

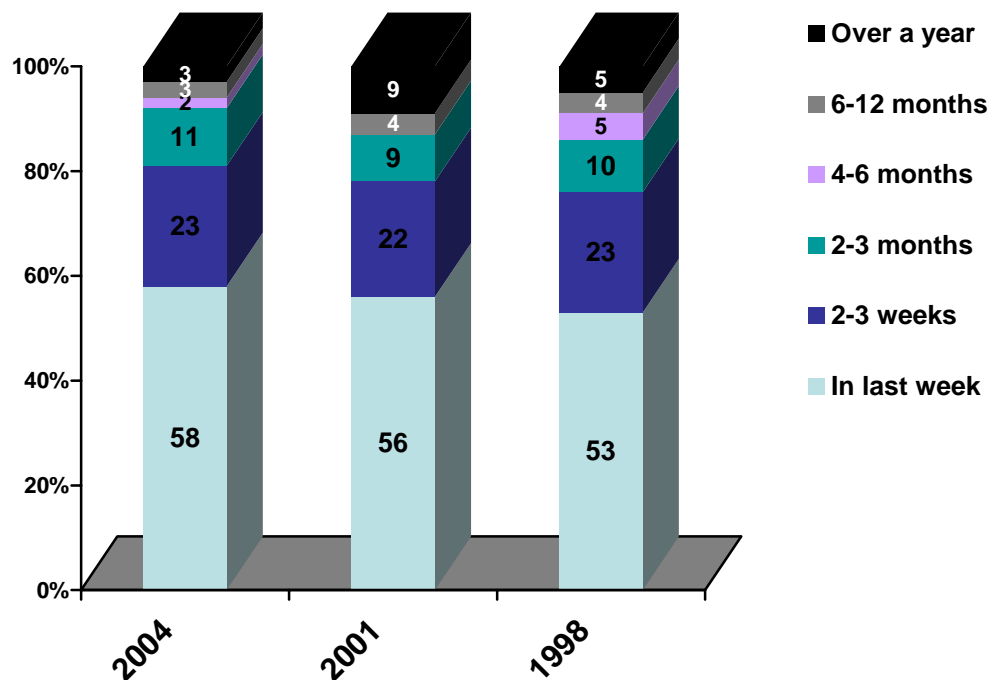
Sydneysiders' Use of Parks and Gardens

A telephone survey of park usage and public attitudes and needs in relation parks was conducted for SPG by Taverners consultants between November and December 2004. Survey participants were 1521 residents of the Greater Sydney area aged 16 years and over. Similar surveys were conducted on two prior occasions, 1998 and 2001. This article presents a brief summary of the 2004 survey results, with some comparisons with the earlier surveys. 'Parks' in the survey included the parks managed by SPG member agencies, including national parks bordering or within the metropolitan area, and local council parks near respondents' homes.

Overall Park Usage

- Figure 1 shows that in 2004, 58% of Sydneysiders visited a Sydney area park in the week prior to interview. A total of 97% visited a park in the last year, with only 3% not visiting a park in the last year.
- In comparing this to the previous studies, the proportion of people visiting parks in the last week has increased from 53% in 1998 to 56% in 2001 to 58% in 2004.

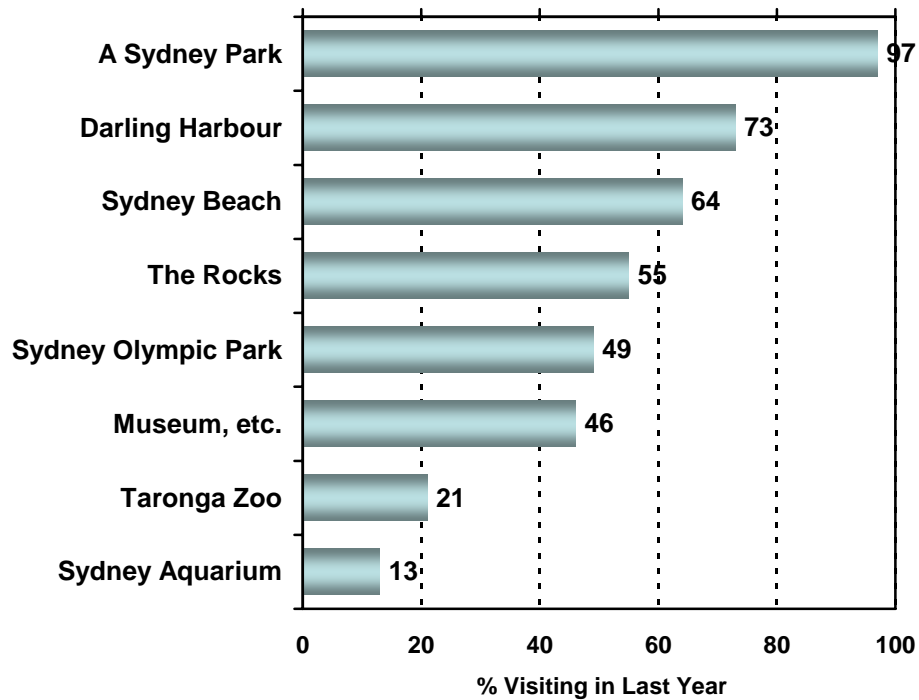
Figure 1: Last Time Sydneysiders' Visited a Park



Park Visitation in Comparison with Other Leisure Activities

- Sydneysiders were asked whether and when they had visited some of the other main recreational destination around Sydney. Compared with the 97% who had visited a Sydney park in the last year, the other most frequently mentioned destinations were Darling Harbour (73%) and Sydney beaches (64%). While 58% had visited a park in the last week, 22% had visited a Sydney beach and 10% had visited Darling Harbour.

Figure 2: Park Visitation Compared to Other Sydney Leisure Venues

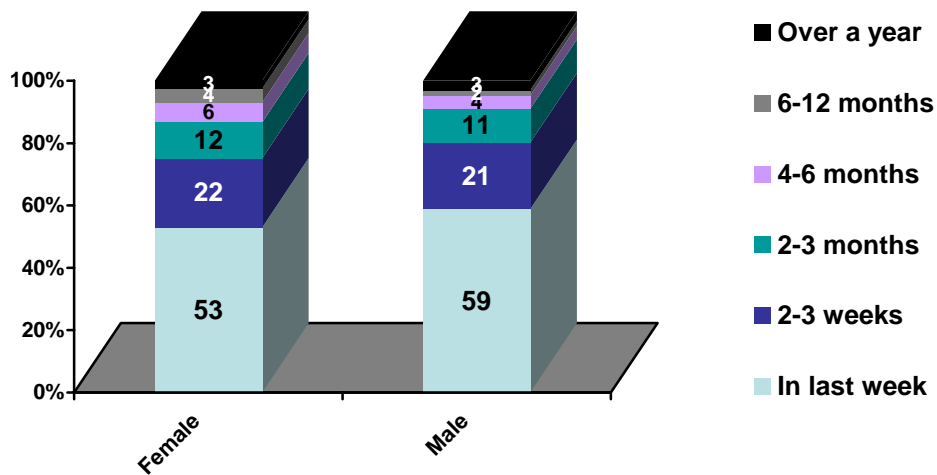


Characteristics of Park Users

Gender

- Figure 3 shows that males were slightly more likely to have visited a park in the last week than females

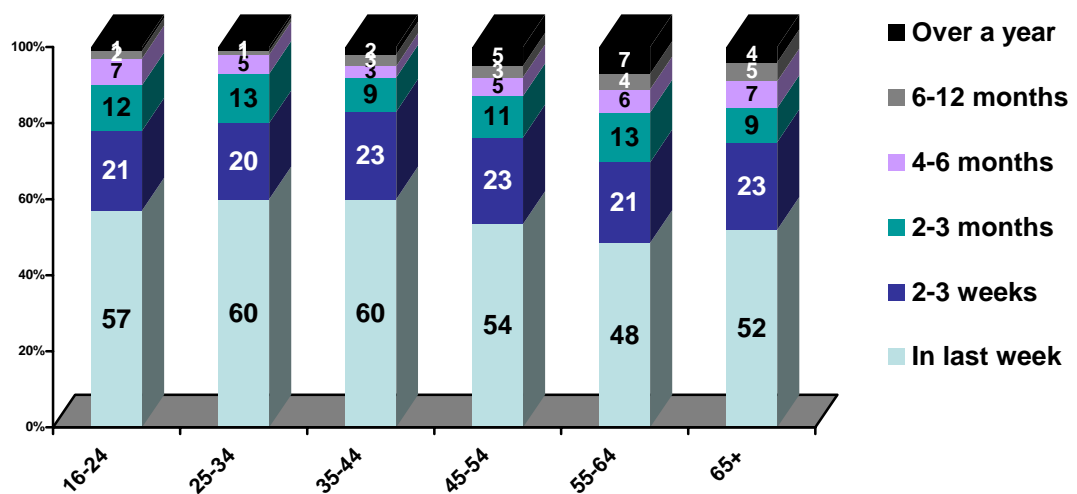
Figure 3: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Gender



Age

- Figure 4 shows that park usage tends to decrease with age, with the lowest proportion of those visiting in the last week being in the 55 to 64 age range. However, usage then increases as people reach retirement age, with the 52% of people age 65 and over visiting a park in the last week – this was an increase from 46% in 1998.

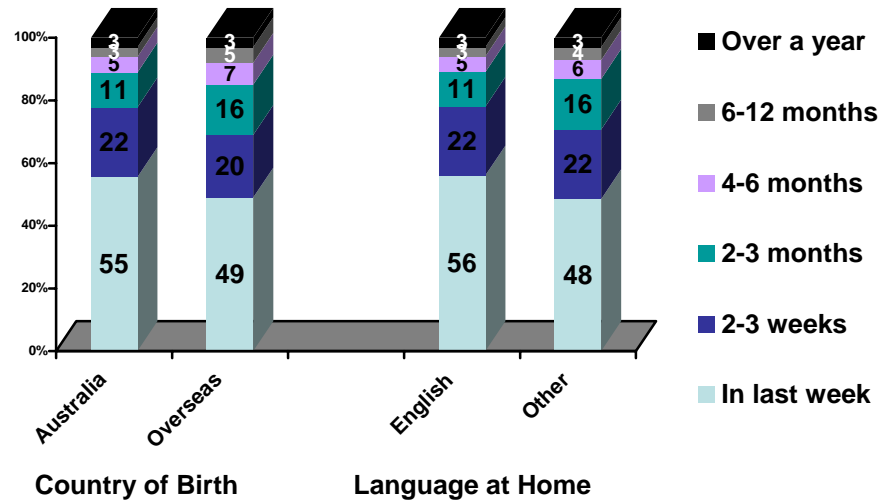
Figure 4: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Age



Country of Birth and Language Spoken at Home

- Figure 5 shows that whether a person was born overseas or in Australia has little influence on park usage. However, people who speak a language other than English at home are less likely to have visited a park in the last week compared to English speakers.

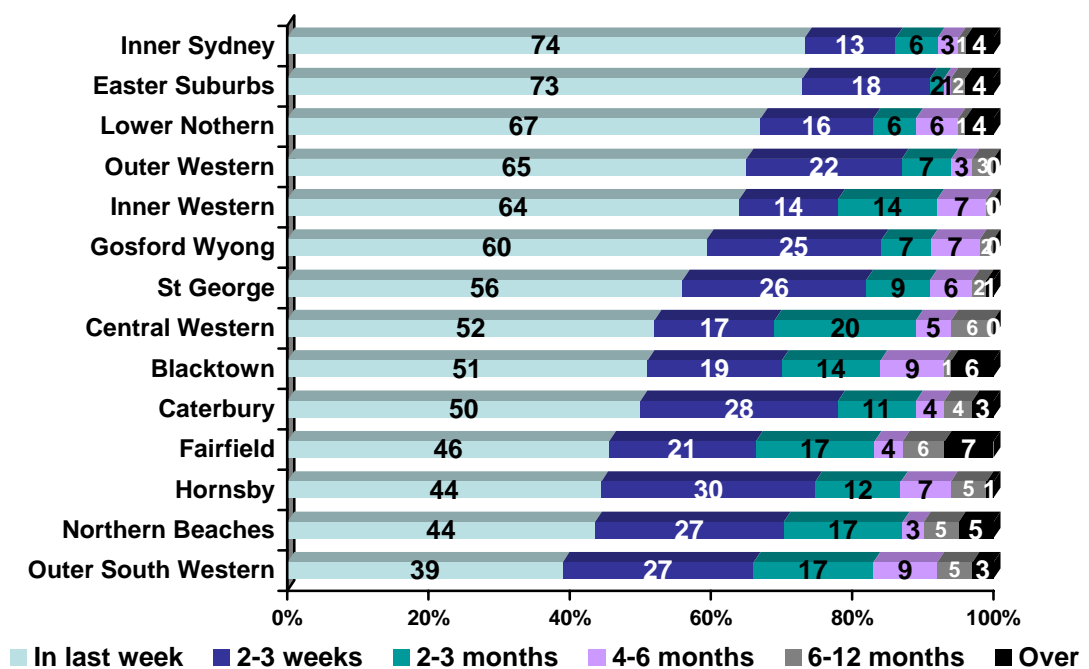
Figure 5: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Country of Birth and Language Spoken at Home



Region of Residence

- Figure 6 shows that residents of the inner suburbs of Sydney are more frequent park visitors than those living in suburbs further from the CBD.

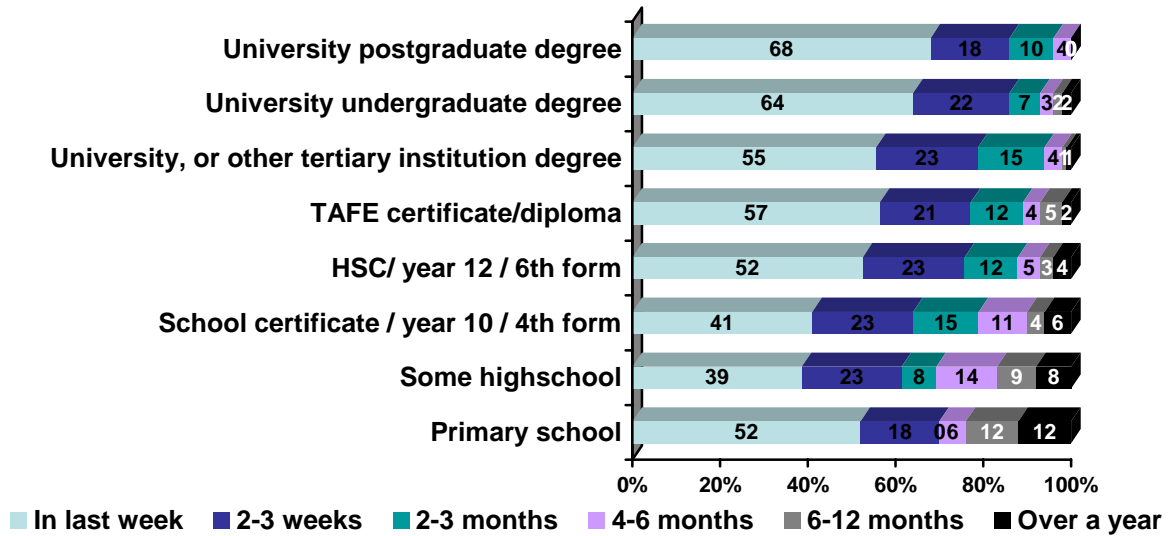
Figure 6: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Region



Education

- Figure 6 shows a trend for park visitation to increase with the level of education with a higher proportion of those with university qualifications having visited a park in the last week. (NB. The 'Primary school' group consists of older people who did not attend secondary school).

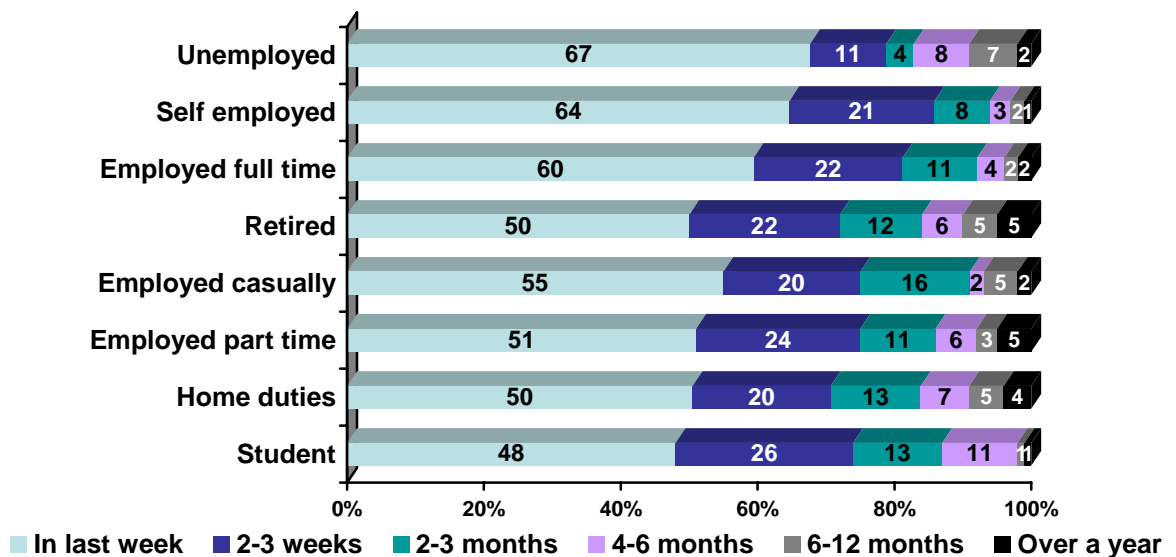
Figure 7: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Education



Employment Status

- Figure 8 shows the variation in park usage based on employment status. While there is considerable variation on the 'last week' visit rate, this substantially disappears if visits in the last 2-3 weeks are included.

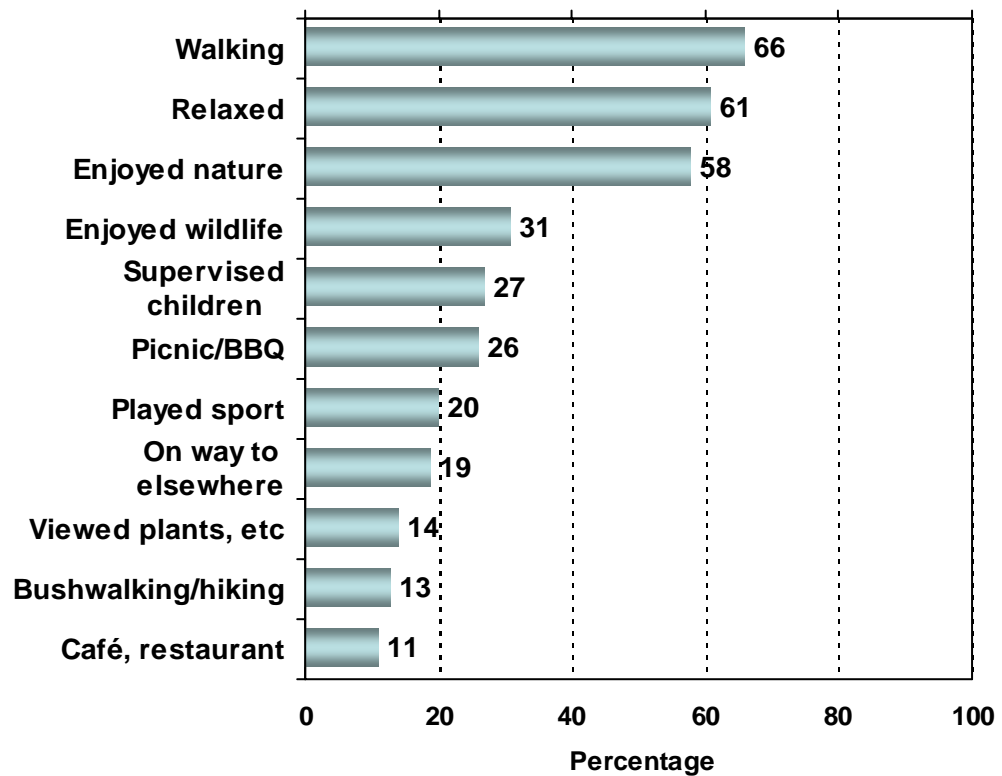
Figure 8: Sydneysiders Visiting a Park in the Last Week by Employment Status



Park Activities

- Walking, relaxing and enjoying nature and wildlife are the main activities of park visitors, as shown in Figure 9. Other informal activities include supervising children and picnicking or barbecuing. When survey respondents were asked what activities they spent most of their time doing during their visit, the three activities most frequently mentioned were: walking (28%); relaxing (16%); and supervising children playing (12%).

Figure 9: Activities During Last Park Visit



Value of Parks

- Figure 10 shows that Sydneysiders value parks as a place to relax, appreciate nature and enjoy the landscape. Parks are also valued as social gathering place and place to exercise.

Figure 10: The Value of Parks

