What is this study?

As a multicultural society, NSW has residents from a great diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. One in five residents (1,196,204 people) speak a language other than English at home. Of those speaking a language other than English, 15% speak little or no English.

This community profile is one part of a larger piece of research funded by the Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) and the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) to explore and better understand the environmental knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and media preferences of eight ethnic communities in NSW. It builds on similar research in 1996.

Six communities were surveyed in 1996, and eight communities were included in this 2004 research:

- Arabic
- Korean
- Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin)
- Macedonian
- Greek
- Spanish
- Italian
- Vietnamese

The study provides a snapshot of the environmental concerns in 2004 of people from these eight ethnic communities in NSW. It aims to broaden and deepen understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and environmental knowledge, values and practices in specific areas, as well as provide practical information for educators and others who wish to communicate effectively with ethnic communities.

How was the study conducted?

Nine focus groups (one in each language group, with separate groups for Cantonese and Mandarin) were held in December 2003 to discuss environmental issues and provide in-depth qualitative information to inform the survey design. All focus groups were facilitated by bilingual researchers in the community language of the participants.

Following survey design and testing, 805 people were surveyed in May-June 2004, with a minimum of 100 from each community. The survey was translated into the eight community languages and bilingual interviewers conducted all of the interviews. Participants could choose to complete the interview in English or their community language. They were mainly conducted in the community language but 19% of all interviews were in English.

What is in the report?

The full report provides all the results of the 2004 survey, with comparisons to 1996 results and to a study in the general community Who Cares about the Environment? It also includes community profiles for all eight communities, the full questionnaire, and detailed methodology for the survey. The focus group discussions are included where these highlight specific issues. In addition to the full report, the community profiles are available in eight separate booklets.

The community profiles include:

- **Demographic profile:** taken from Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 census data.
- **Environmental profile:** key research findings regarding environmental attitudes, values and behaviour.
- **Media profile:** key findings from the research regarding media use patterns.

Any significant differences between the results for the individual language group and the total sample have been highlighted. Differences of + 13 between a language group and the total sample (of all communities combined) are statistically significant.

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2. In interpreting these profiles it should be noted that TARBS, a multilingual television broadcaster, ceased operations between fieldwork completion and publication.
Demographic Profile

Migration History

Vietnamese migration has grown substantially since 1975 following the end of the Vietnam War in April 1975. Current arrivals are still high, although mostly in the family-reunion category. English language competence is a serious issue in this community.

Demographics

Vietnamese-speakers make up the fifth largest language group in NSW and around a quarter of Vietnamese-speakers were born in Australia. Fairfield local government area has the largest population of Vietnamese-speakers with 41% of those in NSW.

In the sample of Vietnamese-speakers for this study there were more females than in the general Vietnamese population in NSW (65% compared to 51%). A smaller proportion of the sample was born in Australia than the general Vietnamese population (4% compared to 25% in NSW) because children under 18 were not interviewed, and this was low compared to a number of other language groups in the study (four groups were about 20% Australian born and four had less than 5%).

Size of language group in NSW: 67,881 representing 6% of all non-English speakers in NSW

Male: 49% Female: 51%

Those who speak English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’: 26,456 or 39%

Main countries of birth

- Vietnam 69%
- Australia 25%

Local Government Areas in NSW with Largest Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
<th>% of Local Government Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>28,050</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>11,811</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>5,574</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>5,068</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>3,714</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 97% living in Sydney Statistical District (SD), 3% outside Sydney SD.

Less than 6 in 10 of the Vietnamese-speakers live in a house with lawns and/or gardens (58%) while almost 3 in 10 have a courtyard garden or mainly paved exterior areas (28%)
Vietnamese-speakers are similar to the total sample in their rating of the environment as ‘very important’ to their lives and the environment was the second most mentioned issue for government attention compared to other state-wide issues, including social issues. However, 31% of Vietnamese speakers were not very or not at all concerned about environmental issues, which is significantly higher than the total sample. 21% were concerned a great deal, half the level of the total sample. In 1996, 93% of Vietnamese-speakers rated the environment in Australia better than their home country, an indication of the standard against which environmental problems in Australia may be measured by Vietnamese-speakers.

Vietnamese-speakers gave similar responses to the total sample when discussing important environmental issues, nominating water conservation and pollution as the most important. In 1996 air pollution, followed by transport and storage of dangerous chemicals were the top issues. The number of Vietnamese-speakers who could not nominate an environmental issue has dropped from 39% in 1996 to 10% in 2004.

On questions of environmental knowledge, Vietnamese-speakers were more likely than the sample average to know that the greenhouse effect is not caused by a hole in the Earth’s atmosphere and that leaves and grass clippings pollute stormwater. Less Vietnamese-speakers than any other group knew that over 90% of NSW electricity comes from burning coal.

Vietnamese-speakers were significantly more likely than the total sample to say they have taken active steps to purchase energy efficient appliances and light globes (67% compared to 47% of the total sample). However, they were much less likely to say they had avoided plastic bags for shopping (17% compared to 33% of total sample).

Over one third of Vietnamese-speakers (35%) could not nominate any personal environmentally damaging behaviours, compared to 26% of the total sample. Of those who could, Vietnamese-speakers were more likely to say that they littered than the total population.

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**Environment Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking of environmental issues (including water conservation) compared to other issues</th>
<th>2nd (29%) compared to Rank 3 (18%) for total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage who rated environment as very important in their life</td>
<td>72% compared to 71% for total sample</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of concern for the environment**

- A great deal: 42% (Total sample) vs. 31% (Vietnamese)
- A fair amount: 40% (Total sample) vs. 19% (Vietnamese)
- Not very much / not at all: 31% (Total sample) vs. 50% (Vietnamese)

**Reasons for environmental concern**

- Concern for future generations: 31% (Total sample) vs. 23% (Vietnamese)
- Health effects of pollution: 22% (Total sample) vs. 19% (Vietnamese)
- Quality of life: 17% (Total sample) vs. 22% (Vietnamese)

**Most important environmental issues**

- Water conservation: 36% (Total sample) vs. 35% (Vietnamese)
- Pollution (general): 14% (Total sample) vs. 10% (Vietnamese)
- Air pollution (motor vehicle emissions): 5% (Total sample) vs. 10% (Vietnamese)
- Don’t know: 10% (Total sample) vs. 10% (Vietnamese)

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**Notes**

1. The sample for the Vietnamese community is 102. The total sample is 805.
2. A result shown like this is significantly different to a result shown like this.
When defining the features of a good place to live, the most popular response for Vietnamese-speakers was to live in a secure, safe area with low crime, nominated by 57% compared with 32% of the total sample. Vietnamese-speakers were less likely to nominate friendly people or clean air compared to the total sample.

Vietnamese-speakers nominated government departments or agencies very reliable sources of environmental information significantly more than the total sample. Environmental groups were also seen as a very reliable source. Vietnamese-speakers were less likely to classify their own children and bi-lingual educators as reliable sources of information than other respondents.

Notes
1. The sample for the Vietnamese community is 102. The total sample is 805.
2. A result shown like this is significantly different to a result shown like this.
Vietnamese-speakers were more likely to watch commercial TV than the total sample but there was also a higher incidence of Vietnamese-speakers who did not watch television at all. Vietnamese-speakers were less likely to watch SBS than the total sample.

Six in ten Vietnamese-speakers listened to LOTE radio regularly. This is significantly higher than the total sample (33%). The most popular LOTE radio station nominated by Vietnamese-speakers was SBS Radio. There was a slightly lower incidence of commercial radio listeners among the Vietnamese sample when compared to the total sample.

The most popular LOTE newspaper was Chieu Duong, with 52% responding that they read LOTE press regularly. Newspapers were the most popular source of information about the environment, nominated by 57%.

Main LOTE title newspaper read: Chieu Duong
(40% of Vietnamese sample)

Other titles nominated were: Viet Luan, Dan Viet Weekly, Saigon Times