

Community Knowledge and Support for Kerbside Recycling

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Executive Summary

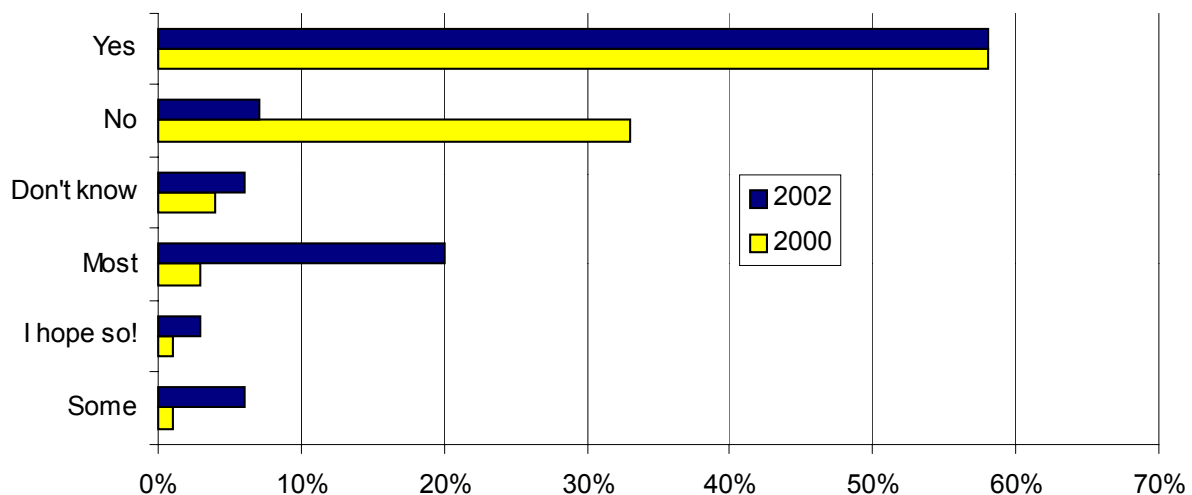
Community consultation for the Recycling Education Program – Kerbside (REP-K) was conducted in the Macarthur region via the distribution of a questionnaire, completed primarily through face-to-face interviews with 385 residents. This was the second round of consultation with the first round conducted in August 2000. Residents were asked the same questions during both survey periods with some additional questions in the second round (July 2002). The aim of the initial consultation was to gain an understanding of community knowledge and support for kerbside recycling, particularly:

- Kerbside recycling participation rate.
- Attitude to recycling and driving factors influencing recycling.
- Overall awareness of correct recycling procedures.
- Level of understanding concerning the impact of contamination.
- Effectiveness of previous and existing information about recycling.
- Preferences for further education in terms of issues and the way information should be disseminated.

The aim of the second round of community consultation was to determine what if any changes had occurred to the community's knowledge and support for kerbside recycling as a result of the REP-K that was implemented after the first round of consultation. The second consultation will form part of the overall program evaluation.

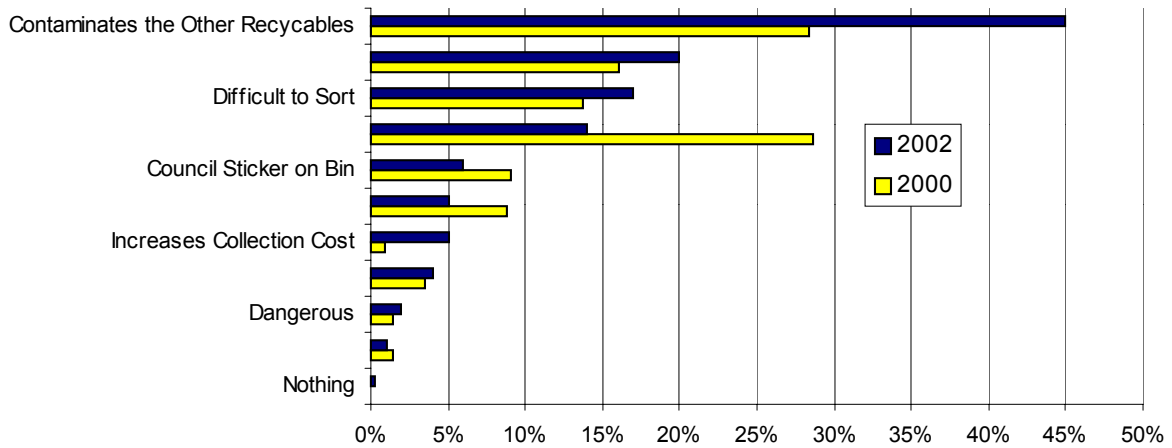
The results of the second round of community consultation demonstrate that:

- Support for kerbside recycling by the community continues to be high with a 98% participation rate.
- Residents of all ages, ethnic and social backgrounds continue to participate in recycling.
- Confidence in recycling has increased considerably with 78% of people believing that all or most of the material collected for recycling actually gets recycled, and only 7% believing that the material doesn't get recycled, down from 33% in 2000.



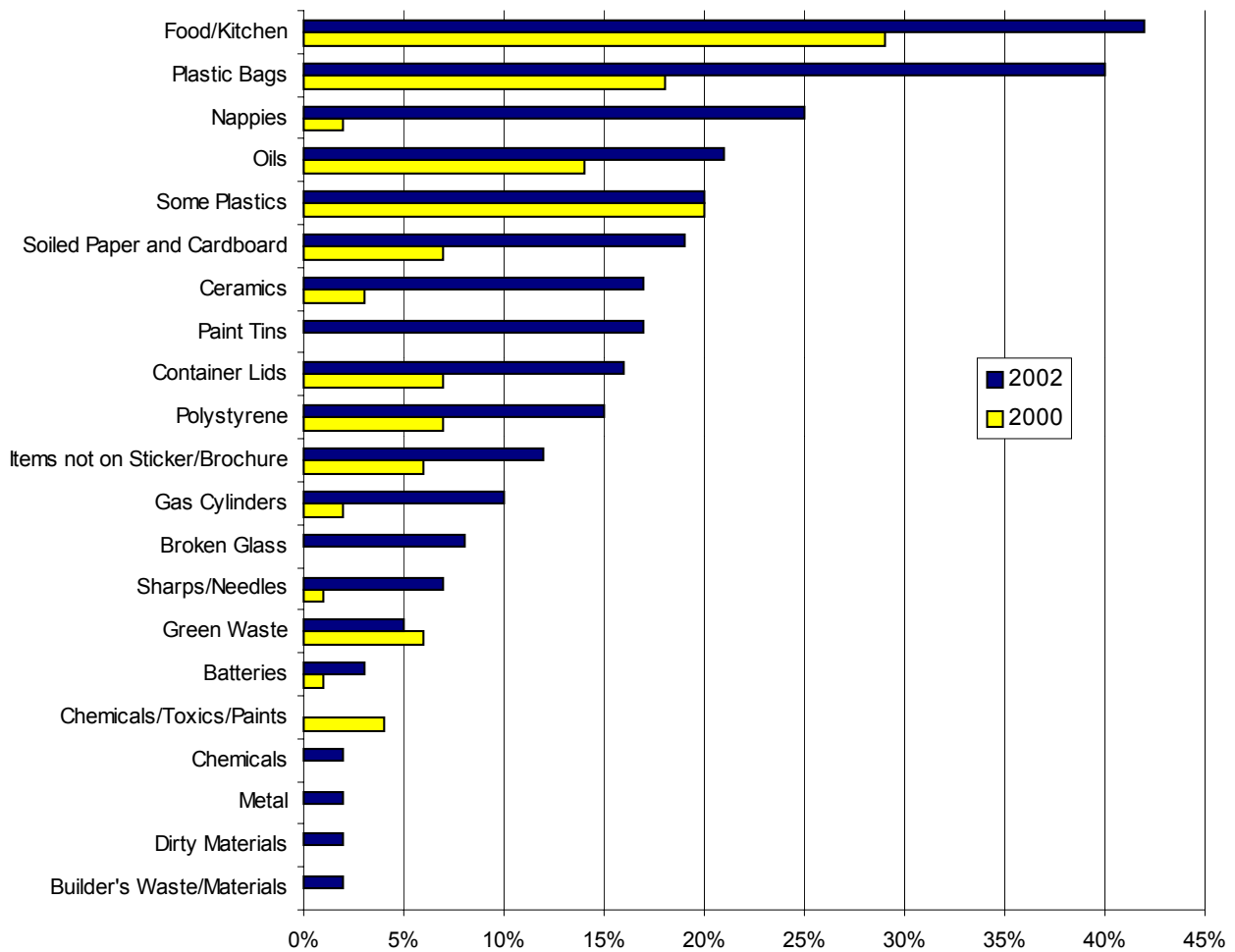
Comparison of confidence in recycling (copy of Figure 45)

- In 2002 the community has a much better understanding of what happens to recycling if the wrong thing ends up in the recycling bin.



Comparison of awareness of contamination impacts (copy of Figure 53)

- The majority of people are aware of things that shouldn't go in their recycling bin, Food/Kitchen (42%) was most commonly mentioned followed by plastic bags (40%) and nappies (25%).

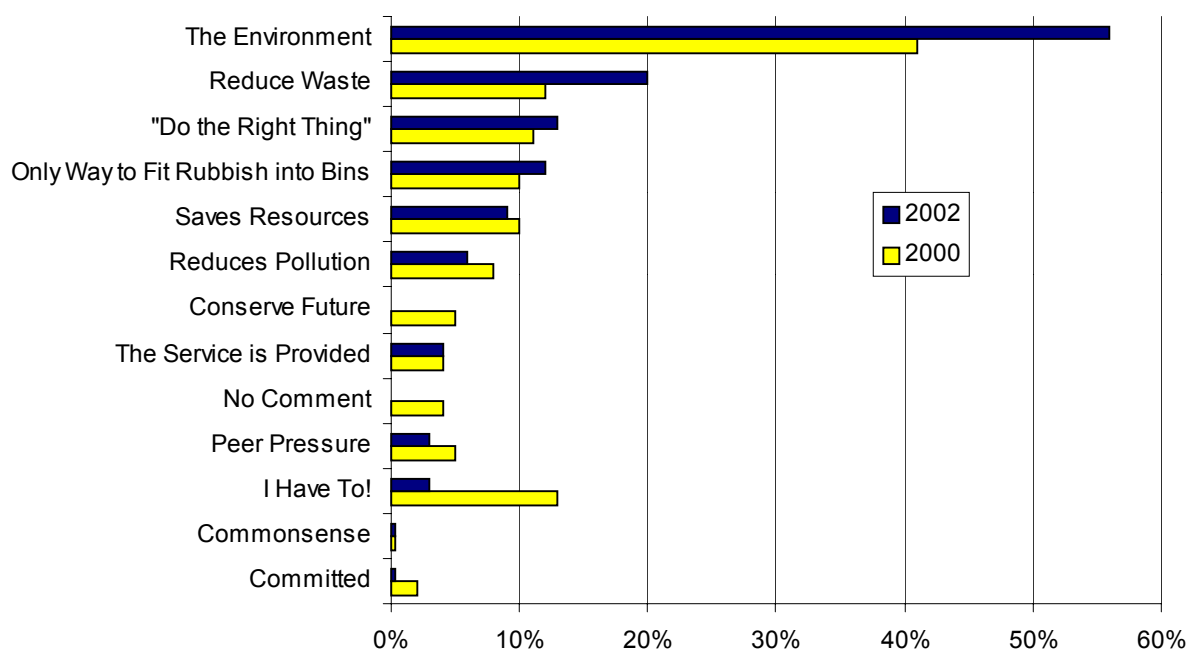


Comparison of items that should NOT go in the recycling bin (copy of Figure 1)

- Awareness of and action on the correct recycling procedures outlined in the program tools has increased across all sectors of the community (i.e. renters, owners and non-English).

- The greatest improvement in following correct recycling procedures in 2002 was the removal of lids and caps.
- Respondents who could recall the program materials, themes and messages were more aware of correct recycling procedure than those that who could not.
- Overall 78% of respondents feel they have been given adequate information on recycling, but remain interested in received regular updates and reminders. Only 66% of people from non-English speaking backgrounds feel they have received adequate information, with no program materials to date being developed in other languages.
- The types of questions residents interested in receiving updated information would like answered show that recycling information needs to be ongoing, constantly reinforcing the same basic messages as well as providing more details on how the process works.

Overall the community's participation in recycling continues to be high, as does their interest in receiving more information, both of a very basic and detailed nature. Concern for the environment is now the primary motivator for recycling, rather than compliance with regulation or the threat of being 'stickered'.



Comparison of motivation for recycling (copy of Figure 44)

Knowledge of what contamination is has increased significantly, as has the understanding of what happens when recycling becomes contaminated. While awareness of correct recycling procedures has increased across the board there are still some areas for improvement. Knowledge about plastics, particularly correct identification continues to be one of the most difficult areas for the community to understand. The level of knowledge and understanding of renters and people from non-English speaking backgrounds still lags behind owners and clearly education programs and information need to better target both of these groups.

Knowledge of correct procedures continues to be high, but there is still a gap between knowing what to do and putting it into practice. This gap has reduced considerably for those who could recall program materials and messages. Clearly increasing the knowledge of correct procedures and recognition of common messages and themes will only come from continual reinforcement.