



# Randwick City Council

Amalgamation Research  
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Date: July 2013





## Background

The State Government has instigated a process of review into Local Government. The Independent Local Government Review Panel has been created to analyse the councils in NSW, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to recommend a path for change.

One of the points raised by the Review Panel is the possible need for boundary changes, consolidations, or in simple terms 'amalgamations'.

Randwick City Council wanted to undertake a community survey in order to measure the Randwick community's attitude towards amalgamation.

## Interviewing

A random telephone survey of 600 residents was conducted between 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with IQCA (Interviewer Quality Control Australia) Standards and the Market Research Society Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

## Sampling error

A sample size of 600 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.0% at 95% confidence.

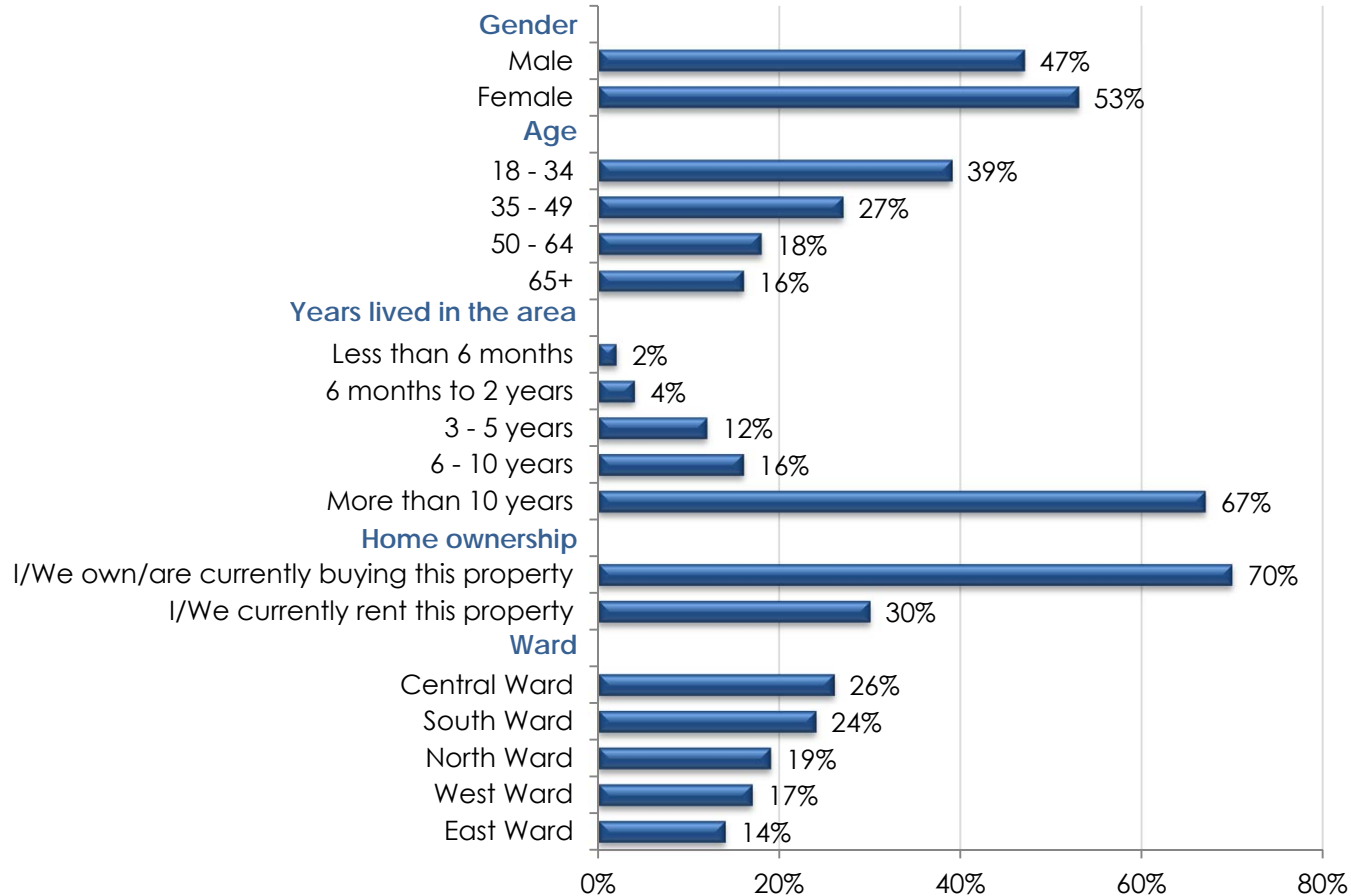
## Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using SPSS V15.

**Errors:** Data in this publication is subject to sampling variability because it is based on information relating to a sample of residents rather than the total number. This difference (sampling error) may occur due to imperfections in reporting and errors made in processing the data. This may occur in any enumeration, whether it is a full count or sample. Efforts have been made to reduce the non-sampling error by careful design of the questionnaire and detailed checking of completed questionnaires.



# Sample Profile



Base: n=600

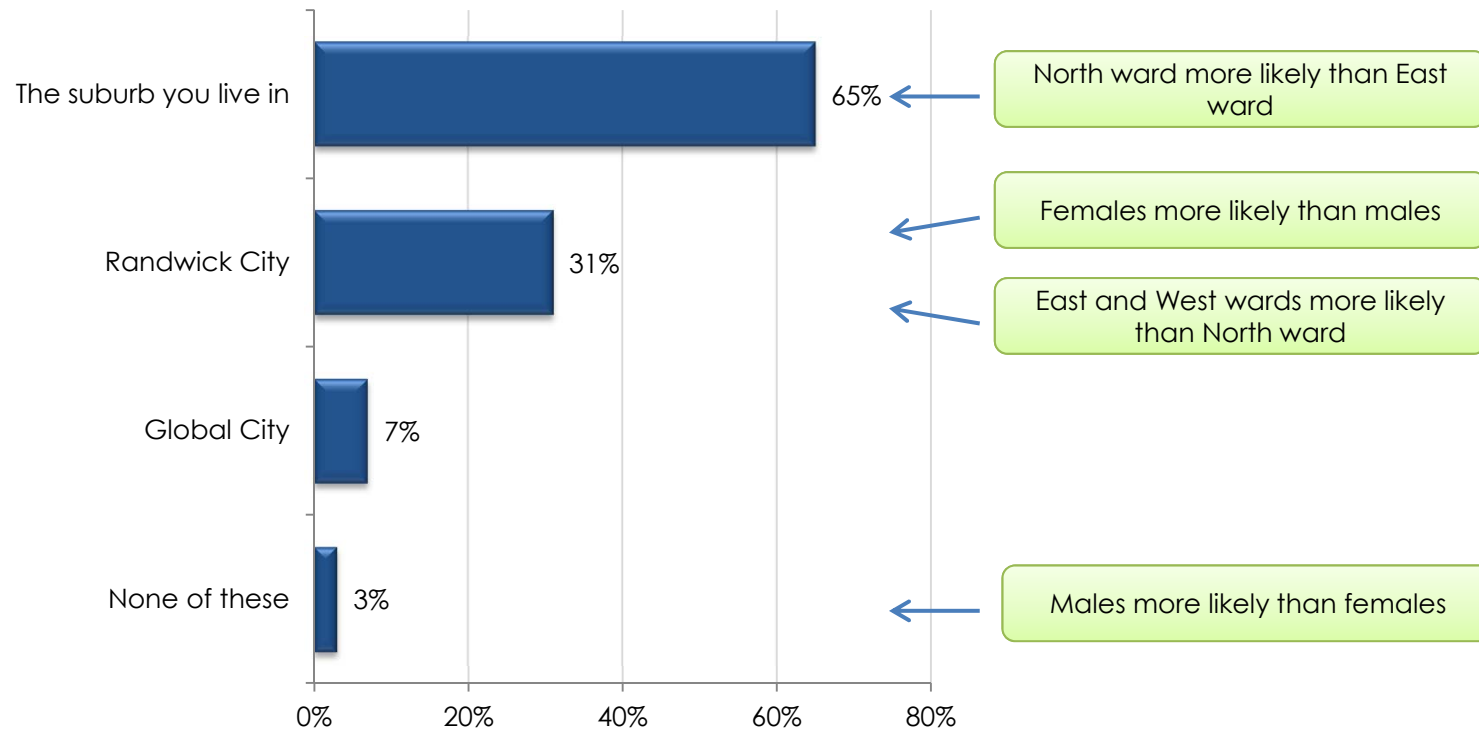
The sample was weighted according to 2011 ABS Stats



Current Brand Image

# The Majority Of Residents Associate Where They Live With The Suburb They Live In

Q. Which of the following, if any, do you most associate with where you live?



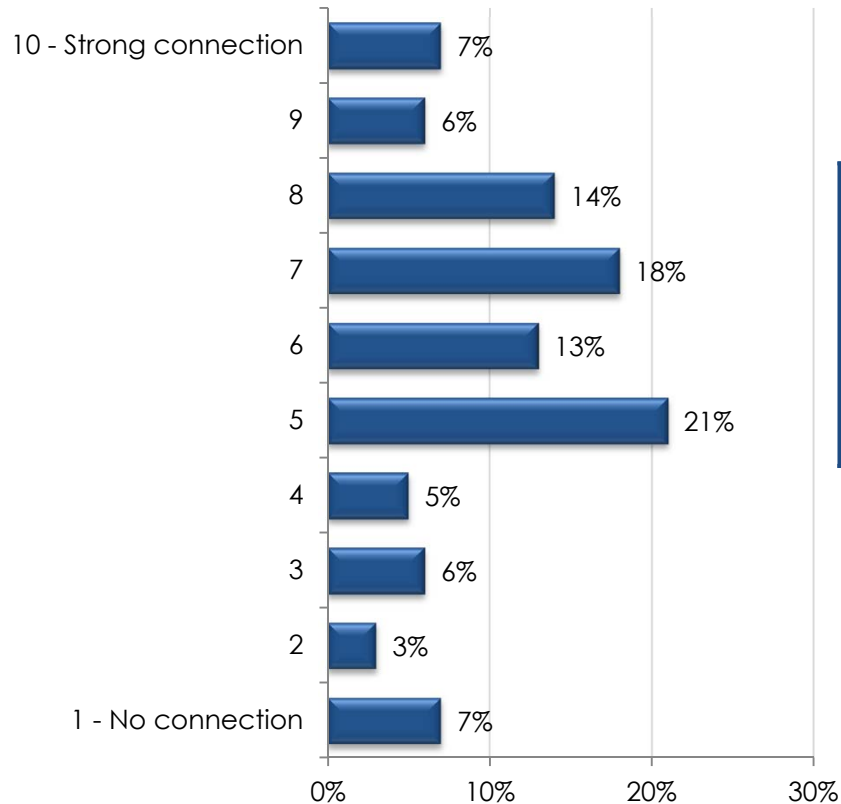
Base: n=600

Few expressed association with where they live being a Global City



# 58% Of Residents Gave A Connection Score Of 6+

Q. How would you rate your connection with the Randwick Local Government Area?



|              | Male      | Female     | 18 - 34    | 35 - 49      | 50 - 64   | 65+   | Overall |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| Mean ratings | 5.72▼     | 6.11▲      | 5.44▼      | 6.02         | 6.15      | 6.70▲ | 5.93    |
|              | West Ward | North Ward | South Ward | Central Ward | East Ward | Own   | Rent    |
|              | 6.02      | 5.96       | 6.11       | 5.44▼        | 6.38▲     | 6.06▲ | 5.61▼   |

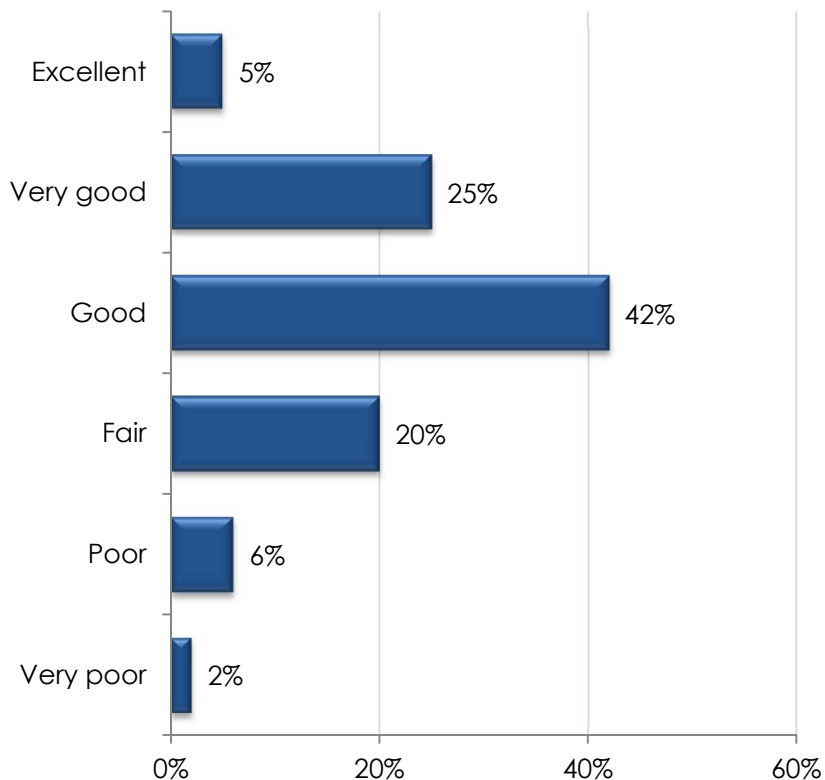
Scale: 1 = no connection, 10 = strong connection  
▲▼ = significantly higher/lower connection by group

Base: n=600

Residents aged 65+, females, those living in the east ward and home owners expressed the highest levels of connection

# The Randwick City Council Image Score Is Significantly Higher Than LGA Benchmarks

Q. Overall, how would you rate Randwick Council's image within the local community?



|              | Randwick City Council | 2012 Randwick Branding Result | LGA Benchmarks |         |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------|
|              |                       |                               | Metro          | Overall |
| Mean ratings | 4.00▲                 | 4.07▲                         | 3.83▼          | 3.55▼   |

| Mean ratings | Male      | Female     | 18 - 34    | 35 - 49      | 50 - 64   | 65+  | Overall |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|------|---------|
|              | 4.07      | 3.94       | 4.02       | 4.01         | 3.83      | 4.16 | 4.00    |
| Mean ratings | West Ward | North Ward | South Ward | Central Ward | East Ward | Own  | Rent    |
|              | 4.02      | 4.01       | 4.05       | 4.02         | 3.87      | 3.99 | 4.04    |

Scale: 1 = very poor, 6 = excellent  
= significantly higher/lower level by group

Base: n=600

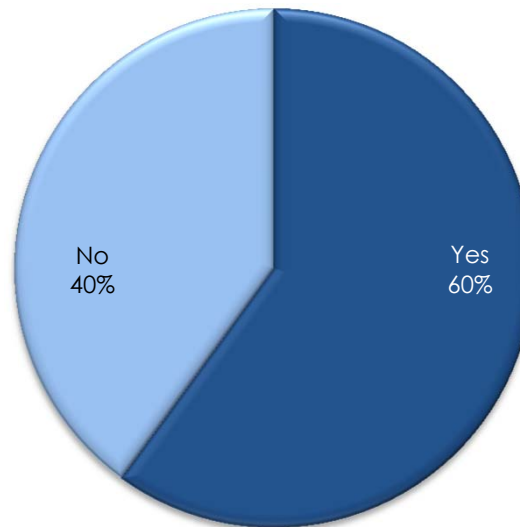
No significant differences were identified across demographics



# There Was A Moderately High Level Of Claimed Community Awareness Of The State Government's Review

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

A lower level of awareness was cited by 18-34 years than by all other age groups



Those who own or are buying their home had a higher level of awareness than did those who rent

Base: n=600

Awareness is higher amongst home owners and older age groups

# Amalgamation Concept Statement

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The NSW State Government appointed an Independent Local Government Review Panel to investigate options for a more efficient and effective system of local government.

The Panel has recommended sweeping changes, including reducing the number of councils in metropolitan Sydney from over 40 to 15 through mergers and amalgamations.

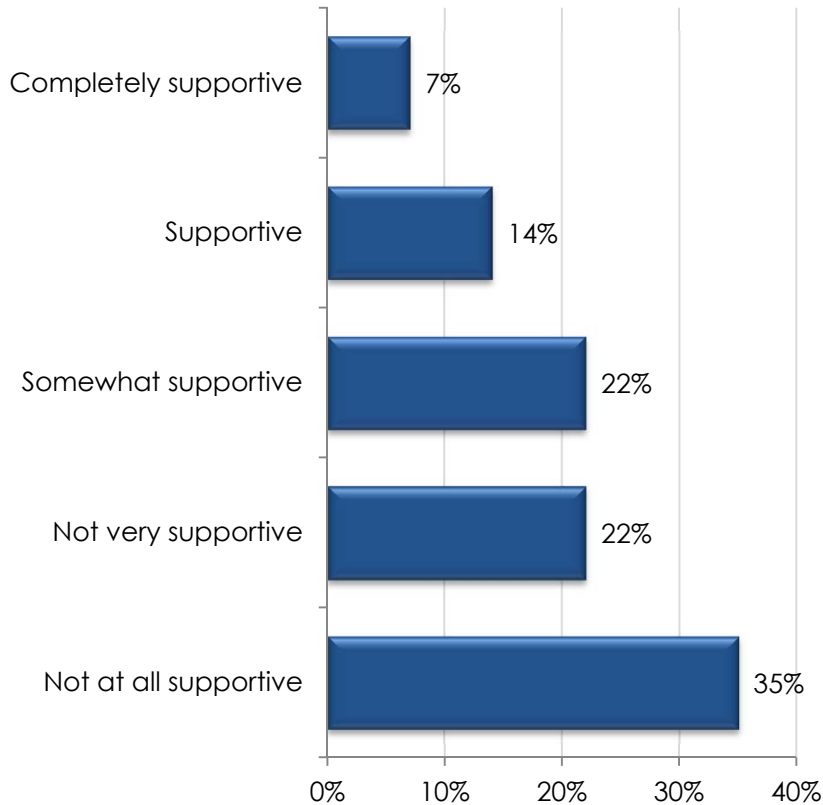
One argument for amalgamation is that bigger councils could be more economically efficient in the delivery of services.

One argument against amalgamation is that bigger councils will not be able to represent local communities as effectively.

The Panel has recommended Randwick City be amalgamated with six other councils into a super global city council with City of Sydney, Woollahra, Waverley, Botany Bay, Marrickville and Leichhardt Councils.

# 21% Of Residents Are Supportive – Very Supportive Of This Proposal, Whilst 57% Are Not Very – Not At All Supportive

Q. How supportive would you be of Randwick Council being amalgamated with six other nearby councils?



| Mean ratings | Male      | Female     | 18 - 34    | 35 - 49      | 50 - 64   | 65+   | Overall |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------|---------|
|              | 2.54▲     | 2.17▼      | 2.58▲      | 2.26         | 2.23      | 2.07▼ | 2.35    |
| Mean ratings | West Ward | North Ward | South Ward | Central Ward | East Ward | Own   | Rent    |
|              | 2.40      | 2.39       | 2.31       | 2.38         | 2.26      | 2.37  | 2.30    |

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

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

Ratio Of Positive to Negative  
21:57%  
1:2.7 Against

Base: n=600

Females and those in the 65+ age group expressed the lowest levels of support

# Current Image Of Council Is A Likely Key Determinant In Identifying Likely Support Of The Amalgamation Concept

- Q. How supportive would you be of Randwick Council being amalgamated with six other nearby councils?
- Q. Overall, how would you rate Randwick Council's image within the local community?

|           | Supportive - Completely Supportive | Somewhat Supportive | Not Very - Not At All Supportive |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Excellent | 16%                                | 11%                 | 75%                              |
| Very good | 12%                                | 31%                 | 58%                              |
| Good      | 17%                                | 22%                 | 61%                              |
| Fair      | 31%                                | 20%                 | 49%                              |
| Poor      | 41%                                | 10%                 | 50%                              |
| Very poor | 78%                                | 11%                 | 22%                              |

*⇒ If you have a good - excellent image of Council, you are not likely to support amalgamation*

Base: n=600

This correlation suggests that residents use their current frame of reference to respond to the amalgamation question

- Q. How supportive would you be of Randwick Council being amalgamated with six other nearby councils?  
Q. Why do you say that?



### Difficult to manage

*"The LGA would be too big to manage effectively"*

### Economically inefficient

*"This would not save us any money"*

### Negative impact on services

*"Services won't be as efficient for residents living in the eastern suburbs. They will be pushed aside and forgotten"*

### Happy with the current Council

*"Happy with what Randwick Council does at the moment"*

### Connection with the local community would be lost

*"We would lose that personal connection with Council"*

### Demographics are dissimilar

*"Some of the other councils are too different demographically to fit the community of Randwick"*

### Increase in council politics

*"Infighting would be a problem with such a large group"*

### Residents' interests won't be heard

*"There would be a lack of communication, we would lose our voice and there would be a longer process to resolve issues with such a large area"*

Those who are not supportive of the amalgamations raised a range of concerns, with the common themes being inefficiencies, impacts on services and a loss of the area's unique identity

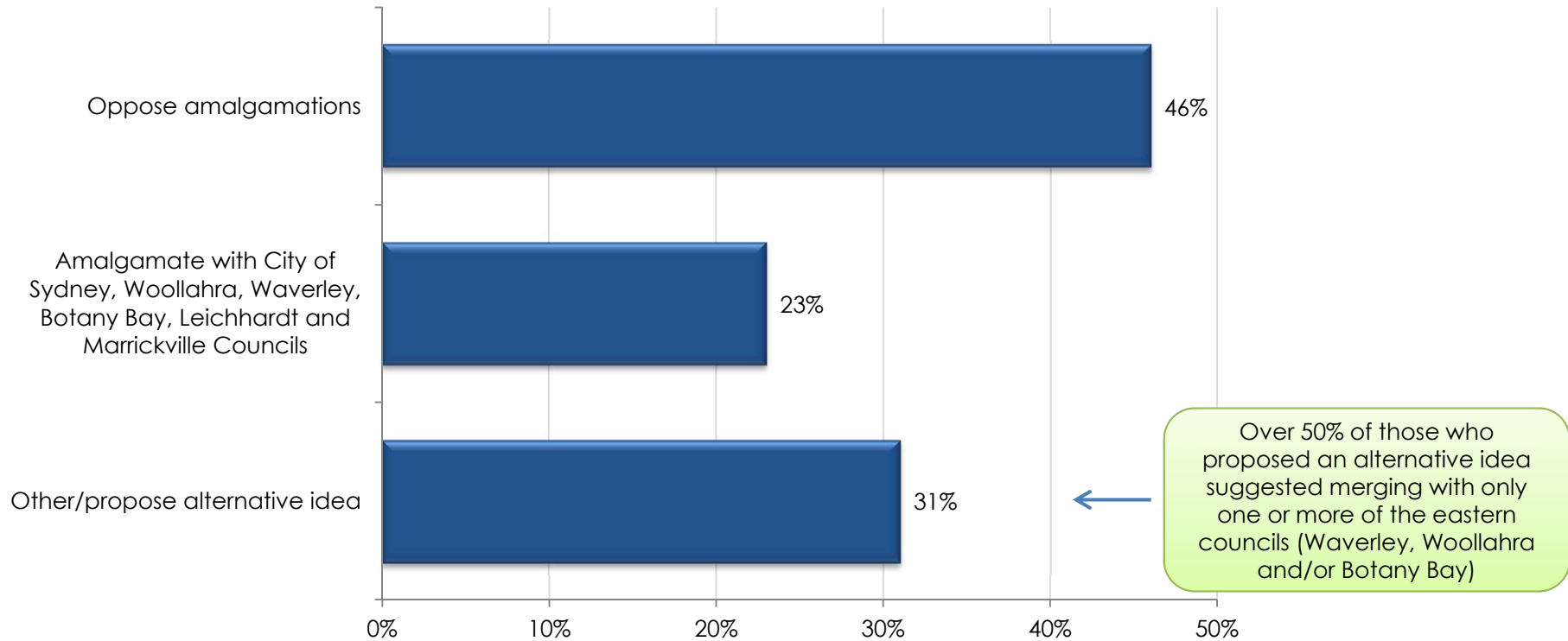






# 46% Of Residents Oppose Amalgamation Outright

Q. As we mentioned, the Panel has recommended an option for Randwick Council to become part of a super global city council. Which of the following options would be your preference?



Base: n=600

If pressed, only 23% would choose the Global City solution

# Significant Differences Were Observed By Age And Gender

Q. As we mentioned, the Panel has recommended an option for Randwick Council to become part of a super global city council. Which of the following options would be your preference?

|   | Male  | Female | 18 - 34 | 35 - 49 | 50 - 64 | 65+  | Overall |
|---|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------|---------|
|   | n=283 | n=317  | n=233   | n=161   | n=111   | n=95 | n=600   |
| Oppose amalgamations  | 38%▼  | 54%▲   | 38%▼    | 50%     | 51%     | 54%▲ | 46%     |
| Amalgamate with City of Sydney, Woollahra, Waverley, Botany Bay, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils | 27%   | 20%    | 30%▲    | 22%     | 16%▼    | 18%  | 23%     |
| Other/propose alternative idea  | 36%   | 26%    | 32%     | 28%     | 33%     | 28%  | 31%     |
| Total   | 100%  | 100%   | 100%    | 100%    | 100%    | 100% | 100%    |

▲▼ = significantly higher/lower percentage by group

Females and those aged 65+ were most likely to oppose amalgamations

# Significant Differences Were Observed By Ward

Q. As we mentioned, the Panel has recommended an option for Randwick Council to become part of a super global city council. Which of the following options would be your preference?

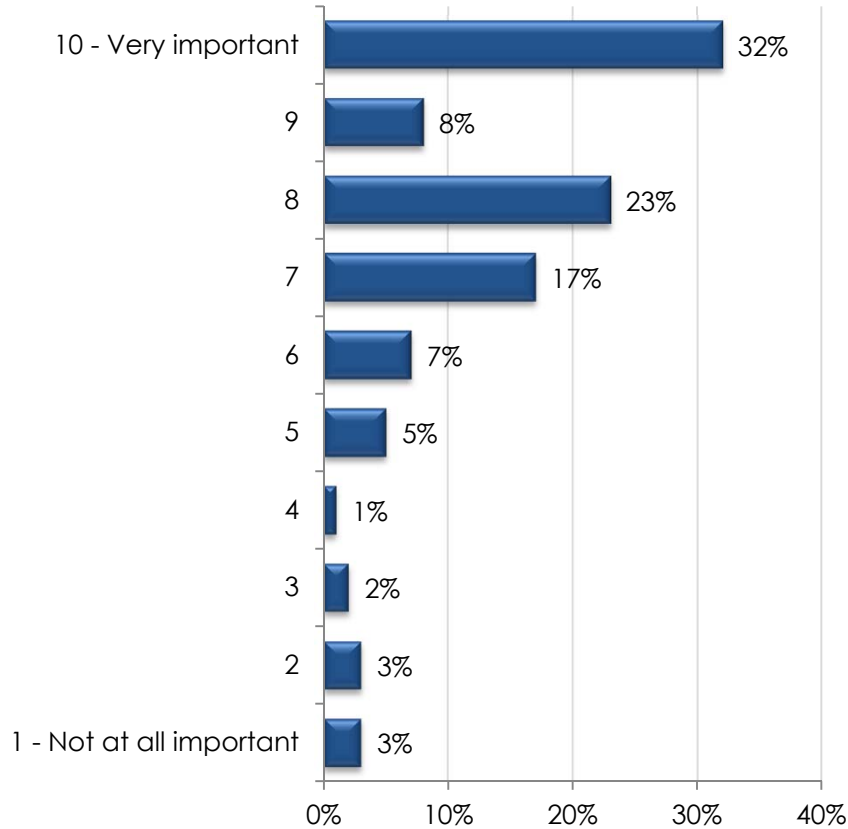
|   | West Ward | North Ward | South Ward | Central Ward | East Ward | Own   | Rent  |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------|-------|
|   | n=103     | n=111      | n=144      | n=157        | n=85      | n=419 | n=181 |
| Oppose amalgamations  | 45%       | 42%▼       | 47%▼       | 40%          | 64%▲      | 48%   | 42%   |
| Amalgamate with City of Sydney, Woollahra, Waverley, Botany Bay, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils | 17%       | 23%        | 27%        | 27%          | 18%       | 23%   | 24%   |
| Other/propose alternative idea  | 38%       | 35%        | 27%        | 33%          | 18%       | 29%   | 34%   |
| Total   | 100%      | 100%       | 100%       | 100%         | 100%      | 100%  | 100%  |

▲▼ = significantly higher/lower percentage by group

Residents living in the East Ward were significantly more opposed to the proposed amalgamations

# 80% Of Residents Gave The Importance Of Retaining Local Representation A Score Of 7 Or Greater

Q. Overall, how would you rate the importance of the Randwick Council area retaining local government representatives?



| Mean ratings | Male      | Female     | 18 - 34    | 35 - 49      | 50 - 64   | 65+    | Overall |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------|---------|
|              | 7.30 ▼    | 8.16 ▲     | 7.32 ▼     | 8.10 ▲       | 7.76      | 8.22 ▲ | 7.75    |
|              | West Ward | North Ward | South Ward | Central Ward | East Ward | Own    | Rent    |
| 7.83         | 8.02      | 7.74       | 7.56       | 7.68         | 7.73      | 7.79   |         |

Scale: 1 = not at all important, 10 = very important  
 ▼ = significantly higher level of importance by group  
 ▲ = significantly lower level of importance by group

Base: n=600

It is clear that, overall, residents still think it is important that Randwick retains local representation



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60% Of Residents Claim to Be Aware Of The Review Of The Local Government System.

At a broad level, 57% of residents are not very supportive - not at all supportive of the amalgamation option, versus 21% who are supportive - very supportive.

- If we remove the fence-sitters (somewhat supportive 22%), the data shows that the community is **2.7:1** against amalgamation

46% oppose amalgamation outright.

Residents ascribe a high level of importance to retaining local representation.



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