

Survey of Swiss in Western Australia

Rob Phillips
March 2005

Executive Summary

In the second half of 2004, a questionnaire was sent to all Swiss in Western Australia who were registered with the Consulate General of Switzerland for the Southern states of Australia, located in Melbourne. One questionnaire was sent to each registered household. In households containing more than one registered Swiss, only one questionnaire was received. The questionnaire consisted of 60 questions, arranged into eight themes:

- Cultural Activities
- Social Activities
- Swiss Club
- Sporting Activities
- Children's Activities
- Consular Activities and Business Services
- Swiss Club Property
- Swiss Club House

There were 329 responses to the survey, out of approximately 1500 registered Swiss families in Western Australia. Of the respondents, 41 were members of the Swiss Club of WA, 270 were not, and 18 did not specify their membership. In 2004, the Swiss Club had a membership of 183, made up of 112 households. The response rates from Swiss Club members was 36% and from non-members it was approximately 19%.

Results

The following points summarise the overall results of this survey.

Swiss Club

- Swiss Club members were interested in Switzerland and Swiss culture and were clearly more interested than non-members.
- There was little interest in folkloric activities overall, but 40% of Swiss Club members expressed some interest in this.
- There was minimal interest in joining folkloric groups, perhaps because people felt they lacked the performance skills to join them.
- The Swiss radio was equally popular with both members and non-members.
- There was strong interest in fitting in with Australian culture.
- There was strong interest in going to a Swiss restaurant, if there was one. This survey may provide valuable market research for a potential restaurateur.
- Club members were interested in traditional Swiss activities, but non-members were less interested.
- Many people responding to the survey were interested in the Swiss Club. Overall, they felt the Club did things they were interested in, did things for their age group, and that language was not a problem. There is a potential for over 130 new members, just from the respondents. Extrapolating to the Swiss population in WA, this could translate to 750 family memberships, if services can be provided which match the needs of people.
- A relatively small number of French Swiss people responded to the survey. They held strong views that the Swiss Club did not represent them, and was exclusively oriented towards Swiss Germans. To address this issue, perhaps the Swiss Club could facilitate the formation of a cercle romande as an affiliated group.

- A common theme was that the Swiss Club was too old-fashioned and traditional. Non-members saw it as backward-looking and not 'up with the times'. Non-members could get this impression from looking at the Club programme of events, which features Metzgete, Fasnacht, 1st August, Jass, yodelling, etc. The events the Club runs do not match the nature of the Club.
- There was strong demand for Swiss German language lessons, for both adults and children. There is a small market niche for someone here.
- Interest in sporting activities was low, but bushwalking and camping were more popular than cycling, general sport and golf, in that order.
- People generally felt that the Swiss Club property at Rolling Green was too far away, but despite this, the consensus was that people liked it and the Club should keep it.
- If the Swiss Club had its own clubhouse, a majority of respondents felt that this would increase membership numbers. There is a need for a clubhouse holding about 100 people, in any suburb, and people would attend it about once a month. However, there was little interest in contributing to the purchase of a clubhouse. People were happy to share a clubhouse with other (preferably European) clubs, but there was lukewarm interest in volunteering services towards the upkeep and maintenance of the clubhouse.

Consular issues

In general, people were very happy with Swiss ambassadorial and consular activities provided in Australia. Most people had interacted with the Consulate General in Melbourne, and were very happy with the service they provided. However, respondents identified a number of areas of improvement in consular services, notably in reducing sexism in official communications and providing more information to Swiss.

New ideas

A number of suggestions were made for alternative activities of the Swiss Club:

- An evening of discussion about politics in CH, perhaps?
- The SCWA could promote some of its functions to Australian people who want to travel to Switzerland.
- Visiting/tours of special Oz (unknown) places (goldfields, Kalgoorlie, boat tour on Swan river, guided tour of Fremantle harbour).
- I would join evening dances with a variety of music styles - also those young people enjoy.
- Rather than a clubhouse meeting I would prefer outings in nature with bonfires etc. The main concern is for the kids (5 & 18).
- How about a fondue evening on 1st August.
- I would also attend a Swiss business owners or commerce function.
- Can a Swiss cooking group be organised - also include children.
- More local group activities - Northern suburbs. We meet by chance quite a few Swiss in this area.
- I would like to see people talking about their experiences here in Perth and give help and advice for newcomers.
- Nice to find out about other Swiss here and read their story/ journey to Australia.
- Communicate with migrants that a club exists
- I would like to read of other Swiss people in Perth. Perhaps a photo and short paragraph about them, their background, why they came to Australia, etc. Maybe included in Swiss Review - for a selection of ages.
- Have an email list and the opportunity to contact other Swiss around.
- We need a shop with Swiss speciality foods in WA, and also Swiss chemist meds I.e. Pulmex, Merfen, Vita Merfen etc. It's rather expensive to import from CH.
- The Rhein Donau Club would accept the Swiss Club as an associate club. They have beautiful rooms and the distance can't be close for everyone. It is not a German club. It is a club for people from hueben & drueber des Rheines & der Donau. What more can we ask for.

Conclusion

The results of this survey show clearly that the Swiss Club of WA fulfils its aims of “furthering Swiss culture”, but the general perception in the Swiss community is that it is too traditional. This perception may not be correct, but that is how people feel. The Swiss Club needs to convince the Swiss community in WA that it is relevant to their needs. This may mean that it needs to add a ‘modern’ angle to its activities, to meet the needs of the many recent Swiss migrants to Australia.

Introduction

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- Cultural Activities
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- Sporting Activities
- Children’s Activities
- Consular Activities and Business Services
- Swiss Club Property
- Swiss Club House

There were 329 responses to the survey, out of approximately 1500 registered Swiss families in Western Australia. Of the respondents, 41 were members of the Swiss Club of WA, 270 were not, and 18 did not specify their membership. In 2004, the Swiss Club had a membership of 183, made up of 112 households. The response rate from Swiss Club members was 36% and from non-members it was approximately 19%.

Demographic Information

| Age | % |
|-------------|------|
| 18-24 | 0.6 |
| 25-34 | 15.1 |
| 35-44 | 28.5 |
| 45-54 | 22.8 |
| 55-64 | 17.9 |
| 65 and over | 15.1 |

99.4% of people responding to the survey were over 25 years of age. However, as shown below, there was a fairly even distribution amongst the other age groups, with the majority of respondents in the 35-44 age group. 50% of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old.

Over 75% of respondents held dual Swiss/ Australian citizenship, with a further 20 % holding Swiss citizenship. 79% of people had a partner, and the majority of partners were Australian (118), Swiss (44), dual Swiss Australian

(35) or of English background (18). A further 28 combinations of nationalities of partners were recorded.

English was overwhelmingly the language spoken at home (241), although Swiss German (102) and French (27) were also reported.

| Years in Australia | % |
|--------------------|-------|
| 0-9 | 27.1% |
| 10-19 | 21.8% |
| 20-29 | 22.1% |
| 30-39 | 16.8% |
| 40-49 | 7.6% |
| 50-59 | 4.0% |
| 60+ | 0.7% |

People responding to the survey had been in Australia from 0 to 75 years. As shown on the left, 71% had been in Australia less than 30 years, with the largest number arriving in the last 10 years. The average time in Australia is 21 years. Other European clubs in Western Australia report an aging in their membership which may be reflected in the general community of immigrants from those countries. However, the information at left seems to indicate that there is an ongoing immigration of Swiss to Australia.

Swiss people who responded to the survey live in all parts of Western Australia. 37 respondents indicated that they lived in the country, ranging from the Kimberleys to Albany. A number of country respondents were interested in meeting other Swiss and joining in Swiss activities, but this was made difficult by the distance:

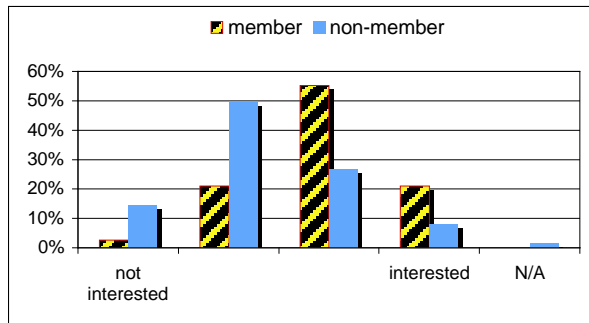
- As I don't live in Perth this [the survey] is all not very relevant to me. But I would like to get together occasionally with other Swiss nationals.

- Would love to join in activities but if you live 4.5 hours from Perth it makes it hard; so it is really only the distance the problem.
- We have a small child, social/ language/ cultural activities would be best. We live in the country but would travel to Perth for these if more frequent.

The rest of this report analyses the eight survey themes.

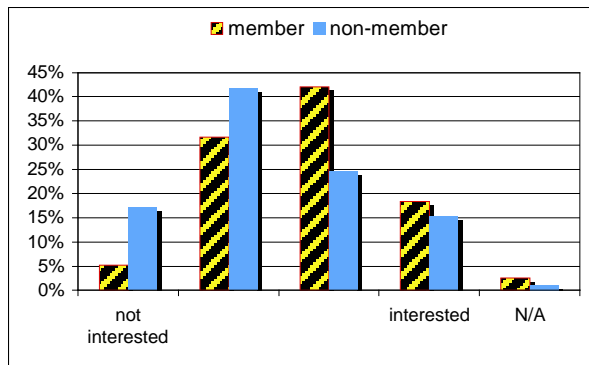
Cultural Activities

This theme explored a range of cultural activities. Responses to cultural activities are analysed both from the point of view of Swiss Club members (red stripes) and non-members (solid blue). **The four responses ranged through ‘not interested’, ‘a bit interested’, ‘quite interested’ to ‘very interested’.** The N/A response indicated that people thought that the question was ‘not applicable’ to them.



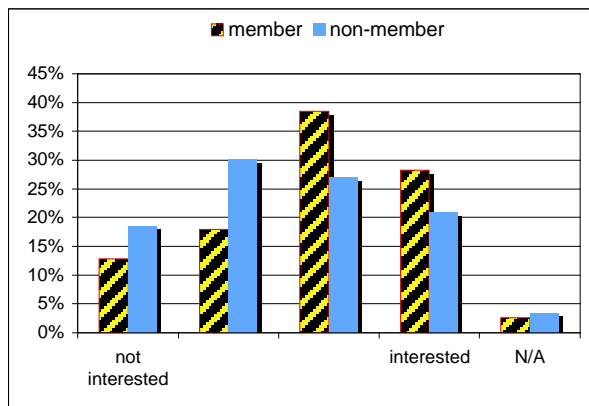
Meeting with other Swiss

Swiss Club members reported substantial interest in meeting other Swiss people. Non-members reported much less interest in meeting other Swiss.



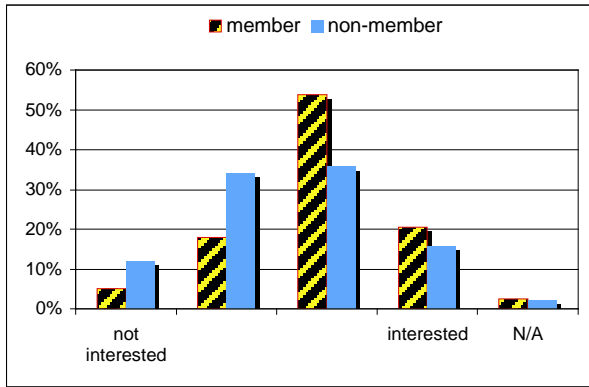
Experiencing Swiss culture, music, art, or literature

There was approximately equal interest and disinterest in experiencing Swiss culture, music, art or literature. However, Swiss Club members showed more interest than non-members.



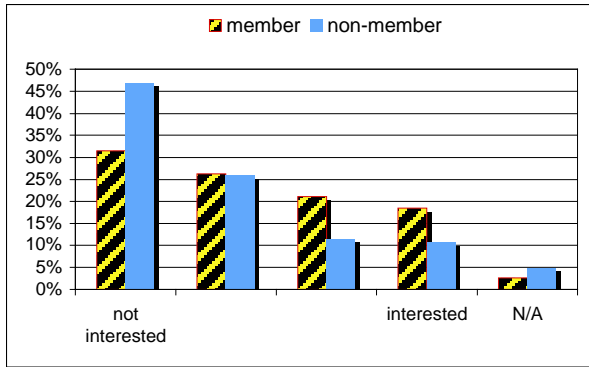
Speaking Swiss German, French, Italian, Romanche

Swiss Club members generally expressed interest in speaking their national language. On the other hand, non-members were approximately equally split in their interest in this.



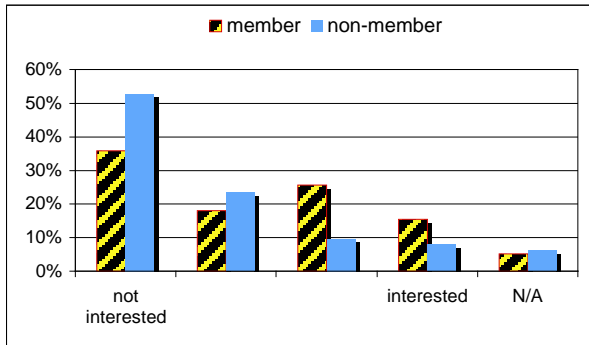
Reading about Swiss activities happening in your region

Swiss Club members generally expressed interest in reading about Swiss activities in their region. On the other hand, non-members were approximately equally split in their interest in this.



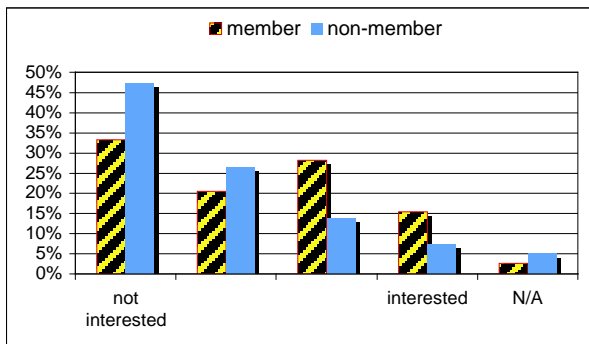
Listening to or watching a Swiss folkloric group

The majority of Swiss were not interested in folkloric activities. However, approximately 40% of Swiss Club members expressed interest, almost double that of non-members.



Listening to Swiss yodelling

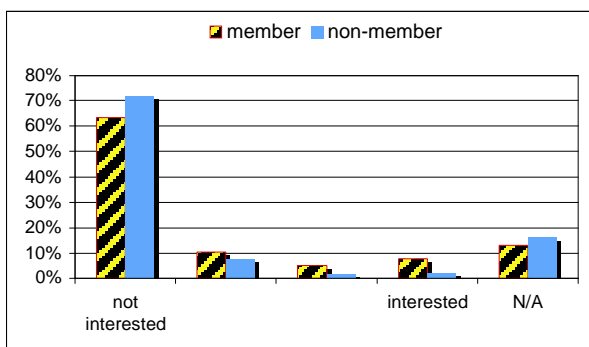
The majority of Swiss were not interested in listening to yodelling. However, approximately 40% of Swiss Club members expressed interest, almost double that of non-members.



Listening to alphorn playing

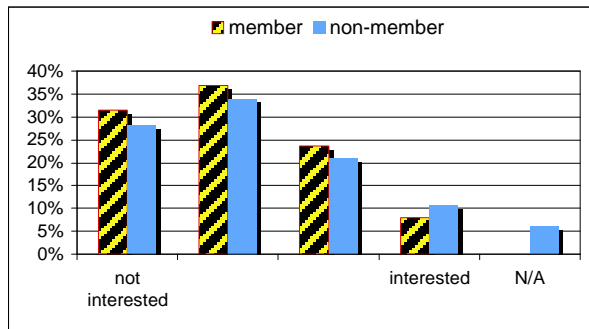
The majority of Swiss were not interested in alphorn activities. However, approximately 40% of Swiss Club members expressed interest, almost double that of non-members.

Responses to these last three questions were similar.



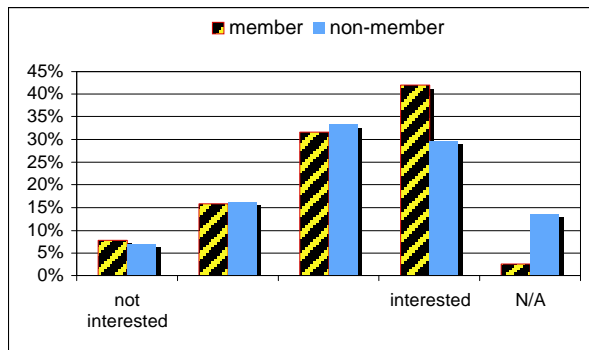
Being part of a folkloric group (yodelling, alphorn, guggemusik, etc.)

There was minimal interest in active participation in folkloric activities, although, once again, Swiss Club members expressed more interest than non-members.



Listening to Swiss radio

Approximately 30% of respondents expressed interest in listening to Swiss radio. There was little variation between Club members and non-members.



Fitting in with Australian culture

Most respondents expressed an interest in fitting in with Australian culture. More Club members expressed a strong interest in this than non-members. It is unclear why almost 15% of non-members found this question to be not applicable.

Several free-form responses were received on the theme of cultural activities. One person felt that “Swiss food, culture, traditions and the language must be upheld”. Another played cowbells with a music group; one was seeking a Swiss violin, viola or cello player for a chamber music ensemble, and a third stated “If I would live closer I would come yodelling”.

A small number of responses referred to the Swiss Radio programme. One person felt that “the dedication and performance of the Swiss radio team is to be applauded”. Another occasionally listens to Swiss Radio and checks SwissInfo on the net for news from home. Another person felt that “the Swiss news on the Tuesday Swiss radio program includes too many irrelevant or unimportant details and sports news from CH is unfortunately ignored”, while a fourth worked on the radio program but gave up because “not enough people listened to it”.

Quite a number of respondents said that they had “embraced the Oz way of life and its culture”. There was a feeling that a Swiss Club would be good for some people, but these respondents “very much feel as an Australian”. One person felt that the problem was that Swiss integrate easily. Other related comments were:

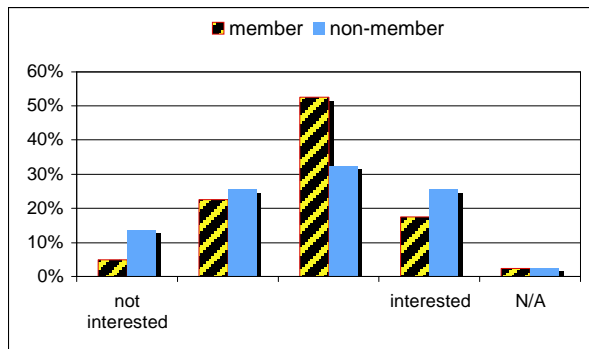
- “I have not joined the Swiss Club yet because I am more interested in the Australian culture at the moment to integrate myself better.”
- “Having chosen to leave our birth country we do not go out of our way to socialise with Swiss people, but enjoy meeting them accidentally.”
- “I emigrated with my parents when (as an emigrant) you were expected to ‘become’ Australian. My parents/ I therefore cut off any ‘Swissness’ to survive. They went to the Swiss Club once when I was a child and found it very ‘Swiss German’ and a little daunting. As an adult I married an Australian reinforcing my Australianness. The Swiss part of me is revived when I travel (something I’ve been able to indulge in only recently). I don’t particularly seek out Swiss people although my son now lives in Basel so that may change in the future.”

Two suggestions for alternative cultural activities were:

- An evening of discussion about politics in CH, perhaps?
- The SCWA could promote some of its functions to Australian people who want to travel to Switzerland.

Social Activities

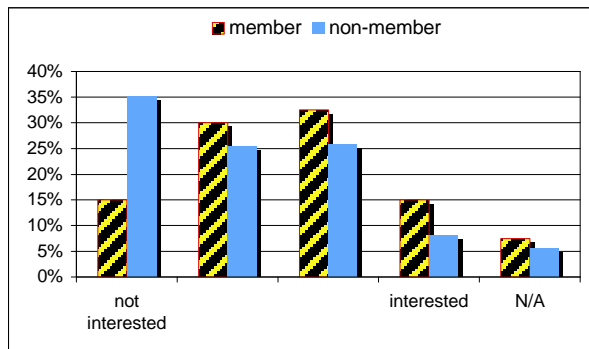
This theme explored a range of Social activities. Responses to Social activities are analysed both from the point of view of Swiss Club members (red stripes) and non-members (solid blue). **The four responses ranged through ‘not interested’, ‘a bit interested’, ‘quite interested’ to ‘very interested’.** The N/A response indicated that people thought that the question was ‘not applicable’ to them.



Going to a Swiss restaurant

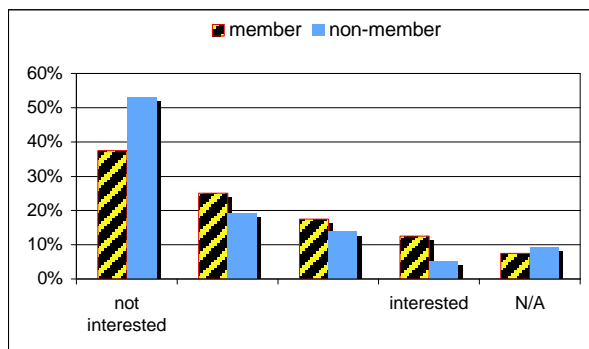
There was strong interest in going to a Swiss restaurant. Over 25% of Club non-members were strongly interested in this. 70% of members were interested in going to a Swiss restaurant. Some comments were:

- I would like to eat Swiss food in Perth - any good restaurants?
- Re: Restaurant: Yes of course if real Swiss dishes are served (variety)
- Would definitely go to a Swiss restaurant if a 'real' Swiss menu is offered (variety)



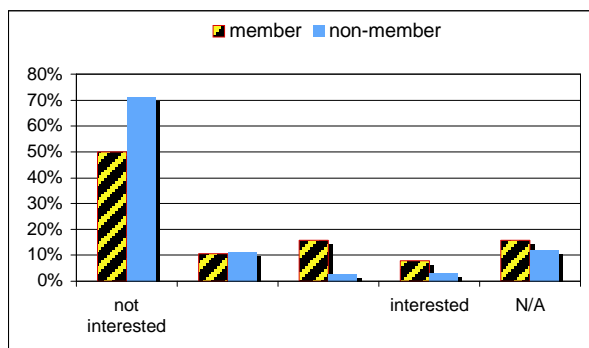
Joining with friends at a 'Lokal'

Most people were not interested in this proposal. However, of those who were interested, there were clearly more Swiss Club members.



Having a social game of Jass

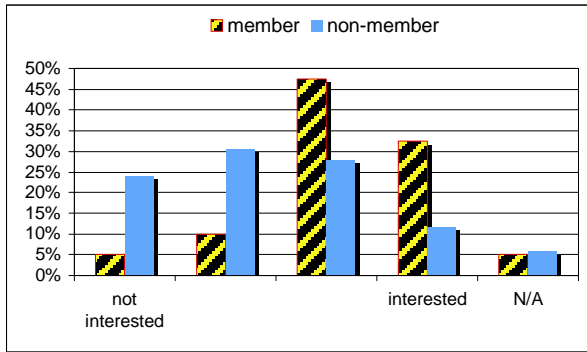
Jass did not hold a strong interest for many Swiss. However, more Club members were interested than non-members.



Joining a Jass competition

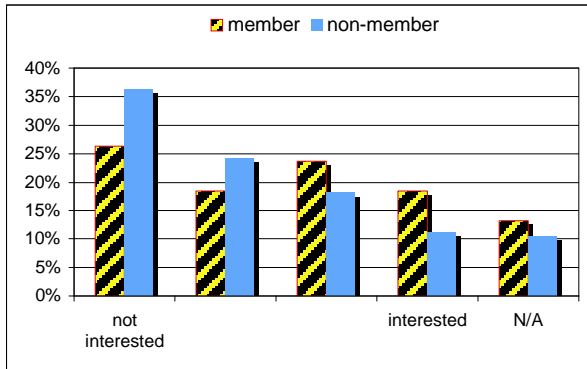
There was even less interest in joining a Jass competition, although there was clearly more interest by Swiss Club members.

One person responded: "I always wanted to go for a Jass, but I was told by a member of the club that unless I was really good I would not be welcome. Well I have not played for over 10 years."



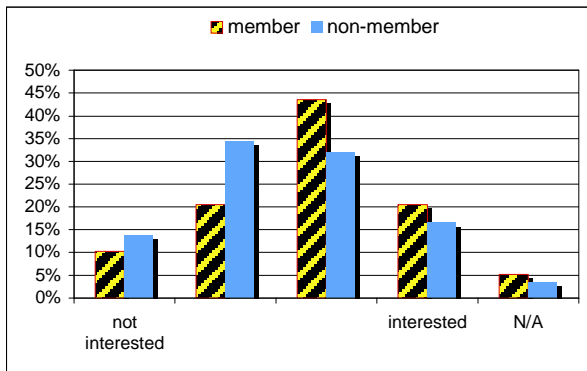
Visiting a Swiss friend at home

Non-members were approximately equally interested and not interested in visiting other Swiss. Club members were clearly very interested in doing this.



Meeting with Swiss business people

Approximately 40% of Club members and 30% of non-members were interested in meeting Swiss business people.



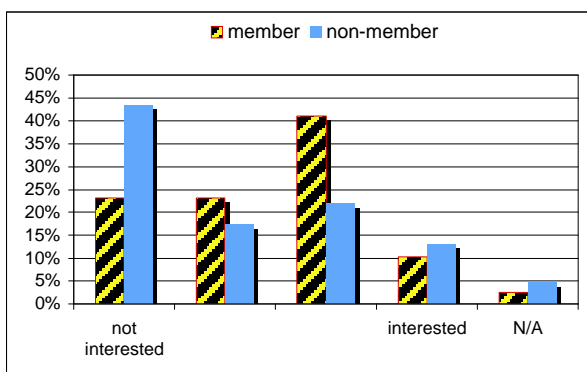
Meeting with other European nationalities

Swiss Club members generally expressed interest in meeting with other European nationalities. On the other hand, non-members were approximately equally split in their interest in this.



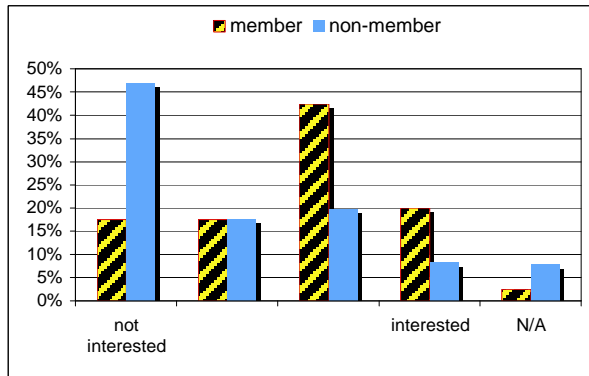
Celebrating the First of August with a bonfire

Swiss Club members generally expressed interest in attending a 1st of August bonfire. On the other hand, non-members were approximately equally split in their interest in this.



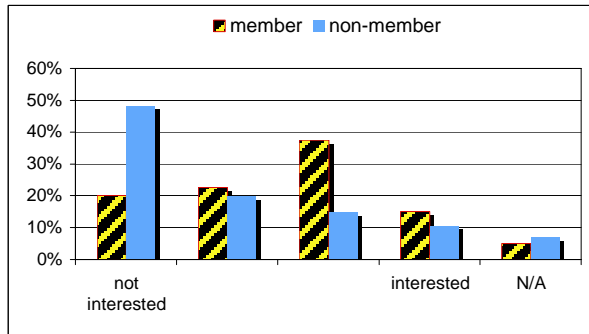
Celebrating the First of August with a dinner/dance

Approximately 50% of members were interested in this celebration. However, a large percentage of non-members were definitely not interested in a 1st August dance, while over 40% of members were interested, but not very interested in this.



Celebrating the Metzgete with a dinner/dance

While similar to the 1st of August dance, more Swiss Club members were interested in the Metzgete, while fewer non-members were.



Celebrating Fasnacht

While the trends for the Fasnacht were similar to those for the 1st August dance and the Metzgete, there was less interest than for the others.

Many people had comments to make about the social activities provided by the Swiss Club. Eleven people felt that they were too old to actively partake in Club activities:

- Being over 87, I am really too old to participate in any activities, but enclosed the SCWA in my will.
- I am happy with the SCWA. However, now my wife has deceased and my children have reached the age that they have other interest and no longer wish to accompany me to club functions. I have no longer renewed my membership in the club
- I have not filled in the questionnaire because I am now 70 and not so much interested in clubs, partying, camping, etc.
- The enclosed form, filled in in the negatives mostly does not indicate disinterest in the Swiss Club or is conditional: I am living alone, no private transport and in 5 years I will be 100, if I make it.
- We are in our late 70s and travelling long distances is uncomfortable, also travelling at night.

One person wrote “I would be ready to visit an elderly Swiss German person in a home for old people.”. Several people wrote that they were interested in get-togethers for seniors, preferably in the daytime, when public transport could be used:

- Both of us are over 70 and do not go out at night, we would enjoy some get together over lunch if not too far away.
- I would make time to meet Swiss ladies for lunch, exhibitions or other functions
- Activities at evenings do not interest me usually because of transport problems

The cost of membership and activities was an issue for some older members:

- From my point of view, being on a pension, is very restrictive, as most of the outings would be too costly for me.
- Some of the activities proposed by the Swiss Club are too expensive for us or held too far for us to get to. Perhaps some informal gatherings or meetings at members' homes?
- Free membership to club for pensioners

Some other people felt that there needed to be more activities for young people:

- There is nothing going for 14-18 year olds.

- We would like to meet other 'young' Swiss, say between 35 and 45 years at organised activities - monthly get-togethers at weekends would be good.
- There should be more for children/ families with children to meet and learn about Swiss culture. A permanent (local) base would help for that.
- Children activities I rate quite important to let them participate/ experience a different culture.

Two people wanted activities for adult singles:

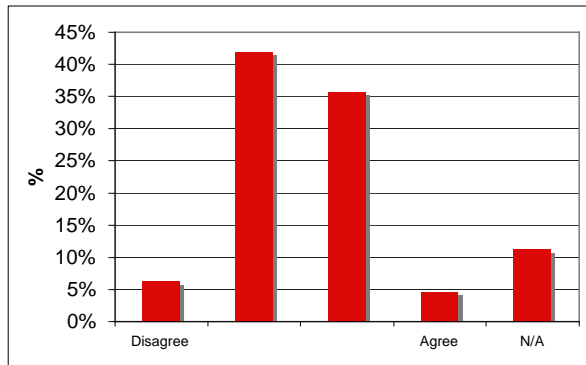
- “I am Swiss by marriage, now single. I would like to see some social activities for people like me. I like to maintain my Swiss ties, but do not want to be overwhelmed.”
- “It would be to consider: Swiss singles like widows to bring together in a book club and talk together”

Several useful suggestions for new activities were made by respondents:

- Visiting/tours of special Oz (unknown) places (goldfields, Kalgoorlie, boat tour on Swan river, guided tour of Fremantle harbour).
- Would join evening dances with a variety of music styles also those young people enjoy.
- Rather than a clubhouse meeting I would prefer outings in nature with bonfires etc. The main concern is for the kids (5 & 18).
- How about a fondue evening on 1st August.
- I would also attend a Swiss business owners or commerce function.
- Can a Swiss cooking group be organised - also include children.
- More local group activities - Northern suburbs. We meet by chance quite a few Swiss in this area.
- I would like to see people talking about their experiences here in Perth and give help and advice for newcomers.
- Nice to find out about other Swiss here and read their story/ journey to Australia.

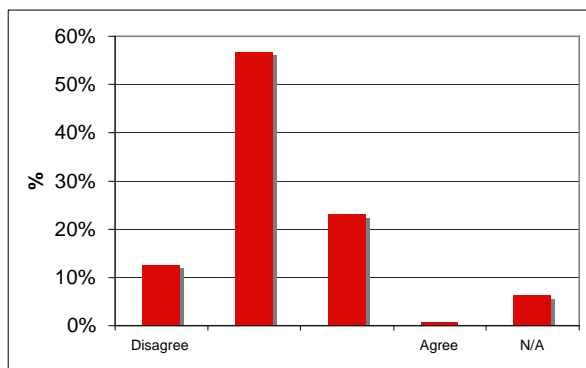
Swiss Club

This theme explored views about membership of the Swiss Club. Responses for this set of questions are only recorded for non-members. **The four responses ranged through 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree' to 'strongly agree'**. The N/A response indicated that people thought that the question was 'not applicable' to them.



I am not interested in the Swiss Club

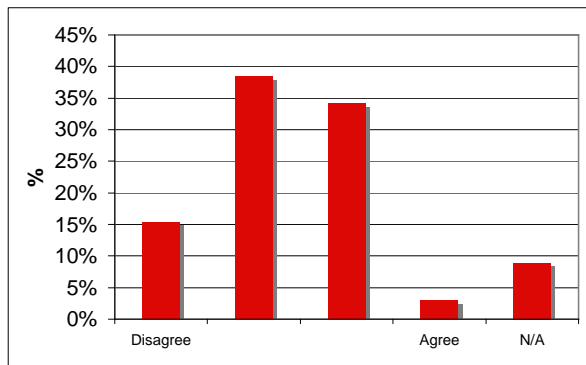
Approximately 48% of non-members stated that they were interested in the Swiss Club. There is a potential for over 130 new members, just from the respondents. Extrapolating to the Swiss population in WA, this could translate to 750 family memberships, if services can be provided which match the needs of people.



I'm not interested in meeting other Swiss

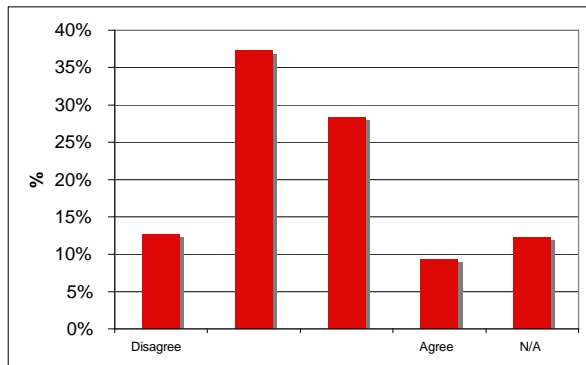
Nearly 70% of non-members were interested in meeting other Swiss.

Under Cultural activities, less than 40% of people responded that they were interested in meeting other Swiss. This discrepancy casts doubt on the validity of this question.



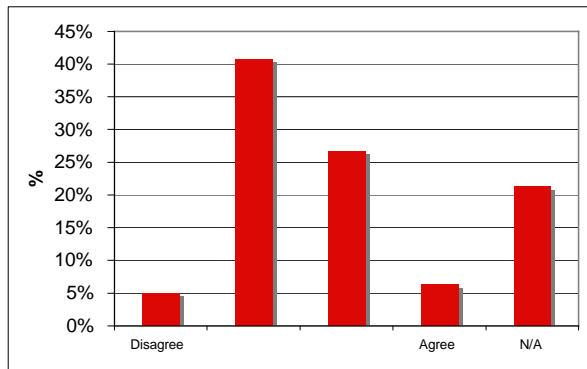
I have plenty of Swiss friends

On average, more Swiss felt that they would benefit from making more Swiss friends.



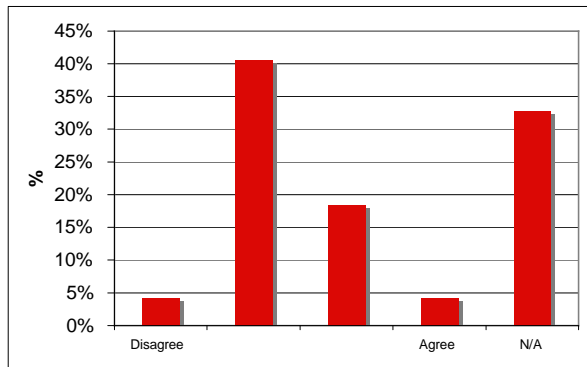
I haven't joined the Swiss Club because I don't know anyone in it

Knowledge of people already in the Swiss Club was not a criterion for joining for the majority of people. While this is a factor stopping people from joining, it is not the only factor.



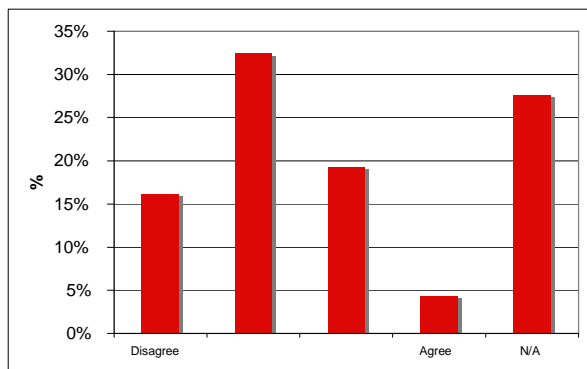
The Swiss Club doesn't do anything I am interested in

Less than 35% of respondents felt that the Swiss Club didn't do anything of interest for them. However 20% of people did not respond.



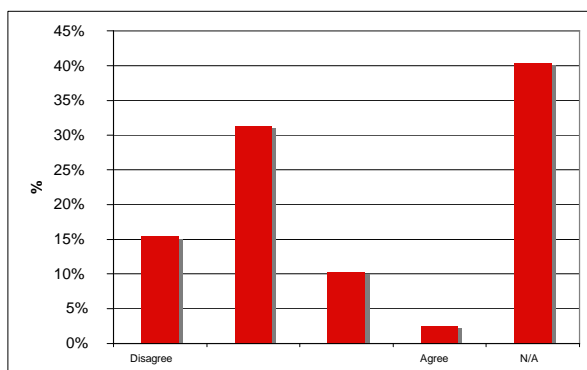
The Swiss Club doesn't have anything for my age group

Over 30% of respondents did not, or could not respond to this question. Of the remainder, the majority disagreed and felt that the Swiss Club might have something of interest for them.



I don't come to Swiss Club activities because my partner does not speak Swiss

Less than 30% agreed that their partner's language influenced their intention to join the Swiss Club. However, over 27% chose not to respond, possibly because they did not have partners, given that 21% of respondents did not have partners.



I don't come to Swiss Club activities because nobody is from a French/ Italian/ Romanche background

Less than 15% of respondents agreed that a non-Swiss German background was a reason for not joining the Swiss Club and 40% thought that this was not applicable. However, the free responses (below) from people of French Swiss background strongly expressed a sense of disenfranchisement with the emphasis of the Club on Swiss German.

Comments on Swiss Club membership

A number of respondents had positive comments to make about the Swiss Club.

- For now, the club is doing very well now. Thank you!
- I can only CONGRATULATE the Swiss and non-Swiss committees for the fantastic enthusiasm shown in the running of the WA Swiss Club. Heartiest congratulations also to the new committee - may the future years be as active and full of fun!
- I think that SCWA does a great job with amazing volunteers. I don't think it's the SC's fault members are diminishing with today's ease of travel. Most Swiss I know travel frequently home to CH.
- I tip my hat to all the organisers at the Swiss Club. Maybe at a later time when my child is older, I will reconsider for activities such as Samichlaus and Fasnacht.

Other people have had little to do with the Swiss Club:

- As someone who gained Swiss nationality by family connection, I have had very little to do with Swiss people or culture in Australia.
- Haven't had contact with Swiss people in Perth other than receiving Swiss Abroad magazine and one invitation to lunch meeting.

Some people felt that club membership is too expensive "What about annual membership fee? Lower fees (below \$50 for a family) will attract more members!"

One person reported problems in attempting to become a member of the Swiss Club. "Als ich mich beim Konsulat in Melbourne gemeldet habe, habe ich meine Interesse fuer the WA Swiss Club gesagt, aber nie habe ich auskunft darueber bekommen, weder vom Konsulat noch vom Swiss Cub. Wenn Sie neue Members wollen, then sollten Sie neue Schweizer in Australien willkommen."

A number of people expressed interest in the Swiss Club:

- I really appreciate that the Club does exist and I and my partner thoroughly enjoyed the functions we did attend (1st Aug dance and dinners, lunch with Herr Stuckey recently)
- I would appreciate to catch up more with Swiss people in WA.
- I am half Swiss and would love to expose my children to that side of my culture and language. However, I, myself, don't speak well and [have] not been active in the Swiss community.
- I look forward to having my own family and hopefully being able to become part of the mothers' group, which may lead to becoming a member.
- I would really be interested in kids' activities but my 5 y.o. does not speak Swiss and I don't know anyone in the Club. Guess feeling a little bit strange attending all by myself, as my partner is not interested.
- Went to one 1st Aug Feier and the kids loved it. Try to keep it.
- Would like for my kids to live Swiss festive days and learn (relaxed way) about it.
- I would appreciate to catch up more with Swiss people in WA.
- I have thought about joining the club, but do not feel confident with my language skills.
- I think this survey is great! I found that most Swiss people don't really care to meet other Swiss people too often. Being Australian born and having my own family it is important for my children to learn and maybe speak the Swiss culture.
- I like to keep in touch with the Swiss community but a busy life with 2 young teenagers (not very interested) make it difficult.
- I would join the SCWA however my current work commitments do not permit the time to do so.
- I've been in Oz all my life. I am interested in maybe 1-2 events per year maximum. More to join in with the culture and share it with my Aussie friends. I would never join a club, but I would love to bring a group of friends and kids to a traditional Aug 1 bonfire, for example.
- My children are over 30 and I am waiting for grandchildren to be able to attend any activities and playgroups.
- I really have no knowledge of things such as Fasnacht and Samichlaus. I have no knowledge or understanding of any of the festivals or folklore, but I would like to broaden my horizons, so I would go and try the Club if there was one close by.
- Very often we talk about going to events/ playgroup, but we do not have the time.
- I think people with young families would still benefit greatly, especially the campovers/ 1 Aug/ Samichlaus sorts of things. Little kids love it all and parents can relax a bit.
- Come on guys, lets have some real Swiss culture in Perth along with the Aussie sense of mateship and openness.

A large number of respondents gave reasons why they did not want to be members of the Swiss Club. These reasons fell into several categories.

Too traditional

A substantial number of people had the impression that the Swiss Club was too old-fashioned and traditional:

- Image of the club is a bit old-fashioned
- The Swiss Club must be more innovative, especially for younger members/participants. Switzerland is a very modern country and this must be reflected in Swiss clubs.
- The Swiss club needs to be modern. Switzerland is a modern country!
- Swiss club tends to be too traditional and should be more open-minded to younger Swiss people. (there was a reason why we chose to live abroad for a certain time).
- In my opinion clubs in any country are a problem. They seem to attract a certain group of people, eg those Swiss club members are more Swiss than the Swiss at home. I'm sick to listen how everything is better at home - would rather join the Australian club, if there is one.
- Swiss clubs tend to be frequented by people who have difficulties to assimilate in the host country. This may be justified in cases like Japan, Saudi Arabia, etc. But in a country like Australia...
- Times have changed and we experience globalisation in multicultural aspects as well. The Waldstaetten are history and worship for the past and history and traditions have little significance in our present days.
- We have not joined the Swiss club because of rather negative experiences back in another country. As it says in the cover letter, most clubs have been founded over 100 years ago and the Swiss ideal has stayed the same. But CH has changed over the last 100 years. Most of the Swiss we have met in the club were very old-fashioned and short-sighted.
- There were also some negative comments. One person felt that the programme (Jass, Metzgete) did not interest them because they were too traditional. Another person, who had been a member of a Swiss Club in another place chose not to join because "People at the Club always complained about everything Australian. Why didn't they go back home!?" However, these feelings may not be representative of the Swiss Club of WA.
- The concept of gathering with nationals of one's origin will need a new approach at this time of globalisation. I do not have the answer or a concept – it just seems to me that the nostalgic traditional element of the past is dominating the actual notion of Swiss clubs.

On our visits to CH we realise that the country is somehow grid locked culturally, politically, economically, by looking more backwards than forwards. Maybe we Swiss abroad could be the Swiss Switzerland needs?

Yet, this cannot be done with the traditional curriculum of Swiss clubs. To us, there is no attraction in joining the atmosphere of the past for nostalgic reasons. There should be an aim above Yodel, Alphorn, Roesti and Jass. It is also to say that Oz, which receives foreigners with open arms (in contrast to CH and SVP politics) there is no need for segregation.

Friedrich Nietzsche said "art is the proper task of life". The only thing I could constructively propose is to go through the 3 stages which are: Ridicule, Discussion, Adoption (by John Stuart Mill) and find out what we Swiss could artfully contribute to CH. With my note, I may have started with the ridicule, maybe it does start a discussion?

Switzerland too close

- We get our 'Swiss fix' on our annual or biannual visits to CH and from subscribing to the Beobachter.

- Also relatives/friends/ kids of friends seem to drop in to Perth frequently! Therefore I don't think Swiss feel so isolated or in need of Swiss national company like years ago.
- Foods books films, everything is readily available. Phone calls are so cheap people can easily talk for hours (phonecards) to CH. Basically the purpose of joining a club has changed.
- I travel to CH at least once a year, and don't need yodelling, culture, etc. here. I enjoy it at home! I have my circle of Oz friends too. Lots of people keep in touch with Swiss news/ friends via the internet so Club activities are not so important anymore.

Self-sufficiency

- I think you are doing a great job, but although I am no recluse or anti-social, I am just not a 'clubby' sort of person.
- Ich bin nie eine Club Person gewesen. Ich stelle mir ein Lokal vor wie eine Lesestube die an gewissen Zeiten offen ist und allen Schweizer und Partner offen steht auch ohne Club Mitgliedschaft
- You can respect and cherish 'Swiss values' without participating in a club, a bit like your don't need to go to church to be spiritual. Sorry, I am a loner! Keep up the good work for those in need.
- I am also not one for organised group activities and like to keep this spontaneous and not be tied to an organisation.

Lack of Interest

- I have a lot of Swiss friends and know some more. I am not interested to meet more - that comes anyway.
- Many Swiss in Perth are Hochnaessig and not very sociable - keep to their own groups (cliques)
- It is a great idea to have a Swiss club, but I do have plenty of friends and social network and have no need to attend the club.
- I did not leave CH to be with Swiss people abroad.
- I haven't worried about getting involved especially as I live SE suburbs and most gatherings seem to be in northern side of river.
- I don't find the questionnaire very relevant to me. I have my contacts with Swiss people in CH (family and friends). I was born in Aus but in the last 35 years have visited CH 16 times, staying between 2 & 4 months each time. My 4 children are also Swiss and have visited CH 3 or 4 times. So we are all fully Australian, and don't feel the need to join a Swiss Club in Australia.
- I have nothing against the Swiss Club – it just isn't my scene (neither is any club). I just like to meet people of all nationalities, without thinking about their background, just what they are as interesting people in the course of everyday life. So therefore I do not feel the need to join in specifically 'Swiss' activities unless I am in CH with relatives. I do feel that the Swiss Club's activities can be of relevance to someone who is not integrated into the Australian community and who perhaps came to Oz as an adult, for companionship and identity where needed. So the survey is an excellent idea to make the association more relevant for them. In our shrinking world, perhaps nationalism is on the way out! Certainly 'shrinking time' is making everyone think of different priorities (to the past 100 years) to concentrate their time and energy.
- It is probable that the lack of interest of Swiss people in joining Helvetic activities is a measure of how 'good' we are as migrants, adapting to the local lifestyle.

Lack of Time

- I have 2 very young children and my own business. So time is my problem to do more with Swiss Club etc.

- I now have a small circle of Swiss friends I see regularly and whose company I enjoy. Besides, I work full-time and don't have a lot of spare time.
- Some people work weekends or away from home and have no opportunity to go to venues.

Language Issues

A minority of respondents, but a very vocal minority, felt that the Swiss Club was focussed exclusively on Swiss Germans. French was only spoken at home by 27 respondents, but 10 of these made comments about the way the Swiss Club seems to be dominated by Swiss Germans and Swiss German. This response rate and the nature of the comments indicates very strong feelings on this issue. Some relevant comments are:

- I was a member of the SCWA in the late 60s/70s. Despite my efforts, found people had joined in groups and were not friendly to a French-speaking only.
- I would like to maintain a link with my heritage and not lose my ability to speak French and maintain my culture
- I would only be interested in a totally separate French-speaking Swiss club as it appears to exist in Sydney and Melbourne.
- I am Swiss French and not very interested in Swiss German events
- Heard from friends that the Swiss Club is dominated by Swiss German people.
- Would consider to join [Club] with Swiss French members, especially for my kids if they had a chance to speak/ learn French then.
- For a couple of examples to illustrate my feeling: at Christmas party for the children a lady was telling an Christmas story in German. There were quite a few French-speaking children who complained and asked if she could tell the story in English (as every member of the club can speak English!) She refused and the children just lost interest and left. A bit later I discovered that her book was actually written in English and that she was translating the story in Swiss German, ignoring the French speaking children.

More recently, we attended the 1st of August dinner dance (with other French speaking people). We enjoyed it and found that it was very well organised, BUT I was very disappointed when I saw that the words for the Swiss national anthem were only written in German on the sheet we were given

That was the last drop for not attending the Swiss club any more, because, it is not really a Swiss club, but a Swiss German club, and its name should be changed.

There are 4 national languages in CH and even if the German part is the biggest, it does not give the right to German speaking people to ignore the other languages, and this is exactly what the club members did when they did not include the other languages on the national anthem sheet.

I think that the WA Swiss club will only get more members (especially French speaking people) if its attitude towards cultures other than the Swiss German one becomes more open. And it will benefit all members.

I hope that my remarks will help you in your attempts to improve the club!

I see 2 solutions to your problem at the moment.

- You don't change anything but change the name of the club to the Swiss German club of WA
- Your attitudes towards the other Swiss cultures and languages change and you get more members and the club becomes an interesting place.

Perhaps to demonstrate the concerns of the French-speakers, one person wrote "Warum ist diese Fragebogen in Englisch, ich denke es handelt sich um einem Schweizer Club. Ein

Schweizer Club ist doch dazu da Schweizer Kultur, Gedankengut, Mentalitaet zu pflegen und nicht Australische.”

Language Lessons

Several Swiss people would like to join the Swiss Club, but had not done so because they or their partners did not speak Swiss German well. There were several requests for language lessons, for adults. There were similar requests for language lessons for students.

- I only speak English. I was born in Australia. Would like to be involved but hesitate as I do not actually come from CH or speak any other languages.
- My Swiss German is getting very rusty.
- Also my partner does not speak the Swiss language which makes it a little more difficult.
- I read the Swiss review and always look for Swiss classes my husband could attend, but have not seen any in WA so far.
- I would be interested if there were language lessons at the club (I grew up in Aus - even though my father is Swiss we never spoke German at home)
- I came to Oz when I was 4yo. My Swiss German is not very fluent. I would like: Swiss German classes for me; and for my husband who speaks only english; Swiss German classes for my children to attend in the coming years. As a child my parents sent me to German lessons as no Swiss German classes were available. I hope this is no longer the case.
- It would be great if the Swiss Club could organise Swiss language lessons for adults - my husband who is Australian would love to learn how to speak Swiss German and I would love to be able to speak Swiss German fluently and also to be able to write German
- My wife is Australian born, has taken lessons in German, finds Schwyzerduetsch hard to understand. A regular class of Schwyzerduetsch to English could be beneficial for her and others.

New Ideas

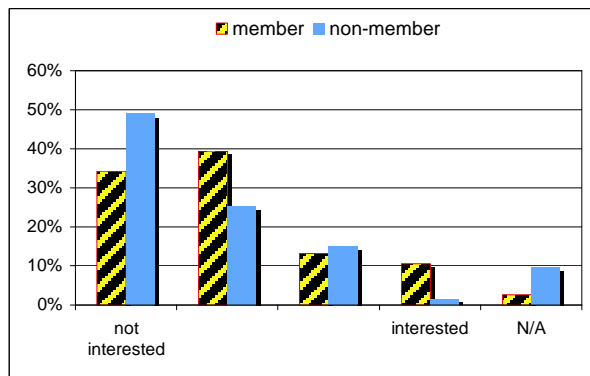
Respondents had several creative ideas that the Swiss Club should consider:

- Communicate with migrants that a club exists
- I would like to read of other Swiss people in Perth. Perhaps a photo and short paragraph about them, their background, why they came to Australia, etc. Maybe included in Swiss Review - for a selection of ages.
- Have an email list and the opportunity to contact other Swiss around.
- We need a shop with Swiss speciality foods in WA, and also Swiss chemist meds I.e. Pulmex, Merfen, Vita Merfen etc. It's rather expensive to import from CH.
- The Rhein Donau Club would accept the Swiss Club as an associate club. They have beautiful rooms and the distance can't be close for everyone. It is not a German club. It is a club for people from hueben & drueber des Rheines & der Donau. What more can we ask for.

Sporting Activities

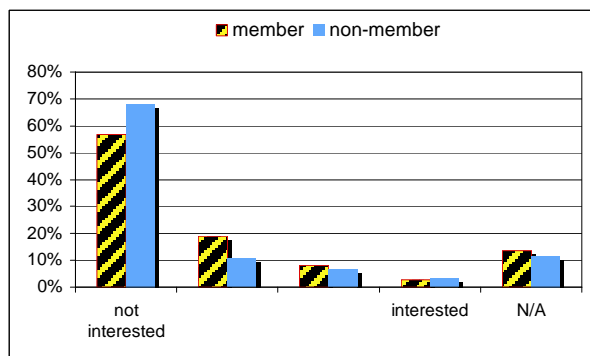
This theme explored a range of sporting activities. Responses to sporting activities are analysed both from the point of view of Swiss Club members (red stripes) and non-members (solid blue). **The four responses ranged through ‘not interested’, ‘a bit interested’, ‘quite interested’ to ‘very interested’.** The N/A response indicated that people thought that the question was ‘not applicable’ to them.

Non-members were clearly less interested in sporting activities as part of the Swiss Club. Responses across each question showed similar trends, with similar discrepancies between members and non-members for each sporting question.



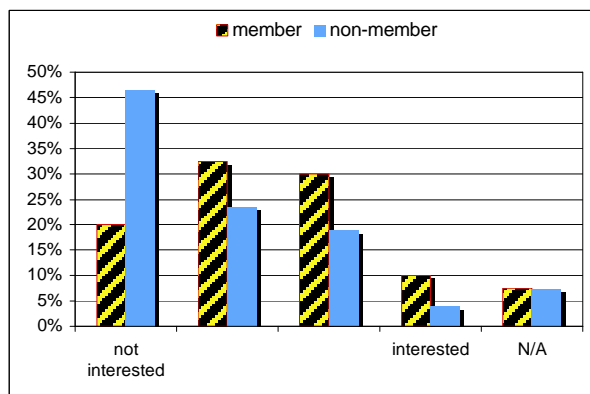
Playing a range of sport with other Swiss

Given the age range of respondents, it is understandable that sporting activities would not be popular to all Swiss. Approximately 22% of Swiss Club members were interested in Sport, compared to approx. 14% non-members. Almost 10% of non-members chose not to respond to this question.



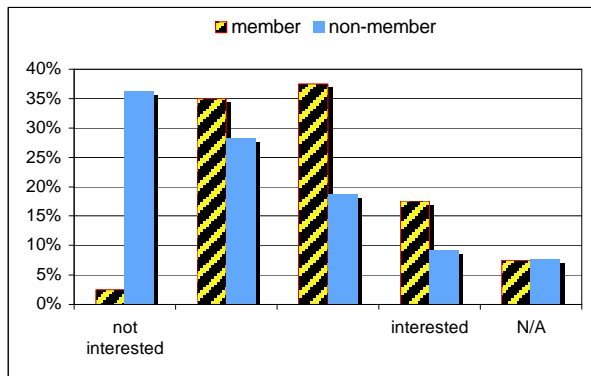
Playing golf with other Swiss

Interest in golf was very low, with little distinction between members and non-members.



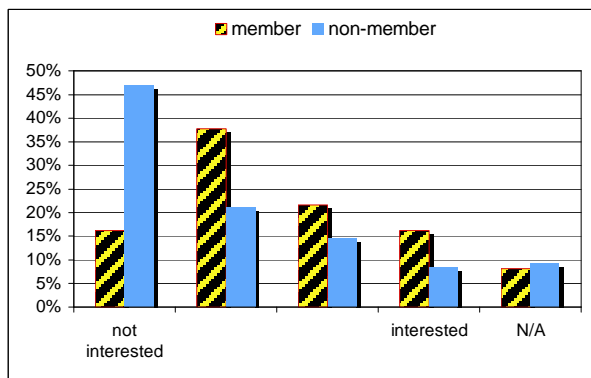
Going camping and sit around a camp fire with Swiss people

Swiss Club members were equally split on this activity, while non-members were less interested, perhaps because they were not aware of the Swiss Club property.



Going on a bush walk with Swiss people

Over 50% of Swiss Club members were interested in going on a bushwalk. Non-members were substantially less interested.



Going on a bicycle ride with Swiss people

Responses about cycling were similar to responses about bushwalking, except that interest was lower for both members and non-members.

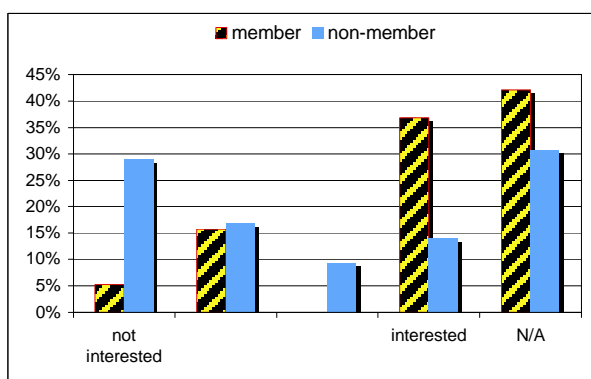
Two free-form comments were made about the Sports Club:

- I found the sport activities very cliquey
- Have looked at the club web site and most activities appear to be sport-oriented, which does not interest me or my family.

Children's Activities

This theme explored a range of children's activities. Responses to children's activities are analysed both from the point of view of Swiss Club members (red stripes) and non-members (solid blue). **The four responses ranged through 'not interested', 'a bit interested', 'quite interested' to 'very interested'**. The N/A response indicated that people thought that the question was 'not applicable' to them.

Approximately 40% of both members and non-members reported that they had children.



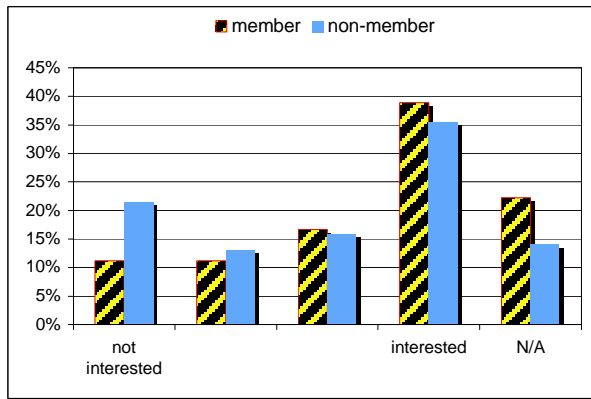
Taking the children to a Swiss play group

Responses to this question were mixed. The questionnaire did not ask how old children were. It is possible that some people responded that they had children, even though these were grown up. Also, some children might be too old to attend a play group.

However, a substantial number of Swiss Club members were very interested in play group activities, while a substantial number of non-members were not at all interested.

Free-form comments were:

- too far from where I live to attend.
- I once went to the playgroup but it was too far away and I didn't really 'click' with the other mothers



Taking the children to Swiss language lessons

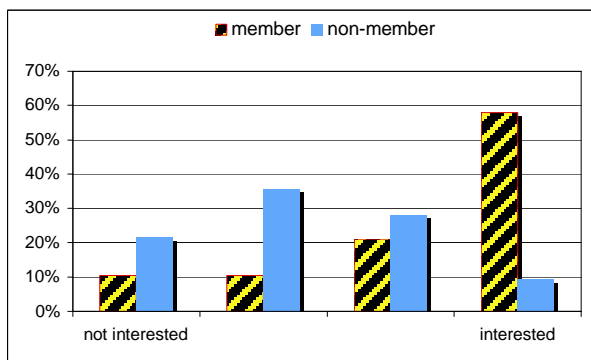
There was substantial interest by both members and non-members in their children taking Swiss language lessons.

In addition, a number of respondents expressed interest in Swiss language lessons for their partners.

- Very interested in language development for children - written and spoken
 - We would like our baby to learn about

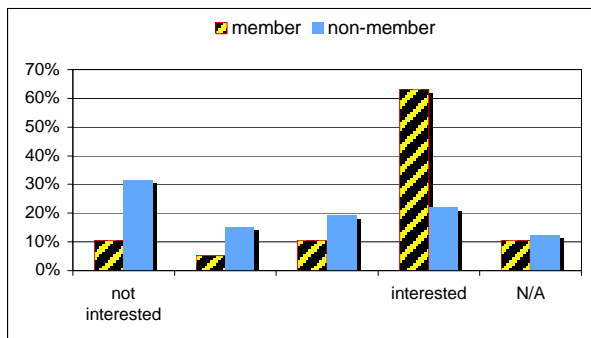
CH, the language and culture and meet other babies/ children socially.

- I would be very interested in some activity for school aged children (eg language lessons) as my daughter is too old now for the play group. She's only 5 but started pre-school fulltime, and can't go to a play group meeting during school hours.



Going to a picnic with Swiss people

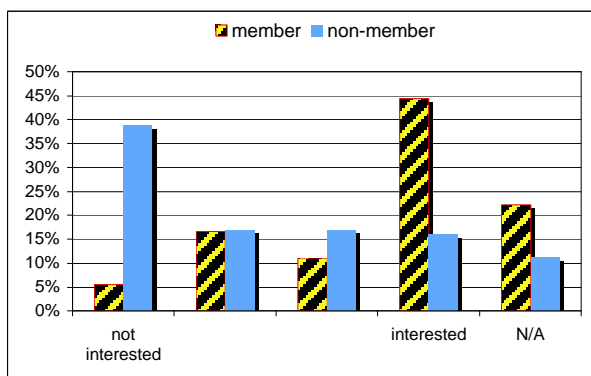
Approximately 80% of Swiss Club members with children were interested in going to a picnic, while less than 30% of non-members were interested.



Going to Samichlaus

There was a strong interest by Swiss Club members in attending Samichlaus with their children, while interest was much weaker by non-members.

One respondent wrote: "As a family, we have maintained the Samichlaus tradition, and a couple of others."



Celebrating the Fasnacht with your children

There was a strong interest by Swiss Club members in celebrating Fasnacht with their children, while interest was much weaker by non-members.

Club members were substantially more interested in meeting with other Swiss parents in a range of activities than non-members. Perhaps this is because non-members do not know enough other Swiss with children, and are too shy to make the first steps to meeting others.

Consular Activities and Business Services

Several questions dealt with services provided by the Swiss Embassy in Canberra, the Swiss Consulate in Melbourne and the Swiss Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sydney.

Less than 10% of respondents reported contact with the Embassy. Over 65% of respondents reported contact with the Swiss Consulate in Melbourne.

Over 60% of people were not able to comment about the Swiss Embassy, but of those that could, the majority were happy with the service provided. This figure is unusually high given that less than 10% had had contact with the Embassy. It is possible that respondents confused the Embassy and the Consulate. The majority of respondents were happy with the service provided by the Consulate, with only 10 respondents expressing dissatisfaction.

Free-form comments also indicated that people were largely very happy with the services provided by the Consulate and Embassy. For example, *“I am **very** happy with the service provided by the Swiss Consulate in Melbourne”*; and *“Totally satisfied with efficiency, promptness and helpfulness. I have never had a problem with the Melbourne consulate.”*

People enjoyed receiving the Swiss Review.

There seemed to be a lack of knowledge about the Swiss Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Only 25% of respondents knew about the Swiss Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and only 1.7% had had contact with that organization. Only 35 respondents expressed an opinion about it, and of these only four were dissatisfied. Two people wanted more information about the services of the Swiss Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its members. Another wanted information about globalised Swiss companies of any sort operating in WA.

Please suggest ways that these services can be improved

One person felt, perhaps facetiously, that Consular services did not need to be improved *“No need for improvement. A holiday in CH will fix any of the above”*.

However, several more serious suggestions were made:

- Consolidate services, so that people don't have to go to Sydney for AHV and Melbourne for other business;
- Working with the Australian Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and advising Swiss migrants of the services which exist;
- Inform Swiss what the Embassy and Consulate actually do and what services they provide. *“We have lived abroad for over 40 years and in 5 countries and never seen a consulate from inside”*;
- Produce an annual report of consular and Swiss industries' activities in Australia, perhaps as a supplement to the Swiss Review;
- Send back all passports by **registered** mail, which need to be signed by the **owner** of the passport;
- There should be a Swiss consulate in Perth;
- Offer the purchase of books, magazines, videos, music from CH on a regular basis, maybe through the Swiss Review;
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy wherever possible;
- *“When the ambassador comes to visit us we shouldn't have to pay to see him”*;
- *“Online voting as soon as possible”*.

Sexism in government responses was a serious issue for four women:

- *“As a married woman and Swiss taxpayer, I think it is a **shame** that all correspondence from the Swiss Consulate is addressed exclusively to my husband.”*
- *“Fuer Paare die zusammenleben sollte es doch moeglich sein beide Namen auf der Adresse zuvermerken (nicht nur die des Mannes!)”*

- “Although I am not married, my children have their father's last name on their birth certificate, but I would like for them to have my name and my 'heimatort' in CH.”
- “I believe it is unfair that I am not able to retain my maiden name, so all my mail comes with my married name. I do not use this name at all at any time. In my opinion it is old fashioned not to give women a choice.”

There were also some criticisms of consular services:

- “Remove your answering/ call diverting computer as it gets it wrong (selection) every time I call!” and “Very hard to reach. Always engaged.”
- “The consulate and the embassy never respond to emails”;
- “The consulate could have a friendlier, more informal manner on the phone”;
- “Fees charged are much too high for service consulate provides”;
- “I wrote to the Swiss representative in Perth requesting documents to register birth of my son. He replied in writing about 2 months later and referred me to Canberra. I expected this person to have all relevant forms sent to me. I was disappointed with the response.”

Which important issues can the consulate help you with?

The most popular issue mentioned by respondents was assistance with the AHV, including *“regular updates on AHV changes and happenings”*. There was a request to pay AHV by Visa/credit card and internet. Another related issues was *“What to do with AHV contributions if we have not contributed enough for a Swiss pension”*.

A second important issue was citizenship, especially citizenship of children born in Australia, but also citizenship of partners and arranging for families to live in Switzerland.

A third issue was assistance in finding work in Switzerland. *“Information in relation to returning to live in CH (e.g. which degrees are recognised, social security, etc.)”* and *“I have thought about living and working in CH and some information and assistance about conditions and prospects of this would interest me”*.

There was also a request for assistance in Perth for Swiss (names of international companies/ exporters to Europe, etc.). Similarly, there was a request for *“Information about Swiss/ German quality products that are available locally, also information about Swiss companies/ businesses that operate in the vicinity of Perth, or those that are owned by Swiss/ German people.”*

Other issues mentioned were:

- “Tertiary studies available in CH”;
- “Recognition of certificates of education attained in CH, suggesting ways how to achieve this”;
- Information about travel requirements in Switzerland;
- Information about the Swiss army;
- Information about EU bilateral agreements;
- Information about Swiss insurance/ pensions, education, laws and rules, finance/ retail news;
- A web site to stay in touch with Swiss business/ employment opportunities;

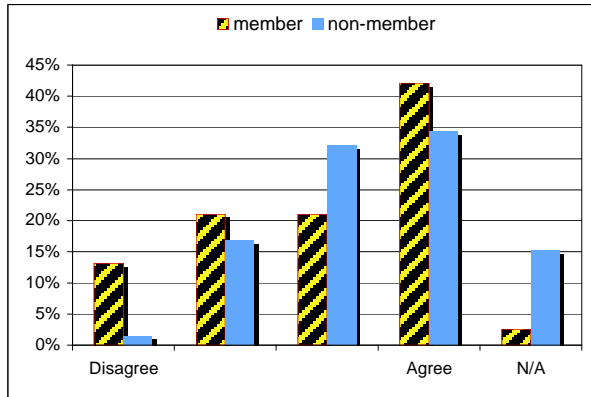
Finally, one person wrote:

“I believe that CH either through the 5th CH or other means should contribute towards 'Swiss Club House' for Swiss clubs overseas as the Swiss abroad are collectively the best ambassadors for CH as a whole. They further Swiss tradition, culture and homeland promotion and deserve to be rewarded for doing that.”

Swiss Club Property

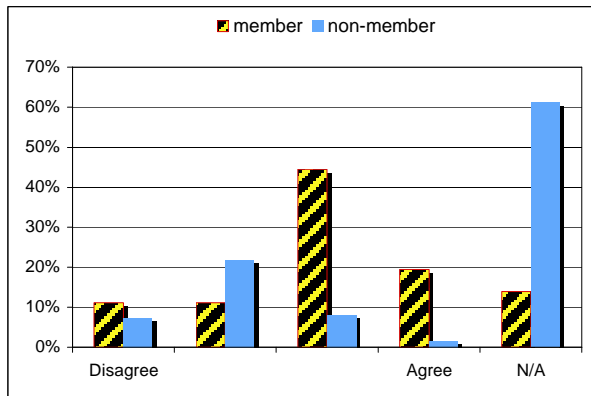
All except one Swiss Club members reported that they knew about the Swiss Club property at Gidgegannup, but 58% of non-members did not know about this. General comments were:

- The SCWA property at Rolling Green is a vital part and reason for our Swiss Club membership, especially with the improved facilities and it is imperative that the Swiss Club keep this facility for its members.
- It's lovely that they have the Gidgegannup property - this must be unique.
- Living outside the city area - Rolling Green is not good for club activities - a club does need a house to call home. Where you can go and have a drink or a meal all the time, not just at functions!
- If the club wants a club house, sell the property at Rolling Green.
- I think (Rolling Green) is a good investment.



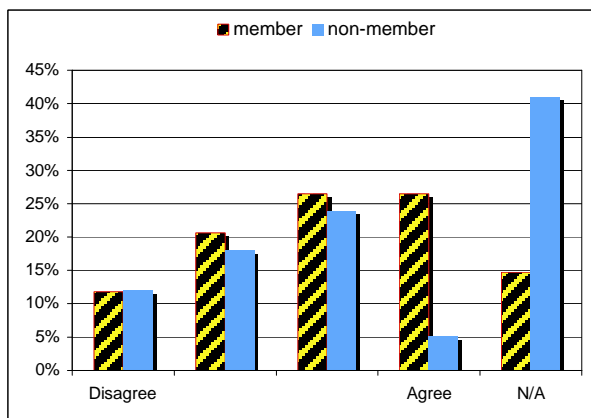
The Swiss Club property at Rolling Green is too far away

Over 60% of respondents felt that the Rolling Green property is too far away, although 15% on non-members did not make a judgement. Almost 15% of Swiss Club members strongly disagreed with this statement.



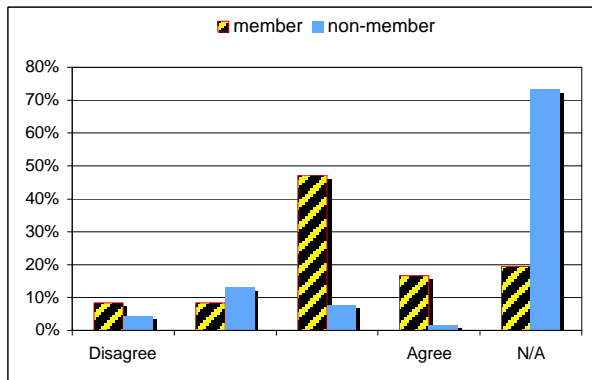
I like going to the Swiss Club property at Rolling Green

Over 60% of Swiss Club members enjoyed going to Rolling Green, despite the distance. The majority of non-members could not make a judgement, possibly because they had never been there. However, approximately 30% of non-members (36 respondents) did not enjoy visiting Rolling Green.



The Swiss Club should continue operating its property at Rolling Green

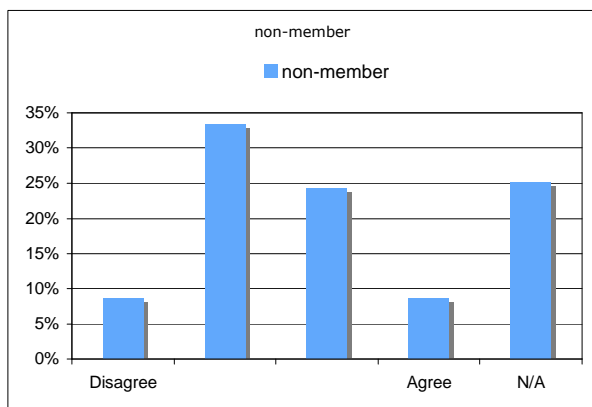
Over 50% of Club members agreed that it should keep operating its property at Rolling Green, although 15% did not express an opinion. The largest proportion of non-members also did not express an opinion.



I enjoy the outdoor activities at Rolling Green

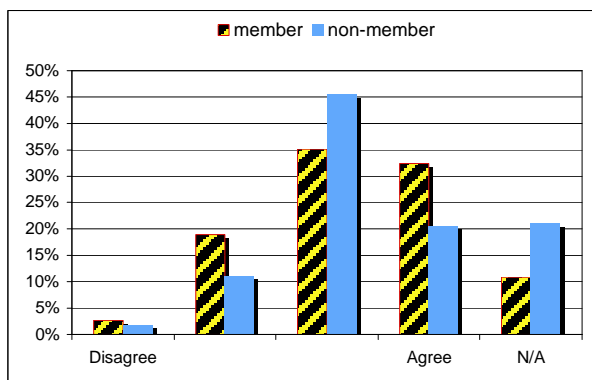
A majority of Swiss Club members enjoy the outdoor activities at Rolling Green. The majority of non-members could not judge.

Swiss Club House



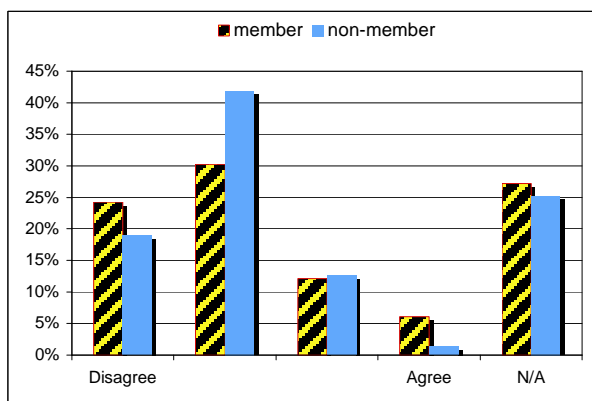
I would join the Swiss Club if it had a Club House

32% (80) of non-members agreed that they would join the Swiss Club if it had a Club House.



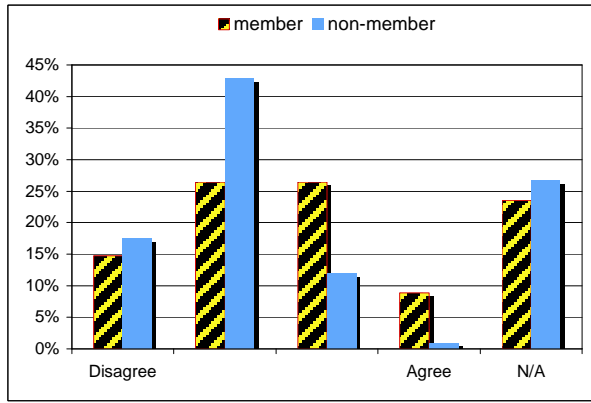
The Swiss Club needs a permanent base in Perth

There was strong agreement that the Swiss Club needs a permanent base in Perth. Approximately equal numbers of both members and non-members agreed, with more members strongly agreeing. However, over 20% of members felt that the Club did not need a permanent base.



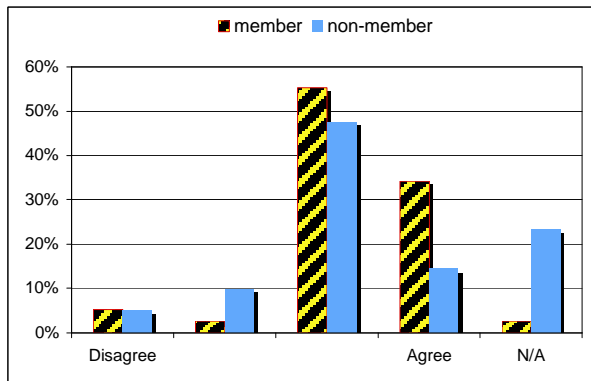
I am willing to donate money towards the purchase of a Club House

Only 5 people strongly agreed to donating towards a Club House, and 32 expressed some interest in this.



I am willing to buy shares in the purchase of a Club House

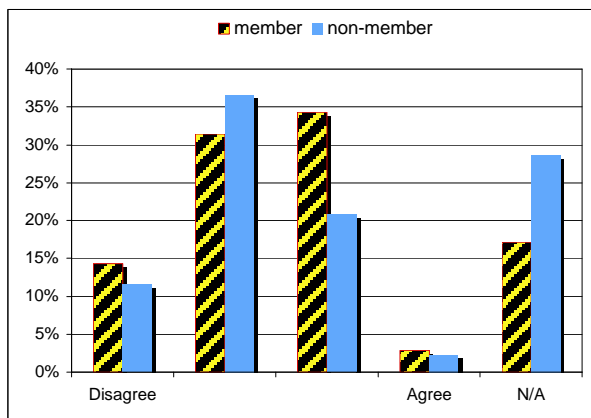
Only 5 people strongly agreed to buying shares in a Club House, and 35 expressed some interest in this.



I don't mind sharing a Club House with another club

There was very little resistance to sharing a Club House with another club.

One member stated "I feel strongly connected to European culture, therefore would rather share a club house with other Europeans."



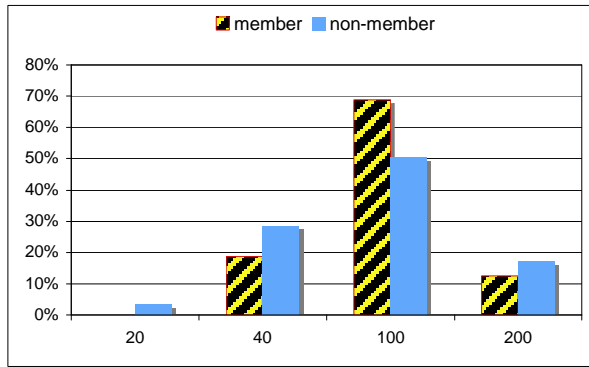
I am willing to contribute to the maintenance of a Club House

Only 6 respondents strongly agreed that they would contribute to the maintenance of a Club House, although over 25% expressed some interest in this. Club members were more likely to contribute than non-members.



I will volunteer to help out at the Club House

Only 7 respondents strongly agreed that they would volunteer to help out at the Club House, although over 30% expressed some interest in this. Club members were more likely to volunteer than non-members.



How big should a Club House be?

The majority of respondents felt that a Club House needed to be able to accommodate 100 people.

If there was a Swiss Club House, which part of Perth should it be in?

Over 62% of respondents did not care which suburb a Club House was in. Preferences for specific regions were fairly evenly spread.

- “A Swiss Club meeting place should be somewhere close to public transport.”
- “A club should not be too far away from where people are.”
- “The Swiss club house sollte definitiv mehr zentral gelegen sei. Auch Meeting appointments nicht zu weit weg.”
- “Wherever a club house might be it will always be too far away for some people. Maybe getting the Swiss of smaller areas together could solve this problem. Having some Swiss community halls or similar venues in different suburbs might be an idea.”

If there was a Swiss Club House, how often would you attend it?

Over 80% of respondents reported that they would visit a Club House at most once a month.

Other Comments

Some people questioned the need of the Swiss Club to have a Club House:

- Frankly speaking, is a clubhouse really necessary? Why not meet at the Hyde Park Hotel, or some other nice place with no extra organisation, cost, and hassle??
- The Swiss Club should concentrate on organising events and not on obtaining and maintaining property.
- The Swiss club should talk to other clubs about their experience with club houses; a club house would change focus of club to a few; I would have to consider leaving club if club house was bought

A restaurant was suggested as a suitable club house by three people:

- We would support a club restaurant for lunches and day functions
- A permanent base could be a Swiss restaurant like Chalet Rigi, just a bit more central.
- We need a chess club and a 'real' Swiss restaurant open to public somewhere in Perth/Northbridge area.

Several other comments were made about a potential Club House.

- The club house should be commercial as well, offering services such as: room hire, evtl catering, etc.
- If appropriate location found for a club house, [there] should be a fee included in membership.