INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

(IPART)

Special Rate Variation Application

Wollongong City Council 2014-15

Attachment 7
WCC Community Vision Survey 2011

2011
Wollongong City Council Vision Survey

Management Report

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This study was commissioned by Wollongong City Council as a way of seeking community input for the development of a Community Strategic Plan. This long term plan will be developed with the Wollongong community and will consist of aspirations, priorities, visions and actions all of which have been included in this community survey.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The broad objectives for the Community Survey process were to:

- Understand what residents value most about living in the Wollongong area;

- Assist Council in identifying the most important issues facing the Wollongong Local Government area at the moment;

- Identify what improvements could be made to make the Wollongong Local Government area a better place to live, work and visit;

- Determine the vision that residents have for Wollongong in 10 years time.

1.3 SURVEY RESPONSE

A total of 504 completed interviews were collected from a random sample of residents throughout the Wollongong Local Government area. Strict sampling procedures ensured that characteristics of selected respondents mirror those of the overall adult population of the area. For a detailed description of the survey methodology refer to Appendix 3.1.

SURVEY RESULTS

2 VISION FOR WOLLONGONG

Wollongong City Council is commencing community consultation for the development of the Community Strategic Plan. This long term plan will be developed with the Wollongong community and will consist of aspirations, priorities, vision and actions.

2.1 VALUE MOST ABOUT LIVING IN THE WOLLONGONG AREA

Residents were asked about what they value most about living in Wollongong. The results are shown in graph 2.1.1.

> **Question**: Using 2 to 3 key words or phrases, what is it you VALUE most about living in the Wollongong area?

Graph 2.1.1: Value most about living in the Wollongong area
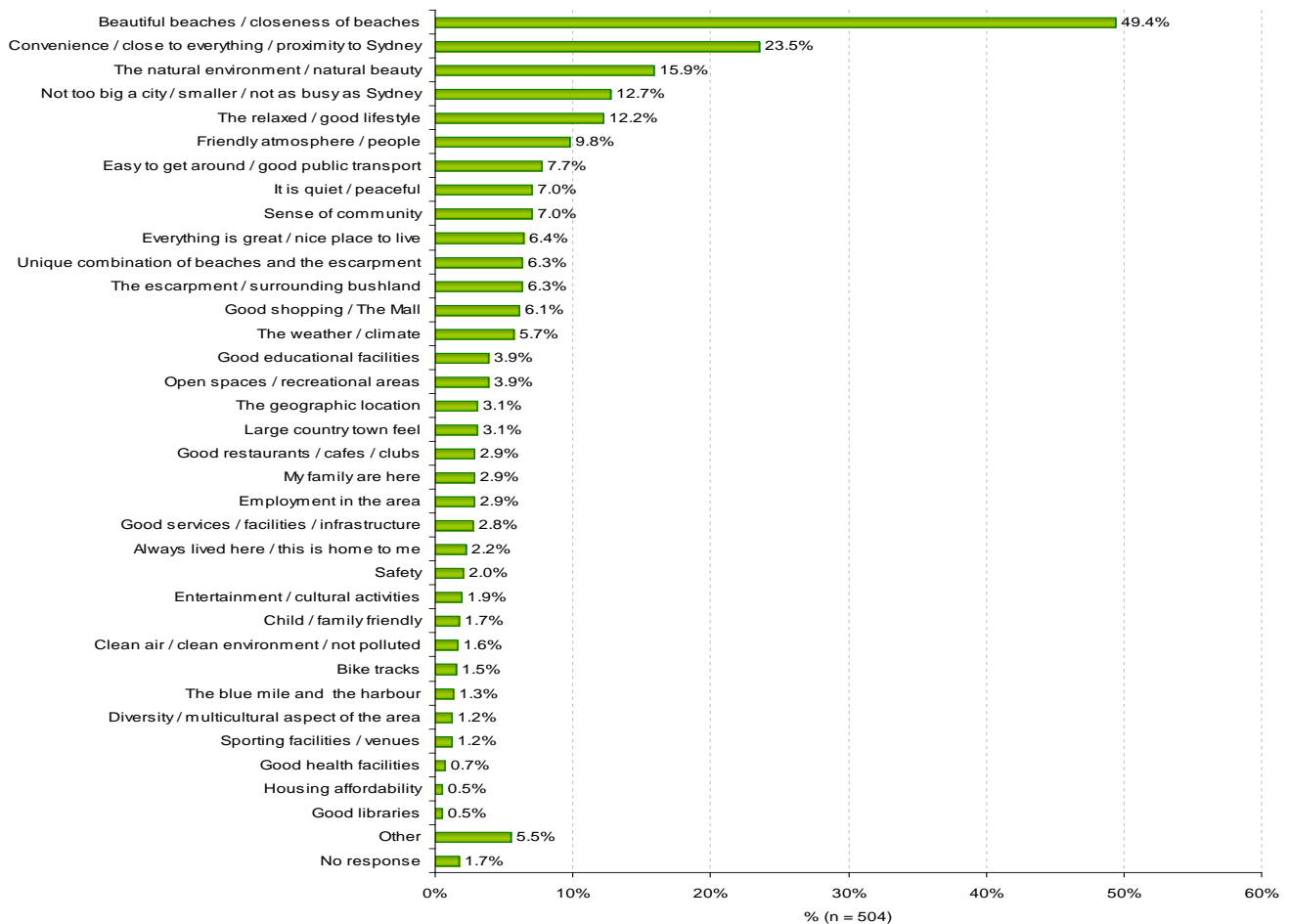
- Half of all residents mentioned that the aspect they valued most about living in the Wollongong area was the beautiful beaches and the closeness to them. This was far and away the standout response amongst residents and was 26 percentage points higher than the second most mentioned aspect.

  Of the residents that valued the beaches in Wollongong, some of the key aspects mentioned were the easy access to the beach, Wollongong being well situated on the coast, and the peacefulness that comes with living near well maintained beaches.

- About one in four residents (23.5%) held the view that what they valued most about Wollongong was that it provided a level of convenience and closeness to everything, while it was also a good proximity to Sydney.

  Some of the verbatim responses given by residents that mentioned the convenience factor of Wollongong included: 'Convenience of being able to get to places in a short space of time', 'Wollongong is central to everything close to Sydney and close to the Shoalhaven', 'Close proximity to Sydney' and 'Love being close to Sydney but far enough away'.

- The natural environment and beauty of Wollongong was also a valued attribute of the area and was mentioned by 15.9% of residents.

  Of this group the typical verbatim responses were: 'the natural environment is very beautiful', 'the natural geography', 'natural beauty', 'It is picturesque and has lovely natural attractions'.

Graph 2.1.2 breaks down the top 5 attributes that residents value most about living in the Wollongong area, by age.

Graph 2.1.2: Value most about living in the Wollongong area by age
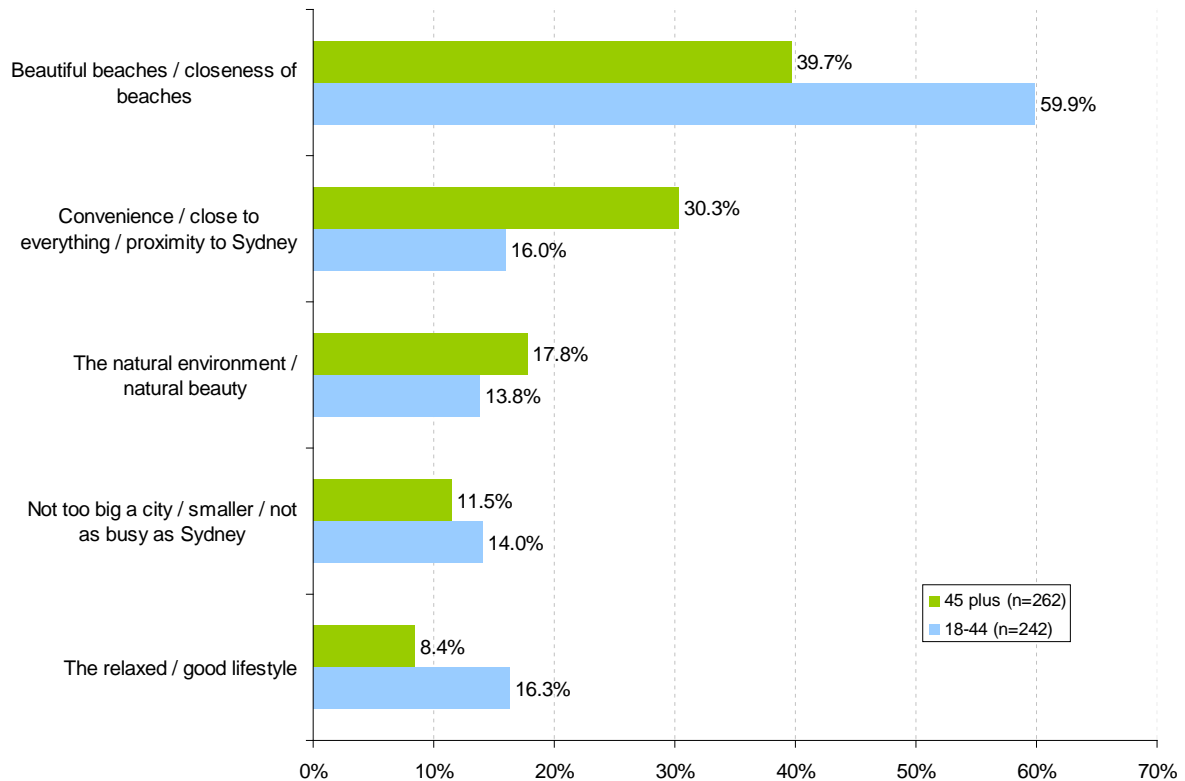
Key results:

- While the beautiful beaches of Wollongong and the proximity to them was the stand out feature amongst residents, further analysis found that it resonated significantly more with those aged 18 to 44 years, with 6 in 10 residents in this age group mentioning this feature compared to 4 in 10 aged 45 years plus.

- The convenience of Wollongong and the proximity to Sydney struck a chord with residents 45 years plus, with about a third of residents in this age group (30.3%) mentioning this attribute, compared to 16% of those 18 to 44 years of age.

- The relaxed lifestyle of Wollongong was a stand out feature for residents aged 18 to 44 years of age, with 16.3% mentioning the lifestyle as opposed to 8.4% aged 45 years plus.

2.2 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES AT THE MOMENT

Residents were asked about what they thought were the most important issues facing the Wollongong Local Government area. The results are shown in graph 2.2.1.

Question: Now thinking about Wollongong Local Government area. In just a few words, what do you think are the most important issues at the moment?

Graph 2.2.1: Most important issues at the moment

Issue	%
Area needs a revamap / revitalisation	20.0%
Lack of jobs	12.4%
More parking	10.3%
Improve public transport / Faster train to Sydney	9.9%
Better road / foot path maintenance	9.0%
Need an elected Council again	9.0%
More free parking / no parking meters	8.4%
Better / upgraded infrastructure	7.4%
Council to regain it's integrity / clear leadership	7.2%
Improved health /medical services	6.6%
Safety in the Mall / on the streets	5.8%
No overdevelopment / over crowding	5.8%
Preservation and improvement of green areas and open spaces	5.7%
Traffic congestion	5.5%
Development and planning of the area	5.4%
Issues relating to crime and anti social behaviour	4.8%
Environmental issues	4.0%
A greater variety of shops	3.9%
Lack of services and facilities	3.7%
Encourage new businesses and industry to the area	3.0%
Improved education	2.2%
More development needed	1.8%
Community consultation / communication	1.7%
Cost of living	1.7%
Attract more tourists	1.7%
Reduce rates / control rates	1.7%
Balance between development and environment	1.4%
More entertainment facilities / restaurants / clubs	1.1%
More rental properties / low cost housing	1.0%
Carbon tax issue	0.9%
Flooding / housing on flood plains	0.8%
More cycleways	0.8%
Sun protection in public areas	0.5%
Improved DA process	0.5%
Other	5.0%
No response	11.4%

% (n = 504)

- When asked about the issues that are of most importance to the Wollongong area at the moment, one in five residents (20.0%) indicated that the area could do with a revamp and some revitalisation. Statistically more residents highlighted the area's need for a revamp than any other issue.

  Of residents that mentioned the Wollongong area needed a revamp, some of the key aspects included giving the Crown St Mall a facelift, the City centre needing rejuvenation, lack of vision with the CBD and Crown St being run down and an eye sore.
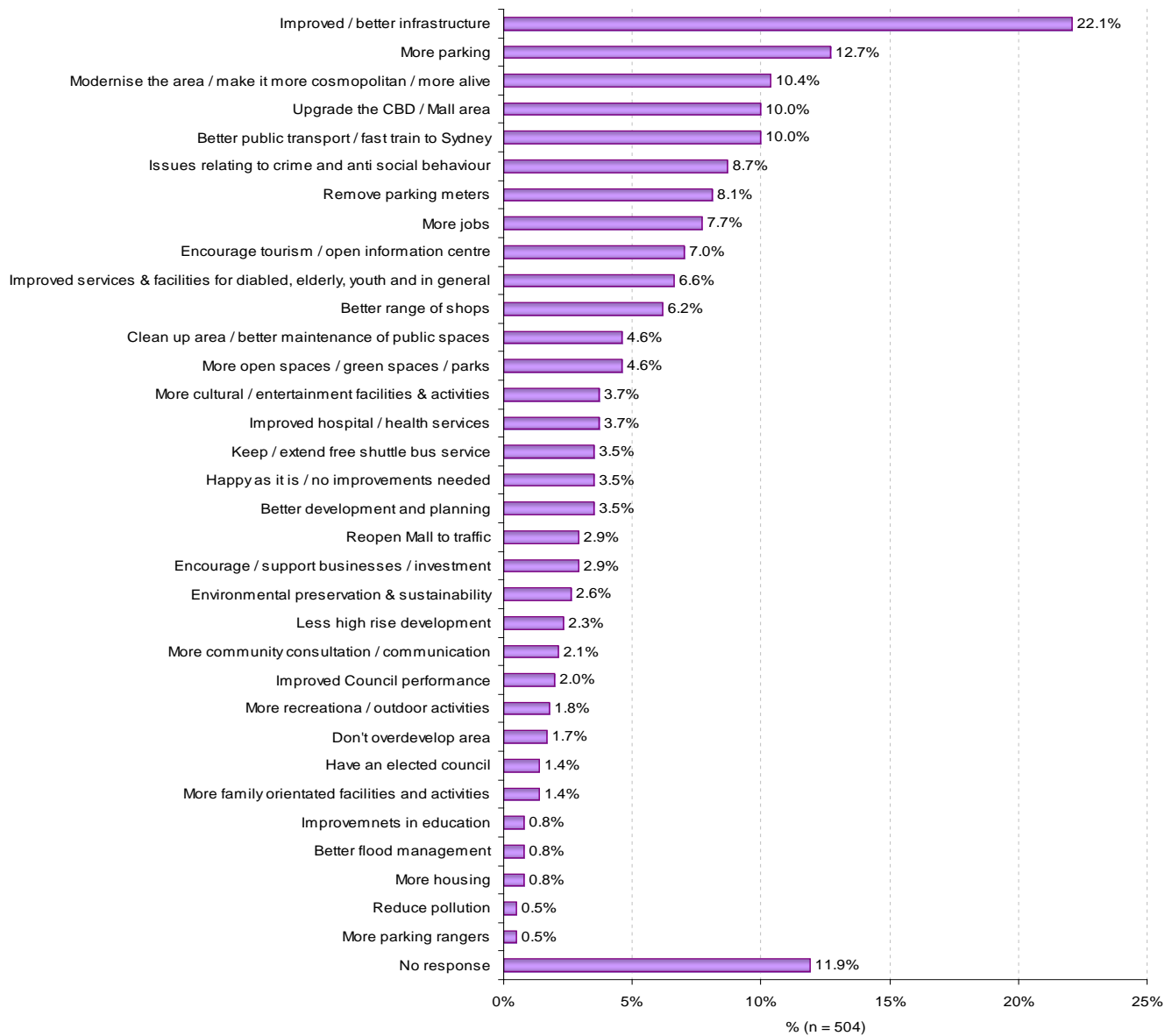
- The region's perceived lack of jobs (12.4%) along with parking issues (10.3%) and public transport including a faster train to Sydney (9.9%) were mentioned as impediments to progress for the Wollongong area.

- It should be noted that 11.4% of residents could not mention any important issues facing the Wollongong Local Government area at the moment.

2.3   IMPROVEMENTS FOR WOLLONGONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Residents were asked about what improvements could be made to make the Wollongong Local Government area a better place. The results are shown in graph 2.3.1.

Question: In your opinion, what improvements would you like to see made to the Wollongong Local Government area to make it a better place to live, work and visit?

Graph 2.3.1: Improvements for the Wollongong Local Government area

| Improvement	%
Improved / better infrastructure	22.1%
More parking	12.7%
Modernise the area / make it more cosmopolitan / more alive	10.4%
Upgrade the CBD / Mall area	10.0%
Better public transport / fast train to Sydney	10.0%
Issues relating to crime and anti social behaviour	8.7%
Remove parking meters	8.1%
More jobs	7.7%
Encourage tourism / open information centre	7.0%
Improved services & facilities for diabled, elderly, youth and in general	6.6%
Better range of shops	6.2%
Clean up area / better maintenance of public spaces	4.6%
More open spaces / green spaces / parks	4.6%
More cultural / entertainment facilities & activities	3.7%
Improved hospital / health services	3.7%
Keep / extend free shuttle bus service	3.5%
Happy as it is / no improvements needed	3.5%
Better development and planning	3.5%
Reopen Mall to traffic	2.9%
Encourage / support businesses / investment	2.9%
Environmental preservation & sustainability	2.6%
Less high rise development	2.3%
More community consultation / communication	2.1%
Improved Council performance	2.0%
More recreationa / outdoor activities	1.8%
Don't overdevelop area	1.7%
Have an elected council	1.4%
More family orientated facilities and activities	1.4%
Improvemnets in education	0.8%
Better flood management	0.8%
More housing	0.8%
Reduce pollution	0.5%
More parking rangers	0.5%
No response	11.9%

% (n = 504)

Key results:

- With regards to the improvements that residents feel should be made to make Wollongong LGA a better place to live, work and visit, the results showed that the focus should be on improving and maintaining infrastructure, for instance roads, footpaths and cycle ways. This response was mentioned by 22.1% of residents, significantly more than any other suggested improvement.

  Most of the responses under this theme were as follows: 'Roads need maintaining as well as footpaths', 'improving infrastructure', and 'more time and money spent on infrastructure'.

- Other key improvements that were mentioned were being able to provide more parking (12.7%) as well as modernising the area and giving it a more cosmopolitan feel (10.4%), upgrading the CBD, especially the Mall precinct (10.0%), while also being able to improve upon existing public transport including the possibility of a fast train to Sydney (10.0%).

- It should be noted that 11.9% of residents could not think of any improvements that could be made to the Wollongong Local Government area to make it a better place to live, work and visit.

Graph 2.3.2 breaks down the top 5 improvements that residents feel would make Wollongong Local Government area a better place to live, work and visit, by Ward.

Graph 2.3.2: Improvements for the Wollongong Local Government area by Ward
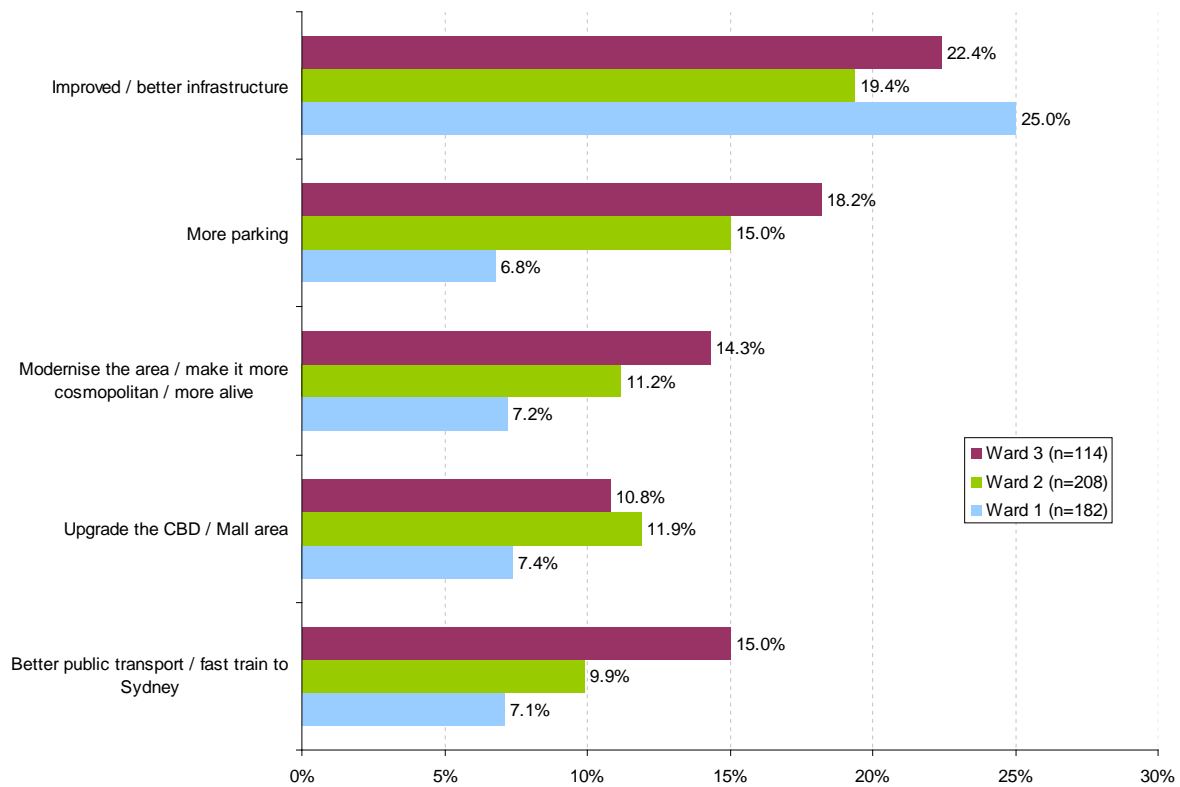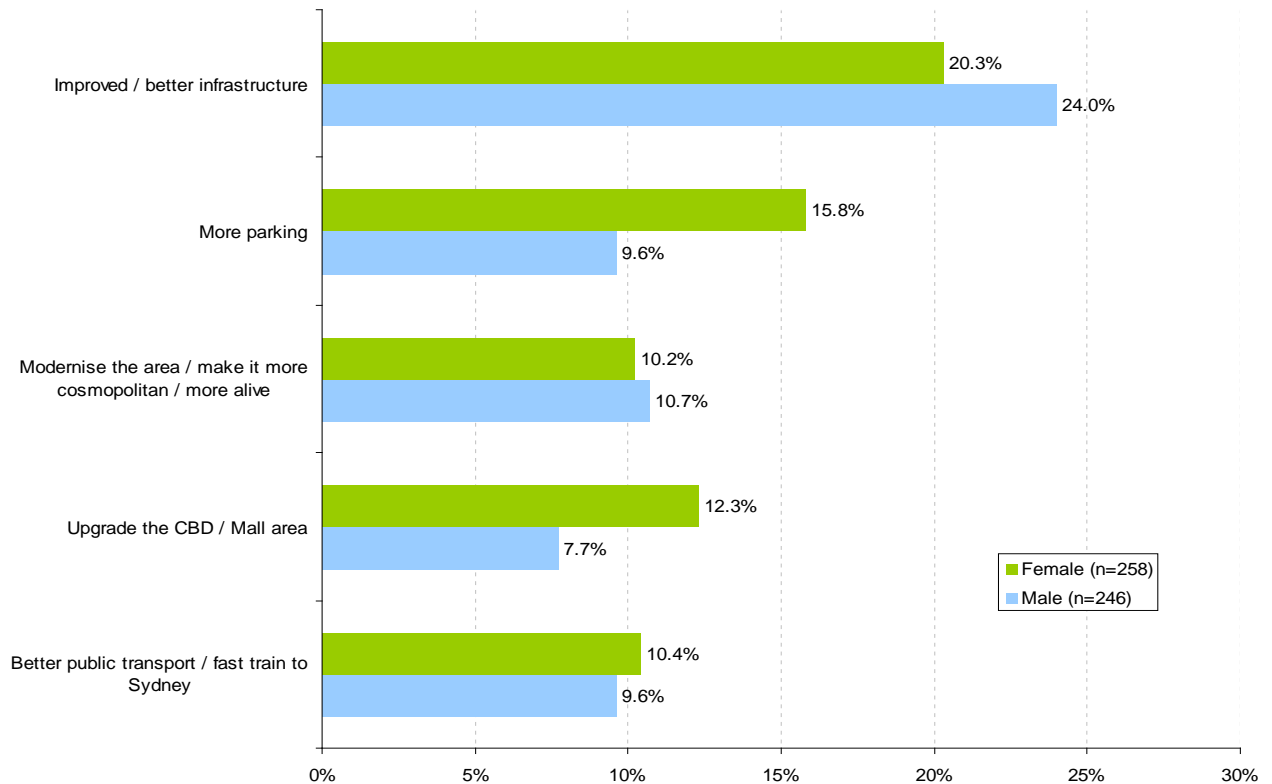

Key results:

- The issue of providing additional parking in the Wollongong area was highlighted more by residents of Ward 3 (18.2%) and Ward 2 (15.0%), while parking was only an issue for 6.8% of residents living in Ward 1.

- Having better public transport including a fast train to Sydney was less of an issue to residents of Ward 1 (7.1%) than for those residents living in Ward 3 (15.0%) who placed a greater weight on this provision.

Graph 2.3.3 breaks down the top 5 improvements that residents feel would make Wollongong Local Government area a better place to live, work and visit, by Sex.

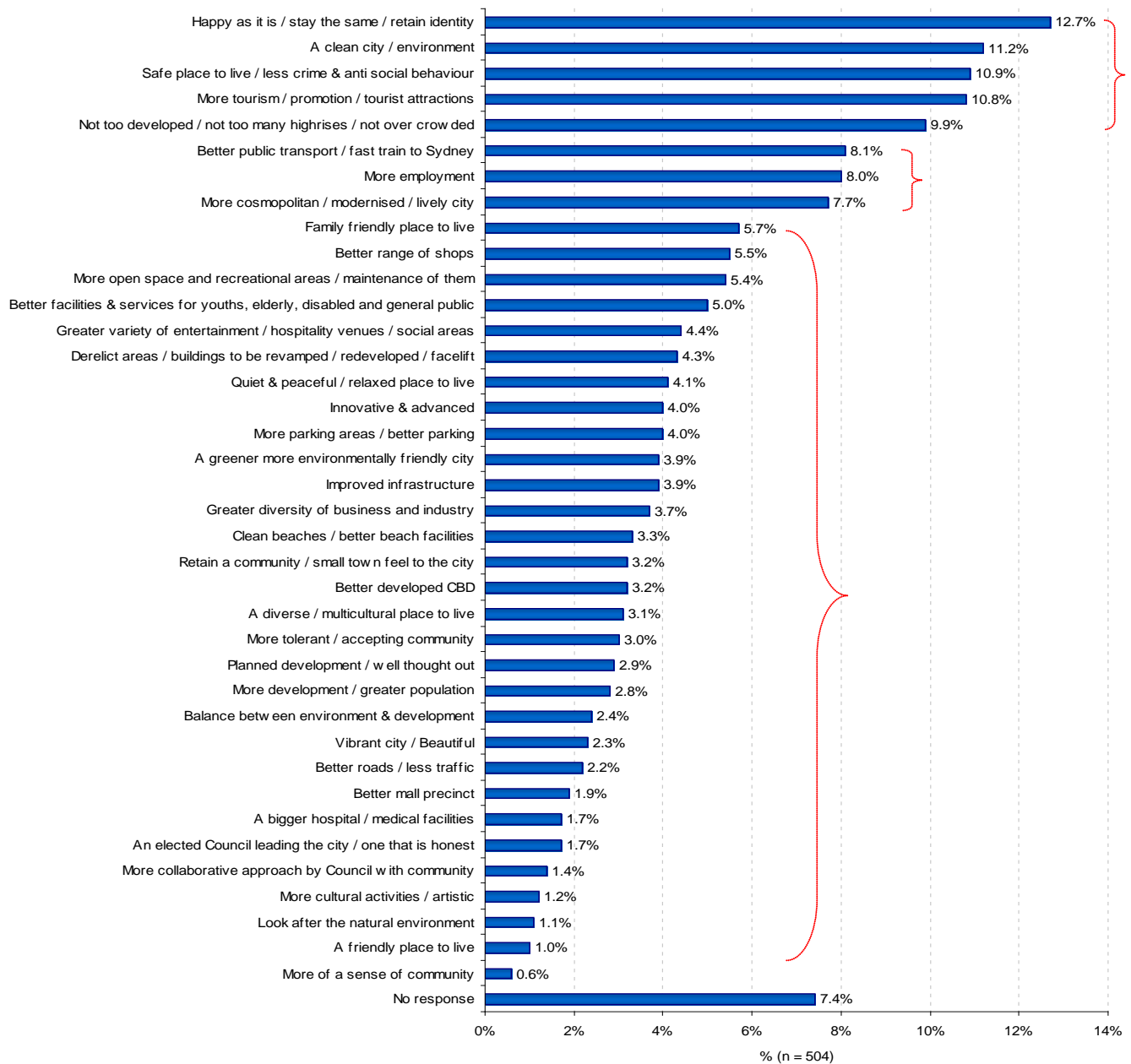Graph 2.3.3: Improvements for the Wollongong Local Government area by Sex

Key results:

- The issue for Wollongong LGA having a greater availability of parking was seen as more of an issue amongst female residents (15.8%), than male residents (9.6%).

2.4 PERSONAL VISION FOR WOLLONGONG

Residents were asked about their personal vision for Wollongong in 10 years time. The results are shown in graph 2.4.1.

Question: In a few words, describe your personal vision of the kind of Wollongong you want to live in, in 10 years time?

Graph 2.4.1: Personal vision for Wollongong

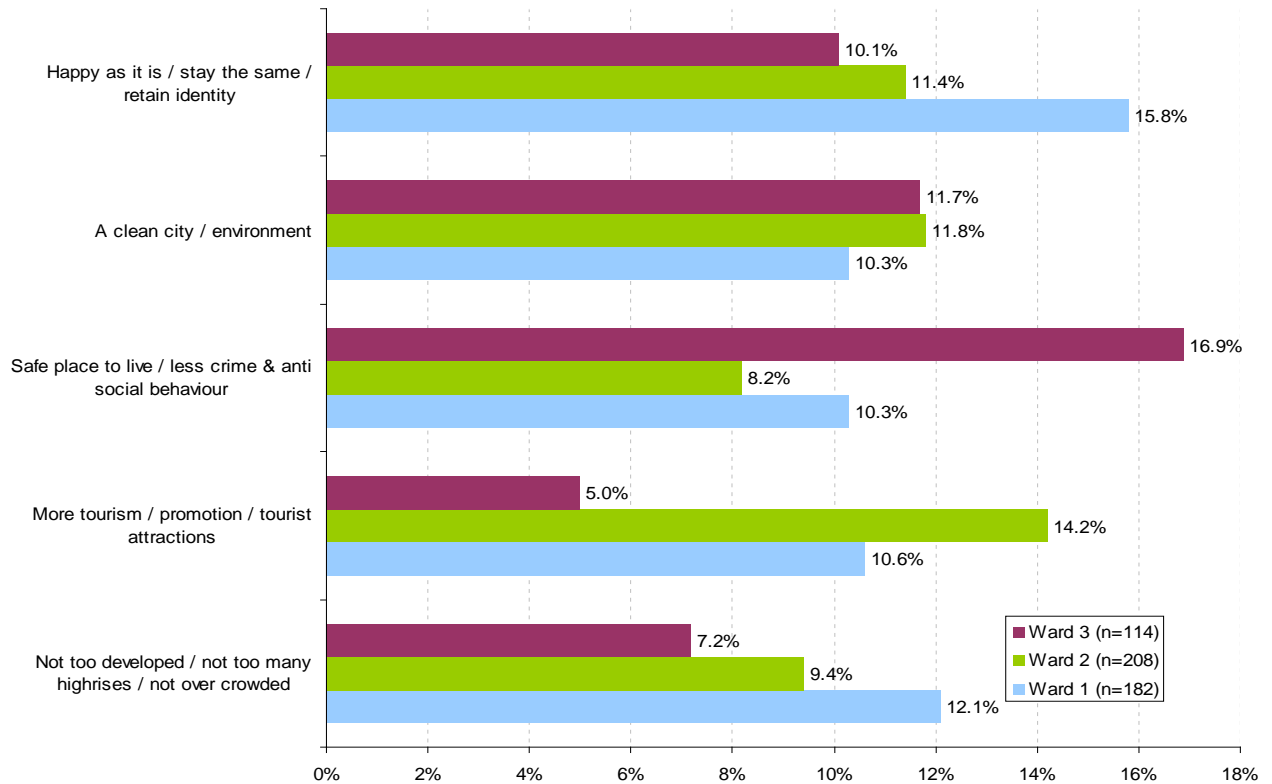| Vision	%
Happy as it is / stay the same / retain identity	12.7%
A clean city / environment	11.2%
Safe place to live / less crime & anti social behaviour	10.9%
More tourism / promotion / tourist attractions	10.8%
Not too developed / not too many highrises / not over crowded	9.9%
Better public transport / fast train to Sydney	8.1%
More employment	8.0%
More cosmopolitan / modernised / lively city	7.7%
Family friendly place to live	5.7%
Better range of shops	5.5%
More open space and recreational areas / maintenance of them	5.4%
Better facilities & services for youths, elderly, disabled and general public	5.0%
Greater variety of entertainment / hospitality venues / social areas	4.4%
Derelict areas / buildings to be revamped / redeveloped / facelift	4.3%
Quiet & peaceful / relaxed place to live	4.1%
Innovative & advanced	4.0%
More parking areas / better parking	4.0%
A greener more environmentally friendly city	3.9%
Improved infrastructure	3.9%
Greater diversity of business and industry	3.7%
Clean beaches / better beach facilities	3.3%
Retain a community / small town feel to the city	3.2%
Better developed CBD	3.2%
A diverse / multicultural place to live	3.1%
More tolerant / accepting community	3.0%
Planned development / well thought out	2.9%
More development / greater population	2.8%
Balance between environment & development	2.4%
Vibrant city / Beautiful	2.3%
Better roads / less traffic	2.2%
Better mall precinct	1.9%
A bigger hospital / medical facilities	1.7%
An elected Council leading the city / one that is honest	1.7%
More collaborative approach by Council with community	1.4%
More cultural activities / artistic	1.2%
Look after the natural environment	1.1%
A friendly place to live	1.0%
More of a sense of community	0.6%
No response	7.4%

% (n = 504)

Key results:

- When residents were asked to describe their personal vision for the kind of Wollongong they would want to live in, in 10 years time, the results showed no clear cut response. Responses instead fell into three distinct tiers; a top tier group or vision, and the middle and lower tiers. Responses that were part of the top tier group included Wollongong retaining its identity (12.7%), a vision that the City and its surrounding environment be clean (11.2%), Wollongong being a safe place to live with less crime and anti social behaviour (10.9%), an area with increased tourism and attractions to bring people to it (10.8%) as well as it being a place that was not too developed or over crowded (9.9%).

- Visions for Wollongong that formed the middle tier included better public transport, including a fast train to Sydney (8.1%), more employment for the region (8.0%), and the area having a more cosmopolitan feel and modernised make over to it (7.7%).

- A total of 7.4% of residents did not provide a response when asked about their personal vision for Wollongong as a place to live in 10 years time.

Graph 2.4.2 breaks down the top 5 visions that residents have for Wollongong Local Government area in 10 years time, by Ward.

Graph 2.4.2: Personal vision for Wollongong by Ward

Key results:

- Further analysis showed that Ward 3 residents placed more emphasis their vision for Wollongong being a safe place to live in, with less crime and anti social behaviour, than residents from the other two Wards.

- The vision for Wollongong as being one of increased tourism and greater tourist attractions was more prevalent amongst residents of Ward 2 and Ward 1, while only 5% of residents from Ward 3 shared this vision.

3 APPENDIX

3.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample Design

A telephone-based survey aiming to secure a response from approximately 500 residents from throughout the Wollongong LGA was used. The survey unit was permanent residents of the Wollongong Council area. Respondents also had to be aged 18 years or older to qualify for an interview. The 2006 Census was used to establish quotas to ensure a good distribution of response by age and sex.

The sample base for the survey was the electronic White Pages. This sample is known to be sub optimal, as the churn of telephone numbers due to people moving and new numbers being added as dwellings are occupied affects about 12% to 15% of possible numbers. Furthermore, from previous research we know that the proportion of silent numbers is increasing and can be as high as 25-30% in some areas. To deal with these issues, IRIS uses a technique that starts with the population of numbers listed in the telephone book and adds new and unlisted numbers using the 'half open' method. In this method, all numbers were incremented by five to create new numbers in the 'gaps' between the listed numbers. The resultant universe of numbers was then de-duplicated to remove any numbers that may be repeated. This process was replicated five times to create a new theoretical universe of telephone numbers. This provided the opportunity for all potential numbers to be selected in the sample. This equal and known opportunity for selection is the first criterion of good random sampling.

Once the potential universe of numbers had been generated, a computer program was used to randomise the database. Following this, a sequential sample (eg. every 110th number) was extracted from the database. The sample was geographically stratified and evenly distributed within strata. This process gave a very even distribution of potential numbers across the whole survey area and within the three survey sub areas. Every household therefore had an equal and known chance of selection and every part of the survey area received a fair proportional representation in the final sample drawn.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted on weekday evenings between 4.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. Following the close of the main survey period, additional interviews were conducted, according to need, in those age groups that were under represented. During this part of the sampling process, a quota sampling procedure was employed to ensure that adequate numbers in all age groups were selected for interview. This eliminated the need for heavily weighting the survey data. Non-private numbers and faxes reached during the selection process were excluded from the sample. The survey was implemented under IQCA quality guidelines. Interviews were conducted using our computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. Continuous interviewer monitoring was used and post interview validations were conducted within five days of the close of the survey.

Response

At the end of the survey period, 504 completed interviews had been collected. Table 3-1 shows that a completion rate of 68.3% was achieved.

Table 3-1   Survey Response Outcomes

Response sequence	Outcome
Completed Interviews	504
Refusals & terminated interviews	234
Valid contacts (Excludes disqualified – businesses, out of area, under 16yrs etc)	738
Completion rate	**68.3%**

Given the level of response to the survey and the fact that it represents a very good random cross-section of the area the findings presented in this report provide a good basis for gauging community opinion.

Weighting Adjustment

The final results have been weighted by the age and area distribution of the population, as this provides the most accurate reflection of overall resident opinions. The proportions and frequency counts in this report are based on an age and sex weighting.

Survey Accuracy

When analysing results for the entire sample, the maximum error rate will be about ±4.4% at the 95% confidence level, assuming a proportional response of 50%. Put another way, we can be confident that if the survey were to be repeated there would be a 95% chance that the new result would lie within ±4.4% of the result achieved in this survey.