



LISTENING@LAKEMBA - LAKEMBA CONSULTATIONS, HOUSEHOLD AND ORGANISATION SURVEY

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Introduction

Canterbury City Community Centre (CCCC) started the “Listening@Lakemba” campaign after receiving Community Builders funding from the Department of Family and Community Services. The purpose of the project was to increase community capacity, resilience and promote social inclusion. The initial stages of the project saw CCCC carry out a series of consultations as part of the “Listening@Lakemba” campaign. Bankstown TAFE Certificate IV Community Welfare students administered the Household surveys door to door in selected areas of Lakemba on November 17th and 24th 2011. WESTIR was involved with compiling the survey, analysing and presenting the results at a community forum held on November 30th.

Aims of the project:

- Build community networks
- Empower communities
- Find out what people like about Lakemba
- Find out what pressures face them and their families
- Gain concepts of community connectedness, social inclusion and community relations
- Measure the level of people’s knowledge and access to local services

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was used to conduct this project.

- Qualitative research was conducted in phase one from June till September 2011. Four sets of consultations were carried out in Lakemba during this period to listen to the views and insights of approximately eighty five women.
- Quantitative research was carried out through door knocking. The surveys were administered on November 17th and 24th. The target groups were women and CALD communities but not limited to these two groups.

Demographics of Sample

A total of three hundred and ten surveys were collected and analysed. There were one hundred and ninety two females compared to one hundred and thirteen males. Two hundred and forty people were born overseas and one hundred and fifty five people had lived in Lakemba for more than five years. However, one hundred and fifty seven people had lived in Lakemba for less than five years. The age breakdown revealed one hundred and six people were aged between 25-34 years old. There were twenty eight people in the 65 years and above age bracket. There were two hundred and three people who had children in their household.



Results

The results indicate a strong sense of community is felt by residents.

Table 1: Proportions of people who speak with the people in their neighbourhood, by gender.

I talk with the people in my neighbourhood	Gender		
	Male	Female	Blank
Agree	91%	86%	100%
Disagree	9%	14%	0%
Blank	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

A slightly higher proportion of males talked with people in their neighbourhood (91%) than females (86%). These high proportions reflect strong community connections. The qualitative results indicated residents felt a 'sense of belonging' and the presence of 'friendly people' to be contributing factors in shaping their community.

In addition, this idea of community was further illustrated in the survey response to whether or not people felt comfortable asking their neighbours for assistance in an emergency.

Table 2: Number of people who felt comfortable asking their neighbours for assistance in an emergency, by how long they have lived in Lakemba.

I feel comfortable asking my neighbours for assistance in an emergency	How long have people lived in Lakemba					
	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years	Blank	Total
Agree	37	47	43	125	2	254
Disagree	3	10	11	28	0	52
Blank	0	0	2	2	0	4
Total	40	57	56	155	2	310



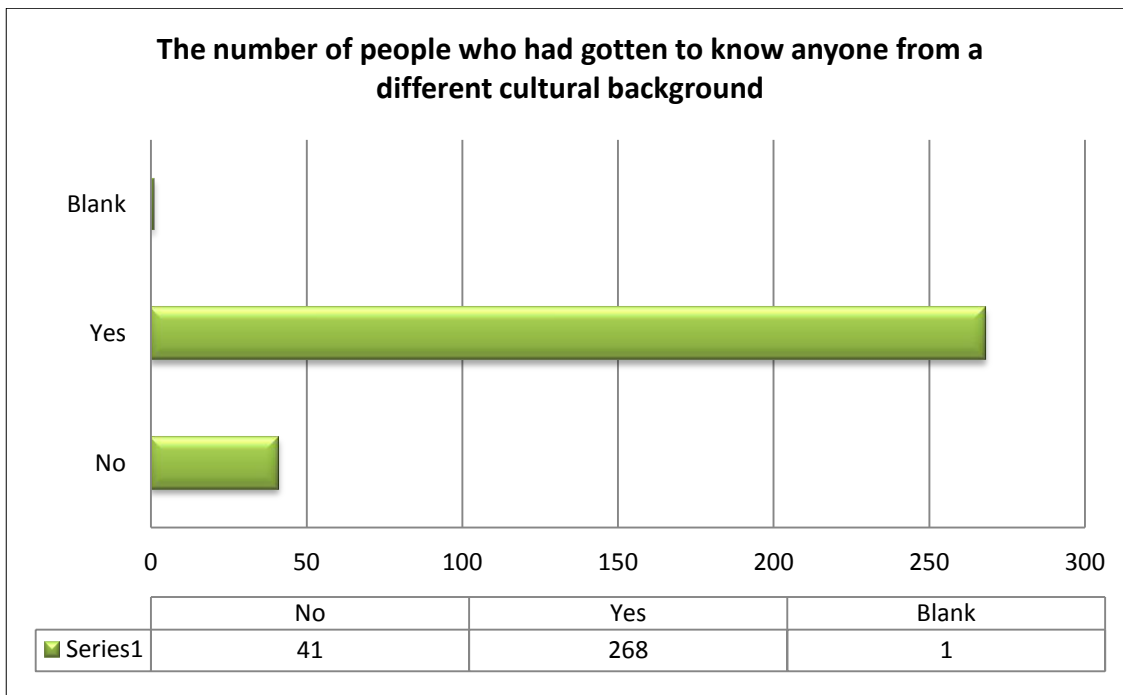
Table 3: Relationship between gender and whether or not people felt comfortable asking their neighbour for assistance in an emergency.

I feel comfortable asking my neighbours for assistance in an emergency	Gender		
	Male	Female	Blank
Agree	81%	82%	100%
Disagree	19%	16%	0%
Blank	0%	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

There were one hundred and twenty five people who lived in Lakemba for more than five years and felt comfortable asking their neighbours for assistance in an emergency but one hundred and twenty seven people who had lived in Lakemba for less than five years felt the same way. The results therefore show that the length of residency in Lakemba has not affected whether or not a person feels comfortable asking their neighbour for assistance in an emergency. These statistics align with the written responses whereby the presence of 'friendly neighbours' was a recurring factor when asked what people liked about the area. A slightly higher proportion of females (82%) than males (81%) felt comfortable asking their neighbours for assistance in an emergency. The 'sense of belonging' that people felt highlights the prevalence of strong community relations in Lakemba.

Furthermore the idea of multiculturalism resonated in both the quantitative and qualitative responses. From the sample, two hundred and sixty eight people had gotten to know someone from a different cultural background compared to forty one people who had not. A cross tabulation revealed a slightly higher proportion of people born overseas (87%) had gotten to know someone from a different cultural background compared to 85% of people who were born in Australia. People liked the availability of 'halal and a diverse range of foods' as well as the presence of 'different people from different places'. This highlights the socially inclusive nature of Lakemba residents. Multiculturalism was a theme that reflected Lakemba's strong social and cultural connections.



Chart 1: Number of people who have gotten to know others from a different cultural background.**Table 4:** Proportion of people who have gotten to know others from a different cultural background, by whether they were born overseas.

Have you gotten to know anyone who comes from a different cultural background	Born Overseas		
	Yes	No	Blank
No	13%	15%	12%
Yes	87%	85%	88%
Blank	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

In addition, people's access to facilities featured strongly in the results. From the survey, two hundred and four people said they did use organisations in Lakemba compared to eighty six who didn't. The library was used the most (29%), followed by faith-based organisations (23%). The use of these facilities by families justifies the continuing provision of services and information. The consultations revealed women felt isolated at home and suggested there should be a place for them to socialise and engage in more activities during the day. High rent costs and a lack of rental properties were also prominent issues emerging from the consultations. People felt that the availability and condition of housing could be improved. The need for people to gain access to local organisations and basic services reflects the importance of continued support for people accessing these amenities.



Chart 2: The types of services and organisations used by people in Lakemba.

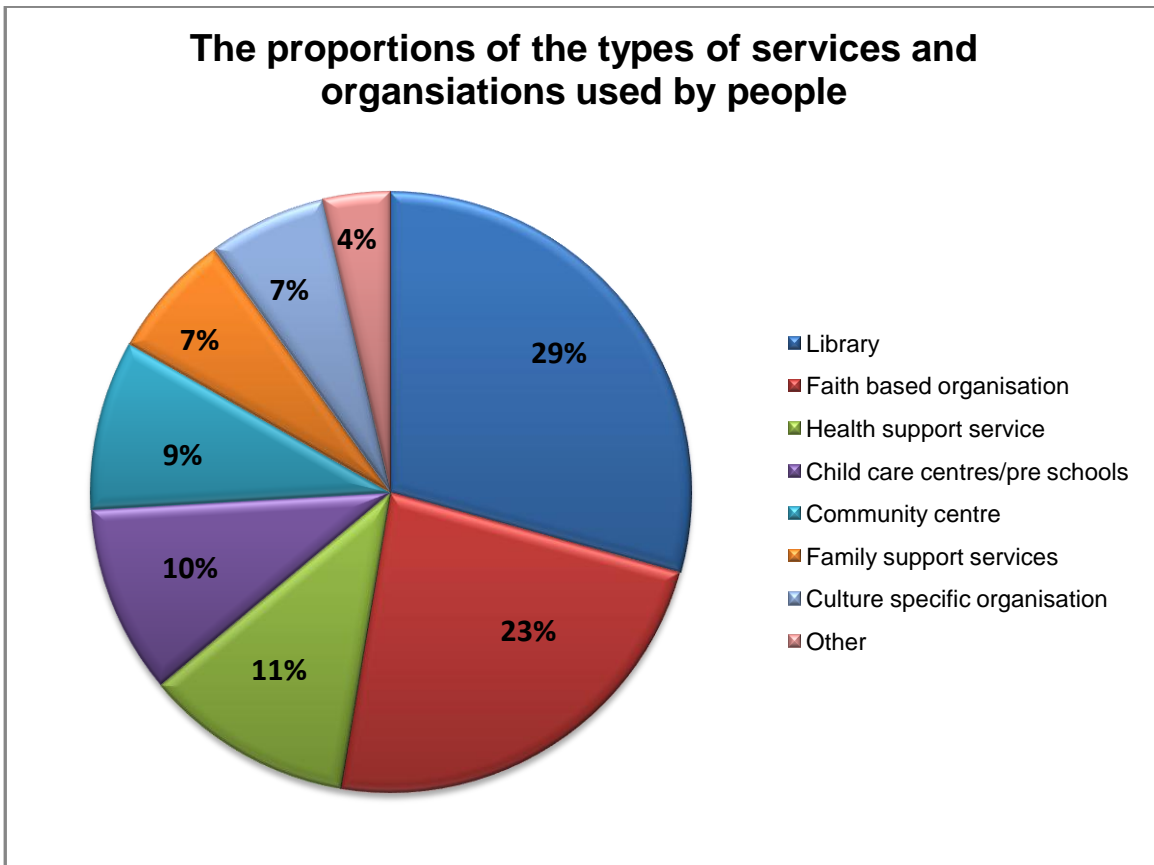
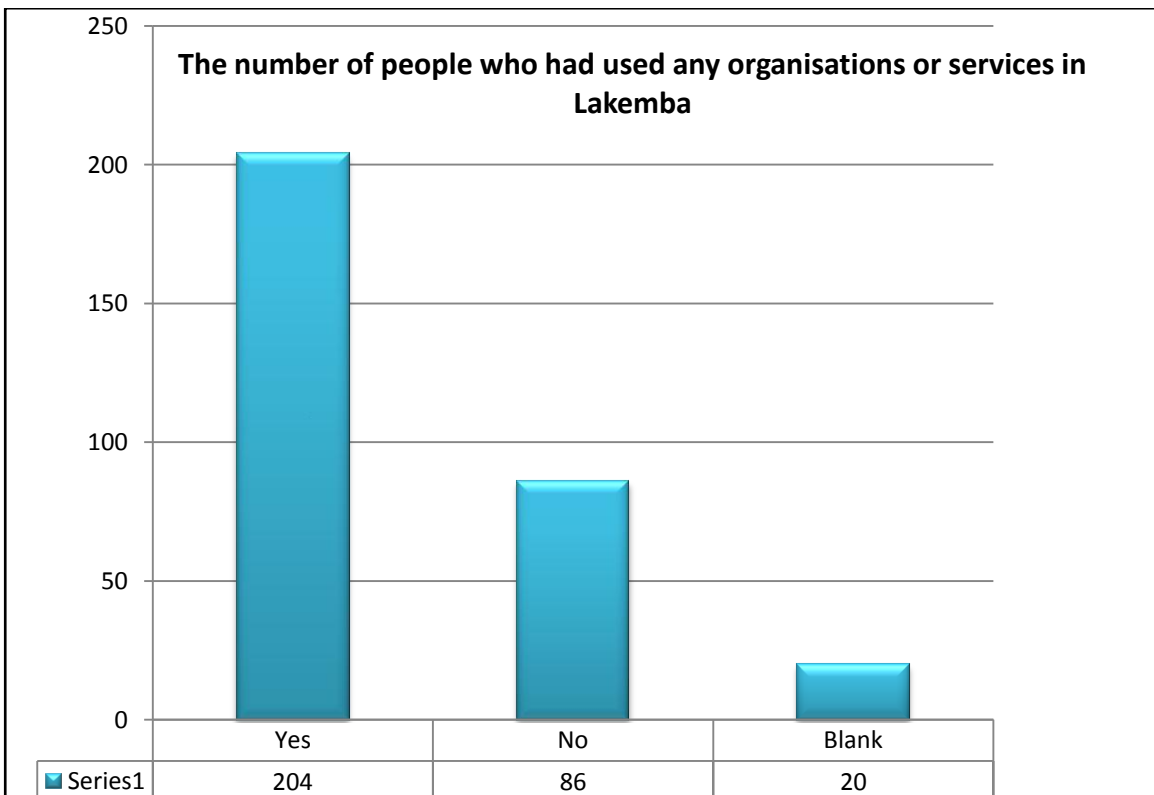
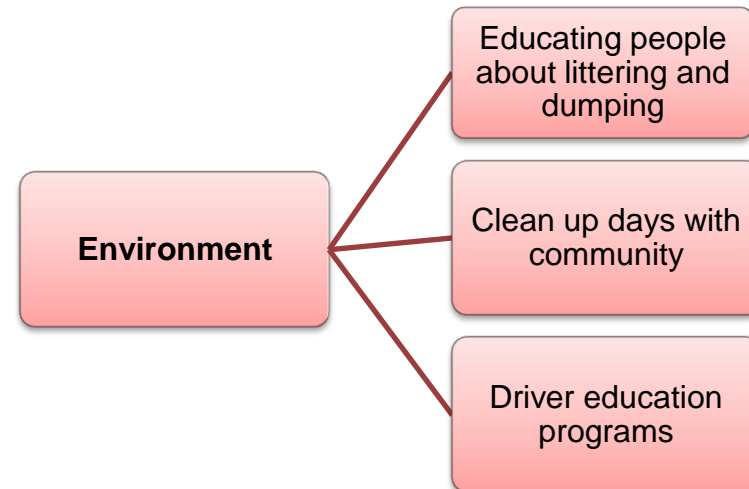
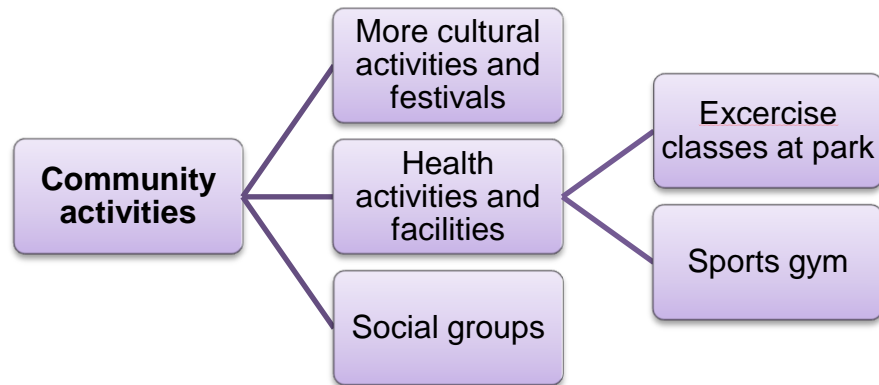
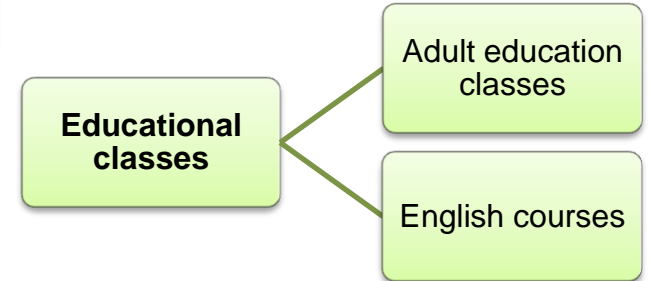
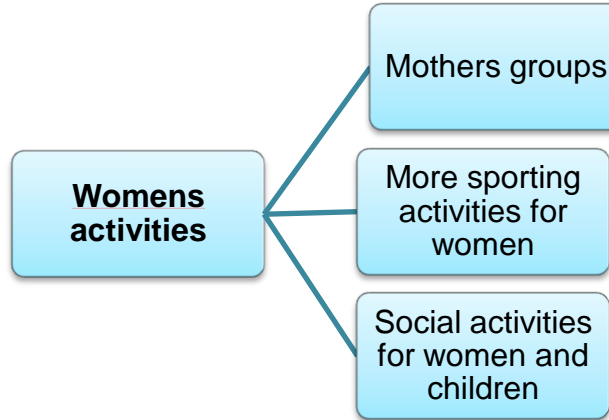
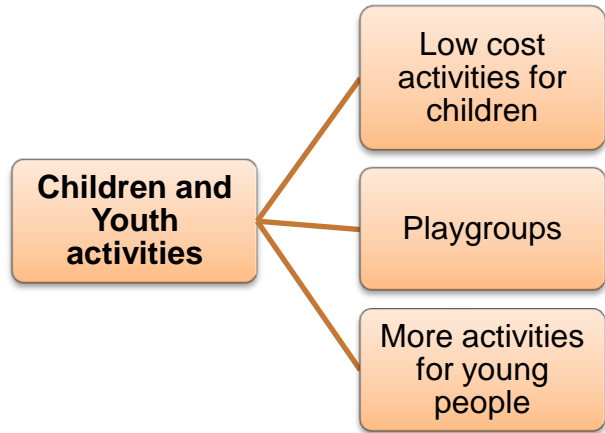


Chart 3: Number of people using organisations or services in Lakemba.



Activities/ Services/ Programs which residents said they needed:



Issues and solutions raised by community members and workers in order of priority:

Social isolation of women and lack of programs and activities for women

- Increase English classes for women in various levels to help with their career pathways .
- Increased labour force initiatives and apprenticeships for women.
- Increase awareness of local services and organisations e.g. connect with schools, community centres, health care centres and family support services.
- Seminars on women's legal, financial and social rights, in different languages.
- Yoga, other recreational classes, affordable gym and swimming pool access.
- More facilities, mothers groups, social spaces e.g. women's cafe.

Housing-lack of affordable and suitable housing, high rent, poor maintenance of unit blocks and tenants rights and responsibilities.

- Reduce waiting times for public and community housing by building more housing.
- Put pressure on local politicians to place more money into housing.
- Utilise vacant land in the area for affordable housing.
- Monitor rent auctions .
- Utilise spaces for housing such as vacant blocks, land next to the railway line.
- Educate people about their rights as tenants-provide information sessions in the community and distribute information packs in many languages.
- Landlords/Agents to include information in rental contracts regarding rubbish management.

Rubbish/Littering and dumping of household items on the street

- Educate people about rubbish and recycling in different languages and symbols.
- Place more signs in public spaces to educate people about how to deal with rubbish by placing it in the different bins provided.
- Clean up Lakemba Day-have prizes and competitions.
- More community engagement e.g. Locals sharing knowledge with others in their blocks, streets and local area and hold discussion groups about the issue.
- Ask council to provide more garbage bins especially to flats/units.
- Improve council response rate to community members' complaints regarding rubbish dumping.
- More regular council pick ups for household goods/chemicals/garden waste etc.

Lack of programs and activities for children

- Specific groups for parents who have lost their children, parenting courses for parents of newborn babies, courses for healthy eating habits.
- Incorporating homework help into before and after school care.
- Easier access to playgroups.
- Community Sports centre close to Lakemba (similar to the one in Marrickville and Riverwood where they incorporate sporting activities).
- Funding for holiday programs for children and their families.
- Cheaper childcare.



Traffic, parking and drivers not obeying road rules

- More car parks along railway line or have the existing car park made multi storey.
- Extend time in council's two hour parking to four hour parking time spots.
- Booking people who do the wrong thing especially around school zones-increase presence of parking police around back streets and on weekends.
- Educate community about driving rules.
- Kiss and ride zones around schools.

Lack of programs and activities for young people

- Identify and promote available programs e.g. vacation care holiday program
- Multipurpose centre e.g. Sydney Olympic Aquatic Centre
- Identify what young people want and what is accessed e.g. skate park
- Form a local youth group/drop in centre specifically for Lakemba
- Playgrounds e.g. Basketball courts-work with highschoools to provide sporting venues to general public.

Public Transport

- Bus stop near Aldi-450 bus to stop closer to the lane.
- Request bus stops for elderly that live in Myee St area.
- Programs to promote the use of public transport/confidence, safety motivation-support for women to feel confident using the public transport system.
- Campaign around the positive use of public transport.
- Negotiate with transport bodies to increase services outside of peak hour and to ensure timetables are reliable.
- More regular trains in the morning and more buses that run to time table.
- Build more parking areas-three floor parking venue in the current commuter parking area.

Conclusion

The results illustrate a strong sense of belonging is felt by the residents of Lakemba. This was attributed to ideas such as multiculturalism, community and the availability of amenities. However there needs to be continued support for people attempting to access organisations for family and individual support. The qualitative results indicated a strong need for more activities for women in the Lakemba area, whether through a women's space or organising weekly women's only sporting events. The consultations revealed housing to be a significant problem in Lakemba. These issues, raised by the community, provide important insights into how people seek to improve their way of life as a community. This project has provided a voice for the community through the creation of a research platform which not only measures levels of social connectivity but also underlines the pressures faced by residents in the area.

