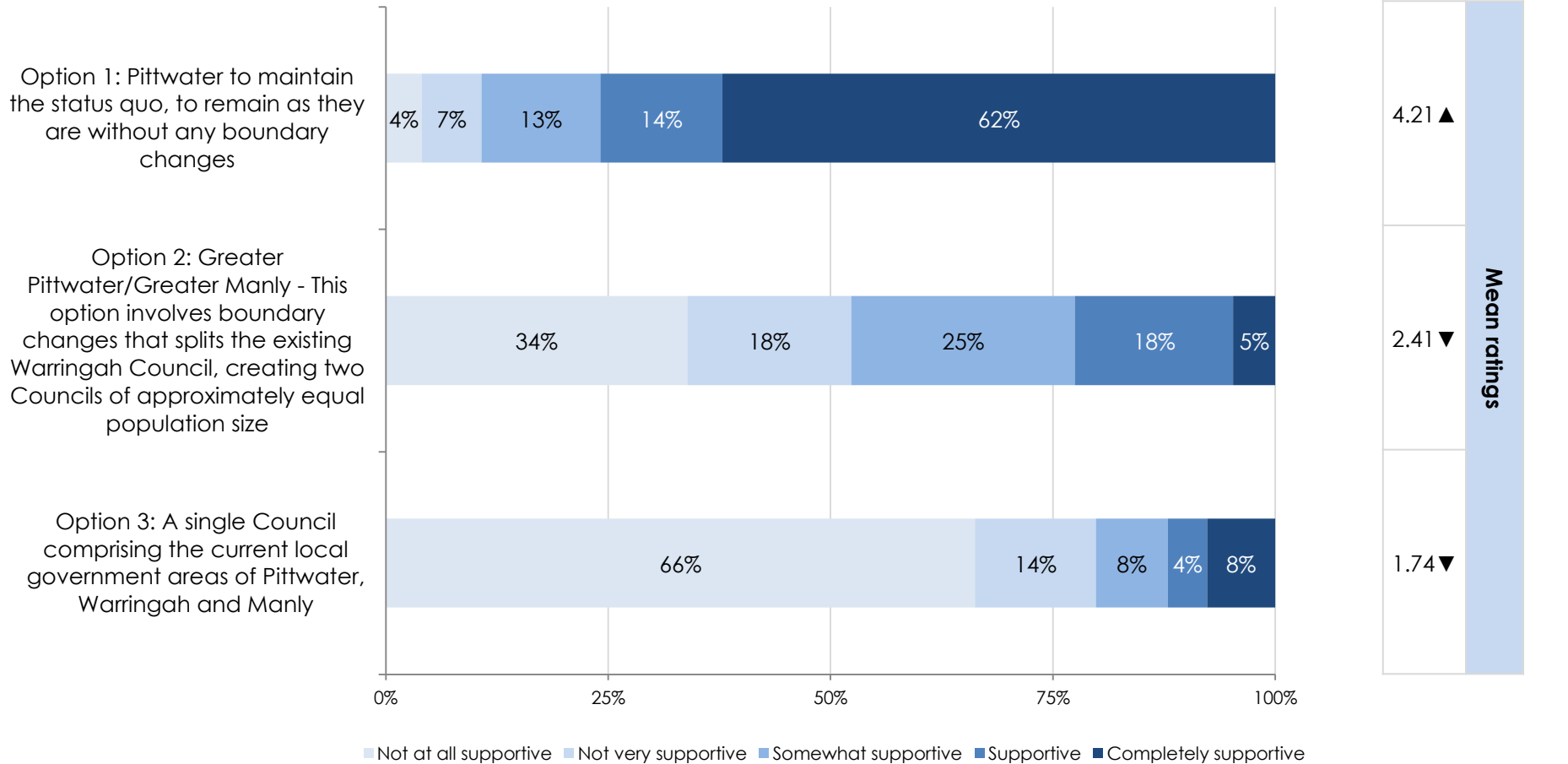
Q7c. How supportive are you of Pittwater being merged into a single council?



This option returned the lowest support of the three, with only 20% expressing any form of support. This result was uniform throughout the community

Summary of Support

- Q7a. How supportive are you of Pittwater Council staying as it is?
- Q7b. How supportive are you of the formation of Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly?
- Q7c. How supportive are you of Pittwater being merged into a single council?



Base: N=405

There was overwhelming support throughout the community for Pittwater to retain the status quo, with a very high result of 62% stating they were 'completely supportive'.

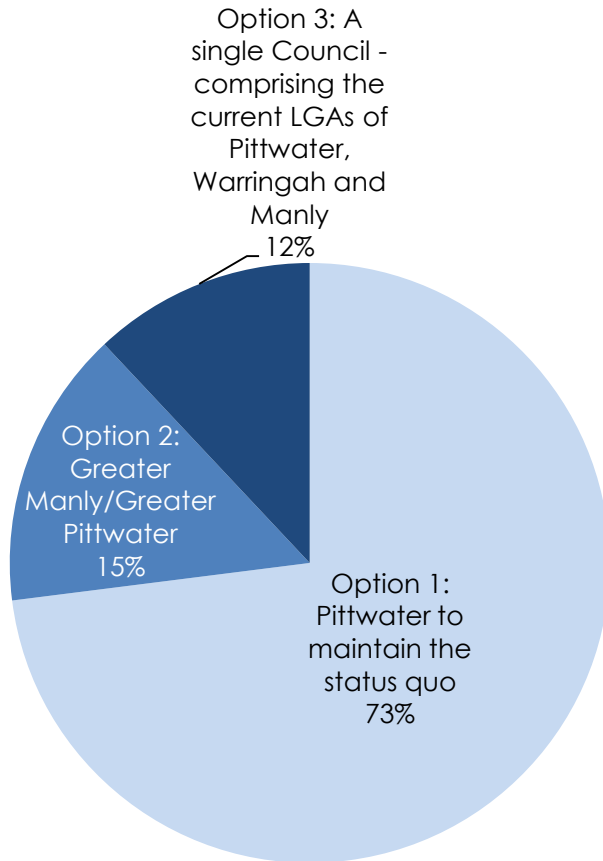
Detailed Findings – Preference Rankings



Preferred Option – FIRST Choice

Q8a. Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option?

Q8b. Why do you say that?



Option 1: Maintain status quo N=297	% of total
Currently happy with Council's performance	37%
These council areas aren't compatible/	31%
Previous inclusion with Warringah didn't work	21%
Effectiveness of current services/efficiency	11%
Too large an area	9%
Loss of identity/being ignored	6%
Increase in rates/Other councils' debts	3%
Loss of representation	1%
Development	1%
Not enough information provided	1%
Option 2: Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly formation N=61	
Better services/facilities/efficiency	7%
Area too large for one council	4%
Economic advantage	3%
Compatible area/boundaries	2%
Benefit the residents	1%
Increased representation	<1%
Option 3: Combine Pittwater, Warringah and Manly N=40	
Economically efficient	8%
Better services/facilities/efficiency	5%
Bigger voice/reduce duplication/corruption	2%
Council area	2%
Success of other amalgamations	1%
Dissatisfied with current situation	<1%

Residents have emphatically chosen to support Pittwater maintaining the status quo, with nearly three-quarters selecting this option as their most preferred. This is a communal attitude, and evokes similar levels of support across all demographics

Preferred Option – FIRST Choice: Option 1 – Maintain Status Quo

Q8a. Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option?
 Q8b. Why do you say that?

The main reasons for the majority selecting this option as their first preference are that they were satisfied with Council's performance, and that they don't believe the other areas would be compatible. This is particularly true of Warringah, with many residents stating that the area was better since the split several years ago, so they see no point in revisiting that scenario

Verbatim responses
"Amalgamation would negatively impact on Pittwater's urban density"
"Amalgamation would reduce the performance of council within the local area"
"Concerned about the deterioration of services if a merge occurs"
"Council needs to stand alone because the other councils like Warringah have been proven guilty of corruption"
"Demographics of the three areas are vastly different, and it would be best to keep these areas separate so their respective councils can deal with their own populations themselves"
"Fought for Pittwater to be separate in 1992 and don't see the point in a merge"
"Have lived in the area under the previous larger Council, and the area has been run a lot better since the smaller Pittwater Council took over"
"Having a smaller council allows Pittwater residents to be properly represented"
"Merging would create an area that would be too large to look after"
"Pittwater is responsive to its local residents and we may lose this if it changes"
"Pittwater works very well at the moment and that would be at risk if they were to merge"
"Since the Pittwater Council formed, things have been done to a good standard"
"Smaller suburbs will lose out if including larger population areas in a merger"
"Things are fine the way they are, Pittwater is sustainable and healthy financially"
"Merging might mean that Pittwater would be neglected and not paid enough attention"



Preferred Option – FIRST Choice: Option 2 – Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly Formation

Q8a. Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option?
Q8b. Why do you say that?

Residents believe if this option is adopted there would be better services and facilities provided, and the resulting council areas would be more efficient

Verbatim responses
<i>"Agree with a bigger council being more efficient in terms of outlay of plans and equipment"</i>
<i>"Efficiencies would be greatest in this option"</i>
<i>"Pittwater is too inefficient and small, and there might be some cost saving and lowering of rates with a merge"</i>
<i>"Warringah was involved with the two areas initially and it worked very well"</i>
<i>"Not too large to still be focused on the locals"</i>
<i>"There needs to be a more sustainable population size"</i>
<i>"Although Pittwater is sustainable, I believe that being bigger would give massive economic advantage"</i>
<i>"Reduction in council related costs"</i>
<i>"Greater council makes more sense economically then keeping status quo"</i>
<i>"Natural boundaries match with this split"</i>
<i>"Manly is quite different to Pittwater, so merging with them wouldn't necessarily be the best idea"</i>



Preferred Option – FIRST Choice: Option 3 – A Single Council Comprising Pittwater, Warringah and Manly

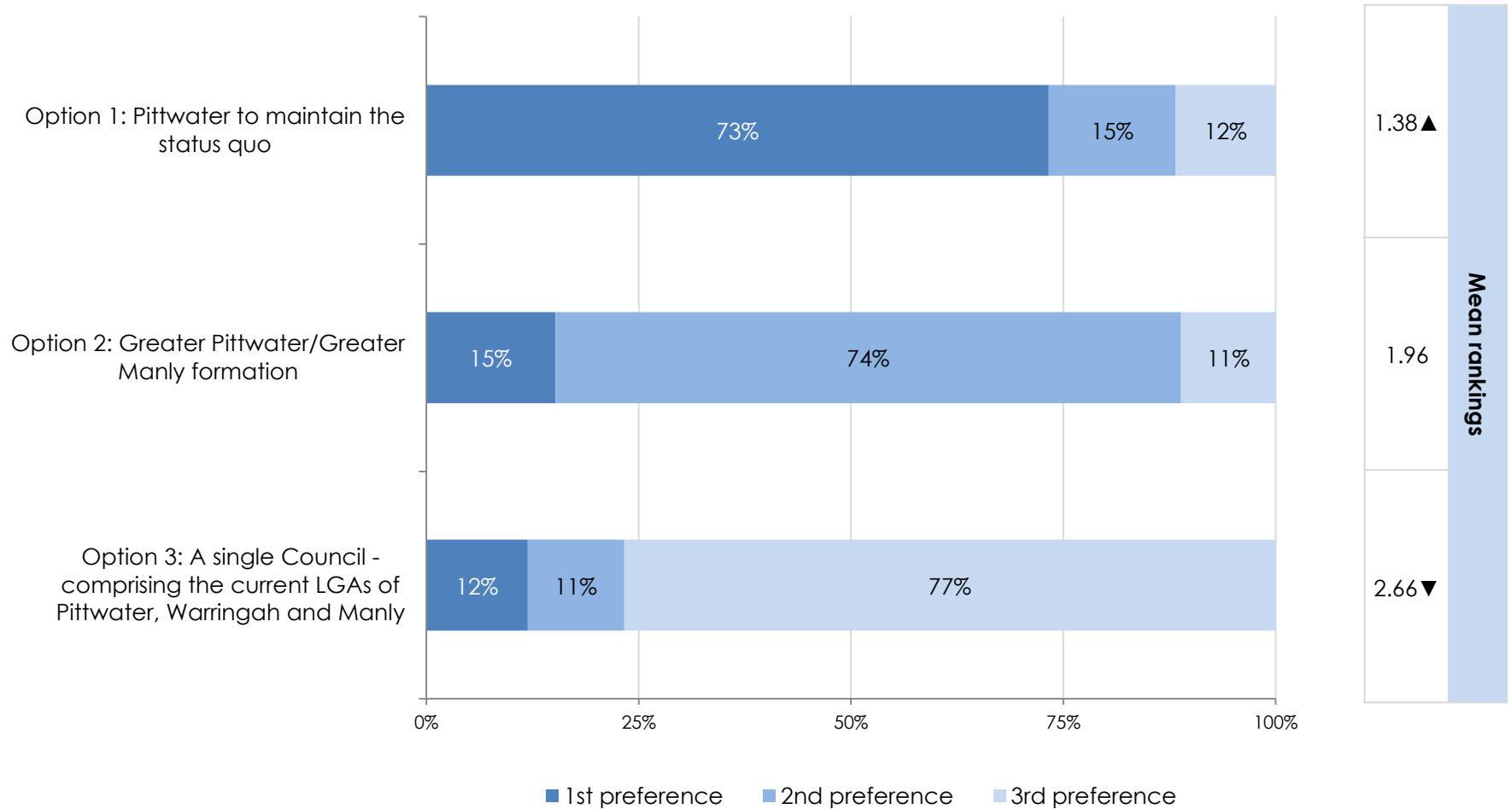
- Q8a. Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option?
 Q8b. Why do you say that?

The most frequently mentioned reason for supporting this option was that it would be economically efficient to do so

Verbatim responses
<i>"Feel that it would be more beneficial to ratepayers as in lower rates"</i>
<i>"Having a single council would save a lot of money and be a lot more efficient"</i>
<i>"Maximisation of finances and resources"</i>
<i>"Fragmentation of services and facilities across the whole Northern Beaches not well served by having individual councils"</i>
<i>"Having one larger council would be more organised and efficient"</i>
<i>"Pittwater Council duplicates too many resources that would be better optimised between larger groups of people"</i>
<i>"Merging on this scale would be economically efficient, as it would reduce duplication of services and cut down on financial wastage"</i>
<i>"Greater efficiency to avoid replication with internal systems and council management costs"</i>
<i>"Control of the area is not in the hands of the people as the managers have too much control. If we merged people would have more power"</i>
<i>"One lot of rules and regulations under one local government would be a lot more logical, and would make living in the Northern Beaches area a lot easier"</i>

Preferred Option – All Rankings

Q8a. Thinking about the options we have just discussed, which is your preferred option? Second preference?



Base: N=405

▲▼ = significantly higher/lower ranking (by option)

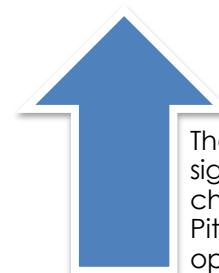
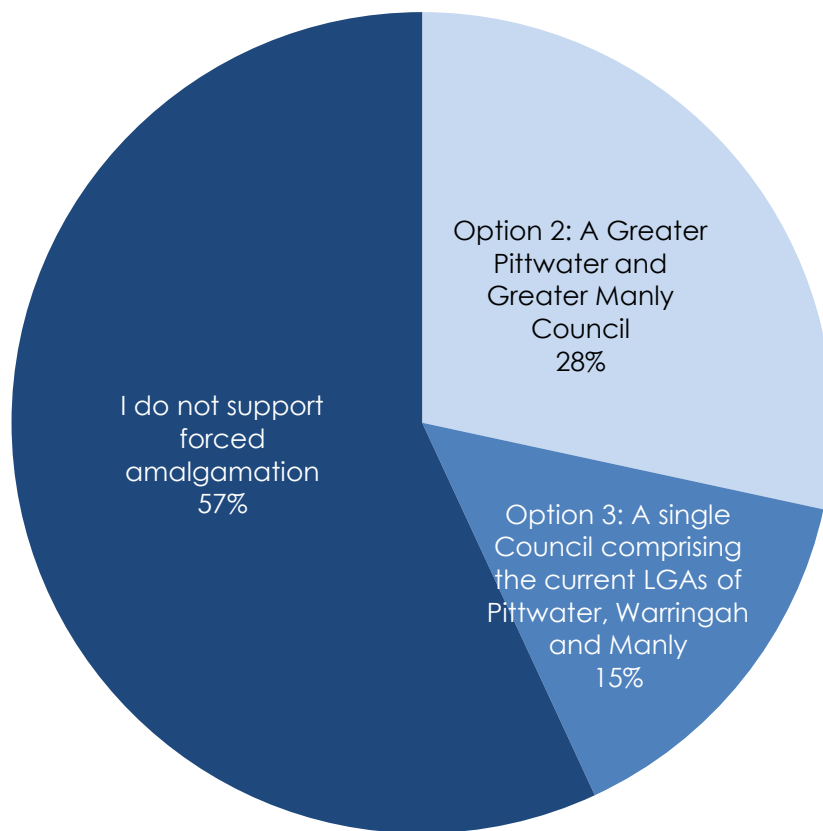
Scale: 1 = 1st preference, 3 = 3rd preference

When we take into account residents' second preferences, there is a high level of support (74%) for the 'Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly formation', however, the option of becoming a single council still does not fare well, continuing to receive minimal support

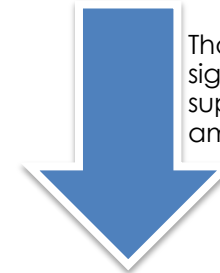
Result of State Government Forcing a Decision

Q8c. If the State Government forces councils on the Northern Beaches to amalgamate, which option would you support?

Whilst there was increased support for the formation of a Greater Pittwater/ Greater Manly formation were the State Government to force amalgamation upon the Northern Beaches, almost twice as many choosing this option as opposed to the single council option, the majority of residents opted to not support forced amalgamation



Those aged 18-34 were significantly more likely to choose the Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly option – 49%



Those aged 65+ were significantly more likely to not support forced amalgamation – 72%

Summary Of Results



Summary of Results

The survey consisted of a series of questions eliciting demographic data, levels of support for each option and their preferences in relation to each option. It is important to note that respondents were asked for their level of support for each option to identify how people felt about each option. The respondents were then asked to preference the options to clarify their ultimate choice when it came to decision making.

Awareness of the Local Government Review

There was a good depth of knowledge of the local government system review, with 37% stating they 'know the plan well' and a further 42% that they 'know the plan a little'. Only 4% claimed to have 'never heard of the plan', half of whom were in the 18-34 age group.

85% of residents were aware of the NSW Government's Fit for the Future announcement recommending that Pittwater merge with Warringah and Manly to form a new single council. 'Newspapers' was the single most informative medium through which residents gained their knowledge (57% of those aware, 43% overall).

57% of residents recalled receiving Council's information pack, 79% of whom then read the information.



Summary of Results

Attitudes to Merger Options

There was strong support for Pittwater Council to retain its status quo, i.e. to remain as they are without any boundary changes, with 62% stating they were 'completely supportive' of this option. With a further 27% stating they were 'somewhat supportive' or 'supportive', this leaves only 11% who displayed any negativity towards this option.

When asked about their level of support for Option 2, there was a more equal level of support for or against, in comparison to Options 1 and 3 where the community held very strong views in favour or against each of those options.

Residents' support for both tabled merger options was much lower than their support for a 'no merger' option. As with other Council areas, Pittwater respondents were more supportive of the smaller amalgamation option (Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly) than the larger amalgamation option of one single council for the northern beaches.



Summary of Results

Preference Rankings

Community preference was for Pittwater to continue to exist as a separate entity. 73% of residents selected this option as their first preference and a further 15% as their second.

- The key driver of this preference was that residents are generally happy with Pittwater Council's performance and efficiencies
- The scale/size of a single Northern Beaches Council, local representation and general compatibility were other identifiable areas of concern that led the community to prefer things to remain as they are

Support for the formation of Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly option was low as a first preference with only 15% of the vote, however, was significantly bolstered by 74% residents selecting it as a second preference.

There was little preference for the State Government's recommendation of merging Pittwater, Warringah, and Manly, with only 23% of residents casting this option as their first or second preference.

Clearly Option 1 (no merger) is the most preferred option, with Option 2 (Greater Pittwater/Greater Manly) being chosen by 74% of residents as their second preference. Option 3 (one single council) was the least preferred option, with 77% declaring this as a last option.



Appendix



Respondent Breakdown by Subcell

All respondents	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	405	198	207	97	97	101	110	368	37

Q5b	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	342	169	173	70	80	91	101	320	22

Q6b	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base	232	115	117	34	51	69	78	220	12



Mediums Through Which Residents Became Aware

Q5b. Where did you first hear about this proposal?

Newspaper	Count	Other	Count
Manly Daily	159	Residents Association	5
Sydney Morning Herald	28	Signage around the area	5
Daily Telegraph	1	Facebook	4
Can't recall	6	Billboard	3
		Community newsletter - Pittwater Offshore News	1
Word of mouth		Council meeting	1
Friend	11	Council newsletter	1
Family member	7	Council's Facebook page	1
Other residents	7	Emailed newsletter - Pittwater Council	1
Neighbour	4	Glenn Street Theatre	1
Work colleague	4	Government Gazette	1
A ranger	1	Letters in the mail from an independent group	1
Local discussion group	1	Mayor Regan at a function for Warringah Council	1
Palm Beach Progress Association	1	Phone survey several months back	1
Rob Stokes	1	Political group	1
Warringah employee	1	Protest signage in the local area	1
		Pamphlet at Council building	1





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