UTS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

THE WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY

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Prepared for the City of Sydney

UTS:IPPG
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

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Background

The City of Sydney (the City) recognises that international students are an important part of the City's diverse community. The City has identified the wellbeing of international students as a key priority area both culturally and economically. The City engaged the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Public Policy and Governance (UTS:IPPG) to undertake explorative research into the wellbeing of international students in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

The central aim of this research is the investigation of how international students living and/or studying in the City area perceive their wellbeing and what does and does not contribute towards their wellbeing. A review of key literature identified the following key focus areas that contributed to the wellbeing of international students.

> housing and housing exploitation

> safety and security

> financial resources and exploitation in the work-place

> discrimination

> social integration.

A related aim is the exploration of whether international students perceive that the City is enhancing their wellbeing and what further initiatives they think the City should be pursuing.

This document provides an evidence-based understanding of the wellbeing of international students in the City through a review of key literature and documentation relevant to the international student context and analysis of engagement undertaken with notable stakeholders as well as international students that live and study in the City.

Methodology

This approach included a literature review of national and international research and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders and international students that lived, studied or lived and studied in the City LGA. The research captured evidence about a variety of experiences, perceptions and impacts. The research methodology is located at Appendix A.

Key findings and implications for the City

The following outlines the key findings from the research. These findings were informed by the research methodology. More detail including online survey data and qualitative findings are located at Sections 5 and 6.

Key findings

Studying in Sydney

> International students regard Sydney as a desirable destination for study

> Transitioning to a new city takes time and understanding Australian culture has particular challenges

> Public transport is expensive and can be difficult to access

Housing and accommodation

> Finding suitable housing and accommodation is challenging, particularly on first arrival

> Although accommodation is expensive, international students consider Sydney to be a desirable place to study and live

> Overcrowding and cleanliness of housing impacts on the overall wellbeing and initial experience of studying in Sydney

Finance and employment
> International students are concerned about financial security

> International students are vulnerable to exploitation by employers

> A number of international students need to work in order to afford to live and study in Sydney

Safety and crime
> Sydney is generally considered a safe place to live for international students

> International students feel they can engage with Police

Social integration, isolation and discrimination
> Socially, international students are integrating well within their own networks

> International students want to connect with local communities

> Sydney's culturally diverse community provides a platform to support and celebrate international students

Wellbeing and health
> The wellbeing of international students in Sydney is generally good

> International students can be susceptible to alcohol and gambling issues

> Sexual and mental health awareness and education could be increased amongst international students

The needs of international students and opportunities for the City
> The City is responding well to the needs of International students and there are many opportunities for further investigation

> Stakeholders are working well together and there is potential for stronger partnerships to be established

> International students could be further engaged and utilised by the City to promote Sydney as a destination for study

> Information and services for international students would be more effective if they were centralised, accessible and promoted through appropriate platforms

The key findings have been collated and synthesised to inform the implications and considerations for the City. The following highlights those implications identified. Further detail on proposed considerations for the City is located at Section 6.2.

> The research shows that the demographic profile of international students can impact on their challenges and needs. Demographic characteristics were shown to differ between students that lived within the City and those that lived in surrounding LGAs.

> Satisfaction with housing and accommodation was dependent on a number of factors including the demographic profile of international students, the access of information, duration of time living in Sydney, type of education provider and accommodation. These

findings could assist the City in future strategies regarding the distribution of information on housing and a different accommodation types.

> Large proportions of students depend on part-time work to support accommodation and living costs and therefore could be at risk of exploitation. Our research shows the relationship between different international student profiles and their work place experiences and satisfaction. Research has shown that this is a significant factor on students' wellbeing and negative experiences correlate with low levels of physical and emotional health.

> The safety of a city is a key consideration for students that seek to study overseas. Students consider Sydney a safe city. Student's inexperience of Sydney and their foreign status makes them potentially vulnerable targets. The research indicates that the longer students are studying in Sydney the more likely they are to report feeling unsafe.

> International students face a number of wellbeing and health challenges in the early stages of arriving in Sydney. Finding adequate accommodation and an area to settle in and integrating and connecting with other international and local students were seen as positive contributors to increased physical and emotional health.

1 Introduction

The City of Sydney (the City) engaged the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Public Policy and Governance (UTS:IPPG) to undertake explorative research into the wellbeing of international students in the City Local Government Area (LGA).

1.1 International students in the City of Sydney

The City LGA is host to more international students than any other in Australia, with over 35,000 international students studying in the City alone. The international education sector is a priority for the City due to its close connections to the tertiary education sector, the valuable addition international students make to the cultural life of Sydney and ability of this sector to add value across the economy – the sector contributed over $1.6 billion to the economy within the City's boundaries in 2010, creating approximately 4,000 local jobs[1]. The wellbeing of international students has therefore been identified by the City as a key priority area, culturally, economically and socially.

1.2 Research aim and methodology

The central aim of the research is to investigate how international students living and studying in the City perceive their wellbeing and the factors that contribute or do not contribute towards their wellbeing. Linked to this research question, the study had four focus areas – safety and security, housing, discrimination and work. A further related aim is the exploration of whether international students perceive that the City is enhancing their wellbeing and what further initiatives they think the City could pursue.

The methodology includes a literature review, key stakeholder interviews, and an online survey, one-on-one in-depth interviews and focus groups with international students, as well as analysis and reporting.

1.3 The definition of wellbeing

For the purpose of this research, the following definition of wellbeing was used.

The World Health Organisation[2] definition of wellbeing is recognised internationally. The WHO defines subjective wellbeing as:

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Wellbeing therefore comprises the synergy of three outcomes together: physical, mental, and social health. As the World Health Organisation expands:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

1.4 This report

This document provides an evidence-based understanding of the wellbeing of international students in the City through a review of key literature and documentation relevant to the international student context and analysis of engagement undertaken with notable stakeholders as well as international students that live and study in the City.

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[1] City of Sydney (2015a) *International education.* Sydney: City of Sydney.

[2] World Health Organisation (WHO) (2014) Mental Health: A State of Wellbeing: Geneva: WHO. http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/

This research provides the City with access to important findings that focuses specifically on the issues, concerns and challenges of international students in the LGA. In addition, the engagement process undertaken as part of this research aims to provide the City with key perceptions of international students' experiences of living, studying and working in Sydney. One of the key outcomes of the research for the City is data that can be used to develop policy and practices that will inform current and future programs and initiatives for international students and thereby contributing to the wellbeing of international students residing in the City LGA and continuing to ensure Sydney is a desirable location for international students to study.

The structure of the key findings and recommendations within this document are arranged and analysed thematically. There are also unattributed quotes throughout the report to support these findings.

2 Methodology

The following provides an overview of the research methodology undertaken to explore the wellbeing of international students in the City. The research was undertaken collaboratively with the City over a four month period from March to July 2016. An outline of the methodology process is located at Appendix A.

Project Commencement

Project inception meeting	Research program

Literature Review

Stakeholder Identification and Mapping

Stakeholder Engagement

Designing research instruments	In-depth interviews with stakeholders	Online survey	In-depth interviews with students	Focus groups with students

Reporting and Presentation

Draft report	Final report	Presentation

3 The engagement process

This section provides a detail of the engagement methods undertaken and participants that informed the research.

FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Stakeholder interviews

The first phase of engagement included in-depth interviews with key stakeholder representatives from agencies and organisations that work within the international student realm. Key stakeholders were identified through the stakeholder mapping and identification process and in collaboration with the City. The City has formed strong relationships and works closely with a number of government, non-government, and private organisations in the international student sector. To ensure a diverse range of stakeholders were engaged, stakeholders influence and interest in the sector were considered.

A total of 11 in-depth interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders. Stakeholders included:

> 2 x NSW Police

> 1 x ISANA International Education Association

> 1 x Redfern Legal Centre

> 1 x Private college

> 2 x Universities

> 1 x CISA Council of International Students Australia

> 2 x NSW Government

> 1 x Housing provider

In addition to the 11 interviews, two Consulate Generals were also contacted to participate, however were unable due to conflicting schedules and travel. General discussions throughout the project were undertaken with City staff which also informed the research.

The interviews were approximately one hour in lengths and provided an opportunity to investigate factors and influences of wellbeing and international students. The main areas of concern identified within the literature were also further investigated. Specific questions were asked to stakeholders that aligned with their experiences and expertise as well as their insight into the needs of international students, working with other organisations and the role and opportunities for the City in the sector. The discussion guide developed for the interviews is located at Appendix B.

Online survey with international students

To expand on the findings form the in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, an online survey for international students was designed and conducted. The survey was designed to be interactive and used as a means to gather feedback on international students' wellbeing, experiences, challenges and needs.

In addition to being available on the City website, and promoted through the City social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, the survey was distributed to a number of different tertiary institutions within the City as well as stakeholders engaged during the interview phase of the research. These organisations and stakeholders were then asked to promote the survey through their own networks and media platforms.

The survey targeted international students aged 18 years and over that:

> lived in the City of Sydney LGA,

> studied in the City of Sydney LGA, or

> studied and lived in the City of Sydney LGA.

For the purposes of this survey, if students stated that they studied at the University of New South Wales they were included as 'studying in the City of Sydney LGA'. This was due to its proximity to the City of Sydney LGA and number of international students.

The survey was live from 5 May 2016 to 31 May 2016. A total of 668 respondents entered the survey, of which 603 qualified to complete the survey. The online survey questions are located at Appendix C. The topline findings from the online survey are located at Appendix D.

As part of the online survey, students were asked whether they would be interested in participating in further research through a focus group or interview. A total of 202 of the 603 respondents indicated an interest.

Bivariate analysis tests for the presence of a relationship between two variables of interest was undertaken on a selection of online survey questions against sex/gender, age, country of birth, length of stay and type of education institution. These questions included:

> suburb of residency (Q5)
> difficulty of finding initial accommodation (Q13);
> experience of negative issues with current or previous accommodations (Q17 + Q19);
> satisfaction with current accommodation (Q28);
> satisfaction with places of work (Q32);
> nature of treatment at workplaces (Q34);
> feelings of safety at night in the City (Q37);
> feelings of safety at night while catching public transport (Q39);
> feelings regarding communicating with the police (Q42);
> nature of physical health (Q44);
> nature of emotional health (Q45);
> status of health in Sydney compared to health in home country (Q46);
> degree of enjoyment related to living in Sydney (Q47); and
> degree of enjoyment related to studying in Sydney (Q48)

These tests provide an additional layer of analysis outlined within the key findings at Section 5 and reflected within the implications and considerations at Section 6.

Online survey – high level demographic profile of respondents (n=603)

The following provides an overview of the key demographic profile of online survey respondents.

> Overall, the most common age of respondents was 23 years old (10.3%), followed by 25 years old (10.1%) and 26 years old (9.1%). The youngest respondent was 18 years old and the oldest respondent was 54 years old.

> There was a slightly higher percentage of female respondents (54%) compared to male (45%).

> The majority of respondents identified as being single (71%).

> The most common responses for country of birth were:

   – India (n=74)

   – China (n=56)

   – Brazil (n=53)

> The most common responses for first language were:

   – Chinese (n=80)

   – Spanish (n=62)

   – English (n=60)

> The most commonly attended education institutions, seperated by institution type. were:

   – ELICOS institutions: Academies Australasia (n=36); English Language Company (n=22); Greenwich College (n=15).

   – HED institutions: University of Sydney (n=82); University of New South Wales (n=67); Charles Sturt University (n=63); University of Technology Sydney (n=49); Australian Institute of Professional Education (n=48); Asia Pacific International College (n=46).

   – TAFE – Sydney Institute (n=40)

   – VET/TVET institutions: Australia Pacific College (n=21); Strathfield College (n=9); NAVITAS Professional (n=8); Pacific Training Group (n=7).

> The majority of respondents had been living in Australia for two years or less (78% n=470), with 38% living in a suburb within the City.

Measures of Association

The following demographic variables were used to conduct bivariate analysis on a selection of key survey questions:

> Sex/gender (Q55)

> Age (Q3)

> Country of birth (Q56)

> Length of stay in Australia (Q61)

   – Type of education institution (Q4)

   – Higher Education (HED)

   – English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS)

   – Technical and Further Education (TAFE)

> Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET)

This extended analysis was used to test for the presence of an association between respective pairs of variables. The results of this analysis are summarised in Appendix E.

FIGURE 4: FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Focus groups with international students

Two focus groups were undertaken with respondents who stated interest in the online survey as participating further in this research. To ensure a representative selection of students were engaged, attributes of gender and nationality were considered. These attributes were then reviewed against students' agreement or disagreement to two questions:

> Thinking about all of the things you have responded to within this online survey how much would you agree with this statement? "I enjoy living in Sydney!"

> Thinking about all of the things you have responded to within this online survey how much would you agree with this statement? "I enjoy studying in Sydney!"

These questions were used as proxies for the degree of positivity/negativity with which students perceived their overall experience of living and studying in Sydney.

The focus groups were undertaken at the University of Technology Sydney and were one hour in length. Between eight and ten students were recruited for each focus group. Overall, a total of 11 participants attended (five participants attended the first focus group and a total of 6 participants attended the second focus group).

The focus groups provided an opportunity for students to express their opinions and experiences in a structured and facilitated group setting. A focus group run sheet was developed to guide discussion and is located at Appendix F.

FIGURE 5: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERVIEW ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

International student interviews

A total of 10 interviews were undertaken with respondents who stated interest in the online survey as participating in further research. A similar process of selection was undertaken as that with focus group participants to ensure representativeness.

The interviews were approximately 30 minutes. The topics of discussion for international students were customised to suit each interviewee. A high-level analysis of each interviewee's survey results was conducted prior to the interview in order to ensure that interview questions and prompts were meaningful, built on already established key findings and drew insightful responses.

4 Literature review

A review of relevant literature, documentation and data was undertaken specific to the research aims and objectives. The review included national and international studies on universal concepts and measures of wellbeing.

4.1 The context

International students make an enormous contribution to Australia's economy and social fabric. The international education service (IES) sector is Australia's largest service-based export industry, and third largest export industry overall[3]. In the 2014-15 financial year the IES sector contributed $18.2 billion to the economy[4], representing a 13.7% increase in earnings since the 2013-14 financial year ($15.7 billion)[5]. With a $6.7 billion share of this contribution, NSW was the primary IES earner in 2015, followed by Victoria at $5.6 billion[6].

In addition to the economic contribution international students make, their cultural and social contribution is substantial. They help ensure that Australia remains a superdiverse, multicultural, and lively nation[7]. Superdiversity is characterised by a substantial increase in the global movement of people, lending to 'the world in one city' phenomenon[8] which characterises 'global cities' such as Sydney today. Alongside legal immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, migrating families and spouses, and irregular, illegal or undocumented migrants[9], international students are active contributors to Australian superdiversity. Superdiversity contributes to a nation's levels of productivity, creativity, and innovation[10]. However, it also introduces new layers of social, economic, and political complexity and unpredictability[11]. This has strong governance implications, and introduces complexities in regard to policymaking and public understanding[12].

International students face a variety of complex challenges as they adjust to the way of life of their host country. Australia's popularity as a study destination masks serious problems faced by substantial numbers of international students, problems identified over more than a decade in the scholarly literature and in government surveys and reports[13]. There is persuasive evidence of poor wellbeing among some international students in Australia, with research

[3] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading (DFAT) (2015) *Australia's Trade in Goods and Services 2014-15*. Canberra: Australian Government.

[4] ibid

[5] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading (DFAT) (2014) *Australia's Trade in Goods and Services 2013-14*. Canberra: Australian Government.

[6] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015b) *Research Snapshot: Export income to Australia from international education activity in 2014-15*. Canberra: Australian Government.

[7] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[8] Vertovec, S. (2007) Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 29(6): 1024-54, p.1024.

[9] ibid

[10] Spoonley, P. (2014) Superdiversity, social cohesion, and economic benefits. *IZA World of Labor,* 46: 1-10, p.3.

[11] Blommaert, J. (2013) *Ethnography, Superdiversity and Linguistic Landscapes*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, p.5.

[12] Vertovec, S. (2007) Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 29(6): 1024-54.

[13] Bexley, E., Daroesman, S., Arkoudis, S. & James, R. (2013) University Student Finances in 2012: A Study of the Financial Circumstances of Domestic Students in Australia's Universities. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education; Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.; Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015b) *Research Snapshot: Export income to Australia from international education activity in 2014-15*. Canberra: Australian Government; Deumert A., Marginson S., Nyland C., Ramia G. & Sawir E. (2005) Global migration and social protection rights: The social and economic security of cross-border students in Australia, *Global Social Policy*, 5(3): 329-352; Lawson, C. (2013) International higher education student satisfaction with accommodation in Australia. Canberra: Australian Education International, Australian Government; Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP; New South Wales Parliament (2011) Inquiry into international student accommodation in New South Wales. Sydney: Social Policy Committee, NSW Parliament; Obeng-Odoom, F. (2012) Far away from home: The housing question and international students in Australia, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(2): 201-216; and Sawir E., Marginson S., Deumert A., Nyland C. & Ramia G. (2008) Loneliness and international students: an Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2): 148-180.

consistently showing that a significant minority face major difficulties outside their studies[14]. Distress has been identified in the following areas:

> personal safety[15],

> isolation and poor social networks[16],

> racialised social interactions[17],

> inadequate financial resources[18],

> difficult migration experiences[19],

> exploitation and poor conditions in employment[20],

> difficulties in relation to language proficiency and educational performance[21] , and

> 'study-work-life balance'[22].

Students' wellbeing is affected by such stressors[23], and impact their ability to have a satisfying, productive stay in Australia. These difficulties are discussed below.

4.2 International students in the City of Sydney

Sydney ranks very highly as a preferred study destination for international students across the globe. In 2015, rankings derived from A.T. Kearney's annual Global Cities Index - an instrument derived from the measure of a city's level of global engagement on 26 criteria, including the richness of a city's human capital, business activity, political engagement, cultural experience, and information exchange - found Sydney to be the most popular international study destination worldwide[24]. In 2015, the QS Best Student Cities Index – an instrument designed specifically for international students, which yields a ranking of the world's leading urban destinations - also found that Sydney ranks as the second "most desirable" city to live and fifth most popular city for "employer activities" worldwide[25]. In 2016, the QS Index revealed that Sydney's "desirability" as a liveable city grew, with a climb in rankings to first place[26].

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[14]Deumert A., Marginson S., Nyland C., Ramia G. & Sawir E. (2005) Global migration and social protection rights: The social and economic security of cross-border students in Australia, *Global Social Policy*, 5(3): 329-352; Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP.

[15] Forbes-Mewett, H. & Sawyer, A-M. (2011) *Mental Health Issues amongst International Students in Australia: Perspectives from Professionals at the Coal-face*. The Australian Sociological Association Conference Local Lives/Global Networks, University of Newcastle New South Wales. November 29 – December 2, p.8; Nyland, C., Forbes-Mewett, H. & Marginson, S. (2010) The international student safety debate: moving beyond denial, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 29(1): 89-101.

[16] Sawir E., Marginson S., Deumert A., Nyland C. & Ramia G. (2008) Loneliness and international students: an Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2): 148-180, p. 170.

[17] Fincher, R. & Shaw, K. (2011) Enacting separate social worlds: 'international' and local students in public space in central Melbourne, *Geoforum*, 42: 539-549; Fincher, R. & Shaw, K. (2009) The unintended segregation of transnational students in central Melbourne. *Environment and Planning A*, 41(8): 1884-1902.

[18] Forbes-Mewett, H., Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Ramia, G. & Sawir, E. (2009) Australian university international student finances, *Higher Education Policy*, 22(2): 141-61; Bexley et al., University Student Finances in 2012: A Study of the Financial Circumstances of Domestic Students in Australia's Universities.

[19] Robertson, S. (2013) *Transnational Student-Migrants and the State: The Education-Migration Nexus*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[20] Nyland, C., Forbes-Mewett, H., Marginson, S., Ramia, G., Sawir, E. & Smith, S. (2009) International students workers in Australia: A new vulnerable workforce, *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(1): 1-14.

[21] Sawir, E., Marginson, S., Forbes-Mewett, H., Nyland, C. & Ramia, G. (2012) International student security and language proficiency, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 16(5), 434-454.

[22] Ong, D. & Ramia, G. (2009) Study-work-life balance and the welfare of international students, *Labour and Industry*, 20(2): 181-206.

[23] Thomson, G. Rosenthal, D. & Russell J. (2006). Cultural Stress among International Students at an Australian University. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, Australia; Rosenthal, D.A., Russell, J. & Thomson, G. (2008) The health and wellbeing of international students at an Australian university, *Higher Education*, 55: 51-67.

[24] A.T. Kearney (2015) Global Cities Index. Sydney: A.T. Kearney Australia.

[25] QS (2015) Best Student Cities Index 2015. London: Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd UK.

[26] QS (2016) Best Student Cities Index 2016. London: Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd UK.

Within Australia, Sydney is the most preferred study location for international students[27]. Within metropolitan Sydney, there are 50,000 international university students and 50,000 vocational and ELICOS[28]. 35,000 of the 50,000 international university students study in campuses situated in the City of Sydney[29], and more than 10,000 of these students live in the local area[30]. Financially, international students contribute $1.6 billion to the local economy, creating approximately 4,000 local jobs[31]. Culturally, international students are active contributors to Sydney's 'superdiversity', a city which boasts 71,903 overseas-born residents, 50,680 of whom speak a language other than English[32].

The City dedicates substantial resources in an endeavour to enhance the experience of international students. Projects and programs developed and funded by the City are well-received by its local international student-base. In 2016 the Lord Mayor's official welcoming ceremony for newly-arrived international students attracted approximately 1,000 students[33]. In 2014, the City's international student leadership and ambassador (ISLA) program was awarded first prize at the 2014 NSW International Student Awards and in 2015, one of the international student ambassadors of this program won the NSW International Student of the Year Award[34]. The large number of international students accessing the City's wellbeing initiatives indicates that these are valued. By investigating how international students perceive and utilise the various services and support offered by the City, the City can form a better understanding of how effective the services are and what more may need to be done. Such an understanding will allow the City to exercise better strategic decision-making in regards to funding, personnel, and infrastructure allocation, so that resources are better targeted to meet the wellbeing needs of the City's international students.

A keen understanding of international students' wellbeing needs may also see to a greater influx of international students to the local area. These students will continue to enrich Sydney's economic, social, and cultural landscape. Gaining a greater understanding of wellbeing will also allow the City to market the local area as an attractive and dynamic study destination to prospective international students. This will continue to ensure that the City remains a strong player in the globally-competitive international student sector. This will maintain its popularity as a destination for students to learn, live, and work.

4.3 The wellbeing of the City of Sydney's international students

4.3.1 City of Sydney Community Wellbeing Indicators

The City has an ethos that a range of factors influence the sustainability of the LGA and its community. Owing to this belief, the City seeks to develop social, cultural, environmental, and governance policies alongside economic frameworks to increase community wellbeing and welfare. Projects such as this – that seek to better understand and assess the wellbeing of international students – demonstrate this commitment.

[27] New South Wales Parliament (2011) Inquiry into international student accommodation in New South Wales. Sydney: Social Policy Committee, NSW Parliament.

[28] Smith, A (2014), 'Sydney named top destination in the world for international students'. *Sydney Morning Herald,* April 27. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-named-top-destination-in-the-world-for-international-students-20140424-zqz2a.html

[29] City of Sydney (2015a) *International education.* Sydney: City of Sydney.

[30] ABS (2011) 2011 Census, Quickstats, City of Sydney. Canberra: ABS http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA17200?opendocument&navpos=220.

[31] City of Sydney (2015a) *International education.* Sydney: City of Sydney.

[32] ABS (2011) 2011 Census, Quickstats, City of Sydney. Canberra: ABS http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/LGA17200?opendocument&navpos=220..

[33] City of Sydney (2015d) *Welcome to Sydney.* Sydney: City of Sydney.

[34] City of Sydney (2015c) *Leaders and ambassadors.* Sydney: City of Sydney.

The City measures its policy outcomes against the objectives, goals, and expected outcomes as detailed in its Community Indicators Framework[35]. The range of indicators which specifically relate to international student wellbeing will be explored in the course of this research project's engagement phase. The outcomes of this project can similarly be assessed against the indicators of the framework. This will allow the City and its community to better understand how well international students' wellbeing needs are currently met, and what more may be done to meet the wellbeing aspirations of the students in future.

4.4 Defining wellbeing

The World Health Organisation[36] definition of wellbeing is recognised internationally. The WHO defines subjective wellbeing as:

> *Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.*

Wellbeing therefore comprises the synergy of three outcomes together: physical, mental, and social health. As the World Health Organisation expands:

> *Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*

Studies have highlighted the vulnerabilities international students face on all three fronts. Their lack of English language proficiency, difficulties with housing, poor and insecure employment conditions, financial pressures, weak academic performance, social isolation from the host community, loneliness, homesickness, racism and discrimination can all potentially contribute to poor overall wellbeing[37]. In reference to such vulnerabilities, in 2011 the National Summit on the Mental Health of Tertiary Students noted the 'growing concern over student mental health and adjustment issues'[38]. In examining these concerns, Forbes-Mewett and Sawyer concluded:

> *The capacity to develop skills to manage everyday tasks and interactions strongly influenced the wellbeing and subsequent mental health of these students. Many of them had not previously been independently responsible for their accommodation, transport, or general self-care. Managing part-time jobs and their own budgetary matters was particularly stressful, especially for those experiencing financial difficulties. Furthermore, without familiar normative controls and reference points, international students were vulnerable to new-found freedoms for which they were often unprepared and likely to experience associated stresses[39].*

It is important to understand how each of these components affects international students' overall wellbeing.

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[35] City of Sydney (2011) Community Wellbeing Indicators. Sydney: City of Sydney.
[36] World Health Organisation (WHO) (2014) Mental Health: A State of Wellbeing: Geneva: WHO. http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/

[37] Augoustinos, M., Beasley, C., & Hanson-Easey, S. (2011). O*verseas Students Health Lens Project: Improving the health and wellbeing of overseas students undertaking post- secondary study in SA in the VET Sector*. Report for SA Health, p. 42; Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security.* Cambridge: CUP; and Rosenthal, D.A., Russell, J. & Thomson, G. (2008) The health and wellbeing of international students at an Australian university, *Higher Education*, 55: 51-67.
[38] Forbes-Mewett, H. & Sawyer, A-M. (2011) *Mental Health Issues amongst International Students in Australia: Perspectives from Professionals at the Coal-face*. The Australian Sociological Association Conference Local Lives/Global Networks, University of Newcastle New South Wales. November 29 – December 2.

[39] ibid, p.8.

4.5 Wellbeing challenges facing international students

There are a range of psychological and social challenges for students who choose to study abroad. Challenges are most likely to present themselves at the 'early stages'[40] of adjustment, making the first few months especially difficult. The following aspects will be discussed:

> settling down in a new and foreign context

> housing, safety, and security

> financial difficulties

> discrimination and exploitation

> social integration.

4.5.1 Settling down in a new and foreign context

'Acculturation' - the physiological, social, and psychological changes students undergo as they experience the norms and practices of another culture - is identified to be particularly challenging for international students whose home culture is 'strikingly different'[41] from western culture. For this reason, students of Asian background studying in English-speaking countries are known to be particularly prone to negative wellbeing outcomes during the process of adjustment to Australian culture[42].

In 2014-15, the top ten countries of origin for international students in Australia (representing 66% of the total international student population) were countries where English was not the first language. Of these ten countries, nine were in Asia, with students from these countries representing 63% of the overall international student population. For these students, moving to a country such as Australia where the culture is 'radically different'[43] requires adaptation on two fronts: psychologically, students must find strategies for coping with the stress induced by feelings of 'dislocation, strangeness, and discomfort'[44] whilst living within a culture that is unfamiliar and foreign to their normal way of life; socially and behaviourally, students must acquire a new skills-set which will allow them to navigate the 'tasks of everyday life' – tasks which they would have considered 'routine' and 'automatic' in their home country, but now require 'conscious effort' and 'careful planning'. As Thomson et al. elaborate, navigating everyday tasks involves challenges with:

> *…the food that is eaten, the housing that can be obtained (and retained over time), the weather, clothing, banking and money, bureaucracies, the attitudes of local people, the part-time work that can be found, and the loneliness that is experienced when away from family and friends[45].*

These challenges are intuitively understood. One of the earliest experiences for an international student involves finding an area to settle. It is within this local area that students will consistently encounter the 'everyday tasks' mentioned above, such as finding and keeping accommodation, using public transport, finding part-time employment, and interacting with the locals. Challenges encountered during the first few months of adjusting and integrating into a new city are said to be not only difficult, but 'especially stressful'[46] for international students. It was found that the

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[40] ibid, p.8.

[41] Thomson, G. Rosenthal, D. & Russell J. (2006). Cultural Stress among International Students at an Australian University. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, Australia, p.10.

[42] ibid

[43] ibid, p.12.

[44] ibid, p.28.

[45] ibid, p.28.

[46] Augoustinos, M., Beasley, C., & Hanson-Easey, S. (2011). O*verseas Students Health Lens Project: Improving the health and wellbeing of overseas students undertaking post- secondary study in SA in the VET Sector*. Report for SA Health*, p.42.

degree of skill students exercise in managing these everyday tasks 'strongly influenced the wellbeing and subsequent mental health of these students'[47]. Within the City, ongoing initiatives of welcome, acceptance, and further relationship-building will assist its international student population to better manage these experiences.

4.6 Key areas of focus

Australia's International Student Survey (ISS) is a biennial survey supported by the Australian Government. It measures international students' satisfaction with regard to key life and learning aspects of their Australian experience, including degree of learning, level of support on arrival, and availability of support services thereafter. International students' overall satisfaction is also measured, quantifying student perceptions of the overall experience of living, working, studying, and socialising in Australia on the whole. The 2014 survey results (latest) were largely positive. International students' overall satisfaction with their Australian tertiary study experience increased more than that reported in previous years: 88% v. 87% in 2012 and 86% in 2010. When asked about satisfaction with 'living in Australia' specifically, ratings were similarly high and saw a comparable increase over the years: 89% in 2014 v. 88% in 2012 and 86% in 2010. Satisfaction with 'study experience' also followed this trend: 87% in 2014, v. 86% in 2012 and 84% in 2010. In fact, satisfaction ratings higher than those of previous years were found to be prevalent across all categories of the survey[48].

Wellbeing is not directly addressed in this survey. Nevertheless, positive associations can be drawn between high levels of satisfaction and the implied wellbeing of international students. This research project will seek to build on ISS findings, with particular reference to each of the wellbeing focus areas of interest. These focus areas are outlined in more detail below.

4.6.1 Housing and housing exploitation

In July 2014, in inner Sydney a fire destroyed a 'shanty town' housing Japanese and Korean students[49]. The students were living in shipping containers, derelict caravans and buses and paying $160 a week each after responding to an advertisement on a Japanese-language website. The fire dramatically revealed how the high cost of accommodation in Sydney forces some international students to live in overcrowded, unsafe, and dilapidated housing. In March 2015, the City of Sydney formed a dedicated team to investigate the illegal, short-term rental market. The squad uncovered massive overcrowding, illegal building works, and fire safety defects[50]. Many of these dwellings were close to universities and were occupied by international students.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) houses less than 15% of international students[51] in Australia's largest cities. This proportion falls far short of demand, and is lower than proportions of PBSA offered in comparable countries. At least 53% of international students[52] must rely on the private rental sector (PRS) for accommodation, yet international students are largely uninformed of Australian tenancy laws when they arrive in Australia. They have no previous rental history, placing them at a disadvantage in interactions with unscrupulous

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[47] Forbes-Mewett, H. & Sawyer, A-M. (2011) *Mental Health Issues amongst International Students in Australia: Perspectives from Professionals at the Coal-face*. The Australian Sociological Association Conference Local Lives/Global Networks, University of Newcastle New South Wales. November 29 – December 2, p.8.

[48] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[49] Olding, R. (2014) 'Students living in shipping containers, cubicles and a toilet'. *Sydney Morning Herald*. July 4; Ong, D. & Ramia, G. (2009) Study-work-life balance and the welfare of international students, *Labour and Industry*, 20(2): 181-206.

[50] Han E. (2015) Illegal accommodation: City of Sydney cracks down on black market syndicates. *Sydney Morning Herald*. June 17. Avalable at : http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/illegal-accommodation-city-of-sydney-cracks-down-on-black-market-syndicates-20150615-gho8ie.html

[51] Ziguras, C. (2015) International Student Accommodation Symposium: Outcomes Report. Sydney: International Education Association of Australia, p.5.

[52] ibid, DET (2015) as cited by Ziguras, p.8.

landlords. The complexity of their paperwork also makes it more difficult for them to approach intermediary agents (e.g. a real estate agency) for housing assistance[53]. The more traditional means of seeking accommodation is therefore more inaccessible for international students.

The pressures of accommodation and living costs tend to be particularly intensified for international students living in Sydney. The rising cost of Sydney-based accommodation is a well-documented phenomenon, contributing to the city's high cost of living overall. In A.T. Kearney's annual *Global Cities Index[54]*, in 2015 Sydney was ranked 46th place in terms of affordability worldwide. In 2016, Sydney's rank dropped to 50th least affordable[55]. These findings are collaborated by other instruments. In 2015's Mercer *Cost of Living* ranking, Sydney was ranked 31st[56], signifying a 22-rank drop between 2013 (9th place)[57] and 2015 (31st place). In this regard, Sydney is very much at a competitive disadvantage in the global market. In the last few years the affordability of Sydney has been partially attenuated by the drop in the value of the Australian dollar. The high cost of living negatively influences international student preferences when choosing a study destination abroad, and difficulties in finding affordable accommodation are likely to diminish students' wellbeing. Indeed, when asked to rate degree of satisfaction with the cost of living and cost of accommodation in Australia, international students tend to indicate lower levels of satisfaction on both fronts. Satisfaction with cost of accommodation showcases a downward trend, with levels dropping from 60% in 2010 to 51% in 2012 and 49% in 2014. In a finding that goes hand-in-hand, satisfaction with the cost of living also decreased over time, dropping from 61% in 2010 to 51% in 2012, then 50% in 2014[58].

State and local governments have increasingly become involved on the topic of housing affordability for international students. Maginson et al.[59] particularly noted local governments' increased efforts for generating research on this topic. The authors called for all levels of government to invoke housing regulations where accommodations prove to be substandard or unauthorised; provide and monitor the provision of pre-departure information on housing to international students to improve their knowledge of Australian tenancy laws; and work together in amending the law and code of practice governing the provision of education services (which encompasses housing) to international students.

Housing exploitation

In Australia, the private rental sector (PRS) is characterised by high rental prices and a shortage of supply[60]. PRS is regulated by 'relatively weak' tenancy laws[61]. This makes it 'potentially more prone to exploitation and abuse' and affords tenants 'poor protection'[62] against unsafe and overcrowded rentals. Precarious housing – that is, housing that is insecure, overcrowded, expensive, badly located, and in poor condition – is a reality for many marginalised groups in Australia, and 'a sizeable number'[63] of international students live in such conditions. The discovery that 'many international students live in squalor'[64] is not a phenomenon isolated to

[53] Lavoipierre, A. (2015) 'Police blitz Sydney's illegal accommodation'. *ABC PM.* June 16. Available at: http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2015/s4256148.htm

[54] A.T. Kearney (2015) Global Cities Index. Sydney: A.T. Kearney Australia.

[55] A.T. Kearney (2016) Global Cities. Sydney: A.T. Kearney Australia.

[56] Mercer (2015) 2015 Quality of Living Rankings. Mercer.
[57] Mercer (2013) 2013 Cost of Living Rankings. Mercer.

[58] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[59] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.15.

[60] Ziguras, C. (2015) International Student Accommodation Symposium: Outcomes Report. Sydney: International Education Association of Australia, p.8.

[61] Burke, T. (2015) Does Australia Have a Competitive Disadvantage in Student Accommodation? Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia, p.6.

[62] ibid, p.3.

[63] ibid, p.4.

[64] ibid, p.150.

Australia. Marginson et al. refers to several studies overseas in which private student accommodation is characterised by housing that is 'in poor repair, hard to heat, crowded, and infested with vermin' (US)[65] and are rented out without gas safety check compliance and inclusion of smoke detectors[66] (UK). However, given the relative dearth of PBSA, international students in Australia are forced to rely on private rental accommodation more than their counterparts in the USA, UK, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia[67]. They are highly dependent on the PRS for accommodation and therefore more likely to face poor housing conditions than international students overseas. For international students in Australia, dependence on the PRS has resulted in their becoming increasingly subject to "exploitation and rent gouging"[68] by unscrupulous landlords, and targets of online accommodation scams involving false and misleading advertising of accommodations.

Marginson et al. demonstrate the prevalence of this phenomenon in Melbourne, where studies have found private international student accommodation to be akin to 'slum-type housing'[69] that are 'potential death-traps[70]. In Sydney, Australia's most unaffordable housing market, the City has come to identify and reaffirm the prevalence of a "high degree" of substandard unauthorised or illegal accommodation in the private rental sector which are not only expensive, but pose risks to students' safety[71]. International students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds are especially at risk of living in precarious housing[72]. The quality of accommodation therefore has a significant impact on these students' wellbeing.

4.6.2 Safety and security

International students' perception of Australia as a 'safe' study destination plays a highly-influential role in their choice to study here. Occupying fourth place (92%) of the five most influential factors, assessment of 'personal safety' was the only non-study related consideration international students were found to make when choosing to study in Australia[73].

Debate on the topic of international student safety gained global precedence in the recent past. Government bodies in countries such as India and China drew attention to governments' denial of safety issues experienced by international students despite growing evidence to the contrary. In Australia the federal government was called to action after a series of attacks on international students gained publicity. In the years following, reports produced by the British Council found considerations of safety to have increased considerably in importance amongst international students. Between 2006 and 2012, determinations on the basis of safety moved from a rank of 17 to a rank of 5[74]. In 2014, "safety" had climbed still higher in importance, taking 4th place in a yet another index involving international students[75].

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[65] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.152, US case study, in Christie et al., 2002.

[66] ibid, p.150, UK case study, in BBC News 2001.

[67] Burke, T. (2015) Does Australia Have a Competitive Disadvantage in Student Accommodation? Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia, p. 3.

[68] ibid, p.3.

[69] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.154, Melbourne case study, in Marshall 2007; Marshall, M. (2007) 'Slum-type housing springs up'. *Preston Post Times* and *Northcote Leader,* 5 December.

[70] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.155, Melbourne case study, in Miller 2007; Miller, A. (2007) 'Students caught in "death traps"'. *Waverley Gazette,* 3 April.

[71] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.9.

[72] Ziguras, C. (2015) International Student Accommodation Symposium: Outcomes Report. Sydney: International Education Association of Australia, p.8.

[73] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[74] Xiong, L., Nyland, C. and Smyrnios, K (2015) Testing for cultural measurement equivalence in research on domestic and international tertiary students' fear of crime, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology,* 0: 1-22, p.2.

[75] ibid, p.2.

The National Code of Practice, established under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act* (2000), contains a set of standards to govern the protection of international students and the delivery of education services to them[76]. Under the Code of Practice, the law does not mandate that institutions oversee 'the provision of a safe environment or duty of care of life and property'[77]. Nevertheless, most education institutions in Australia distribute written information about safety to international students during the course of their orientation program. Some institutions have 'dedicated' advice services to help international students with issues of safety: at UTS, for example, international students may call or drop by the international student centre to speak with international student advisers on a range of settlement and adjustment issues[78]. Other institutions provide targeted advice for vulnerable subsets of the international student body, such as female students[79].

While forms of support are not guaranteed and vary between institutions, international students are generally protected whilst on campus. However, students are responsible for managing their own safety when they leave the confines of their educational institution. As detailed by Marginson et al., students' inexperience, combined with their foreigner status, make them more vulnerable targets for crime when they are in public spaces[80]. International students are therefore more exposed to crimes of property (i.e. burglary, robbery, and vehicle threat) and physical assault, and there is 'some evidence' that they are specifically 'targeted' as victims[81]. Their preference for living in inner urban circles also exposes them to the high incidence of crime associated with these areas. There is also a perception amongst international students that owing to their status as 'non-citizens' and 'non-white people'[82], the police are less likely to help should they seek protection. Irrespective of 'targeted crimes', international students may also unknowingly place themselves at risk by engaging in a number of unsafe practices on a day-to-day basis, including travelling to-and-from work late at night, living in sub-standard accommodations at risk of overcrowding, fire hazards etc., and keeping silent about exploitative employers and landlords[83].

As summarised by the President of the Council of International Students (CISA), "engagement between international students and the local community" is an important medium for building international students' awareness on issues relating to safety and wellbeing. In fact, CISA regards local engagement to be "one of the ways to address safety issues more effectively"[84].

4.6.3 Lack of financial resources and exploitation in the work-place

Lack of financial resources

In what is a public misconception, international students are often perceived to being 'inherently wealthy' because of their choice to study abroad[85]. In fact, research reveals that first-generation international students are more likely than other students to be 'culturally, academically, and financially disadvantaged', and that due to this disadvantage they are more prone to face a

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[76] Department of Education and Training (DET) *n.d. ESOS National Code.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[77] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security.* Cambridge: CUP, p.224.

[78] University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) (2016). *Services and Support.* Sydney: UTS.

[79] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security.* Cambridge: CUP, p.224.

[80] ibid, p.205.

[81] ibid, p.239.

[82] ibid, p.224.

[83] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney.

[84] Council of International Students Australia (CISA) (2013) 'International Student Safety Concern Will Again Damage Australia's Largest Services Export', *CISA,* p. 1.

[85] Houshmand, S., Spanierman, L. B. & Tafarodi, R. W. (2014) Excluded and avoided: Racial microaggressions targeting Asian international students in Canada. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20: 377-388.

'more problem-beset experience' when studying abroad[86]. Indeed, the majority of international students are said to bring with them a very limited amount of money upon arrival[87] and depend on income from part-time employment to supplement their living and education costs[88]. For this reason, the perceived availability of part-time work plays an influential role in students' selection of study destinations[89].

The pressure to finance living costs with part-time work may result in an unhealthy work-life balance, and increased levels of stress and anxiety amongst international student employees. In what is a two-edged sword, it has been shown that international students are also at 'higher risk' of gambling[90], and may turn to gambling as a way of dissociating with increased mental, social, and sexual anxiety and stress. In what is downward spiral, the loss of money then sees international students turn to illegal accommodation to make up for the shortfall in funds. Those students who arrive in Australia with adequate finances are no less prone to gambling. In general international students have limited money management skills upon arrival, and some have been found to gamble away even their student fees[91]

Satisfaction with 'earning money' and 'financial support' amongst international students in the tertiary sector is low and has decreased further between 2012 and 2014. Satisfaction with financial support remained steady at 65% in both 2010 and 2012, but in 2014 dropped by 11% to 54%. Satisfaction levels with earning money increased from 59% to 62% between 2010 and 2012. However, as was the case with students' earning potential, satisfaction levels decreased by 9% to 53% in 2014[92]. Students were similarly dissatisfied with the cost of living and accommodation in Australia, with satisfaction rates for both decreasing over time. Compared with Melbourne, Sydney is perceived to have more employment opportunities[93]. Whilst Sydney ranked 5th place for "employer activity" (94%) in 2015's QS *Student Cities Index[94],* in 2016 its rankings dropped four places to 9th position (87%)[95]. This indicates that in reality, students' hopes of finding part-time work in Sydney are likely to be met with challenges and disappointment.

Exploitation in the work-place

Many international students will have little or no knowledge of their rights in the work-place and could face serious exploitation as a result. Their vulnerability is also compounded by their lack of skills and their indiscriminate need to find employment, which may expose them to the advances of exploitative employers. As is the case with tenancy rights, students are often not aware of their rights as employees. They are similarly uninformed in regards to the health and safety regulations that protect them in the workforce. Fraudulent practices undertaken by employers involved doctoring payrolls and rosters in a half-pay scam, so that students' working

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[86] Reddon, E (2015) 'Are international students satisfied?'. *The Australian,* 22 August, p.1. Available at: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/are-international-students-satisfied/news-story/7214486c0fe51bcf1fbea4d2bb6b670a

[87] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney.

[88] Melbourne East Regional Development Australia (2012) Stakeholder Engagement Plan to Enhance the Tertiary Education Industry Strength in the Melbourne East Region. Victoria: McKinna et al.

[89] ibid.

[90] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.12.

[91] ibid.

[92] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

[93] Melbourne East Regional Development Australia, Stakeholder Engagement Plan to Enhance the Tertiary Education Industry Strength in the Melbourne East Region.

[94] QS (2015) Best Student Cities Index 2015. London: Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd UK.

[95] QS (2016) Best Student Cities Index 2016. London: Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd UK.

hours are halved on payslips, and thereby earn only half the wages they are due[96]. Other reported cases are of international students receiving "food" payments or payment in the form of accommodation[97]; working between 40 and 70 hours a week[98]; receiving no penalty rates and being denied breaks on shifts lasting up to 16 hours[99]; and receiving as little as $8 an hour in wages, when the Australian minimum wage is double this amount[100]. International students' vulnerability is further compounded by the fact that their language and cultural skills limit the opportunities available to them in the job market, and as one student summarised, "you just have to take it whether it's good or not"[101].

The most recent example of international student exploitation has been the uncovering of illegal employment practices of convenience stores. In 2015, *Four Corners* revealed that 69 Australian franchisees of a global chain of convenience stores had engaged in ongoing wage-fraud practices in regard to its student employees, and in some instances had blackmailed staff and refused to return employees' passports and drivers licenses[102]. Where international students know or suspect unfair treatment such as this, fear plays an influential role in their decision to remain silent. Fear can stem from multiple sources: they fear losing the source of income which allows them to finance their stay in Australia, but even more so, students fear speaking up will result in government persecution and will carry with it the risk of deportation[103]. Their fears are not unfounded: the mandatory penalty for breaching the 20-hour working allowance is the retraction of the student visa and expulsion from Australia[104]. Formal and informal programs, policies, and initiatives upheld by government and non-government agencies alike discourage students' reporting of exploitative accommodation and workplace practices.

More recent research into the under payment of international students in Australia also highlights concerns around students' knowledge of work rights and uncertainty around who to speak to or where to access the correct information. A recent survey undertaken by the University of Sydney Business School highlighted that at least 60 percent of international students who work in Sydney are being paid below the federally mandated minimum wage of $17.29 per hour, with an even greater number of Sydney based international university students being exploited, particularly by employers in the retail and hospitality sector[105].

[96] Ferguson, A., Danckert, S. & Toft, K (2015) '7-Eleven: Investigation exposes shocking exploitation of convenience store workers'. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 29 August, p.3. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/7eleven-investigation-exposes-shocking-exploitation-of-convenience-store-workers-20150828-gja276.html

[97] Peake, R. (2015) 'International students in Canberra combine to fight exploitation'. *Canberra Times*, 28 September, p.*2.* Available at: http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/international-students-in-canberra-combine-to-fight-exploitation-20150924-gjtz6q.html

[98] McNeilage, A (2015) 'International students forced to work for just $8 an hour', *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, p.1. Availbale at: http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/international-students-forced-to-work-for-just-8-an-hour-20150116-12rwuo.html

[99] Ferguson, A., Danckert, S. & Toft, K (2015) '7-Eleven: Investigation exposes shocking exploitation of convenience store workers'. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 29 August, pp. 1-3. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/7eleven-investigation-exposes-shocking-exploitation-of-convenience-store-workers-20150828-gja276.html

[100] McNeilage, A (2015) 'International students forced to work for just $8 an hour', *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, p.1. Availbale at: http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/international-students-forced-to-work-for-just-8-an-hour-20150116-12rwuo.html.

[101] Peake, R. (2015) 'International students in Canberra combine to fight exploitation'. *Canberra Times*, 28 September, p.*2.* Available at: http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/international-students-in-canberra-combine-to-fight-exploitation-20150924-gjtz6q.html.

[102] Ferguson, A., Danckert, S. & Toft, K (2015) '7-Eleven: Investigation exposes shocking exploitation of convenience store workers'. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 29 August, p. 2. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/7eleven-investigation-exposes-shocking-exploitation-of-convenience-store-workers-20150828-gja276.html.

[103] Education Malaysia Australia (2015) 'A call for action: the exploitation of international students'. *Council of International Students Australia,* 15 September.

[104] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.6.

[105] The University of Sydney, *Nearly all foreign student workers underpaid – Business School Survey*, The University of Sydney Business School, 2016, available at: http://sydney.edu.au/business/news/2016/foreign_student_workers

4.6.4 Discrimination and exploitation

International students may face exploitation at the hands of a number of sources including employers, illegal accommodation providers and unscrupulous landlords, employers, international education recruiters, and scammers. With reference to the latter two, the international higher education sector is shown to be particularly vulnerable to exploitative acts by recruiters and scammers. It is seen to produce a "worrying culture of international student exploitation"[106], and as the targets of one such online scam in 2015, international students in both Sydney and Melbourne universities lost thousands of dollars to fraudulent "education agents" posing as intermediaries of Sydney and Melbourne universities.

Housing and employment exploitation were addressed under their respective focus areas above. To reiterate the discriminatory housing practices to which students are subject, they: face wrongful evictions, are asked to finance repairs to the accommodation, are given onerous responsibilities as part of their tenancy agreement, are subject to invasions of privacy, are awarded unreasonable rent increases, and have their bond unlawfully withheld upon exit[107]. In terms of exploitation in the workplace, students are subject to practices such as the underpayment of wages, employer intimidation, unfair dismissal, illegal working hour loadings, and a lack of insurance coverage[108].

4.6.5 Social integration

Most international students look forward to making friends with native community members during the course of their study period[109]. However, such expectations are often met with 'strong disappointment'[110]. Research reveals that cross-cultural friendships between international students and local students are 'challenging and rare'[111]. Within urban local areas, international and local university students are found to socialise in separate spaces and in different ways. Friendship groups formed are often exclusionary and may even take on racial connotations. Local students are prone to view international students as part of a homogenous group whose cultural practices are incompatible with their own, and vice versa[112]. However, lack of interaction with local students can be an 'isolating' experience[113] and 'a source of great regret'[114] for all international students. By means of compensation, many international students seek friendships with other co-nationals so as to ensure that they are not socially isolated. Others tend towards co-national friendship groups as a way of embedding familiarity into an unfamiliar way of life in their host country[115].

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[106] Jacks, T. (2015) 'Scammers fleece thousands from international students'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September, p.1. Available at: http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/scammers-fleece-thousands-from-international-students-20150916-gjo1ei.html

[107] Obeng-Odoom, F. (2012) Far away from home: The housing question and international students in Australia, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(2), p.209.

[108] Nyland, C. & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2009). *International Student Exploitation.* The Australian Institute of Criminology (Non-sex industry) labour trafficking forum, Australian Institute of Criminology, Griffith ACT. 18 June, slide 8.

[109] Lawson, C. (2013) International higher education student satisfaction with accommodation in Australia. Canberra: Australian Education International, Australian Government, p.6.

[110] Deumert A., Marginson S., Nyland C., Ramia G. & Sawir E. (2005) Global migration and social protection rights: The social and economic security of cross-border students in Australia, *Global Social Policy*, 5(3): 329-352; Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.16; Sawir E., Marginson S., Deumert A., Nyland C. & Ramia G. (2008) Loneliness and international students: an Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2), p. 170; Fincher, R. & Shaw, K. (2011) Enacting separate social worlds: 'international' and local students in public space in central Melbourne, *Geoforum*, 42: 539-549.

[111] Williams, C.T., & Johnson, L.R. (2011) Why can't we be friends? Multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35: 41-48, p.41.

[112] Fincher, R. & Shaw, K. (2011) Enacting separate social worlds: 'international' and local students in public space in central Melbourne, *Geoforum*, 42: 539-549.

[113] ibid, p.546.

[114] ibid, p.540.

[115] Ibid.

Houshmand et al.[116] designed a study to assess international students' experience of covert forms of racism. The population of interest was East and South East Asian international students studying in Canada. Through interview analysis, the authors identify six key 'racial experiences' which temper the possibility of ongoing social interaction between international students and native citizens. These occur when international students feel excluded and avoided; are ridiculed for their accent; are rendered invisible (i.e. experience feelings of not being visible, wanted or acknowledged); face ambivalence and feel invalidated in regards to having their international/cultural values and needs met by natives; are confronted by ascription of intelligence based on racial stereotypes; and encounter environmental microaggressions (i.e. face structural barriers to their active social participation on campus)[117]. They found that in response to such experiences, students tended to engage in three key defensive behaviours: engaging only with their own racial and cultural groups; withdrawing from academic spheres, especially from academic activities which required social interaction with peers; and seeking comfort in the racial diversity at their university and in the surrounding [local] community[118].

Given contextual similarities between Australia and Canada as well as the Asian background of the students interviewed, some of these experiences may also be common to international students in Australia. Experiences such as those identified above may contribute to the sense of loneliness and isolation international students feel during their stay here, and may impact significantly on their wellbeing. In a study conducted on international students studying in Australia, approximately 135 of the 200 international students interviewed had experienced problems with loneliness and isolation[119]. This was especially the case in the early months of their stay. The authors propose that forming friendships with locals may be 'the key'[120] to countering loneliness. Indeed, it has been shown elsewhere that positive interactions with locals early on have the ability to shape students' views on the 'approachability and support' that could be expected of Australians in general[121]. Conversely, negative social experiences with locals early on have the opposite effect, and negatively influence students' views on 'what life would be like for them in the future'[122].

4.7 International comparative research

4.7.1 International students experience in USA

Discrimination and social integration

The flow of international students into the US received increasing attention in the post September 9/11 climate[123]. Evidence from research suggested that there were various reasons for the decline in international applications and enrolment including greater national security and discrimination and hostility towards foreign students[124].

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[116] Houshmand, S., Spanierman, L. B. & Tafarodi, R. W. (2014) Excluded and avoided: Racial microaggressions targeting Asian international students in Canada. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20: 377-388.

[117] ibid, p.377.

[118] ibid, p.377.

[119] Sawir E., Marginson S., Deumert A., Nyland C. & Ramia G. (2008) Loneliness and international students: an Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2), p. 170.

[120] ibid, p.172.

[121] Augoustinos, M., Beasley, C., & Hanson-Easey, S. (2011). O*verseas Students Health Lens Project: Improving the health and wellbeing of overseas students undertaking post- secondary study in SA in the VET Sector*. Report for SA Health, p. 42.

[122] ibid, p.27.

[123] Lee, J.J. and Rice, C., 2007. Welcome to America? International student perceptions ofdiscrimination. *Higher Education*, *53*(3), pp.381-409.

[124]ibid, p. 382.

According to Lee and Rice[125] the emergence of neo-racism i.e. discrimination based on culture and national borders post September 9/11 is the primary reasons for range of problems faced by international students in US universities. Neo-racial difficulties faced by international students on university campus are social interactions, interactions with faculty and administration, and denial of funding or job opportunities. Neo-racial difficulties manifest in off-campus interactions such as housing and shopping. Students also reported incidents of verbal discriminations, cultural stereo-typing, direct confrontations, and feelings of discomfort in US universities. In addition, many international students perceived Americans as lacking the desire to understand another culture and therefore expressed feelings of cultural alienation and social exclusion. According to research findings conducted by Lee and Rice[126] students from Asia, Latin America, India and the Middle East report considerable discrimination while students from Europe, Canada and New Zealand did not report any negative experiences related to their race and culture.

Financial resources and employment opportunities

Majority of research studies have shown that a primary reason for international students to get a US degree is due to it being as a necessary step towards finding employment in United States and obtaining permanent immigration status[127]. However a research study conducted by Alberts and Hazen[128] demonstrated that irrespective of their original intention, international students reported that they were in two minds to stay in US or go back to their respective countries due to several factors such as 1) professional factors, 2) personal factors and 3) societal factors.

With regard to professional factors lack of financial resources and employment opportunities were reported by international students in the US. International students due to their student visa status F-1 are not qualified to accept any off-campus federal jobs. Further there is a prohibition of international students working more than 50% time, or 20 hours per week, on campus is an institutionalized policy[129]. Post 9/11, 2001, US have designed very restrictive visa policies, sending mixed messages to international students who are welcome as students but not to remain for work[130]. The economic downturn since 2009 has also resulted in increased employment crisis of international students in US. In a research study Kwazdo[131] conducted interviews with international students who were full time professional in their home country before arriving in US as students. Majority of these students were engaged in physically demanding jobs working in university dining facility which involved cooking, cleaning and lifting of heavy items.

Safety and security

Coming to study in the United States has become an obstacle course, and prospective students abroad are increasingly leery of stringent government regulations[132]. The implementation of the Sevis computer-based tracking system by the Department of Homeland Security and the imposition of new fees charged to students from abroad are additional threats to safety and

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[125]ibid, p. 393.

[126] ibid

[127] Rao, M., 1995. Foreign students and graduate economic education in the United States. *The Journal of Economic Education*, *26*(3), pp.274-281.

[128] Alberts, H.C. and Hazen, H.D., 2005. "There are always two voices…": International Students' Intentions to Stay in the United States or Return to their Home Countries. *International Migration*, *43*(3), pp.131-154.

[129] Lee, J.J. and Rice, C., 2007. Welcome to America? International student perceptions ofdiscrimination. *Higher Education*, *53*(3), pp.381-409.

[130] Altbach, P.G., 2004. Higher education crosses borders: Can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students?. *Change: the magazine of higher learning*, *36*(2), pp.18-25.

[131] Kwadzo, M., 2014. International students' experience of studying and working at a northeastern public university in the US. Journal of International Students, 4(3), pp.279-291.

[132] Altbach, P.G., 2004. Higher education crosses borders: Can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students?. *Change: the magazine of higher learning*, *36*(2), pp.18-25.

security of international students. Racial and Cultural discrimination especially against Middle Eastern students are a cause of concern for safety and security. In February 2015 three Muslim students were shot to death at the residential complex of University of North Carolina[133]. Recent attitude surveys also indicated that students considering studying abroad see the United States as a less safe place to study compared to competitors such as Australia and Britain due to frequent terrorist attacks[134].

4.7.2 Canada

Financial resources and employment opportunities

According to recent statistics the number of international students studying in universities in Canada has increased from 53, 168 to 116, 890[135]. The increase in international students in Canada is intimately linked to its immigration policies. International students reported that Canada was their choice of destination for higher education simply due to the ease of visa or immigration to the United States[136].

Since 2000, the Canadian government has launched a series of policy initiatives to expedite the processing of study permit applications and enhance access for international students to Canadian labour market during and after their study[137]. Data shows that in 2009, 74% of all admissions to Canadian Employment Council were former students[138]. Evidence suggested that primary reasons prompting international students to consider staying in Canada after graduation is scope of better job opportunities and high quality of life[139].

Safety and security, and enhanced quality of life

In a research study conducted by Arthur and Flynn[140] and [141] international students expressed their preference for intention to stay in Canada after graduation due to reasons such as: safe, multicultural, more freedom than in their home country, employee protection laws, social protection laws, and so on. The relative safety and political stability of Canada was also quoted as one of the driving reasons for international students to stay in Canada.

Discrimination and social and cultural integration

However Canadian international student expressed apprehension and fear about cultural barriers for their successful integration in general and for their specific integration into the workplace. Insufficient proficiency in English was the most concerning cultural barrier. As Canada has bi-lingual policy i.e. English and French, majority of international students reported difficulties in speaking English or French[142]. In a research study conducted by Grayson[143]

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[133] Al Jazeera (2015), 'Three Muslim students killed at North Carolina campus'. *Al Jazeera News,* February 12. See: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/students-murdered-university-north-carolina-campus-150211093231033.html.

[134] Altbach, P.G., 2004. Higher education crosses borders: Can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students?. *Change: the magazine of higher learning*, *36*(2), pp.18-25.

[135] Kunin& Associates, 2012 in Grayson, J.P., 2014. Negative racial encounters and academic outcomes of international and domestic students in four Canadian universities. *Journal of International Students*, *4*(3), pp.262-278, p. 264.

[136] Chen, L.H., 2007. Choosing Canadian graduate schools from afar: East Asian students' perspectives. *Higher Education*, *54*(5), pp.759-780.

[137]Canadian Immigration and Citizenship (CIC), 2016. *Canadian Immigration and Citizenship*. Government of Canada: Toronto. See: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/.

[138] She, Q. and Wotherspoon, T., 2013. International student mobility and highly skilled migration: a comparative study of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. *SpringerPlus*, *2*(1), p.1.

[139] Arthur, N. and Flynn, S., 2011. Career development influences of international students who pursue permanent immigration to Canada. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, *11*(3), pp.221-237.

[140] ibid

[141] Chen, L.H., 2007. Choosing Canadian graduate schools from afar: East Asian students' perspectives. *Higher Education*, *54*(5), pp.759-780.

[142] ibid

international students reported discrimination in Canadian universities especially amongst students of non-European origin.

4.8 Concluding remarks

The 2014 International Student Survey revealed that the level of support available for adjusting to the local area was a cause of dissatisfaction for many tertiary sector-international students. Research suggests that fostering strong international student engagement at the level of local institutions is identified as a means of ensuring 'a richer educational, social, and cultural experience'[144] for international students. Local institutions which are highly committed to fostering, facilitating, and maintaining a range of initiatives for international students can help them to overcome much of the negative experiences and effects of adjustment and settlement. Local government institutions such as the City of Sydney are well placed to assist international students to feel welcome and accepted in the local area, foster connections within the local community and community members, find safe employment and accommodation within the local businesses, and feel sense of physical safety on local streets, public spaces, and public transport.

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[143] Kunin& Associates, 2012 in Grayson, J.P., 2014. Negative racial encounters and academic outcomes of international and domestic students in four Canadian universities. *Journal of International Students*, *4*(3), pp.262-278, p. 264.

[144] Sawir E., Marginson S., Deumert A., Nyland C. & Ramia G. (2008) Loneliness and international students: an Australian study, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2), p. 170.

5 Key research findings

The following section provides the key findings and recommendations from the research undertaken. The key findings and recommendations are informed by:

> key City plans and policies

> national and international literature

> in-depth interviews with key stakeholders

> an online survey, focus groups and interviews with international students.

The overarching results of the bivariate analysis are contained within purple boxes as part of the key findings in their respective sections.

Please note: Percentages within the following figures represent the number of responses per question category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered each question.

A total of 603 international students undertook the survey.

In relation to <u>overall wellbeing and health</u> and as part of the online survey, students were asked to think about all of the things that they had responded to and indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement *"I enjoy living in Sydney" and "I enjoy studying in Sydney".*

Over 80% respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each of these statements. Agreement was higher when asked whether students enjoyed living in Sydney (86%) compared to studying here (80%).

The following figure portrays the top 20 countries of birth.

FIGURE 6: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' COUNTRIES OF BIRTH

Q56 (n=603)
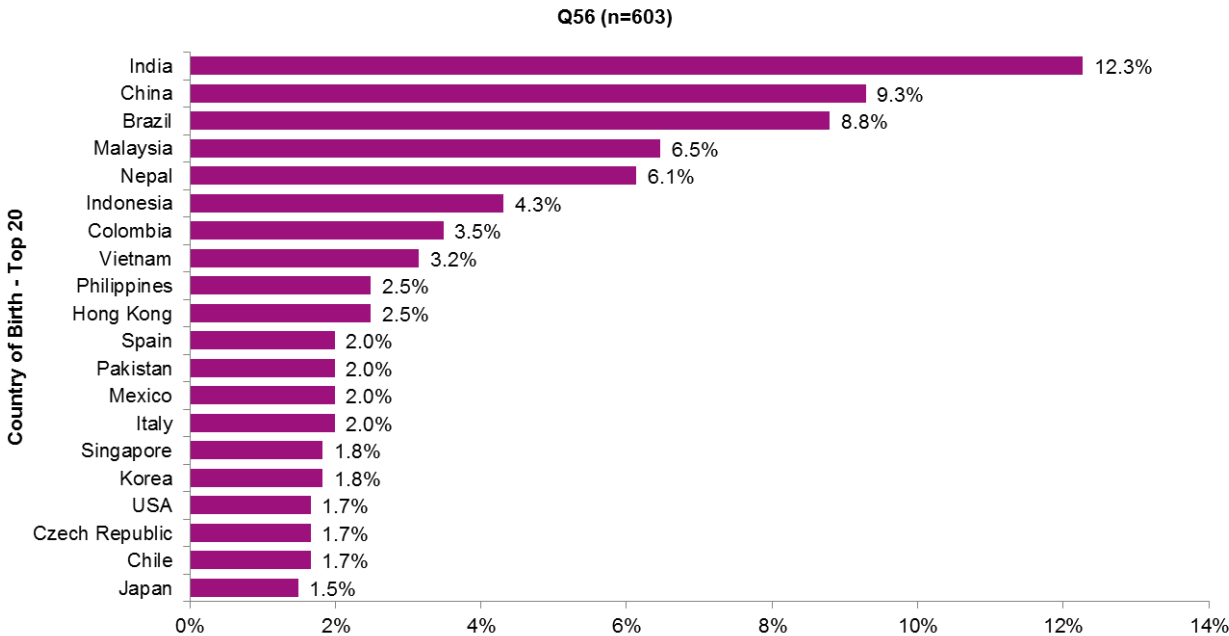
Survey respondents represented 74 different countries of birth.

The most common responses for country of birth were:

− India (n=74)

− China (n=56)

– Brazil (n=53)

5.1 Studying in Sydney

As part of the online survey international students were asked to nominate the educational institution in which they studied.

The majority of students that study in the City live outside of the LGA

> Age: Students aged 30-35 years were more likely on average to live a City of Sydney suburb. Students younger than 30 years were less likely to do so.

> Country of birth: Chinese students were much more likely on average to live in the City. Nepalese students were least likely to do so. Indian, Malaysian, and Brazilian students were more likely to live in non-City LGAs.

> Length of stay in Australia: As length of stay in Australia increased, students were progressively less likely to live in a suburb in the City *.

> Type of education institution: On average, ELICOS and VET students were more likely to live in a City suburb*.

The most commonly attended education institutions of students were the University of Sydney (14% n=82), followed by the University of New South Wales (11% n=67), and Charles Sturt University (10% n=63)[145].

The following illustrates the top 20 nominated educational institutions of international students that responded to the survey.

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[145] Although UNSW is not located within the City LGA, it has been included as there is a high likelihood of UNSW students accessing services and facilities within the City due to close proximity and transport connections.

Q4 (n=603)

Institution	%
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE	0.7%
KAPLAN AUSTRALIA	0.7%
AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF COMMERCE	0.7%
NAVITAS ENGLISH	1.0%
PACIFIC TRAINING GROUP	1.2%
NAVITAS PROFESSIONAL	1.3%
STRATHFIELD COLLEGE	1.5%
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY	2.0%
GREENWICH COLLEGE	2.5%
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY	2.8%
AUSTRALIA PACIFIC COLLEGE	3.5%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPANY	3.6%
ACADEMIES AUSTRALASIA	6.0%
TAFE - SYDNEY INSTITUTE	6.6%
ASIA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE	7.6%
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL...	8.0%
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY	8.1%
CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY	10.4%
UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES*	11.1%
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY	13.6%

Education Institutions - Top 20
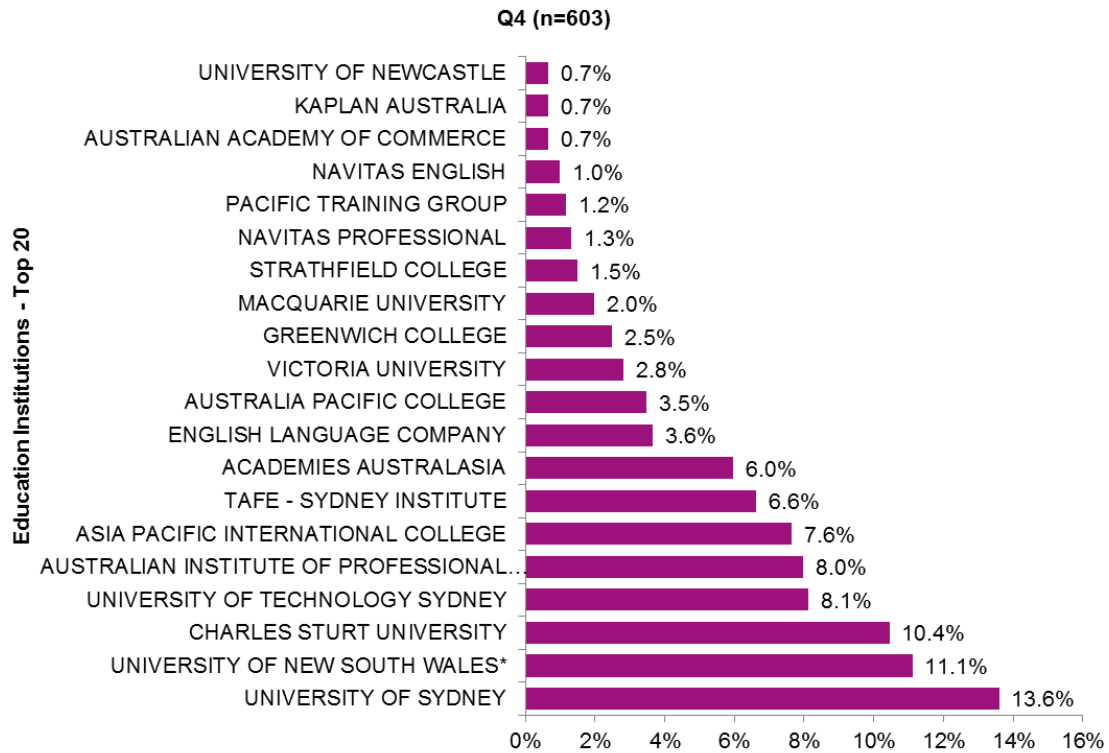
Further, respondents were asked what their main area/s of study was. The following figure shows that respondents were most likely to be studying Business (43%) followed by IT (15%).

Q6 (number of responses=628; number of respondents=509)

Main Areas of Study	%
Business	43%
Information Technology (IT)	15%
Engineering	14%
Language	11%
Health	8%
English language	8%
Communication and media	6%
Science	5%
Education	5%
Design, architecture and building	3%
International Studies	3%
Law	2%
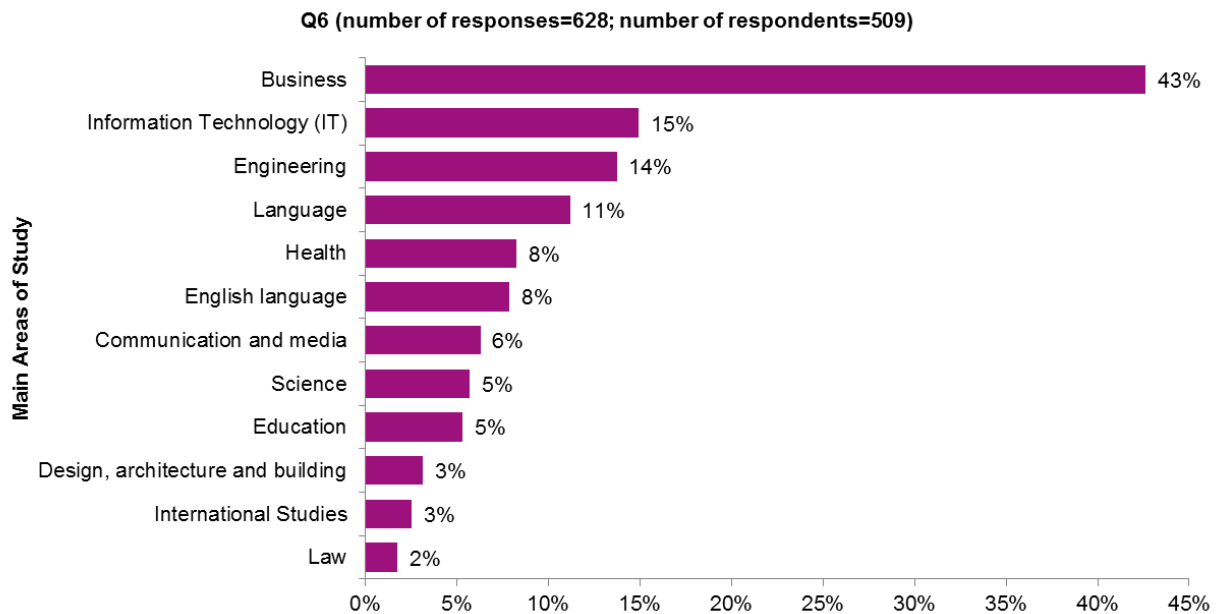
Students were also asked whether they lived within a suburb located in the City. 38% of respondents (n=228) live in a suburb within the LGA, with the following figure outlining the top 22 responses.

Q5 (n=228)

City of Sydney Suburb/Locality - Top 22	Value
SYDNEY	40
ULTIMO	25
CHIPPENDALE	20
SURRY HILLS	16
REDFERN	15
PYRMONT	12
CAMPERDOWN	11
NEWTOWN	9
HAYMARKET	7
GLEBE	6
DARLINGHURST	6
ZETLAND	5
ROSEBERY	5
KINGS CROSS	5
EAST SYDNEY	5
DARLINGTON	5
ALEXANDRIA	5
FOREST LODGE	4
WATERLOO	3
PADDINGTON	3
ERSKINEVILLE	3
ELIZABETH BAY	3
BROADWAY	3
WOOLLOOMOOLOO	2
CHINATOWN	2
ANNANDALE	2
THE ROCKS	1
POTTS POINT	1
MOORE PARK	1
MILLERS POINT	1
GOAT ISLAND	1
CENTENNIAL PARK	1
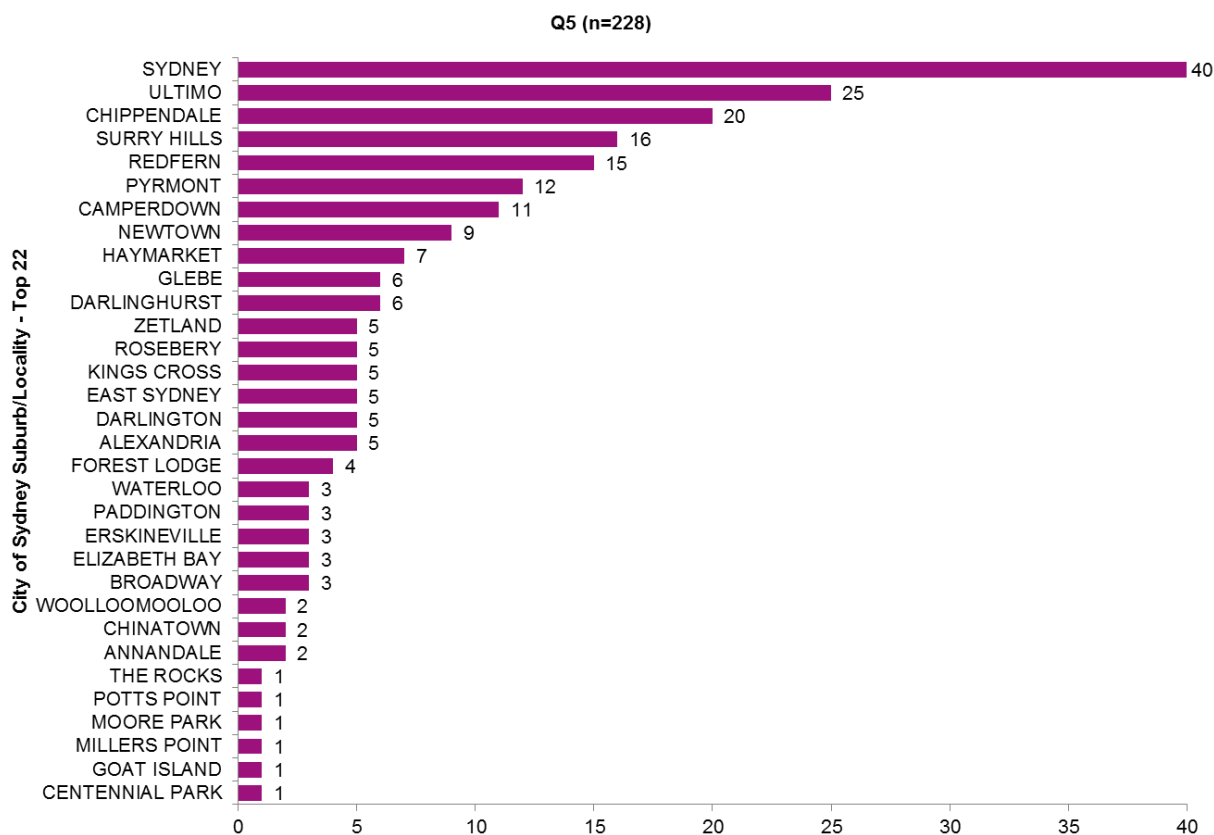
The most common suburbs in which respondents lived outside the City LGA included:

> Kensington (5.8%)

> Kingsford (1.8%)

> Strathfield (1.7%)

> Parramatta (1.7%)

With regard to the length of time students had spent in Australia, 39% stated that they had been studying in Australia for 1-2 years (n=232). The length of stay was also reflected with regard to course length, where students were also most likely to pursue a course between 1-2 years (44%, n=266).

FIGURE 10: LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN AUSTRALIA

Q7 (n=603)

Length of Time Spent Australia (Years)	
Less than 6 months	25%
6 months to 1 year	18%
>1 to 2 years	39%
>3 to 5 years	14%
5 years or more	4%
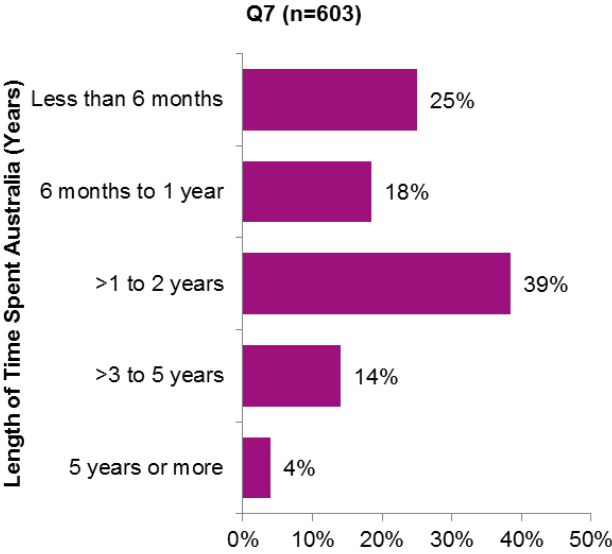
FIGURE 11: LENGTH OF COURSE

Q8 (n=603)

Length of Course (Years)	
Less than 6 months	10%
6 months to 1 year	20%
>1 to 2 years	44%
>3 to 5 years	24%
5 years or more	2%
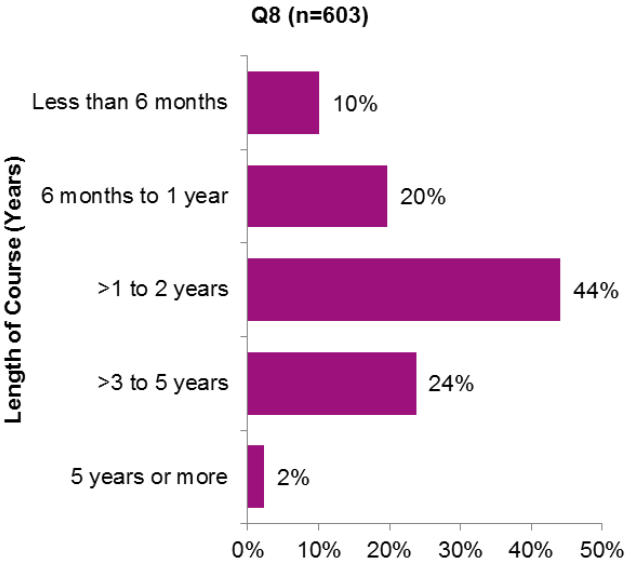
5.1.1 International students regard Sydney as a desirable destination for study

The focus groups and interviews with international students illustrated an overall positive view of Sydney as a good place to study. Factors that students identified as important to making Sydney an attractor for international students included:

> world class educational institutions and teaching

> work opportunities (in Australia and within countries of birth)

> a culturally and socially diverse community

> natural beauty and mild climate

> the diverse range of festivals, activities and cultural events

Students were asked to think about all the things that they responded to within the online survey and how they would agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I enjoy studying in Sydney"

Overall, the majority of respondents either agreed (51%) or strongly agreed (29%) to the statement.

Students were asked whether they would recommend others to study in Sydney. A total of 88% of respondents (n=530) indicated that they would recommend Sydney as a place to study. This demonstrates a high proportion of students that could potentially be current or future 'ambassadors' of Sydney as a destination to study.

These findings were further supported by students that undertook interviews. As two students noted:

"I would definitely tell people to come to Sydney. You get good education, although expensive and you get to see many beautiful place… people are friendly too"

"The weather really helps, there are lots of new people to meet and there is always something to do"

5.1.2 Transitioning to a new city takes time and understanding Australian culture has particular challenges

A number of students that took part in the focus groups and interviews discussed challenges faced when first arriving in Sydney. Students noted that their main form of understanding what Sydney may be like as a city to study in was via the internet or friends and family that undertook a similar experience. Initial challenges faced by international students discussed in the focus groups and interviews included:

> the cost of housing and living e.g. food, events, transport

> the lack of engagement by educational providers in the provision of appropriate information – although not legally required to provide international students with information on things outside of course requirements, students believed that educational institutions were best placed to provide them with guidance and support on things like visas, language requirements, and accommodation.

> social integration with other international students (from other countries) and Australian students

> navigating government support services and facilities e.g. health, immigration, education

Homesickness was cited by many of the stakeholders as a key challenge for international students. In addition to moving to a new city, with most having to navigate a different culture and a different language, international students can be particularly prone to homesickness, particularly when first arriving. As one interviewee notes of international students:

"They're usually travelling alone for the first time in their lives…"

As noted within the literature, challenges encountered during the first few months of adjusting and integrating into a new city (for international students) are said to be not only difficult, but 'especially stressful'[146] . Ongoing initiatives by the City of 'welcome, acceptance, and further relationship-building' will assist its international student population to better manage challenging experiences.

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[146] Augoustinos, M., Beasley, C., & Hanson-Easey, S. (2011). O*verseas Students Health Lens Project: Improving the health and wellbeing of overseas students undertaking post- secondary study in SA in the VET Sector. Report for SA Health*, p.42.

Sydney was generally perceived as a great place to live and study. There was general consensus among students within the focus groups and interviews that moving to Sydney to study and live would be somewhat easy. As two students noted in the interviews:

"…Sydney always seemed to be a magical place because it has the beaches, the fireworks, the sunshine, the smiley people… but the reality of changing countries hits and you don't have support around you… it can sometimes take up to one year to settle for some students".

"I didn't think that first year would be so difficult, I felt so up and down emotionally, I got the flu for the first time, I had to avoid social media as all I could see were my friends back home having a great time"

The respondents of the online survey had an average age of 23 years old. Given the generally younger age of international students, it was noted by stakeholders, from educational institutions that on arrival, the younger students can often be overwhelmed, like a "deer caught in headlights".

The focus groups also highlighted the challenge some students face in private colleges around connecting with other classmates and teachers. It was noted that private colleges are "… mostly people from international countries with little or no Australia… some teachers are also not Australian".

The transition is seen as a process that takes time with the first year being cited by one stakeholder as "the most awkward" and the last year as "the best". However, the final stages of an international students time in Sydney also has the potential to be stressful, when decisions have to be made about longer term life plans such as migrating to Australia or finding a job, as one student noted

"…as they get to last semester they start to realise reality"

These findings were reflected within the online survey. 'Making local friends' was a key concern for students, before arriving in Sydney (24%) and after arriving in Sydney (33%). This increase demonstrates the need for key stakeholders to work together in order to address relationship building and social connections for new international students.

Students identified educational providers as a key source for support and information. However as identified within the student interviews, students sometimes felt that they were not necessarily provided with correct information about housing, transport, services etc. or provided with respect.

A key finding from the engagement phases of the project was the difficulty some international students encounter transitioning and integrating into the Australian culture and lifestyle. As two students noted as part of interviews:

"International students don't get treated in the same way as local students do by Universities…"

"Teachers don't really understand the difficulties that International students face…"

As outlined within the literature, 'acculturation' - the physiological, social, and psychological changes students undergo as they experience the norms and practices of another culture - is identified to be particularly challenging for international students whose home culture is

'strikingly different'[147] from western culture. Research also reveals that cross-cultural friendships between international students and local students are 'challenging and rare'[148].

Some stakeholders discussed cultural obligations and meeting the expectations of family and friends in students' home countries as impacting on the overall wellbeing of students studying in Sydney. One stakeholder noted that some students having to return to home countries in order to participate in cultural rituals such as arranged marriages.

One stakeholder spoke directly about the impact on acculturation and the struggle of students learning and understanding Australian cultural norms. One stakeholder said:

"International students often struggle with things that some people may not even be aware of such as Australian slang… not feeling part of the culture and community in which students live can result in depression [and] disengagement… potentially resulting in increased drug and alcohol consumption or increased risk of suicide"

On the other hand, another stakeholder provided an insight into international students that embrace the "new-found freedom" of Australian culture.

"Some male students welcome the Australian cultural norms, particularly the drinking culture…"

However, the consumption of alcohol may be at odds with family and cultural expectations, and students may refrain from contacting their families due to this conflict. One stakeholder mentioned cases being brought to consulates where 'parents have lost contact with their children'.

For other students some carry the expectations of their family to Australia to be high achieving, and earn good money. This pressure to "make their family proud", as identified through the stakeholder interviews, can lead to negative wellbeing factors such as stress, sleeplessness, poor diet and impacts their ability to develop relationships with other people while in Sydney.

This was also reflected within the online survey. International students were asked to nominate their main concerns before and after arrival. "Doing well academically" was one of the top three concerns before arrival and this remained a top three concerns after arrival. This is further illustrated within the figure below.

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[147] Thomson, G. Rosenthal, D. & Russell J. (2006). Cultural Stress among International Students at an Australian University. Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, Australia, p.10.

[148] Williams, C.T., & Johnson, L.R. (2011) Why can't we be friends? Multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35: 41-48, p.41.

Q9 vs. Q10

Main Concerns

■ Before Arrival (responses=1604; respondents=600) ■ After Arrival (responses=1537; respondents=599)

Being able to speak and write English was also an important factor to a positive transition experience for students. The results from the online survey demonstrate that speaking English was more of a key concern for students before arriving in Sydney (25%) compared to after arriving in Sydney (17%). Students were also asked to indicate what they thought of their spoken and written English skills generally. As shown in the following figure, respondents were more likely to feel that their written English skills are 'good; (45% n=272), compared to their spoken English (41% n=245).

FIGURE 13: SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH SKILLS

Q59 vs. Q60 (n=603)

■ Spoken English ■ Written English
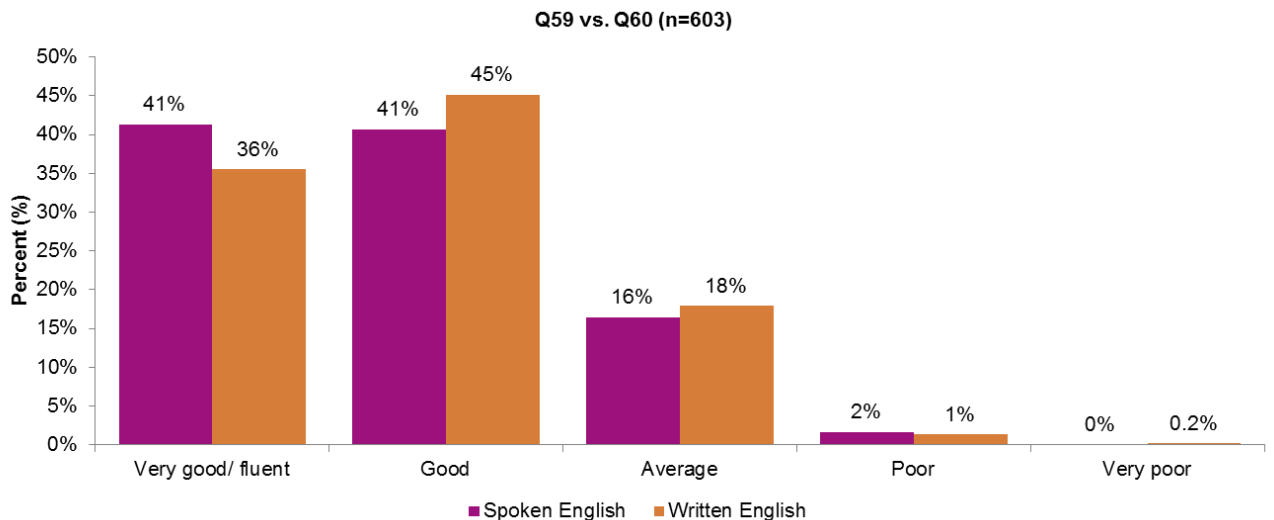
One stakeholder that represented an international student service noted that of the 10 clients with which they met within a given week, "40% require an interpreter". Another stakeholder noted that some students come to Australia to learn the English language, and that these students in particular are more 'vulnerable' and 'shy'.

Students within the focus groups as well as the student interviews spoke of the impact not 'knowing' or 'understanding' the English language can have on their wellbeing. Some quotes from students within the focus groups included:

"Australian slang is often hard to interpret… there should be a pocket book guide that provides a list of Australian slang and their meanings for international students to use"'

"Would be great to get more help with Aussie slang and accents at the beginning"

"I think learning English before I come to Australia was better as it helped me at school, on transport, to know where to find accommodation"

"Sometimes I feel I am left out or behind because I do not understand what is happening in my class…"

"Australian students do not want to work with international students because they have poor English"

International students can feel constrained by not being able to be as articulate as they are in their own language and it is recognised that some students require more help than others with language skills, particularly when it comes to their studies.

Lack of English proficiency was seen by stakeholders as creating a knowledge gap, such as comprehension of sexual health, understanding legal documentation, gaining employment and understanding Australian culture. As one stakeholder asserts:

"…language barriers are a big hurdle to overcome…" leading to international students feeling "excluded from society"

5.1.3   Public transport is expensive and can be difficult to access

Public transportation is seen as key to the living experience of international students in Sydney. Interviews undertaken with educational institution representatives highlighted the negative impact of the cost of transport on the wellbeing of international students.

"Public transport is not only not accessible late at night for many international students… it is also very costly… if I struggle with paying $50 a week how are international students meant to get by…"

This sentiment was also expressed by international students within the focus groups.

"…there are no travel concessions currently for international students like there are for Australian students… why can't we get treated like first class citizens?"

"Public transport is really expensive – sometimes I wish I had chosen Brisbane"

Generally, the cost of public transport is not something a student considers until after they arrive in Sydney and experience it for the first time. Some students noted paying in the region of $500 a semester on public transport. One stakeholder highlighted an example of how such costs impacted a student living in Parramatta:

"…one student I know has said to me that they have had to choose between eating well or paying for public transport to get to class…"

Further, students noted the challenges of getting home later at night and the need to use taxis or Ubers which were more expensive, because public transport was not available.

As noted within the City of Sydney International Education Provider Forum "Much can be done to assist and support international students in their quest for knowledge and a better way of life… One of the key messages is that we must collaborate and work together to ensure the information we provide is accessible and appropriate and is available to support these students

in obtaining accommodation, getting job and dealing with stress and anxiety. There is an opportunity to fix legislative matters..."[149]

5.2   Housing and accommodation

Having access to adequate and affordable housing and accommodation is identified as a key contributor to the overall wellbeing of international students. Of the 603 students that participated in the online survey, the majority of respondents (73%, n=440) lived in rental accommodation (flat, apartment, townhouse or house) with the second most common type of accommodation being 'student accommodation/purpose built student accommodation' (15% n=88).

Students who were satisfied with their accommodation were more likely to feel better emotionally.

> Gender: Female respondents were more likely to report having experienced negative issues compared with male respondents.

> Satisfaction with accommodation was higher than average for students between 24-35 years of age. 18-23 year olds were least likely to be satisfied with their current accommodation.

> Country of birth: Brazilian students were most likely to report satisfaction with current accommodation. Ratings were also high amongst Indian and Malaysian students. Chinese and Nepalese students were less likely to report satisfaction.

> Length of stay in Australia: On average, students who have been in Australia for less than six months were less likely to be satisfied with accommodation.

> Type of education institution: TAFE students were less likely to report satisfaction with their current accommodation compared with VET and HED students.

5.2.1   Finding suitable housing and accommodation is challenging, particularly on first arrival

An immediate requirement of international students when arriving in Sydney is finding appropriate accommodation. However, as identified by the majority of stakeholders and particularly those representing the housing sector finding suitable and affordable accommodation is challenging. Stakeholders said that:

"International students often arrive and have nowhere to live, don't know who to trust and don't know about laws around renting"

"The high cost of living in Sydney impacts greatly on the type and adequacy of housing for international students"

As highlighted within the literature, international students in Australia are forced to rely on private rental accommodation more than their counterparts in the USA, UK, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia[150]. This not only impacts on cost but also on potentially poorer housing conditions such as cleanliness and space.

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[149] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.9.

[150] Burke, T. (2015) Does Australia Have a Competitive Disadvantage in Student Accommodation? Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia, p. 3.

Stakeholders representing student accommodation and educational institutions generally noted that accommodation for students often provides little privacy, lack of bathroom and kitchen facilities as well as limited opportunities for socialising. As one stakeholder stated:

"International students can be particularly vulnerable to being ripped off by landlords and all students really need help with housing exploitation"

Satisfaction with accommodation was lower for students who live in the City compared to other LGAs*.

For international students in Australia, dependence on the private rental sector has resulted in their becoming increasingly subject to "exploitation and rent gouging"[151] by unscrupulous landlords, and targets of online accommodation scams involving false and misleading advertising of accommodations.

The high cost of accommodation is also identified as challenging. Many students have to find employment to be able to afford accommodation but are restricted to work only 20 hours per week, as one stakeholder noted "the high cost of accommodation works against living on this income". As one student stated within an interview:

"…prices are very expensive, cheaper places are unclean"

Students that participated in the focus groups and interviews generally indicated that they researched housing and accommodation options prior to arriving in Sydney. This provided them with an idea on cost and location to Sydney CBD and their place of study. Some participants also noted that they relied on family and friends that had studied or live in Sydney to assist in locating housing. The preparedness of students in understanding and navigating the housing market in Sydney prior to arriving was also demonstrated in findings from the online survey.

Students were asked to indicate the level of difficulty they encountered finding accommodation when arriving in Sydney. The following figure shows that:

> over half (57% n=341) of respondents indicated that finding accommodation upon arrival in Sydney was 'a little' or 'not at all' difficult

> approximately 20% of respondents stated finding accommodation was either 'very' (n=76) or 'extremely' (n=46) difficult.

Students living with homestay families were least likely to report negative issues and more likely to be satisfied with their current accommodation. Students living in purpose-built student accommodations or rentals were most likely to report experiencing negative issues with where they currently live and least likely to be satisfied.

[151] Burke, T. (2015) Does Australia Have a Competitive Disadvantage in Student Accommodation? Melbourne: International Education Association of Australia, p.6.

Q12 (n=603)
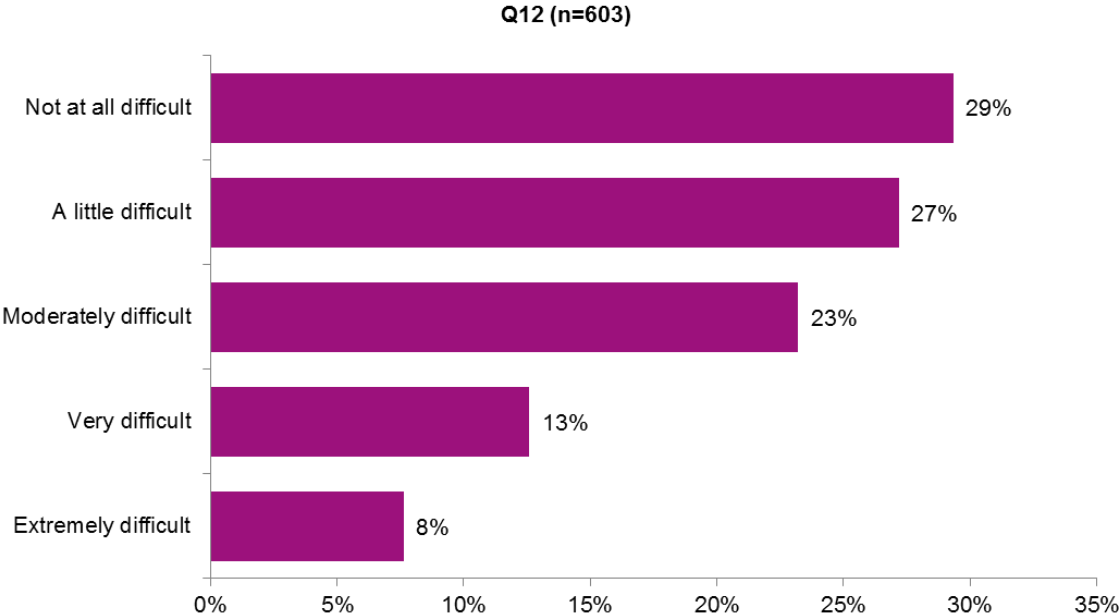
As noted within the City of Sydney International Education Provider Forum "A high degree of unauthorised or illegal accommodation impacts on the students' wellbeing as it is substandard and often a heath and fire risk…The Homestay housing option is a win-win option. It is great for the international student as it allows them to integrate and learn Australia cultural nuances and way of life as well as learn about such matters as catching public transport and getting a job…"[152]

Students were also asked whether they had received any help or advice (information/financial) to find a place to live. 55% (n=334) indicated receiving some form of support. Respondents that identified that they received some form of support (information/financial) were then asked to specify the source of assistance. This is outlined within the following figure.

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[152] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.5.
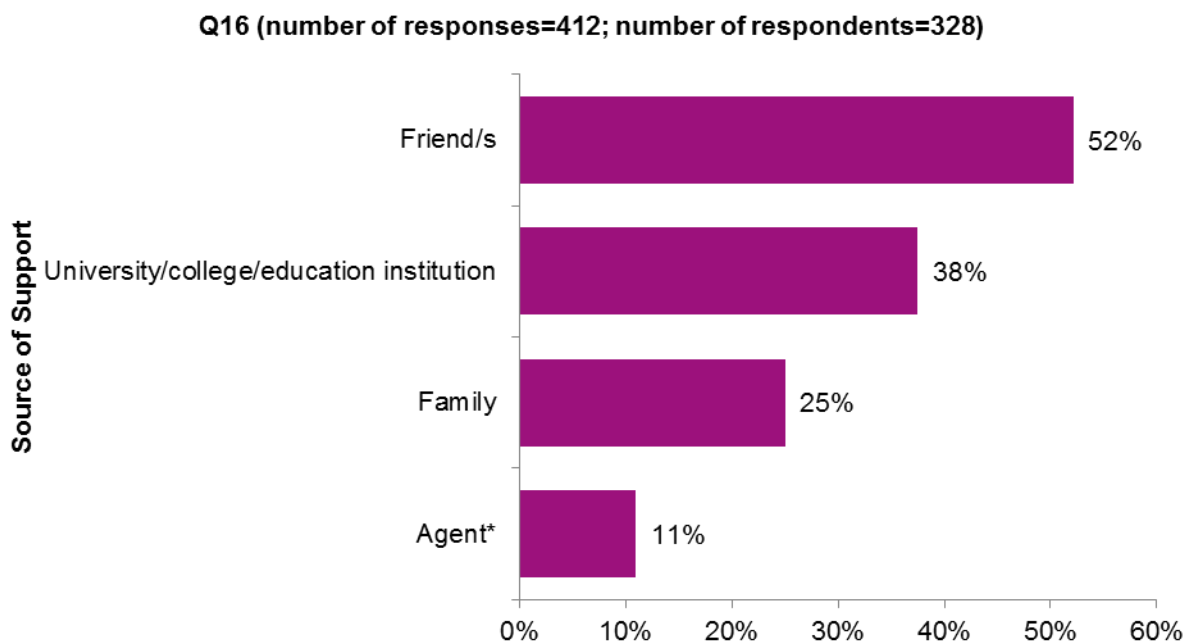
Q16 (number of responses=412; number of respondents=328)

* Given the popularity of 'Agent' as a specification under the 'Other' category, 'Agent' has been added to the original set of categories.

** Where respondents specified alternative sources of support under the 'other' category' and these included staff based at education institutions, these responses were added to the 'university/college/education institution' category.

Assistance was most likely to be given by friends (52% responses=171), followed by assistance from the education institution or its staff** (38% responses=123).

Degree of difficulty with finding initial accommodation was lower for students who had support upon arrival in Australia.

> Age: Students younger than 30 years of age reported less difficulty in finding their initial place of accommodation compared to students who were 30-35 years of age.

> Country of birth: On average, Malaysian and Nepalese students experienced more difficulty with initial accommodation. Chinese and Brazilian students reported less difficulty on average.

> Type of education institution: HED and ELICOS students were more likely to have experienced difficulty finding initial accommodation. VET students were least likely to have had trouble in this regard.

These responses were further investigated within the focus groups and interviews with students. Overall, students felt that they could trust friends or other students more so than other sources such as educational institutions and agents for information on finding appropriate accommodation. As some students discussed within a focus group:

"…information is generally hard to get on housing… if you are not in student accommodation at a university trying to work out the rental market and your rights is hard…"

"… I didn't know I had to have bond or deposit even before I moved in… I had no friends to tell me…"

Another two students that participated within an interview also noted the difficulties with the lack of support and appropriate information provided by education providers.

"I went to my college to ask for some support finding accommodation and all I got was a whole lot of paper… some of it not even correct"

"How are people working at university meant to understand the struggle of student housing when they haven't lived it themselves…"

5.2.2 Although accommodation is expensive, international students consider Sydney to be a desirable place to study and live

It was noted by another stakeholder that whilst some students are met with financial struggles, most students cope by "living to suit their budgets" and do not generally complain about the cost of accommodation.

Finding affordable accommodation means living away from Sydney CBD, with some students travelling considerable distances to their educational institutions, as identified within the online survey (62% living in suburbs outside the City LGA). One stakeholder details that students from developing countries generally did not mind travelling over long distances from place of accommodation to their education institution, as long as they were able to have a room to themselves.

Another stakeholder notes that for some students living in the City was important to them despite the cost, "the most urban experience is a cool one – fairly expensive but good experience".

FIGURE 16: SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT ACCOMMODATION

Q28 (n=603)
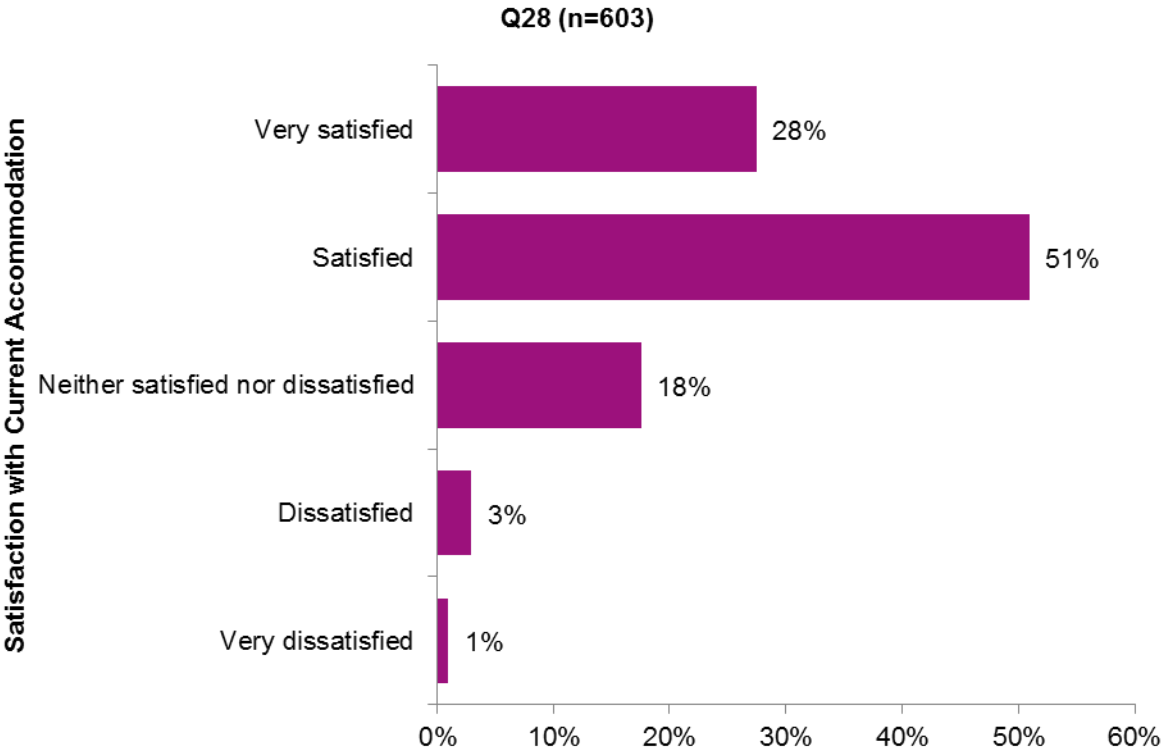
Those students that stated difficulty in finding accommodation when first arriving in Sydney were then asked why this was. The majority of respondents indicated cost of accommodation (82% responses=98) being the primary cause of difficulty, followed by housing availability in the desired area (52%, responses=62).

Q13 (number of responses=235; number of respondents=120)
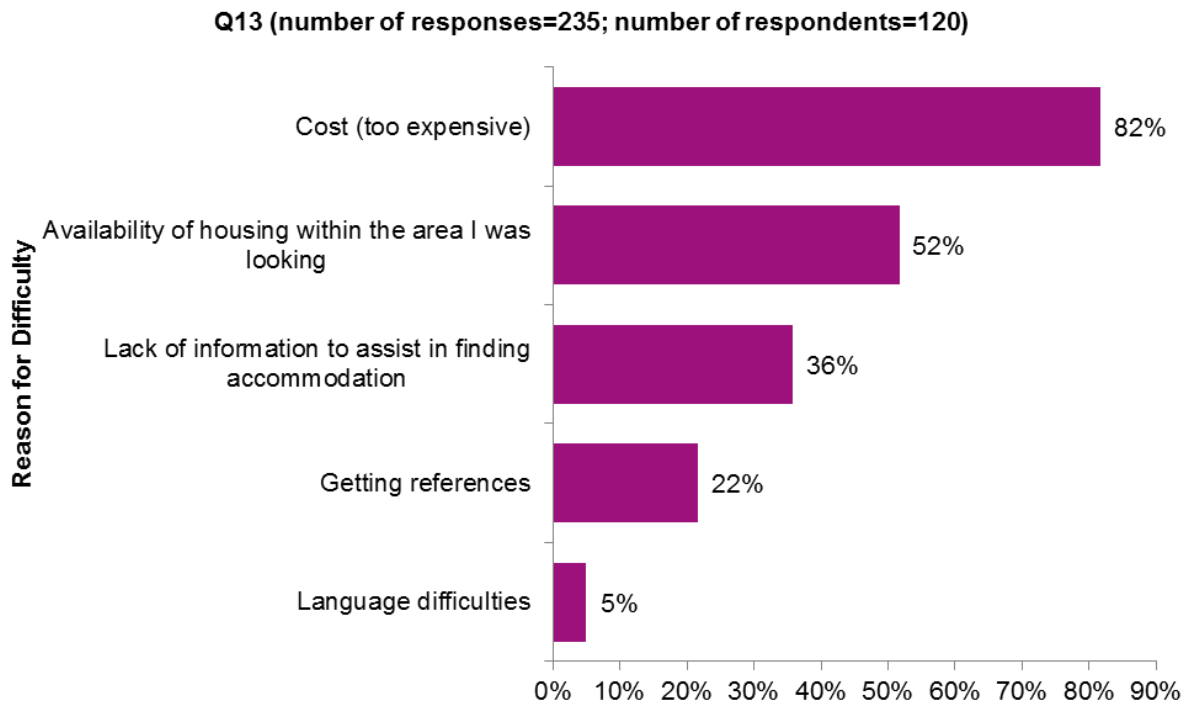
As part of the online survey, students were also asked to comment on the treatment of their housing provider (family they live with, university/housing provider or landlord). Although the literature indicates a number of factors such as cleanliness and cost as impacting on liveability standards within international student housing, the online survey found that approximately 90% of students indicated being treated well by their housing provider (as a key determinant on liveability standards). This finding was consistent across all three types of accommodation providers: homestay families (100% n=30); university/housing providers (92% n=81); and landlords (92% n=401).

Some of the concerns of those students that stated that they had not been treated well by their housing provider or landlord are outlined in the following figure.

FIGURE 18: CONCERNS OF STUDENTS THAT INDICATED THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN TREATED WELL BY THEIR LANDLORD
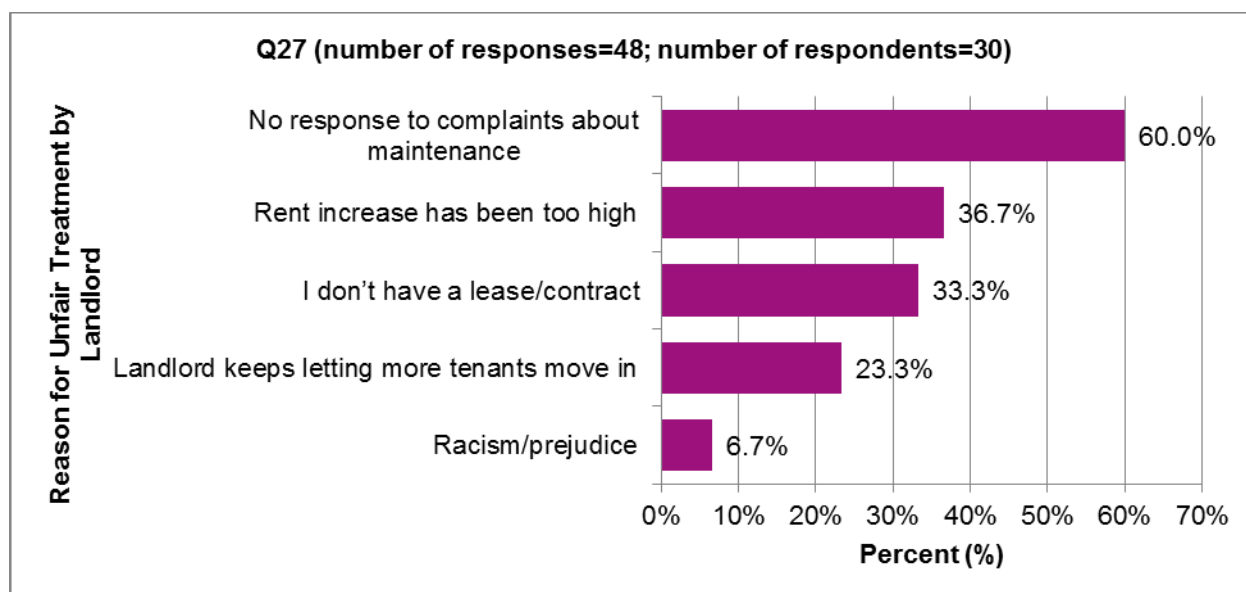
Q27 (number of responses=48; number of respondents=30)

Of those respondents who indicated not being treated well by the owners of their accommodation, the majority were in private rentals. Students who live in private rentals were most likely to identify landlords' lack of response to complaints about maintenance as the primary factor contributing to unfair treatment (60% responses=18), followed by unfair rent increases (37% responses=11).

5.2.3 Overcrowding and cleanliness of housing impacts on the overall wellbeing and initial experience of studying in Sydney

As discussed within the literature, there a number of challenges to not only the pressures of appropriate accommodation and associated costs, but also around living conditions such as overcrowding and cleanliness. Research has shown that overcrowding within student accommodation can also cause significant fire hazards[153].

The City established a dedicated team in 2015, to investigate the illegal, short-term rental market, uncovered massive overcrowding, illegal building works, and fire safety defects[154].

The online survey asked students who they lived with. The following figure shows that respondents were most likely to live with family members or partners (29% n=174) and were least likely to live with a homestay family (4% n=26).

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[153] Olding, R. (2014) 'Students living in shipping containers, cubicles and a toilet'. *Sydney Morning Herald*. July 4. Ong, D. & Ramia, G. (2009) Study-work-life balance and the welfare of international students, *Labour and Industry*, 20(2): 181-206. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/students-living-in-shipping-containers-cubicles-and-a-toilet-20140704-zsvo6.html

[154] Han E. (2015) 'Illegal accommodation: City of Sydney cracks down on black market syndicates'. *Sydney Morning Herald*. June 17. Avalable at : http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/illegal-accommodation-city-of-sydney-cracks-down-on-black-market-syndicates-20150615-gho8ie.html

Q11 (n=603)
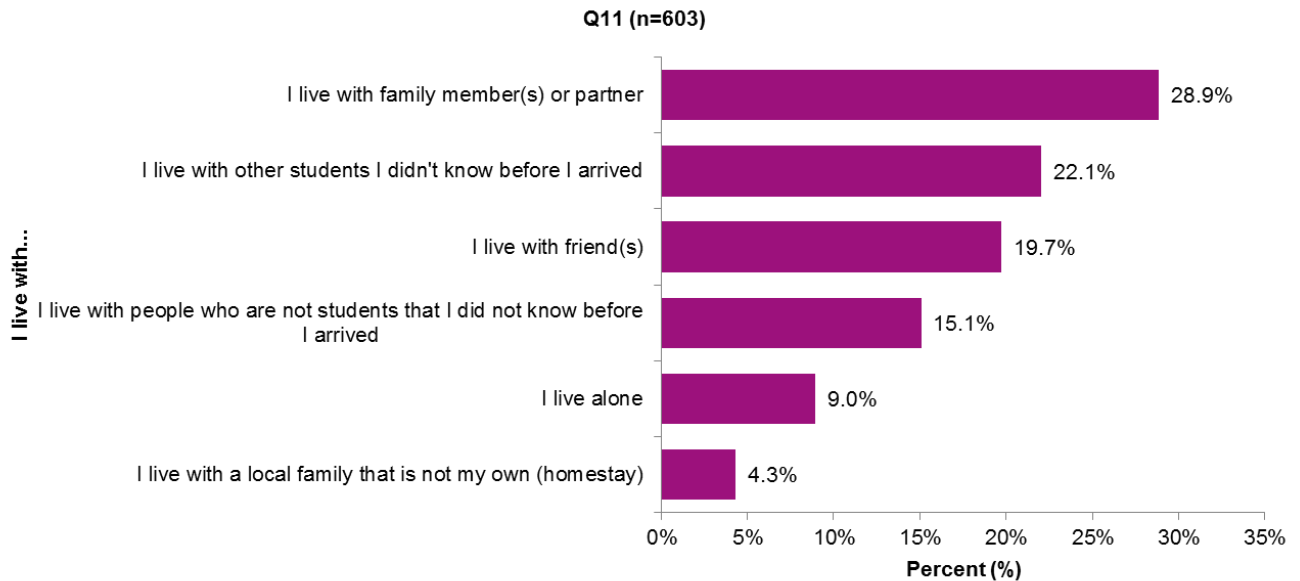
Further, students that indicated that they had experienced negative issues with accommodation (current and previous) were asked to nominate what these issues were. The cleanliness of accommodation as well as overcrowding and building maintenance rated highly. The results are outlined in the following figure.

FIGURE 20: NEGATIVE ISSUES WITH ACCOMMODATION - CURRENT VS. PREVIOUS

Q18 vs. Q19
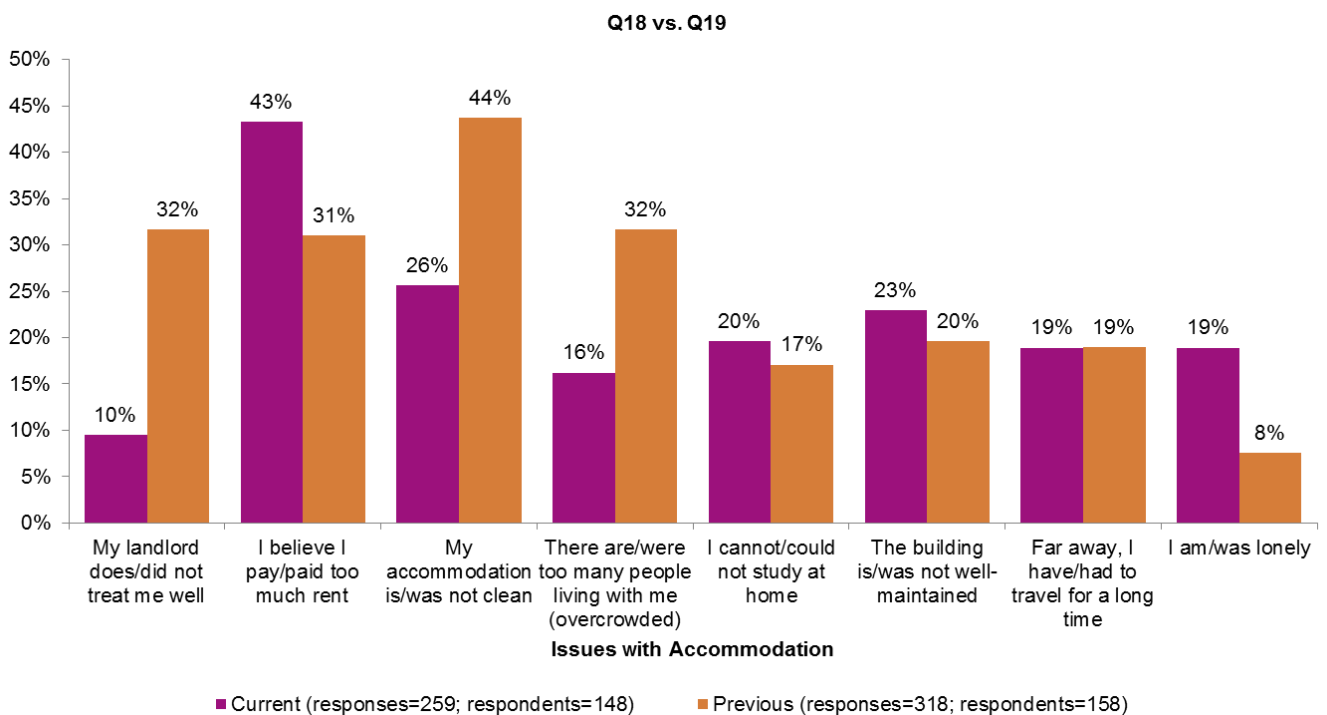
These findings were also noted within the focus group, as two students noted:

"…I had most issues with my accommodation when I first arrived… I had up to eight people living with me and it was never clean…"

"…sometimes having too many people in a house can act as a deterrent to socialising as you want to get out of the house as there is no room…"

Communication around housing options was also identified as an issue for international students with "no real communication links" between landlords and potential tenants (stakeholder interview). Students generally looked online prior to arriving in Sydney to investigate potential housing options and locations.

As identified by the City there is a prevalence of a "high degree" of substandard unauthorised or illegal accommodation in the private rental sector which are not only expensive, but pose risks to students' safety[155].

Stakeholders representing the housing sector identified the need to work towards changing the perception of the types of housing international students live in. For example, having international students as tenants for Airbnb properties was seen as an area of opportunity.

"…if a host gives clear house rules, international students are generally respectful of that"

Two examples provided by stakeholders included:

1. Finding homestays that are closer to the City

2. Older people living by themselves in City suburbs potentially charging lower accommodation rates to international students in return for company and light errands.

There may also be opportunity to investigate a link between international students volunteering for the City to deliver services that cater to the elderly e.g. delivering meals as part of the City's meals on wheels service. An initiative such as this could not only provide opportunities for students to interact with Australians and learn English but also provide social interaction for elderly people.

5.3 Finance and employment

A key impact on the wellbeing of international students in Sydney is the cost of living. This was identified within the literature, stakeholder interviews and online survey with international students. As the research reveals, first-generation international students are more likely than other students to be 'culturally, academically, and financially disadvantaged', and that due to this disadvantage they are more prone to face a 'more problem-beset experience' when studying abroad[156].

5.3.1 International students are concerned about financial security

Overall, stakeholders recognised that the wellbeing of international students is related to financial security. It was noted that some students bring "lots of money" with them, while others have to rely on employment to cover their cost of living. The following figure shows the main sources of income for international students that participated in the online survey.

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[155] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.9.

[156] Reddon, E (2015) 'Are international students satisfied?'. *The Australian,* 22 August, p.1. Available at: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/are-international-students-satisfied/news-story/7214486c0fe51bcf1fbea4d2bb6b670a

Q29 (n=603)
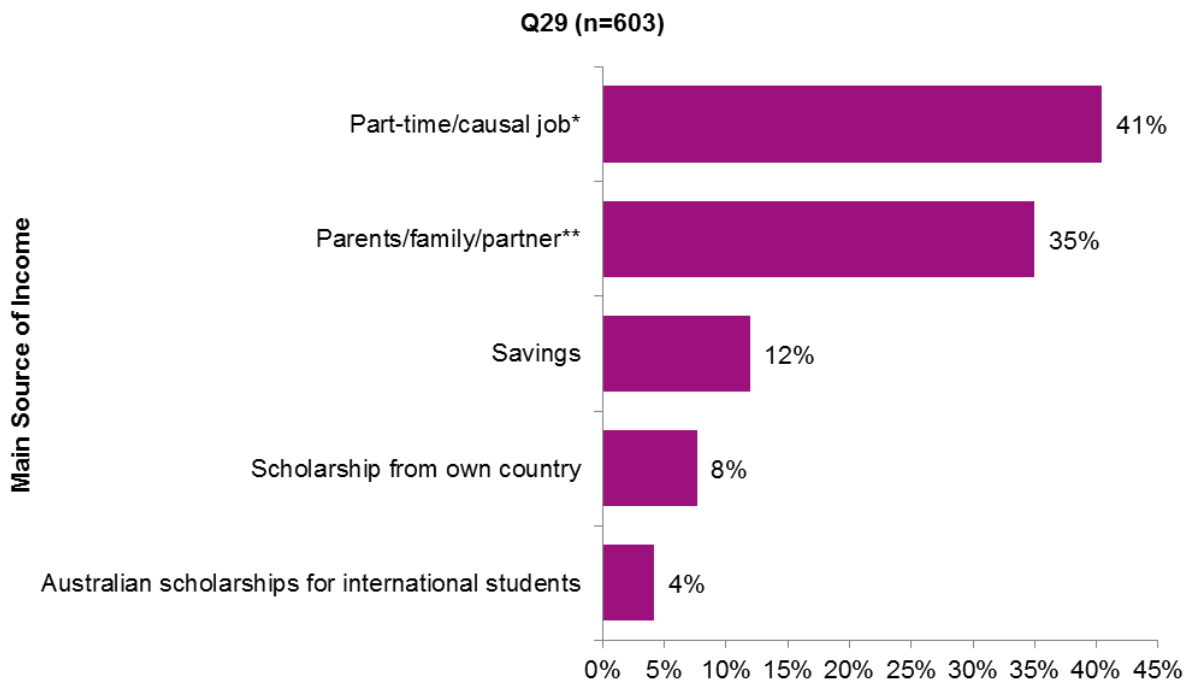
A total of 41% of respondents (n=244) identified a part time /casual job as being their main source of income. While 35% of respondents (n=211) relied on income from family members or partners to support their stay in Australia.

Stakeholders identified the following financial impacts that contribute to the wellbeing of international students:

> not having the skills or experiences to be able to budget effectively

> not being provided with the same scholarship opportunities as Australian students

> natural disasters in home countries (for example the Nepal earthquake) resulting in families no longer being able to send money over

> restriction on work hours (20 hours per week)

> high housing costs, even as part housing provided by universities.

5.3.2 A number of international students need to work in order to live and study in Sydney

The need for some international students to work and earn money to live in Sydney can impact on their overall experience of their stay. As one stakeholder (an ex-international student) noted:

"… Earning and saving money means you have to make sacrifices… and only having time to study or work can lead to a decline in health or a downward spiral for the individual"

Another stakeholder representing a government body described the need for international students to work to live in Sydney as a potentially "negative cycle". This is shown where international students require money to cover the high costs of living in Sydney, so they need to find employment, which then has a 'knock-on' effect on their studies. The stakeholder went on to say that this can result in courses being failed, and students then having to pay additional fees.

Students involved in the focus groups also discussed the impact of working on their social lives, specifically around engaging with other students and Australians in "extra-curricular activities" such as surfing, BBQs, hiking and attending City events.

Further more serious implications for the impact of financial stress on wellbeing arising from the stakeholder interviews include anecdotal stories on international students engaging in sex work to help finance their stay in Sydney and not knowing who to turn to when financial or employment difficulties arise. As one stakeholder noted:

"…not knowing where to seek help with finances can lead to deep feelings of stress and isolation… international students don't tend to reach out to people back home… as often their families have saved for so long for them to be here"

As part of the online survey, students identified the following as the main reason/s for working.

FIGURE 22: MAIN REASON FOR WORKING
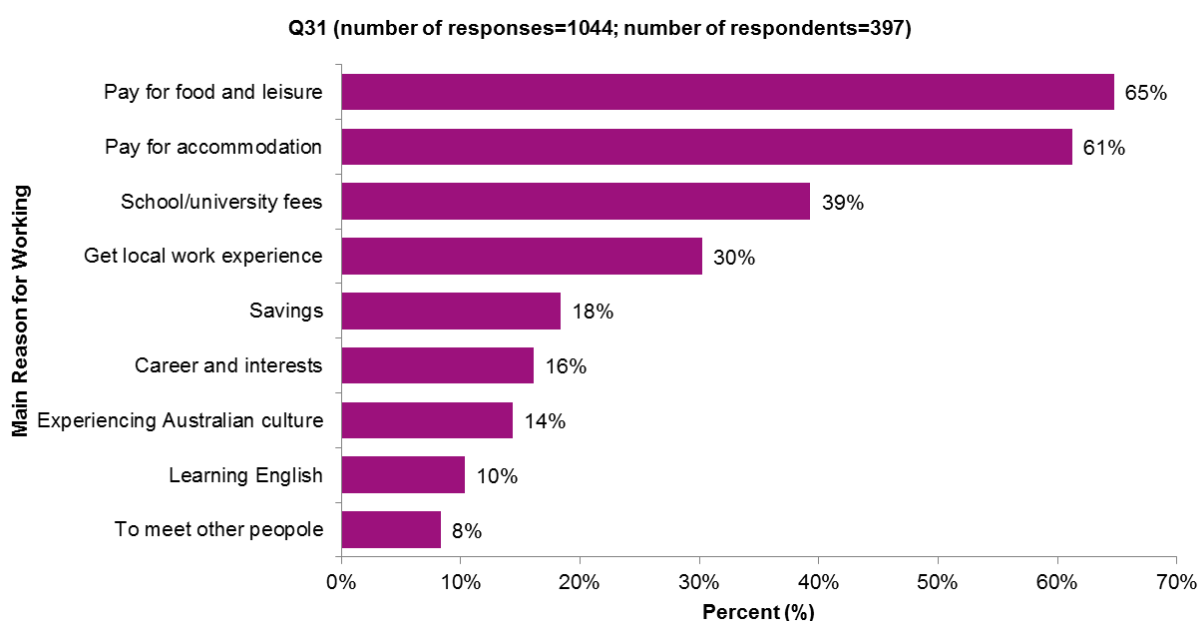
Q31 (number of responses=1044; number of respondents=397)

Most respondents identified paying for food and leisure activities (65% responses=257), and paying for accommodation (61% responses=243) as their main reasons for working.

5.3.3 International students are vulnerable to exploitation by employers

Many international students will have little or no knowledge of their rights in the work-place and could face serious exploitation as a result. Their vulnerability is also compounded by their lack of skills and their indiscriminate need to find employment, which may expose them to exploitative employers. As is the case with tenancy rights, students are often not aware of their rights as employees. This was evident within the discussion undertaken with students as part of the focus group and interview engagement phase of the research. As one student highlighted:

"…when I first came to Australia I had some savings but my studies are for a number of years so I needed to get a job… I didn't know how many hours I could work and I didn't know how much I should expect for pay…it would be good to receive more correct information on my working rights"

A stakeholder interviewee estimated that of the 60% of international students who work in Sydney, 40% will have employment related issues. General work related issues for international students identified by a variety of stakeholders included:

> underpayment or non-payment

> discrimination in the workplace

> low wages and long hours

> having to engage in menial work

> unfair employment conditions.

Stakeholders identify that employment stakes for some students are high, for example even if they do not like the working conditions "students take the job anyway as they have to support themselves", and that "for every one international student who rejects a job, there are 10 more to take the job". This can lead to potential unfair treatment, where students are regarded as "disposable" by employers.

Another key issue identified by both stakeholders and international students who participated in the focus groups and interviews, is the visa restriction on the amount of hours that can be worked. It was noted that this can result in students working additional hours thereby breaching visa conditions and as a result leading to exploitation by their employer, forcing students to undertake more hours for less money with students fearful of reporting this exploitation in case they are deported for breaching the conditions of their student visa. As one student in the focus group said:

"… I need to work more than 20 hours a week… I get paid so badly that 12 hour days are normal for me… working so much does mean I get less time to study and see my friends"

A focus of the online survey was to gain a greater insight and understanding of work conditions and treatment. A total of 66% of respondents (n=397) indicated that they currently or have previously undertaken paid work in Sydney. The following figure outlines student responses to their overall satisfaction with the place within which they work/ed.

FIGURE 23: OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH PLACES OF WORK
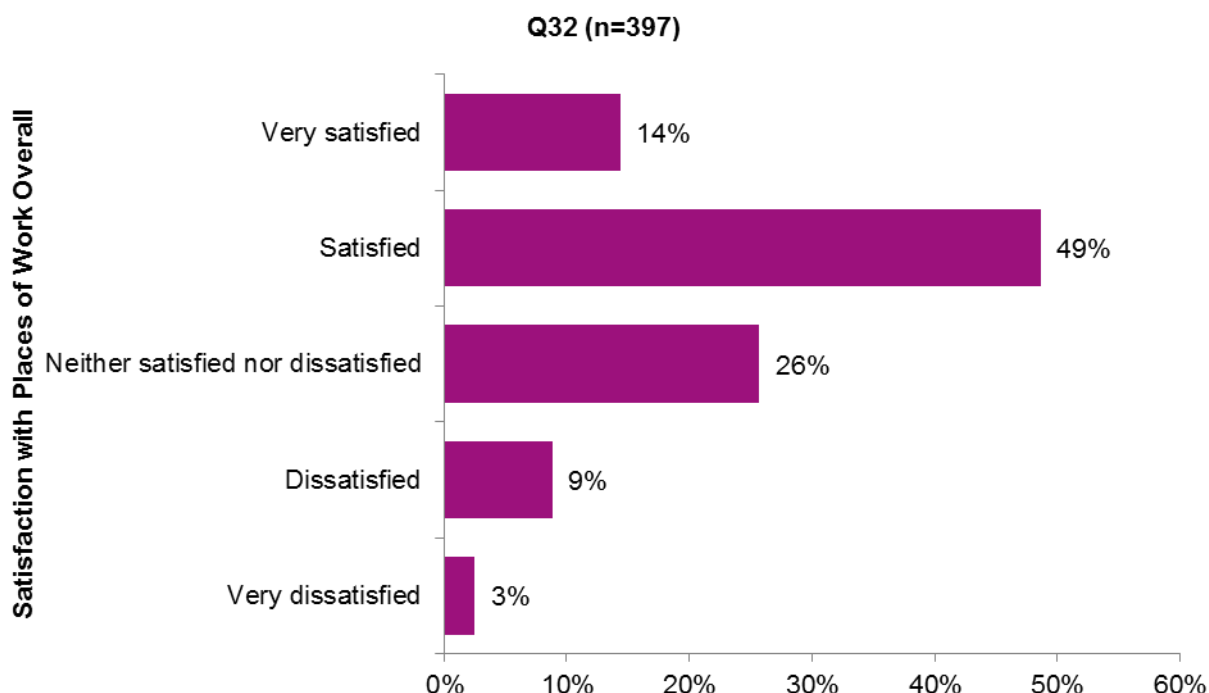
63% of respondents indicated they were satisfied (n=193) or very satisfied (n=57) with their workplaces and approximately a quarter of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (n=102).

Students that indicated they were not satisfied with the places in which they currently or previously worked, were then asked to nominate reasons why they were not satisfied.

Students who were satisfied with their workplaces reported being of good emotional health. This trend reversed for students who were not satisfied with their workplaces.

Satisfaction with workplace was higher amongst students who have been treated fairly as an employee.

> Age: 18-23 year-olds were more likely to be satisfied with their workplace compared to 24-35 year-olds.

> Country of birth: Indian students were more likely to be satisfied with their workplace compared to Chinese and Brazilian students.

> Type of education institution: ELICOS (highest) and HED students were more likely to report satisfaction with workplaces compared with TAFE (least) and VET students.

The top two factors contributing to dissatisfaction were:

> not being paid well (78% responses=35)

> not enjoying the type of work (53% responses=24).

FIGURE 24: REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH WORKPLACE

Q33 (number of responses=101; number of respondents=45)
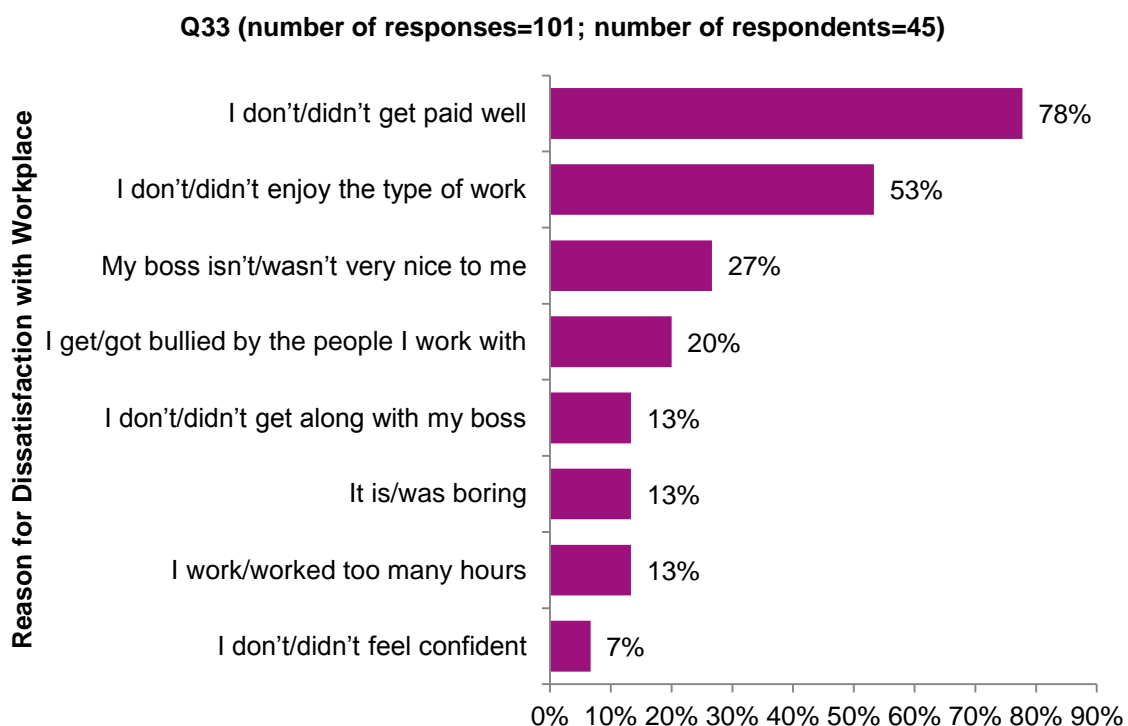
Further, students were asked to think about how they are or were treated at work. The majority of students reported being treated fairly (82% n=325). The 18% of respondents (n=72) who indicated they were not being treated fairly at work were asked to identify the reasons for unfair treatment with the following results.
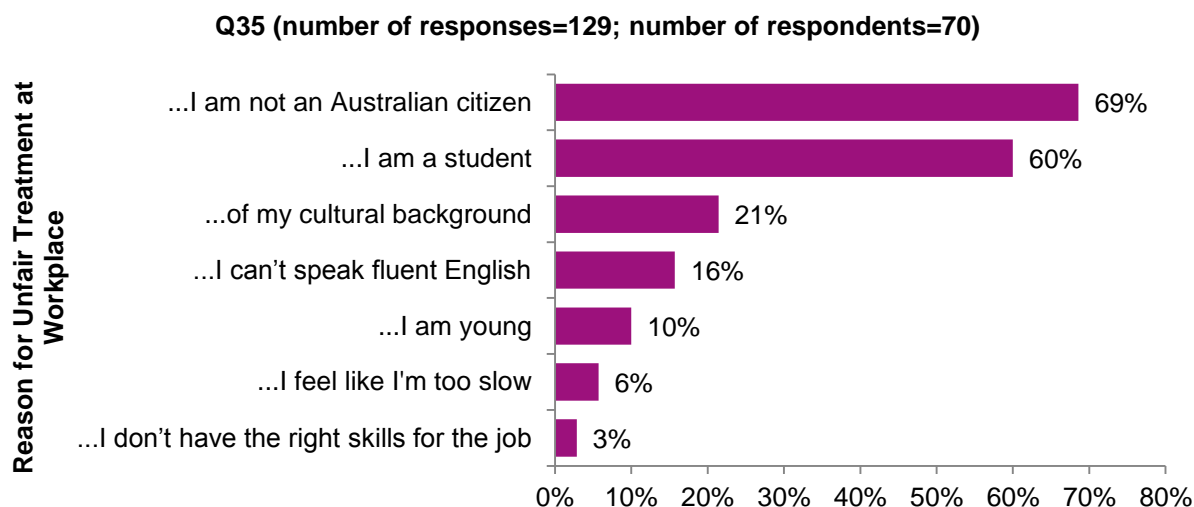
Q35 (number of responses=129; number of respondents=70)

The most common reasons identified were: not being an Australian citizen (69% responses=48) and being a student (60% responses=42). This further highlights the potential impact on wellbeing and the division between international and Australian students that study and work.

The literature also highlights the fraudulent practices undertaken by employers, including doctoring payrolls and rosters[157], providing students with "food" payments or payment in the form of accommodation[158]; working students between 40 and 70 hours a week[159]; students receiving no penalty rates and being denied breaks on shifts lasting up to 16 hours[160]; and receiving as little as $8 an hour in wages, when the Australian minimum wage is double this amount[161].

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[157] Ferguson, A., Danckert, S. & Toft, K (2015) '7-Eleven: Investigation exposes shocking exploitation of convenience store workers'. *Sydney Morning Herald,* 29 August, p.3. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/7eleven-investigation-exposes-shocking-exploitation-of-convenience-store-workers-20150828-gja276.html

[158] Peake, R. (2015) 'International students in Canberra combine to fight exploitation'. *Canberra Times*, 28 September, *p.2.* Available at: http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/international-students-in-canberra-combine-to-fight-exploitation-20150924-gjtz6q.html

[159] McNeilage, A (2015) 'International students forced to work for just $8 an hour', *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, p.1. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/international-students-forced-to-work-for-just-8-an-hour-20150116-12rwuo.html

[160] Ferguson et al., '7-Eleven: Investigation exposes shocking exploitation of convenience store workers', pp. 1-3. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/7eleven-investigation-exposes-shocking-exploitation-of-convenience-store-workers-20150828-gja276.html

[161] McNeilage, A (2015) 'International students forced to work for just $8 an hour', *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, p.1. Available at: http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/international-students-forced-to-work-for-just-8-an-hour-20150116-12rwuo.html.

Ratings of feeling well emotionally were lower amongst respondents who reported being treated unfairly at work*.

> Age: 18-23 year-olds were most likely to report being treated well at the workplace.

> Country of birth: Chinese students were less likely to report being treated fairly at work. On average, Nepalese and Brazilian students were more likely to report fair treatment.

> Length of stay in Australia: Students who have been living in Australia between one to two years were less likely on average to report being treated fairly at work*. Students whose stay has been six months to a year in duration were most likely to report fair treatment.

> Type of education institution: On average, TAFE students were less likely to report being treated unfairly at work.

5.4 Safety and crime

International student consider safety as an important deciding factor when studying abroad. Research has shown that international students perceive Australia as a 'safe' study destination[162].

Feeling safe night:
> Age: 18-23 year-olds were least likely to feel safe when walking in the City at night, whilst again, 30-35 year olds were most likely feel safe.

    On average, 18-29 year old students were less likely to feel safe when catching public transport at night compared with students aged 30-35 years.

> Country of birth: Students from Brazil were much more likely on average to feel safe when walking in the City at night. Feelings of safety amongst Chinese students were lower than the average.

    Students from Brazil were again much more likely on average to feel safe when catching public transport at night. Feelings of safety amongst Chinese, Malaysian, and Nepalese students were lower than average.

> Length of stay in Australia: Students who have been living in Australia between 6-12 months were most likely to feel safe in the City at night. Students who have been living in Australia for five years or more were least likely to feel safe in the City at night, with feelings of safety trending downward between these two length-of-stay categories *.

    Safety ratings were once more highest amongst students who have been living in Australia between 6-12 months. Feelings of safety thereafter decreases across length-of-stay categories, such that students who have been living in Australia for five years or more were least likely to feel safe catching public transport at night.

> Type of education institution: ELICOS and TAFE students were most likely to feel safe when walking in the City at night.

    ELICOS and TAFE students were also more likely to feel safe catching public transport at night compared with HED and VET students.

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[162] Department of Education and Training (DET) (2015a) *International Student Survey 2014 Overview Report.* Canberra: Australian Government.

UTS:
IPPG

THE WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY

5.4.1 Sydney is generally considered a safe place to live for international students

The stakeholder interviews highlighted Sydney as a generally safe place for international students. Interviews undertaken with Police illustrated a number of engagement initiatives being undertaken to build trust with the international student community. These initiatives are particularly tailored towards those students that have not had a 'good' experience of police or government in their home countries. As one police representative said:

"Parents and communities in home countries hear about the interaction (between students and police) which builds their confidence in their child having a good experience while studying in Sydney"

As part of the online survey, students were asked a number of questions on how safe they felt in certain locations and situations. The following figure illustrates students' feeling of safety during the following times:

> walking through the City at day

> walking through the City at night

> catching public transport at day

> catching public transport at night.

FIGURE 26: SAFETY AROUND THE CITY OF SYDNEY
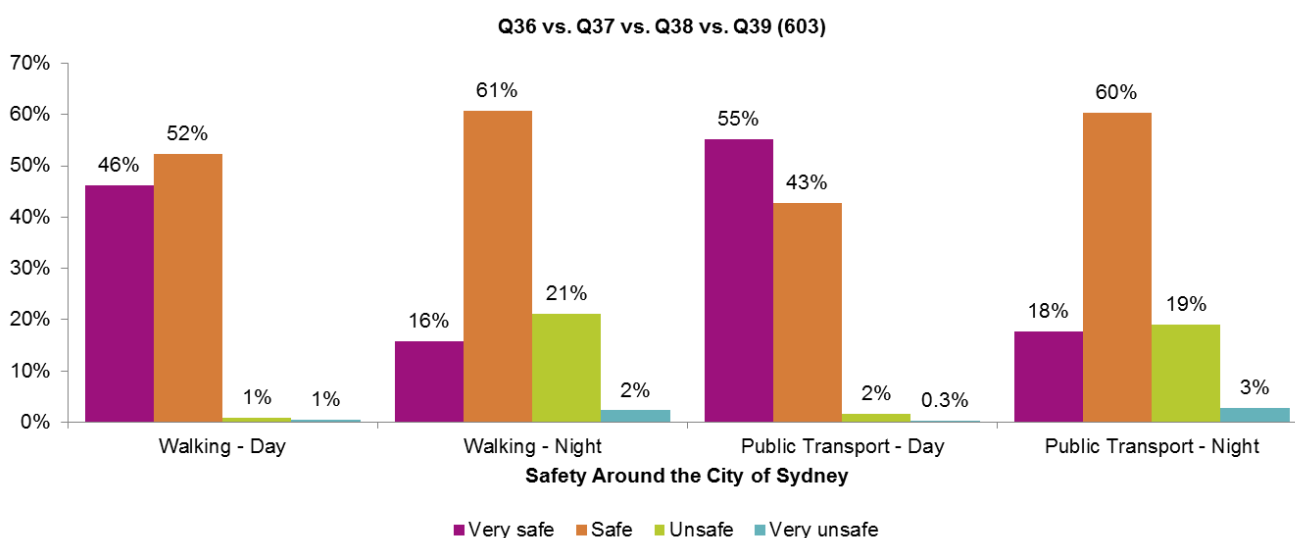
Overall, respondents indicated high levels of feeling 'very safe' walking and on public transport during the day and 'safe' walking and catching public transport at night. Respondents were most likely to indicate feeling 'very safe' when walking in the City LGA (46%, n=279) and catching public transport (43%, n=333) at day.

As part of the online survey, students were asked to look at a map of the City LGA and nominated locations in which they felt the most and least safe. The following figures provide a visual representation of the words most frequently mentioned by respondents. The size of each word represents how many times it was mentioned – the larger the word, the more times it was mentioned.

The perception of safety was also discussed within the focus groups. There was general consensus across both groups that students felt safe across the Sydney CBD. As one student said:

"I have always felt safe in Sydney"

Some students noted train stations and bus stops as spaces in which they felt least safe.

"… it is usually late at night… when I have to get public transport… some suburbs and bus stops can be fairly dark… I would prefer an Uber however it usually costs too much money"
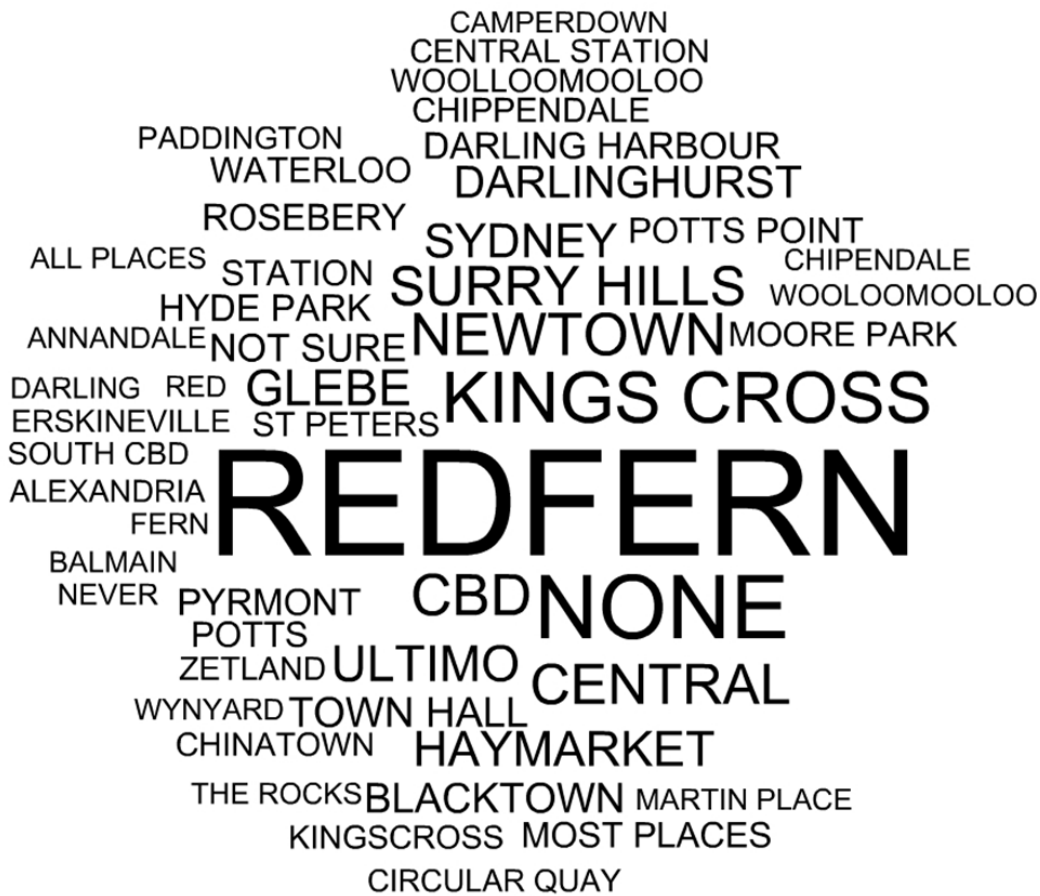
5.4.2 International students feel they can engage with Police

Research suggests that there is a perception amongst international students that owing to their status as 'non-citizens' and 'non-white people'[163], the police are less likely to help should they seek protection.

> **Feeling safe whilst walking in the City at night was lowest amongst students who were not comfortable with contacting the police*.**

As part of the online survey, students were asked, if they needed to, would they feel they could talk to or contact police. Approximately nine out of ten respondents (88%, n=532) felt that they could talk to or contact the police if necessary.

The reasons for the 12% (n=71) of students that said that they feel they cannot talk to or contact police are illustrated in the figure below.

The most common response involved uncertainty regarding how to talk to or contact the police (60% responses=39). However, one in four respondents (25% n=16) indicated being afraid to contact the police, whilst 22% (n=14) identify issues of trust as a reason for not communicating with the police.

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[163] Marginson, S., Nyland, C., Sawir, E., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2010) *International Student Security*. Cambridge: CUP, p.224.

Feeling safe whilst catching public transport at night was lowest amongst students who were not comfortable with <u>contacting the police</u>*.

> Age: 18-23 year-olds were least likely to feel that they could communicate with the police. 30-35 year olds were most likely to feel comfortable doing so.

> Country of birth: Nepalese and Brazilian students were more likely be at ease when communicating with the police. Chinese and Malaysian students were not as likely to feel this way.

> Length of stay in Australia: Students who have been living in Australia between 3-5 years were least likely to feel comfortable speaking with the police.

> Type of education institution: VET students were more likely on average to feel comfortable communicating with the police.

FIGURE 29: WHY STUDENTS FEEL THEY CAN NOT TALK TO OR CONTACT POLICE

Q43 (number of responses=69; number of respondents=65)

■ I am not sure how to talk to/contact Sydney police.

■ I am scared to talk to/contact Sydney police.

■ I don't trust Sydney police.
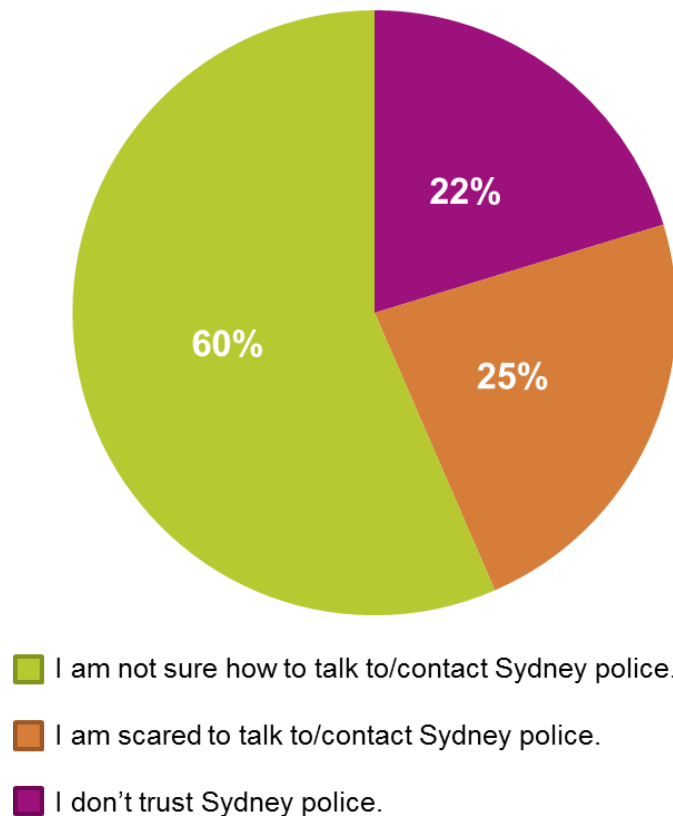
5.5 Social integration, isolation and discrimination

For many international students, experiencing and immersing themselves within the culture of the country in which they want to study is seen as something they generally look forward to[164].

5.5.1 Socially, international students are integrating well within their own networks

Social integration is important for international students arriving in Sydney, particularly if they have arrived on their own. Making friends and connecting with networks early is a key component to the overall positive experience of studying in Sydney. As one student stated within an interview:

"…you can get through a hard day if you can laugh it off with your friends… friends are very important…"

Stakeholders were asked to describe their understanding of international students' experience of integrating into the Australian culture. Stakeholders cited different examples of where international students are doing well socially, however this was mostly with people and students form their own countries or through consulate Facebook pages.

"…they connect to existing communities so that they have a point of reference that in turn helps with their wellbeing…"

This was further reflected by students who participated in the focus groups.

"…there are a number of Facebook pages that are started by people from my country… Brazil… and they are for Brazilian students to talk and chat online about things to do and catch up and meet ups"

Stakeholders and students alike recognised that many students don't necessarily have an established group of Australian friends. As one stakeholder noted:

"By the time they get settled in and are comfortable with surroundings, they have already made friends with students from home countries and by then it's too late to make domestic friends"

The literature also speaks to the difficulties for newly arrived international students connecting with domestic students, with the recognition that cross-cultural relationships between international students and local students are 'challenging and rare'[165]. Further research suggests that many international students seek friendships with other co-nationals so as to ensure that they are not socially isolated. Others tend towards co-national friendship groups as a way of embedding familiarity into an unfamiliar way of life in their host country[166].

Some students within the focus groups also discussed the differences between international students and their cultural backgrounds, believing that it is sometimes just as challenging to connect and socialise with other international students. One student said:

"Understanding cultures is important within the international student network, for example a Mexican greeting is very different to a Chinese greeting…"

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[164] Lawson, C. (2013) International higher education student satisfaction with accommodation in Australia. Canberra: Australian Education International, Australian Government

[165] Williams, C.T., & Johnson, L.R. (2011) Why can't we be friends? Multicultural attitudes and friendships with international students, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35: 41-48, p.41.

[166] Fincher, R. & Shaw, K. (2011) Enacting separate social worlds: 'international' and local students in public space in central Melbourne, *Geoforum*, 42: 539-549.

5.5.2 International students want to connect with local communities

Despite not regularly mixing with local communities, international students are perceived by stakeholders as wanting to connect with Australian students, as it enables them to 'learn about the country', 'learn English', and 'be part of the community'. One stakeholder said:

"International students have a real desire to connect with local people, but say that it is difficult to meet local people'

An international student that took part in an interview said:

"I attend a college where the majority of my class mates and also my teacher are not from Australia… it would be great to have more opportunities outside of class to meet Australians"

One stakeholder identified that opportunities for international students to mix Australian students don't happen often due to the 'bubble' of cultural groups and significant language barriers. For an English speaking student, it is easier to make Australian friends by "heading to the Uni bar" or attending events.

Australian students are also seen to have preconceived ideas about international students whom, as one stakeholder views, are "socially isolated on purpose", suggesting that "discrimination is so prominent that it is culturally accepted". This was also reflected within a focus group, where on international student said:

"…Australian students don't want to commit [to friendship]… as they see international students as only here for a period of time"

5.5.3 Sydney's culturally diverse community provides a platform to support and celebrate international students

Stakeholders spoke of the "rich fibre" and "melting pot" that is Sydney. The cultural diversity is formed by people who live, work, visit and study in the City, including international students. A couple of stakeholders suggested forming stronger partnerships or relationships between consulates and peak bodies that represent notable cultural groups in the City. As one stakeholder said:

"There are opportunities for the general public to understand more about international students, and why they are here and what they contribute to our local community"

Similarly, it was suggested there are a range of community groups could be a conduit between the City, consulates and international students that may assist with reaching out to students and connecting them with Australian cultural groups and activities that are associated with their cultural background. A stakeholder noted that Australia has a unique capacity to bring diverse people to share different views and experiences. This finding by stakeholders was mirrored within the discussions undertaken in the focus groups.

"Sydney is one of the most culturally diverse places in the world… even more than in Europe… this is one reason I wanted to come here… you can see the diversity in the streets"

5.6 Wellbeing and health

The City plays an important role in the wellbeing of international students. The City also seeks to work with the community to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage by promoting 'relative equality'[167]. The City of Sydney measures its policy outcomes against the objectives, goals, and

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[167] City of Sydney 2014, *Sustainable Sydney 2030 Community Strategic Plan*, 2014, .pp. 1. Available at:
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/sustainable-sydney-2030

expected outcomes as detailed in its Community Indicators Framework[168]. The ranges of indicators which may relate to international student wellbeing include:

> Strategic direction 6 – Vibrant local communities and economies: building communities and local economies by supporting diversity and innovation in the city's villages.

> Strategic direction 7 – A cultural and creative city: a creative life where people can share traditions and lifestyles – celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, diversity and community.

> Strategic direction 8 – Housing for a diverse population: a wider range of affordable housing so people who provide vital city services can afford to live in the city.

> Strategic direction 10 – Implementation through effective governance and partnerships: partnerships across government, business and community; leadership in local, national and global city forums.

Note: due to sensitivities with particular topic areas associated with wellbeing and health, the majority of the following section was informed by stakeholder interviews.

5.6.1 The wellbeing of international students in Sydney is generally good

In relation to overall wellbeing and health and as part of the online survey, students were asked to think about all of the things that they had responded to and indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement *"I enjoy living in Sydney"*.

The following figure shows that more than half 'agreed' that they enjoy living (52%, n=312) and an additional 34% (n=207) indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement.

The following figure shows that over 80% respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each of these statements. Agreement was higher when asked whether students enjoyed living in Sydney (86%) compared to studying here (80%).

FIGURE 30: DEGREE OF AGREEMENT: ENJOYMENT LIVING IN SYDNEY VS STUDYING IN SYDNEY
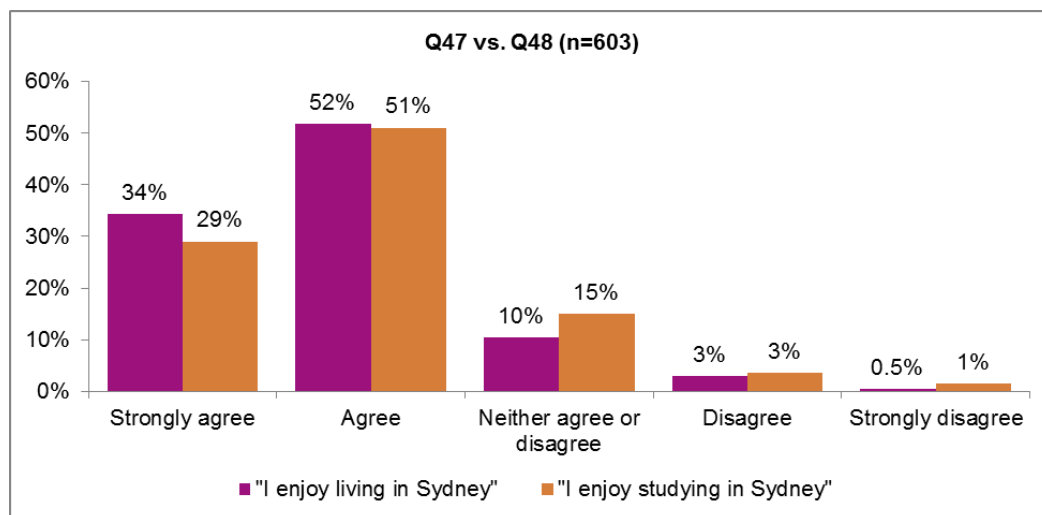
As outlined within the literature, for the purpose of this research, within this research, wellbeing comprises the synergy of three outcomes: physical, mental, and social health.

Overall, stakeholders perceived the wellbeing of international students in Sydney as ranging from 'OK' to 'good'. For a number of stakeholders, wellbeing is regarded as the achievement of a combination of areas. These foundational areas of; finding accommodation, gaining

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[168] City of Sydney (2011) Community Wellbeing Indicators. Sydney: City of Sydney.

employment and making friends are established then international students are able to further immerse themselves in Australian culture and way of life resulting in overall positive wellbeing.

A couple of stakeholders that work within education institutes felt that the majority of international students are generally 'doing very well' and are "positive, upbeat, and very intelligent people". It was suggested that the lifestyle, climate and diversity of cultures within Sydney contributed to this.

Stakeholders who rated the wellbeing of international students as being 'OK' cited negative experiences such as complications with visa conditions and accommodation issues as being areas of impact. One stakeholder said:

"The needs of international students are being met but there is so much room for improvement"

It was recognised by some stakeholders that negative experiences can also depend on the individual, their personality type and the effort they put in to ensuring a positive experience for their time in Sydney. This sentiment was also raised by some students in the focus groups, with one student noting:

"…it shouldn't always be up to others to make the effort [colleges, services, other students]… it has to be up to the individual to also make the effort"

As part of the online survey, students were asked to generally describe their physical and emotional health. The following figure outlines the results.

Physical and emotional health

> Age: 30-35 year olds were more likely to report feeling 'excellent' or 'good' physically compared with younger students.

> Gender: Good physical health° was more prevalent amongst male respondents compared with female respondents.

> Country of birth: On average, students from China and Brazil were more likely to report good physical health.

  Ratings of good emotional health were higher than average amongst Chinese and Malaysian students. They were lower than average amongst Nepalese students.

> Length of stay in Australia: On average, good physical health was more likely to be reported by students who have been living in Australia between six months to a year. Students whose stay has been five years or more in length were much less likely to report good physical health.

  Good emotional health was highest amongst students whose stay has been less than six months in duration. Reported health decreases across length of stay categories before rising once more amongst students who have been living in Australia for five years or longer.

> Type of education institution: ELICOS students were much more likely to report good emotional health compared with the average. On average, TAFE students were much less likely to do so*
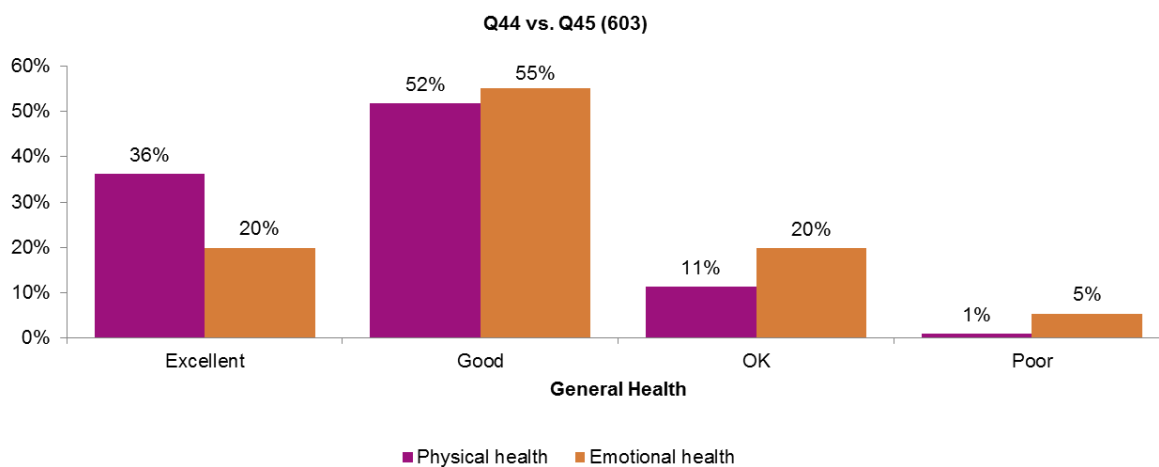
Q44 vs. Q45 (603)

Respondents were more likely to report their physical health being 'excellent' (36%, n=218), compared to emotional health (20% n=120). Ratings of 'good' were similar for emotional health (55% n=332) compared with physical health (52% n=312). On average, respondents were most likely to report being of 'good' health (average=53%, total n=644), followed by 'excellent' health (average=28%, n=total n=338).

Students who had <u>better health</u> in Australia compared with their home country were more likely to agree with the statement, "I enjoy studying in Sydney!".

Students who had <u>better health</u> in Australia compared with their home country were more likely to agree with the statement, "I enjoy living in Sydney!".

> Age: Students aged between 30-35 years were most likely to experience better health in Australia compared to health enjoyed in their home countries. Younger students were less likely to report (comparatively) better health.

> Gender: Male respondents were more likely to report better health compared with female respondents.

> Country of birth: Indian, Brazilian, and Chinese students were more likely to report better health in Australia compared with students from Malaysia and Nepal (least likely).

> Length of stay in Australia: Students who have been living in Australia for less than six months and those whose stay has been five years or longer were less likely on average to report better health.

Further, students were asked generally, compared with when they were living in their home country, whether their overall health (emotional and physical) was better in Sydney. Respondents were most likely to report their health in Sydney being 'about the same' as was in their home country (53% n=318). One in three respondents reported 'better' health in Sydney than experienced in their home country (33% n=197).

The concept of wellbeing was discussed within the focus groups and overall there was general agreement amongst participants that their wellbeing was 'good'. As one student said:

"…if wellbeing is about how I feel physically and emotionally as well as my social life then I am good… money and cost of living is different"

Enjoyment: Living and studying in Sydney

> Age: On average, students 30-35 years of age were less likely to indicate agreement when asked whether they enjoy studying in Sydney compared with younger students.

> Country of birth: Students from Brazil and Malaysia were more likely to agree that they enjoy living in Sydney. Students from China were less likely to report agreement in comparison with the average.

  Ratings of agreement° regarding study enjoyment were higher than average amongst Malaysian and Indian students. They were lower than average amongst Brazilian and Chinese students.

> Length of stay in Australia: Students whose length of stay in Australia has been five years or more were much less likely on average to report agreement when asked whether they enjoy living in Sydney.

  Ratings of agreement regarding study enjoyment steadily decrease as length of stay in Australia increases.

> Type of education institution: TAFE students were least likely to report agreement when asked whether they enjoy living in Sydney.

> On average, VET (least) and TAFE students were less likely to report that they enjoy studying in Sydney. ELICOS students were more likely to do so.

5.6.2 International students can be susceptible to alcohol and gambling issues

Although not addressed within the online survey, stakeholders and students that participated in interviews spoke openly about the struggle some students confront and experience with regard to alcohol and gambling.

Some students welcome Australian drinking customs, especially if alcohol consumption is not tolerated in their home countries. However, one stakeholder from a government health department explained that international students have a general lack of information about safe drinking limits and the adverse consequences of consumption, such as 'risk-taking' and 'dangerous driving'.

Young men in particular often find new freedom with being able to drink alcohol; however this can have negative consequences for some. Stakeholders highlighted alcohol consumption impacting on study, which can then lead to low marks, and as a result stress and depression.

Another stakeholder highlighted problem gambling as an emerging concern amongst international students. One stakeholder noted that:

> *"…problem gambling can be triggered by stress stemming from social isolation, difficulties with accommodation, mental health issues, and the pressure to achieve academically in their time here"*

The literature also supports this comment in that some international students may turn to gambling as a way of dissociating with increased mental, social, and sexual anxiety and stress. Further, the loss of money then sees international students turn to illegal accommodation to make up for the shortfall in funds. Those students who arrive in Australia with adequate finances are no less prone to gambling. In general international students have limited money

management skills upon arrival, and some have been found to gamble away even their student fees[169].

One international student spoke of a gambling experience of a friend and the consequences that this had on their life in Sydney. The gambling meant that the student was unable to pay university fees and had to borrow money off other friends to buy food and catch public transport.

Stakeholders also discussed the 'little' to no experience international students have with budgeting money. As one stakeholder said:

"Exposure to gambling is new for many international students when coming to Australia, some of whom bring with them money for their stay and are not aware of how to budget"

Gambling addiction is often an "unnoticed" issue. This may be partly explained by the fact that generally international students are "a very transient population" and often only live and study in Australia for a relatively short period of time. It is also noted that international students may not necessarily 'seek assistance' or help with gambling problems as gambling may be a stigmatised issue in students' home countries. As a result this may be difficult for government bodies and organisations to not only identify the problem but also work with affected students to work through the issue. One stakeholder from an educational institute said:

"…many students with gambling issues do not see the relevance of counselling, do not wish to see University counsellors and do not know where to seek counselling, particularly if they are from a non-English speaking background"

5.6.3 Sexual and mental health awareness and education could be increased amongst international students

The interviews with stakeholders revealed the complex challenges around sexual health and international students. Stakeholders highlighted the concern of increased sexually transmitted infections (STIs) within the international student community as well as general sexual health awareness and education.

As one stakeholder details anecdotal evidence that, international students are "at increased risk of acquiring STIs and HIV", with rates having risen over the years. The stakeholder notes further anecdotal evidence that the rise in rates of STIs and HIV infections has predominantly been amongst young gay male international students of south-east Asian and Asian backgrounds.

Young women were also identified as particularly vulnerable when it comes to sexual health, with the following factors highlighted by stakeholders:

> a taboo topic area due to cultural sensitivities

> lack of reporting of incidents of sexual assault

> lack of information on contraception.

Stakeholders acknowledged that there needed to be more accessible information on sexual health including information in different languages.

Mental health is another complex area identified by stakeholders as an important consideration to the wellbeing of international students.

One stakeholder described how some international students do not necessarily seek help with an existing mental health issue as they believe that 'a new life in Sydney will help overcome this'. Another stakeholder noted that some students arrive with prescribed medication for an existing mental health issue but do not seek continuation from a doctor in Sydney once the medication finishes, and as a result the mental health issue is impacted on.

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[169] City of Sydney, (2015b) International Education Providers Forum Report. Sydney: City of Sydney, p.12.

One stakeholder discussed the requirement of international students to undergo a physical examination in order to gain their visa and that it would also be helpful to understand some background on their mental health and what may assist them during their study in Sydney. This information would also benefit educational providers to understand how to not only assist international students with existing mental health conditions but also to potentially influence the types of information and advice they provide students.

A stakeholder who regularly meets with international students that face mental health issues describes them as being "completely let down by the system [government – health and education]". In general, these students tend to lack information about whom to look to for assistance and are "suffering from psychological stress", which has consequences that "runs through every aspect of their life".

However, it was noted that once the appropriate support was provided that there was visible changes to students' wellbeing, for example with students "[starting] to make friends" and "feeling more included in society". The countries of students identified by stakeholders as not typically seeking counselling for mental health issues were identified as Korea, Japan, China, and Vietnam.

5.7 The needs of international students and opportunities for the City

The City is well placed to assist international students to feel welcome and accepted in the local area, foster connections within the local community and community members, find safe employment and accommodation within the local businesses, and feel sense of physical safety on local streets, public spaces, and public transport. Stakeholders and students identified a range of needs of international students and potential opportunities for the City to assist in meeting them.

5.7.1 The City is responding well to the needs of International students and there are many opportunities for further investigation

Generally, stakeholders believed that the City is supporting the needs of international students. It was acknowledged that the City "does a lot already" and is "doing a good job in getting international students involved and providing them with relevant information and events to attend". Successful initiatives discussed by stakeholders included; the ISLA program, the annual forum and mayors welcome and annual forums and workshops that bring together experts in the international student sector to highlight challenges, new data and activities. One stakeholder said:

"The City of Sydney is doing a brilliant job with international students… and the lord mayors welcome is an amazing event where all organisations are represented"

With regard to stakeholder engagement and influencing the international student sector, the City of Sydney is perceived by those stakeholders interviewed as:

"…proactive…"

"…bringing together networks and resources…"

"…providing research and data…"

"…enabling collaboration and appropriate forums to share knowledge and experiences…"

"…allowing many opportunities for dialogue and cross-fertilisation…"

As part of the online survey students were provided with a list of events and programs that are either sponsored or organised by the City. Students were asked whether they has attended or participated in these events. The list was decided in collaboration with the City. The following figure provides an overview of responses.

Q52 (number of responses=1259; number of respondents=543)
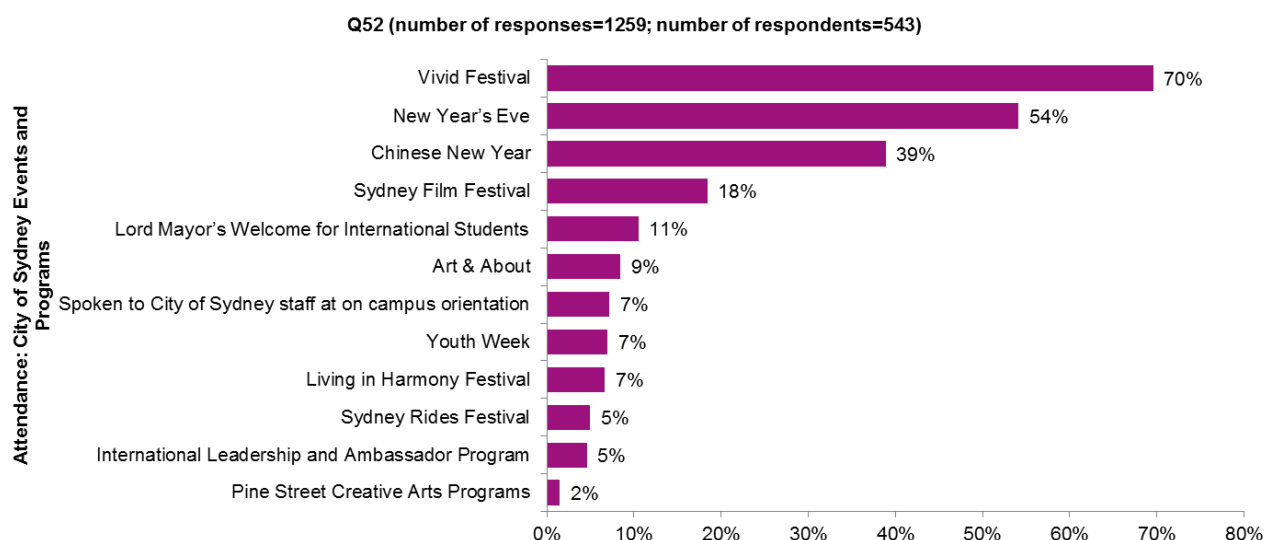
Respondents were most likely to have attended Vivid (70% responses=378), followed by New Year's Eve celebrations (54% responses=294) and Chinese New Year (39% responses=211), with 44 respondents noting that they had not attended any events or programs listed. A student that participated in an interview believed that the City could provide:

"…more free sports events for international students e.g. fun runs and hikes – physical exercise and being with others helps with stress and sadness"

A need of international students identified within the focus group related to the initial stages of arriving in Sydney. It noted that there was the lack of opportunities to connect and socialise with other international and Australian students.

Students noted that they were generally keen to continue and practice their hobbies, sports, and religions that they participated in in their home countries and that these established interests could enable initial relationship building with other students. A recommendation discussed within the focus groups was the City playing a larger role establishing stronger links with other international students early within a student's time in Sydney, particularly those that have been living and studying in Sydney for some time.

As one student noted within a focus group:

"… I think that it would be great to have this program I saw in Spain… I call it the 'Godfather' program… where a new young international student is partnered with an older international student who knows how to live and study and have fun in Sydney… teach them and pass on knowledge"

Some students that were interviewed also noted that the City could become more 'present' and 'engaged' by attending classes and speaking about local government and their broader role in supporting international students and their wellbeing. Students generally understood the role of local government and referred back to a similar type governing body within their home countries. However, a number of students were uncertain of the City of Sydney in relation to who they were, where they were located and how they support and interact with international students. As two students highlighted:

"I think City of Sydney could become more engaged with education institutions and work together to build meet and greets, buddy programs for students when they first arrive"

"I know the Sydney Council [the City] provide the ISLA program and town hall event… but not sure what else"

5.7.2 Stakeholders are working well together and there is potential for stronger partnerships could be established

The majority of stakeholders interviewed provided numerous examples of how organisations and agencies are currently working well together to increase the wellbeing and positive experience of international students studying in Sydney.

"We're doing really well to be honest. Sydney is exceptional in the way we do talk across stakeholder groups"

Collaboration initiatives, activities and processes that were cited by stakeholders included:

> focus area partnerships

> developing and undertaking surveys and sharing results and key findings

> participating and supporting sports events

> engaging with the private sector, including housing services

> working with other tiers of government, particularly state government

> being part of a safety and wellbeing forum

> internal and external capacity building initiatives such as sharing relevant events and courses relevant to leadership and mentoring

> information sessions with international students including the mayors welcome

Engaging with international students and allowing their voices to be heard is seen to be a key success factor to stakeholder partnerships working well.

"…we are lucky to bring the voices of NSW international students to the table"

While stakeholders are generally seen to be working well together and with the City, there is identified opportunity for further knowledge sharing and formalised partnerships. As one stakeholder stated:

"I have seen a bit of knowledge-sharing, but stakeholders need to continue to keep open with each other… once a year doesn't always work"

There was enthusiasm for further collective initiatives that enabled stakeholders to work together to respond to international student needs more 'holistically'.

"Once we start working more collectively with all stakeholders… it will then be easier to organise the outcomes or recommendations from meetings or discussions"

Regular meetings, working groups and interest groups were seen as a way for stakeholders to work together to tackle specific issues, utilise different skillsets, influence policy, "share responsibility" and break down "firewalls" between organisations

Another stakeholder noted:

"It would be great to have more workshops and seminars that specifically tackle challenges and opportunities around the wellbeing of international students… not just safety and housing"

One stakeholder suggested that the City could undertake more transparent and 'on-the-ground' engagement processes with international students through education providers. Some suggestions of 'on-the-ground' engagement formats included; working closely with student groups through cultural clubs and societies as well as with teachers and lecturers by presenting City specific programs or strategies and broader promotion of City events. This would not only enable the distribution of important information but also a greater understanding and appreciation for international students of the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders,

organisations and the City. The City may also benefit from 'being-on-the-ground' through gaining firsthand experience of international student needs.

5.7.3 Information and services for international students would be more effective if they were centralised, accessible and promoted through appropriate platforms

Overall, stakeholders and students acknowledged that there is 'a great deal' of information and resources available for international students. However, students believe that the information and resources available to international students, particularly when first arriving in Sydney can be 'limited in content', 'difficult to locate' and 'not always correct'. As one student noted within an interview:

> *"There is actually too many different avenues to locate information I need… I use government website, college website, Google… everyone says something different"*

It was noted that service providers and facilities that international students access for support and assistance often provide information through varying communication channels or platforms. Students that participated in the focus groups said that when they seek information to help them with 'accessing transport', 'going to the doctor', 'get a job' that they receive information from different sources that is often 'conflicting' and branded by different sources, for example; private organisations, universities or government agencies. As one student stated in a focus group:

> *"…it is often difficult to actually know what information you get given is correct… you just hope for the best… I often just ask a friend or another student or go onto the 'Brazilians in Sydney Facebook page… this is usually where I get the most helpful information"*

Recent research into underpaid work of international students undertaken by the University of Sydney's Business School[170], highlighted a key factor to the unfair treatment at work as being the basic or poor English language skills and not knowing their rights or how to enforce them. it was further noted that "…they are also away from home for the first time and are cut off from their natural support networks and that the situation is further aggravated by the fact that there is an oversupply of student workers in some areas and this leaves many feeling that they can be easily replaced if they complain."[171]

An online 'one-stop-shop' was put forward by many stakeholders as not only an opportunity for the City to improves the wellbeing of students but also to address the need of students navigating and accessing correct and relevant information. One stakeholder said:

> *"If students have clarity then a lot of mistakes and suffering and concerns will be avoided"*

The idea of the 'one-stop-shop' was discussed with stakeholders in terms of both physical and online spaces. Physical space options include:

> *"…an all-in-one central hub in the City that offers a free counsellor once a week, cooking classes, activities and games etc."*

> *"…a centre (like Couch in Melbourne) that is a hub for international students to congregate and network… including offering information on City day and night time events"*

Suggestions for online spaces included

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[170] The University of Sydney, *Nearly all foreign student workers underpaid – Business School Survey*, The University of Sydney Business School, 2016, available at: http://sydney.edu.au/business/news/2016/foreign_student_workers

[171] ibid

"…government agencies and relevant international student support services and organisations internet websites or 'Apps' merged together for a specific international student 'go-to' App that has relevant information under key headings such as housing, health, events, education etc. and can be downloaded and applicable for use before arriving in Sydney and while studying in Sydney"

The development of an associated website was also suggested for those students that prefer accessing information on a computer. One stakeholder also referenced the importance of any platform and information to be accessible in different languages.

"…these online resources need to ensure language does not become a barrier"

A further online service currently being explored by another stakeholder is to connect students and potential accommodation hosts together online with a view to:

"…students being able to communicate online using this service in the future as a way of making connections"

Accessible online resources are also seen as essential to help international students do their research on studying in Sydney prior to arriving. As one stakeholder said:

"…information and opportunities are generally there…but students need to do their research before they arrive and while they are here… there is also a lot of information available through university links, online forums and Facebook pages, but educating students on how to access and knowing how to access is key"

Events and programs generally were identified by international students in the focus groups as important sources of information, particularly when first arriving in Sydney.

"…people need to know on day one what their rights are… and begin to familiarise themselves with local support systems"

It was also suggested that events located in the centre of the City allowed students to familiarise themselves with places and spaces at the 'heart of Sydney'.

Events or programs that are undertaken for the purpose of information distribution could be supported by regular seminars or conferences to 'recap' or 're-visit' information for students. As one stakeholder noted that many are overwhelmed by the information they receive initially, or get "caught up in the euphoria of being in a new place" and are not fully aware of some of the pitfalls from the outset.

Being able to gain adequate information was a recurring point amongst the stakeholder interviews, with the example of accessible and free health services (such as outpatient clinics, free doctor advice number and confidential health services being cited as examples of services that international students do not realise they are able to utilise).

Information on what to do if and when things 'go wrong' could also be better articulated according to one stakeholder. International students need a diagnosis tool where they can understand case and effects "when x happens, then do y" or "how to prevent x from happening". This suggestion was also discussed within the focus groups. Students also agreed that an interactive online platform where students could ask question and receive instant answers on different topics area would also be beneficial, for example 'how much does it cost to see a doctor?', 'what do I need to bring to my first day at college?', or 'what events run in the City might interest me as an international student?'.

5.7.4 International students could be further engaged by the City to promote Sydney as a destination for study

A key finding from the focus groups and interviews was that international students were interested in being engaged by the City. As one stakeholder said:

"International students are a source of so much information; they have progressive views and ideas on innovation and different ways of doing things that we could learn from"

Increasing opportunities for engaging with international students outside their studies is seen as a way to assist in the overall health, wellbeing and positive experience of living and working in Sydney. This in turn would enable the process of students becoming ambassadors and as a stakeholder stated "…taking the good stores back to their home countries".

Ideas for further engaging with and assisting the overall positive experience of international students have in Sydney include; awareness campaigns to the public on what benefits international students bring to Australia to increase their profile, employability and reputation, and providing more training for international students so that they are able to acquire additional professional skills while studying.

One stakeholder provided the example of government departments and the City engaging international students in project or work experience specific to the sector and providing them with the opportunity to "contribute to solutions and influence policy". It was noted that these students may then return to their home countries and work for similar government agencies or work with the Australian government in the future, "…with a positive relationship and understanding already established".

Another stakeholder spoke of the generosity and proactive nature of international students around sharing knowledge on what they enjoy about living and studying in Sydney. The stakeholder said "…how can we tap into them to build the social fibre of this society [international student] even if they are here only for a short time without impacting their studies"

Proactive approaches that work to build rapport and seek the views of international students are regarded as being an effective engagement strategy as one stakeholder said: "conversation needs to happen so that students are not merely passive receivers of delivery". This was also reflected in an interview with a student:

"…see international students as people… find out what their dreams are"

Initiatives such as the ISLA program are regarded as encouraging and positive. It was suggested that this type of program could be rolled out to reach a wider number of students, as well as further utilisation of the ambassadors of the program to work across different organisations to create more of a "ripple effect" of information to international students.

The results of the online survey (603 responses) also illustrates that international students do want to be engaged and do want to have a voice. As part of the online survey, students were also asked to state whether they would be interested in participating in further research. A total of 202 respondents (34%) said that they would be interested. Engagement and interest of international students is summarised by the following quote by a student in a focus group.

"… it is great that the City is doing this research… it is good that we get a voice and are being heard…"

6 Implications and considerations for the City

The following section builds on the large quantity of data and information collected throughout the research. The key findings have been collated and synthesised to inform the following implications and considerations for the City. This information identifies some areas in which the City may further investigate when designing support services and programs that enable increased opportunities for the wellbeing of international students. Outlined below are our key implications and the supporting evidence.

6.1 Implications for the City

The research shows that the demographic profile of international students can impact on their challenges and needs. Demographic characteristics were shown to differ between students that lived within the City and those that lived in surrounding LGAs.

> Older students were more likely to live in the City than younger students.

> Younger students face greater challenges accessing accommodation and the information they need, however they were more likely to live outside the City LGA.

> Older students have less issues integrating and have more experience living independently are more likely to live in the City LGA.

> Students attending ELICOS and VET courses were more likely to be living in the City compared to those attending university.

Summary considerations:

> Information provided by the City could be targeted towards younger international students residing in the LGA. Information may address accommodation, tenant, and landlord rights; availability of key facilities and support services within the LGA; as well as a list of key contacts that reflect specific international student support services and needs.

> The City could aim to provide targeted information to those students completing English language or vocational training courses. Care should be taken to ensure resources are written using simple and clear English as well as translated into other languages.

Satisfaction with housing and accommodation was dependent on a number of factors including the demographic profile of international students, the access of information, duration of time living in Sydney, type of education provider and accommodation. These findings could assist the City in future strategies regarding the distribution of information on housing and a different accommodation types.

> Students that live in the City were less satisfied with their accommodation than students that lived in other LGAs.

> When arriving in Sydney, younger students were able to find accommodation more easily than older students, however older students were more satisfied with their accommodation.

> Brazilian students reported less difficulty finding initial accommodation and were more likely to be satisfied with their accommodation.

> Nepalese students reported more difficulty finding initial accommodation and were more likely to be less satisfied with their accommodation.

> Although Chinese students reported less difficulty finding initial accommodation they were more likely to be less satisfied with their accommodation

> Newly arrived students were less likely to be satisfied with their accommodation

- Students living with homestay families were more satisfied with their accommodation than students living within purpose built accommodation and rentals.

- University and ELICOS students found it more difficult to find initial accommodation.

Summary considerations:

- Provide newly-arrived students with information on accommodation, including information on how the rental process works in Sydney, specification of students' rights and responsibilities as tenants, the frequency with which rent should be paid (e.g. fortnightly, not monthly, as some students expect), and what tenants may expect from their landlords etc. should be highlighted in any information provided on housing.

- There is an opportunity for the City to work on building a mentorship program for newly-arrived students, akin to the ISLA program. Within this program, international students that have been living in Sydney for a period of time could mentor recently arrived students through the initial transition phase. The more experienced students can act as practical advisors to new students. Such initiatives may also provide new students with opportunities for socialising and making new friends, a key concern for many students upon arrival. Within such a program, pairings could be chosen on the basis of nationality, depending on the degree of difficulty students from different nationalities report when it comes to finding accommodation. For example, Brazilian students, who identify finding the process easier, could be paired with Nepalese students, as the latter find the process of seeking accommodation more difficult.

Large proportions of students depend on part-time work to support accommodation and living costs and therefore could be at risk of exploitation. Our research shows the relationship between different international student profiles and their work place experiences and satisfaction. Research has shown that this is a significant factor on students' wellbeing and negative experiences correlate with low levels of physical and emotional health.

- Younger students are more likely to report being treated well and satisfied with the place in which they work.

- Indian students more satisfied with their place of work compared to Chinese and Brazilian.

- ELICOS and university students were more likely to report satisfaction with the work place compared to TAFE students.

- Ratings of being treated well were lower amongst Chinese students.

Summary considerations:

- Seek to understand whether all students are fully aware of their work rights and whether there is a correlation between a lack of understanding and age. The City could target information sessions on work place rights and processes particularly to Chinese and Brazilian students as well as those students undertaking TAFE courses.

The safety of a city is a key consideration for students that seek to study overseas. Students consider Sydney a safe city. Student's inexperience of Sydney and their foreign status makes them potentially vulnerable targets. The research indicates that the longer students are studying in Sydney the more likely they are to report feeling unsafe.

- Younger students were less likely to feel safe walking the City at night and catching public transport at night.

- Students from Brazil were more likely to feel safe walking and catching public transport.

- Students from Asian countries were less likely to feel safe walking and catching public transport.

> Students that had been in Sydney for a shorter period of time were more likely to feel safe compared to those that had been in Sydney for longer.

> University students were less likely to feel safe walking and catching public transport compared to students attending TAFE.

> Brazilian students were most likely to feel comfortable contacting Police.

> Students from Asia (Chinese and Malaysian) were least likely to feel comfortable contacting Police.

Summary considerations:

> Younger students, and students of Asian background, could be more targeted by the City and NSW Police in their engagement processes. For example initiatives such as the 2014 beach soccer tournament between NSW Police and international students. Informal, fun, and activity-based initiatives such as these could potentially build a foundation for increased trust and understanding of the role of police in Australia. Students of cultural backgrounds that are more comfortable with communicating with the police, for example Brazilians, could be part of the event task force.

> Research identifies that international students, owing to their youth and inexperience, may unknowingly place themselves at risk of harm by engaging in a number of unsafe practices, including travelling to and from work late at night. Workshops, focus groups, and informal discussions on the topic of safety with international students, specific to the Sydney context, may provide a means of identifying, then addressing, the most common risk factors.

> Workshops and focus groups with younger international students may also assist in understanding the reason younger students are more fearful for their safety whilst walking and catching public transport at night. Practical solutions can be provided to meet concerns that are more tangible in nature. For example, if students fear walking alone at night after class, walking groups and meeting points can be arranged at key campus locations.

International students face a number of wellbeing and health challenges in the early stages of arriving in Sydney. Finding adequate accommodation and an area to settle in and integrating and connecting with other international and local students were seen as positive contributors to increased physical and emotional health.

> Male respondents were more likely to report better health compared with female respondents.

> Chinese and Brazilian students were more likely to feel better physically than students from other countries.

> Chinese and Malaysian students were more likely to feel better emotionally than students from other countries.

> Nepalese students were less likely to feel better emotionally than students from other countries.

> Students that have been in Sydney longer were more likely have lower levels of good physical health.

> Students that had been in Sydney for a less period of time reported having better levels of emotional health than those that had been in Sydney longer.

> Indian, Brazilian and Chinese students were more likely to report having better health while in Sydney compared to when they were in their home country.

> Malaysian and Nepalese students were less likely to report better health while in Sydney compared to when they were in their home country.

> Brazilian and Malaysian students are more likely to enjoy studying in Sydney.

> Chinese students were less likely to enjoy studying in Sydney compared to other students.

> TAFE students least likely to enjoy living in Sydney compared to students at other educational institutions.

> VET and TAFE students were less likely to report enjoyment studying in Sydney and ELICOS students were more likely.

Summary considerations:

> More research is needed to determine why levels of physical and emotional health seem to be better amongst more recently-arrived students. Perhaps this speaks to increased pressure regarding employment, affordability, visa, and study concerns as time passes and needs become more pressing. Physical fitness, yoga, and meditation classes can be a means of improving students' physical health.

6.2 Considerations for the City

The following section provides an outline of the key findings from the analysis of data and research aligned with some considerations for the City moving forward. The following figure provides a summary of some key factors that influence the wellbeing and positive experience of international students studying and living in Sydney.

FIGURE 33: KEY FACTORS FOR A POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Studying in Sydney

KEY FINDINGS

International students regard Sydney as a desirable destination for study

Public transport is expensive and can be difficult to access

Transitioning to a new city takes time and understanding Australian culture has particular challenges

CONSIDERATIONS

> Establish an initiative that **tracks the impact of international students' positive outcomes as a result of studying in Sydney**. This initiative may include a survey distributed by educational institutions or via established international student groups that represent different countries on Facebook. These surveys could seek to understand whether past international students have recommended Sydney as a place to study to friends and family, secured a job that links to the area of study undertaken in Sydney, or return to Sydney for further study or leisure.

> The City could investigate **a buddy/mentor program** in partnership with educational institutions that connect newly arrived students with established international students or Australian students to allow 'knowledge' and 'understanding' of the Sydney experience to be passed on. This could also potentially form part of the broader International Student Leadership and Ambassador (ISLA) Program run by the City.

> The inclusion of public transport costs and timetables within **'one-stop-shop' online forum or website** developed and promoted by the City as well as any welcome packs provided to students at orientation weeks or events e.g. USB provided to educational institutions.

> There may be an opportunity for the City to provide **'transition' type programs and/or events** for students that have recently arrived in Sydney. These initiatives may include a welcome pack on a City USB that provides access to material within a variety of languages on key services, facilities and information on assistance around health and wellbeing e.g. alcohol and gambling. These USBs could be provided to educational institutions and distributed as part of induction or O Week events.

> Provide international students and educational institutions with the opportunity to discuss and report on the impact of transport costs. The City may consider advocating to the NSW Government to implement policy changes around **international student concession on public transport** to align with that of Australian students.

> Promote **alternative transport options** for international students e.g. walking and cycling. Maps and information could be provided by educational institutions and housing providers. These forms of transport can also impact positively on healthy lifestyle and increased mental and physical wellbeing.

Housing and accommodation

KEY FINDINGS

Finding suitable housing and accommodation is challenging, particularly on first arrival

Overcrowding and cleanliness of housing impacts on the overall wellbeing and initial experience of studying in Sydney

Although accommodation is expensive, international students consider Sydney to be a desirable place to study and live

CONSIDERATIONS

> The City to **educate and promote and distribute information on City housing objectives, programs and initiatives** that specifically impact or related to international students. This could be achieved through establishing a bi-annual workshop specific to housing and accommodation for international students in the City. This working group may include representatives from the City Safe and City Housing Teams, other government agencies as well as representatives from housing providers such as Urbanest, Iglu and Airbnb. This could build on the City strata workshop currently provided to international students as part of Youth Week. It could also be a platform to investigate and explore additional ways to **improve housing affordability** for international students within the City.

> The research shows that overcrowding within private dwellings is still prevalent. Continue to work closely with the City's Unauthorised Accommodation Investigation Team to **target illegal and unsafe rental arrangements** that exploit international students and ensure landlords comply with relevant legislation.

> Communicate, promote and **raise the profile of alternative housing and accommodation types and resources** to international students prior and after arrival, such as Airbnb. This could also include information on emergency/temporary student accommodation. Explore opportunities to partner with alternative housing providers to make aware the different options students can consider and resulting in more informed decisions. This information to be provided to international students in welcome packs or at orientation week.

> Work with private colleges and local residents that provide and/or partake in the homestay accommodation option in the City to discuss options for **increasing the number of homestay households** within the City LGA. This could be undertaken via a short phone or online survey with host families and international students currently living with host families.

Finance and employment

International students are concerned about financial security

A number of international students need to work in order to afford to live and study in Sydney

International students are vulnerable to exploitation by employers

CONSIDERATIONS

> Investigate providing an **online budget tool specific** to international students that outlines potential costs for living in Sydney. This could be an interactive tool that is accessible online as part of the City international student 'one-stop-shop' or within promotional material delivered to students before arriving in Sydney. The data within the tool could be updated to reflect changes in housing market, public transport costs and conversion rates between their home country currency and the Australian Dollar. This tool could also enable a forum for past and present students to discuss current and past employment and cost related experiences living and studying in Sydney.

> Increase engagement of international students through the City's **volunteering programs and events** providing opportunities for work experience, connection with the broader Sydney community and increased ability to learn about the Australian culture and practice the English language. Engagement activities may include; social media platforms, targeted education programs and student information hubs.

> Collaborate with international student organisations and tertiary education institutions to workshop ideas that may assist international students that are seeking employment, for example tax, visa and working rights information, resume writing and job search and application processes. A potential option could include an **international students working in Sydney education program** that directly involves employers at the local City level who employ international students. The program could include information on working visa, international student rights, and key government and other organisation contact details.

> The City could investigate establishing a framework or process with the NSW government that encourages and supports international students to **report employers that are breaching student visa working conditions**. Students would be provided amnesty for reporting unlawful employers. This would also assist in stronger relationships and bonds between local and state government specific to the international student sector.

Safety and crime

KEY FINDINGS

Sydney is generally considered a safe place to live for international students

International students feel they can engage with Police

CONSIDERATIONS

> Build on the relationship the City has established with the police and continue the **safety initiatives and programs** targeted at international students. This could include establishing specific safety awareness workshops or demonstrations by police to international students as part of orientation week or welcome packs.

> Ensure promotion undertaken by the City highlights the positive association international students have with Sydney as a safe city. This could also include **raising the profile of the work and positive experiences and views of the police** that demonstrate 'good news' stories.

Social integration, isolation and discrimination

KEY FINDINGS

Socially, international students are integrating well within their own networks

International students want to connect with local communities

Sydney's culturally diverse community provides a platform to support and celebrate international students

CONSIDERATIONS

> Undertake discussions with key education providers located within the City to encourage **'peer mentor' initiatives** where local students connect with international students to assist with the initial social integration and initial transition period. These programs could provide leadership and training opportunities for students and/or include trust building, sharing social experiences through food and music or community based activities undertaken in association with community groups.

> Investigate opportunities for **international and Australian students to engage and participate in City supported events, festivals and programs together**. These may be events or programs that are already run by the City or run by community groups that celebrate broader cultural diversity and social cohesion within the City. For example, the City could promote a specific event or night within a larger event such as Vivid or the Sydney Film Festival that is specifically for local and international students only. The event could show case art or film that reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds of international students and include a pre or post social get together in a City space.

Wellbeing and health

KEY FINDINGS

The wellbeing of international students in Sydney is generally good

International students can be susceptible to alcohol and gambling issues

Sexual and mental health awareness and education could be increased amongst international students

CONSIDERATIONS

> Work with relevant health departments and education institutions to ensure **culturally appropriate information and translated material on sexual and mental health** is easily accessible and targeted to the international student community. Information could be presented simply online as info-graphics with key contact details in different languages so that it is accessible to a broad range of people. This information could also be included in the City 'USB' that is provided at O-Week or other similar welcome events.

> Incorporate or increase promotion of **sexual, physical and mental health awareness campaigns and information** within the City's international student related events and program already run throughout the annual calendar. This may include representatives from non-government organisations or counselling services at universities or colleges attending events or undertaking 'pop-up' sessions as part of courses. Specific areas of focus may include; gambling addiction, alcohol, sexual health and physical health.

The needs of international students and opportunities for the City

KEY FINDINGS

The City is responding well to the needs of International students and there are many opportunities for further investigation

International students could be further engaged and utilised by the City to promote Sydney as a destination for study

Stakeholders are working well together and there is potential for stronger partnerships to be established

Information and services for international students would be more effective if they were centralised, accessible and promoted through appropriate platforms

CONSIDERATIONS

> Continue to **broker and encourage collaborations between key stakeholders and international student groups** to promote and build on collective initiatives between essential service providers and students.

> Investigate and seek to establish an **online 'one-stop' information resource or an international student City App** that includes tailored and relevant information that international students can easily access. The design and development of the platform could be undertaken with international students and be supported by key international student service providers and government agencies. Ensure that this website or App is accessible to international students prior to arriving in Sydney and promoted through educational institutions, social media streams and government websites.

> Introduce **an annual engagement process** in which the City engages with international students to acknowledge their importance and role in City life and culture as well as enabling an opportunity to discuss their needs and express their views and experiences. This may be in the form of an online survey, similar to the one undertaken as part of this research, workshops or focus groups, an online forum, or initiatives that may form part of the international student hub e.g. photography or art.

> Consider supporting **a central "pop up hub"** for international students to meet, network, gain information and share knowledge. The hub could provide access to computers, Wi-Fi and skype to contact family at home and connect with other international students in Sydney. The hub could move around the City and visit destinations such as City library, student accommodation, educational institutions, Town Hall, train station, City events, dis-used commercial space or park and also provide English classes or opportunities to talk and socialise with Australian students. The hub may also include mental and sexual health services and music, art or cooking classes that reflect and embrace different cultures.

> Work with educational institutions to build on the positive association that international students have with Sydney as a place to study. This could be achieved **through increased promotion of City events and festivals** through established international student social media networking platforms. Ambassadors that form part of the ISLA program may assist the City in accessing these online networks.

> **Embed and consider the needs and wellbeing of international students within the development of the future Social Sustainability Strategy**. All four key Directions outlined within the Social Sustainability Discussion Paper align with supporting, enhancing and ensuring international student wellbeing – a City for all that is inclusive, connected, livable and engaged. Any actions taken forward from this research should respond and reflect this future Strategy.

The City is host to more international students than any other LGA in Australia. The wellbeing of international students has been identified by the City as a key priority area and focus moving forward. This research has provided the City with a greater understanding of the issues, challenges and experiences that impact on the wellbeing of international students. The research further illustrates how international students perceive their wellbeing and what does and does not contribute towards this. Further, the investigation of international student needs has highlighted some future opportunities and initiatives for the City to consider.

A final question that formed part of the online survey asked students to list three words that came to mind when they thought of Sydney as a place to study. The following figure may provide an overarching visual depiction of international students and their experience and wellbeing associated with studying in the City. The figure provides a visual representation of the words most frequently mentioned by respondents. The size of each word represents how many times it was mentioned – the larger the word, the more times it was mentioned.

FIGURE 34: STUDENT WORDS TO DESCRIBE SYDNEY AS A PLACE TO STUDY

Appendix A.   Methodology

PROJECT COMMENCEMENT

On commencement of the research, the UTS:IPPG team met with the City research team for a comprehensive briefing. This meeting enabled the finalisation of the methodology and research process, identification of key City policies and documents, discussion of relevant stakeholders and potential risks for consideration.

Following the confirmation of arrangements at the inception meeting, a detailed research program was developed. The research program outlined the agreed scope of research, key tasks, responsibilities, and timeframes. The research program was reviewed and signed off by the City research team. The research program was a live document that was updated and referred to throughout the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of relevant literature, documentation and data was undertaken specific to the research aims and objectives. The review included national and international studies on universal concepts and measures of wellbeing. The review assisted in the approach to stakeholder and international student engagement and allowed evidence to be incorporated in the research base and analysis. The literature review provides:

> an understanding of the international student context in the City

> an outline of the City community wellbeing indicators

> a definition of wellbeing

> an understanding of the various challenges faced by international students

> an overview of the key areas of focus identified as part of the research question by the City, specifically:

- housing and housing exploitation

- safety and security

- financial resources and exploitation in the work-place

- discrimination

- social integration.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING

An initial stakeholder identification, mapping and analysis process was undertaken in collaboration with the City. The City has established relationships and partnerships with a number of key agencies and organisations that provide services and support international students in Sydney. The identification process ensured a representation of stakeholders was involved from a diverse range of backgrounds, including; housing, health, local government, international student bodies, police, and education. The engagement techniques used as part of the research were designed, developed and implemented to be inclusive, transparent and meaningful.

ENGAGEMENT

This phase of the research included four key methods of engagement; interviews with key stakeholders, an online survey, focus groups and interviews with international students.

The research instruments for the engagement, were developed and reviewed in collaboration with the City research team and were informed by the research aims and literature and documentation reviewed.

The following figure provides an overview of techniques and number of people engaged in the research.

FIGURE 35: STAKEHOLDER AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
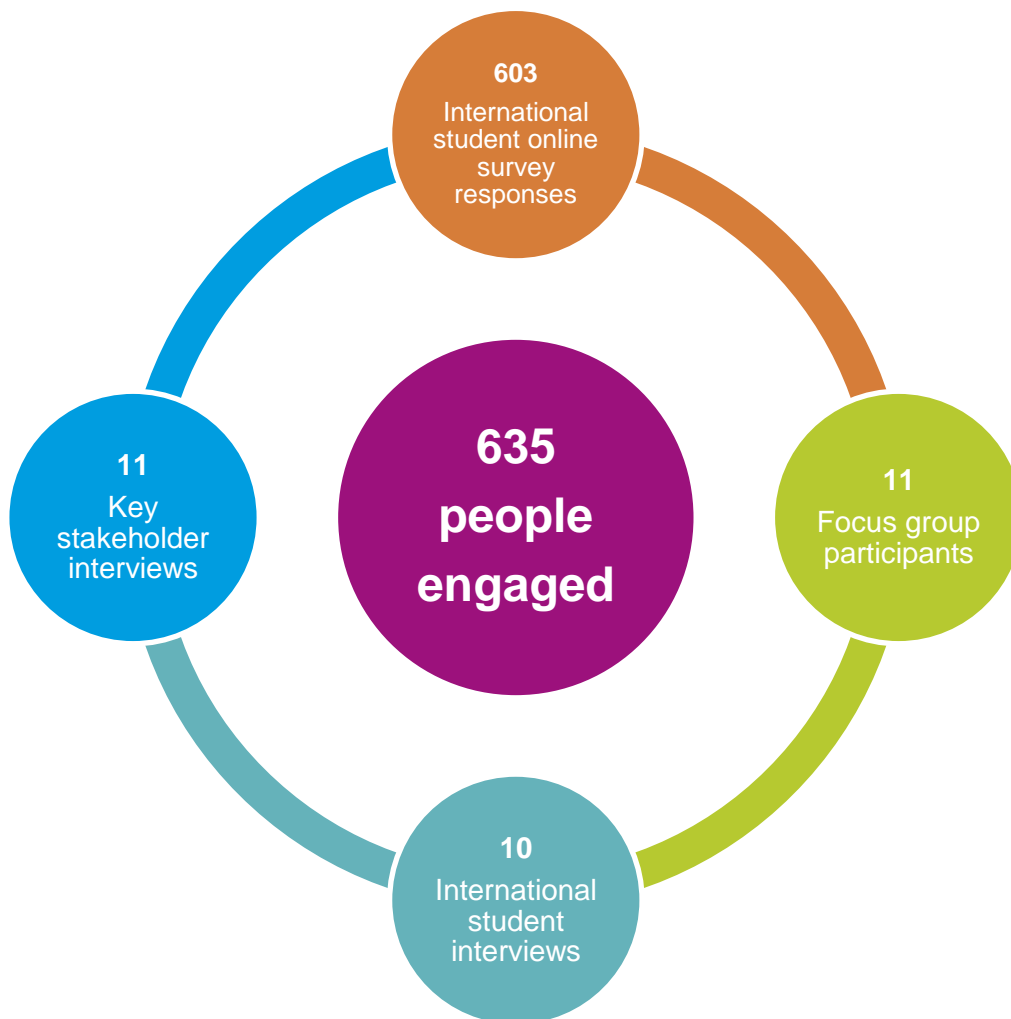
Further information on the engagement phase of the research is located at Section 3.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The analysis of data from the engagement processes involved the synthesis of materials and findings from all parts of the research; the literature review, stakeholder interviews, online survey, interviews and focus groups with international students. The key findings and recommendations were presented to key representatives from the City.

Appendix B. Stakeholder engagement interview guide

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE: WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CITY OF SYDNEY COUNCIL

Introductory text

My name is _____ and I am a researcher at the University of Technology Sydney Institute of Public Policy and Governance (UTS:IPPG). We have been engaged by the City of Sydney (the City) to investigate how international students perceive living, working and studying in the City area and the factors that contribute to their wellbeing.

As part of this research we are undertaking a literature review, key stakeholder interviews, an online survey, in-depth interviews and focus groups with international students, as well as analysis and reporting.

This project will provide the City with access to important research that will focus specifically on the issues, concerns and challenges of international students in the LGA. A key outcome of the project for the City will be data that can be used to develop policy and practices that will inform present programs and initiatives.

We are hoping to speak with you today to gain a greater understanding of your thoughts and experience on the wellbeing of international students in the City.

A few things to note:

Before we start there are just a couple of things to note…

- The interview should take approximately 30-40 minutes
- All information collected will be kept strictly confidential and stored securely and any subsequent use of the data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
- In order to help us with our analysis, we will be recording the interview and I will take also take notes.
- You or your organisation _will not_ be identified by name in any reports or papers using information from this interview without your permission and after your review of the materials.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Can you please confirm that you have understood this information and agree to be interviewed?

Additional notes for interviewer:

The City's role:

The City of Sydney Local Government Area is host to more international students than any other LGA in Australia, with over 35,000 international students studying in the City. The valuable contribution that international students make to the cultural life of Sydney and the ability of the education sector to add

value across the economy is significant. The wellbeing of international students has therefore been identified by the City as a key priority area, both culturally and economically.

Wellbeing:

The World Health Organisation (WHO 2016) definition of wellbeing is recognised internationally. The WHO defines subjective wellbeing as:

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Wellbeing therefore comprises the synergy of three outcomes together: physical, mental, and social health. As the World Health Organisation expands:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Introduction

- Can you briefly tell us a bit about yourself and your organisation/where you work?
- What is your role or association with international students? E.g. how do you support them, what do you provide them, how do you relate to them
- What role does your organisation play in supporting the wellbeing of international students? E.g. programs, assistance, events etc.

2. Wellbeing – factors and influences

- In regards to the international students that you come into contact with, in general how would you say they are going in regards to their wellbeing? *(*refer to above definition if this is helpful)*
- What are some of the contributing factors to the wellbeing of international students? E.g. what allows international students to be physically, mentally, and socially healthy?
- What are some of the contributing factors that work against the wellbeing of international students?

- What do you see as the key challenges to the wellbeing of international students in the City? *(*say that we will cover housing, work, safety and security, discrimination in more detail a little later…)*
- Why have you identified these as particularly challenging? Do you have any specific examples that we could include as part of this research?
- Which of these areas do you feel are particularly relevant to your role in supporting the wellbeing of international students?

3. Focus areas

Depending on which stakeholder we are interviewing, we will navigate through one or more of the following topic areas for discussion…

Housing exploitation:

- What are the housing issues affecting international students?
- Do you think these are different to domestic students in the City? If yes, how/why?
- Are there international students who are more likely to be affected? E.g. cultural background, where they live etc
- What do you think needs to be done to assist in issues relating to housing and international students?

Safety and security:

- What are safety and security issues affecting international students?
- Do you think these different to domestic students in the City? If yes, how/why?
- Are these students from particular cultural backgrounds?
- What do you think needs to be done to assist in issues relating to safety and security and international students?

Financial and workplace:

- What are financial and/or workplace issues affecting international students?
- Do you think these different to domestic students in the City? If yes, how/why?
- Are these students from particular cultural backgrounds?
- What do you think needs to be done to assist in protecting international students in the workplace?

Discrimination and exploitation:

- Is discrimination an issue for international students?
- Are some international students more likely to suffer discrimination? How would explain the phenomenon?
- What do you think needs to be done to fight discrimination directed against international students?

Social integration and isolation:

- What are social integration/isolation issues affecting international students?
- Do you think these different to domestic students in the City? If yes, how/why?
- Are some international students more at risk? Do you think social integration and isolation are specific issues for international students?
- What do you think needs to be done to facilitate social integration and lessen isolation of international students?

4. Working together:

- Do you have any current partnerships or relationships with other government, NGO or private sector agencies/organisations specific to international students?
- If yes, what do you work together on and how?
- In what ways do you think stakeholders can work together more effectively to share strategies and knowledge around supporting and promoting the wellbeing of international students?

5. Needs:

- Do you think that international students are generally able to access the information they need? For example, with regard to study, work, housing, transport etc?
- What is your perspective on the needs of international students in the City generally? E.g. support, facilities, services, assistance etc

6. Opportunities and the role of the City:

- What role do you think the City has in supporting the wellbeing of international students?
- What are some current areas, programs, initiatives that are successful and provide an opportunity to build on/strengthen?
- Do you have ideas for new strategies and programs that would improve the wellbeing of international students in the City?
- Do you have any other ideas for the City of Sydney to support the wellbeing of international students?

7. Close:

- Do you have any other questions?
- Opportunity to provide the stakeholder with an outline of the next stages of the research e.g. online survey, focus groups, analysis etc
- Thank stakeholder for their time

Appendix C. Online survey questions

THE WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY

The Institute for Public Policy and Governance based at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS:IPPG) has been engaged by the City of Sydney to undertake research into how international students living in the City area perceive their wellbeing and the factors that contribute to it. This online survey will help us gain a greater understanding of your views and experiences as an international student in Sydney.

This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes.

We are hoping that you can be as honest as possible. All responses are totally confidential and you will not be identified.

PRIZE:

One lucky international student will win a Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb voucher for you and a friend. To be in the running, all you need to do is complete the following online survey.
If you have any questions about this research, please contact Ben Dowler (UTS:IPPG) ben.dowler@uts.edu.au – we thank you for your time.

Ethics:

Studies undertaken by UTS:IPPG have been granted program approval by the University of Technology, Sydney, Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research you may contact Associate Professor Roberta Ryan, the Director of IPPG or the UTS Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (02 9514 9777). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

* Required

Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb

18 years and older

1. **Are you 18 years of age or older?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Yes

   ( ) No   *Stop filling out this form.*

International student

International student

2. **Are you an international student?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Yes   *Skip to question 3.*

   ( ) No   *Stop filling out this form.*

Age

3. **What is your age?** *

   ....

Studying in Sydney

4. **Do you study at any of these institutions? If 'yes', please select your education institution from the list below. If 'no', please select 'other' and write the name of your institution.** *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ ABBEY COLLEGE
- ◯ ABC STUDY GROUP
- ◯ ABERG SINGING STUDIO
- ◯ ABILITY EDUCATION
- ◯ ACADEMIES AUSTRALASIA
- ◯ ACADEMY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- ◯ ACCESS LANGUAGE CENTRE SYDNEY
- ◯ ACES
- ◯ ACES CENTRE
- ◯ ACTORS CENTRE AUSTRALIA
- ◯ ACTORS COLLEGE OF THEATRE AND TELEVISION
- ◯ ADVANCE ENGLISH
- ◯ AERIS EDUCTAION
- ◯ AGED CARE TRAINING
- ◯ AGNI STUDIO
- ◯ AICE, AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF ENGLISH
- ◯ AICL EDUCATION
- ◯ AIRPORT DENTAL
- ◯ ALLIANCE FRANCAISE SYDNEY
- ◯ ASA
- ◯ ASIA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
- ◯ ATA P/L TESOL COLLEGE
- ◯ AUSTRALAIN NATIONAL COLLEGE
- ◯ AUSTRALIA PACIFIC COLLEGE
- ◯ AUSTRALIA TRAINING SOLUTIONS
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF COMMERCE
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN CAMPUS NETWORK - ACN
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills)
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (York Street, Sydney)
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF VOCATIONAL STUDIES
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION CENTRE
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN FASHION COLLEGE
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN IDEAL COLLEGE
- ◯ AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

- ◯ AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF NLP
- ◯ BCA NATIONAL TRAINING GROUP
- ◯ BEDFORD COLLEGE / BAPTIST
- ◯ BRAVO EDUCATION
- ◯ BRENT STREET
- ◯ BRIDGE BUSINESS COLLEGE
- ◯ BROADWAY BALLROOM
- ◯ CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE
- ◯ CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL
- ◯ CANTERBURY EDUCATION GROUP
- ◯ CANTERBURY LANGUAGE ACADEMY
- ◯ CARRICK
- ◯ CARRICK INSTITUTE
- ◯ CASS TRAINING INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
- ◯ CASTLE COLLEGE
- ◯ CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
- ◯ CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY
- ◯ CHARTERED SECRETARIES AUSTRALIA
- ◯ CHINESEFIRST LANGUAGE SCHOOL
- ◯ COFA George Street
- ◯ COFFEE SCHOOL
- ◯ COMMERCIAL ARTS TRAINING COLLEGE
- ◯ CORNELL INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY
- ◯ CP2000
- ◯ CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
- ◯ DEC - DENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE
- ◯ EF EDUCATION
- ◯ EF INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE SCHOOL
- ◯ ELLE IELTS
- ◯ ENGLISH AUSTRALIA
- ◯ ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPANY (Kent Street, Sydney)
- ◯ ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPANY (Sussex Street, Sydney)
- ◯ EORA TAFE
- ◯ ESTHER EDUCATION CENTRE
- ◯ EVOLUTION HOSPITALITY INSTITUTES
- ◯ FAST LANE
- ◯ FBI FASHION COLLEGE PTY LTD
- ◯ GLOBAL COLLEGE
- ◯ GOLDWELL BEAUTY TRAINING
- ◯ GREENWICH COLLEGE

- GROUP COLLEGES AUSTRALIA
- HARDIE HOLDING
- HERBARIUM - ECOLOGY DEPARTMENT
- HIGHER ED SYSTEMS
- HOLMES INSITUTE
- IDP
- IDP STUDENT SERVICES
- IH International School
- IIBIT
- ILSC
- INFRONT STAFFING
- INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS NETWORK (IBN)
- INTERNATIONAL FILM SCHOOL
- INTERNATIONAL WING CHUN ACADEMY
- ISBT UNSE PARTNERS
- ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE
- JALC
- JET ENGLISH COLLEGE
- JMC MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY
- JOHN IELTS
- KAPLAN AUSTRALIA
- KAPLAN INTERNATIONAL
- KAPLAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGES
- KENT INSTITUTE
- KENT INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY
- KING'S OWN INSTITUTE
- KINGSWAY INSTITUTE
- LA LINGUA LANGUAGES SCHOOL
- LA MART COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
- LANDMARK EDUCATION
- LAW EXTENSION COMMITTEE
- LEADING EDGE EDUCATION
- LEARNING LAB PTY LTD
- LETS EDUCATION - STEP ONE COLLEGE
- LKJ COLLEGE
- LLOYDS INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
- LOYAL AUSTRALIA COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS
- MACLEAY COLLEGE
- MACQUARIE INSTITUTE
- MACQUARIE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

- ○ MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
- ○ MAQUARIE EDUCATION GROUP AUSTRALIA
- ○ MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
- ○ MERCURY COLLEGE
- ○ MERCURY COLLEGES
- ○ METRO COLLEGE
- ○ MHM AUSTRALASIA PTY LTD
- ○ MOORE COLLEGE
- ○ MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
- ○ MYQUAL
- ○ NATIONAL ART SCHOOL
- ○ OCENIA KORYU CENTRE
- ○ OK SCIENCE AND LEARNING
- ○ ONSUNG INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE AUSTRALIA
- ○ PATISSE COOKING SCHOOL
- ○ PERFORMANCE EDUCATION
- ○ PIANO SCHOOL
- ○ PLAIN ENGLISH
- ○ QANTM COLLEGE
- ○ RACP
- ○ RICHARD CROSLAND SCHOOL OF FINE WOODWORK
- ○ ROYAL AUSTRALIA COLLEDGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS
- ○ ROYAL AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
- ○ RSA & RCG SCHOOL
- ○ SCHOOL OF COLOUR AND DESIGN
- ○ SCREEN WISE
- ○ SHILLINGTON COLLEGE
- ○ SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY
- ○ SPEC
- ○ SPRINGBOARDS PERFORMING ARTS
- ○ ST PATRICK'S BUSINESS COLLEGE
- ○ STAINBOROUGH WEMYSS
- ○ STEDMANS HOSPITALITY PERSONNEL AND TRAINING
- ○ STRATHFIELD COLLEGE
- ○ SUN INT BUSINESS TRAINING
- ○ SYDNEY COLLEGE OF ENGLISH
- ○ SYDNEY FILM SCHOOL
- ○ SYDNEY INTENSIVE SCHOOL FOR ENGLISH
- ○ SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
- ○ SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH COLLEGE

○ SYDNEY LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS

○ SYDNEY MECHANICAL SCHOOL OF ARTS

○ SYDNEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

○ SYDNEY THEATRE SCHOOL

○ SYDNEY TRAINING SCHOOL TAXI COLLEGE

○ TAFE - Sydney Institute

○ TEAM MISSION IMPOSSIBLE (George Street, Sydney)

○ THE COLLEGE OF LAW

○ THE CONTEMPORARY SINGING STUDIO

○ THE EDUCATION GROUP

○ THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

○ THE JULIAN ASHTON ART SCHOOL

○ THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

○ THE SPANISH CAT

○ THE SPANISH CAT LANGUAGE SCHOOL

○ THE SYDNEY BUSINESS AND TRAVEL ACADEMY

○ THE SYDNEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

○ THE SYDNEY COFFEE SCHOOL

○ TOP EDUCATION

○ UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

○ UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES (UNSW)

○ UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE (UON)

○ UNIVERSITY OF NORTE DAME

○ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND (USQ)

○ UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY (USYD)

○ UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA (UTAS)

○ UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY sYDNEY (UTS)

○ UNSW COFA

○ URBAN DANCE CENTRE

○ VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

○ VICTORY INSTITUTE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

○ VIRTUAL LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES LTD

○ VIVAT LEARNING

○ W.E.A. SYDNEY

○ WALES ACADEMY

○ WENDY DIXON MUSIC TEACHING

○ WHITEHOUSE INSTITUTE OF DESIGN

○ WILLIAM ANGLISS INSTITUTE

○ WIZARD CORPORATE TRAINING

◯ XL EDUCATION

◯ YVONNE SORAYA ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

◯ Other: ....

Living in Sydney

5. **Do you live in any of the following suburbs? If 'yes', please pick your suburb from the list below. If 'no', please select 'other' and write the name of your suburb.** *

Mark only one oval.

- ○ ALEXANDRIA (2015)
- ○ ANNANDALE (2038)
- ○ BEACONSFIELD (2015)
- ○ BROADWAY (2007)
- ○ CAMPERDOWN (2050)
- ○ CENTENNIAL PARK (2021)
- ○ CHINATOWN (2000)
- ○ CHIPPENDALE (2008)
- ○ CHURCH HILL (2000)
- ○ CIRCULAR QUAY (2000)
- ○ DARLING HARBOUR (2000)
- ○ DARLINGHURST (2010)
- ○ DARLINGTON (2008)
- ○ DAWES POINT (2000)
- ○ EAST SYDNEY (2010)
- ○ ELIZABETH BAY (2011)
- ○ ERSKINEVILLE (2043)
- ○ EVELEIGH (2015)
- ○ FOREST LODGE (2037)
- ○ GARDEN ISLAND (2000)
- ○ GLEBE (2037)
- ○ GOAT ISLAND (2090)
- ○ GOLDEN GROVE (2008)
- ○ HAYMARKET (2000)
- ○ HMAS KUTTABUL (2011)
- ○ KINGS CROSS (2011)
- ○ MACDONALDTOWN (2042)
- ○ MILLERS POINT (2000)
- ○ MOORE PARK (2021)
- ○ NEWTOWN (2042)
- ○ PADDINGTON (2021)
- ○ POTTS POINT (2011)
- ○ PYRMONT (2009)
- ○ REDFERN (2009)
- ○ ROSEBERY (2018)
- ○ RUSHCUTTERS BAY (2011)
- ○ ST JAMES (2000)

○ ST PETERS (2044)

○ STRAWBERRY (2012)

○ SURRY (2010)

○ SYDNEY (2000)

○ THE ROCKS (2000)

○ ULTIMO (2007)

○ Other: ....

Study and initial concerns

6. **What is your main area of study? You may select more than one.** *
   Check all that apply.

   ☐ Business

   ☐ Communication and media

   ☐ Design, architecture and building

   ☐ Education

   ☐ Engineering

   ☐ Information Technology (IT)

   ☐ Health

   ☐ International Studies

   ☐ Language

   ☐ Law

   ☐ Science

   ☐ English language

   ☐ Other: ....

7. **How long have you been studying in Australia?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ○ Less than 6 months

   ○ >6 months to 1 year

   ○ >1 to 2 years

   ○ >3 to 5 years

   ○ 5 years or more

8. **How long is your current course?** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ○ Less than 6 months

   ○ >6 months to 1 year

   ○ >1 to 2 years

   ○ >3 to 5 years

   ○ 5 years or more

9. **What were your main concerns before you arrived in Sydney? Please select up to three responses.** *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Where to stay
- [ ] Finding a job
- [ ] Speaking the language
- [ ] Cost of living
- [ ] Making friends from my culture
- [ ] Making local friends
- [ ] Doing well academically
- [ ] Getting used to the Australian culture
- [ ] Feeling safe
- [ ] Being accepted by the local Australian communities
- [ ] Living away from home
- [ ] Other: ....

10. **Now thinking about after your arrival in Sydney…What were your main concerns after you had been in Sydney for a few months? Please select up to three responses.** *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Where to stay
- [ ] Finding a job
- [ ] Speaking the language
- [ ] Cost of living
- [ ] Making friends from my culture
- [ ] Making local friends
- [ ] Doing well academically
- [ ] Getting used to the Australian culture
- [ ] Feeling safe
- [ ] Being accepted by the local Australian communities
- [ ] Living away from home
- [ ] Other: ....

Housing and accommodation

11. **Who do you live with?** *
Mark only one oval.

◯ I live alone

◯ I live with other students I didn't know before I arrived

◯ I live with friend(s)

◯ I live with people who are not students that I did not know before I arrived

◯ I live with family member(s) or partner

◯ I live with a local family that is not my own (homestay)

◯ Other: ....

12. **When I first came to Sydney, finding accommodation was...:** *
Mark only one oval.

◯ Extremely difficult

◯ Very difficult

◯ Moderately difficult   *Skip to question 15.*

◯ A little difficult   *Skip to question 15.*

◯ Not at all difficult   *Skip to question 15.*

Housing and accommodation: Initial difficulties

13. **You have indicated that finding accommodation was difficult for you when you first came to Sydney. Why was it difficult for you to find accommodation? Please select up to three responses.** *
Check all that apply.

☐ Cost (too expensive)

☐ Lack of information to assist in finding accommodation (I didn't know what to do or how to contact the appropriate people/organisation)

☐ Availability of housing within the area I was looking (I couldn't find housing within close proximity to where I study)

☐ Language difficulties

☐ Getting references

☐ Other: ....

Housing and accommodation: Initial difficulties

14. **You have indicated that finding accommodation was difficult for you when you first came to Sydney. How did this make you feel?** *

....

....

....

....

....

Housing and accommodation: Support

15. **When you first came to Sydney, did you receive any (information/financial) help or advice to find a place to live? ***
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No   *Skip to question 17.*

Housing and accommodation: Support

16. **You have indicated that when you first arrived in Sydney, you received help or advice to find a place to live. Who helped you? Please select up to three responses. ***
Check all that apply.

☐ University/college/education institution

☐ Friend/s

☐ Family

☐ Other: ....

Housing and accommodation: Current difficulties

17. **Have you experienced any negative issues with where you currently live? ***
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No   *Skip to question 19.*

Housing and accommodation: Current issues

18. **You have indicated that you have experienced negative issues with where you currently live. What is the reason for these issues? Please select up to three responses. ***
Check all that apply.

☐ My landlord does not treat me well

☐ I believe I pay too much rent

☐ My accommodation is not clean

☐ There are too many people living with me (overcrowded)

☐ I cannot study at home

☐ The building is not well-maintained

☐ Far away, I have to travel for a long time

☐ I am lonely

☐ Other: ....

Housing and accommodation: Previous issues

19. **Have you experienced any issues with where you have lived previously?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No   *Skip to question 21.*

Housing and accommodation: Previous issues

20. **You have indicated that you have experienced negative issues with where you have previously lived. What was the reason for these issues? Please select up to three responses.** *

Check all that apply.

☐ My landlord did not treat me well

☐ I believed that I paid too much rent

☐ My accommodation was not clean

☐ There were too many people living with me (overcrowded)

☐ I could not study at home

☐ The building was not well-maintained

☐ Far away, I had to travel for a long time

☐ I was lonely

☐ Other: ....

Type of accommodation

21. **What type of accommodation are you currently living in?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ In homestay, living with an Australian family   *Skip to question 22.*

◯ Student accommodation/purpose built student accommodation   *Skip to question 24.*

◯ In rental accommodation (flat, apartment, townhouse, house)   *Skip to question 26.*

◯ In a home you own (flat, apartment, townhouse, house)   *Skip to question 28.*

◯ Other: ....   *Skip to question 28.*

Homestay

22. **Have you been treated well by the family you live with?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes   *Skip to question 28.*

◯ No   *Skip to question 23.*

Homestay

23. **You have indicated that you have not been treated well by the family that you live with. What are some of your concerns? Please select up to three responses.** *
Check all that apply.

☐ Rent increase has been too high

☐ No response to complaints about maintenance

☐ I don't have a lease/contract

☐ The homestay family keeps letting more tenants move in

☐ Racism/prejudice

☐ Other: ....

Skip to question 28.

University/housing provider

24. **Have you been treated well by the university or housing provider?** *
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes   *Skip to question 28.*

◯ No   *Skip to question 25.*

University/housing provider

25. **You have indicated that you have not been treated well by the university or housing provider. What are some of your concerns? Please select up to three responses.** *
Check all that apply.

☐ Rent increase has been too high

☐ No response to complaints about maintenance

☐ I don't have a lease/contract

☐ The university/housing provider keeps letting more tenants move in

☐ Racism/prejudice

☐ Other: ....

Skip to question 28.

Landlord

26. **Have you been treated well by your landlord?** *
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes   *Skip to question 28.*

◯ No   *Skip to question 27.*

Landlord

27. **You have indicated that you have not been treated well by your landlord. What are some of your concerns? Please select up to three responses.** *
Check all that apply.

- [ ] Rent increase has been too high
- [ ] No response to complaints about maintenance
- [ ] I don't have a lease/contract
- [ ] Landlord keeps letting more tenants move in
- [ ] Racism/prejudice
- [ ] Other: ....

Skip to question 28.

Housing satisfaction

28. **Generally, how satisfied are you with your current accommodation?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Very satisfied
- ( ) Satisfied
- ( ) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ( ) Dissatisfied
- ( ) Very dissatisfied

Finance and employment

29. **What is your main source of income?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Scholarship from own country
- ( ) Australian scholarships for international students
- ( ) Part-time job
- ( ) Savings
- ( ) Parents/family
- ( ) Other: ....

30. **Are you currently, or have you previously, undertaken paid work in Sydney?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No   *Skip to question 36.*

Paid work

31. **You have indicated that you are currently, or have previously, undertaken paid work. What is/was your main reason for working? Please select up to three responses. ***

Check all that apply.

- ☐ School/university fees
- ☐ Pay for food and leisure
- ☐ Pay for accommodation
- ☐ Career and interests
- ☐ Experiencing Australian culture
- ☐ Learning English
- ☐ Savings
- ☐ Get local work experience
- ☐ To meet other people

32. **You have indicated that you are currently, or have previously, undertaken paid work. Thinking about all of the places where you have worked, how satisfied are/were you with your place/s of work overall? ***

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Very satisfied   *Skip to question 34.*
- ◯ Satisfied   *Skip to question 34.*
- ◯ Neither satisfied not dissatisfied   *Skip to question 34.*
- ◯ Dissatisfied
- ◯ Very dissatisfied

Lack of satisfaction: Paid work

33. **You have indicated that you are/were dissatisfied with your current or previous place of employment. Thinking about the places where you have worked, what are some reasons why you are/were not satisfied? Please select up to three responses. ***

Check all that apply.

- ☐ I don't/didn't get paid well
- ☐ My boss isn't/wasn't very nice to me
- ☐ I work/worked too many hours
- ☐ It is/was boring
- ☐ I don't/didn't get along with my boss
- ☐ I get/got bullied by the people I work with
- ☐ I don't/didn't feel confident
- ☐ I don't/didn't enjoy the type of work
- ☐ Other: ....

Treatment at work

34. **Thinking about how you are/were treated at work, which of the following statements applies to you? ***

Mark only one oval.

( ) I was treated fairly at work.   *Skip to question 36.*

( ) I was not treated fairly at work.

Unsatisfactory treatment: Work

35. **You have indicated that you are not/were not treated fairly at work. Why do you think you were not treated fairly? ***

Check all that apply.

[ ] I am a student

[ ] Because of my cultural background

[ ] Because I feel like I'm too slow

[ ] Because I don't have the right skills for the job

[ ] Because I can't speak fluent English

[ ] I am not an Australian citizen

[ ] I am young

[ ] Other: ....

Crime and safety

This is a map of City of Sydney boundaries. Please refer to this map when answering the following questions.
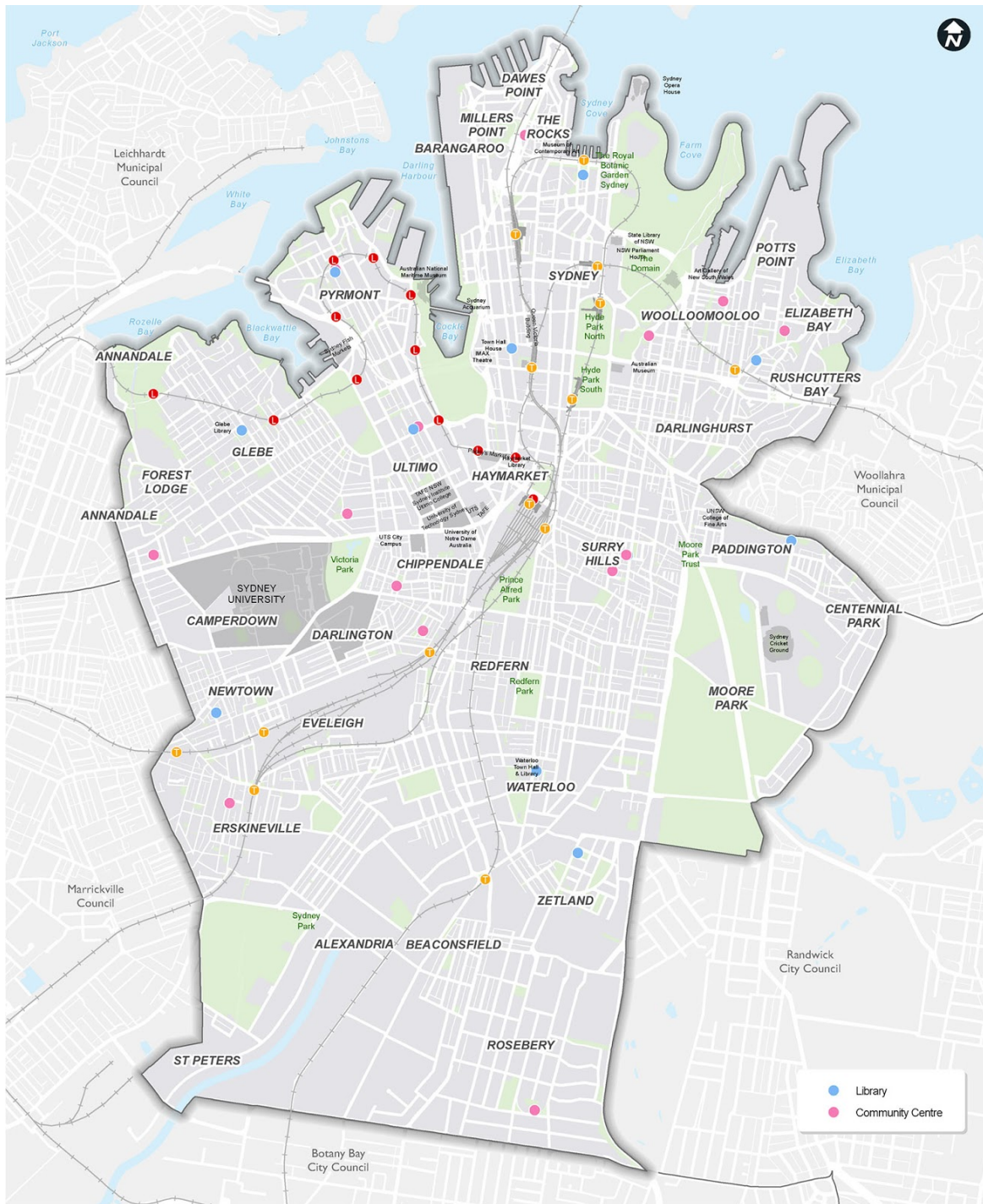
36. **Generally, how safe do you feel when you walk through the City of Sydney during the day? Please refer to the map to see where the City of Sydney boundaries are.** *

Mark only one oval.

⬭ Very safe

⬭ Safe

⬭ Unsafe

⬭ Very unsafe

37. **Generally, how safe do you feel when you walk through the City of Sydney at night? Please refer to the map to see where the City of Sydney boundaries are.** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Very safe

◯ Safe

◯ Unsafe

◯ Very unsafe

38. **Generally, how safe do you feel when you catch public transport during the day? Please refer to the map to see where the City of Sydney boundaries are.** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Very safe

◯ Safe

◯ Unsafe

◯ Very unsafe

39. **Generally, how safe do you feel when you catch public transport at night? Please refer to the map to see where the City of Sydney boundaries are.** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Very safe

◯ Safe

◯ Unsafe

◯ Very unsafe

40. **Looking at the map above, think about areas of the City of Sydney that you visit or have visited. These areas can be where you study or go to have fun, or areas near where you live. Where in the City of Sydney do you feel the safest?** *

41. **Looking at the map above, think about areas of the City of Sydney that you visit or have visited. These areas can be where you study or go to have fun, or areas near where you live. In which areas of Sydney do you feel the least safe?** *

42. **If you needed to, would you feel you could talk to / contact Sydney police?** *
Mark only one oval.

  ◯ Yes   *Skip to question 44.*

  ◯ No

Reason/s for not talking to/contacting Sydney police

43. **Why do you feel this way?** *
Check all that apply.

  ☐ I am scared to talk to/contact Sydney police

  ☐ I am not sure how talk to/contact Sydney police

  ☐ I don't trust police

  ☐ Other: ....

Wellbeing and health

44. **In general, how would you describe your physical health?** *
Mark only one oval.

  ◯ Excellent

  ◯ Good

  ◯ OK

  ◯ Poor

45. **In general, how do you feel emotionally?** *
Mark only one oval.

  ◯ Excellent

  ◯ Good

  ◯ OK

  ◯ Poor

46. **Generally, compared with when you were living in your home country, has your overall health (emotional and physical) in Sydney been:** *
Mark only one oval.

  ◯ Better

  ◯ About the same

  ◯ Worse

Overall satisfaction

47. **Thinking about all of the things you have responded to within this online survey how much would you agree with this statement…? "I enjoy living in Sydney!"** *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree or disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

48. **Thinking about all of the things you have responded to within this online survey how much would you agree with this statement…? "I enjoy studying in Sydney!"** *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Strongly agree
- ( ) Agree
- ( ) Neither agree or disagree
- ( ) Disagree
- ( ) Strongly disagree

49. **Would you recommend others to study in Sydney?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No   *Skip to question 51.*

Reasons for recommendation

50. **You have indicated that you would recommend others to study in Sydney. What is the reason for this?** *

....

....

....

....

....

Skip to question 52.

Reasons for lack of recommendation

51. **You have indicated that you would not recommend others to study in Sydney. What is the reason for this? ***

Programs and events for international students

52. **The following is a list of events/programs sponsored or organised by the City of Sydney. Please select any events/programs that you have attended or have participated in. ***

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students
- [ ] International Leadership and Ambassador Program
- [ ] Living in Harmony Festival
- [ ] Youth Week
- [ ] Pine Street Creative Arts Programs
- [ ] Spoken to City of Sydney staff at on campus orientation
- [ ] Art & About
- [ ] New Year's Eve
- [ ] Chinese New Year
- [ ] Sydney Rides Festival
- [ ] Vivid Festival
- [ ] Sydney Film Festival
- [ ] Other:

Future programs and events for international students

53. **What types of programs/ services and/or events could the City of Sydney provide in the future that would be of benefit to international students? ***

54. **Please list three (3) words that come to mind when you think of Sydney as a place to study.** *

....

....

....

....

....

Demographics

55. **What is your sex/gender?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Do not want to answer

◯ Other

56. **Where were you born?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ China

◯ Brazil

◯ Germany

◯ Hong Kong

◯ India

◯ Italy

◯ Korea

◯ Malaysia

◯ Nepal

◯ Spain

◯ Taiwan

◯ Thailand

◯ Vietnam

◯ Other: ....

57. **What is your first language?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Chinese
- ◯ English
- ◯ German
- ◯ Hindi
- ◯ Italian
- ◯ Korean
- ◯ Malay
- ◯ Nepali
- ◯ Portugese
- ◯ Spanish
- ◯ Thai
- ◯ Vietnamese
- ◯ Other: ....

58. **What is your relationship status?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Single
- ◯ Married
- ◯ De facto/partner but not married
- ◯ Divorced or separated
- ◯ Partner deceased

59. **My spoken English skills are...:** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Very good/ fluent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Average
- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Very poor

60. **My written English skills are...:** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Very good/ fluent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Average
- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Very poor

61. **How long have you been in Australia?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Less than 6 months

◯ >6 months to 1 year

◯ >1 to 2 years

◯ 3 to 5 years

◯ 5 years or more

Focus group/interview

62. **In addition to this online survey, we are conducting two (2) focus groups and ten (10) one-on-one (individual) telephone interviews. These focus groups and interviews will further explore the topic areas within this survey. If you choose to participate, you will receive a $20 gift voucher for your time. The focus groups and interviews will be approximately one hour in length. Are you interested in participating?** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes, I want to attend a one hour focus group or a telephone interview.

◯ No, I don't want to participate in a focus group or telephone interview.   *Skip to question 64.*

Focus group and/or interview participation

There are a limited number of spaces in the focus groups and interviews. Please sign up quickly to ensure we can include you!

63. **You have indicated your interest in participating in a focus group and/or an interview. Please provide your name, email address, and phone number below, so that we may contact you.** *

....

....

....

....

....

Prize

Please note that the details you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be linked to your responses. We will randomly assign all respondents an ID number.

64. **In order to win 2 x Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb vouchers please tell us in 25 words or less about one (1) experience you've had as an international student in Sydney. This experience can be positive or negative, but should be something that you have not shared in the survey yet. ***

....

....

....

....

....

65. **Please provide your NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER below so that we can contact with you if you win 2 x Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb vouchers. The winner will be contacted by 3 June, 2016. We will be in contact with the winner before we post the voucher to you to confirm the address to send the vouchers to. As mentioned above, the details you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be linked to your responses. Good luck and thank you. ***

....

....

....

....

....

Thank You

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and feedback in this research.

Need help?
- If you do have concerns about your emotional or physical health call Lifeline on 131 114.
- If you have concerns about legal issues contact the International Student Legal Advice Service on 02 9698 7645.
- If you come across advertisements or know of accommodation that you think looks unsafe or illegal, call the City of Sydney on 02 9265 9333 or head to cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/illegal-housing for more information.

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Appendix D.   Online survey Topline Report

RESEARCH ON THE
WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS

ONLINE SURVEY
TOPLINE REPORT
JUNE 2016

UTS:IPPG
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

UTS CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 00099F

ippg.uts.edu.au

OVERVIEW

> The Institute for Public Policy and Governance based at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS:IPPG) has been engaged by the City of Sydney (the City) to undertake research on the wellbeing of international students living and studying in the City.

> As part of this research, UTS:IPPG developed an online survey that was distributed to key stakeholders linked to the international student community in Sydney e.g. consulates, government departments/agencies, NGOs, universities and colleges and NSW Police.

> Stakeholders promoted the survey through their own networks, contacts and social media platforms.

> The survey was live for 26 days from Thursday 5 May to Tuesday 31 May, 2016.

> This document provides an overview of key findings from the survey.

RESPONDENT BREAKDOWN

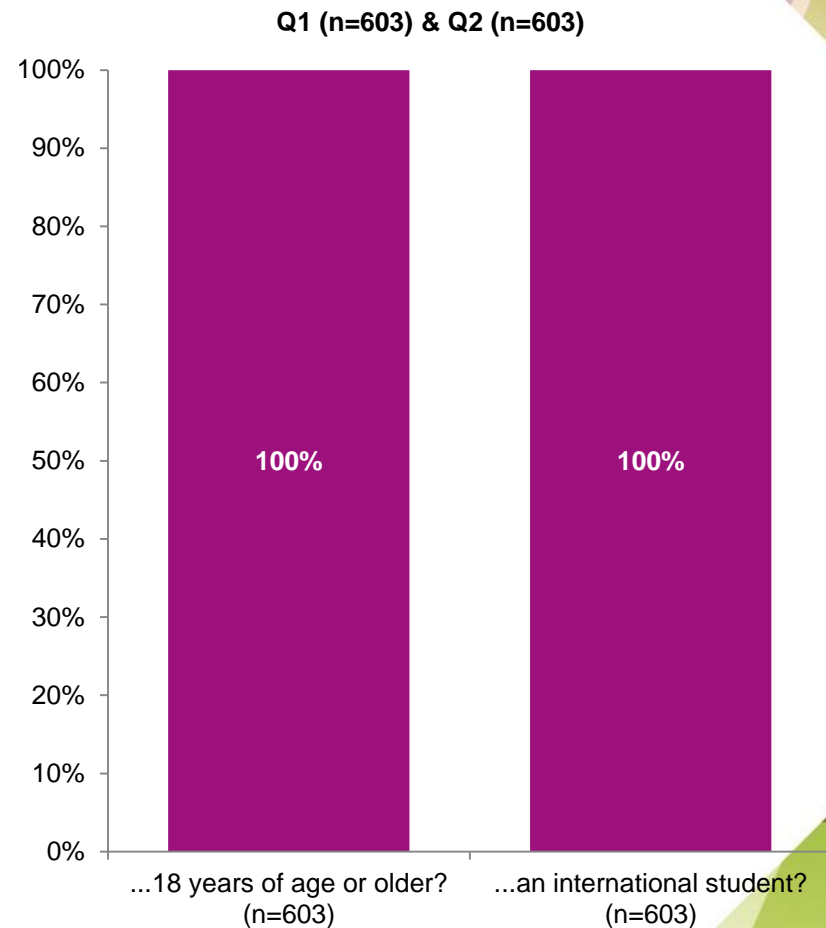| Number of Respondents…	Number
…who entered the survey	668
…with valid responses	663
…who are over the age of 18	650
…who are international students	633
…who study in an institution based in the City of Sydney	595
…who live in a City of Sydney suburb	228
…who either live and/or study within the City of Sydney	603
Total number of valid respondents	**603**

For the purpose of this survey, the City was interested in respondents who either lived and/or studied in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

A total of 603 responses to the survey were considered valid for analysis.

Screener questions

ARE YOU 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?
ARE YOU AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT?

- A pre-requisite of participating in the online survey was that respondents had to be:
  - 18 years or older, and
  - an international student.
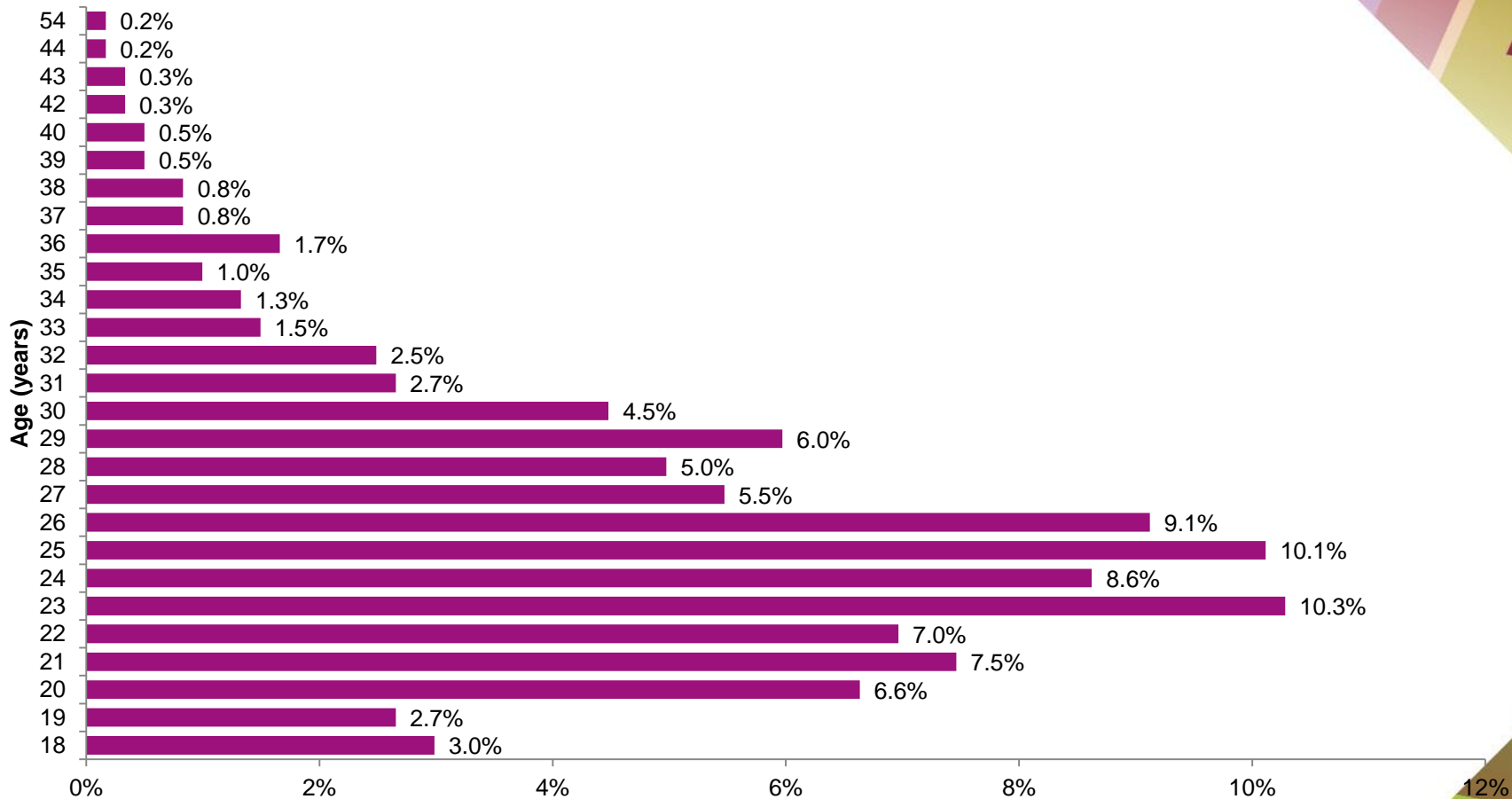
Q1 (n=603) & Q2 (n=603)

Bar chart showing:
- ...18 years of age or older? (n=603): 100%
- ...an international student? (n=603): 100%

WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

Q3 (n=603)

Overall, the most common age of respondents was 23 years old (10.3%), followed by 25 years old (10.1%) and 26 years old (9.1%).

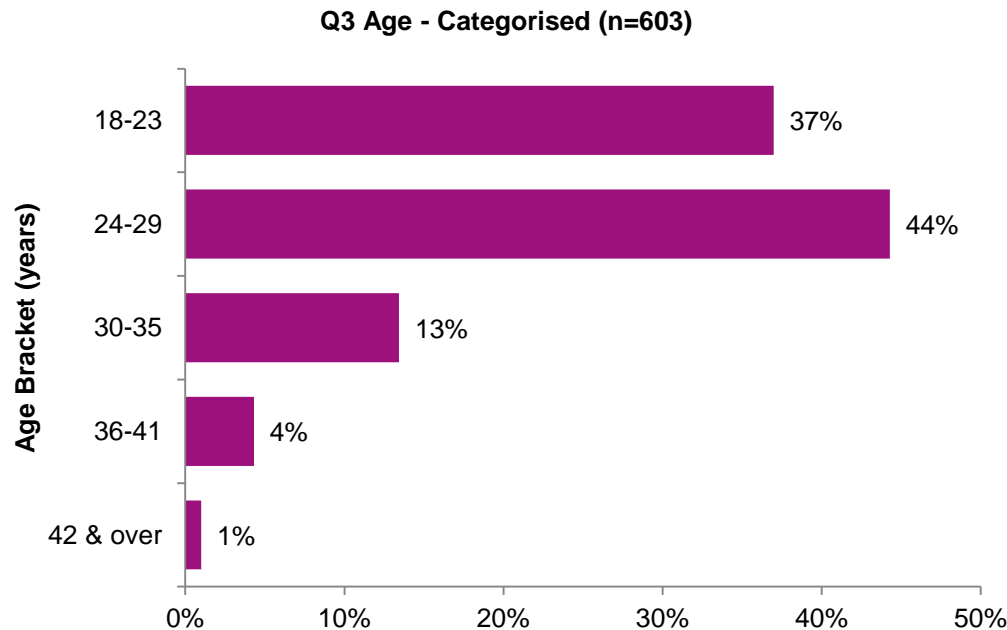# WHAT IS YOUR AGE? - CATEGORISED

Q3 Age - Categorised (n=603)

Age Bracket (years)

- 18-23 — 37%
- 24-29 — 44%
- 30-35 — 13%
- 36-41 — 4%
- 42 & over — 1%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

Approximately four out of five respondents were aged between 18 and 29 years (81%, n=490).

Min. age is 18 years old

Max. age is 54 years old

Most common age is 23 years old

Median age is 25 years old

Demographic questions

WHAT IS YOUR SEX/GENDER?
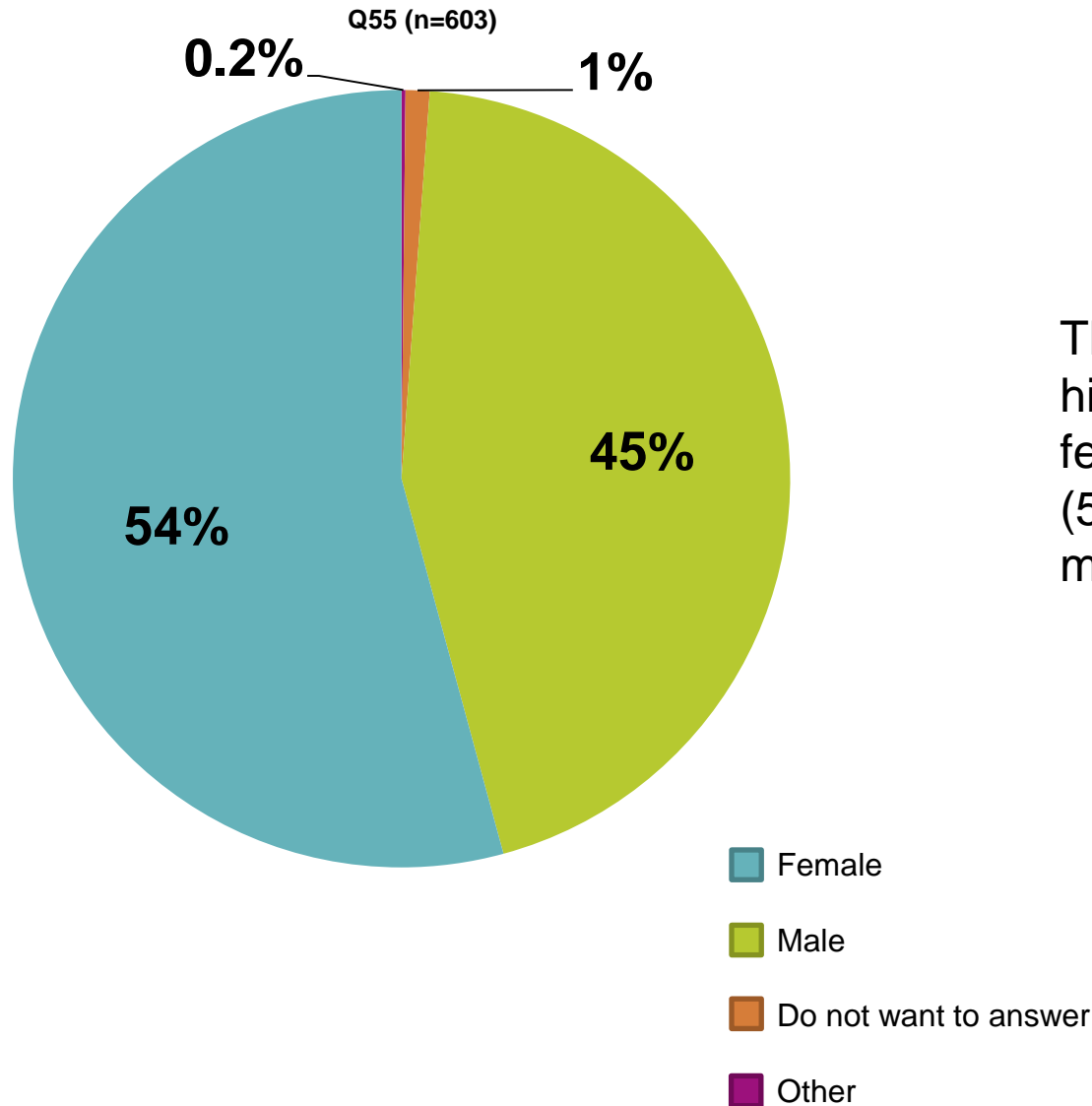
Q55 (n=603)

0.2%

1%

45%

54%

Female

Male

Do not want to answer

Other

There was a slightly higher percentage of female respondents (54%) compared to male (45%).

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WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP STATUS?

Q58 (n=603)
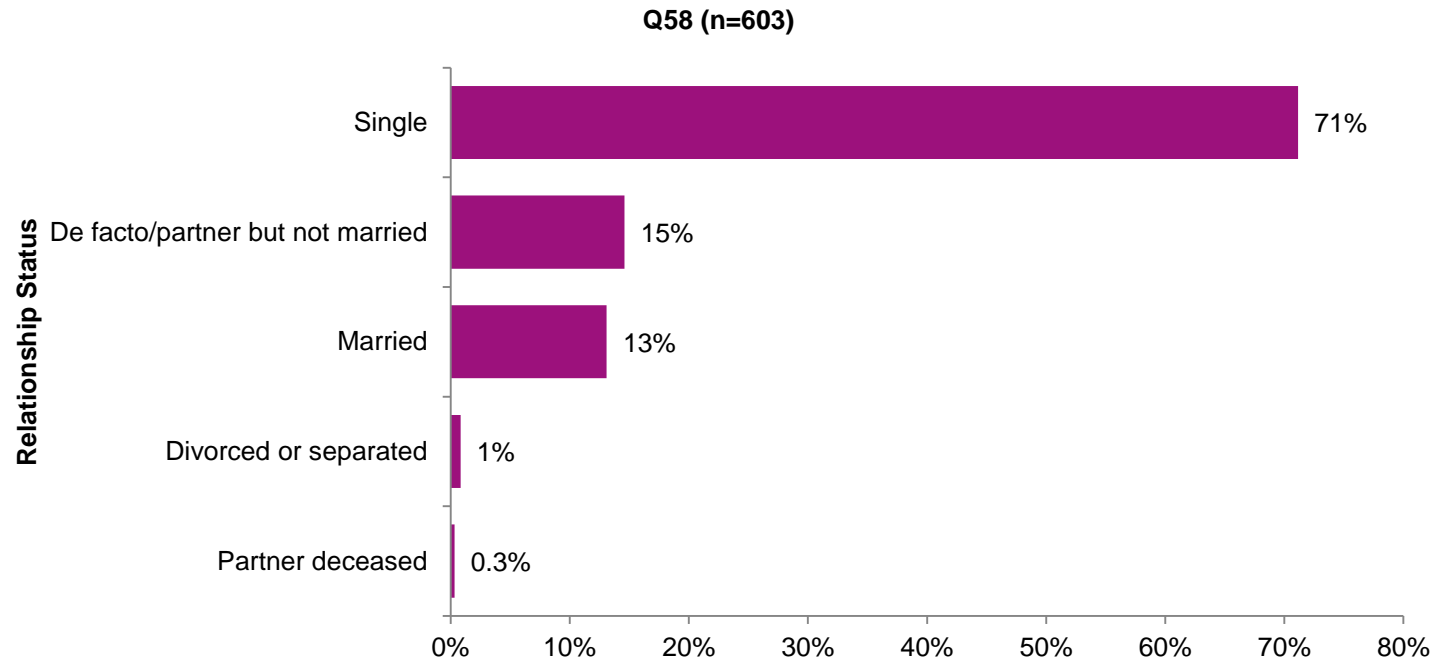
The majority of respondents identified as being single (71%), followed by de facto/partner (15%) and married (13%).

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

Q56 (n=603)

The most common responses for country of birth were:
- India (n=74)
- China (n=56)
- Brazil (n=53)

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE?

Q57 (n=603)
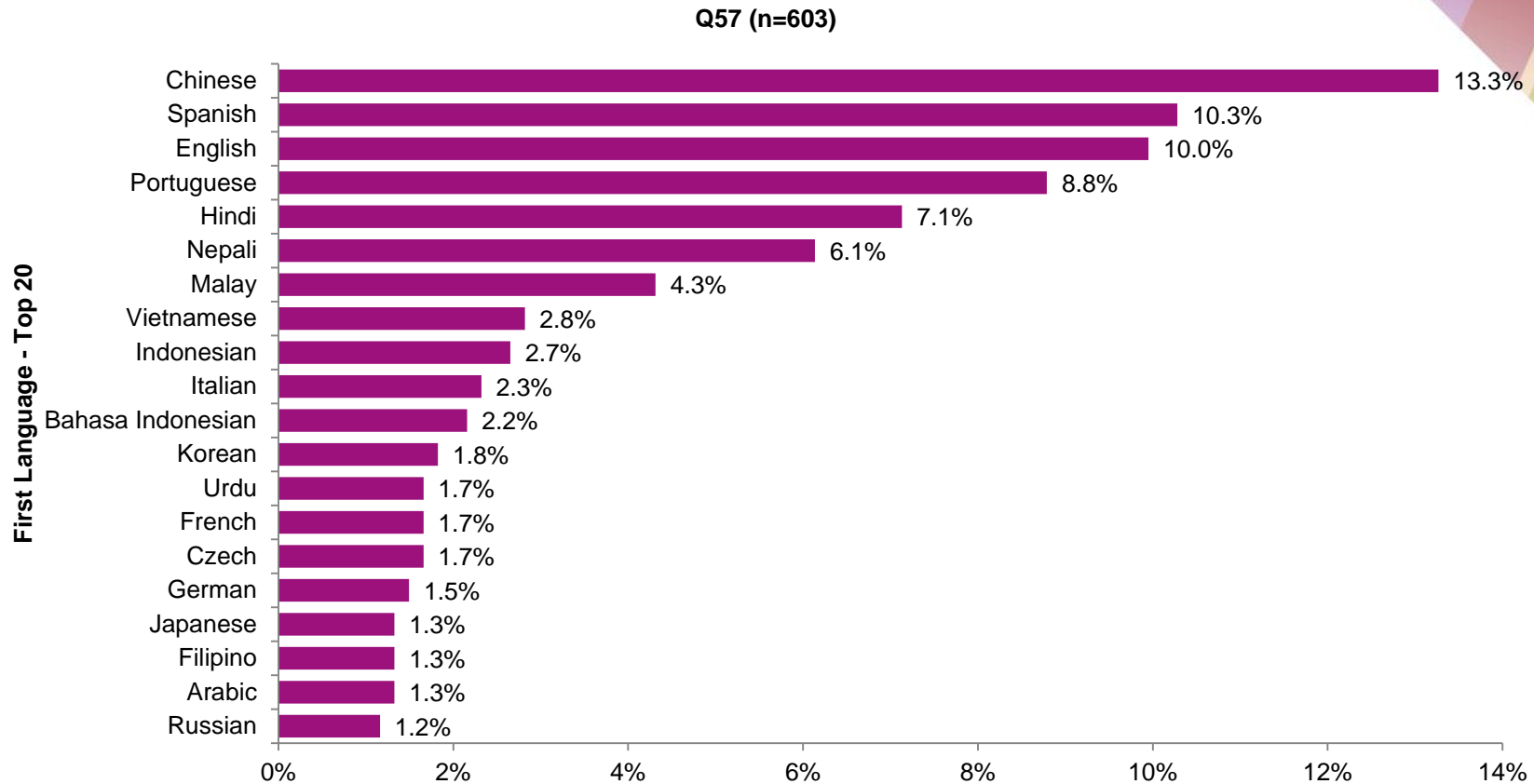
The most common responses for first language were:
- Chinese (n=80)
- Spanish (n=62)
- English (n=60)

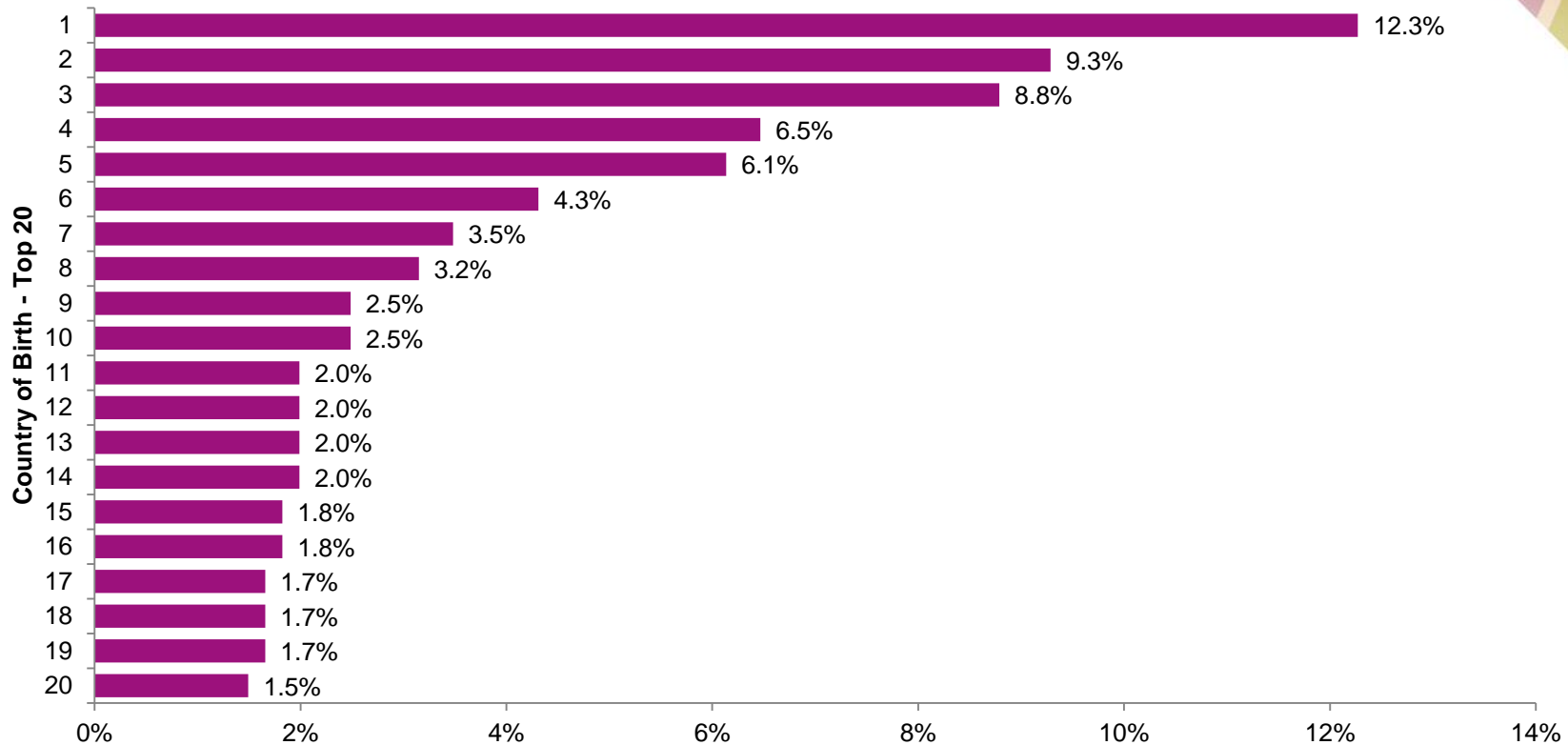# MY SPOKEN ENGLISH SKILLS ARE…
MY WRITTEN ENGLISH SKILLS ARE...
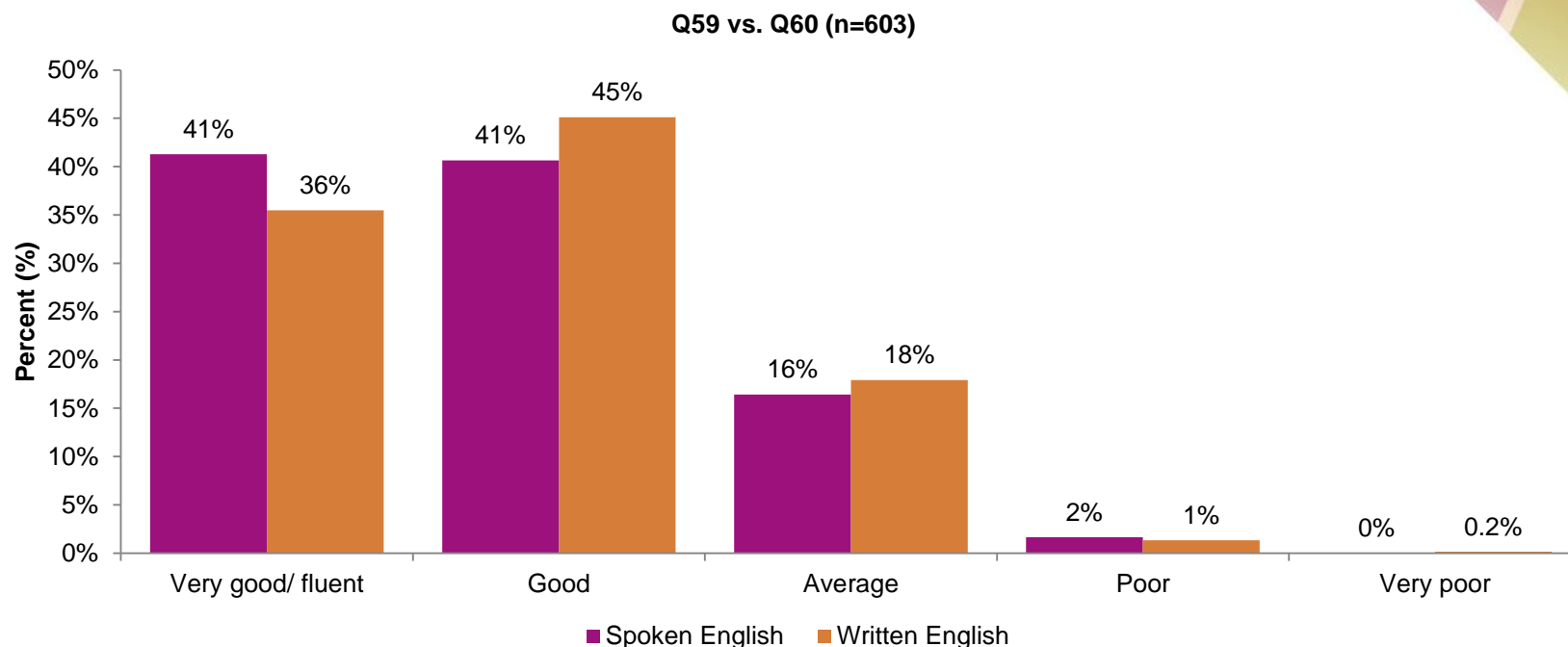
Q59 vs. Q60 (n=603)

Respondents were asked to indicate what they thought of their spoken and written English skills…

- On average, respondents rated their English language skills overall as being 'good' (43% total n=517).
- Respondents were more likely to feel that their written English skills are 'good' (45% n=272), than their spoken English skills (41% n=245).

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN AUSTRALIA?

Q61 (n=603)
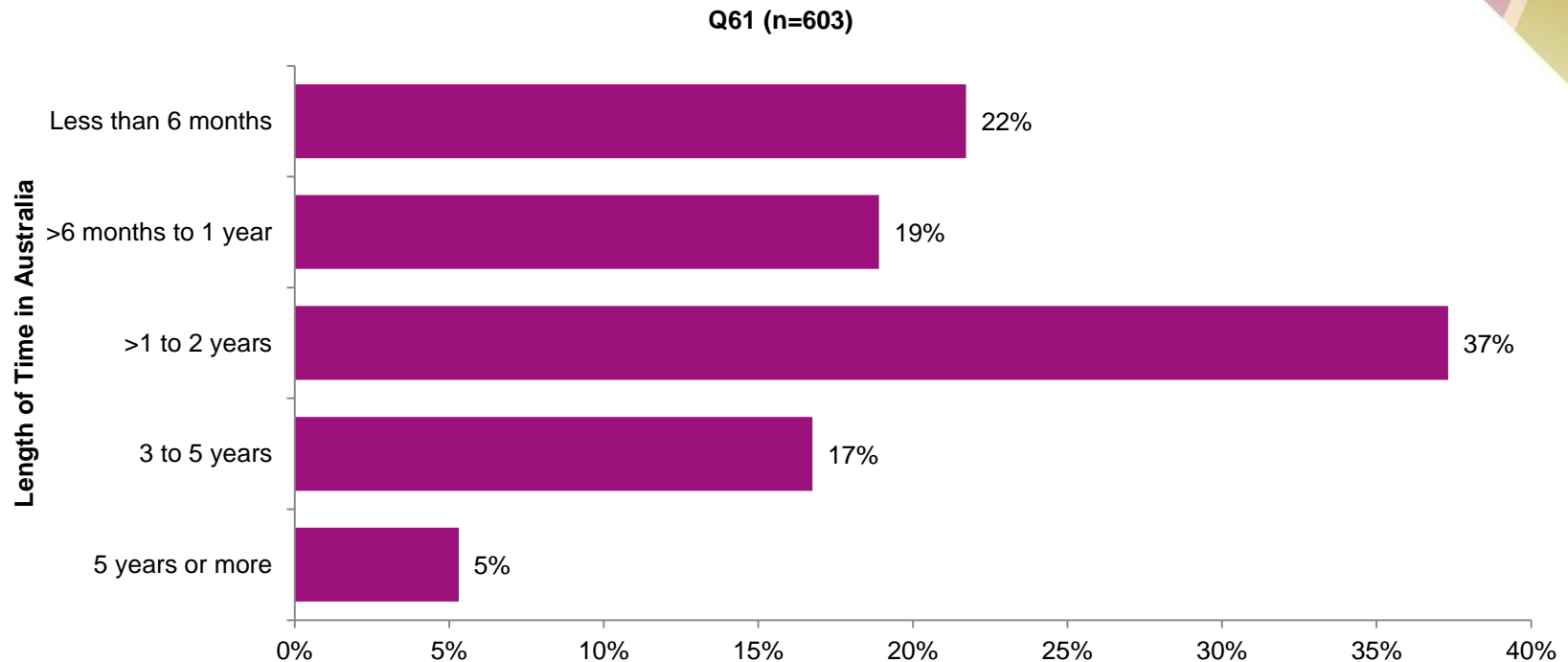
37% of respondents (n=225) had been living in Australia for more than one, but less than two years, with the overall majority being in Australia for two years or less (78% n=470).

Studying in Sydney

DO YOU STUDY AT ANY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS?

Q4 (n=603)

Education Institutions - Top 20

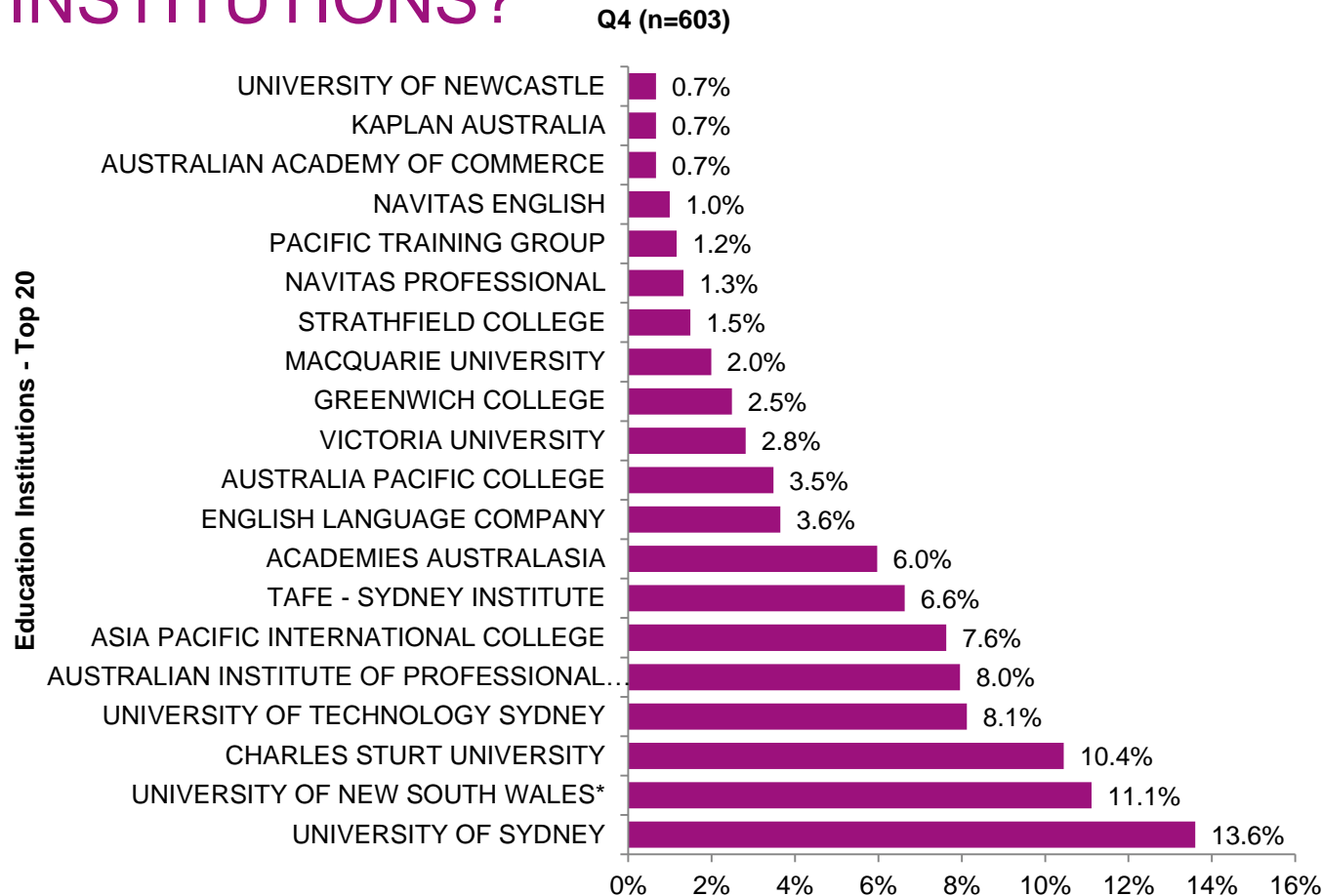| Institution	Percentage
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE	0.7%
KAPLAN AUSTRALIA	0.7%
AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF COMMERCE	0.7%
NAVITAS ENGLISH	1.0%
PACIFIC TRAINING GROUP	1.2%
NAVITAS PROFESSIONAL	1.3%
STRATHFIELD COLLEGE	1.5%
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY	2.0%
GREENWICH COLLEGE	2.5%
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY	2.8%
AUSTRALIA PACIFIC COLLEGE	3.5%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPANY	3.6%
ACADEMIES AUSTRALASIA	6.0%
TAFE - SYDNEY INSTITUTE	6.6%
ASIA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE	7.6%
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL…	8.0%
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY	8.1%
CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY	10.4%
UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES*	11.1%
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY	13.6%

99% of respondents (n=595) attended an education institution based in the City.

The most commonly attended education institutions of students were the University of Sydney (14% n=82), followed by the University of New South Wales (11% n=67), and Charles Sturt University (10% n=63).

Note: Although UNSW is not located within the City LGA, it has been included as there is a high likelihood of UNSW students accessing services and facilities within the City due to close proximity and transport connections.

DO YOU LIVE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SUBURBS? – SUBURBS/LOCALITIES BASED IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY

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Q5 (n=228)

City of Sydney Suburb/Locality - Top 22

| Suburb	Value
SYDNEY	40
ULTIMO	25
CHIPPENDALE	20
SURRY HILLS	16
REDFERN	15
PYRMONT	12
CAMPERDOWN	11
NEWTOWN	9
HAYMARKET	7
GLEBE	6
DARLINGHURST	6
ZETLAND	5
ROSEBERY	5
KINGS CROSS	5
EAST SYDNEY	5
DARLINGTON	5
ALEXANDRIA	5
FOREST LODGE	4
WATERLOO	3
PADDINGTON	3
ERSKINEVILLE	3
ELIZABETH BAY	3
BROADWAY	3
WOOLLOOMOOLOO	2
CHINATOWN	2
ANNANDALE	2
THE ROCKS	1
POTTS POINT	1
MOORE PARK	1
MILLERS POINT	1
GOAT ISLAND	1
CENTENNIAL PARK	1

38% of respondents (n=228) live in a suburb within the City.

# DO YOU LIVE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SUBURBS? TOP 22 SUBURBS

Q5 (n=603)
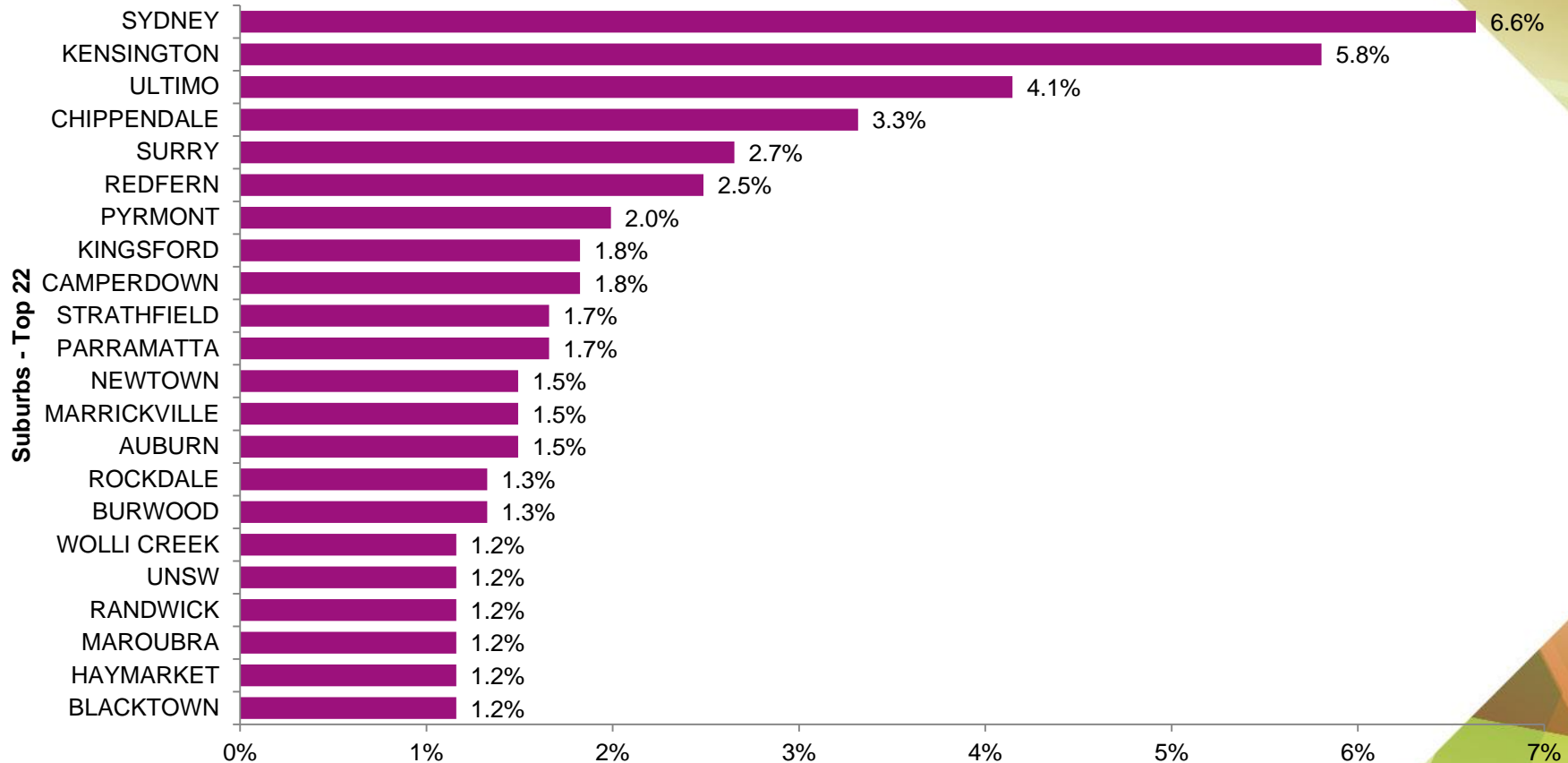
However, the majority of respondents (62% n=375) live in suburbs outside the City. Most commonly Kensington, Kingsford and Strathfield.
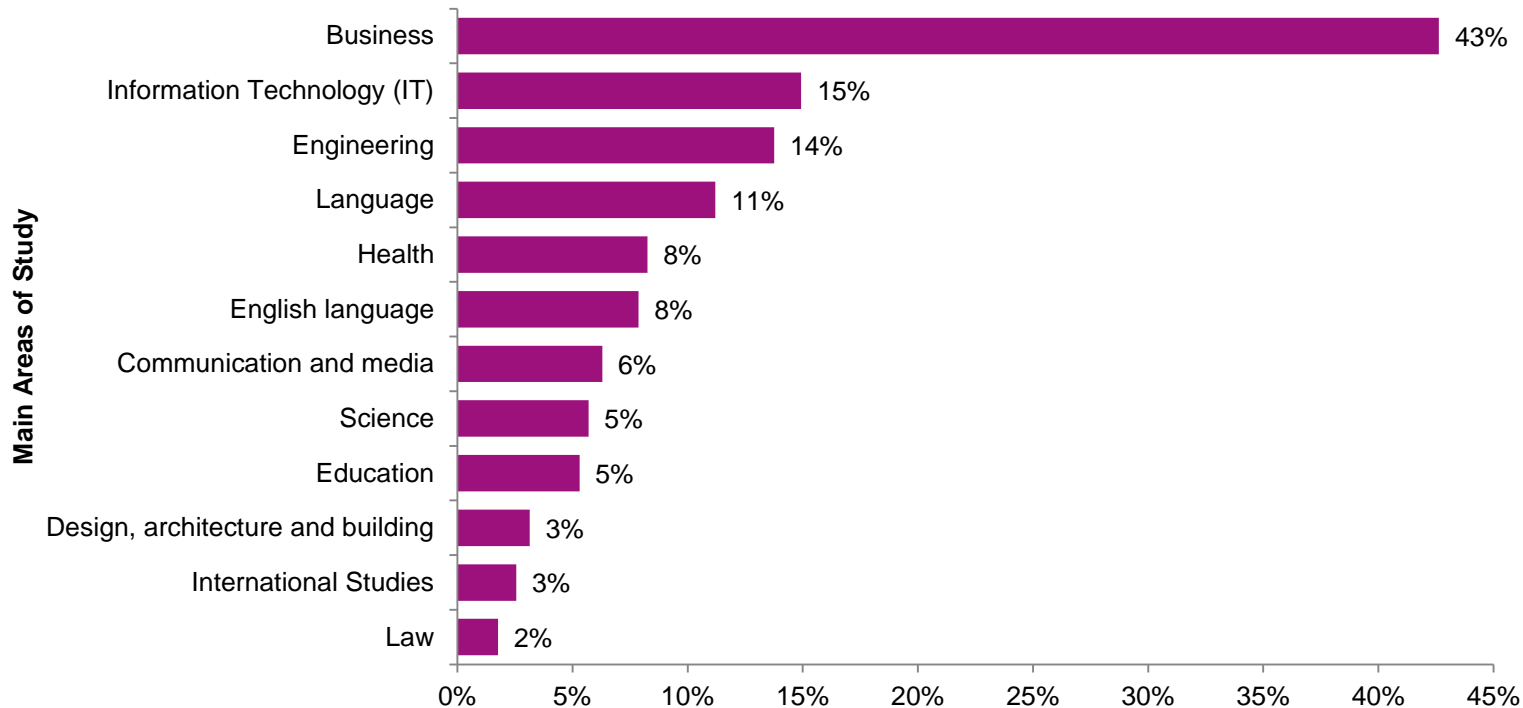
IS THE NOMINATED EDUCATION INSTITUTION LOCATED IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY?
IS THE NOMINATED SUBURB LOCATED IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY?

Respondents were more likely to study in the City of Sydney (99%), than live in the City of Sydney (38%).

Q4 (n=603) & Q5 (n=603)

■ Institution ■ Suburb
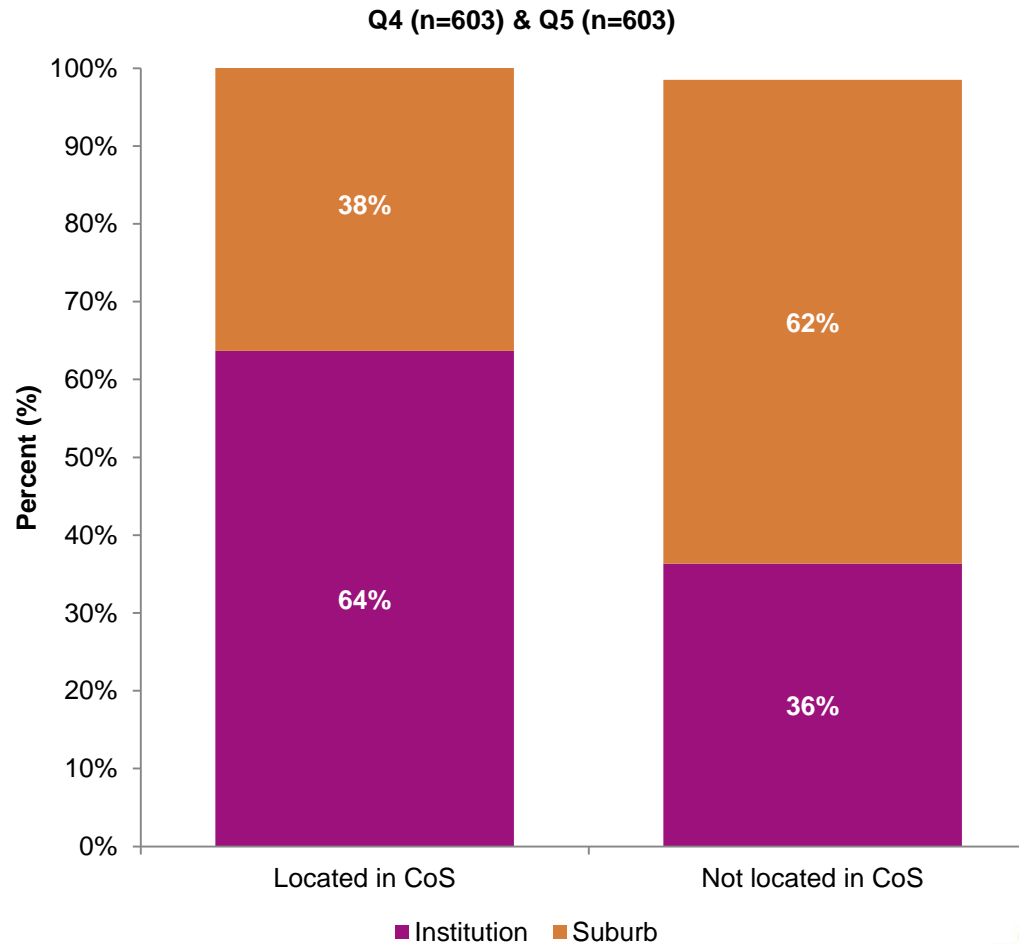
WHAT IS/ARE YOUR MAIN AREA/S OF STUDY?

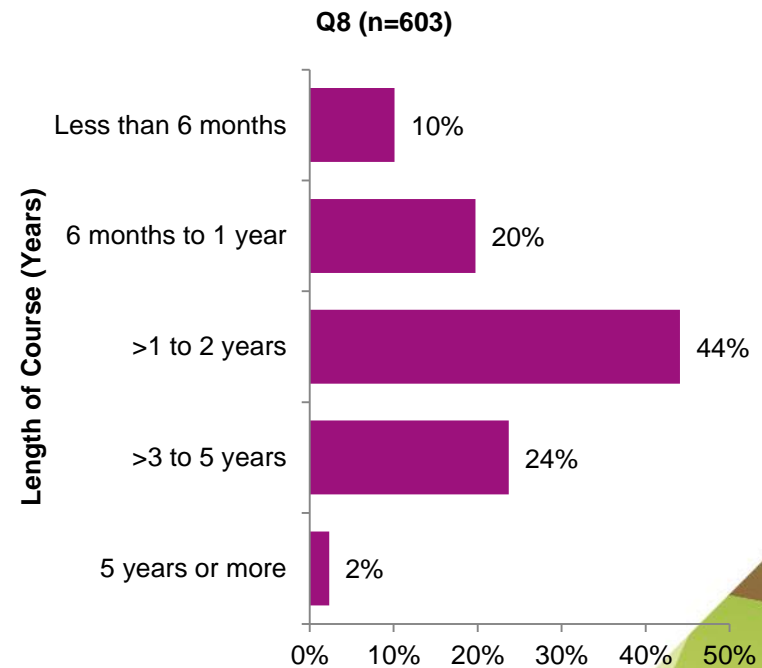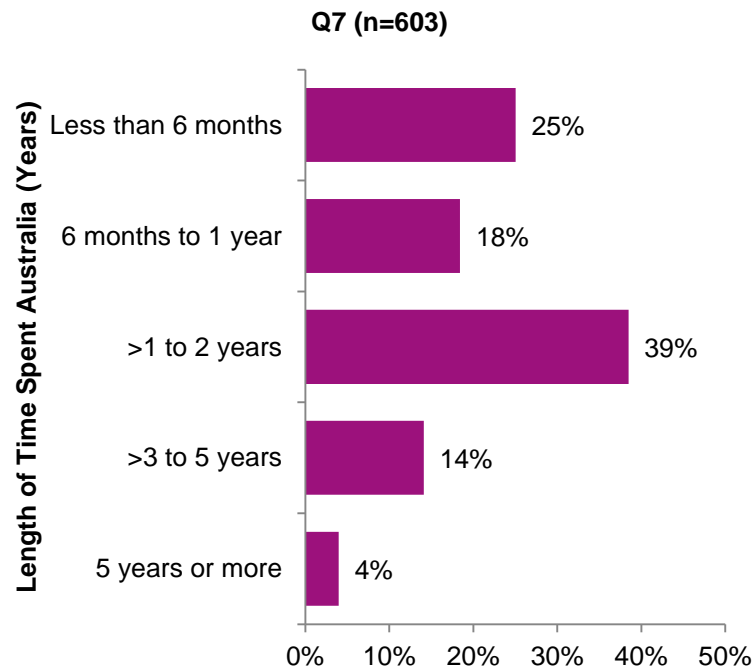**Q6 (number of responses=628; number of respondents=509)**

Respondents were most likely to be studying business (43% responses=217), followed by IT (15% responses=76).

Note: as this was a multiple response question, respondents were able to select multiple areas of study. Percentages are calculated using the number of respondents as the denominator, as opposed to the number of responses.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA?
HOW LONG IS YOUR CURRENT COURSE?

39% of respondents have been studying in Australia for 1-2 years (39% n=232).

44% of respondents' current courses are 1-2 years in length (44% n=266).

Q7 (n=603)

Length of Time Spent Australia (Years)

Less than 6 months	25%
6 months to 1 year	18%
>1 to 2 years	39%
>3 to 5 years	14%
5 years or more	4%

Q8 (n=603)

Length of Course (Years)

Less than 6 months	10%
6 months to 1 year	20%
>1 to 2 years	44%
>3 to 5 years	24%
5 years or more	2%

MAIN CONCERNS: COMPARISON - BEFORE ARRIVAL AND AFTER ARRIVAL

Q9 vs. Q10
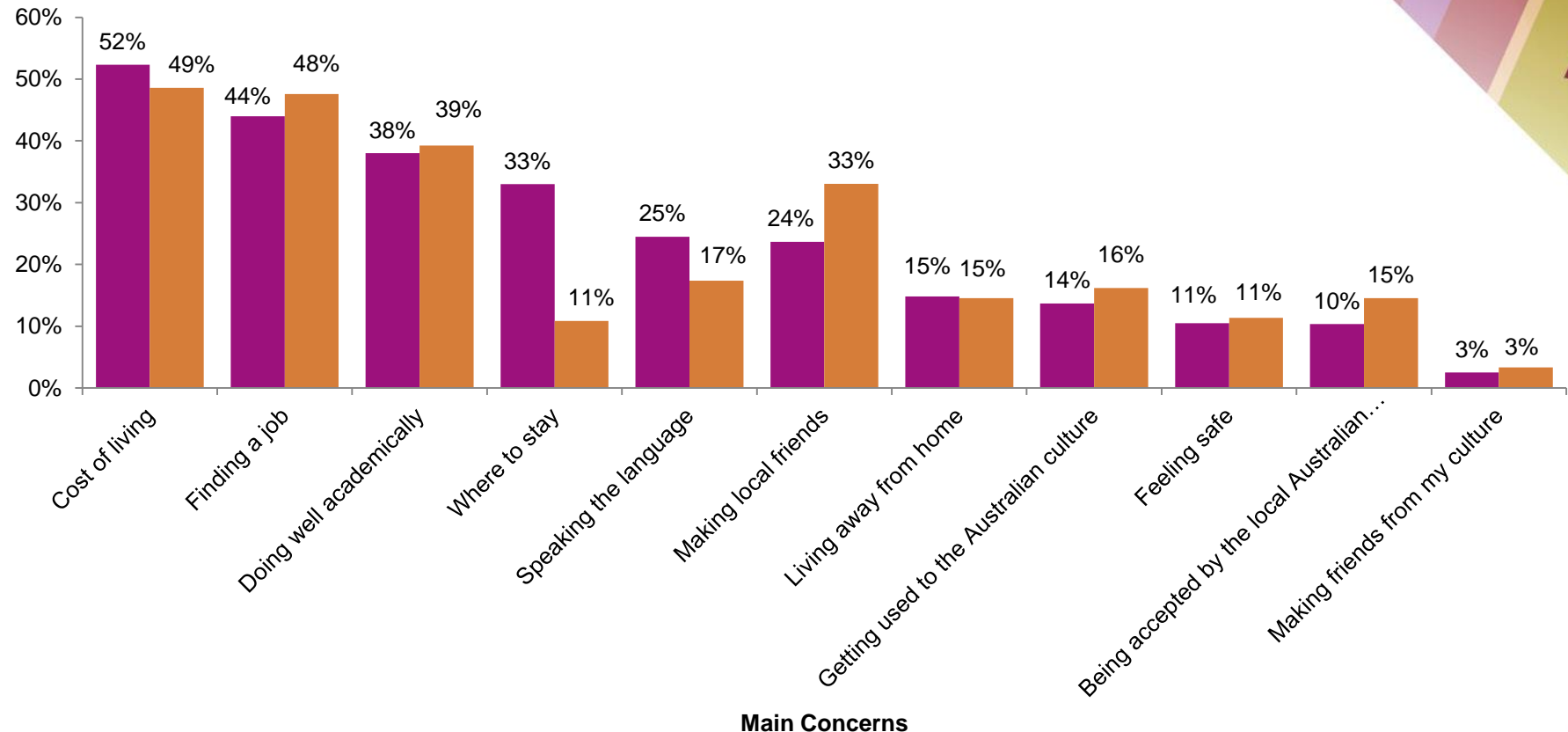
Before Arrival (responses=1604; respondents=600)   After Arrival (responses=1537; respondents=599)

- Main concerns prior to arrival were the cost of living (52% responses=314); finding a job (44% responses=264); and doing well academically (38% responses=228). These also remained the main concerns for students after arrival.
- Finding a job and doing well academically increased after arrival, while concerns regarding cost of living decreased.

Housing & accommodation

WHO DO YOU LIVE WITH?

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Q11 (n=603)
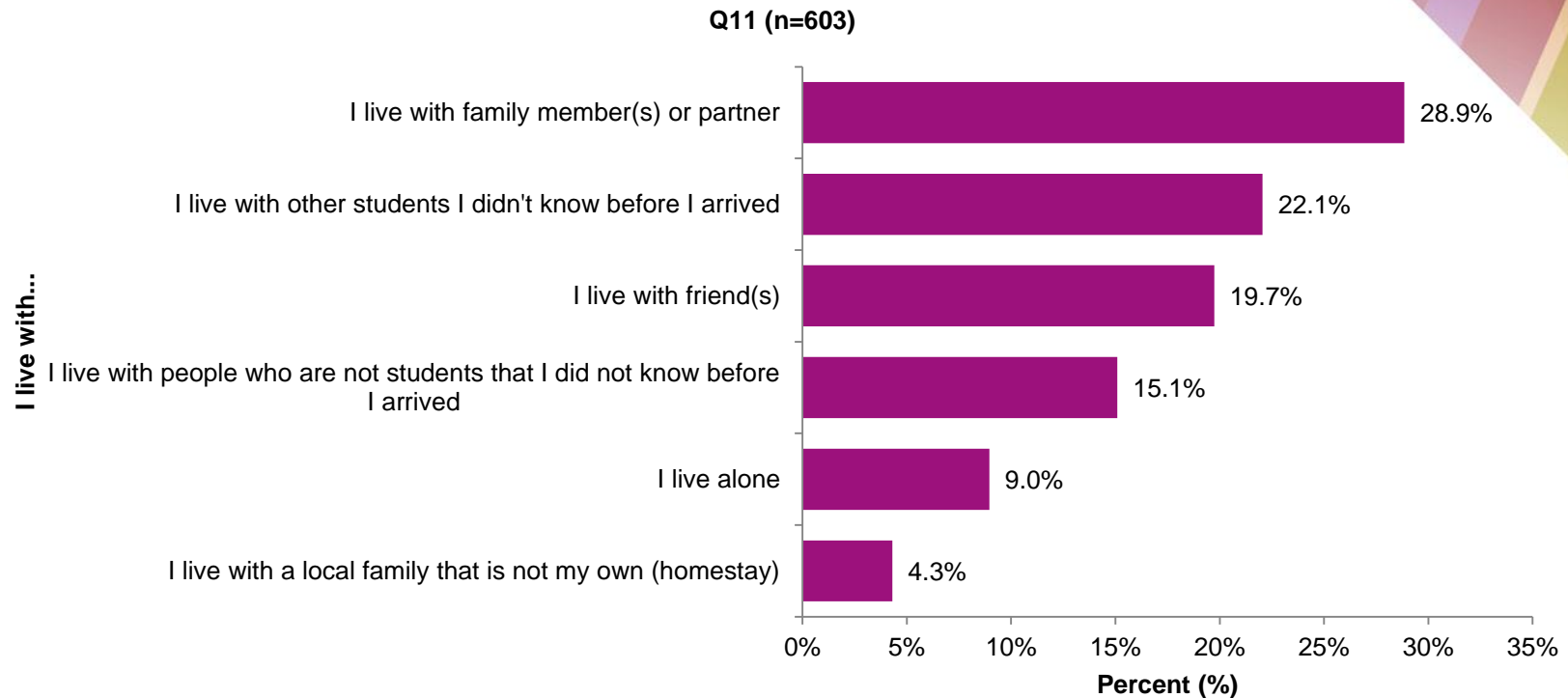
- Respondents were most likely to live with family members or partners (29% n=174).
- Respondents were least likely to live with a homestay family (4% n=26).

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WHEN I FIRST CAME TO SYDNEY, FINDING ACCOMMODATION WAS...

Q12 (n=603)
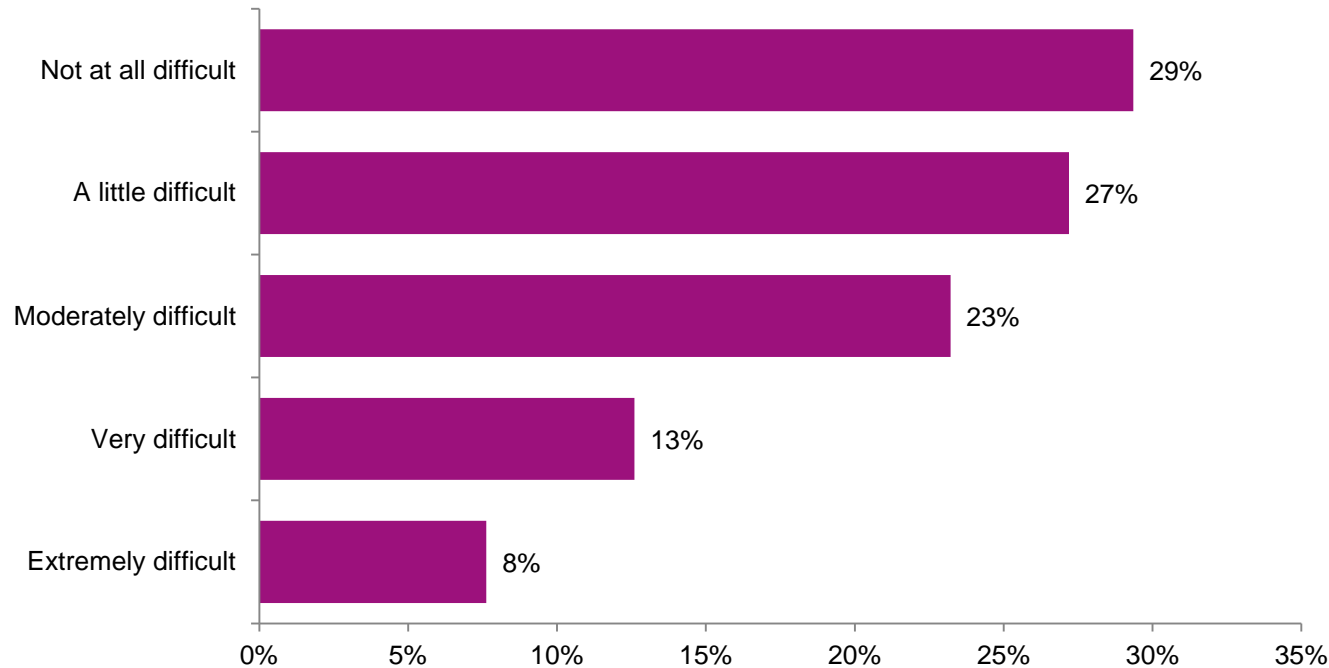
- Over half (57% n=341) of respondents indicated that finding accommodation upon arrival in Sydney was 'a little' or 'not at all' difficult.
- Approximately 20% of respondents stated finding accommodation was either 'very' (n=76) or 'extremely' (n=46) difficult.

WHY WAS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO FIND ACCOMMODATION?

Respondents were then asked why they found it difficult to find accommodation…

Q13 (number of responses=235; number of respondents=120)
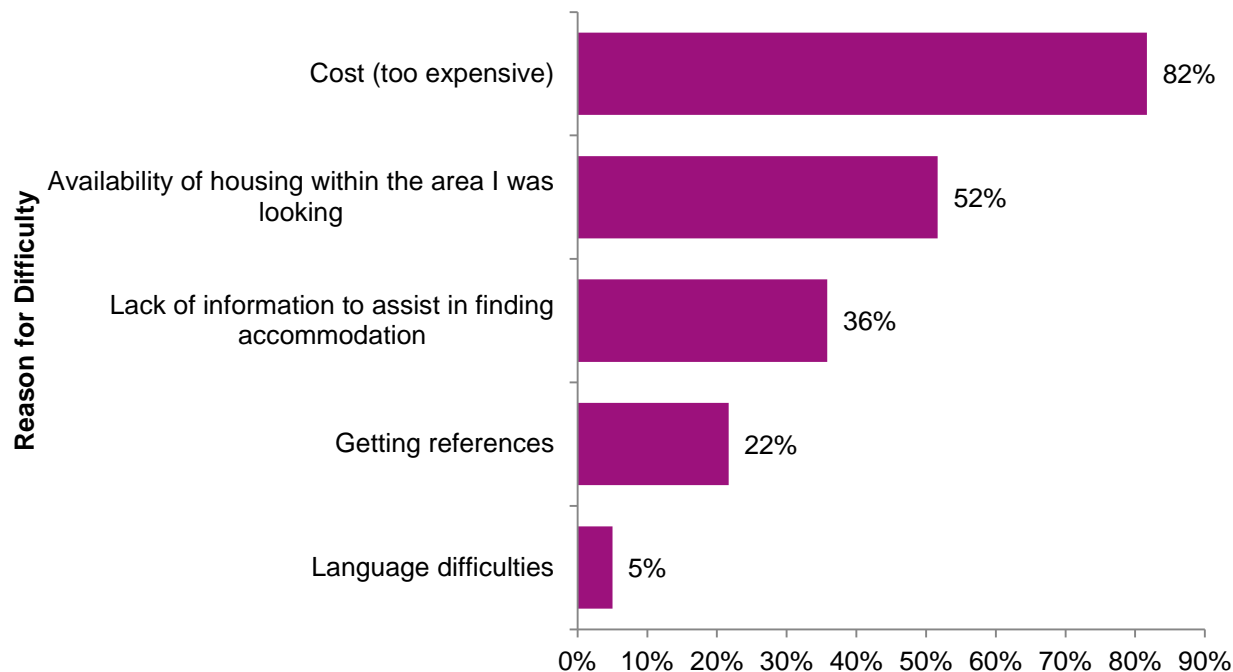
The majority of respondents indicated cost of accommodation (82% responses=98) being the primary cause of difficulty, followed by housing availability in the desired area (52%, responses=62).

WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO SYDNEY, DID YOU RECEIVE ANY (INFORMATION/FINANCIAL) HELP OR ADVICE TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE?

Q15 (n=603)

55% 45%

Yes ▮ No ▮
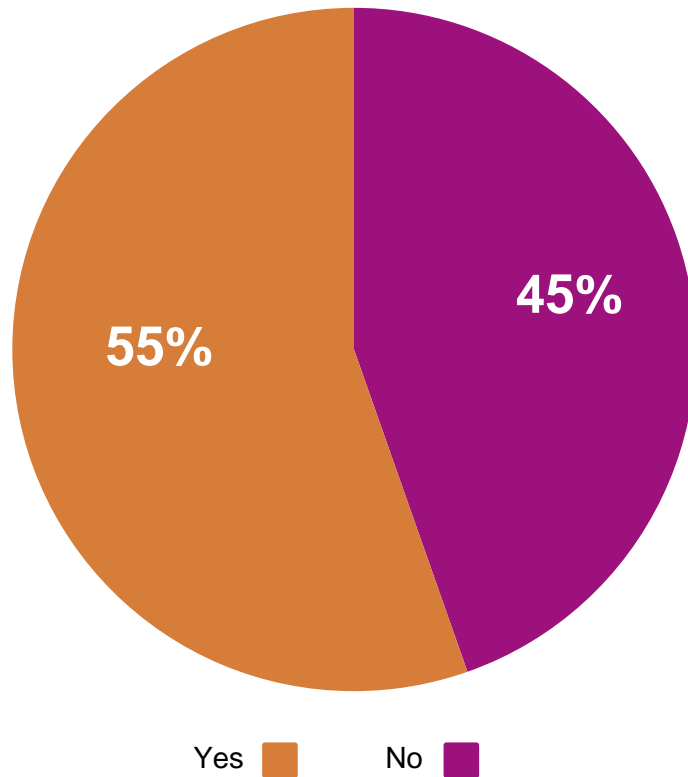
More than half of respondents (55% n=334) received a form of support to find a place to live upon arrival in Sydney.

WHO HELPED YOU FIND A PLACE TO LIVE?

Respondents that identified that they received some form of support (information/financial) were then asked to specify the source of assistance…

Q16 (number of responses=412; number of respondents=328)
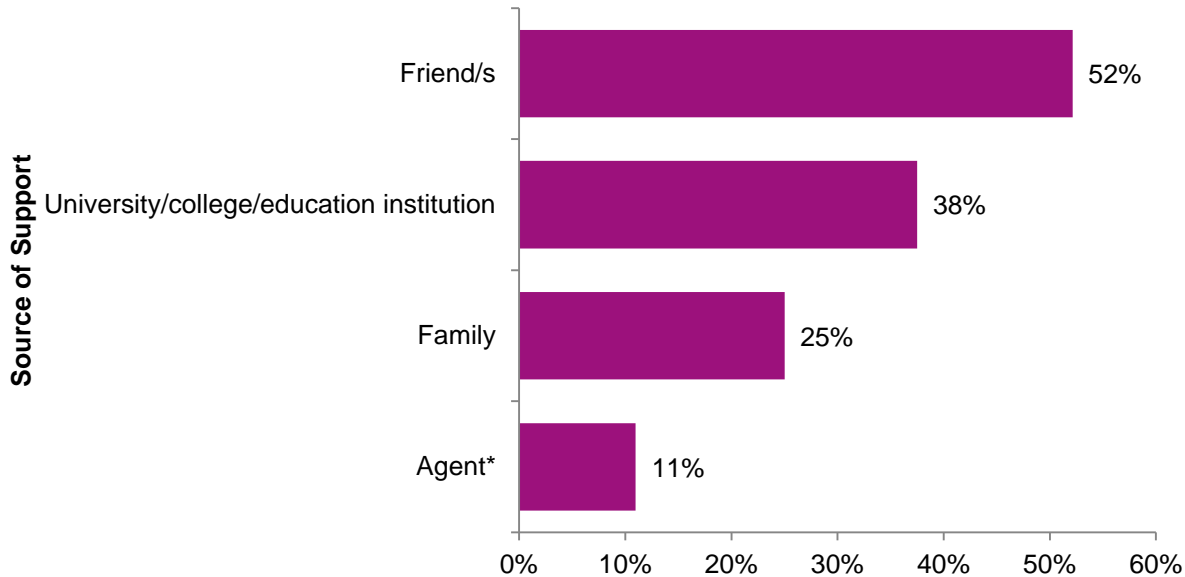
Assistance was most likely to be given by friends (52% responses=171), followed by assistance from the education institution or its staff** (38% responses=123).

*Please note: Given the popularity of 'Agent' as a specification under the 'Other' category, 'Agent' has been added to the original set of categories.
**Please note: Where respondents specified alternative sources of support under the 'other' category' and these included staff based at education institutions, these responses were added to the 'university/college/education institution' category.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY NEGATIVE ISSUES WITH WHERE YOU LIVE/HAVE LIVED COMPARISON - CURRENT VS. PREVIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Q17 vs. Q19 (n=603)

Bar chart showing "Issues with Accommodation" comparing Current Accommodation and Previous Accommodation:
- No: Current Accommodation 71%, Previous Accommodation 72%
- Yes: Current Accommodation 29%, Previous Accommodation 28%

Legend: ■ Current Accommodation ■ Previous Accommodation
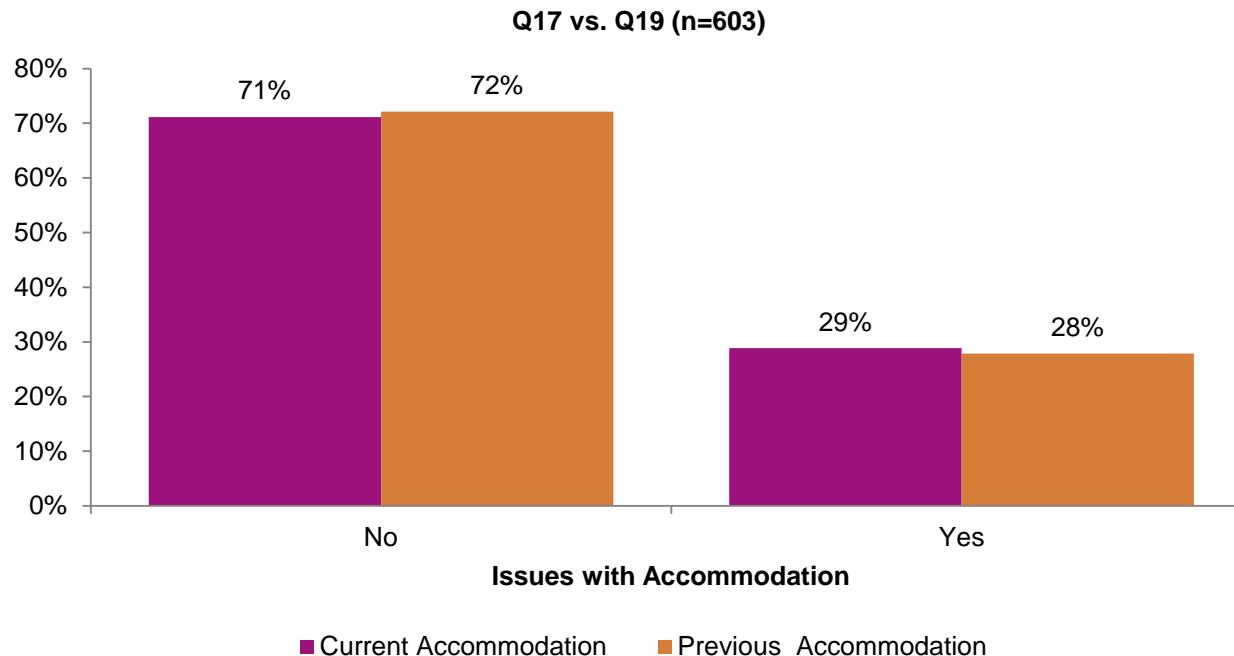
• Most respondents indicated they did not experience any issues with accommodation (72% n=864).
• There was little change between the percentage of respondents who report experiencing no issues with their current (71% n=429) and previous accommodations (72% n=435).

NEGATIVE ISSUES WITH ACCOMMODATION – CURRENT VS. PREVIOUS

Q18 vs. Q19

Issues with Accommodation

■ Current (responses=259; respondents=148)   ■ Previous (responses=318; respondents=158)
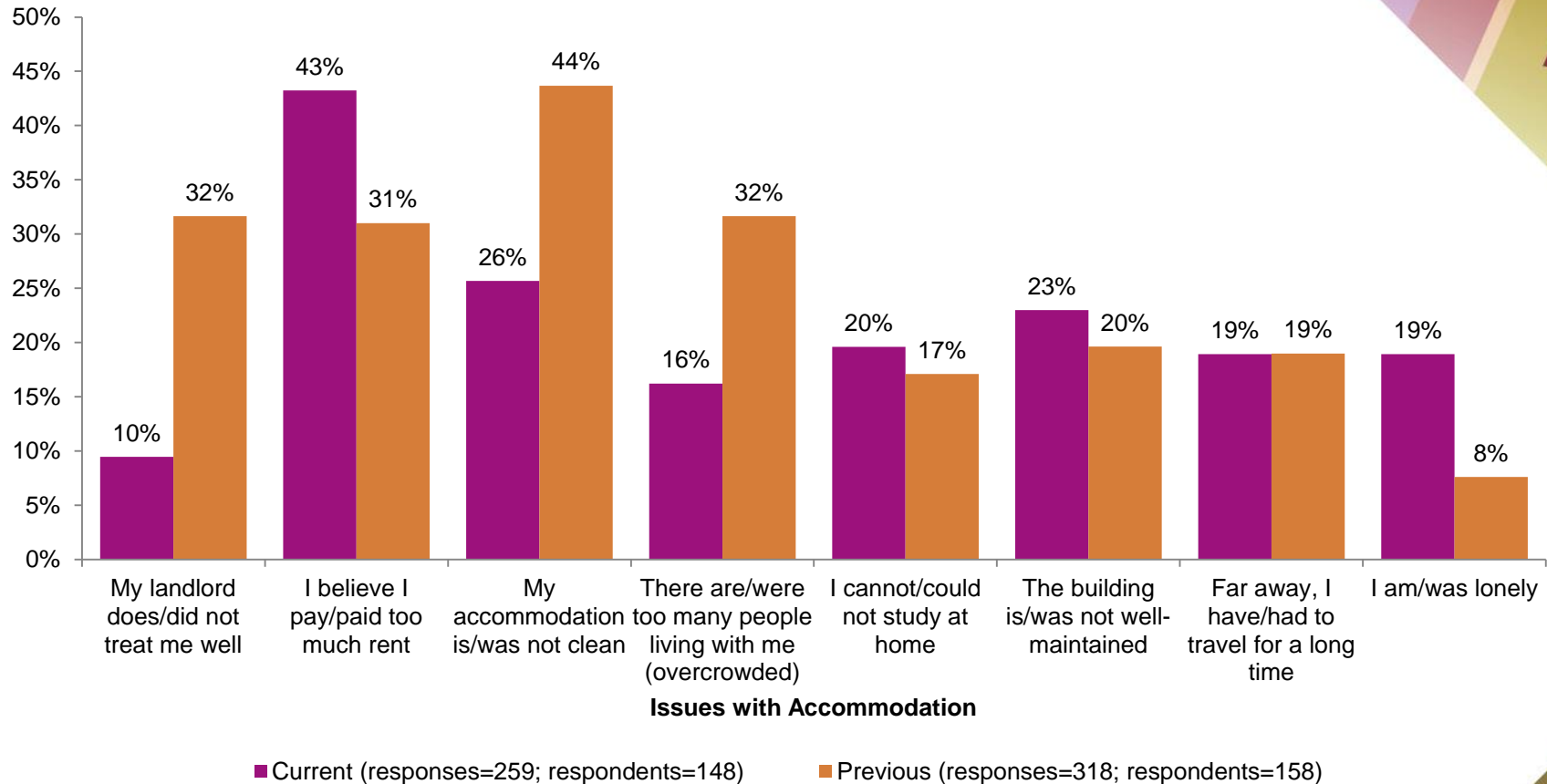
- Most common issues with current accommodation: paying too much rent (responses=64); accommodation not being clean (responses=38); and living in a building that is not well-maintained (responses=34).
- Most common issues with previous accommodation: cleanliness of accommodation (responses=69), overcrowding (responses=50) and unfair treatment from landlord (responses=50).

WHAT TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION ARE YOU CURRENTLY LIVING IN?

Q21 (n=603)
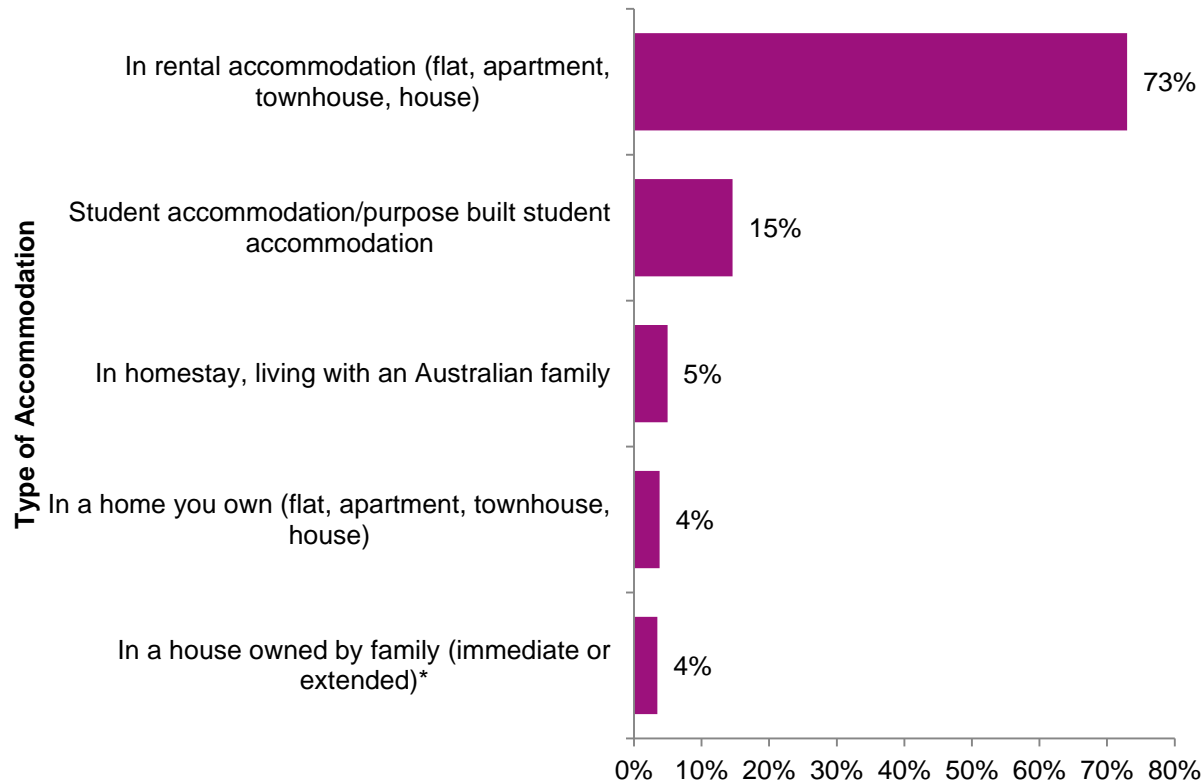
- The majority of respondents (73%, n=440) lived in rental accommodation.
- The second most common type of accommodation was 'student accommodation/purpose built student accommodation' (15% n=88).

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HAVE YOU BEEN TREATED WELL BY: THE FAMILY YOU LIVE WITH; UNIVERSITY OR HOUSING PROVIDER; LANDLORD?

Q22 vs. Q24 vs. Q26
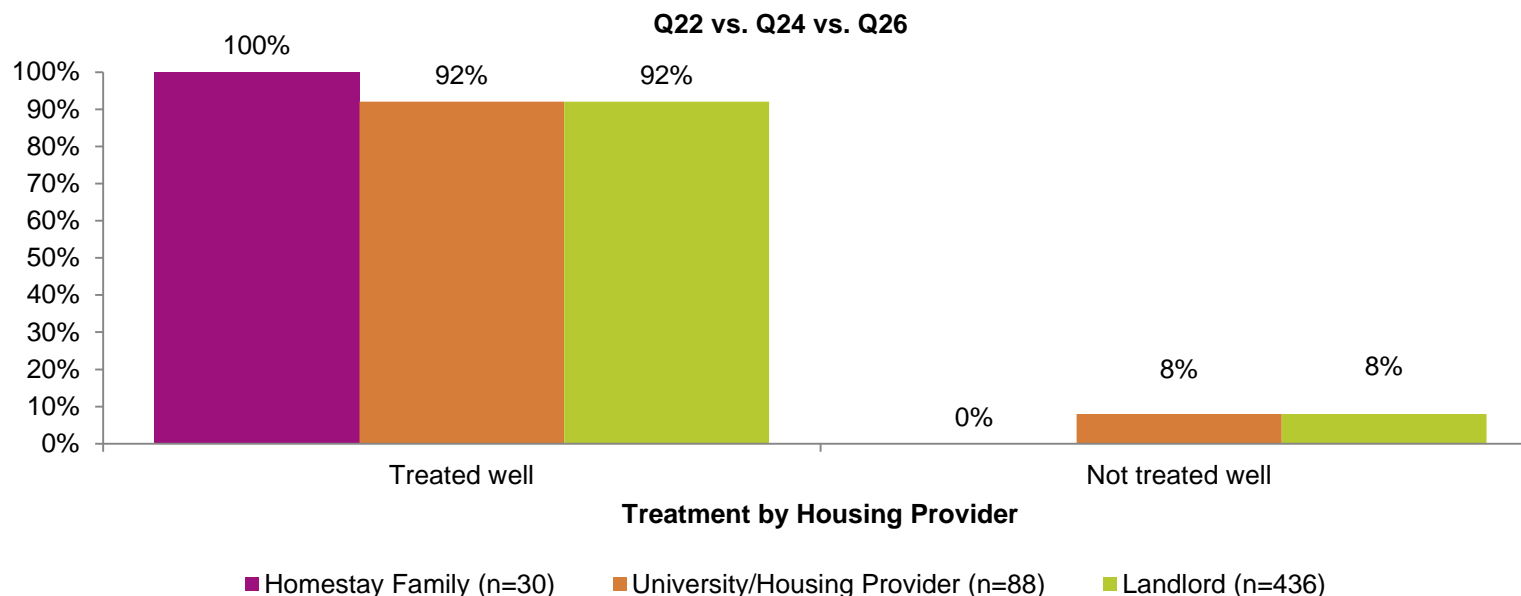
- Approximately 9 out of 10 students indicated being treated well by their housing provider.
- This finding was consistent across all three types of accommodation providers: homestay families (100% n=30); university/housing providers (92% n=81); and landlords (92% n=401).

YOU HAVE INDICATED THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TREATED WELL BY YOUR HOUSING PROVIDER. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR CONCERNS?

Q25 vs. Q27
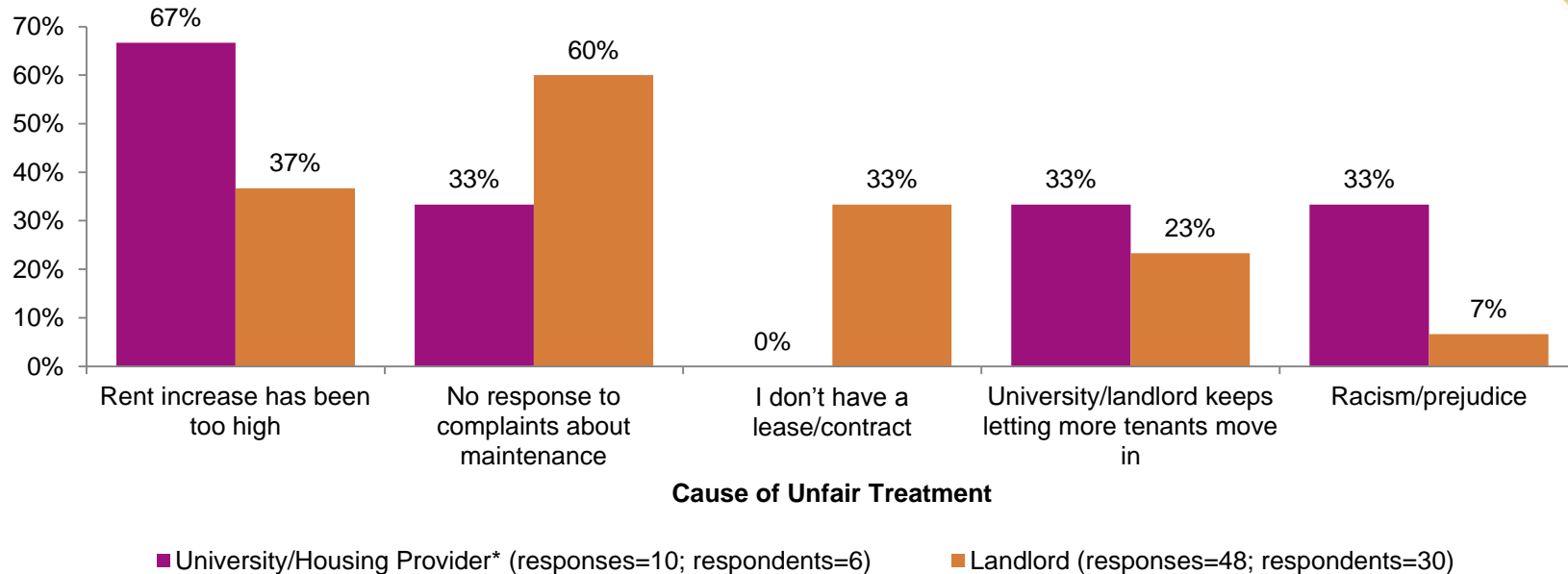
Chart — Cause of Unfair Treatment

- University/Housing Provider* (responses=10; respondents=6)
- Landlord (responses=48; respondents=30)

Cause of Unfair Treatment	University/Housing Provider*	Landlord
Rent increase has been too high	67%	37%
No response to complaints about maintenance	33%	60%
I don't have a lease/contract	0%	33%
University/landlord keeps letting more tenants move in	33%	23%
Racism/prejudice	33%	7%

- Of those respondents who indicated not being treated well by the owners of their accommodation, the majority were in private rentals.
- Students who live in private rentals were most likely to identify landlords' lack of response to complaints about maintenance as the primary factor contributing to unfair treatment (60% responses=18), followed by unfair rent increases (37% responses=11).

GENERALLY, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CURRENT ACCOMMODATION?

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Q28 (n=603)

Satisfaction with Current Accommodation

- Very satisfied — 28%
- Satisfied — 51%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied — 18%
- Dissatisfied — 3%
- Very dissatisfied — 1%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%
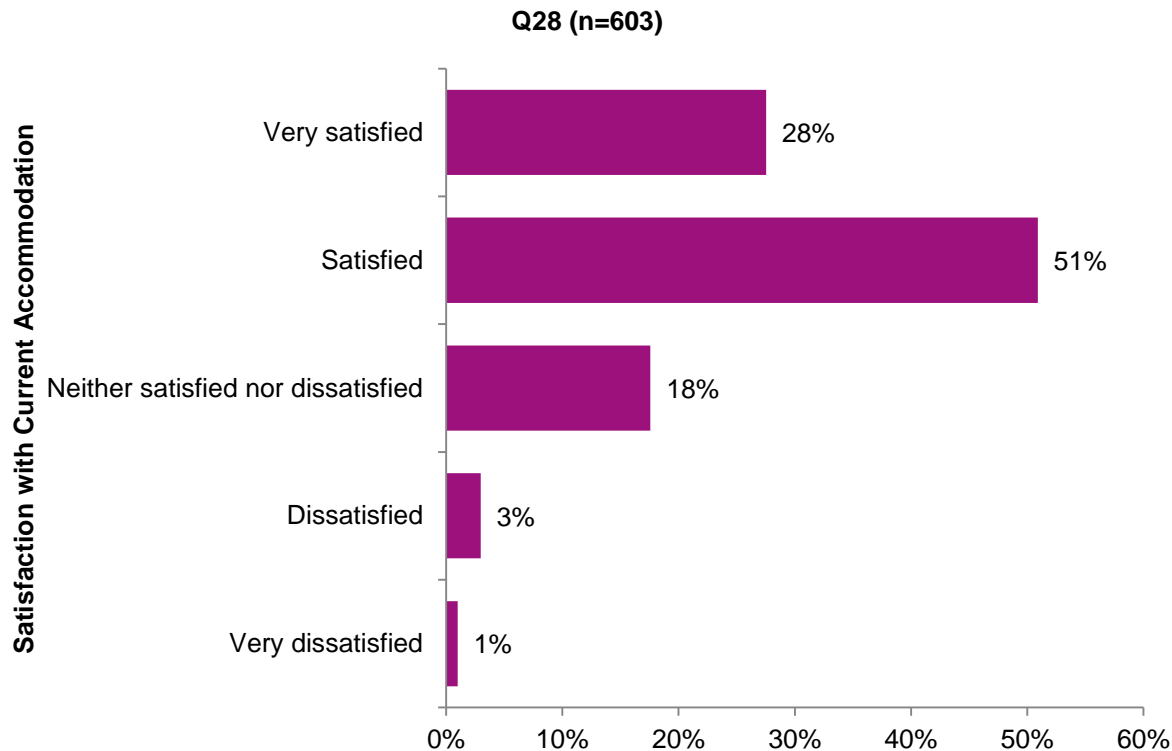
Nearly 80% of respondents were satisfied (51% n=307) or very satisfied (28% n=166) with their current accommodation.

Finance and employment

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME?
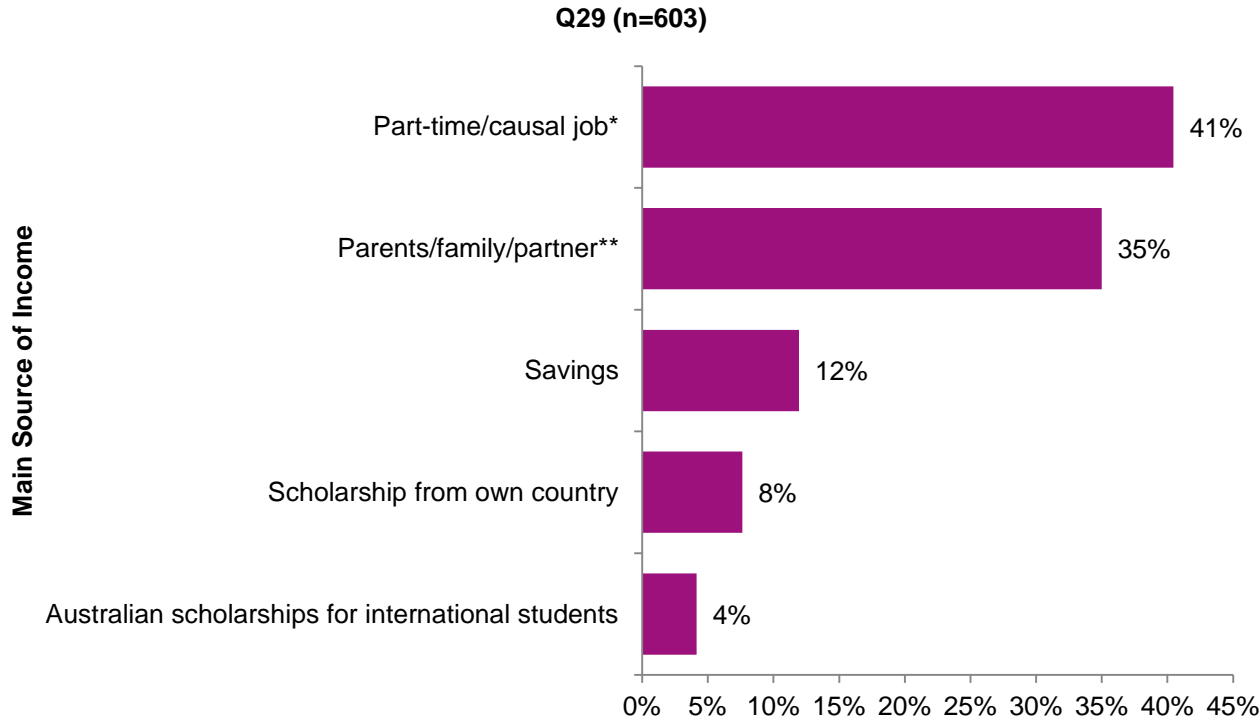
Q29 (n=603)

Main Source of Income

Category	%
Part-time/causal job*	41%
Parents/family/partner**	35%
Savings	12%
Scholarship from own country	8%
Australian scholarships for international students	4%

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

- 41% of respondents (n=244) identified a part time /casual job as being their main source of income.
- 35% of respondents (n=211) relied on income from family members or partners to support their stay in Australia.

Note: Where respondents specified 'other' sources of income derived from casual jobs, these responses were added to the 'part-time job' category.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY, OR HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY, UNDERTAKEN PAID WORK IN SYDNEY?

Q30 (n=603)
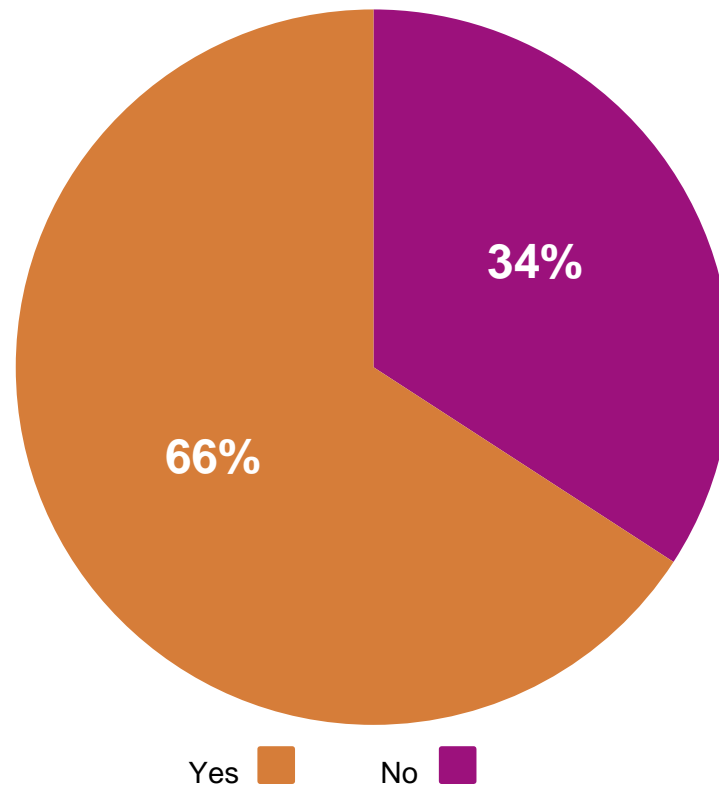
66% of respondents (n=397) were undertaking, or had previously undertaken, paid work in Sydney.

WHAT IS/WAS YOUR MAIN REASON FOR WORKING?

Q31 (number of responses=1044; number of respondents=397)
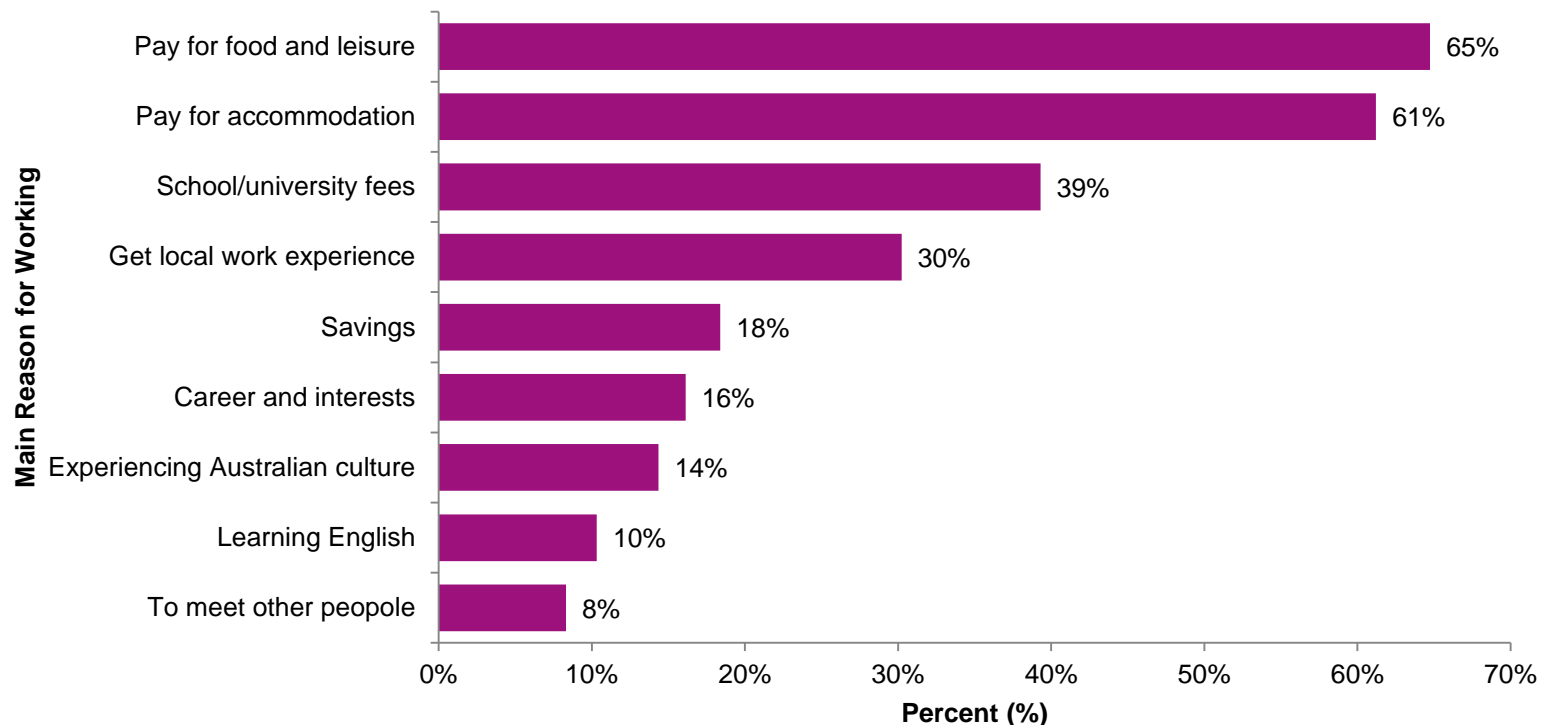
Most respondents identified paying for food and leisure activities (65% responses=257), and paying for accommodation (61% responses=243) as their main reasons for working.

THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE PLACES WHERE YOU HAVE WORKED, HOW SATISFIED ARE/WERE YOU WITH YOUR PLACE/S OF WORK OVERALL?

Q32 (n=397)
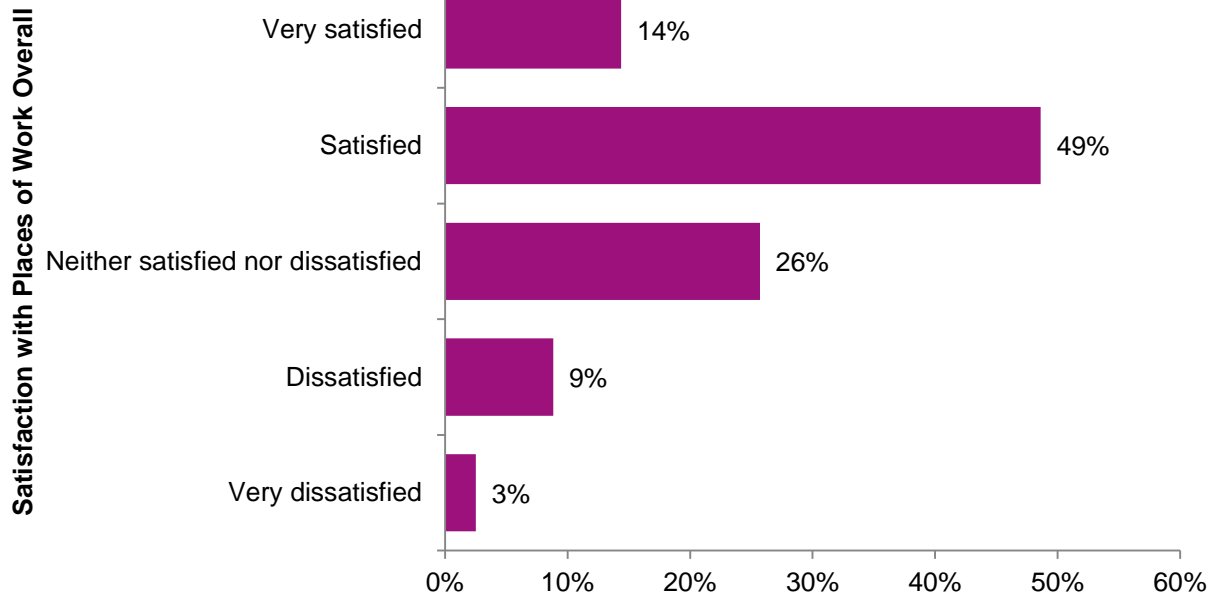
Satisfaction with Places of Work Overall

- Very satisfied — 14%
- Satisfied — 49%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied — 26%
- Dissatisfied — 9%
- Very dissatisfied — 3%

- 63% of respondents indicated they were satisfied (n=193) or very satisfied (n=57) with their workplaces.
- A quarter of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (n=102).

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THINKING ABOUT THE PLACES WHERE YOU HAVE WORKED, WHAT ARE SOME REASONS WHY YOU ARE/WERE NOT SATISFIED?

Q33 (number of responses=101; number of respondents=45)

Reason for Dissatisfaction with Workplace

Reason	Percentage
I don't/didn't get paid well	78%
I don't/didn't enjoy the type of work	53%
My boss isn't/wasn't very nice to me	27%
I get/got bullied by the people I work with	20%
I don't/didn't get along with my boss	13%
It is/was boring	13%
I work/worked too many hours	13%
I don't/didn't feel confident	7%
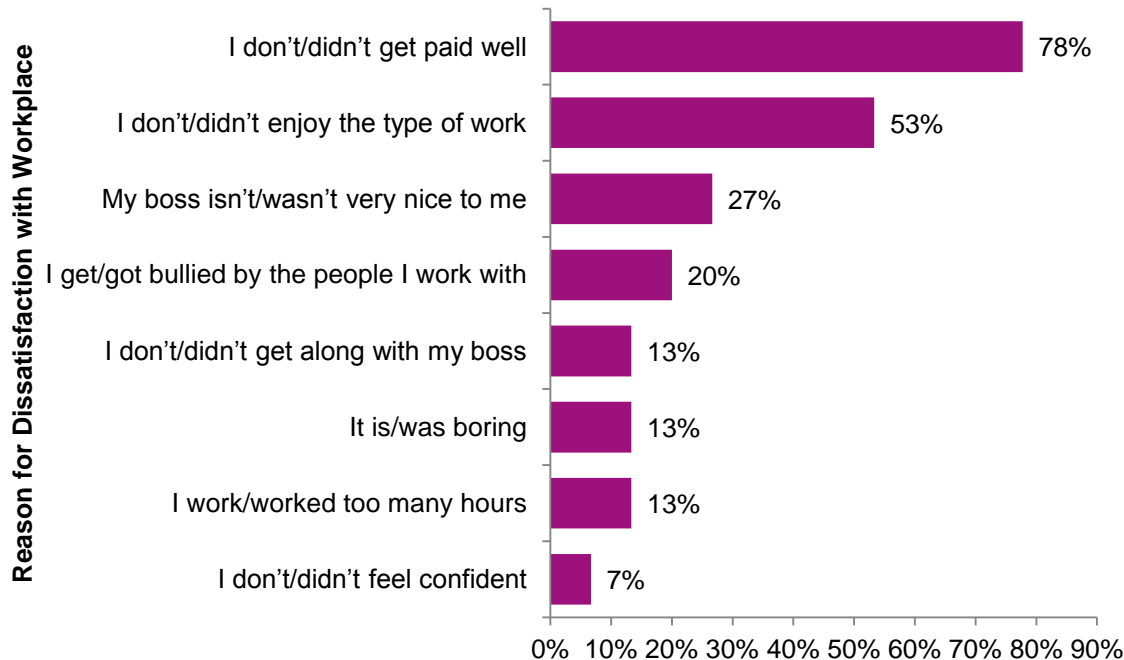
- Over 11% of respondents (total n=45) indicated being dissatisfied (9%, n=35) or very dissatisfied (3%, n=10) with their workplaces overall.
- The top two factors contributing to dissatisfaction were:
  - Not being paid well (78% responses=35); and,
  - Not enjoying the type of work (53% responses=24).

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THINKING ABOUT HOW YOU ARE/WERE TREATED AT WORK, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS APPLIES TO YOU?

Q34 (n=397)

18%

82%

Respondents who currently undertake, or have previously undertaken, paid work in Sydney were asked to rate the nature of treatment received from their workplaces…

- The majority of students reported being treated fairly at work (82%, n=325).
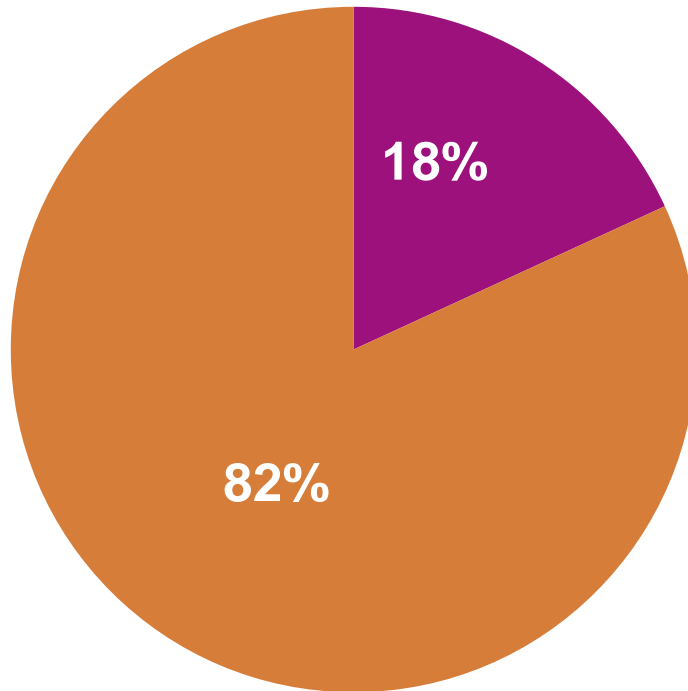
■ I was treated fairly at work.

■ I was not treated fairly at work.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WERE NOT TREATED FAIRLY AT WORK?

Q35 (number of responses=129; number of respondents=70)
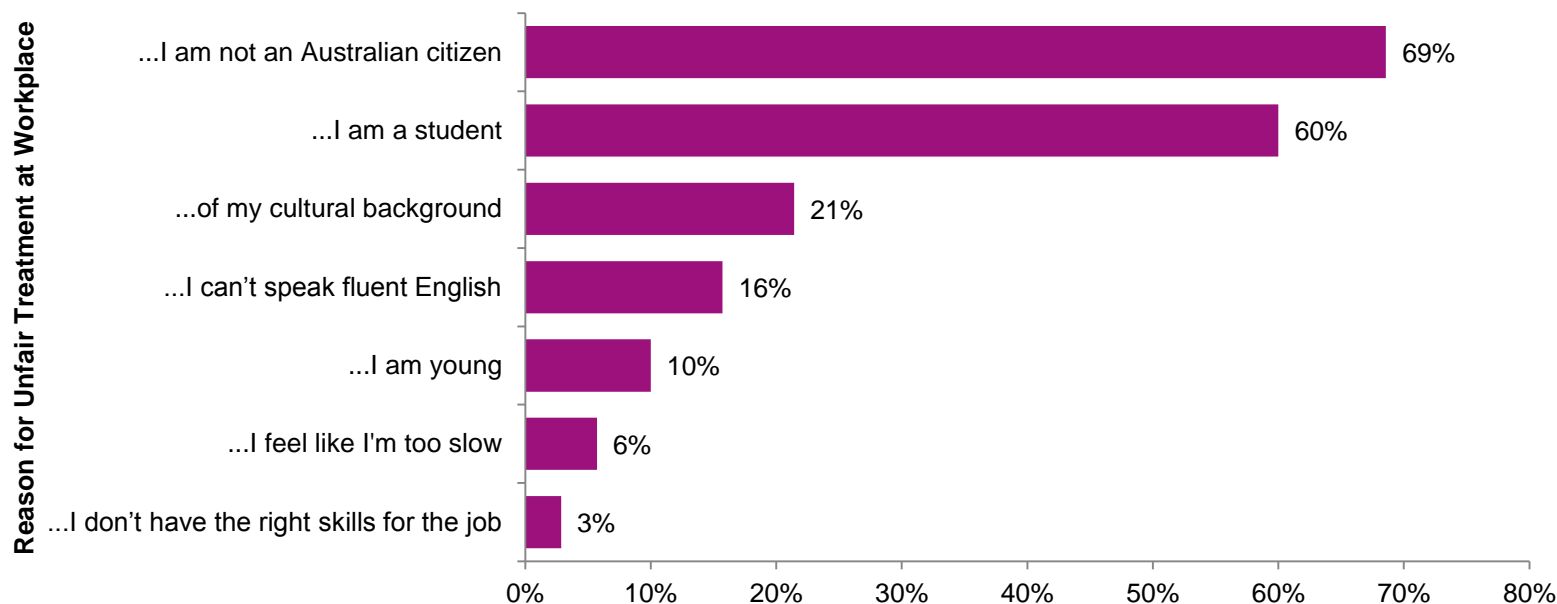
The 18% of respondents (n=72) who indicated they were not being treated fairly at work were asked to identify the reasons for unfair treatment…

- The most common reasons identified were: not being an Australian citizen (69% responses=48) and being a student (60% responses=42).

SAFETY AND CRIME

GENERALLY, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WHEN… YOU WALK THROUGH THE CITY OF SYDNEY AT NIGHT/DURING DAY; CATCH PUBLIC TRANSPORT AT NIGHT/DURING DAY
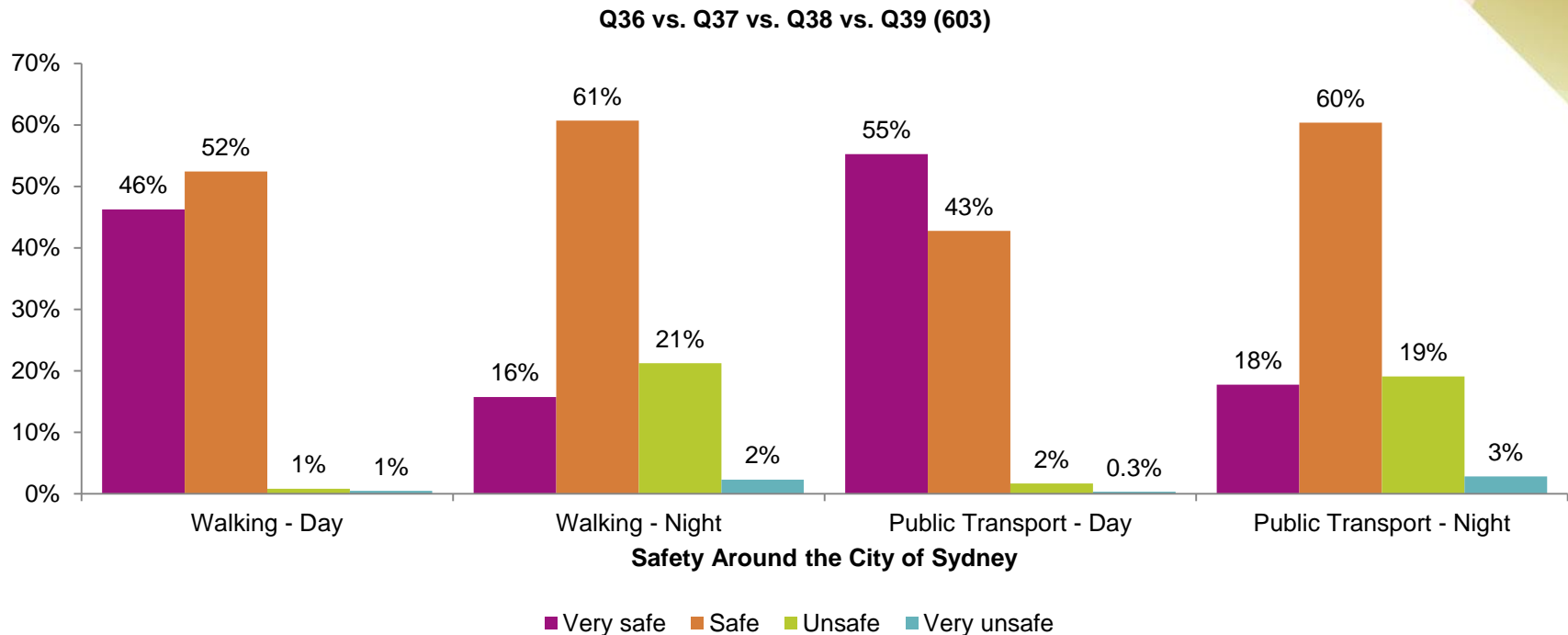
Q36 vs. Q37 vs. Q38 vs. Q39 (603)

Bar chart — Safety Around the City of Sydney

	Very safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Walking - Day	46%	52%	1%	1%
Walking - Night	16%	61%	21%	2%
Public Transport - Day	55%	43%	2%	0.3%
Public Transport - Night	18%	60%	19%	3%

- Overall, respondents indicated high levels of feeling 'very safe' walking and on public transport during the day and 'safe' walking and catching public transport at night.
- Respondents were most likely to indicate feeling 'very safe' when walking in the City of Sydney (46%, n=279) and catching public transport (43%, n=333) at day.
- Respondents answered similarly across feeling 'unsafe' and 'very unsafe' walking (24%) and on public transport at night (23%).

WHERE IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY DO YOU FEEL THE SAFEST?

WHERE IN THE CITY OF SYDNEY DO YOU FEEL LEAST SAFE?

IF YOU NEEDED TO, WOULD YOU FEEL YOU COULD TALK TO / CONTACT SYDNEY POLICE?

Approximately nine out of ten respondents (88%, n=532) felt that they can talk to or contact Sydney police if necessary.

12%

88%
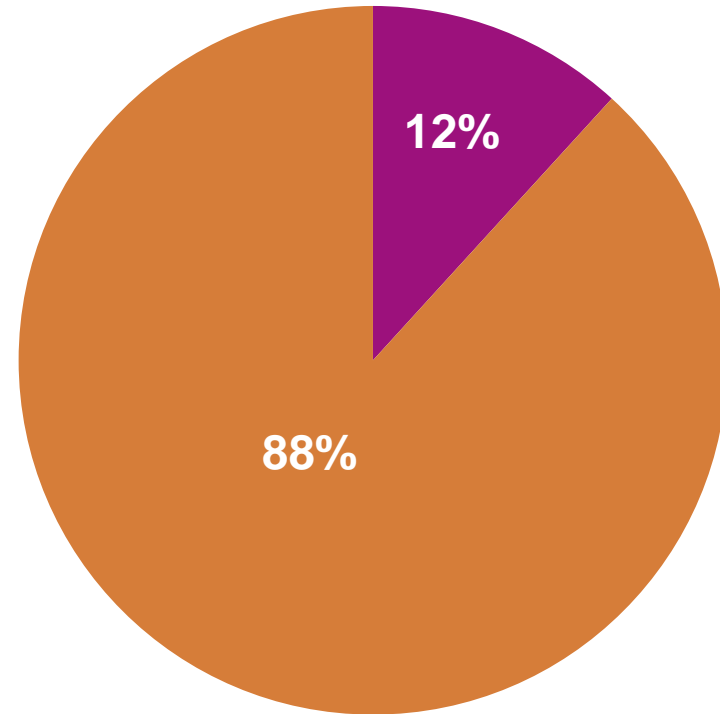
Yes   No

WHY DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU CANNOT TALK TO/CONTACT SYDNEY POLICE?

12% of respondents (n=71) reported feelings of unease about making contact with Sydney police…

- These respondents were asked to indicate the reason for their discomfort.
    - The most common response involved uncertainty regarding how to talk to or contact the police (60% responses=39).
    - However, one in four respondents (25% n=16) indicated being afraid to contact the police, whilst 22% (n=14) identify issues of trust as a reason for not communicating with the police.

Q43 (number of responses=69; number of respondents=65)
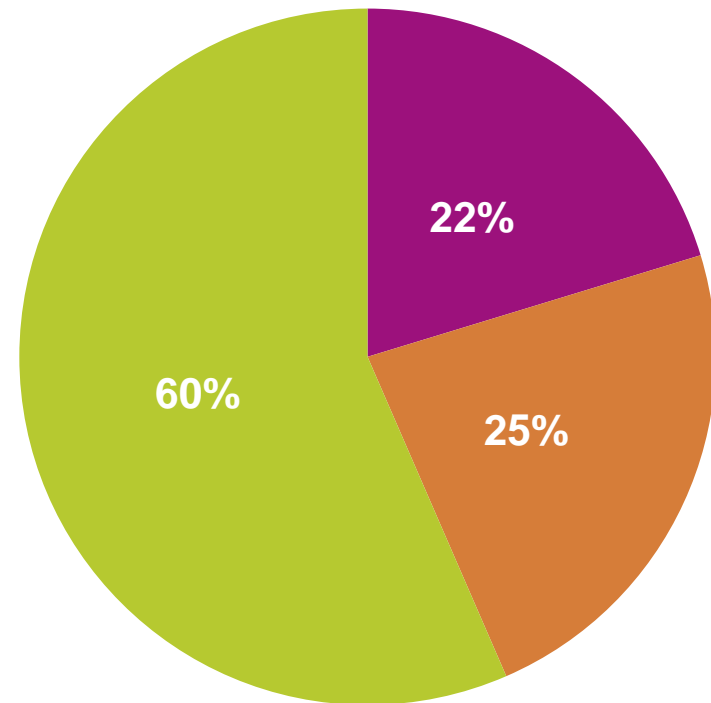
22%

60%

25%

- I am not sure how to talk to/contact Sydney police.
- I am scared to talk to/contact Sydney police.
- I don't trust Sydney police.

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IN GENERAL, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR: PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH?
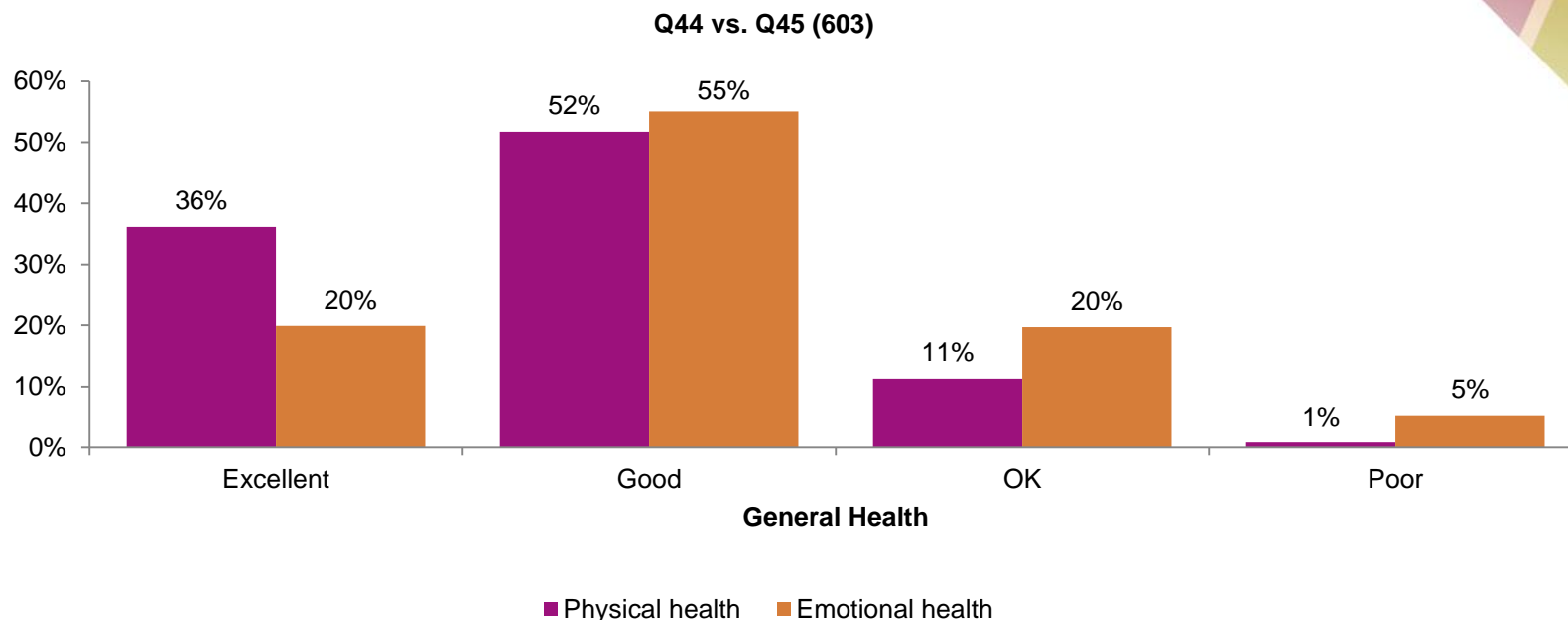
Q44 vs. Q45 (603)

On average, respondents were most likely to report being of 'good' health (average=53%, total n=644), followed by 'excellent' health (average=28%, n=total n=338).

- Respondents were more likely to report their physical health being 'excellent' (36%, n=218), compared to emotional health (20% n=120).
- Ratings of 'good' were similar for emotional health (55% n=332) compared with physical health (52% n=312).

GENERALLY, COMPARED WITH WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY, HAS YOUR OVERALL HEALTH (EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL) IN SYDNEY BEEN?

- Respondents were most likely to report their health in Sydney being 'about the same' as was in their home country (53% n=318).
- One in three respondents reported 'better' health in Sydney than experienced in their home country (33% n=197).

Q46 (n=603)

15%

33%

53%
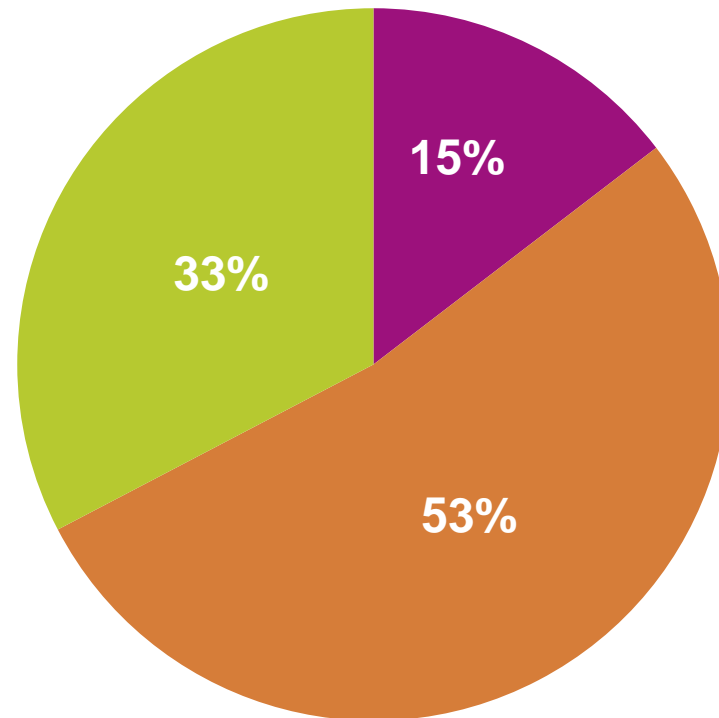
- Better
- About the same
- Worse

THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE THINGS YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO WITHIN THIS ONLINE SURVEY HOW MUCH WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT…? "I ENJOY LIVING IN SYDNEY"/"I ENJOY STUDYING IN SYDNEY!"?

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Q47 vs. Q48 (n=603)

Legend: ■ "I enjoy living in Sydney" ■ "I enjoy studying in Sydney"
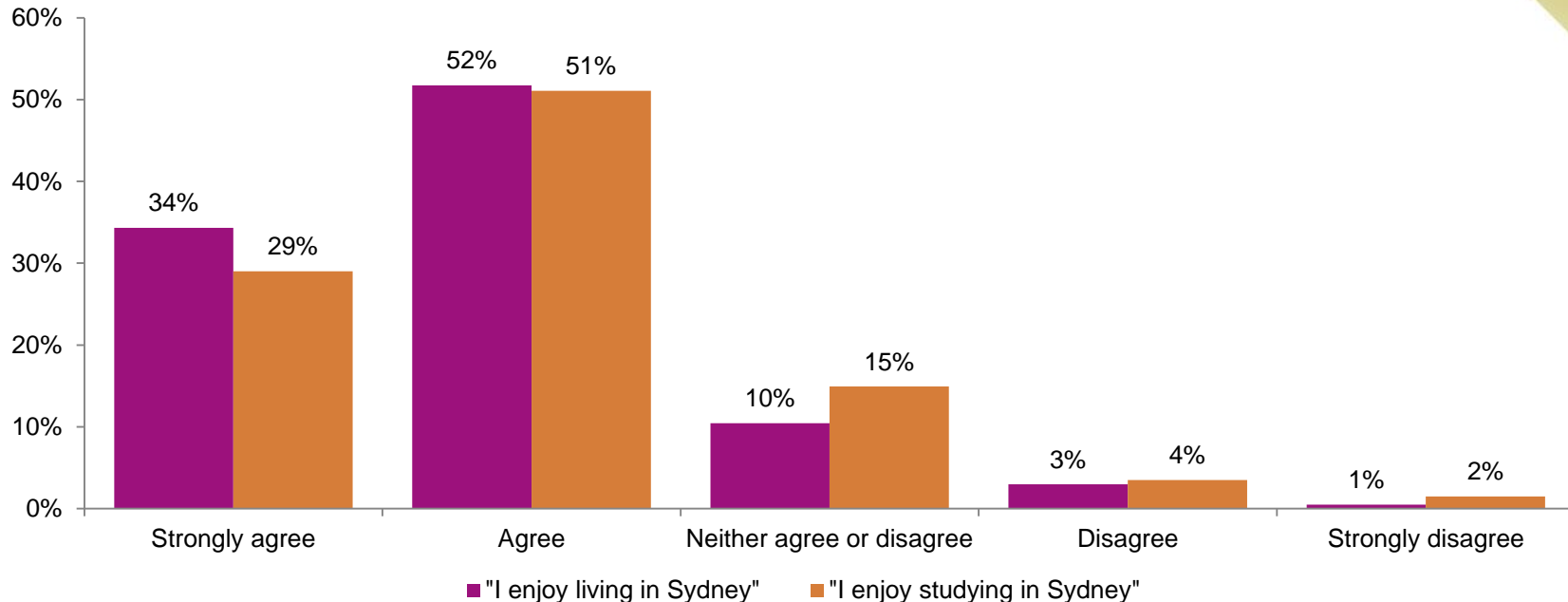
- Overall, the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the above statements.
- More than half 'agreed' that they enjoy living (52%, n=312) and studying (51%, n=308) in Sydney.
- An additional 34% (n=207) and 29% (n=308) 'strongly agreed' with these statements.

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WOULD YOU RECOMMEND OTHERS TO STUDY IN SYDNEY?

Q49 (n=603)
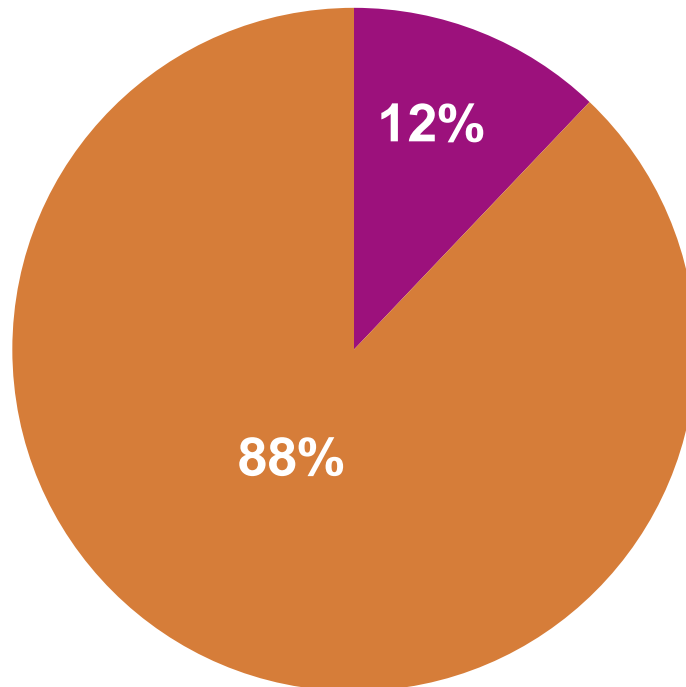
88% of respondents (n=530) indicated that they would recommend Sydney as a place to study to prospective students.

Yes   No

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF EVENTS/PROGRAMS SPONSORED OR ORGANISED BY THE CITY OF SYDNEY. WHICH EVENTS/PROGRAMS HAVE YOU ATTENDED OR PARTICIPATED IN?

Q52 (number of responses=1259; number of respondents=543)
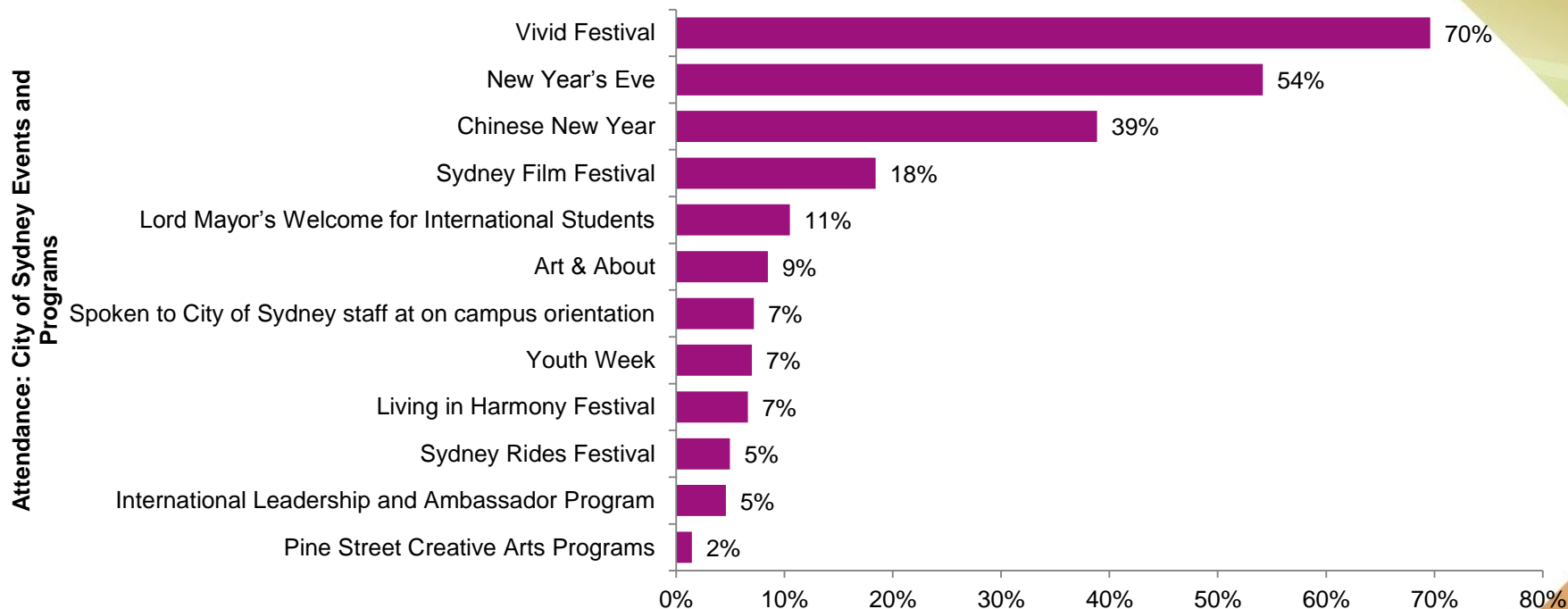
Attendance: City of Sydney Events and Programs

Event/Program	Percentage
Vivid Festival	70%
New Year's Eve	54%
Chinese New Year	39%
Sydney Film Festival	18%
Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students	11%
Art & About	9%
Spoken to City of Sydney staff at on campus orientation	7%
Youth Week	7%
Living in Harmony Festival	7%
Sydney Rides Festival	5%
International Leadership and Ambassador Program	5%
Pine Street Creative Arts Programs	2%

- Respondents were most likely to have attended Vivid (70% responses=378), followed by New Year's Eve celebrations (54% responses=294) and Chinese New Year (39% responses=211).
- 44 respondents noted that they had not attended any events/programs listed within the survey.

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PLEASE LIST THREE WORDS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF SYDNEY AS A PLACE TO STUDY

Appendix E. Results of bivariate analysis

Demographic Variables

Please note:

- ↓ represents a difference of -5% or more between the average rating and the rating for the demographic sub-category in question; i.e. demographic sub-category rating is lower than the average rating.
- ↑ represents a positive difference of +5% or more between the average rating and the rating for the demographic sub-category in question; i.e. demographic sub-category rating is higher than the average rating.
- - represents no difference between the average rating and the rating for the demographic sub-category in question, where 'no difference' indicates a positive difference that is less than 5%, or a negative difference that is greater than -5%.
- Symbols in red font and grey cells are used to highlight where the number of respondents was less than 30 (n<30). Therefore these differences should be interpreted with caution, if at all.

Gender/Sex

Question	Question Label	Rating/s Examined	Avg.	F	M	PNTA	Other
Q5	Suburb of residency:	*Living in the City of Sydney*	**37.6%**	-	-	↓	
Q13	Difficulty finding initial accommodation:	*Extremely difficult + Very difficult*	**20.2%**	-	-	-	
Q17 & Q19*	Experienced negative issues with current (Q17) or previous accommodation (Q19):	*Yes*	**46.6%**	-	-		↑
Q28	Satisfaction with current accommodation:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**78.4%**	-	-	↓	↑
Q32	Satisfaction with place/s of work:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**63.0%**	-	-	-	
Q34	Nature of treatment at work:	*I was treated fairly at work*	**81.9%**	-	-	-	↑
Q37	Feelings of safety in City of Sydney at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**76.5%**	-	-	↓	↑
Q39	Feelings of safety catching public transport at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**78.1%**	-	-	↓	↑
Q42	Feelings regarding communicating with the police:	*Yes*	**88.2%**	-	-	↑	↑
Q44	Nature of physical health:	*Excellent + good*	**87.9%**	-	-	↑	↑
Q45	Nature of emotional heath:	*Excellent + good*	**75.0%**	-	-	↑	
Q46	Health in Sydney compared with health overseas:	*Better*	**32.7%**	-	-	↓	
Q47	Agreement: "I enjoy living in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**86.1%**	-	-	↓	↑
Q48	Agreement: "I enjoy studying in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**80.1%**	-	-	↓	

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Age

Question	Question Label	Rating/s Examined	Avg.	18-23	24-29	30-35	36-41	42+
Q5	Suburb of residency:	*Living in the City of Sydney*	37.6%	-	-	↑	↑	↓
Q13	Difficulty finding initial accommodation:	*Extremely difficult + Very difficult*	20.2%	-	-	↑	-	-
Q17 & Q19*	Experienced negative issues with current (Q17) or previous accommodation (Q19):	*Yes*	46.6%	↑	-	-	-	↓
Q28	Satisfaction with current accommodation:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	78.4%	↓	-	-	-	-
Q32	Satisfaction with place/s of work:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	63.0%	-	-	↓	↑	↑
Q34	Nature of treatment at work:	*I was treated fairly at work*	81.9%	↑	-	-	↓	-
Q37	Feelings of safety in City of Sydney at night:	*Very safe + safe*	76.5%	↓	-	↑	↑	↑
Q39	Feelings of safety catching public transport at night:	*Very safe + safe*	78.1%	↓	-	↑	↑	↑
Q42	Feelings regarding communicating with the police:	*Yes*	88.2%	-	-	-	-	↑
Q44	Nature of physical health:	*Excellent + good*	87.9%	-	-	↑	-	↓
Q45	Nature of emotional heath:	*Excellent + good*	75.0%	-	-	-	↑	↑
Q46	Health in Sydney compared with health overseas:	*Better*	32.7%	-	-	↑	↑	↓
Q47	Agreement: "I enjoy living in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	86.1%	-	-	-	↑	↑
Q48	Agreement: "I enjoy studying in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	80.1%	-	-	↓	-	↓

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Country of birth

Question	Question Label	Rating/s Examined	Avg.	CHN	BRA	DEU	HKG	IND	ITA	KOR	MYS	NPL	ESP	TWN	THA	VNM	Other
Q5	Suburb of residency:	*Living in the City of Sydney*	**37.6%**	↑	-	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	-
Q13	Difficulty finding initial accommodation:	*Extremely difficult + Very difficult*	**20.1%**	↓	↓	↓	-	-	↓	-	↑	↑	↑	-	-	↓	-
Q17 & Q19*	Experienced negative issues with current (Q17) or previous accommodation (Q19):	*Yes*	**46.6%**	↑	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	-	↓	↑	↑	-	↑	-
Q28	Satisfaction with current accommodation:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**78.7%**	↓	↑	↓	↓	-	↓	↓	-	-	-	↓	-	-	-
Q32	Satisfaction with place/s of work:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**62.9%**	↓	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑
Q34	Nature of treatment at work:	*I was treated fairly at work*	**81.8%**	↓	↑	-	↓	-	↑	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	-
Q37	Feelings of safety in City of Sydney at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**76.5%**	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	-	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	-
Q39	Feelings of safety catching public transport at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**78.2%**	↓	↑	↑	↓	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	-	↓	-
Q42	Feelings regarding communicating with the police:	*Yes*	**88.4%**	↓	↑	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	-
Q44	Nature of physical health:	*Excellent + good*	**87.9%**	↑	↑	-	↓	-	-	↓	-	-	-	↓	↓	↓	-
Q45	Nature of emotional heath:	*Excellent + good*	**75.0%**	↑	-	↑	↓	-	↑	↓	↑	-	↑	↓	-	↓	-
Q46	Health in Sydney compared with health overseas:	*Better*	**32.8%**	-	-	↑	-	↑	↑	↑	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	-	-
Q47	Agreement: "I enjoy living in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**86.2%**	↓	↑	-	↓	-	↑	↓	↑	-	↑	↓	↑	-	-
Q48	Agreement: "I enjoy studying in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**80.2%**	↓	↓	↓	↓	-	↓	-	↑	-	↓	↓	↑	↑	-

Length of stay in Australia

Question	Question Label	Rating/s Examined	Avg.	<6 months	6-12 months	>1-2 years	3-5 years	5+ years
Q5	Suburb of residency:	*Living in the City of Sydney*	37.6%	↑	-	-	↓	↓
Q13	Difficulty finding initial accommodation:	*Extremely difficult + Very difficult*	20.2%	-	-	-	-	-
Q17 & Q19*	Experienced negative issues with current (Q17) or previous accommodation (Q19):	*Yes*	46.6%	↓	-	-	↑	↑
Q28	Satisfaction with current accommodation:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	78.4%	↓	-	-	↑	-
Q32	Satisfaction with place/s of work:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	63.0%	-	-	-	-	↓
Q34	Nature of treatment at work:	*I was treated fairly at work*	81.9%	↑	↑	↓	-	↓
Q37	Feelings of safety in City of Sydney at night:	*Very safe + safe*	76.5%	-	↑	-	↓	↓
Q39	Feelings of safety catching public transport at night:	*Very safe + safe*	78.1%	-	↑	-	-	↓
Q42	Feelings regarding communicating with the police:	*Yes*	88.2%	-	-	-	↓	-
Q44	Nature of physical health:	*Excellent + good*	87.9%	-	↑	-	-	↓
Q45	Nature of emotional heath:	*Excellent + good*	75.0%	↑	-	-	-	-
Q46	Health in Sydney compared with health overseas:	*Better*	32.7%	↓	↑	-	-	↓
Q47	Agreement: "I enjoy living in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	86.1%	-	-	-	-	↓
Q48	Agreement: "I enjoy studying in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	80.1%	-	-	-	↓	↓

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Type of education institution

Question	Question Label	Rating/s Examined	Average Rating	ELICOS	HED	TAFE	VET
Q5	Suburb of residency:	*Living in the City of Sydney*	**37.4%**	↑	-	-	↑
Q13	Difficulty finding initial accommodation:	*Extremely difficult + Very difficult*	**20.3%**	-	-	-	↓
Q17 & Q19*	Experienced negative issues with current (Q17) or previous accommodation (Q19):	*Yes*	**46.4%**	-	-	↓	↑
Q28	Satisfaction with current accommodation:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**78.4%**	-	-	↓	-
Q32	Satisfaction with place/s of work:	*Very satisfied + satisfied*	**62.9%**	-	-	-	-
Q34	Nature of treatment at work:	*I was treated fairly at work*	**81.8%**	-	-	↑	-
Q37	Feelings of safety in City of Sydney at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**76.4%**	↑	-	-	-
Q39	Feelings of safety catching public transport at night:	*Very safe + safe*	**78.0%**	↑	-	-	-
Q42	Feelings regarding communicating with the police:	*Yes*	**88.2%**	-	-	-	-
Q44	Nature of physical health:	*Excellent + good*	**87.9%**	-	-	-	-
-Q45	Nature of emotional heath:	*Excellent + good*	**74.9%**	↑	-	↓	-
Q46	Health in Sydney compared with health overseas:	*Better*	**32.8%**	-	-	-	-
Q47	Agreement: "I enjoy living in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**86.0%**	-	-	↓	-
Q48	Agreement: "I enjoy studying in Sydney!":	*Strongly agree + agree*	**80.0%**	↑	-	↓	↓

*Composite question - responses combined from Q17 and Q19.

Appendix F. Focus group run sheet

FOCUS GROUPS: WELLBEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CITY OF SYDNEY COUNCIL

Welcome

Welcome everyone and thank you for coming. I'm _____ from the University of Technology, Sydney. I'm joined by my colleague _____ and we will both be facilitating today's focus group. We will also be taking some hand-written notes.

Housekeeping

If I could ask that everyone switches off their mobile phones, and I'd like to check that everyone has completed:

- Confidentiality and privacy agreement

Confidentiality

I'd like to remind everyone of your obligations under the confidentiality and privacy agreement that everything you say here is to be kept in the strictest of confidence, even after tonight's group has finished.

We are conducting this research on behalf of the City of Sydney, whom with we will share the results of our analysis – but not the individual details of who said what.

Recording

We will be taking notes to assist us with our analysis – so please feel free to speak openly.

Ground rules

To help with the smooth running of this evening's group, I'd like everyone to observe some simple ground rules:

1. Be open-minded
2. Respect other group members and their values
3. Respect different points of view, there is no right or wrong
4. Respect the outcomes of the discussion
5. One person to speak at a time
6. Let facilitator facilitate
7. Be non-judgmental
8. Be brief
9. No grandstanding

Incentive payment

At the end of the focus group we will give you a $20 Woolworths voucher as a thank you for your time and participation.

Timing of tonight's session

We expect tonight's group to go for around one hour, finishing up at __. Please help yourself to refreshments.

Bathrooms

The bathrooms are located…

Purpose of this focus group

The Institute for Public Policy and Governance based at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS:IPPG) has been engaged by the City of Sydney to undertake research into how international students living in the City area perceive their wellbeing and the factors that contribute to it.

Prompt:

- Provide an overview of local government and the City of Sydney…
- Why we are doing a focus group…
- How you were selected…

Each of you has already participated in this research by completing the online survey. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. We had an amazing response with over 600 respondents and over 200 people wanting to do the focus group.

We are now undertaking focus groups and one-on-one interviews with international students to gain further insight and understanding of your views and experiences as international students in Sydney. We will be asking you some similar questions to those in the online survey, for example what are your needs, challenges and opportunities of international students and what role might the City of Sydney play addressing and supporting these.

We are hoping that you can be as honest as possible. As noted earlier, all responses are totally confidential and you will not be identified.

Does anyone have any questions about how the focus group is going to be run?

QUESTION 1 – who? (5 min)

Ok, so to start the discussion; I'd like to go round the table and have everyone introduce themselves.

- Name
- Where you are from (country of birth)
- How long you have lived in Sydney
- And what course you are studying

QUESTION 2 – concerns before arriving in Sydney (10 min)

What were your main concerns before arriving in Sydney?

Prompts: Where to stay, finding a job, speaking the language, cost of living, making friends, doing well academically, getting used to the Australian culture, living away from home etc

Were you able to locate the information you needed? e.g. about courses, housing, work etc

Where did you find this information?

QUESTION 3 – concerns after arriving in Sydney (10 min)

What were your initial difficulties after arriving in Sydney?

Prompts: cost, lack of information, availability of housing, language etc

How did you deal with these difficulties?

Are you still experiencing these difficulties (after being in Sydney for a while…?)

QUESTION 4 – support services and access to information (10 min)

What types of information do you need as an international student?

As an international student, what support services do you access/need most often?

From your experience as an international student in Sydney, do you have the support services and access to the information you need? (Appropriateness)

e.g City of Sydney, universities, TAFE, colleges, police etc

QUESTION 5 – wellbeing (10 min)

What do you think wellbeing is?

Explain what wellbeing is (definition) and provide to students

What do you see as the key challenges to the wellbeing of international students in the City and why?

The research undertaken to date show the following four areas of concern specific to the wellbeing of international students…

- **Housing, work, safety and security, and discrimination.**

Do you have any specific examples that we could include as part of this research?

QUESTION 6 – the future and the role of the City of Sydney (10 min)

What programs and events do you think are particularly important for international students in Sydney? Why?

Great to have you in this research… start to think about some new ideas and programs moving forward…

What types of programs/ services and/or events could the City of Sydney provide in the future that would be of benefit to international students?

What role do you see the City of Sydney Council having in supporting and celebrating international students?

Needs of international students moving forward

How do you think you (international students) could collaborate with the City of Sydney in the development of future programs and events?

To help future international students…

To be an ambassador for Sydney…

What do you think the City can influence and what might be outside their jurisdiction?

QUESTION 7 – the future (5 min)
Thinking about your time as a student in Sydney…

Are you able to provide one experience that stands out for you? (This can be positive or negative)