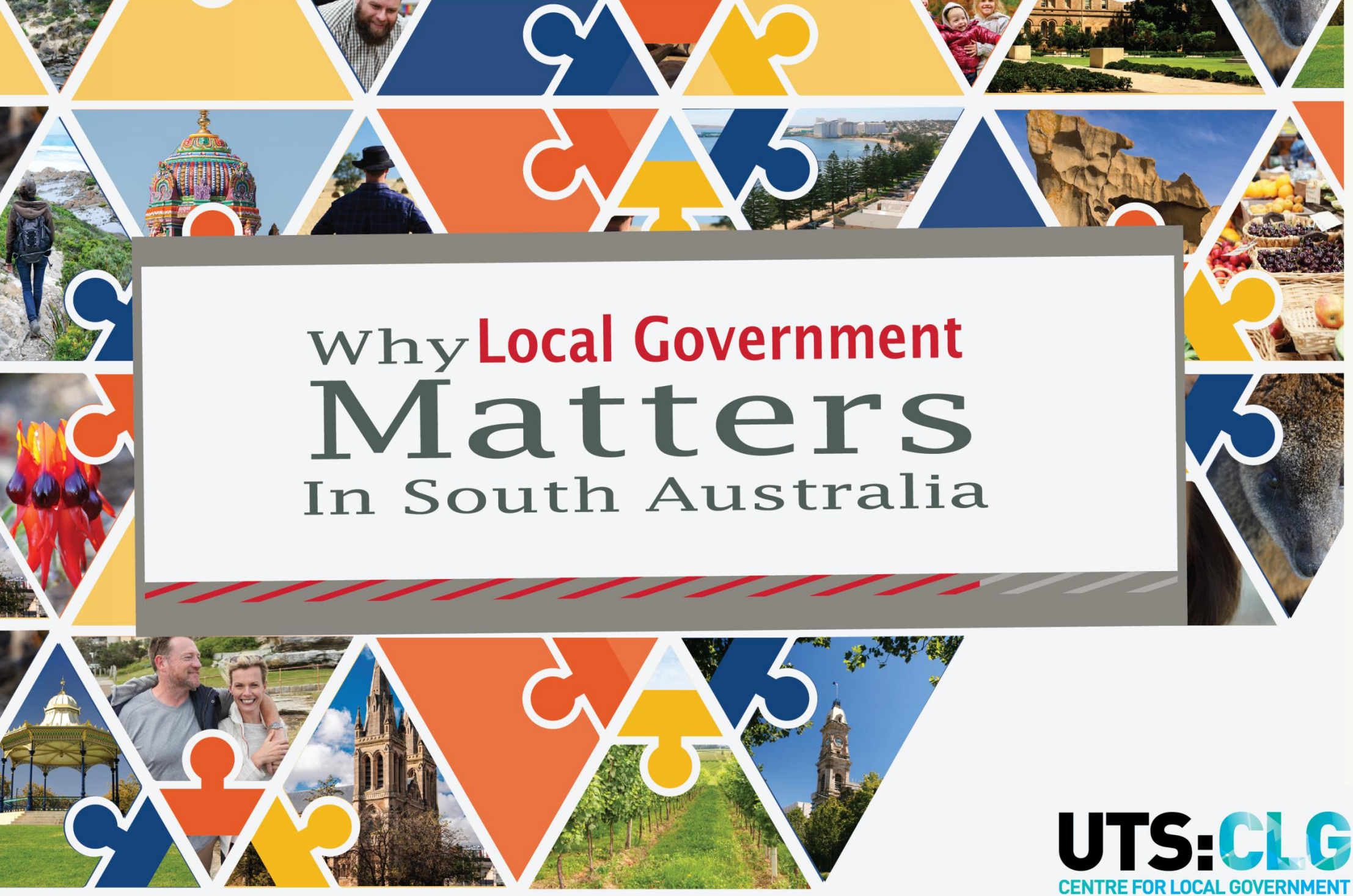

Why Local Government Matters In South Australia

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

UTS:IPPG Project Team

Project Director: Associate Professor Roberta Ryan, Director IPPG

Project Manager: Catherine Hastings, Research Officer

Research Assistance: Theresa Alvarez, Research Assistant

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UTS:IPPG expresses their gratitude to the Project Advisory Group:

Chris Russell (Strategic Director, Local Government Association South Australia)

Fiona Harvey (Manager, Innovation and Strategy, City of Marion)

Stuart Boyd (Snr Strategy Consultant, Adelaide City Council)

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Executive Summary

In 2016 the *Why Local Government Matters in South Australia* research sought to investigate the value of local government to South Australians. The project was undertaken by the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney with funding from the Research and Development Scheme of the Local Government Association of South Australia and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government. The project follows the 2014/15 nation-wide survey, *Why Local Government Matters* which examined Australian attitudes to local government. This project took an in-depth look at South Australia. The project methodology involved:

- an online panel survey of 1002 South Australians (from metropolitan Adelaide and country areas)
- four focus groups (from inner city, outer suburbs and rural centres), and
- data from the national online survey (from the 2015 Why Local Government Matters research project).

The research focussed on four central questions:

- What does place mean to people?
- What should be the role of government in local service delivery?
- What do people think about the role of local government?
- Does a person's attachment to place, attitudes about service delivery or governance and the conception of the role of local government change depending on where they live, key demographic variables and their political values?

The research findings present an intricate and rich story about the value of local government to South Australians. Generally, South Australians feel emotionally connected to their local areas, with over 60% of respondents strongly or moderately agreeing that they feel at home in their local area and 37% strongly or moderately agreeing that their local area reflects the type of person they are. Similarly, focus groups revealed that emotional connection to place connected with feeling part of a community, and feeling as if your values and interests are reflected in your local area.

When asked about the role of government and participating in decision-making, over have of survey respondents (55%) indicated they would like government to involve them in decision-making about the services delivered in their local area. Additionally, a slightly higher percentage of survey respondents strongly or moderately agreed that private sector delivers the best value services (26.5%) compared with those who strongly or moderately agreed that government provides the best quality services (19.7%). When discussing public and private service provision, participants indicated that privatisation may make services more efficient but expressed concerns over cost, representation and decision-making.

Survey respondents were generally in favour of shared services, with over 70% of respondents strongly or moderately agreeing that councils should work with each other and governments as well as service providers. While the online survey did not ask about amalgamation, focus group participants found that there are positive aspects of amalgamation, including the ability for councils to 'bulk buy', pool resources and share knowledge, but that these are outweighed by negative aspects including unequal distribution of services in larger areas, contactors taking jobs from local businesses and the loss of local representation.

Overall, the research found that South Australians value local governments role in promoting the benefits to the local community (65%), planning for the future (81%), economic development (71%) . South Australians also value the role of local government promoting health and wellbeing and area promotion.

This report provides the results of the research on how South Australians perceive local government and its role in society. The knowledge gained has the potential to assist policy makers across all levels of government to deliver policy outcomes that effectively respond to the needs of communities.

1 Introduction

Why Local Government Matters is a major piece of social research on community attitudes to local government undertaken by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) since 2014[1]. The research aims to better understand how and why the activities of local governments, and their roles in society, are valued by communities.

The research investigates:

1. local government's role as a 'place shaper' and its importance in meeting the needs of citizens that drive their attachment to, and satisfaction with, the areas in which they live
2. the preferences of communities for how their services are delivered at the local level and the ability of local governments to offer flexible and community specific service delivery
3. theories of governance, particularly community beliefs about big versus small government and its role in the market, the appropriate role for the private sector in local service provision, the preferred extent of public participation in government decision making, and preferences for the realisation of public value
4. community knowledge of local government, ranked importance of services which can be delivered by local government in different jurisdictions, and attitudes about amalgamation
5. the attributes of individuals which are theorised to interact with or influence their attitudes and beliefs about each of the areas above, including demographic factors, levels of community participation, person values and political leanings.

This report summarises the findings of a South Australia specific research project undertaken in 2016 with funding from the Local Government Research & Development Scheme South Australia and ACELG. A more comprehensive summary of the conceptual framework for the research can be found at Appendix A.

[1] Ryan, R., Hastings, C., Woods., R., Lawrie, A., Grant, B. 2015 *Why Local Government Matters: Full Report 2015* Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney Australia http://www.acelg.org.au/news/local-government-does-matter

1.1 Research questions

The current research is organised around the following four key questions:

What does place mean to people?

Local governments matter because of their roles as 'place-shapers' and their importance in meeting the needs that most drive people's attachment to, and satisfaction with, the areas in which they live. To better understand what matters to Australians about the place – or local area – in which they live, survey respondents were first asked their level of agreement with two statements describing ways their local area may contribute to personal identity, connection to the community. They were then asked to rate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, eleven aspects of the environment of their local area including economy, infrastructure and services. Similar ideas were explored in the focus groups, with participants asked about their feeling for their local area and what makes if a good or a not good place to live.

What should be the role of government in local service delivery?

All governments make choices about the part they play in service delivery based on their understanding of the role of government from an economic and ideological perspective. In order to tease out how Australians think about some of the key arguments in this area, survey respondents were asked a series of thirteen questions about service delivery, the role of government and how they wish to participate with governments in decision-making. In the focus groups, participants were asked their views on public versus private delivery of local services, what representation means, and preparedness to pay more tax for more or better services, their preferred role in local decision making with council, and amalgamation and shared service agreements.

What do people think about the role of local government?

Local governments can perform different functions according to their state legislations, populations, and geographic location (e.g. regional vs metropolitan). Survey respondents were asked to rate twenty different potential roles for local government according to how important it is that local government perform these functions in their local area. They were also asked about the possible impacts of amalgamation over a number of dimensions. They were also asked some knowledge questions about their local government (e.g. name of current Mayor). Focus group participants were asked about the local government of the area in which they live to test to what degree they understood the functions of local government in their community, and to gauge their satisfaction with local government's performance of these roles.

Does a person's attachment to place, attitudes about service delivery or governance, and conception of the role of local government change depending on where they live, key demographic variables, and their political values?

Survey respondents and focus group participants shared information about their level of education, political affiliation, employment status, age, gender, dwelling type, language spoken at home, household composition, length of time living in the local area, living in Adelaide or non-Adelaide local government area, and if they voted in the last South Australian local government election. These data were used to test the potential correlation between individual attributes and the views of participant on other questions within the research.

1.2 This report

This report contains descriptive data from the survey and a thematic summary of the focus group data.

Survey data is presented as frequency tables for each question, and where appropriate, a chart showing the relative proportions of responses in groups of similar questions (with a sample size n=1002, at 95% confidence level, the margin of error is approximately +/- 3%). The results of cross-tabs with the demographic and values variables are also given where the associations are significant (at $p<.05$ on a two-tailed X^2 test of association); and where that association is of a magnitude that suggests a meaningful difference (typically >5%).

This report should be read in conjunction with the Summary Report, which contains a discussion of the results and indication of the policy implications of the data for local government in South Australia.

2 Methodology

This research has been guided by the participation of a Project Advisory Group, consisting of three stakeholders in the local government sector in South Australia and the project team at UTS:IPPG.

A report isolating the descriptive results of the 147 South Australian respondents of the national *Why Local Government Matters* survey in 2014 (n=2006) was prepared for consideration by the Project Advisory Group. This group then met in February 2016 to discuss the results, finalise the objectives of the current project in the South Australian context, and provide input into the design of the research project. The team at UTS:IPPG then adapted the survey instrument (Appendix B) and focus group discussion guides from the national project for use on the South Australian project.

2.1 Online Panel Survey

The online panel was managed by YellowSquares and was live from 15 March to 7 April 2016. A total of 1002 responses were collected[2]. The sample of respondents from non-Adelaide local government areas was boosted using Facebook advertising to allow for more statistically significant comparisons to be made between the Adelaide and non-Adelaide residents of the state. Of the 1002 total responses, 597 were collected from Adelaide metropolitan areas (59.6%) and 405 from country areas across the state (40.4%), compared to the actual population distribution of 77.1% Adelaide metropolitan and 22.9% country[3].

As such, this sample is not random, but efforts were made to make it as reflective as possible to true state population gender and age distributions using quotas.

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[2] The national survey in 2014 (report dated 2015) was administered by computer aided telephone interviewing (CATI). The South Australian project survey was administered online, via an online panel. As such there were some differences in the design of questions to meet the requirements of each mode, and it is expected that the difference in modes will have introduced some bias between the results sets. As such, the 2014 national results and the South Australian 2016 are comparable, but differences (and similarities) in the results may need to be interpreted in light of this.

[3] Calculated from Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census of Population and Housing, by postcode

In the analysis presented in this report, some post-stratification weighting was employed to boost the response weighting of those under 35 years old and decrease the weighting of those in older aged groups; and also correct for a slightly higher female to male response rate. For presentation of the univariate descriptive statistics in this report, weighting was also used to correct for the oversampling of non-Adelaide residents described above.

2.2 Focus Groups

Four focus groups were held in South Australia between 31 March and 2 April 2016. Groups were chosen to represent diversity of local government areas within the State.

1) Adelaide (inner-city, higher SES)
2) Adelaide (outer suburbs, lower SES)
3) Non-Adelaide (rural centre, higher SES)
4) Non-Adelaide (rural centre, lower SES)

Participants were recruited across ages, gender and occupations with the only exclusion criteria being that they worked local government (or had been elected as a councillor). There were nine participants in each group.

Focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was undertaken with the assistance of NVivo v.10 software.

2.2.1 Participant summary – Focus Groups

TABLE 1: POLITICS

	Frequency	Percent
Liberal	10	27.8
Labor	10	27.8
Greens	5	13.9
None	9	25.0
Other	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 2: AGE

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	3	8.3
25-34	7	19.4
35-44	6	16.7
45-54	10	27.8
55-64	7	19.4
65-74	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 3: VOTED IN 2014 COUNCIL ELECTION

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	66.7
No	12	33.3
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 4: GENDER

	Frequency	Percent
Male	17	47.2
Female	19	52.8
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 5: SPEAKS A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME

	Frequency	Percent
No	33	91.7
Yes	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 6: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	Frequency	Percent
School Education	19	52.8
Certificate or Diploma	8	22.2
Bachelor Degree	8	22.2
Post-graduate Degree	1	2.8
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 7: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	Frequency	Percent
Employed for wages	15	41.7
Self-employed	5	13.9
Out of work and looking	4	11.1
Out of work and not looking	1	2.8
A homemaker	4	11.1
A student	1	2.8
Retired	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 8: DWELLING TYPE

	Frequency	Percent
Mortgaged or owned outright	25	69.4
Being rented	10	27.8
Other	1	2.8
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 9: HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Frequency	Percent
Couple with no children	13	36.1
Couple with children	11	30.6
One parent family	3	8.3
Other type of family household	1	2.8
Single (lone) person household	3	8.3
Group household (non-family)	5	13.9
Total	36	100.0

TABLE 10: LENGTH OF TIME IN THE LOCAL AREA

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2 years	4	11.1
More than 2 less than 5	9	25.0
More than 5 less than 10	5	13.9
More than 10 years	18	50.0
Total	36	100.0

3 Online Panel Survey Results

3.1 Demographics and values

3.1.1 Q4. In the past 12 months, have you been actively involved in any service club or sporting, social, welfare, emergency services or recreation group in your community?

TABLE 11: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	375	37.3
No	630	62.7
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.2 Q9. What political party do you normally vote for, or most identify with?

TABLE 12: POLITICAL ORIENTATION

	Frequency	Percent
Liberal	272	27.1
National	15	1.5
Labor	344	34.2
Greens	46	4.6
Other - minor parties	79	7.9
None - I change from election to election	249	24.7
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.3 Q10. Did you vote in the last South Australian Council election in 2014?

TABLE 13: VOTING IN 2014 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	713	71.0
No	292	29.0
Total	1004	100.0

NB: this compares to the actual rate of 31.99% of adults in South Australia who voted[4]. The discrepancy may be attributed to forgetfulness on the part of the respondents, social desirability bias (even though the survey was online), confusion over the question (state or local government) or a reduced number of drop outs from people with an increased interest in local government which is suggested by having voted in the election.

3.1.4 Q11. What is the name of the Mayor of your local Council?

TABLE 14: ABLE TO NAME THE MAYOR

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	407	40.7
No	63	6.3
Not quite	11	1.1
Abuse	7	0.7
Don't know	513	51.2
Total	1001	100.0

3.1.5 Q14. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

TABLE 15: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

	Frequency	Percent	South Australia
No, English only	928	92.4	81.4
Yes	76	7.6	18.6
Total	1004	100.0	100.0

[4] http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilelections

3.1.6 Q15. What is the highest level of educational qualification you have completed?

TABLE 16: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Frequency	Percent	South Australia
School education level	340	33.8	51.2
Certificate or Diploma level	408	40.7	30.2
Bachelor degree level	187	18.6	15.3
Postgraduate Degree level	69	6.9	3.3
Total	1004	100.0	100.0

3.1.7 Q16. Which of the following best describes you currently?

TABLE 17: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	Frequency	Percent
Employed for wages	451	44.9
Self-employed	55	5.5
Out of work and looking for work	57	5.7
Out of work but not currently looking for work	17	1.7
A homemaker	88	8.8
A student	55	5.5
Retired	239	23.8
Unable to work	41	4.0
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.8 Q17. Is the dwelling in which you live?

TABLE 18: DWELLING TYPE

	Frequency	Percent	South Australia
Mortgaged or owned outright	704	70.1	70.1
Being rented	267	26.6	29.1
Other	33	3.3	0.8
Total	1004	100.0	100.00

3.1.9 Q18. What best describes the household in which you live?

TABLE 19: HOUSEHOLD TYPES

	Frequency	Percent
Couple with no children	344	34.3
Couple with children	328	32.6
One parent family	61	6.0
Other type of family household	69	6.9
Single (lone) person household	177	17.6
Group household (non-family)	26	2.6
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.10 Q19. How long have you lived in your local area?

TABLE 20: LENGTH OF TIME RESIDENT IN LOCAL AREA

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2 years	132	13.1
More than 2 and less than 5 years	128	12.7
More than 5 and less than 10 years	150	14.9
More than 10 years	595	59.3
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.11 Q1. Gender

TABLE 21: GENDER PROFILE (WEIGHTED)

	Frequency	Percent
Male	490	48.8
Female	514	51.2
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.12 Q2. How old are you (recoded)

TABLE 22: AGE PROFILE (WEIGHTED)

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	58	5.8
25-34	209	20.8
35-44	188	18.7
45-54	140	13.9
55-64	202	20.1
65-74	180	17.9
75 plus	28	2.7
Total	1004	100.0

3.1.13 Q3. What is your home postcode (recoded)

TABLE 23: LOCATION (WEIGHTED)

	Frequency	Percent
Adelaide	773	77.0
SA (not Adelaide)	231	23.0
Total	1004	100.0

3.2 Place Attachment

3.2.1 Q5. Thinking about the local area in which you live, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

TABLE 24: EMOTIONAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (FREQUENCIES)

	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
It reflects the type of person I am	101	275	411	129	34	55
I feel at home there	334	299	255	63	25	29

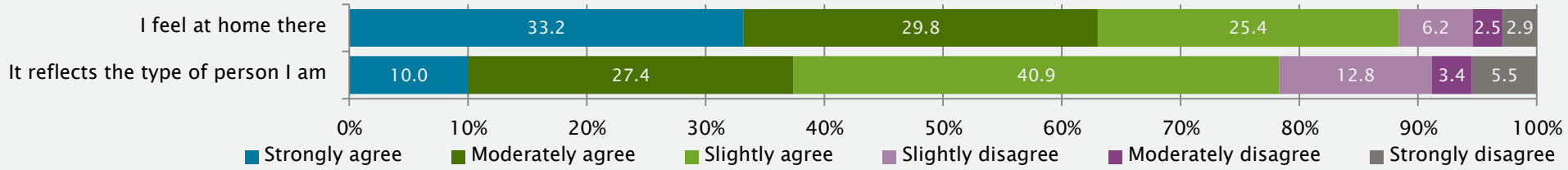


FIGURE 1: EMOTIONAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (RELATIVE PROPORTIONS)

It reflects the kind of person I am

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (14.1% compared with 9.5%) and moderately agree (32.6% compared with 27.3%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to strongly agree (17.0% compared with 8.0%) and moderately agree (35.8% compared with 25.6%)
- Being able to correctly name the Mayor of the LGA in which they live, increases the likelihood that a respondent will strongly or moderately agree (47.5% compared with 41.1%)

- Those who are employed for wages (41.8%), self-employed (52.3%) or retired (44.4%) are more likely to strongly or moderately agree compared with those who are out of work (29.4%).
- Homeowners are more likely to strongly or moderately agree (44.4%) compared with those who are renting (29.7%)

I feel at home there

- Older respondents are more likely to strongly or moderately agree (75 years and older; 78.9% compared with 18-24 year olds (46.2%), with levels of agreement steadily increasing with age
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (44.7% compared with 31.3%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to strongly agree (44.3% compared with 32.2%) and moderately agree (32.6% compared with 27.8%)
- Liberal (44.5%) and Labor (40.1%) supporters are more likely to strongly agree compared to those who normally vote for the National Party (25.0%) or The Greens (27.7%)
- Being able to correctly name the Mayor of the LGA in which they live, increases the likelihood that a respondent will strongly or moderately agree (74.8% compared with 60.7%)
- Those who are employed for wages (67.6%), self-employed (72.3%) or retired (73.6%) are more likely to strongly or moderately agree compared with those who are out of work (56.9%) or students (41.9%).
- Homeowners (71.2%) are more likely to strongly or moderately agree compared with those who are renting (52.0%)

3.2.2 Q6. Thinking about the local area in which you live, how important are each of the following to you?

TABLE 25: IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF INSTRUMENTAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (FREQUENCIES)

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces	280	428	236	44	16
Availability of appropriate public services	296	457	202	35	14
Availability of good schools	237	329	163	77	199
A supportive and cohesive community	192	435	303	59	16
Job opportunities	285	335	202	54	129
A positive economic outlook	258	456	231	40	20
Convenient public transport	317	321	214	77	74
Good quality roads and bridges	327	480	173	20	5
Levels of water, air and noise pollution	380	445	153	18	8
A safe environment	541	360	90	12	2
Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs	337	438	202	21	7

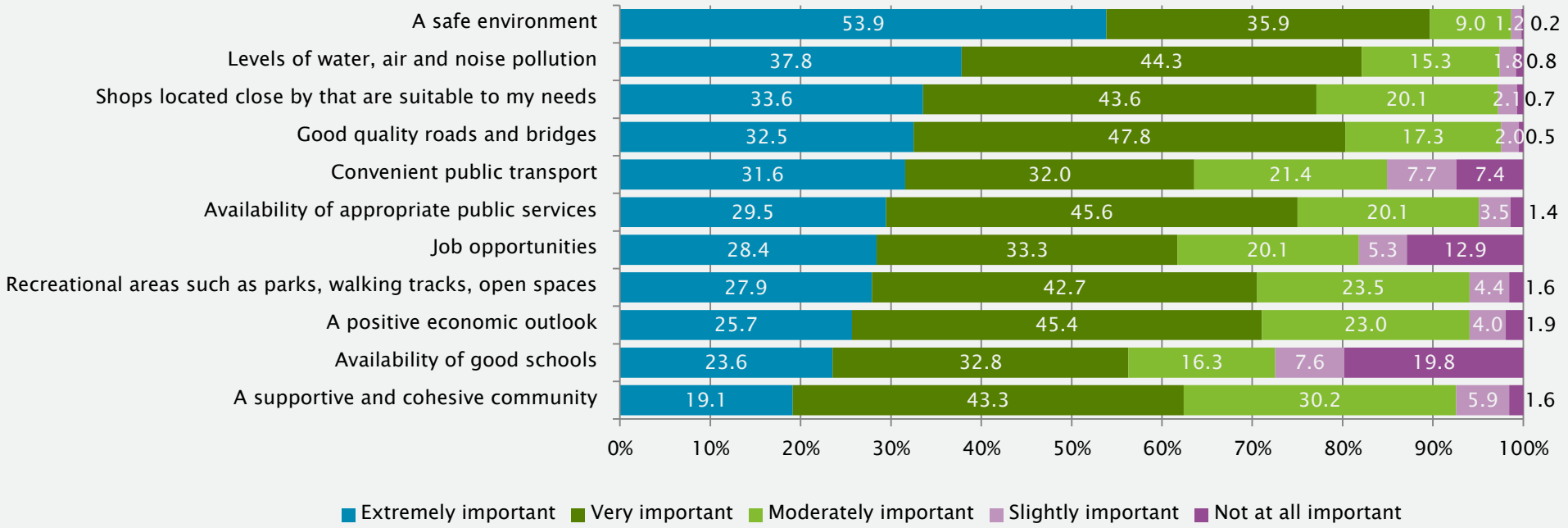


FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF INSTRUMENTAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (PROPORTIONS)

Recreation areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces

- Women (73.5%) are more likely than men (65.7%) to rate as extremely or very important
- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (31.8% compared with 26.4%) or very important (44.3% compared with 40.5%)
- Respondents with a postgraduate degree level qualification are more likely to rate extremely important (36.5% compared to the state average of 28.4%)

Availability of appropriate public services

- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely or very important (81.7% compared with 72.2%)
- Respondents who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to rate as extremely or very important (78.1% compared to 68.9%)

Availability of good schools

- Women (26.2%) are more likely than men (19.5%) to rate as extremely important; but women (23.3%) are also more likely than men (18.7%) to rate as not at all important
- Respondents aged 25-34 years (33.1%) and 35-44 years (36.4%) are more likely to rate as extremely important (compared with the state average (23.5%)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (30.1% compared with 18.9%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (28.4% compared with 20.5%)
- Respondents who are out of work and looking (64.8%) and homemakers (67.0%) are more likely than those who are employed for wages (59.6%) and self-employed (60.0%)
- Couples with children (72.4%) and one parent families (76.4%) are more likely to rate as extremely or very important (compared with the state average of 57.5%)

A supportive and cohesive community

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (28.6% compared with 16.4%) and very important (49.1% compared with 42.0%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (27.6% compared with 17.6%) or very important (50.4% compared with 41.6%)
- Being able to correctly name the Mayor of the LGA in which they live, increases the likelihood that a respondent will rate as extremely important (24.1% compared with 17.9%) or very important (47.4% compared with 41.1%)

Job opportunities

- Women (64.8%) are more likely than men (55.9%) to rate as extremely or very important
- Respondents aged 18–24 years (46.2%) are more likely, and those aged 75 and over (13.2%) less likely than the state average (29.9%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (39.3% compared with 23.6%)
- Liberal (27.9%), Greens (27.7%), Labor (30.5%) voters are more likely and supporters of minor parties (36.1%) considerably more likely than National (16.7%) voters to rate as extremely important
- Respondents out of work and looking are considerably more likely to rate as extremely important (52.9% compared with 29.9% state-wide)
- One parent families (45.6%) and couples with children (36.6%) are more likely to rate as extremely important (compared to 29.9% state-wide)

A positive economic outlook

- Women (32.4%) are more likely than men (23.2%) to rate as extremely important (although the response rates are closer to the same proportions in other categories)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (36.3% compared with 23.5%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (34.0% compared with 25.4%)
- Respondents that voted in the last SA council election are more likely to rate as extremely or very important (75.7% compared with 65.7%)
- Homeowners (30.9%) are more likely to rate as extremely important compared with those who are renting (22.0%)

Convenient public transport

- Respondents from LGAs in the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those outside of Adelaide to rate as extremely important (34.5% compared with 19.8%)
- Renters (67.4%) are more likely than homeowners (57.7%) to rate as extremely or very important

Good quality roads and bridges

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (38.3% compared with 31.0%)
- People who are active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (37.4% compared with 31.8%)
- Liberal voters are more likely to rate as extremely important (39.9% compared with 33.9% state-wide)
- Homeowners (35.4%) are more likely to rate as extremely important compared with those who are renting (28.5%)

Levels of water, air and noise pollution

- Women (47.1%) are more likely than men (32.5%) to rate as extremely important
- National voters are less likely than other voters to rate as extremely important (16.7% compared to 41.2% state-wide) and very important (33.3% compared with 42.5% state-wide); supporters of The Greens are most likely to rate as extremely important (72.3%)
- Respondents with a post-graduate level education are more likely to rate as extremely important (52.4% compared with 41.2% state-wide)

A safe environment

- Women (61.6%) are more likely than men (47.5%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (60.7% compared with 52.6%)
- National voters are considerably less likely to rate as extremely important (16.7% compared with 55.9% state-wide)

Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

- Women (37.1%) are more likely than men (27.3%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents with a school level of education (35.9%) are more likely than those with a post-graduate level degree(20.6% to rate as extremely important, with likelihood falling across increasing levels of education

Q7 Thinking about the local area in which you are currently living, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the provision of each of the following?

TABLE 26: SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF INSTRUMENTAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (FREQUENCIES)

	Strongly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Moderately dissatisfied	Strongly dissatisfied
Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces	247	407	237	59	28	26
Availability of appropriate public services	111	443	296	85	34	36
Availability of good schools	153	385	328	69	32	38
A supportive and cohesive community	111	374	364	96	30	30
Job opportunities	51	213	329	191	100	122
A positive economic outlook	51	321	349	148	64	71
Convenient public transport	185	322	267	99	52	80
Good quality roads and bridges	94	406	298	102	43	61
Levels of water, air and noise pollution	186	461	231	69	25	32
A safe environment	184	436	257	64	35	28
Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs	308	408	185	46	26	31

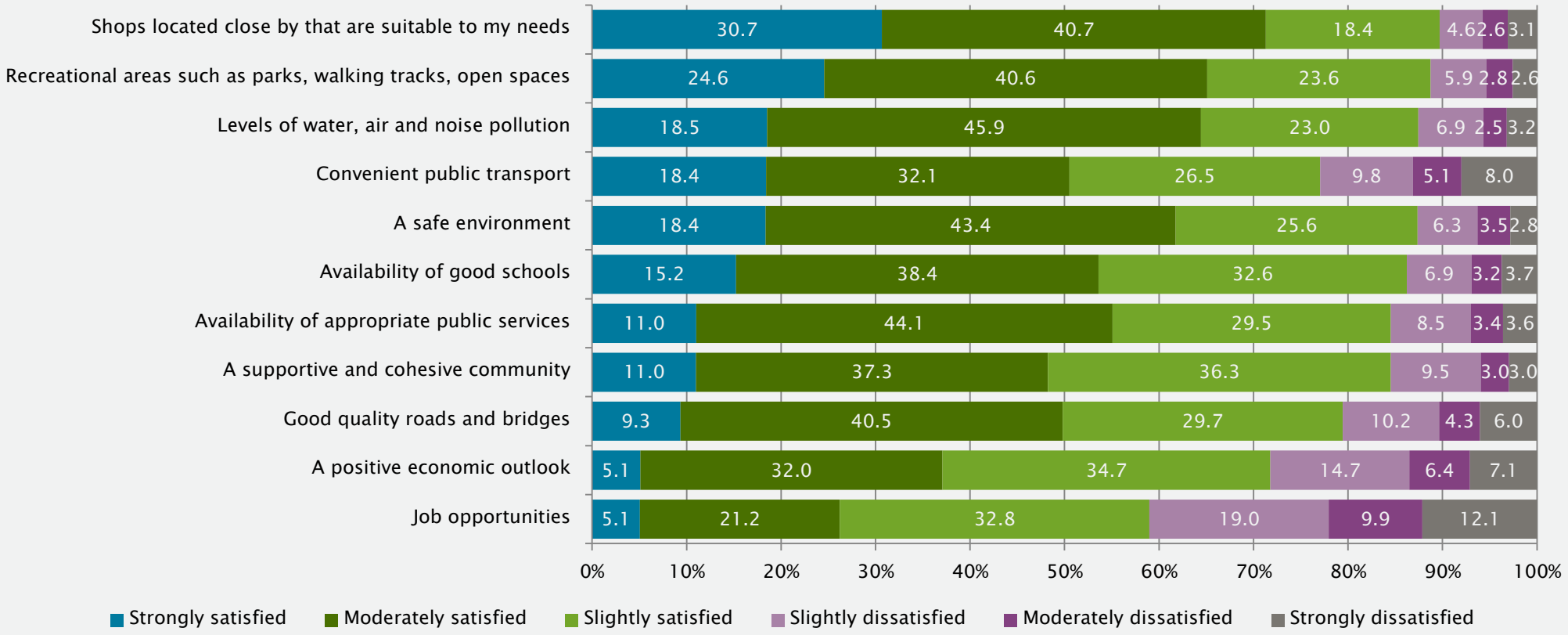


FIGURE 3: SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF INSTRUMENTAL PLACE ATTACHMENT (RELATIVE PROPORTIONS)

Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces

- Respondents aged 18–24 years (12.8%) are more likely, and those aged 75 and over (36.8%) less likely than the state average (26.0%) to be strongly satisfied with satisfaction increasing with age
- Supporters of minor parties are less likely to be strongly satisfied (15.3% compared with 26.0% state-wide)

Availability of appropriate public services

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly or moderately satisfied (61.1% compared with 43.0%)
- Those with a postgraduate level qualification are more likely to be dissatisfied (33.3% compared with 18.1% state-wide)

Availability of good schools

- People who are active in the community are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (62.1% compared with 52.9%)
- Respondents who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (58.9% compared with 45.0%)

A supportive and cohesive community

- Older respondents are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (75 years and over 68.4% compared with 18-24 years 38.5%)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly satisfied (15.6% compared with 9.5%); with Adelaide residents more likely to be moderately or slightly satisfied (76.9% compared with 69.1%)
- People who participate more in their community are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (58.7% compared with 45.3%)
- Those who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (53.9% compared with 39.7%)
- Respondents in one parent families are less likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (36.7% compared with 50.3% state-wide)

Job opportunities

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are less likely than those that live in Adelaide to be satisfied (45.1% compared with 61.3%); and more likely to be strongly dissatisfied (21.5% compared with 9.0%)

A positive economic outlook

- Women (40.3%) are more likely than men (34.0%) to be strongly or moderately satisfied
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are less likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly or moderately satisfied (33.3% compared with 40.7%);
- Supporters of minor parties and independents are less likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (27.8% compared with 37.7% state-wide)
- People currently out of work and looking for a job are less likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (21.6% compared with 37.7% state-wide)
- Homeowners are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied compared with those who are renting (38.8% compared with 34.5%)

Convenient public transport

- Respondents aged 18-24 years (33.3%) are least likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied and those aged 65-74 year (50.7%) most likely, with likelihood increasing with age.
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are considerably less likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly or moderately satisfied (23.4% compared with 61.8%)
- Labor voters (57.8%) are most likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied compared with Liberal voters (49.1%) and Greens voters (34.0%)
- People who voted in the last SA council election are slightly more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (47.7% compared with 42.4%)
- Those with a post-graduate degree level qualification are more likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (54.0% compared with 46.3% state-wide)

Good quality roads and bridges

- Levels of satisfaction increase with age; respondents aged 18–24 years (35.9%) are less likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied compared with those aged 75 years or more (60.5%)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are less likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly or moderately satisfied (42.2% compared with 53.8%)

Levels of water, air and noise pollution

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly satisfied (26.9% compared with 16.6%)
- Homeowners are more likely than renters to be strongly or moderately satisfied (69.0% compared with 54.9%)

A safe environment

- Older respondents are more likely to be strongly satisfied (18–24 years 10.3% compared with 75 years and more 31.6%)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly satisfied (25.9% compared with 16.9%)
- Homeowners are more likely than renters to be strongly or moderately satisfied (69.9% compared with 53.7%)
- Respondents from one parent families are less likely to be strongly or moderately satisfied (54.4% compared with 65.7% state-wide)

Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are less likely than those that live in Adelaide to be strongly satisfied (21.7% compared with 34.8%)
- Liberal (33.9%) and Labor (35.5%) supporters are more likely to be strongly satisfied compared with those who vote for The Greens (17.0%) or minor parties and independents (18.1%)

3.3 Service delivery and governance

3.3.1 Q8. Thinking about the role of government in the provision of services to the community, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

TABLE 27: GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY (FREQUENCIES)

	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
I want government to involve me in making decisions about what services are delivered in my local area	251	298	330	80	18	28
The private sector delivers the best value services	61	205	401	203	66	67
Governments can have a role in providing any of the services a community needs	229	346	316	77	17	20
I am prepared to pay more taxes to get a broader range of public services	44	98	276	250	88	249
I am prepared to pay more taxes to get better quality public services	38	115	255	263	82	251
The people who work in government have enough knowledge to decide what services are needed in my area	67	166	331	198	108	135
Service providers have the best knowledge of how services should delivered	91	285	415	134	34	45
People who are using a service will know best how much of that service is needed	231	375	306	59	13	21
Communities know enough to make good decisions about what services they need	205	361	339	65	22	12
There are some services that governments can provide at a higher quality than the private sector	147	278	393	114	34	38
Governments should use a mixture of public, private and not-for-profit organisations to deliver public services in my area	231	363	302	57	14	37
Governments and councils should work with each other and other service providers to provide local services	425	311	214	32	8	15
Government delivers the best quality services	46	151	363	240	106	98

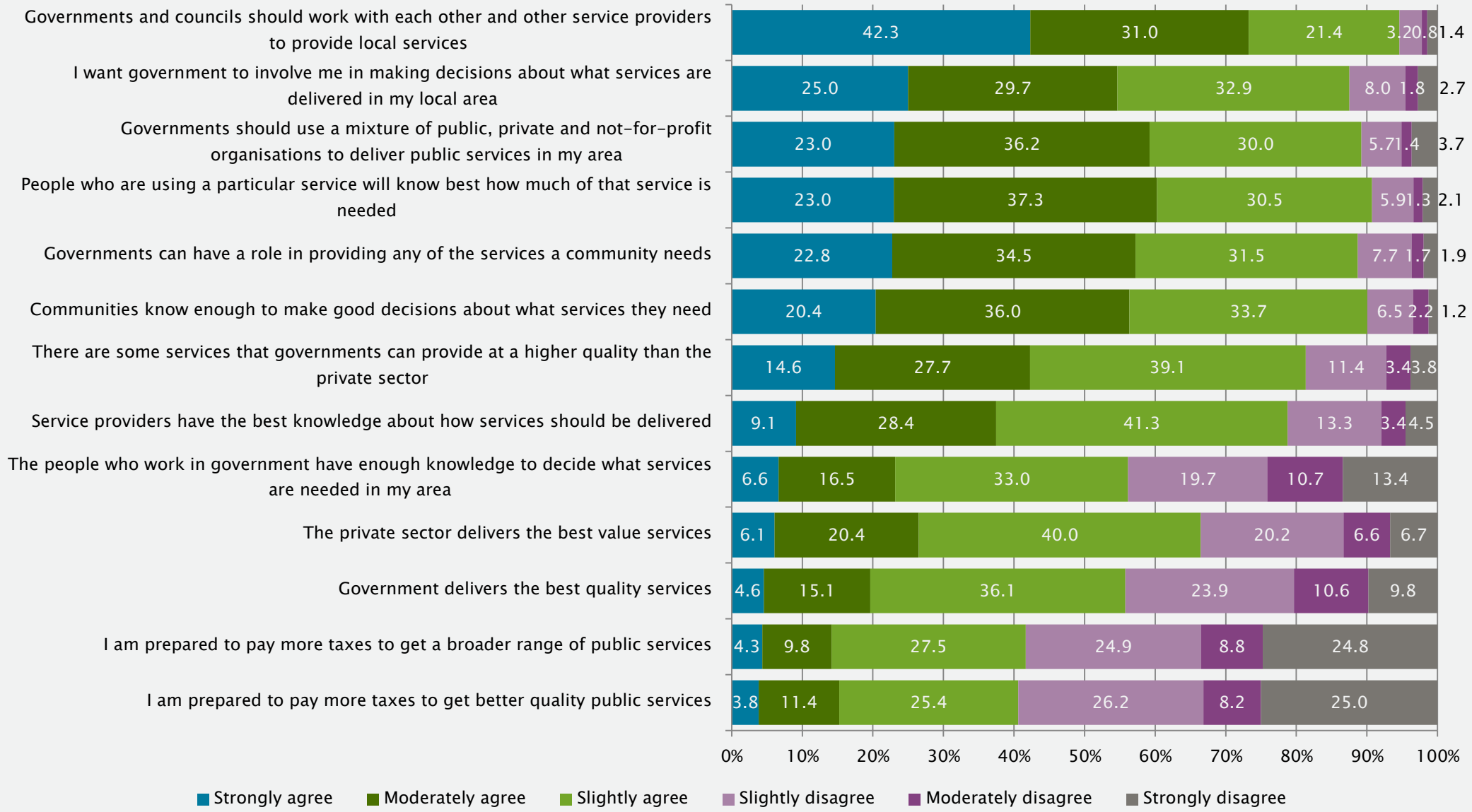


Figure 4: Governance and service delivery (Proportions)

I want government to involve me in making decisions about what services are delivered in my local area

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (35.6% compared with 22.9%)
- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly agree (38.5% compared with 21.8%)

The private sector delivers the best value services

- Greens voters (27.7%) and supporters of minor parties and independents (20.8%) are more likely to moderately or strongly disagree compared to those who vote Liberal (8.5%) or Labor (14.7%)
- Respondents with a post-graduate level qualification are more likely to moderately or strongly disagree (28.6% compared with 14.4% state-wide)

Governments can have a role in providing any of the services a community needs

- Older respondents are more likely to strongly or moderately agree (75 years or more 73.7%; compared with 18-24 years 51.2%)
- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly agree (29.4% compared with 21.8%)
- Respondents from a one parent family are more likely to strongly agree (32.4% compared with 24.7% state-wide)

I am prepared to pay more taxes to get a broader range of public services

- Younger people (18-24 years 23.1%; and 25-34 years 25.9%) are less likely and the elderly (75 years or more 47.3%) more likely to strongly or moderately disagree compared with 36.1% state-wide)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly or moderately disagree (40.5% compared with 33.1%)
- People who participate more in their community are less likely to strongly disagree (20.2% compared with 29.4%)
- Greens voters (10.6%) are less likely than those who vote Liberal (24.4%) and Labor (23.1%) to strongly disagree; supporters of the minor parties and independents are most likely to strongly disagree (37.5%)

I am prepared to pay more taxes to get better quality public services

- People who participate more in their community are less likely to strongly or moderately disagree (29.4% compared with 37.7%)
- Greens voters (10.6%) are less likely than those who vote Liberal (22.6%) and Labor (22.8%) to strongly disagree; supporters of the minor parties and independents are most likely to strongly disagree (37.5%)
- Homeowners (36.7%) are more likely to strongly or moderately disagree compared with renters (29.2%)

The people who work in government have enough knowledge to decide what services are needed in my area

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly or moderately disagree (37.8% compared with 21.0%)
- Supporters of minor parties and independents are less likely to strongly or moderately agree (16.7% compared with 21.4% state-wide) and more likely to strongly disagree (25% compared with 15% state-wide)

Service providers have the best knowledge about how services should be delivered

- Greens voters (31.9%) and supporters of minor parties and independents (36.1%) are less likely to strongly or moderately agree compared to those who vote Liberal (44.1%) or Labor (42.2%)

People who are using a particular service will know best how much of that service is needed

- Women (67.6%) are more likely than men (61.1%) to strongly or moderately agree
- Agreement increases with age, with 18-24 year olds (17.9%) less likely than those aged 70 years or more (39.5%) to strongly agree
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly disagree (31.9% compared with 23.1%)
- Greens supporters are most likely to strongly agree (34.0% compared with 26.6% state-wide)

Communities know enough to make good decisions about what services they need

- Respondents aged over 70 years (44.7%) are most likely to strongly agree and those aged 18-24 years old (10.3%) least likely compared to the state average of 22.1%

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (31.9% compared with 23.1%)
- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly or moderately agree (69.0% compared with 55.9%)
- Greens voters (12.8%) are less likely and supporters of minor parties or independents (31.9%) more likely to strongly agree compared to the state-wide average (22.1%)
- Respondents from one person families are more likely to strongly agree (32.4%) compared to couples with no children (23.4%) and couples with children (19.6%)

There are some services that governments can provide at a higher quality than the private sector

- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly or moderately agree (52.0% compared with 39.2%)
- Respondents who are self-employed are less likely to strongly or moderately agree (26.1% compared with 44.0%)

Governments should use a mixture of public, private and not-for-profit organisations to deliver public services in my area

- Women (27.9%) are more likely than men (21.4%) to strongly agree and moderately agree (39.3% compared with 35.7%)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (67.4% compared with 60.2%)
- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly agree (32.6% compared with 20.8%)
- Greens voters (19.1%) and supporters of minor parties or independents (19.4%) are less likely to strongly agree compared with Liberal (30.7%) or Labor (26.6%) voters

Governments and councils should work with each other and other service providers to provide local services

- Women (47.0%) are more likely than men (44.1%) to strongly agree
- Levels of agreement increase with age from 30.8% (18-24 year olds) to 68.4% (70 years or more) strongly agreeing
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly agree (53.8% compared with 40.4%)

- People who participate more in their community are more likely to strongly agree (53.6% compared with 41.1%)

Government delivers the best quality services

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to strongly or moderately disagree (29.7% compared with 18.3%)
- Supporters of minor parties and independents (34.7%) and the Greens (27.7%) are more likely to strongly or moderately disagree compared with Liberal (24.0%) or Labor (13.5%) voters
- Self-employed respondents are mostly likely to strongly or moderately disagree (38.5% compared with 22.9% state-wide)

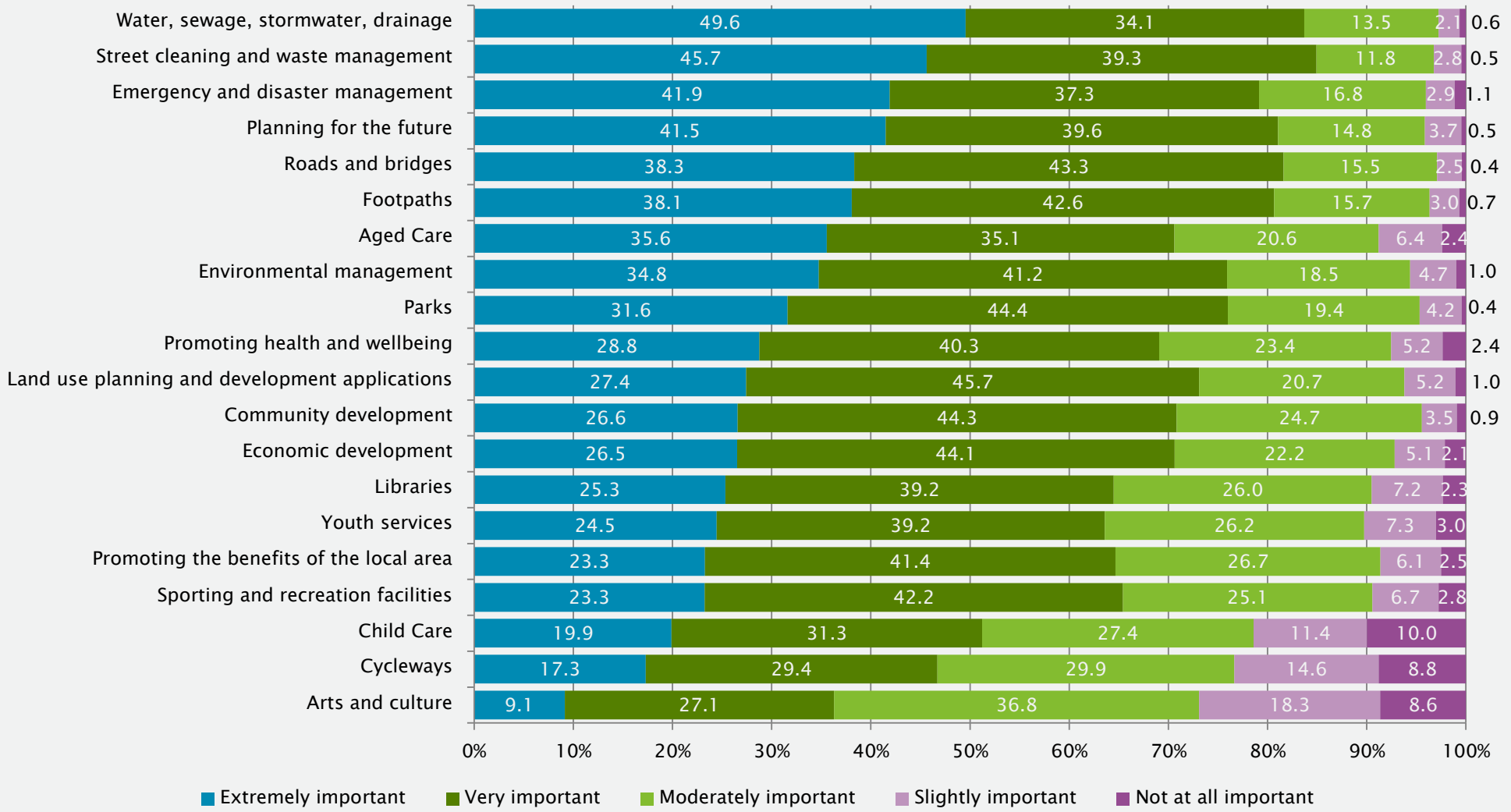
3.4 The ideal roles for local government

3.4.1 Q12. Here is a list of the different things that councils can do. How important is it to you that councils do each of these things?

TABLE 28: IMPORTANCE OF ROLES OF COUNCIL (FREQUENCIES)

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Water, sewage, stormwater, drainage	498	343	136	21	6
Roads and bridges	385	435	155	25	4
Parks	317	446	194	42	4
Footpaths	382	428	157	30	7
Cycleways	174	295	301	146	88
Land use planning and development applications	275	459	208	52	10
Street cleaning and waste management	458	395	119	28	5
Environmental management	349	414	185	47	10
Child Care	200	315	275	115	100
Aged Care	357	352	207	64	24
Emergency and disaster management	421	374	169	29	11
Libraries	255	393	261	72	23
Sporting and recreation facilities	233	424	252	67	28
Arts and culture	92	273	370	183	87
Economic development	266	443	223	51	21
Youth services	246	393	263	73	30
Community development	267	445	248	35	9
Planning for the future	417	397	149	37	5
Promoting the benefits of the local area	234	416	268	61	25
Promoting health and wellbeing	289	405	235	52	24

FIGURE 5: IMPORTANCE OF ROLES OF COUNCILS (RELATIVE PROPORTIONS)



Water, sewage, stormwater, drainage

- Women (55.5%) are more likely than men (50.2%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents aged 18-24 years are less likely to rate as extremely important (35.9% compared with 53.4% state-wide
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (57.5% compared with 50.6%)

Roads and bridges

- Respondents aged 18-24 years are less likely to rate as extremely important (25.6% compared with 41.3% state-wide
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (48.4% compared with 36.5%)
- People who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to rate as extremely important (42.6% compared to 37.7%)
- Respondents who are self-employed (49.2%) and homemakers (48.9%) are more likely than those who are unemployed (35.3%) or the state-wide average to rate as extremely important

Parks

- Those with a post-graduate degree are more likely to rate as extremely important (46.0% compared to 32.2% state-wide)
- Homeowners (34.1%) are more likely than renters (27.2%) to rate as extremely important

Footpaths

- Women (45.3%) are more likely than men (33.7%) to rate as extremely important
- Ratings of extremely important increase with age, ranging from 20.5% (18-24 years) to 52.6% (70 years or more)
- Homemakers (46.8%) and retired respondents (46.7%) are more likely to rate as extremely important compared to those who are employed (36.0%) or unemployed (37.3%)

Cycleways

- Homemakers (30.9%) and unemployed (25.5%) respondents are more likely to rate as extremely important compared with those who are self-employed (10.8%) or employed for wages (17.0%)

Land use planning and development applications

- People who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to rate as extremely or very important (78.0% compared with 67.5%)
- Homemakers (41.5%) and retired people (35.0%) are more likely than those who are employed (25.5%) or unemployed (25.5%) to rate as extremely important

Street cleaning and waste management

- Ratings of importance increase with age, from 23.1% (18-24 years) to 68.4% (70 years or more)
- Liberal (55.1%) and Labor (50.0%) voters are more likely than Greens (40.4%) voters or supporters of minor parties and independents (41.7%) to rate as extremely important
- Homeowners (50.7%) are more likely than renters (39.8%) to rate as extremely important
- Ratings of importance increase with length of time resident in the local area, from 44.4% (less than two years) to 50.4% (more than 10 years)

Environmental management

- Women (41.9%) are more likely than men (30.5%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (43.0% compared with 33.5%)
- Greens (55.3%) supporters are more likely than Labor (40.1%) or Liberal (33.6%) voters to rate as extremely important

Child Care

- Women (55.8%) are more likely than men (44.1%) to rate as extremely or very important

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely or very important (55.1% compared with 48.4%)
- Ratings of extremely or very important fall with increased educational attainment, from 54.7% (school education level) to 44.5% (post-graduate degree level
- Renters (60.2%) are more likely than homeowners (47.8%) to rate as extremely or very important

Aged Care

- Women (47.1% are more likely than men (33.0%) to rate as extremely important
- Older respondents are more likely to rate as extremely important (68.4% compared with 41.4% state-wide)
- Greens supporters (31.9%) are less likely than Liberal (44.9%) or Labor (44.3%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents who speak a language other than English at home are half as likely as those who don't to rate as extremely important (23.6% compared to 42.2%)
- Ratings of extremely important fall with increased educational attainment, from 49.7% (school education level) to 25.4% (post-graduate degree level)
- Homemakers (47.9%) and those who are retired (53.7%) are more likely than the employed (31.5%) and self-employed (35.4%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from one parent families (47.1%), couples with no children (49.1%) and single (lone) person households (42.0%) are more likely than those part of a couple with children (29.8%) to rate as extremely important
- Ratings of extremely important increase with length of time resident in the local area, from 30.3% (less than two years) to 44.2% (more than 10 years)

Emergency and disaster management

- Women (52.0%) are more likely than men (39.2%) to rate as extremely important

- Labor voters (52.1%) are more likely than respondents who support the Liberal party (43.1%), the Greens (40.4%) or minor parties and independents (41.7%) to rate as extremely important
- Ratings of extreme importance decrease with educational attainment, from 49.7% (school education level) to 25.4% (post-graduate degree level)
- Respondents who are unemployed (51.0%), homemakers (53.2%) and retired (51.3%) are more likely to rate as extremely important compared to those who are employed (43.0%) or self-employed (47.7%)

Libraries

- Women (30.5%) are more likely than men (21.9%) to rate as extremely important
- Homemakers (35.1%) and those who are retired (30.7%) are more likely than the self-employed (20.0%), employed (25.0%), unemployed (23.5%) to rate as extremely important

Sporting and recreation facilities

- Those aged 18-24 years are less likely to rate as extremely important (42.6% compared with 65.1% state-wide)
- People who are more active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (27.9% compared with 21.1%) and very important (46.4% compared with 38.4%)
- Greens supporters (14.9%) and those who vote for minor parties and independents (18.1%) are less likely than those who vote Liberal (26.5%) or Labor (24.0%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents who are employed (20.8%) or self-employed (16.9%) are less likely than those who are unemployed (25.5%), homemakers (33.0%) or retired (28.0%) to rate as extremely important
- Couples with no children (27.7%) are more likely than couples with children (22.3%) or one parent families (20.6%) to rate as extremely important

Arts and culture

- Women (41.2%) are more likely than men (28.1%) to rate as extremely or very important

- Supporters of minor parties and independents are more likely to rate as not at all important (16.7% compared with 9.0%)

Economic development

- Women (32.4%) are more likely than men (23.4%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (34.6% compared with 24.8%)
- Greens voters are less likely to rate as extremely important (17.0% compared with 28.7% state-wide)

Youth services

- Women (31.9%) are more likely than men (20.2%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (34.6% compared with 22.1%)
- Those with school level education (29.5%) or certificate/diploma level education (29.3%) are more likely than those with a bachelor degree (18.3%) or post-graduate level qualification (20.6%) to rate as extremely important

Community development

- Women (34.9%) are more likely than men (21.7%) to rate as extremely important
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (36.3% compared with 25.0%)
- People who are more active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (32.4% compared with 27.8%) and very important (47.2% compared with 40.6%)
- Respondents from one parent families are more likely to rate as extremely important (38.2% compared with 29.5% state-wide)

Planning for the future

- Ratings of extremely important increase with age from 33.3% (18-24 year olds) to 51.6% (65-74 year olds) and then fall for those aged 70 years and over (44.7%)

- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (47.9% compared with 40.9%)
- People who are more active in the community are more likely to rate as extremely important (48.3% compared with 41.0%)
- Greens voters are less likely to rate as extremely important (27.7% compared with 43.7% state-wide)

Promoting the benefits of the local area

- Women (30.7%) are more likely than men (21.7%) to rate as extremely important
- Ratings of extremely important increase with age from 5.1% (18-24 year olds) to 34.2% (70 years and over)
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (34.6% compared with 21.9%)
- People who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to rate as extremely important (29.1% compared with 21.0%)
- Those who are out of work (31.4%), homemakers (34.0%) or retired (32.3%) are more likely to rate as extremely important compared with respondents who are employed (22.5%) or self-employed (23.1%)

Promoting health and wellbeing

- Women (35.6%) are more likely than men (26.8%) to rate as extremely important
- Younger people are less likely to rate as extremely important, 18-24 year olds (20.5%) and 25-34 year olds (18.7%) compared with 32.0% state-wide
- Respondents from LGAs outside of the Adelaide metropolitan area are more likely than those that live in Adelaide to rate as extremely important (38.3% compared with 27.8%)
- Greens voters are less likely to rate as extremely important (21.3% compared with 32.0% state-wide)
- Unemployed respondents (37.3%) and homemakers (42.6%) are more likely to rate as extremely important (compared to 32.0% state-wide)

3.4.2 Q.13. Imagine that your local council enters into an agreement with four other councils nearby to deliver services together through a shared, collaborative arrangement. Would councils in your area working together to deliver services make each of the following things much better, better, no different, worse or much worse?

TABLE 29: SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENTS (FREQUENCIES)

	Much better	Better	No different	Worse	Much worse
The cost to me for local services	72	227	440	204	62
The cost of rates	75	167	425	249	88
The appropriateness of local services to my needs	67	234	513	144	47
The accountability of my council to its ratepayers	79	184	485	181	76
My ability to influence the way services are delivered	53	160	545	172	75
The quality of local services	73	308	448	125	51

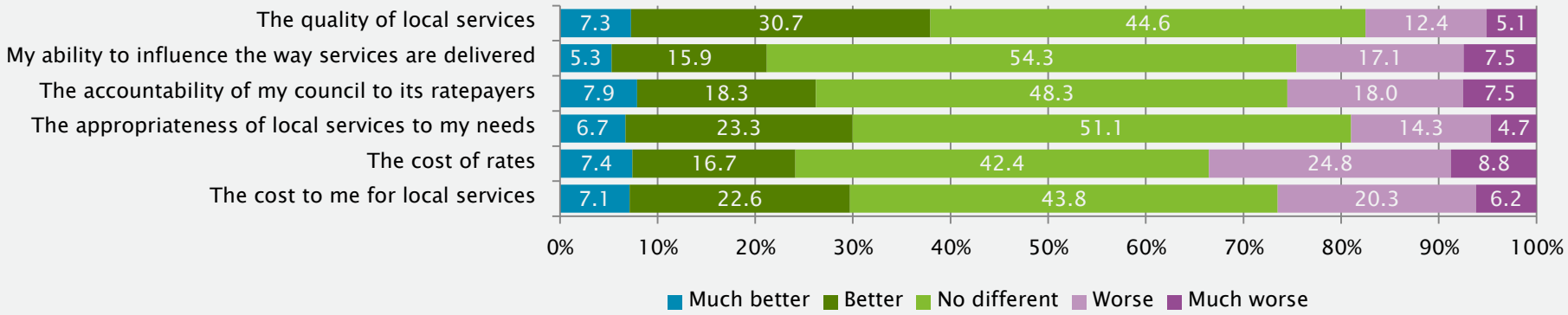


FIGURE 6: SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENTS (RELATIVE PROPORTIONS)

The cost to me for local services

- Respondents aged 18–24 years are more likely to predict as much better or better (46.2% compared with 28.2% state-wide)

- Greens voters are least likely to predict as worse or much worse (14.9%) compared with Labor (20.7%), Liberal (33.9%) and voters for minor parties and independents (43.1%)
- People who speak a language other than English at home are more likely to predict as worse or much worse (43.6% compared with 26.6%)

The cost of rates

- Predictions of worse or much worse increase with age, from 15.4% (18.24 years) to 39.5% (75 years and over). Similarly, younger people are more likely to predict as much better or better (33.3% for 18-24 year olds to 19.2% for 65-74 year olds)
- Supporters of the minor parties and independents (51.3%) are most likely to predict as worse or much worse compared with those who vote Liberal (38.9%), National Party (39.6%), Greens (25.6%) and Labor (24.3%). Greens voters are most likely to predict as no different (55.3% compared to 42.0% state-wide)
- People who speak a language other than English at home are more likely to predict as worse or much worse (49.3% compared with 32.6%)
- Unemployed people are more likely to predict as better or much better (37.3% compared with 24.5%)

The appropriateness of local services to my needs

- Greens voters are most likely to predict as no different (57.4% compared to 49.7% state-wide)

The accountability of my council to its ratepayers

- People who voted in the last SA council election are more likely to predict better or much better (29.3% compared to 18.3%); and less likely to think there will be no difference (43.0% compared to 53.3%)
- Retired people are more likely to think it will get worse or much worse (35.6% compared to 28% state-wide) and unemployed people are more likely to think it will get better or much better (37.3% compared with 26.25%)
- Respondents who have lived in the local area more than ten years (32.0%) are more likely than those who have lived in their local areas less than two years to think it will get worse or much worse (22.3%)

My ability to influence the way services are delivered

- Greens (55.3%) and Labor (53.6%) voters are more likely to think that it will make no difference compared with Liberal voters (45.9%) and supporters of minor parties and independents (45.8%)
- Retired people are most likely to think it will get worse or much worse (35.7% compared with 26.6% state-wide); and self-employed people are most likely to think it will get better or much better (29.4% compared with 21.1%)

The quality of local services

- Women (39.4%) are more likely than men (33.0%) to think it will get better or much better
- 18-24 year olds (51.3%) are more likely and respondents aged 75 or more (28.9%) less likely to think it will make no difference compared with 44.0% of respondents state-wide
- Greens voters (53.2%) are more likely to think it will make no difference compared with Liberal (39.2%) and Labor (40.7%) voters; Liberal (40.3%) and Labor voters (45.5%) are more likely to think it will be better or much better compared with Greens votes (29.8%), none of whom think it will get much better

4 Focus Group Findings

4.1 Attachment to place

Is this a place you chose to live?

A large number of participants spoke of living where they do because of proximity to family. Others mentioned closeness to work, or affordability. Some said that they had always lived where they currently live and felt no need to move. Many from Port Lincoln had moved there specifically for retirement. Most people said that they are happy living where they do. The exceptions were the majority of the participants from Murray Bridge who said they felt they had not made a choice to live there, rather 'ending up there' through failed relationships, wanting their children to be closer to immediate family, or other factors about which they felt little control.

Emotional connection

Being happy living in a particular place appears connected with a feeling of being amongst friendly people and part of a community.

To participants, community most commonly means: pulling together in times of crisis; spending social time with people who live in the area; feeling like you know people and they know you; being recognised in the shops and on the street; having longer connections to an area and having known neighbours over a longer period; looking out for each other; having connections locally through having children; and having been part of shared experiences.

- For people in inner-city Adelaide in particular, community meant being in an area with a cultural and creative vibe, reflecting their interests and values.
- In other groups, it was noted that living in an area with people with similar values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds helped to create a sense of community.
- Fewer people in inner-city Adelaide described themselves as being part of a close community. They had a perception that a sense of community would be easier to develop in country areas or 'in the hills' where the population density is lower.

- Those that felt more connected locally described activities such as volunteering, organised community events, and informal neighbourhood socialising (such as street parties and BBQs in the park) as important ways to spend time with each other and therefore build a friendly, supportive community.
- A couple of participants, in each of the Adelaide groups, connected feeling part of the community with having pride in where they live and caring about being engaged with decision-making in the local area.
- Many of the participants from Murray Bridge said they did not feel part of the community, because they did not think of the people in their local area as being like them (more involved in drugs, crime and social security dependency; characterised as being 'not great', 'undesirable'; living in a 'bad area').
- In outer suburbs, where there had been recent growth in population density, some respondents reported feeling less connected than they had previously, when the area was more rural.

Facilities – instrumental satisfaction

The facilities available to people and their satisfaction with them played a large part in how connected participants reported being with the area in which they live.

For residents of the two non-Adelaide councils, dissatisfaction with basic facilities—such as roads, footpaths, availability of waste collection and recycling, traffic and public transport—was the most prevalent source of discontent.

Having access to a convenient and pleasant life-style, which matches their interests, is an important contributor to satisfaction and connection to the area. Most often mentioned by participants were climate; a quiet/relaxed atmosphere; availability of sport and recreation activities (especially fishing in Port Lincoln, beaches around Adelaide, and outdoor recreation areas targeted at younger people such as skate parks and basketball courts); being a good place for children; and being located 'close to everything' that they felt they needed day-to-day. The attractiveness of the area (streetscape and trees) was also mentioned by many as making a difference to how they feel about the area – being ugly and run-down decreased their pride in, and connection to, the local area.

Almost universally important for participants, from all four areas, are public transport; appropriate convenient shopping; and accessibility of work opportunities, health and educational facilities.

Safety was mentioned by many participants from Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge as a threat to their satisfaction with living in the area, with concerns about breaking and entering; assault and vandalism most common. Conversely, some participants in inner-city Adelaide mentioned their feeling of personal safety as a basis for their attraction to the area.

4.2 Knowledge of Local Government

A core collection of traditional council responsibilities were recognised across all four groups as being things that councils do. These were: rubbish collection; roads; footpaths, nature strips, streetscape, and street tree and shrub plantings; libraries (including mobile libraries in some areas); grants to local charities and community organisations; managing development applications; and town planning (including location and size of shopping centres; rezoning). All groups, with the exception of Murray Bridge, also recognised that parks and gardens are maintained by council.

The following roles of local government were only volunteered by some groups:

- Recreational facilities for youth such as stake parks (Port Lincoln and Adelaide outer suburbs)
- Parking, dog registration, and community centres (Port Lincoln, Adelaide inner suburbs)
- Cemetery, some sort of role in aged and disability services, and services for young parents (Murray Bridge)
- Street sweeping, community bus, public safety, community events, holding council meetings, bike paths, arts and cultural services (Adelaide inner suburbs)
- Migrant services, youth services (both Adelaide groups)
- Car parks, connecting with and engaging with the community (Adelaide outer suburbs)

That these local government roles were only recognised in some areas, may perhaps be driven by different roles of local government in each of these areas; the participants own interactions with LG based on their personal circumstances; and degree to which the 'core' responsibilities of local government have been delivered to the satisfaction of the community (as represented by the members of these focus groups at least).

The residents of Port Lincoln came up with the longest and most comprehensive list of local government roles in their community, also including (in addition to those already mentioned above): ovals and sporting facilities; public toilets; tourist information centre; promotion of the area; business development; food safety, environmental management, and advocacy on behalf of citizens. This broader set of local government roles may simply reflect the different needs of the Port Lincoln community compared to other areas. However, of all the four groups, this group had the most engaged and positive relationship to their local government. This may mean that they were able to recall more of the activities of their council than other groups.

Only a couple of people claimed for local government activities that would not normally be associated with local government directly, namely schools and the NBN. Only a couple of people (from the Adelaide groups) admitted that they either don't really know much about what local government does, or probably only know about a small proportion of it. In general, lists of the role of local government came quite easily to each of the groups, with two or three people much more knowledgeable than the rest of the group.

Negative experiences of local government

The precise nature of criticisms of local government varied between the groups, but was mostly about the cost of rates; wasted money and other resources; corruption; and not feeling like the decisions made were in line with their own preferences. Examples include:

- "People don't speak well of Council because they don't get what they want or because council is slow"
- Things that are broken (such as pipes, pot holes in roads, footpaths) don't get fixed quickly enough after they are reported
- Different service levels in different parts of the same LGA seen as unfair – a "disproportionate allocation of resources" (e.g. rubbish, recycling and roads once out of town)
- In Port Lincoln, members of the group complained about the impact of developers on the local natural and built environment and the role of council in supporting developers over the wishes of the community
- Cost of rates are too high compared to what they get back; higher rates mean increases to rents so they impact everyone
- Money wasted and not used properly, misuse of funds on things that don't matter (to that particular person at least)

- How rates are calculated is unfair – areas with a mix of zoning and applicable rates are hard to understand and some participants think that it is unfair that being closer to a river, on a larger plot of land, or having a tarred road should make a difference to your rates and what rubbish collection you get
- Council staff paid too much, don't even live in the area and get undeserved perks such as very expensive cars and telephones
- Different people in council tell you different things which is frustrating and adds to the length of time it takes to get anything done
- Councillors don't need training and are not paid enough to attract people with 'good education'
- Compared to other areas, a perception that they are getting less and this is not fair
- Participants from the less wealthy local government areas had the most negativity to their local governments. Many reported a strong sense of corruption in decision making; that councillors are not there to help you, rather themselves; that there is too much red tape; council has too many employees; and you get better services if you live in a wealthier area

4.3 Service Delivery

4.3.1 Public vs. Private provision of services

Efficiency

In general, participants across all groups think that privatisation may make services more efficient: if they are more responsive and if their workers aren't "leaning on a shovel all the time". One participant told the story of her son doing work experience in the engineering area at council and being appalled at how little got done in a day. Although, having made comments like this, most of the time groups would then qualify their statements with concerns about cost, representation, decision making, and the impact on them of the profit motive. Some people said, in the case of road works, they could in fact be contractors leaning on the shovel or doing traffic management (i.e. jobs that look like 'skiving' but are in fact required for health and safety reasons), and that it is now hard to know if it is a council employed worker or a subcontractor doing the job. Some made the point that private companies aren't always well run. On the whole, however, there was a perception that council workers are often under-employed and many of them "do nothing:" They liked the idea of encouraging increased efficiencies, but wanted to retain a sense of accountability and local representation.

It's okay to bring in efficiencies but still have it run under government.

Cost

Only one participant suggested that privatisation of council roles would decrease rates or the costs of services to him, saying "if there's competition it would get better. It would impact quality and price". Everyone else was more pessimistic. Many used the examples of privatised electricity and water to illustrate how privatisation had increased their costs. One participant, a nurse, spoke very eloquently about the increasing privatisation of health care and the associated increase in costs, "you may get a better service in private but the prices will skyrocket".

The thing about private sector is that they can have a monopoly and charge as much as they want.

They can bring in anything they want and they can charge whatever they want.

It sounds good, but I reckon it would be expensive.

Quality

There was great diversity of opinion across the groups about the impact of privatisation on the quality of local services. Many of the participants had stories about waiting a long time for council to act, or decisions about which they were unhappy, and these participants were more likely to think that quality would increase with privatisation.

Quality would improve with competition. Better prices too.

Private has it better than public. Councils have no competition, they don't really care.

Others thought that private firms may do better work because they tend to be specialists, rather than local government employees who they see as being more generalist.

On the other hand, across all groups it was commented that quality could decrease with privatisation because of a lack of accountability or obligation to the community. Councils have good information about the community and are close to the community so better understand what the community needs. One participant suggested that councils can more easily join with other organisations and community groups to collaborate on a project which is an advantage to the community and brings about better quality programs.

Representation and accountability

Participants across all four groups had concerns about the lack of connection, representation and accountability that would result in the case that a non-elected corporation was responsible for providing services at the local level (the LGA Inc. scenario).

Having elected councillors gives a sense of community involvement in decision making and connection between those making decisions and the local community. There is a concern that private provision of local services would end up being done by larger firms who feel no responsibility to the local area and who didn't understand the wishes of the community. Whereas currently elected representatives can be kicked out if they don't perform, a private firm's only responsibility is to their shareholders and profit.

> *Local members will get stuff done if you approach them. Local members have more influence.*
>
> *You have a say in Council and they're responsible to the people and the community.*
>
> *We're already so anonymous when it comes to the local council you would even be further anonymous with a private organisation running it.*
>
> *The ability to know that you cannot vote for someone is a big deal. I worry about the jobs that need to be done, but if they're harder, won't get done.*
>
> *I'm wary of privatising Council. For some people it's just a job but councillors have a drive and push for things to be done. And other people would not have this motivation and passion.*
>
> *For most councils, the people elected have the community at heart. Their interest is in the community. Most of the time they're doing the right thing. Shareholders are looked at first before the community – especially in small country towns.*

Participants asked many questions when presented with this scenario including, for example:

- Would there be a board and who would be on it?
- Would they be accountable to the local area?
- Who is responsible when something is done wrong?

- How would be community be able to bring input? Would we still have a say in what happens?
- If its private – would the free services be paid for?

Some participants thought there would be a difference in responsiveness to the community between a smaller local private company and a larger private company.

There was also an acknowledgement that part of Councils' accountability is an adherence to process which enables both consultation with the community and compliance with health and safety and other policies which protect workers.

> *It's a catch 22. There's time delay in Council but sometimes going by the book it can be really important. Ensuring things are done right, properly, with consultation – that method is important and this is overlooked in private business.*

In Port Lincoln, some participants were concerned that a privatised system for management of services and the local area would make the influence of business and developers even more powerful, as "decisions may be for sale, rather than for the benefit of the people". Although others in the group see this already as issue with elected councillors "with elections it can never get to the same extent.

> *Private opens the door to corruption and can buy things off. It's not democratic at the end of the day.*

Provision of services at the local area should be community driven, not profit driven

Participants from the two Adelaide councils felt strongly that "local Councils care more for the community than a private company". There was a concern that private companies providing services would be "pretty heartless" and that "a local person in Council knows the area and they have a local knowledge that a private organisation would not". A number of people across the groups made the point that people shouldn't make profit on some things (for example, utilities and health), not everything is profitable, and getting rid of unprofitable services would have huge ramifications for the community.

> *It would increase the divide between those who can and can't afford it. It won't be good for the social nature of the town. And the crime.*

Across all groups, there was a concern that if local services were provided by a private company (the idea of LGA Inc) then everything would become user-pays, driving up inequality in the community and risking an increase in social problems. Several people commented that "government is fairer" and that "public is for everyone"; compared to "in private, if the user can't pay the user can't get".

> *Governments do things that businesses can't do because some things don't make profit. In that you build great public services that are inefficient but trying to privatise all things you're opening a can of worms. Your council rates will skyrocket, because it's a user pays rule. I'm not going to use the skate park but other kids and families will. You accept it when it's Council because it's local and you do a lot of things that you can't do privately. Things like running programs for kids you need deep pockets – you need all levels of governments to pitch in. There's role for Council to be public because not everything is profitable.*

Impact on local employment conditions

There was a diversity of opinion across and within groups on the impact of privatisation of council functions on the local labour market. The most prevalent were:

- Privatisation would create more jobs locally
- More private provision of services would mean larger firms would win the contracts, putting local contractors and small businesses out of work
- The numbers of people employed to provide the services would decrease. Being delivered by the private sector means fewer people employed (more efficiency, lower level of service provision not requiring same staffing levels)

There is already outsourcing

A majority of participants were aware that some parts of council's work is already outsourced and therefore the actual services are delivered by private firms under contract to council, specifically in the areas of road maintenance and waste management. Opinions about whether outsources was good or bad varied, and to some extent depending on individual experience of specific incidents. They included:

- Cheaper to outsource than have internal council responsibility for training, health and safety and public liability

- Outsource services, but decision making should stay within council
- The quality of the outsourced work is not as good as that of council's
- Outsourcing guarantees that the work is done properly as it is done by specialists, often council workers need to be 'jack of all trades, master of none'
- Outsourcing is councils shifting their responsibility, there's no accountability

Generally it just looks like its Council doing the work, the general public doesn't know that it's being contracted, and it gives council a better reputation.

4.3.2 Paying more for better or more services

In general, participants did not see why they should pay more rates (or taxes); they wanted what they currently pay to be spent better.

We pay enough now and money doesn't get used properly at all.

We pay enough now. A large number of people in Council are on big wages, cars, and mobile phone supplied. Half of them don't live in the town… they need to get rid of half the staff.

They should do what they do now but do it better.

In a couple of the groups, it was suggested that they would only pay more if they could see better where the money was being used and if the finances of council were more transparent. It was acknowledged by one of the groups that financial information and reporting was probably available "but didn't really care enough to look at it".

4.3.3 Decision Making

Many participants felt that councillors would be accessible if they needed them, and that they could find out how to contact them in that case. In general, most people do not know who their elected representatives are, although a couple said that it would be easier in smaller communities to have a relationship with them.

Definitely. I can go down there and get a meeting with a representative. It would happen.

I feel like I could look up my representative but the need to do this hasn't really arisen. There are some things, but I haven't really bothered to do it.

Whilst it's all working, there's no need to contact Council but as soon something happens you have a number to call and they do come quickly to fix things. Because they know that there are some things that they have to do well.

A smaller number said they feel less confident about how to access their representatives.

It's hard to know where to go and who to talk to. There needs to be more transparency around who I am meant to speak with.

How does anyone even know about these things? There needs to be better communication.

Each of the groups talked about wanting council to communicate more to them about the decisions being made through open meetings, information on the internet and social media, and printed materials in the their letterbox. A couple expressed anger and frustration that council didn't provide them with invitations to meetings and the opportunity to have a say on local matters. There was also some acknowledgement that most of the information they currently get goes frequently unread, so it perhaps is not totally council's fault!

It's a personal thing too, depending on how much your want to pay attention and interact.

Councils appreciate the apathy we have, only businesses and other people with vested interests keep close to Council.

There are differences between councils that are good at community consultation and those who aren't especially when it comes to issues around planning.

Only one person had a personal example of going to a public meeting where council was presenting a proposal and seeking community feedback. In general, although people said they wanted council to offer meetings and more community engagement opportunities, they also said they would be unlikely to go themselves, unless it was something that was of direct interest or inconvenience to them being discussed.

People just get on in life and younger people aren't interested in political things. I don't see that I can change anything really.

A lot of people don't vote in Council elections. I don't, but if I did you would hope the person you're voting for cares for the community and their needs.

Council puts letter drops of public forums or consultation and I've never done it but I know other people have participated.

I'm happy with my level of apathy.

The last council has been in 18 months and you've noticed a difference and a care factor. They're asking the community what they want; they actually allow meetings for community to voice their opinion.

4.4 Amalgamation

There's not enough income [for council]. The entire peninsula should be one big bucket. Amalgamations. Evenly spreading operations. Outsource as much services as possible but put money into community development and get it into the community.

Many people saw potential cost savings in amalgamation because of the ability for local government to then "buy in bulk". However, there was also concern in all groups, that if the combined localities are quite different, then their wants and needs may be different, affecting the ability to obtain significant cost efficiencies or leading to unequal service provision. The larger places may end up having to pay to the smaller places.

You might get fewer services. Depending on what services are available in that area and how cheaper it is to do things for one area as compared to another.

Bigger organisations should save some money – you would hope everyone would get the same share of the benefit.

People in small areas should have equal services.

Larger places might forfeit a lot and larger places be carrying the smaller places.

There was some concern that larger amalgamated local government areas would impact on representation, especially once it was explained that the number of total councillors would not be the sum of all existing, and therefore each councillor would be representing a larger number of people.

The bigger things get the less representation.

Might become distant at the small community level – like small companies that grow into large companies.

They're not in your area anymore and you won't feel like you're being heard. Quality of services would go down.

There's less representation it's a larger area. A councillor's job would be greater.

There would be a diminishing on your importance if the council is much larger.

With a bigger council one thing which would get lost is local decision making.

There was concern by one participant, who works as a contractor, that amalgamation would have a detrimental impact on his business:

If they go into tender with one organisation, this would cut out the little bloke. Local councils outsource to small organisations, if it's just one council they would outsource to only one large organisation.

Some participants had concerns that an amalgamated council would mean reduced quality of services. In one case this was because the bigger combined organisation would struggle to manage (with the merger of Medicare, Centrelink etc given as an example); and in another case it was because decision making would be taken out of the hands of local people who know the area and centralised (such as in health where local decision making was taken away from locals and placed in the hands of one person "and they have no idea".

Things would get worse. Local people may have less decision making.

Are large organisations going to have local knowledge of how different places have different needs?

Council has to be local to do some of the things it does.

A couple of people think that amalgamation would have a positive impact for smaller areas because they would be able to access a broader range of services, usually only available in bigger councils.

A few people suggested that have 'satellite' liaison officers, or administration 'sub-branches' would help to decrease the sense of remoteness from the council in a geographically large local government area and help the provision of uniform service delivery across the new council area.

Only a couple of people said that they thought amalgamation wouldn't really change anything.

One participant with property and businesses across council borders said, "We have dozens of Councils. As a property owner, it's hard to deal with different Councils – there's duplications of services. It's hard on developers and property owners."

4.5 Shared Services

All groups, except the inner-city group in Adelaide, recognised that councils already have entered into shared service agreements, particularly in the areas of waste collection and library provision.

There was some concern about the impact of shared service agreements on the local council's ability to provide appropriate services for their community.

> *Local knowledge would be lost. As soon as you have an issue – having someone with local knowledge would be better and with a large contract there would be less of this.*

There was a general agreement that the quality of services could increase, especially in areas such as waste collection, as councils could easily share trucks and rostering or get better deals if they put it out to tender.

> *In regional areas it can be even more beneficial because they're so remote.*

> *Depends on the person that does the job. The people that are being hired and their passion. If the right person is appointed it doesn't matter [who does the job].*

However, shared service agreements may not always be the best option.

If they only have one contractor it would mean job losses. Having a potential for a bigger contract could work great in areas with no expertise but if council can do it they should continue to do it.

There was also a concern in the groups in regional areas that the quality in services would different, with rural areas missing out.

Larger cities would get more priority and rural places would be forgotten.

Not one size fit all. And some services would not fit in all areas. You'd have to work out different cultures and different needs.

Whilst some people thought that "resources could be shared and costs lowered" a fair number of people said that rates would go up with shared services, because they always go up.

There was also an idea brought up in three of the groups that shared service agreements may lead to innovation and better practice.

More fresh eyes, more input can come up with better ideas.

Participant 1: Can Councils share knowledge and services?

Participant 2: Shared knowledge is good.

Participant 3: *Isn't that the job of the LGA?*

Appendix A. Conceptual Framework for the *Why Local Government Matters* Study

Background

What do people really think about local government? What are community views about amalgamation? Would people be happy to pay more rates for better services?

Why Local Government Matters is a major piece of social research on community attitudes to local government undertaken by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG). The research aims to investigate how and why the activities of local governments, and their roles in society, are valued by communities. The research covers a range of areas including community views about what they value about where they live, how they want to engage in decision-making, service delivery preferences, what role they would like to see local government play and what they think about local government amalgamations.

This sector-influencing research draws on the successful examples of major research projects that have been used to articulate the value of largely intangible outcomes across diverse policy fields such as the arts, disability and the environment. Examples of these projects include *Who Cares About the Environment?* (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) and *More than Bums on Seats* (Australia Council for the Arts).

A literature review was conducted to identify key themes in Australian and international research on local government and governance relevant to the aims of the study. The focus of the review was on research studies and theoretical or conceptual frameworks that have been applied to citizens' perceptions of local government and governance. The review also considered the range and focus of existing national and international surveys on the roles and functions of local and other levels of government.

The review identified a well-established body of surveys on citizen satisfaction with local government function, services and outcomes. However, the review also identified a significant gap in knowledge about how citizens' connections with local representation, democracy, governance, place and public services affect whether and why local government matters to them. Understanding how these

connections influence perceptions of the importance and outcomes of local government is crucial to helping policy makers across all levels of government to deliver policy outcomes that respond to the needs of communities and the public sector.

This research is therefore not about performance of or satisfaction with local government; instead it is about *why local government matters* to people across the whole spectrum of its activities. It aims to establish benchmarks of the community's attitudes, values and priorities regarding quality of life and in relation to areas influenced by local government.

Research objectives

The aims of the research are to:

1. Investigate the social context for interactions between Australian communities and their local governments in order to:
    a. build understandings and stimulate discussion amongst stakeholders of key issues for the sector
    b. inform planning, implementation and review of activities research and capacity building activities
    c. provide input to policy debates on the status of local government and key issues for managing change
    d. contribute to the development of research on local government and support the work of professional networks and knowledge communities.
2. Establish benchmarks of the community's:
    a. ***awareness***, knowledge and understandings of the status, governance roles and service functions of Australian local government
    b. ***attitudes***, values and priorities regarding quality of life and wellbeing in the area In which they live and in relation to the aspects of their local area that are influenced by local government
    c. interest, engagement and ***participation in*** the local area, and their self-reported experiences and behaviours in relation to local activities and councils.

3. Promote awareness of the role of the ACELG in facilitating innovation and best practice and in providing professional leadership to support effective local government in Australia.

Methodology

In April/May 2013, a literature review of predominantly survey research on 'citizen perceptions of local government' was undertaken to both inform the development of the research project and ensure that it was not replicating work already undertaken in Australia or internationally.

Consultation with the sector was facilitated by ACELG over a period of ten months from May 2013. The discussion focussed on the value of local government; the relationship of local government to the community; community values around governance and service delivery; place making by local government; and the relationship of people to the places in which they live. From this process a conceptual framework for the research was developed (discussed in detail in Section 0 below) and circulated to jurisdictional associations for comment.

The research is conceived as a staged, mix methods project over two to three years.

Stage 1: National CATI survey Version 1

A survey instrument using computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) was written by ACELG, tested in sections through three online panel surveys and analysis of results, and then fielded to 2006 people nationally in October/November 2014 by market research company UMR

Stage 2: Qualitative data collection: national focus groups

ACELG will be conducting focus groups nationally in 2015/16. This stage of the research project will unpack the results of the survey and allow for greater understanding of the attitudes of the community to local government according to different contexts and in more depth than is possible through quantitative data alone.

Stage 3: National CATI Survey Version 2

Following Stage 2, ACELG will field a revised and shortened version of the Stage 1 CATI survey nationally to a sample of at least 2000 adults. Revisions to the survey instrument will be made on the basis of an evaluation of the 2014 question set and outcomes of the qualitative phase of the research. The survey will deliver a national data set against which local jurisdictions can benchmark.

Stage 4: A survey instrument for local jurisdictional or local government area use

ACELG will make available the questions from the Stage 3 version of the survey and the complete national dataset to local governments and jurisdictional bodies who would like to conduct their own local research off the back of the national project.

Conceptual framework

Developing the conceptual framework for the research project involved consultation with the sector and a steering group of ACELG research staff and associates. Based on these discussions, five key areas of enquiry emerged:

1. local government's role as a place shaper and its importance in meeting the needs of citizens that drive attachment and satisfaction with the area in which they live
2. the preferences of communities for how their services are delivered at the local level and the ability of local governments to offer flexible and community specific service delivery
3. theories of governance, particularly community beliefs about big versus small government and its role in the market, the appropriate role for the private sector in local service provision, the preferred extent of public participation in government decision making, and preferences for the realisation of public value
4. community knowledge of local government, ranked importance of services which can be delivered by local government in different jurisdictions, and attitudes about amalgamation
5. those attributes of individuals which are theorised to interact with or influence their attitudes and beliefs about each of the areas above, including demographic factors, levels of community participation, and personal values and political leanings.

A literature review of key theoretical areas – place attachment; service delivery and governance – was an important part of the development of the conceptual framework and how constructs were to be measured in the survey instrument. Key elements of this literature review are presented below.

4.5.1 Place attachment

Place attachment has been defined in a number of different ways as it has been researched widely across a number of disciplines. The discussion which follows is not an exhaustive review of the literature about attachment to place; it is rather a synthesis of the literature that directly informed the development of this study.

Place attachment is a positive emotional bond that develops between people and their environments (Steadman 2003). Attachment to place can be conceived as a strong fusion of aesthetic, emotional and instrumental attachment (Savage 2010). Aesthetic and emotional dimensions of attachment are the psychological connections people make to the areas in which they live, linked to identity and to the bonds people make between themselves and places (Stedman 2003). Culture and identity are not just about social relationships, but are also profoundly spatial, with self-identity linked to place-identity (Stephenson 2010). Aesthetic responses to landscape and the built environment encompass how an area looks, how it feels to be in it, or what it looked like in the past (Stephenson 2010). Instrumental dimensions of attachment are linked to the capacity of a place to meet our needs; it is a multidimensional judgement about the quality of a setting which is often described as place satisfaction (Stedman 2002).

A neighbourhood or local area can serve several different functions for community members: relaxation and re-creation of self; making connections with others; fostering attachment and belonging; and demonstrating or reflecting one's values (Kearns and Parkinson 2001). Attachment to place, the local area in which we live, can act to support and develop aspects of personality and identity through the principles of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy. As described by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), the first principle of identity is the desire to maintain personal *distinctiveness* or uniqueness, which means that a resident's association with a specific town, and the lifestyle that is possible there, enables them to differentiate themselves from people from other areas or regions. Second, place is inextricably linked with the development and maintenance of *continuity* of self through preservation of a continuity with either specific places that have emotional significance or characteristics of places which are generic and transferable from one

place to another. Third, *self-esteem* – a person's feeling of worth or social value – can be supported by a favourite environment, meaning that living in a certain area makes someone feel good about themselves. The final principle of *self-efficacy*, which means that an individual has belief in their ability to meet situational demands. With respect to the environment, or the local area in which someone lives, feelings of self-efficacy are maintained if the environment facilitates, or at least does not hinder, a person's everyday lifestyle.

In other literature, the dimensions of place that promote or inhibit self-efficacy are called instrumental (Savage 2010; Steadman 2003). These instrumental dimensions of place attachment or satisfaction include a range of areas that are directly impacted by local government service delivery and urban planning, or indirectly by local governments' advocacy on behalf of their communities. They are reflective of the types of themes that are common in community strategic planning and other aspects of what local communities desire from their local governments.

Savage (2010) argues that attachment based on principles of identity (aesthetic and emotional dimensions of attachment) is essentially a middle class luxury as 'the ability to value places is dependent on having a wide enough set of reference points to allow comparison and evaluation' (p.118). He also argues that how people respond and connect to their local area will be influenced by their length of association with the neighbourhood (how long they have been resident) and whether they have chosen to be there, or have been 'fixed' there by their life circumstances. Atkinson (2010) notes that "whatever people elect to do, to be and to reside in remains deeply influenced by class dispositions, by social networks and by financial resources that vary dramatically". On the other hand, place satisfaction (or instrumental attachment) is less sensitive to socio-economic indicators – as the functional aspects of the place in which someone lives impact directly their daily lives, self-efficacy and satisfaction regardless of their life circumstances (Savage 2010).

4.5.2 Service delivery and governance

This part of the research is based on the proposition that individual local governments need to make strategic decisions about how they manage local service delivery. They need to answer questions such as:

- What types of services are needed?
- What level of service delivery is required and how should they meet the community's expectations?

- What are the priorities for service delivery?
- How should services be delivered and by whom?
- Who should pay for services? What mixture of private and public money is appropriate?
- Who should decide on the answers to these questions?

Each local government will answer these questions on the basis of prevailing political, social and public administration ideologies, as well as the values held by staff and elected members (or those of the jurisdictional government under which they are constituted). Their opinions about the roles and value of local government; the appropriate role of community participation in decision-making; the role of the market in service provision; the aspects of different public management 'paradigms' under which they operate; and how they value different sources of knowledge (e.g. community opinion vs. expert or academic knowledge) will impact on how they answer each of these questions about service delivery, and consequently how services are delivered in the local community.

Drawing on debates about the role and value of local government that have been prominent since the early 1800s, Chandler (2010: 6) points to a widely-held view that the roles of local government jurisdictions should be based on 'the benefit areas of local public goods' in order to ensure efficient delivery of services (Chandler 2010: 6). As summarised by Watt (2006: 8), the major advantage of local government is that 'it allows the local public goods and services it provides to be adjusted to suit the tastes and the preferences of local residents'. Ideally, local governments are established so that local residents both pay for and vote to decide on the local public goods they receive (Watt 2006: 9).

Writing within the Australian context, Colebatch and Degeling (1986) argue the importance of tailored local service provision as a justification for local government. At one level, local governments are agencies of state governments and are given specified powers – and in some cases funds – to provide nominated services or exercise particular powers. Since many government services are offered directly or indirectly by other tiers of government, it is not the only possible agent. On the other hand, within local communities each council is viewed as a legal entity and as a political body with elected representatives, but also crucially as a service body. This creates a unique kind of relationship between itself and the people of its locality: as well as being 'voters' and 'ratepayers', citizens are 'customers' of the council's services (Colebatch and Degeling 1986).

The view that local governments are the best placed organisations to tailor local services to meet the preferences of local communities questioned, largely on the grounds that in a globalising world it is not possible to constitute a spatial community. As noted by Chandler (2010: 10), many commentators have pointed to vast differences between a sedentary rural life on the one hand, and the industrialised mass communication age of the 20th and 21st centuries on the other. They have argued that 'advances in modern communications made community governments based on the village or suburb an outmoded entity'.

In the past few decades this has led to debates on local government needing to be engaged in networks and partnerships; with discussions of 'governance' than 'government'. Networked community governance has the goal of meeting community needs as defined by the community and as set out in the context of the demands of 'a complex system of multi-level governance' (Stoker 2011: 17). This governance is always an interactive process and involves various forms of partnership. According to Stoker (2011: 20-23), the move towards networked community governance has also encouraged a vision of the role of local government as 'place-shaping'.

Place-shaping refers to the creative use of power and influence to promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens, and may include building and shaping local identity, regulating harmful and disruptive behaviours and helping to resolve disagreements (Lyons 2007: 3). Place-shaping helps to identify the special characteristics of local places, including neighbourhoods or defined parts of a local government area, so that action can be taken on economic, social and environmental fronts to enhance the quality of the place and the quality of life of its people (McKinlay et al 2011: 4; Rablen 2012: 303-305).

Discussion of 'public value' has been widespread in public policy debates since a conceptual framework was put forward for it by Mark Moore in 1995 (Williams and Shearer 2011; Alford and O'Flynn 2009). Moore's work, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government* describes 'a *philosophy* of public management – an idea of what we citizens should expect of public managers, the ethical responsibilities they assume in taking office, and what constitutes virtue in the execution of their offices' (1995: 1). There is strong support in the literature for suggesting that adopting public value as a guiding theme or principle for local government practice enhances democratic and service provision outcomes for local communities (see Benington 2009). Politics is central in a public value paradigm. While private sector firms may focus on efficiency, quality, security and reliability, public managers must combine these concerns with a striving for accountability, as well as attention to public preferences (Benington 2009).

Stoker's (2006: 44; after Kelly and Muers 2002) summary contrasting the key features of traditional public administration, new public management and the public value management paradigms illustrates the way that different perspectives on public management impact on the role that local governments will play in their communities.

TABLE 30: 'PARADIGMS' OF MANAGEMENT

	Traditional Public Administration	New Public Management (NPM)	Public Value
Key objectives	Politically provided inputs; service monitored through bureaucratic oversight	Managing inputs and outputs in a way that ensures economy and responsiveness to consumers	The overarching goal is achieving public value that in turn involves greater effectiveness in tackling the problems the public most cares about; stretches from service delivery to system maintenance
Role of managers	To ensure rules and procedures are followed	To help define and meet performance targets	To play an active role in steering networks of deliberation and delivery and maintain overall capacity of the system
Definition of public interest	By politicians or experts; little in the way of public input	Aggregation of individual preferences, in practice captured by senior politicians or	Individual and public preferences captured through a complex process of interaction that involves deliberative reflection over

		managers supported by evidence about customer choice	inputs of opportunity costs
Approach to public service ethos	Public sector has a monopoly on service ethos and all public bodies have it	Skeptical of public sector ethos (leads to inefficiency and empire building); favours customer service	No one sector has a monopoly on public sector ethos; maintaining relationships through shared values is seen as essential
Preferred system for service delivery	Hierarchical department or self-regulating profession	Private sector or tightly defined arms-length public agency	Menu of alternatives selected pragmatically and a reflexive approach to intervention mechanisms to achieve outputs
Contribution of the democratic process	Delivers accountability; Competition between elevated leaders provides an overarching accountability	Delivers objectives: Limited to setting objectives and checking performance, leaving managers to determine the means	Delivers dialogue: Integral to all that is undertaken, a rolling and continuous process of democratic exchange is essential

Source: Stocker (2006)

Within these paradigms, local governments can take different approaches to how they interact with the community with regards to the community's role in decision-making about service delivery. Governments can consult with the community by seeking the views of

stakeholders in order to improve outcomes, with the mode of consultation sitting within a continuum of possible approaches to community participation, as illustrated in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7: EXTENT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC VALUE

A key trend since the late 1980s has been the 'marketising' of public services, driven by the forces of 'privatisation' and 'liberalisation' (Warner and Clifton 2013: 48). Three common responses by local governments to these trends have been:

- **Hollowing out** – Declines in property tax revenues and reductions in inter-governmental transfers have forced local governments to 'hollow out' their services through service cutbacks, restructuring local government away from traditional public service obligations, and increasing user fees.
- **Riding the wave** – Some municipalities use privatisation as a two-edged sword by harnessing the market toward more public ends. Services may be contracted out, but councils at the same time pay attention to the need to create markets for public services. They allow competitive bidding from in-house teams, and carefully monitor all processes to ensure service quality and cost savings for rate payers.

- **Pushing back** – Often encouraged by social action undertaken by citizens, many local governments have pushed back against market encroachment and state pressure to cut back and privatise. This has led to initiatives such as establishing multi-sectoral coalitions of citizens, non-profit organisations and government, for example as regards housing and economic development strategies (Warner and Clifton 2013: 52-57).

There are several examples of councils successfully taking advantage of economies of scale through shared service provision (Aulich et al. 2011). The threshold population sizes for particular services are different, and this is a key factor in determining whether shared service arrangements can lead to improvements. Avenues for delivering shared services include: two or more councils co-ordinating production activities; two adjacent councils organising a single production unit; and one council contracting services from another council or another government agency.

The case for shared services rests on two main propositions, namely the valuing of the continued existence of small autonomous councils based on the principle of 'subsidiarity' i.e. that government powers should be exercised at the lowest level of government possible; and that the optimal number of production units depends on the trade-off between scale economies and coordination economies (Dollery, Akimov and Byrnes 2009).

Appendix B. Survey instrument

Are you male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

In what year were you born?

What is your home postcode?

In the past 12 months, have you been actively involved in any service club or sporting, social, welfare, emergency services or recreation group in your community?
Yes/No

Thinking about the local area in which you live, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly agree; Moderately agree; Slightly agree; Slightly disagree; Moderately disagree; Strongly disagree

1. It reflects the type of person I am
2. I feel at home there

Thinking about the local area in which you live, how important are each of the following to you? [randomised]

Not at all important; slightly important; moderately important; very important, extremely important

1. Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces
2. Availability of appropriate public services
3. Availability of good schools
4. A supportive and cohesive community
5. Job opportunities
6. A positive economic outlook
7. Convenient public transport
8. Good quality roads and bridges
9. Levels of water, air and noise pollution
10. A safe environment
11. Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

Thinking about the local area in which you are currently living, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the provision of each of the following? [randomised]

Strongly satisfied; Moderately satisfied; Slightly satisfied; Slightly dissatisfied; Moderately dissatisfied; Strongly dissatisfied

1. Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces
2. Availability of appropriate public services
3. Availability of good schools
4. A supportive and cohesive community
5. Job opportunities
6. A positive economic outlook

7. Convenient public transport
8. Good quality roads and bridges
9. Levels of water, air and noise pollution
10. A safe environment
11. Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

Thinking about the role of government in the provision of services to the community, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [randomised]

Strongly agree; Moderately agree; Slightly agree; Slightly disagree; Moderately disagree; Strongly disagree

1. I want government to involve me in making decisions about what services are delivered in my local area
2. The private sector delivers the best value services
3. Governments can have a role in providing any of the services a community needs
4. I am prepared to pay more taxes to get a broader range of public services
5. I am prepared to pay more taxes to get better quality public services
6. The people who work in government have enough knowledge to decide what services are needed in my area
7. Service providers have the best knowledge about how services should be delivered
8. People who are using a particular service will know best how much of that service is needed
9. Communities know enough to make good decisions about what services they need
10. There are some services that governments can provide at a higher quality than the private sector
11. Governments should use a mixture of public, private and not-for-profit organisations to deliver public services in my area
12. Governments and councils should to work with each other and other service providers to provide local services

13. Government delivers the best quality services

What political party do you normally vote for, or most identify with?

1. Liberal
2. National
3. Labor
4. Greens
5. None – I change from election to election
6. Other (please specify)

Did you vote in the last South Australian Council election in 2014?

Yes/No

What is the name of the Mayor of your local Council? *Open*

Here is a list of different things that councils can do. How important it is to you that councils do each of these things? [randomised]

Not at all important; slightly important; moderately important; very important, extremely important

1. Water, sewage, stormwater, drainage
2. Roads and bridges
3. Parks
4. Footpaths
5. Cycleways

6. Land use planning and development applications
7. Street cleaning and waste management
8. Environmental management
9. Child Care
10. Aged Care
11. Emergency and disaster management
12. Libraries
13. Sporting and recreation facilities
14. Arts and culture
15. Economic development
16. Youth services
17. Community development
18. Planning for the future
19. Promoting the benefits of the local area
20. Promoting health and wellbeing

Imagine that your local council enters into an agreement with four other councils nearby to deliver services together through a shared, collaborative arrangement. Would councils in your area working together to deliver services make each of the following things much better, better, no different, worse or much worse? [randomised]

1. The cost to me for local services
2. The cost of rates
3. The appropriateness of local services to my needs
4. The accountability of my council to its ratepayers
5. My ability to influence the way services are delivered

6. The quality of local services

Do you speak a language other than English at home?

1. No, English only
2. Yes, Which? (Specify)

What is the highest level of educational qualification you have completed?

1. School education level
2. Certificate or Diploma level
3. Bachelor degree level
4. Postgraduate Degree level

Which of the following best describes you currently?

1. Employed for wages
2. Self-employed
3. Out of work and looking for work
4. Out of work but not currently looking for work
5. A homemaker
6. A student
7. Retired
8. Unable to work

Is the dwelling in which you live?

1. Mortgaged or owned outright
2. Being rented

3. Other

What best describes the household in which you live

1. Couple with no children
2. Couple with children
3. One parent family
4. Other type of family household
5. Single (lone) person household
6. Group household (non-family)

How long have you lived in your local area

1. Less than 2 years
2. More than 2 and less than 5 years
3. More than 5 and less than 10 years
4. More than 10 years