

The logo for the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), featuring the letters 'I·C·A·C' in a stylized, serif font with dots between the letters.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION  
AGAINST CORRUPTION



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**COMMUNITY ATTITUDES  
TO CORRUPTION AND  
TO THE ICAC**

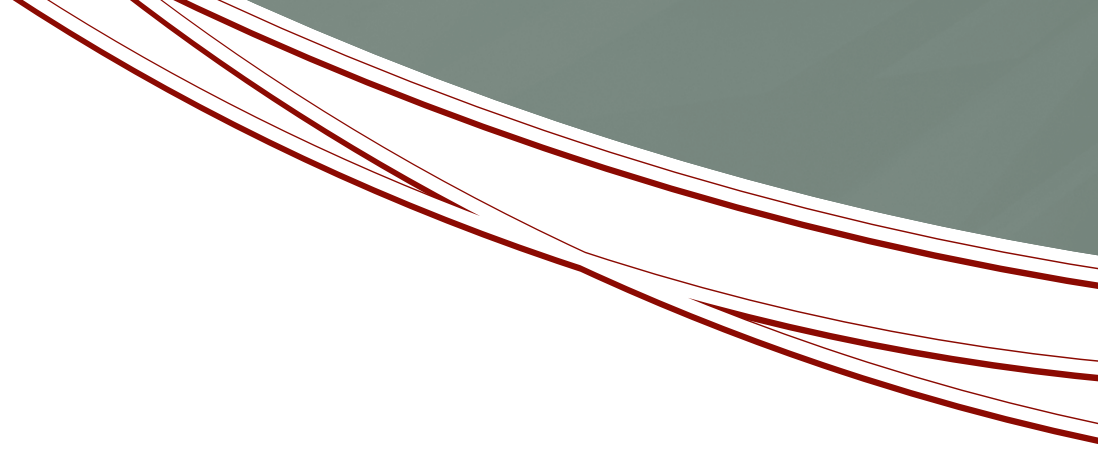
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**REPORT ON THE  
2009 SURVEY**

**JUNE 2010**

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Public sector organisations are welcome to refer to this publication in their own publications. References to and all quotations from this publication must be fully referenced.



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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION  
AGAINST CORRUPTION

Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney, NSW, Australia 2000

Postal Address: GPO Box 500,  
Sydney, NSW, Australia 2001

T: 02 8281 5999

1800 463 909 (toll free for callers outside metropolitan Sydney)

F: 02 9264 5364

TTY: 02 8281 5773 (for hearing-impaired callers only)

E: [icac@icac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:icac@icac.nsw.gov.au)

**[www.icac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au)**

Business Hours: 9 am - 5 pm Monday to Friday

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## Research summary and key findings

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has conducted Community Attitudes Surveys periodically since 1993, to measure changes and trends in the NSW community's awareness, perceptions and attitudes to public sector corruption in NSW and the ICAC.

This publication reports on the results of the latest Community Attitudes Survey, conducted in October–November 2009.

Significantly greater percentages of respondents in 2009, compared with 2006 (when the last survey was conducted), indicated that corruption in the NSW public sector is a problem for the community, that it is a major problem, and that corruption in the NSW public sector affected them or their families. In a number of cases, these changes have reversed trends observed in the Community Attitudes Surveys conducted in 1999, 2003 and 2006.

Respondents to the 2009 survey considered corruption in NSW government departments to be a significantly more serious problem than corruption in NSW local councils.

Attitudes and perceptions concerning the reporting of corruption are somewhat similar to those observed in 2006. Over 85% of respondents to the 2009 survey indicated they were willing to report serious corruption and over 90% agreed that it is their responsibility to report corruption. Approximately half indicated that something useful would be done if corruption was reported, although roughly two-thirds appear to believe that people who report corruption suffer for it.

It appears that public perceptions of the ICAC in 2009 were also reasonably similar to those reported in 2006.

Direct awareness of the ICAC does not appear to have changed greatly in recent years, with 36% of the sample being able to name the ICAC and 86% being able to name or recognise it. Over 90% of respondents recalled at least one media story concerning an ICAC investigation, with recall of the ICAC's investigation into Wollongong City Council in 2008 exceeding 75%. Knowledge of the ICAC's functions and jurisdictions was greater than in 2006 but frequent misconceptions remain.

Similar to the results from 2006, 95% of respondents indicated that having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW. Approximately two-thirds of the sample indicated that the ICAC has been successful in exposing corruption and about half indicated that it had been successful in reducing corruption. Roughly 75% would be willing to provide the ICAC with information about serious corruption.

Together, these findings point to a public which, while more concerned about corruption, has not lost faith in the state's anti-corruption framework.

# Methodology

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has, since 1993, periodically conducted surveys to examine the NSW community's awareness, perceptions and attitudes regarding corruption and the ICAC. This publication deals with the most recent Community Attitudes survey, conducted in 2009. The last survey prior to that was conducted in 2006.

The Community Attitudes Survey covers topics such as perceptions of the extent of corruption, attitudes to reporting corruption, and knowledge of and attitudes about the ICAC. Responses regarding these topics are used to help inform and monitor the ICAC's education and corruption prevention functions.

For the 2009 Community Attitudes Survey, the survey was revised, although many questions remained unchanged to facilitate comparisons with previous surveys.

Taverner Research was contracted to pilot and conduct the revised survey. This survey was distributed via two methods:

- a computer assisted telephone interview (CATI), as per previous Community Attitudes Surveys
- an online survey that randomly-selected respondents were invited by email to answer.

The reason for distributing the survey via two different methods was that recent local media reports of decreased use of telephone landlines raised the possibility that CATI sampling may no longer be appropriately representative. Consequently, the Commission decided to pilot online distribution.

Demographic information from each sample was compared to data obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics concerning:

- employment status
- educational attainment
- length of NSW residency.

The CATI sample appeared more representative of the NSW populace in terms of employment status and length of NSW residency. Because the CATI sample appeared more representative than the online survey, it was used as the source of the results reported in this publication.<sup>1</sup>

The survey was administered over an approximately three-week period beginning in mid-October 2009. The sample was randomly selected from NSW adults, and quotas were applied regarding gender, age and place of residence to ensure a general representativeness of the adult NSW population.

## Data analysis

This publication reports a number of different statistical tests. Most, although not all, of these tests fall into one of two categories:

- Comparisons of survey results to results from previous Community Attitudes Surveys.
- Comparisons of responses amongst different subgroups of the sample.

Comparisons of subgroup responses were all made using logistic regressions. The variables entered into the regression were groups that it was thought *a priori* might respond differently to the rest of the sample. These groups were:

- 18–24 year olds
- non-Sydney residents
- people whose primary language is not English
- university graduates
- NSW public sector employees.

1. All subsequent references to "survey" and "respondents" refer to the CATI survey and the respondents to it.



Two additional points regarding data analysis should be noted:

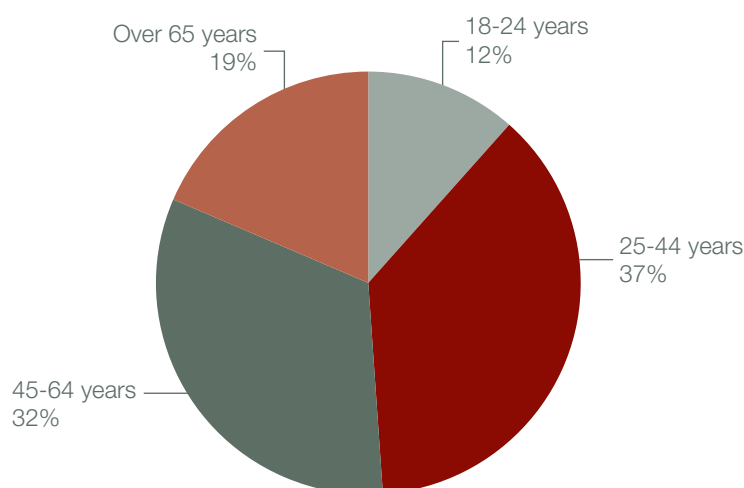
- Percentages may not always sum up to 100% because of rounding.
- Because of the large number of statistical tests performed  $\alpha$  was set to 0.01 for each test.<sup>2</sup>

## Demographics

In total, 501 individuals responded to the survey. Given that 4,042 people were approached, this represents a response rate of 12.4%.

Fifty-one per cent of the sample was male and the age profile of survey respondents is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Age profile of survey respondents**



Additionally, amongst survey respondents:

- 97% had lived in NSW for more than five years
- 95% spoke English as their primary language
- 29% had completed a university degree, 10% had not completed year 10
- 14% were currently working in the NSW public sector with an additional 2% currently working in both the public and private sectors
- 39% had worked for the NSW public sector at some time in their career.

2.  $\alpha$  is the criterion that statistical tests have to pass – in this case, this criterion has been made stricter than usual.

## Perceptions of corruption

The first set of items examined respondents' perception of corruption in NSW. The specific items examined included respondents':

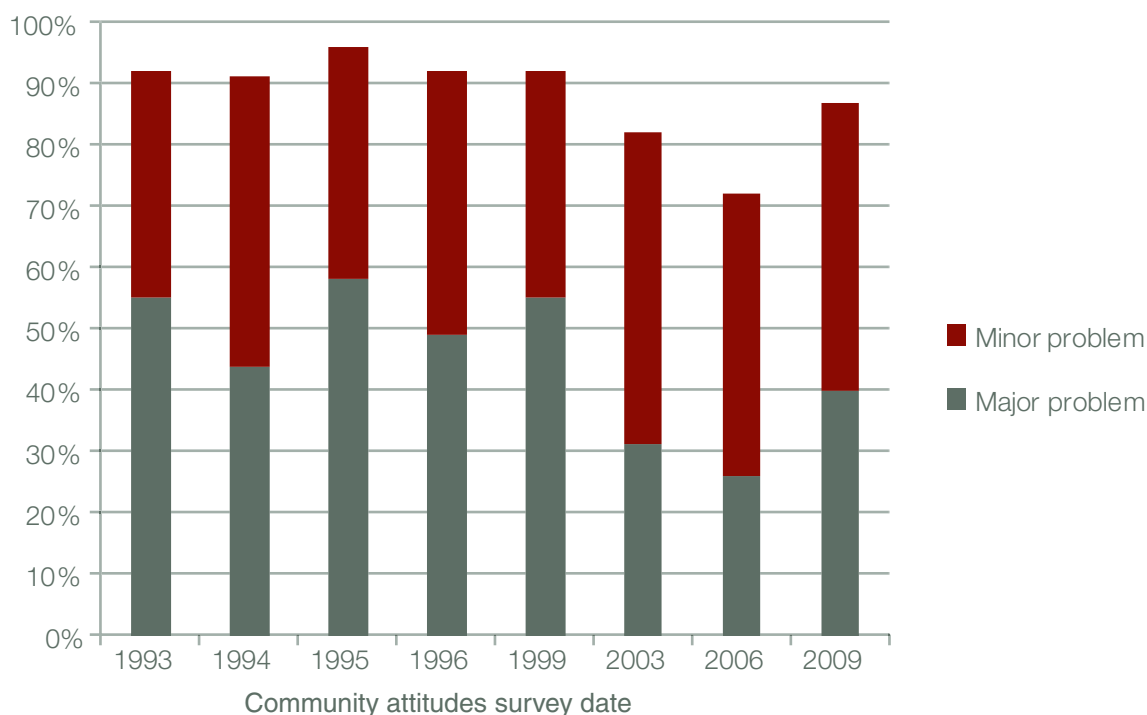
- perceptions of whether corruption in NSW is a problem
- definitions of corruption
- perceived awareness of corrupt officials
- beliefs regarding whether corruption affects them or their family.

### Extent of corruption

Compared to the 2006 survey, there are a number of significant differences in the perceived extent, level and impact of NSW public sector corruption.

As in previous surveys, respondents indicated whether they perceived corruption in NSW to be a problem. Forty per cent viewed such corruption as a major problem with an additional 47% viewing it as a minor problem. Figure 2 compares these percentages with results obtained in previous Community Attitudes Surveys.

**Figure 2: Is corruption perceived as a problem in the NSW public sector?**





The percentage of respondents who indicated they perceived corruption to be a major or minor problem was significantly greater than in 2006.<sup>3</sup> This reversed the trend of decreasing perceptions of corruption that had been noted in the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey report.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted, however, that the 2009 percentage was still significantly less than the corresponding percentage in the 1999 survey.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the percentage of respondents who perceive corruption to be a major problem was significantly greater than the percentage from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey but significantly less than the percentage in 1999.<sup>6</sup>

The percentage of respondents who thought that corruption was a “problem” and the percentage who thought it was a “major problem” were independently compared across the sample subgroups. The following statistically significant differences were observed:

- Respondents whose primary language was not English were significantly less likely to view corruption in NSW as a problem.<sup>7</sup>
- NSW public sector employees were significantly less likely to view corruption in NSW as a major problem.<sup>8</sup>

Questions asking respondents to indicate whether corruption was a “major problem”, “minor problem” or “not a problem” in:

(a) government departments and

(b) local councils

were included in the 2006 and 2009 Community Attitudes Surveys. Responses to these questions are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1: Comparison of perceptions of corruption at NSW government departments and local councils**

Extent of perceived corruption	2006	2009
<i>Government departments</i>		
Corruption perceived as a major or minor problem	74%	85%
Corruption perceived as a major problem	27%	41%
<i>Local councils</i>		
Corruption perceived as a major or minor problem	77%	83%
Corruption perceived as a major problem	35%	35%

When asked specifically about their perceptions of corruption in NSW government departments, a significantly greater percentage of 2009 respondents indicated that it is a problem<sup>9</sup> and a significantly greater percentage indicated that it is a major problem<sup>10</sup>. Although a greater percentage of respondents in 2009 indicated that corruption in local councils is a problem, this increase is not statistically significant<sup>11</sup>, and the percentage that indicated that corruption in local councils is a major problem was the same as in 2006.<sup>12</sup>

3.  $\chi^2=37.5$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

4. *Community attitudes to corruption and the ICAC: Report on the 2006 survey*, ICAC, Sydney, 2006.

5.  $\chi^2=7.4$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1015$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

6.  $\chi^2=23.0$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p<0.001$  and  $\chi^2=23.9$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1015$ ,  $p<0.001$  respectively.

7.  $B=-1.2$ ,  $Wald=6.8$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.29$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

8.  $B=-0.95$ ,  $Wald=9.3$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.39$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

9.  $\chi^2=20.6$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

10.  $\chi^2=22.1$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

11.  $\chi^2=4.2$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $n.s.$

12.  $\chi^2<0.1$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $n.s.$

It should also be noted that the results from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey suggested that corruption might be more frequently seen as being problematic in local councils. For the 2009 results, respondents' ratings (i.e. major problem, minor problem, or not a problem) of government departments and local councils were compared; a related-samples sign test indicated that, across the whole sample, corruption in government departments was viewed as significantly more problematic than corruption in local councils.<sup>13</sup>

## Understanding of corruption

Respondents were asked to provide their own definition of corruption. These were classified into a number of different themes where one definition could have multiple themes. The most frequently used themes were:

- bribery or other improper payment, which was used in 33% of definitions
- self-interest at the expense of government/one's employer/the public, which was used in 22% of definitions
- illegality, which was used in 15% of definitions.

An example of a definition using each theme is presented below:

*Means being paid, doing a favour for someone for money or benefits.*

*People who are acting in their own interests rather than representing the interest of their public.*

*It means illegal dealings to [sic] the community.*

## Experience of corruption

Respondents were given a standardised definition of corruption to use for the rest of the survey.

They were then asked whether they were aware of someone that they thought was corrupt in the NSW public sector (other than via media reports). Eighteen per cent indicated that they were aware of a public official whom they perceived to be corrupt.

When these respondents were asked how they became aware, the following responses were most frequently provided:<sup>14</sup>

- 40 respondents (43% of respondents who indicated that they were aware of a public official they perceived to be corrupt) indicated from first-hand experience
- 38 respondents (40%) indicated from people they know
- 16 respondents (17%) indicated gossip
- five respondents (5%) indicated via other means.

These respondents also indicated the type of corruption in which this official was engaged. The following responses were most frequently provided:

- 20 respondents (21% of the respondents who indicated awareness of an official they perceived to be corrupt) indicated bias/favouritism or other unfairness
- 17 respondents (18%) indicated conduct relating to development applications or rezoning
- 13 respondents (14%) indicated self-interest at the expense of government/one's employer/the public.

## Effects of corruption

As presented in Figure 3, 53% of respondents indicated that corruption affects them or their family.

The percentage of respondents who thought that corruption affected them or their family was significantly larger than observed in 2006.<sup>15</sup> However, this percentage appeared to have decreased across recent Community Attitudes Surveys. Consequently, the 2009 percentage was compared with the 1999 percentage and still found to be significantly lower.<sup>16</sup>

There were no sample subgroups that were significantly more or less likely to indicate that corruption affected them or their family.<sup>17</sup>

Respondents who indicated that corruption affected them or their family were asked how it affected them. The most frequent responses were:

- 71 respondents (27% of respondents who indicated that corruption affected them or their family) indicated it affected them in terms of poor execution of government functions (e.g. poor services)

13.  $Z=3.6$ ,  $p<0.001$ ; "don't know" responses were excluded for this analysis.

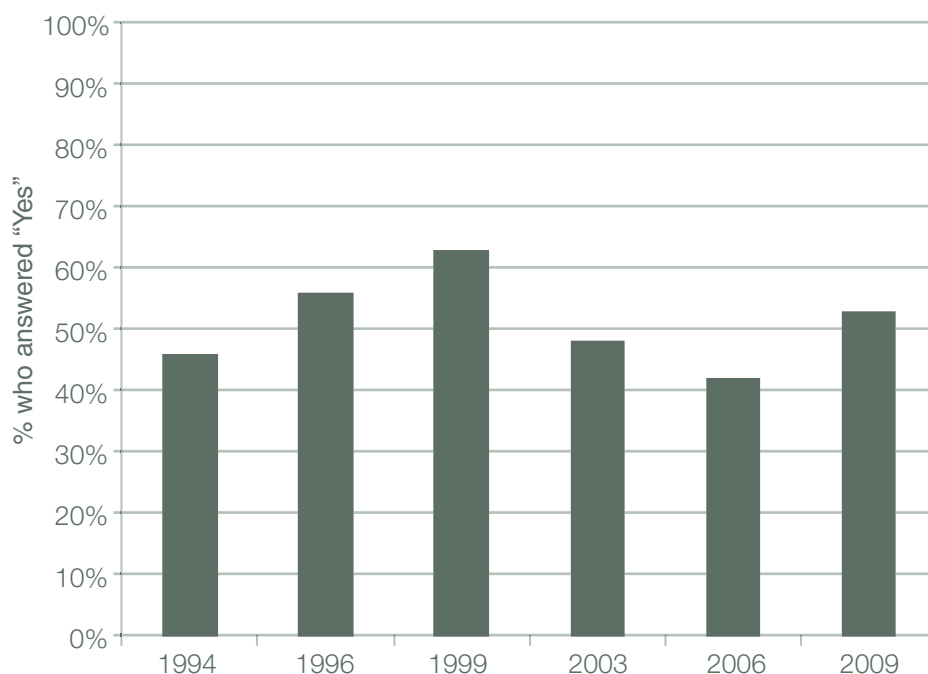
14. Five individuals indicated two methods by which they were aware.

15.  $\chi^2=11.9$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

16.  $\chi^2=8.7$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1015$ ,  $p<0.005$ .

17.  $|B|s \leq 0.69$ ,  $Walds \leq 2.5$ ,  $0.50 \leq EXP(B)s \leq 1.5$ ,  $ps > 0.1$ .

**Figure 3: Do respondents believe corruption affects them or their families?\***



\* This question was not asked in 1993 and 1995.

- 56 respondents (21%) indicated in terms of personal financial costs (e.g. increased taxes, rates).

An example of each description is presented below:

*Any corrupt act affects me as a tax payer/ I have to pay more taxes to cover their corruption.*

*Through the misallocation of scarce resources.*

## Conclusions

Compared with the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey, a greater percentage of the public perceives that problematic corruption exists in NSW, although such perceptions appeared greater in earlier Community Attitudes Surveys.

A corresponding increase was observed for perceived corruption in government departments, although not for perceived corruption in local government. Taken together these findings suggest that the increase in perceptions of problematic corruption appears primarily due to changing perceptions of state government in NSW.

Definitions of corruption provided by respondents correspond to "traditional" notions of corruption such as improper payments, illegal actions and personal benefit at the expense of others. To put it another way, the concept of corruption as being a person taking an illegal payment to

benefit another at the community's expense still resonates strongly in the NSW community.

A small but substantial minority of respondents indicated that they were personally aware of a public official they believed to be corrupt, generally via personal experience or through people they know. Interestingly, public officials appear neither less nor more likely to report being aware of corrupt officials compared to the rest of the sample.

More than half of the respondents believe that corruption affects them or their family, although this opinion still appears less prevalent than it was in the 1999 Community Attitudes Survey. Most frequently, corruption is seen to produce poor execution of government functions and higher taxes/rates/fees.

# Attitudes to reporting corruption

The second set of items involved respondents' perceptions and beliefs regarding reporting corruption. The following specific topics were addressed:

- The likelihood that respondents would report serious corruption.
- Whether respondents believe they have a responsibility to report corruption.
- The perceived consequences of reporting corruption.

## Likelihood of reporting corruption

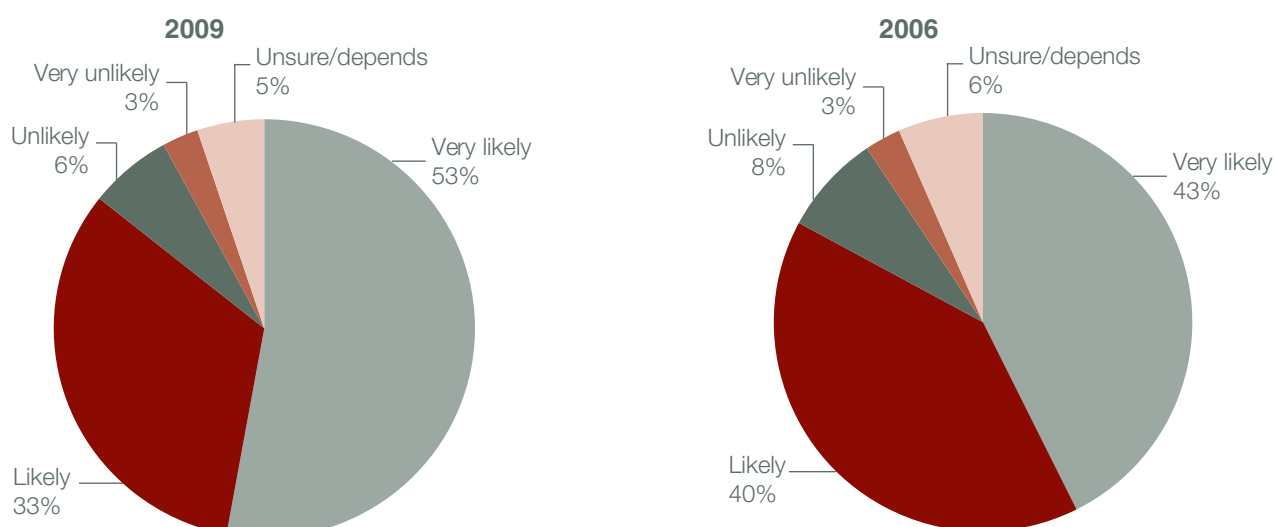
As presented in Figure 4, a majority of respondents indicated that they were very likely to report corruption that was of a serious nature. (Serious corruption was defined as "...would be considered a criminal offence...").

The percentage of respondents who were likely or very likely to report serious corruption did not significantly differ between the 2009 and 2006 Community Attitudes Survey samples.<sup>18</sup> In both samples, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they would be at least "likely" to report serious corruption.

No subgroup indicated that they would be significantly more or less likely to report serious corruption.<sup>19</sup>

Respondents also nominated to whom they would report this serious corruption (if they chose to report it). As presented in Table 2 and observed in previous Community Attitudes Surveys, police was most frequently nominated by respondents.

**Figure 4: How likely respondents are to report serious corruption**



18.  $\chi^2=1.4$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p>0.1$ .

19.  $|B|s \leq 0.77$ ,  $Walds \leq 2.2$ ,  $0.46 \leq EXP(B)s \leq 1.4$ ,  $ps > 0.1$ .

**Table 2: Organisations/people to whom respondents would report serious corruption**

Organisation/person to whom respondents would report serious corruption	Percentage of respondents
Police	45%
Ombudsman	16%
Member of Parliament	11%
ICAC	9%
Depends on the details of the corrupt conduct in question	9%

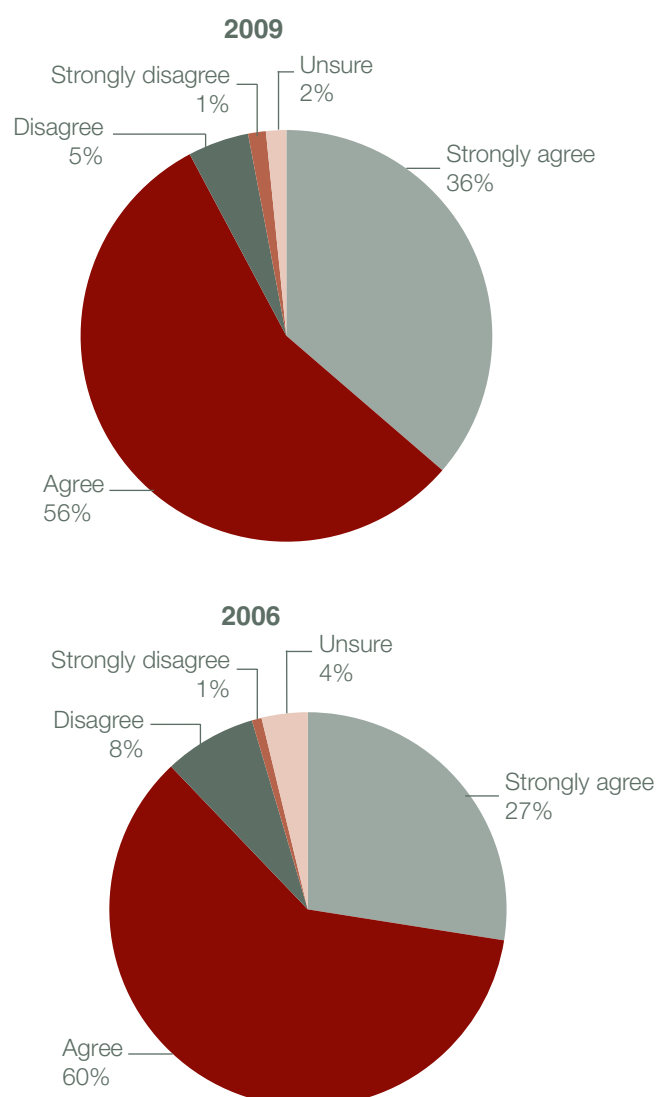
## Responsibility to report corruption

As presented in Figure 5, respondents indicated whether they agreed that it was their responsibility to report corruption.

The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they had a responsibility to report corruption did not significantly differ between the 2006 and 2009 samples.<sup>20</sup> Over 85% of respondents in each sample indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that reporting corruption was their responsibility.

No subgroup was significantly more or less likely to indicate that they had a responsibility to report corruption.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 5: Do respondents agree that they have a responsibility to report corruption?**



20.  $\chi^2=5.3$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p>0.01$ .

21.  $|B| \leq 1.4$ ,  $Walds \leq 5.8$ ,  $0.25 \leq EXP(B) \leq 1.8$ ,  $ps > 0.01$ .

Table 3 presents the most frequently reported reasons why respondents believe they have a responsibility to report corruption.

**Table 3: Most frequently reported reasons for having a responsibility to report corruption**

Reason	Percentage of sample providing that reason
Right thing to do/moral principles	22%
Public duty as citizens	20%
If it is not reported it will not be stopped	15%
Need to stop corruption/make the world a better place	12%

An example of each reason is presented below:

*If I didn't feel it was right and it has been allowed to happen and an outsider has to step in everyone is accountable.*

*I'm a citizen and I have a moral responsibility to the state.*

*If they are allowed to keep going it is going to get worse.*

*Because it's to better the future of the younger generation/ if you don't report it, nothing will be done and they will keep on doing it.*

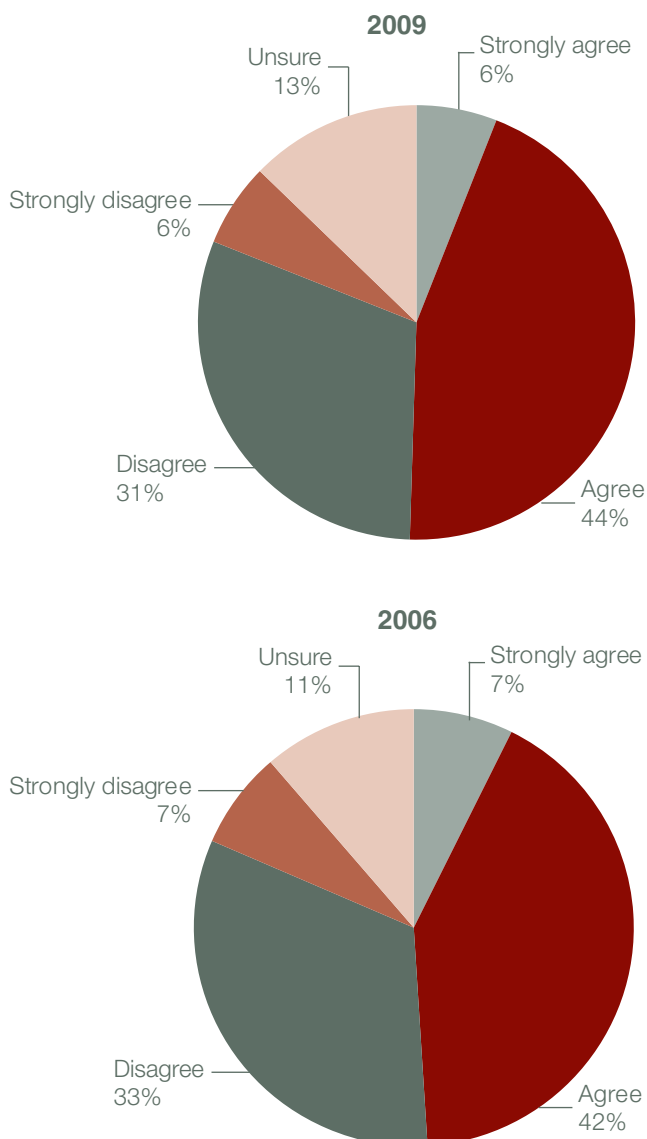
## Consequences of reporting corruption

Respondents were asked two questions about the consequences of reporting corruption:

- Whether something useful would be done if they reported corruption in the NSW public sector.
- Whether people who report corruption are likely to suffer for it.

As presented in Figure 6, approximately half the sample indicated that something useful would be done if they reported corruption.

**Figure 6: Do respondents agree that something useful would be done if they reported NSW public sector corruption?**



The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that something useful would be done did not differ significantly between the 2006 and 2009 samples.<sup>22</sup>

No subgroup was significantly more or less likely to agree that something useful would be done if they reported NSW public sector corruption.<sup>23</sup>

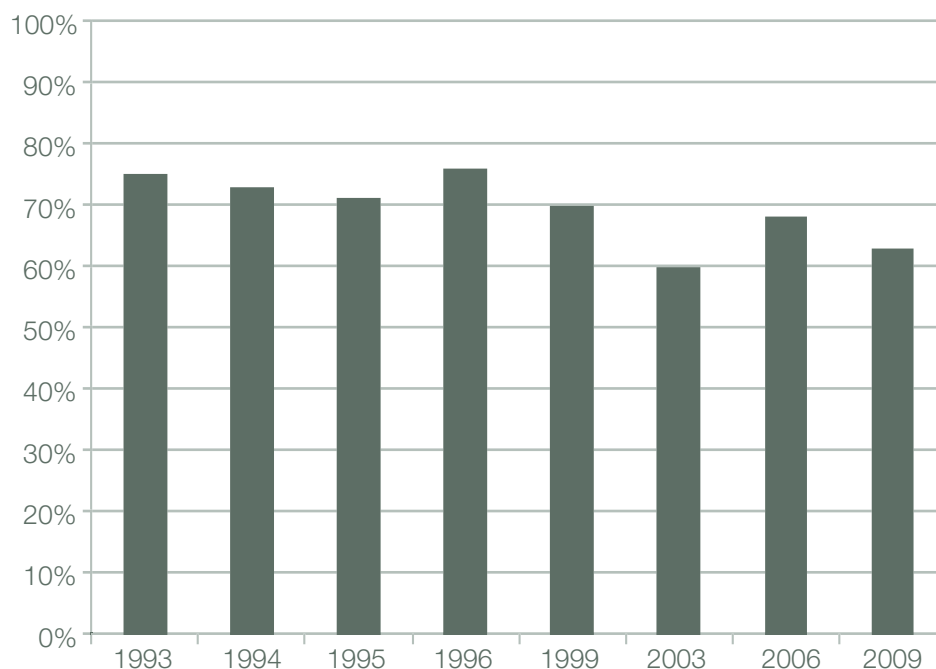
Figure 7 presents the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that those who report corruption are likely to suffer for it.

22.  $\chi^2=0.22$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p>0.5$ .

23.  $|B| \leq 0.93$ ,  $Walds \leq 5.7$ ,  $0.84 \leq EXP(B) \leq 2.5$ ,  $ps > 0.01$ .



**Figure 7: Do respondents agree that people who report corruption are likely to suffer for it?**



The percentage of respondents that indicated that people who report corruption are likely to suffer for it was not significantly different to the percentage from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey.<sup>24</sup>

Among sample subgroups, the only statistically significant difference was that 18–24 year olds were significantly less likely to indicate that people who report corruption are likely to suffer for it.<sup>25</sup>

Roughly half of the respondents believe that something useful would be done if corruption was reported and almost two-thirds believe that a person reporting corruption would be likely to suffer for it.

Respondents' attitudes to reporting corruption were somewhat similar in the 2006 and 2009 Community Attitudes Surveys. Despite the increase in perceptions of corruption discussed earlier, attitudes to reporting corruption do not appear to have changed markedly.

## Conclusions

Overall, over 85% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to report serious corruption. As per previous Community Attitudes Surveys, respondents most frequently indicated that these reports would be made to the police.

Consistent with this, the vast majority of respondents believe that they have a responsibility to report corruption. Respondents most frequently indicated that this responsibility arose from their own morals, their public duty as citizens, the belief that corruption needed to be reported to be stopped or the need to improve the world.

24.  $\chi^2=5.5$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $ps>0.05$ .

25.  $B=-0.80$ ,  $Wald=7.7$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.45$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

## Knowledge about the ICAC

The third set of questions examined public knowledge about the ICAC. Specific questions were designed to establish:

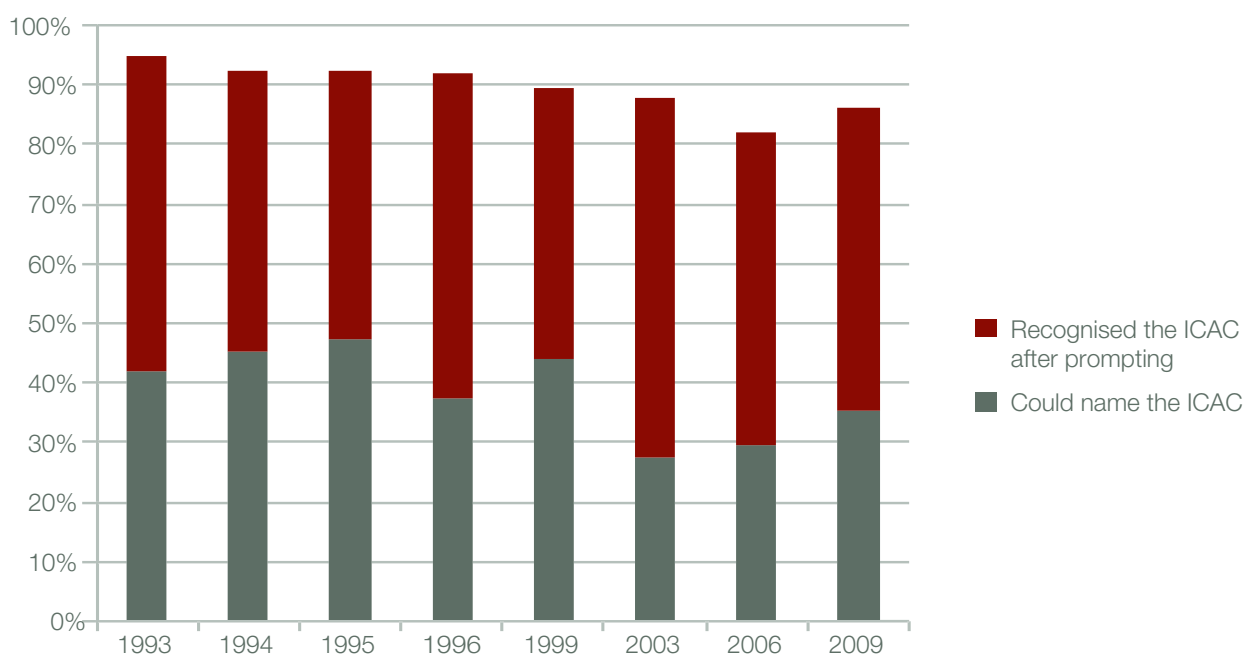
- whether respondents had heard of the ICAC and whether they knew it was the anti-corruption body for NSW state and local government
- whether respondents were aware of recent media stories about ICAC investigations, and
- the level of understanding respondents had regarding the ICAC's functions and jurisdiction.

### Awareness of the ICAC

Respondents were asked to name the body set up to deal with corruption in the NSW public sector. Respondents who did not name the "ICAC", "I-C-A-C" or "Independent Commission Against Corruption" were then asked whether they had heard of the ICAC.

As presented in Figure 8, 36% of respondents could name the ICAC as the NSW public sector anti-corruption body without prompting. An additional 50% recognised the ICAC after being prompted with the name, making a total of 86% of respondents who either could name or recognise the ICAC.

**Figure 8: Are respondents aware of the ICAC?**



Neither the percentage of respondents that could name the ICAC, nor the percentage that could name or recognise the ICAC, were significantly different from the corresponding percentages from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey.<sup>26</sup>

It was, however, noted in the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey that there was a decrease in this percentage between 1999 and 2003. Consequently, comparisons between the 1999 and 2009 samples were also made. While the percentage who could name the ICAC was significantly greater in 1999 compared with 2009, the percentage who could either name or recognise it did not significantly differ between the 1999 and 2009 samples.<sup>27</sup>

Comparisons across sample subgroups were performed separately for naming the ICAC, and naming or recognising the ICAC. The following statistically significant results were obtained:

- 18 to 24-year-olds were significantly less likely to be able to name the ICAC, and significantly less likely to be able to either name or recognise the ICAC.<sup>28</sup>
- Respondents whose primary language is not English were significantly less likely to be able to name or recognise the ICAC.<sup>29</sup>
- University graduates were significantly more likely to be able to name the ICAC.<sup>30</sup>

26.  $\chi^2=3.2$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p>0.05$  and  $\chi^2=3.9$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1003$ ,  $p>0.01$  respectively.

27.  $\chi^2=7.9$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1015$ ,  $p<0.005$  and  $\chi^2=1.9$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=1015$ ,  $p>0.1$  respectively.

28.  $B=-1.3$ ,  $Wald=9.9$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.26$ ,  $p<0.005$  and  $B=-2.5$ ,  $Wald=54.4$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.087$ ,  $p<0.001$  respectively.

29.  $B=-2.3$ ,  $Wald=18.4$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.10$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

30.  $B=0.94$ ,  $Wald=19.3$ ,  $EXP(B)=2.6$ ,  $p<0.001$

## Awareness of media reports relating to ICAC investigations

As noted in the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey report, it is possible that respondents may not be able to name or recognise the ICAC but still be aware of ICAC activity. To examine this, items were included in the 2006 survey asking about respondents' recall of media stories related to ICAC investigations.

Respondents to the 2009 survey were presented with a randomised list of nine "news stories" (using the wording given in Table 4). Three of these were based on the three most recent ICAC public inquiries; three were based on investigations which had been publicly reported since the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey and which had received extensive media coverage; and three were fictitious.

The three fictitious stories, which were designed to be plausible-sounding but were not based on real events or organisations, were included as a 'control'. They were included to identify if respondents were indicating awareness of news stories because of factors other than genuine recall.

The percentage of respondents that indicated awareness of each media story is presented in Table 4. The percentage of respondents who recalled at least one of the real media stories was 92%, which was significantly greater than the 86% who could name or recognise the ICAC.<sup>31</sup>

31. McNemar test,  $\chi^2=9.0$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=501$ ,  $p<0.005$ .

**Table 4: Respondents' recall of news stories related to ICAC investigations**

News story presented to respondents	Percentage of respondents that indicated awareness of news story
<i>News stories based on most recent ICAC public inquiries</i>	
Extensive misuse of a corporate credit card by the CEO of Sydney Ferries.	62%
Widespread bribery regarding the issuing of security guard licenses.	48%
A barrister corruptly attempted to influence criminal proceedings on multiple occasions.	40%
<i>News stories based on recent widely-reported ICAC investigations</i>	
Bribery and inappropriate sexual relationships related to development applications at Wollongong City Council.	77%
Widespread bribery, favouritism and fraud in relation to contracted maintenance work at RailCorp.	67%
Kickbacks received by NSW Fire Brigades project managers in relation to construction work.	20%
<i>Fictitious news stories</i>	
Staff repeatedly giving jobs at the NSW Department of Rural Development to friends and relatives.	23%
Fraud and bribery regarding the processing of waste at Green Hills Shire Council.	17%
Widespread misuse of IT equipment by staff of the NSW Rivers Authority.	10%

To determine whether recall of the actual stories was better than the fictitious stories, the percentage of respondents who recalled media reports of each real story was compared to the percentage who recalled the fictitious story which had the highest "recall" (the "NSW Department of Rural Development" story).

- Recall of each real investigation excluding the "Fire Brigades" investigation was significantly greater than "recall" of this fictitious story.<sup>32</sup>
- Recall of the "Fire Brigades" story did not significantly differ from recall of this fictitious story.<sup>33</sup>

These results suggest that, for the most part, reported recall of media coverage of ICAC investigations is actual recall. Consequently, it appears that most respondents are genuinely aware of media stories about ICAC investigations.

## ICAC functions and jurisdiction

Respondents who could either name or recognise the ICAC when prompted were asked to indicate what they thought the ICAC did.<sup>34</sup> The most frequent response, by far, was investigative activity, which was nominated by 75% of these respondents.

Respondents also answered a series of true/false statements concerning the functions and jurisdictions of the ICAC. Each of these statements had two versions – one where "true" was the correct answer and one where "false" was the correct answer. Each respondent was given only one version of each statement.

The percentage of respondents who selected each response category is provided in Table 5. The bolded percentage in each row is the percentage of respondents who gave the correct response.

32. McNemar tests,  $\chi^2 \geq 40.1$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $ns=501$ ,  $ps<0.001$ .

33. McNemar test,  $\chi^2=1.0$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=501$ ,  $p>0.1$ .

34. Other respondents were not asked any more questions about the ICAC.

**Table 5: Responses to statements regarding the ICAC's jurisdiction**

Item	True	False	Don't know
The ICAC is the corruption body for the whole of Australia	38%	41%	22%
The ICAC is the corruption body for NSW and not the rest of Australia	45%	36%	19%
The ICAC can investigate allegations of corruption in NSW local government	88%	3%	10%
The ICAC cannot investigate allegations of corruption in NSW local government	7%	86%	7%
The ICAC can investigate allegations of corruption in the private sector when the corruption has nothing to do with the public sector	41%	36%	23%
The ICAC cannot investigate allegations of corruption in the private sector even when the corruption has nothing to do with the public sector	47%	36%	17%
The ICAC can investigate allegations of corruption against NSW politicians	89%	3%	10%
The ICAC cannot investigate allegations of corruption against NSW politicians	9%	80%	11%
The ICAC can investigate allegations of corruption against NSW judges and magistrates	80%	7%	14%
The ICAC cannot investigate allegations of corruption against NSW judges and magistrates	16%	68%	16%
The ICAC decides whether people should face criminal charges for corruption	59%	27%	14%
The ICAC does not decide whether people should face criminal charges for corruption	42%	47%	11%
The ICAC is independent of the government of the day	78%	11%	11%
The ICAC is not independent of the government of the day	20%	66%	14%

The percentage of correct responses across each item-pair (i.e. across the two versions) was compared to the corresponding percentage from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey. Note that the “decide whether people should face criminal charges” pair was not compared because this item was not included in 2006.

For the item-pairs concerning (a) ICAC's NSW jurisdiction, (b) the inclusion of politicians in ICAC's jurisdiction and (c) the ICAC's independence of the government of the day, no significant differences were found between the 2006 and 2009 Community Attitudes Survey samples.<sup>35</sup>

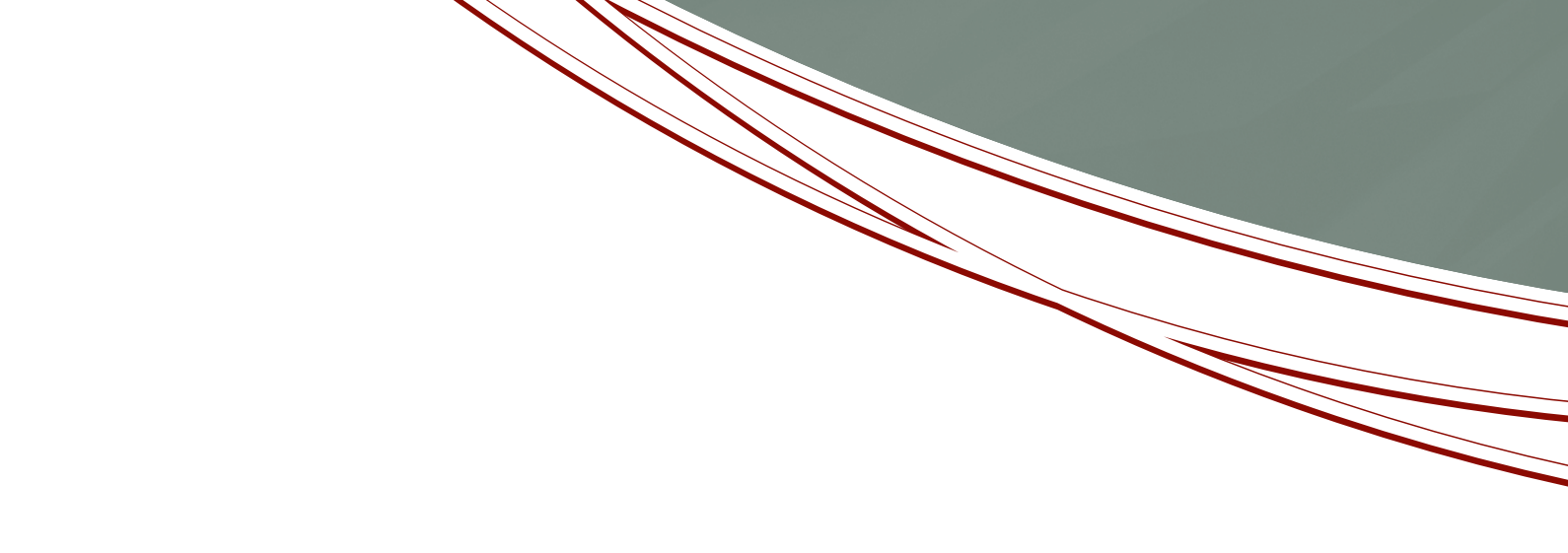
For the item-pairs concerning (a) the exclusion of private sector-only corruption, (b) the inclusion of local government corruption and (c) the inclusion of judges and magistrates in the ICAC's jurisdiction, significantly larger percentages of the 2009 sample gave correct responses compared with the 2006 sample (see Table 6).<sup>36</sup>

35.  $\chi^2_{s \leq 1.3}$ ,  $dfs=1$ ,  $ns=844$ ,  $ps>0.1$ .

36.  $\chi^2_{s \geq 9.3}$ ,  $dfs=1$ ,  $ns=844$ ,  $ps<0.005$ .

**Table 6: Respondent's knowledge of ICAC's jurisdiction**

Item-pair	Percentage of respondents giving correct answer	
	2006	2009
The ICAC can/cannot investigate allegations of corruption in the private sector when the corruption has nothing to do with the private sector	31%	41%
The ICAC can/cannot investigate allegations of corruption in NSW local government	79%	87%
The ICAC can/cannot investigate allegations of corruption against NSW judges and magistrates	63%	74%



Respondents also indicated whether they had read any paper-based or website materials produced by the ICAC. In total, 12% of the sample indicated that they had read ICAC materials with a further 2% being unsure. Among respondents who had read ICAC materials:

- 22 respondents (44% of those who had read ICAC materials) indicated that they had read paper-based materials
- 15 respondents (30%) indicated that they had read internet-based materials
- 10 respondents (20%) indicated that they had read both paper-based and internet-based materials
- 3 respondents (6%) indicated that they were not sure of the format of the ICAC materials that they had read.

misconceptions. A small number of respondents had read ICAC materials in either online or in paper form.

## Conclusions

It appears that public awareness of the ICAC in 2009 was not greatly different from what it was in 2006. The percentage of respondents that could either name the ICAC as the corruption body for the NSW public sector did not markedly change compared with 2006, nor did the percentage who could either name or recognise the ICAC.

As per the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey, it appears that many respondents recall news stories related to ICAC investigations. This survey introduced plausible-sounding but fictitious news stories to determine whether recall of stories was genuine. With one exception, recall of the actual stories appeared higher than recall of the fictitious stories, suggesting that respondents do indeed recall the actual stories.

In terms of ICAC functions, most respondents associated the ICAC with investigative activity. Knowledge about the ICAC's functions and jurisdictions appears to have improved compared with 2006, although there are still frequent



## Perceptions of the ICAC's performance

The final set of questions in the Community Attitudes Survey examined respondents' perceptions of the ICAC's performance. This was assessed in three ways.

- Respondent opinions of whether the ICAC was successful at exposing or reducing corruption.
- Perceptions of confidence in the ICAC, as indicated by a willingness to provide it with information about serious corruption.
- Whether respondents agreed that having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW.

### Reducing and exposing corruption

Respondents were asked whether the ICAC had been successful in:

- exposing some of the corruption in NSW
- reducing the level of the corruption in NSW.

As presented in Table 7, a majority of respondents to each item indicated that the ICAC had been successful. It should also be noted that "don't know" was selected more than twice as often as "unsuccessful" in each case.

Figure 9 (see page 22) compares the percentages of respondents who indicated that the ICAC had been successful at exposing or reducing corruption with responses from previous Community Attitudes Surveys.

The percentage of respondents who indicated that the ICAC had been successful in exposing corruption did not significantly differ between the 2009 and 2006 samples.<sup>37</sup> However, an examination of Figure 10 suggested lower percentages in recent years. Consequently, the percentages from the 1999 and 2009 samples were compared and the 2009 percentage was found to be significantly lower than the 1999 percentage.<sup>38</sup>

The only significant result from the comparison of subgroups was that people whose primary language is not English were significantly less likely to indicate that the ICAC had been successful at exposing some of the corruption in NSW.<sup>39</sup> This may be because fewer of these individuals have access to sources of information that report on ICAC work. This explanation is also consistent with the earlier-reported finding that respondents who indicated their primary language is not English were less likely to be aware of the ICAC.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 7: Responses regarding the success of the ICAC in fulfilling its functions**

Has ICAC been successful at:	Successful	Unsuccessful	Don't know
Exposing some of the corruption in NSW	73%	7%	20%
Reducing the level of corruption in NSW	51%	16%	34%

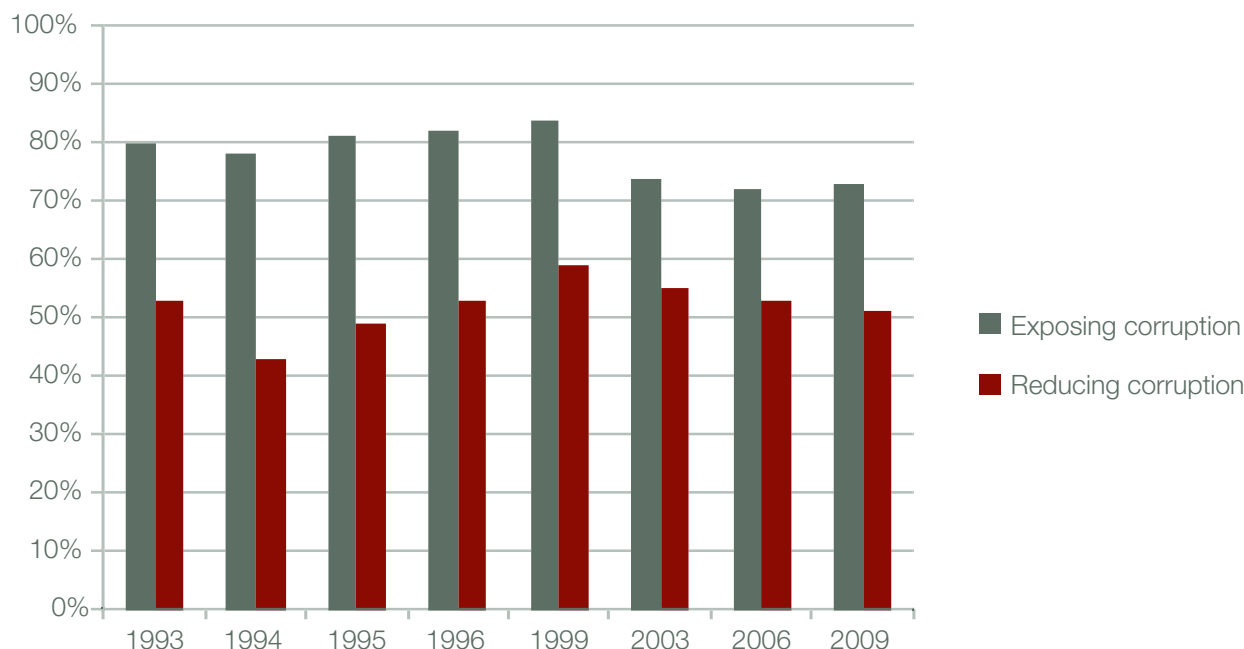
37.  $\chi^2=0.04$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $ns=844$ ,  $p>0.5$ .

38.  $\chi^2=15.7$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=890$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

39.  $B=-1.9$ ,  $Wald=9.2$ ,  $EXP(B)=0.15$ ,  $p<0.005$ .

40. Although the individuals who answered this question were aware of the ICAC.

**Figure 9: Do respondents believe that the ICAC has been successful at exposing and reducing corruption?**



Amongst respondents who indicated that the ICAC had been successful in exposing some of the corruption in NSW, the most frequent reason why they thought it had been successful was because of media reports (180 responses, 57%). Amongst respondents who did not think that the ICAC had been successful or did not know whether it had, the most frequently provided reason was that ICAC inquiries/successes were not publicised enough (39 responses, 33%).

The percentage of respondents who indicated that the ICAC had been successful in reducing corruption did not significantly differ between the 2009 sample and the 2006 sample.<sup>41</sup> A comparison with the 1999 results also did not reveal a significant difference.<sup>42</sup>

There were no subgroups that were significantly more or less likely to indicate that the ICAC has been successful in reducing corruption.<sup>43</sup>

Amongst respondents who indicated that the ICAC had been successful in reducing some of the corruption in NSW, the most frequent reason why they thought it was successful was because of media reports (51 responses, 23%). Amongst respondents who did not think that the ICAC had been successful or did not know whether it had, the most frequently provided response was to indicate that they did not know of a reason (61 responses, 29%).

41.  $\chi^2=0.62$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=844$ ,  $ps>0.1$ .

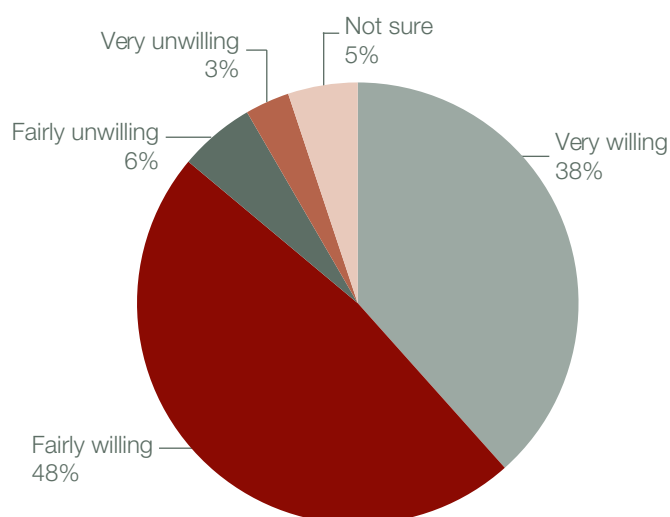
42.  $\chi^2=6.1$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $n=890$ ,  $ps>0.01$ .

43.  $|B|s \leq 0.39$ ,  $Walds \leq 0.83$ ,  $0.67 \leq EXP(B)s \leq 1.2$ ,  $ps>0.1$ .

## Willingness to provide information

As presented in Figure 10, a large majority of respondents would be fairly or very willing to provide information about serious corruption to the ICAC.

**Figure 10: Would respondents be willing to provide information about serious corruption to the ICAC?**



The percentage of respondents who would be fairly or very willing to provide information was not significantly different from the percentage observed in the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey.<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, there were no subgroups that were significantly more or less willing to provide information about serious corruption to the ICAC.<sup>45</sup>

Among respondents who indicated that they were very or fairly willing to provide information to the ICAC, the most frequent reason was because corruption is wrong / reporting corruption is the right thing to do (166 responses, 45%). Among other respondents, the most frequent reason was concern about the possible consequences from reporting (12 responses, 30%). Examples of these reasons are presented below:

*Because I don't like to see corruption, I want a fair go for everyone.*

*Because I would want it to stop.*

*I know there will be a backlash.*

## Good thing for people of NSW

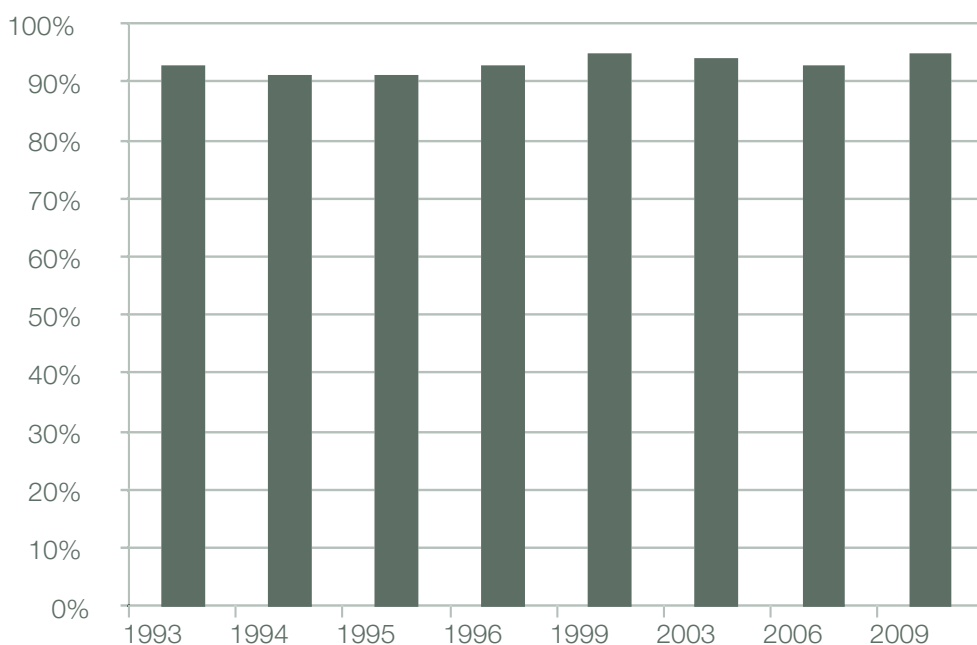
As presented in Figure 11, 95% of respondents indicated that having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW.

The percentage of respondents who indicated that having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW was not significantly different from the percentage observed in the 2006 sample.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Figure 11 indicates that this percentage has been remarkably consistent across all the Community Attitudes Surveys.

The most frequent reasons respondents gave for their responses regarding whether having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW were:

- there needs to an oversight body (48 comments, 11%)
- the ICAC's presence prevents/reduces corruption (47 comments, 11%)
- there needs to be somebody to fight/control corruption (47 comments, 11%).

**Figure 11: Do respondents believe that having the ICAC is a good thing for the people of NSW?**



44.  $\chi^2 < 0.01$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $n = 844$ ,  $p > 0.5$ .

45.  $|B| \leq 0.68$ ,  $Walds \leq 0.41$ ,  $0.93 \leq EXP(B)s \leq 2.0$ ,  $ps > 0.5$ .

46.  $\chi^2 = 1.37$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $n = 844$ ,  $p > 0.1$ .

An example of each of these reasons is presented below:

*Somebody needs to be looking over these issues.*

*I believe they keep people honest. And people think twice before doing something wrong.*

*If the body didn't exist [sic] then the people in the public sector are more likely to think they'll get away from it [sic] and are more likely to commit those crimes.*

## Conclusions

Public perceptions of the ICAC in 2009 appear reasonably similar to perceptions from the 2006 Community Attitudes Survey.

Over 70% of the public appears to believe that the ICAC has been successful at exposing corruption in NSW. Additionally, roughly half believe that the ICAC has been successful at exposing corruption. These percentages have been fairly similar in the Community Attitudes Surveys conducted in recent years.

Confidence in the ICAC is also shown by the finding that over 75% of the public appears willing to provide information to the ICAC about serious corruption. Given that roughly 85% would be likely to report serious corruption<sup>47</sup>, this suggests that amongst members of the public who would report corruption, the vast majority would be willing to report it to the ICAC.

Finally, as in previous Community Attitudes Surveys, almost all respondents indicated that the ICAC was a good thing for the people of NSW.

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47. This finding was presented in the Reporting Corruption chapter on p. 12.



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION  
AGAINST CORRUPTION

Level 21, 133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney, NSW, Australia 2000

Postal Address: GPO Box 500,  
Sydney, NSW, Australia 2001

T: 02 8281 5999

1800 463 909 (toll free for callers outside metropolitan Sydney)

F: 02 9264 5364

TTY: 02 8281 5773 (for hearing-impaired callers only)

E: [icac@icac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:icac@icac.nsw.gov.au)

[www.icac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au)

Business Hours: 9 am - 5 pm Monday to Friday