

# Social Housing in Waterloo: Tenant Perceptions of Safety, Health and Wellbeing, and the Community

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# Waterloo Community Profile

**Public Housing Residences: 2,425**

## Age and Gender

- 58% of residents are aged over 55 years
- 53% are Male

## Household Composition

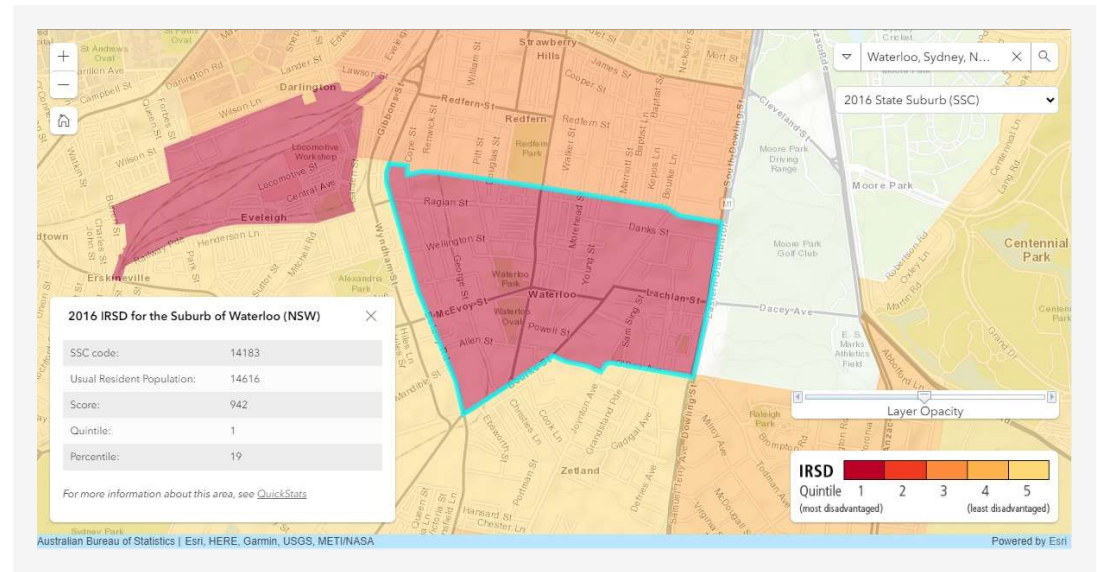
- 77% are single occupant households

## Income Sources

- Primary sources of income include Age Pension, Disability Support Payment, and Job Seeker Payment.

## Cultural Diversity

- 12% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 39% of residents are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
- Main languages spoken: English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Vietnamese



# The Collaborative Group Members

## NSW State Government

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice SSESNS District (DCJ)
- NSW Health – Sydney Local Health District (SLHD)
- Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment – NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)
- NSW Police – South Sydney Police Area Command
- NSW Department of Education
- Department of Customer Service (DCS) Customer Experience Unit
- Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW)

## Local Government

- City of Sydney

## Local Aboriginal Land Council

- Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC)

## Federal Government

- Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN)
- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- Services Australia (Centrelink)

## Community

- Redfern Waterloo Affordable Housing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Allies
- REDWatch Incorporated
- Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board (NAB) – Waterloo Redevelopment Subgroup

## Non Government Organisations

- Counterpoint Community Services (CCS)
- Inner Sydney Voice (ISV)
- Mission Australia (MA)
- Mudgin-Gal
- Redfern Legal Centre (RLC)

## NGO Peak bodies

- Local Community Services Association (LCSA)
- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)
- Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Service
- Tenants Union NSW (TU)
- Multicultural NSW

## Other Agencies

- UNSW – CPHCE – HERDU
- Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)
- Fact Tree Youth Service
- Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation



# The Action Plan

The Action Plan has six priority areas:

1. Improved Safety



2. Improved Health and Wellbeing



3. Improved Communication, Consultation, and Community Participation



4. Improved Customer Service



5. Improved Service Integration and Service Accessibility for all service users



6. Improved Responses to Systemic Issues (and Accountability) on an ongoing basis



# The Waterloo Tenants Survey

Residents aged 18 years and over who had lived on the estate for at least 6 months were invited to participate in the online survey.



The Matavai and Turanga public housing towers at the Waterloo Estate (Photo by Jessica Hromas)

## The survey included questions about:

-  Perceptions of safety and experience of crime
-  Health and Wellbeing
-  Perceptions of and engagement with the Waterloo community
-  Access and experience with government and community agencies

# Survey Methodology

The survey materials were translated into Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese by Multicultural NSW.



Квартиросъемщики, проживающие в социальном жилье в районе Ватерлоо, мы нуждаемся в вашей помощи

Приглашаем вас принять участие в интернет-опросе под эгидой Университета штата Новый Южный Уэльс

В ходе интернет-опроса будет произведена оценка результатов работы общественных организаций и правительственных учреждений, направленной на решение общественных проблем в области безопасности, здоровья и благополучия обитателей социального жилья в Ватерлоо, а также качества получаемых ими услуг.

В опросе могут принять участие все квартиросъемщики, прожившие не менее 6 месяцев в социальном жилье в районе Ватерлоо и достигшие 18 лет.

Опрос занимает 10–15 минут, и анкету можно заполнить на английском, китайском, русском и вьетнамском языках.

За дальнейшими подробностями об исследовании и том, как принять участие, обращайтесь на сайт [https://bit.ly/SurveyWaterloo\\_Russian](https://bit.ly/SurveyWaterloo_Russian)

или отсканируйте QR-код



Если вам требуется помощь при заполнении анкеты, вы можете обратиться к родственникам или же к сотрудникам службы социальных услуг Counterpoint Multicultural Centre, 73 Garden St, Alexandria Phone: 9319 4073

The survey was promoted through multiple channels, including:

- SMS invitations to the lead tenant from DCJ
- Posters
- QR-coded flyers
- Local events such as ‘Summer on the Green’



Images from Summer on the Green

## Survey Results: Demographics

Demographic Characteristic	Number	%
<b>Gender (n = 301)</b>		
Woman/Female	116	38.5
Man/Male	167	55.5
Non-binary/Use a different term	7	2.3
Prefer not to answer	11	3.7
<b>Age Group (n = 286)</b>		
18 – 34 years	16	5.3
35 – 44 years	21	7.0
45 – 54 years	46	15.3
55 – 64 years	84	27.9
65 – 74 years	72	23.9
75 years and older	47	15.6
Prefer not to answer	15	5.0

**1 in 5** respondents spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, most spoke Mandarin (9%) or Russian (8%).

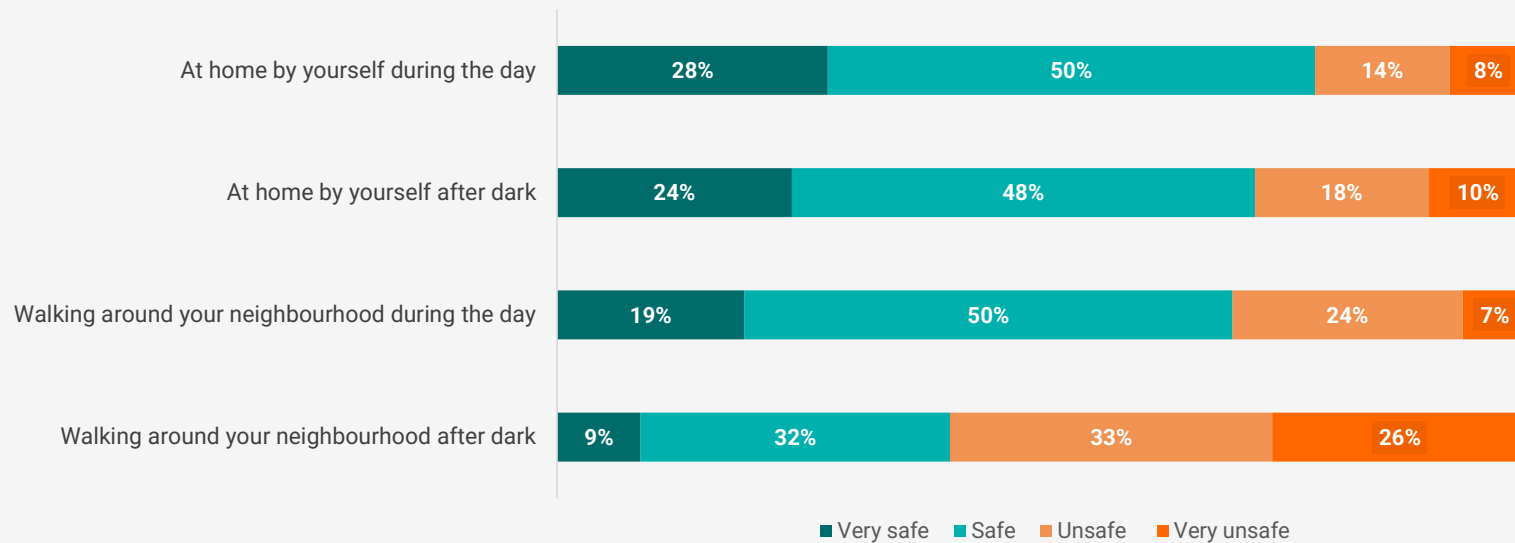
**17%** of respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

**30%** of respondents reported Year 10 or below as their highest level of Education.

# Survey Results: Safety and Crime

## Perceptions of Safety

Question: Thinking about your personal safety, how safe or unsafe do you feel in the following situations?

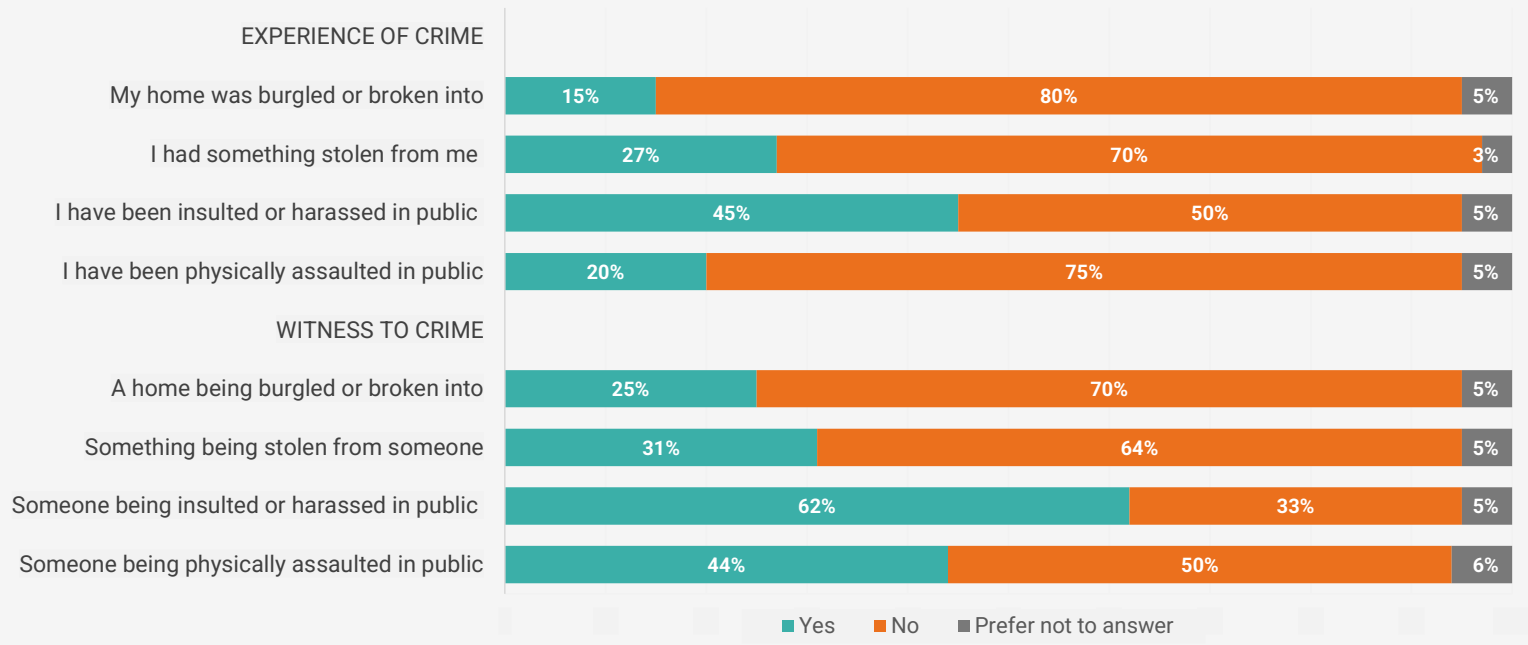




# Survey Results: Safety and Crime

## Experience of Crime

Question: In the last 6 months, have you experienced any of the following crimes at or near the Waterloo Housing Estate?



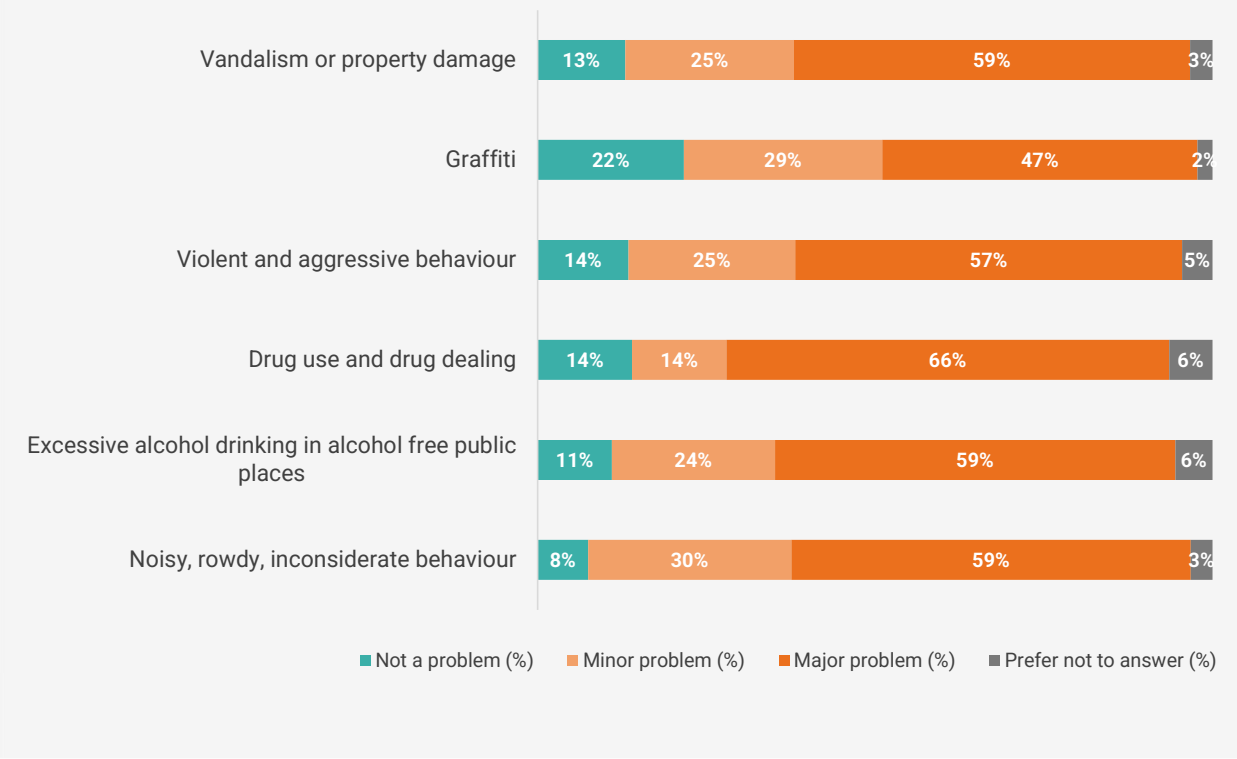
# Survey Results: Safety and Crime

## Antisocial Behaviour

65% of respondents agree that security on the estate is a major issue.

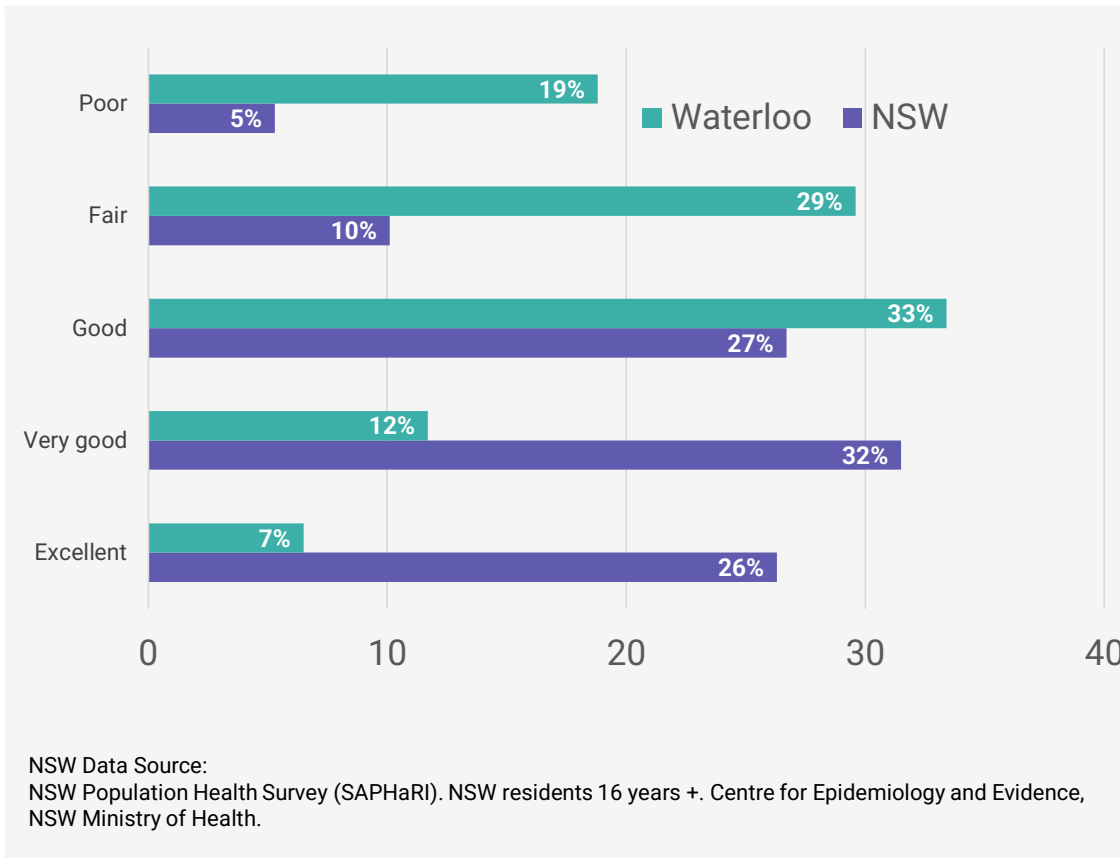
Only 43% feel that police and agencies are working effectively together to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour.

Question: In the last six months, were any of the following a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem on Waterloo Housing Estate?



## Survey Results: Health and Wellbeing

### Self-reported Health, Health Conditions, and Disability



**48%** of all respondents rated their health as **fair or poor** compared to **15%** in **NSW**.

**56%** of respondents reported having **one or more physical health conditions**.

**36%** of respondents stated they had a **mental health condition**.

**1 in 4** respondents reported having a **disability**.

## Survey Results: Health and Wellbeing

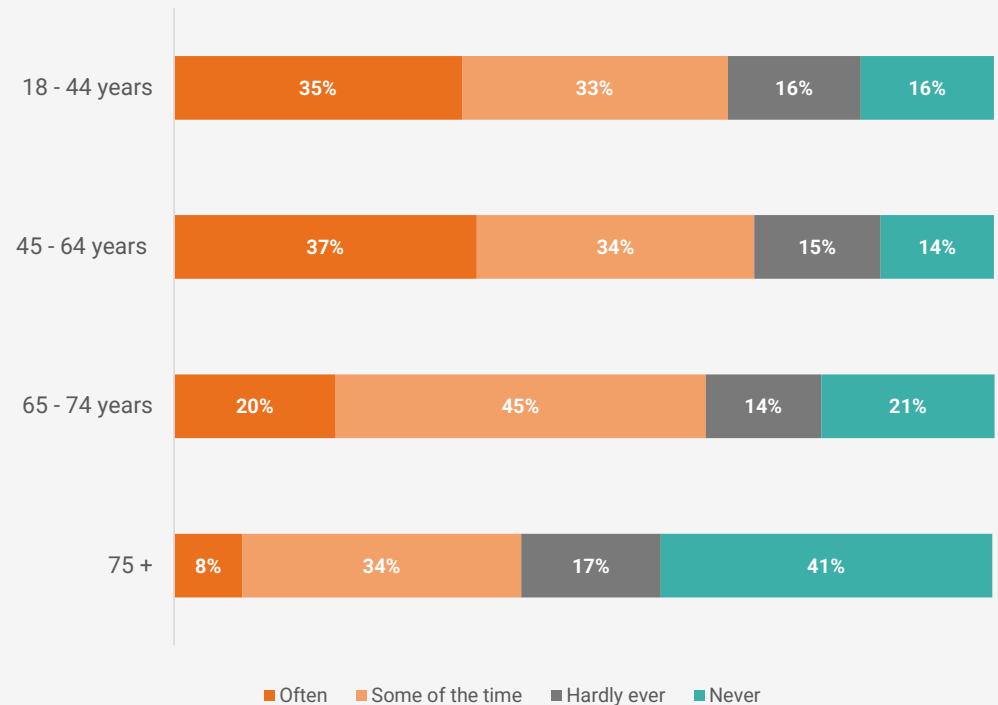
### Loneliness

**28%** of respondents reported feeling **lonely often**, and **36%** reported that they felt **lonely some of the time**.

**Only 21%** of respondents reported that they had **never felt lonely** in the last four weeks.

**41%** of respondents aged **75 and older never felt lonely**.

Question: During the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel lonely (by Age group)?



## Survey Results: Access to and Experience with Services

### Interactions and Experience with Health, Aged Care, and Disability Services:

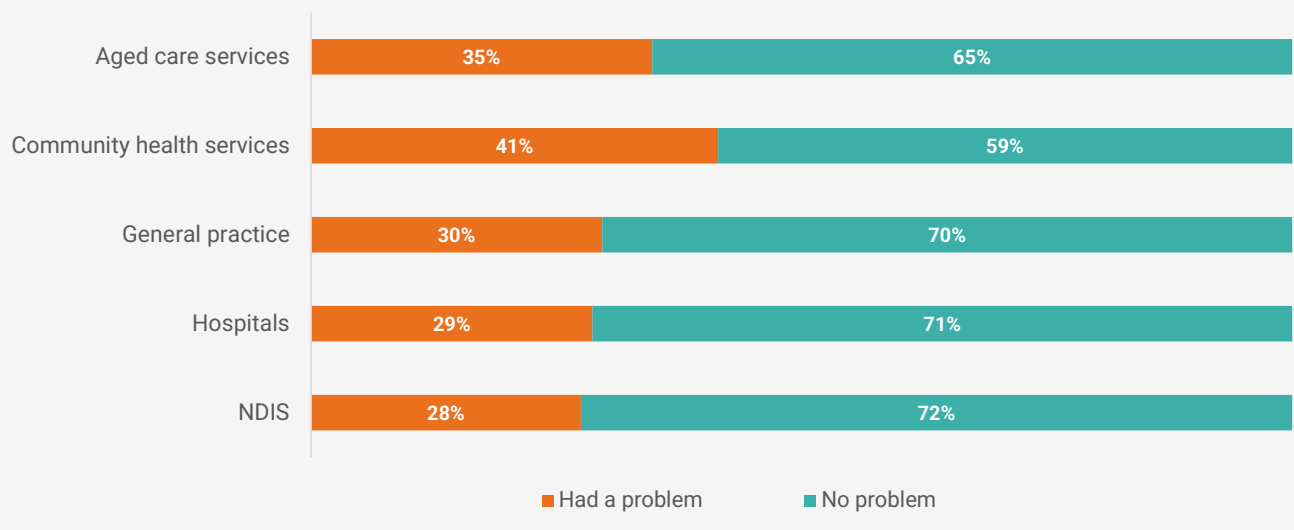
**90%** of respondents had interacted with **general practice** in the previous six months.

**75%** had interacted with **hospitals**.

**48%** with **community health services**.

**one in three** people had interacted with **aged care services** and the **NDIS**.

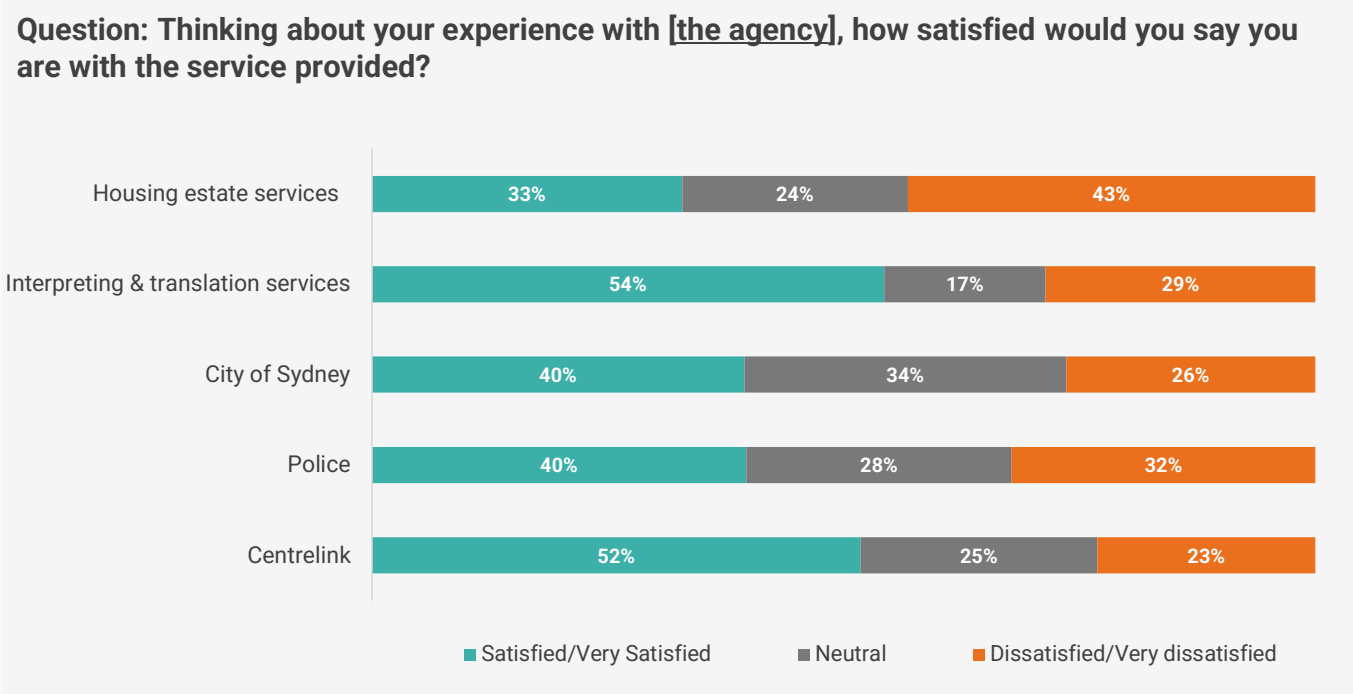
Question: Thinking about the services you have contacted in the last six months, have you experienced any problems accessing them?



# Survey Results: Access to and Experience with Services

## Interactions and Experience with Other Government Agencies

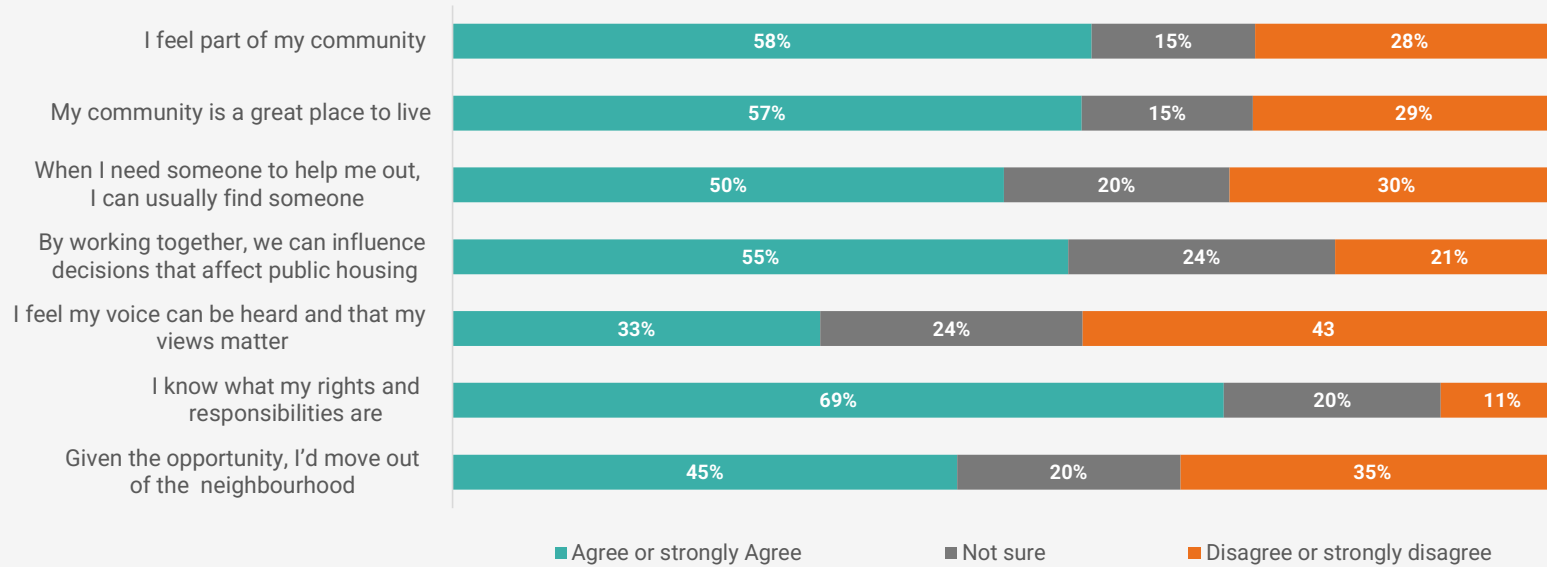
Of those who interacted with the services, **45%** reported having **problems accessing Centrelink**, and **40%** had **problems accessing Housing Estate services**.



# Survey Results: Community Engagement

## Feelings about the Waterloo Community

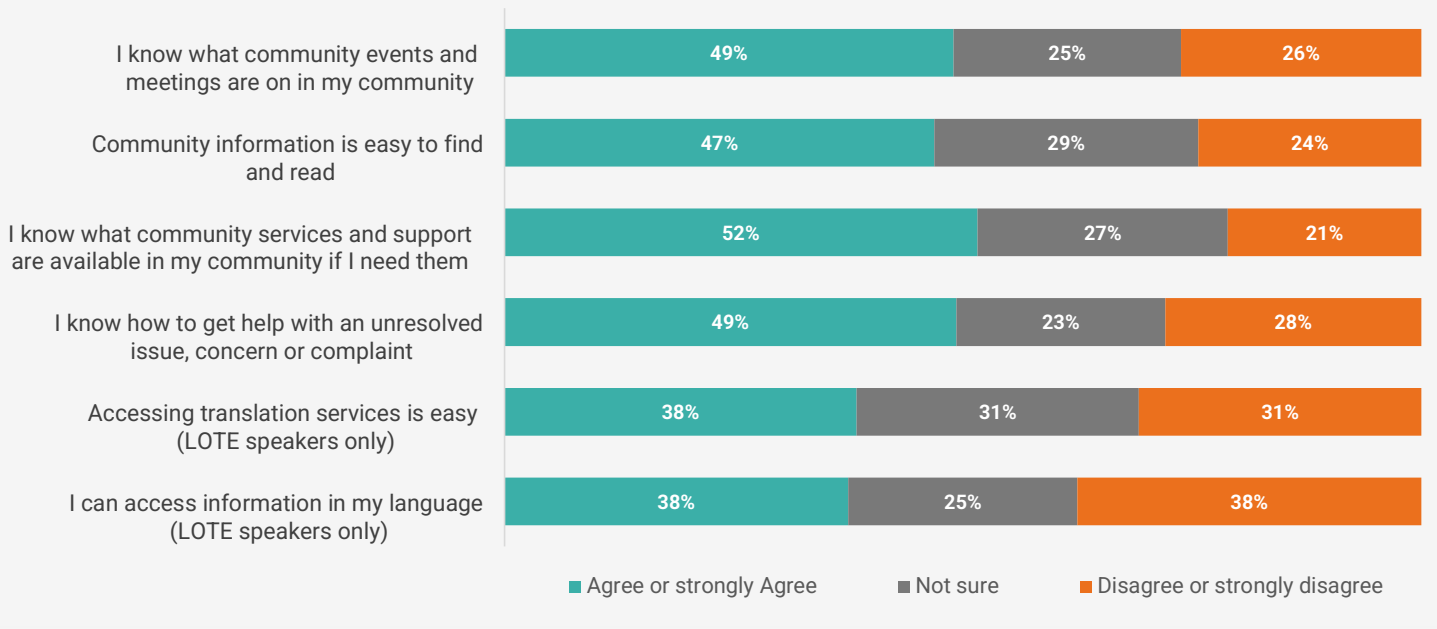
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Waterloo community?



# Survey Results: Community Engagement

## Access to Community information and Involvement in Community Activities

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Waterloo community?



71 % attended a community meeting or event

37% participated in an organised group (such as a social group, sport team, church group, community group)

24% took an active role in providing or supporting a community service or program

41% reported volunteering for an organisation or group



## Survey Results: Comments from Respondents

127 respondents answered the open text question, offering comments and suggestions.

### Safety

“You can't have a healthy community if you haven't got a safe community, and Waterloo is far from safe, especially at night”

### Health and Wellbeing

“Government could help out the community by implementing a free district nurse”

### Community Participation

“The events are wonderful for the community and build community support”

### Customer Service

“A good training system for staff would probably be advantageous”

### Service Integration

“Continue to keep working with non gov and government agencies”

### Systemic Issues and Accountability

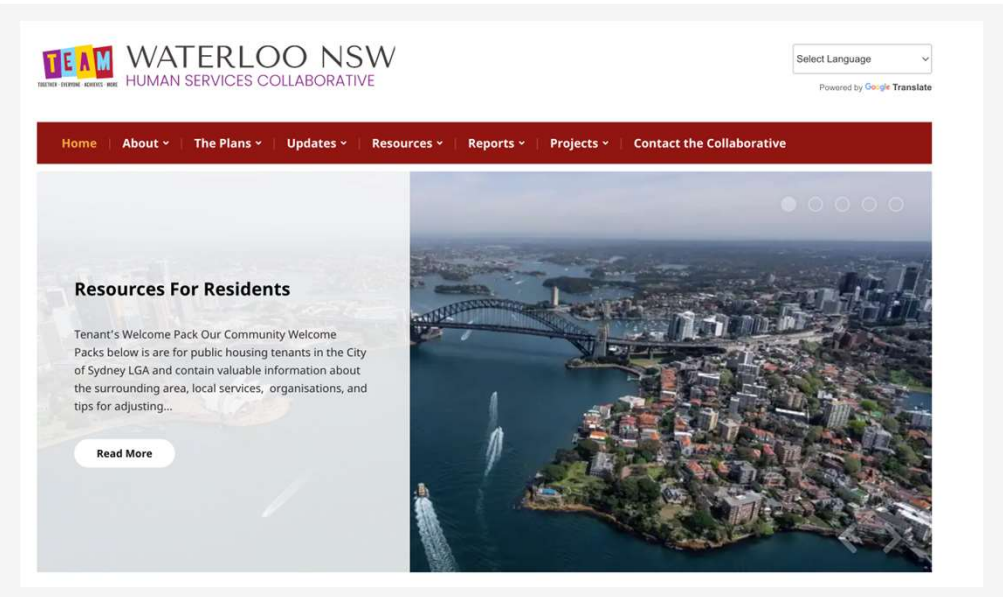
“Combat anti-social behaviours, such as smoking in public places and elevators, throwing garbage and spitting everywhere, injecting drugs and urinating in fire escapes”

### Other Comments

“When there is a problem there are a lot of police, then none the following days”.

# Want to Learn More?

Please visit <https://waterloo2017.com/> for more information about the Tenants Survey, the Collaborative Group, and the Action Plan.



*We wish to thank the people who participated in the survey and those who provided support to participants during the survey.*

*We would also like to thank members of the Waterloo Human Services Review Group who provided advice about the questionnaire and the report.*

### Waterloo Public Housing Tenants Survey: Highlights

In 2023, the Waterloo public housing tenants survey was conducted by the Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity at UNSW on behalf of Waterloo Human Services Collaborative Group to inform the Waterloo Human Services Action Plan. 320 residents completed the online survey.

**Here is what residents said:**

- 58% feel part of their community
- 69% know their rights and responsibilities
- 57% feel their community is a good place to live

**Areas that need improvement:**



- 57% were dissatisfied with the speed in which maintenance issues were fixed
- 45% have been insulted or harassed in public
- 59% feel unsafe walking around the neighbourhood after dark

**Residents comments and suggestions:**

- "Combat anti-social behaviours"
- "I feel safer in housing than anywhere previous, in a security building, they do their job"
- "The sanitary conditions are extremely poor, pests are never killed, trees are never trimmed, the outside of the windows cannot be cleaned, garbage is thrown from high altitude."
- "Many elderly people in the area don't feel safe, they often become stressed and isolated because they're afraid to go out."
- "You can't have a healthy community if you haven't got a safe community and Waterloo is far from safe especially at night."

Want to learn more?  
The full report is available at Website: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/iphce/research/projects/review-of-the-waterloo-human-services-action-plan> and <https://waterloo2017.com/reports/>  
Further information about the Waterloo Human Services Plan can be found at: <https://waterloo2017.com/the-plan/>

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Tenant Survey 1 page highlights report available on the website