

# COUNCIL MEMBERS' SURVEY

November 2004



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*Commissioned by the Local Government Association of South Australia*

## FOREWORD

Local Government in South Australia manages \$8.8 billion of community infrastructure and more than \$1 billion of expenditure each year. Across 67 of the 68 Councils\*, 751 Council Members, elected by their communities, set policies, adopt strategic plans, set budgets and rates and make key decisions every week of the year.

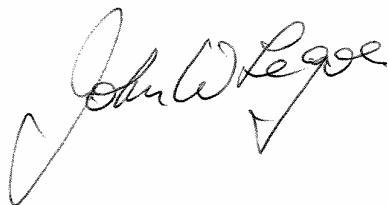
This group of South Australians make an outstanding contribution to the State and receive no payment for their time and little thanks. I know, I am one of them. However, little is known collectively about us, our backgrounds, our experience as Councillors and why we are so willing to contribute so extensively to our communities.

In 1997 the LGA asked Dr John Robbins of the Adelaide University to repeat earlier work he had conducted in 1987 to help fill that void.

In 2004 we commissioned Professor Dean Jaensch of the Flinders University to build on Dr Robbins' work by updating the survey.

Professor Jaensch's report is now published by the LGA to assist Local Government, the SA Government and Parliament, and the State as a whole to better understand the 751 elected Members serving communities across the State.

I express my appreciation to Professor Jaensch for undertaking the survey and compiling the report, and to the 366 of my colleagues who also completed the survey.



**Cr John Legoe**  
President  
Local Government Association of SA

*\* Roxby Downs does not yet have an elected Council*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Sample**

An anonymous questionnaire was posted to each elected Council member in SA. From the total of 751 members, 367 completed questionnaires were returned, a satisfactory response rate of 48.9 percent. Comparisons were made with the available data on members, and the representativeness of the sample was satisfactory.

The analysis included the total respondents, and subdivisions into metropolitan (above 50,000 population), metropolitan (below 50,000 population), regional city, rural/urban, and rural.

### **Profile of the members**

The proportion of women members, which had grown from less than 3 percent in 1973, to 25 percent in 1997, had "plateaued" at 26 percent in 2004. The proportions were over 20 percent in each type of Council, with the rural Councils at 34 percent.

There has been a continuing trend of the "ageing" of the membership. In 1987, 45.2 percent of the respondents were at least 51 years of age, with 19.1 percent over 60 years. In 1997, the respective figures were 58.4 and 21.3 percent. In the 2004 survey, 76.0 percent of the respondents were over 55 years of age, and 43.8 percent over 60 years. There needs to be a concentration on attracting younger candidates for election to reverse this trend.

Of 363 respondents, 82.6 percent were married, 94 had dependent children living at home, and 35 had other dependents living at home.

In the large and small metropolitan and the regional city Councils, 49, 64 and 47 percent respectively had remained at school until at least 16 years of age. In the regional and rural Councils the proportions were 39 and 36 percent. This was "mirrored" by the education level reached: there was a significantly higher proportion of members who had finished year 12 in the metropolitan Councils.

Of 365 respondents who replied to the question, 82.2 percent were born in Australia, of whom 88 percent were born in South Australia. 94.5 percent of the respondents gave their national identity as "Australian", with the remainder stating a "joint" identity such as "Australian-Italian".

38 respondents stated that they had a disability of some type, and 83 percent of these stated that they were satisfied with the provisions made by their Council in regard to the disability.

Of 365 respondents, 18.1 percent were full-time employees, 10.1 percent part-time or casual employees, 37.0 percent self-employed or employers, 6.6 percent unemployed or voluntary, and 28.2 percent were retired. There was significantly higher proportion of females than males under the part-time/casual heading, and this was reversed under employer/self-employed.

The occupation profile was skewed, as expected, towards primary industry in the rural and rural/urban Councils, and towards professional and managerial in the cities. Overall, of the 206 respondents who were employed, 44.2 percent were in the professional/managerial categories. There is an under-representation (in comparison with the society) of manual, sales and clerical, and public service employees.

**Recruitment**

The factors stated by the members as the reason(s) they became interested in becoming an elected member covered a wide and diverse range. The most common were positive reactions to, or encouragement from existing Councillors (27.7%); "asked by friends" (23.8%); a specific issue (15.8%); and "family tradition" (20.1%). Of a further 19.6 percent who gave a variety of answers, 12.2 percent could be summarised as "serve the community". Only seven percent of the respondents provided a "negative" reason for their involvement – such as "oppose existing Councillor(s)/CEO".

The "specific issues" were dominated by general or specific mentions in relation to roads, traffic, rates, and development plans.

**Election process**

Of the members who faced a contest at the last election, 58.1 percent stated that they personally outlaid less than \$500 on their campaign, and 52.5 percent stated that the total election expenditure was less than \$500. At the other end of the spectrum, 14.1 percent stated that their personal outlay was greater than \$2,000 and 7.8 percent stated that the total outlay was more than \$4,000.

More than half of the rural/urban and rural Council members stated that their total expenditure was less than \$250. The significantly higher expenditures were overwhelmingly in the cities. A majority of the respondents spent between two and four weeks on their campaigns, with a significant minority-mainly in the cities- claiming to have spent six and more weeks.

Of 358 respondents, 29.3 percent were first elected at the last election, and a further 29.1 percent had served 3 to 5 years on the Council. At the other extreme, between 22 and 34 percent of the members in the cities had served eleven years or more.

**Relations with the community**

As expected, a significant proportion and, in some cases, a clear majority of the members were heavily involved with community organizations, and between one third and one half hold office in these. There was a high level of involvement across the categories of work, public, political, religious, service, sport and "other" organizations, and similar patterns were evident across the categories of Councils.

**Attitudes to Council work**

The respondents, in the overwhelming majority, showed positive attitudes to their work. The question included 14 components of Council work/responsibilities, with aggregate positive attitudes stated by 80 percent or higher in eight components. The lowest positive attitudes were stated for the components "costs" (42.7%), elections (59.9%), "paper-work" (66.5%), and "time" (68.0%). These patterns were similar across the types of Councils.

**Time allocations**

Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours per month spent on six specific roles as a Councillor. The least demands on time involved consulting with members and/or officers – a majority spent less than five hours per month on this. At the other "end" of the spectrum, were the roles of Council meetings (average of responses – 13.8 hours per month) and Committee meetings (13.3 hours), contact with the public (12.2 hours), and correspondence (8.3 hours). Combining the averages for the six roles, and an "other" role, the hours per month totalled 73.5. A small proportion (but above 10 percent in the metropolitan Councils) claimed that they spent more than 25 hours per month on the more time-consuming roles – a few claiming more than 40 hours per month.

**Remuneration**

Respondents were asked to rank in order of preference four types of remuneration: an allowance (as current), a meeting fee, a part-time salary, and a full-time salary. They were also asked to specify what they would consider to be an adequate monetary figure for their first ranking.

Nearly three-quarters of the sample, 72.6 percent, opted for an allowance. Only 8.2 percent nominated a meeting fee, 13.5 percent a part-time salary, and 5.6 percent a full-time salary. The highest support for the allowance came from members in the rural/urban and rural Councils; the highest, but minority support, for a salary from the metropolitan Councils. In the urban Councils, between 23.4 percent and 37.6 percent wanted to change the basis of remuneration from a "voluntary service" allowance to a salary-based employment. On the other hand, a number of respondents commented that the remuneration should be on the basis of compensation for voluntary work, and that the "service" component should not be transformed into a "profession".

Of the overwhelming majority who opted for an allowance, one-third stated a monetary figure at or only slightly more than the existing maximum. Support for this was strongest in the rural/urban and rural Councils. A total of 16.5 percent requested an allowance between \$6 000 and \$8 000, and a further 21.8 percent nominated an allowance between \$8 000 and \$10 000.

**Facilities and Supports**

Respondents were asked to nominate which supports were available for them at their Council. In summary: photocopier (72.6%), secretarial services (49.3%), fax (39.5%), computer (27.9%), internet (26.6%), mobile telephone (7.9%). These supports were much higher in availability in the urban Councils, especially the metropolitan Councils.

Respondents were also asked what supports they would like to see provided by the Council. 176 respondents named 238 items; hence 191 of the 367 respondents had no such requests. Of the requests for technology, a computer (usually lap-top with internet facility) was the most requested (99 respondents), then mobile telephone (20) and a telephone-fax (14). 38 respondents requested training and workshops as their "necessary" request.

It is interesting to note that 65 respondents, when asked to specify what non-Council supports they had, stated "wife/husband/family" at the top of the list.

## THE 2004 SURVEY

The survey was commissioned by the Local Government Association, and was conducted in August 2004.

The questionnaire was designed with advice from the Local Government Association, and built on previous research by Dr John Robbins (Adelaide University). Dr Robbins carried out surveys of elected members in 1987 and 1997, the latter partly to explore the effects of the amalgamations which took place in the mid-1990s, shortly after the 1997 Local Government elections.

The 2004 questionnaire was structured to allow a comparative analysis with parts of the 1997 survey, replicating some of the questions. Such comparisons are valid, as the response rates for both surveys were similar, and large enough to allow the final sample to be considered representative of the total membership. Some questions were changed slightly to reflect different issues and different emphases in 2004, and these have been noted in the text and the tables.

The key purpose of the 2004 survey was to produce a "time-slice" of the elected membership of Local Councils. The range of questions was significantly extended from 1997, and included seven themes:

- a profile of the membership under a range of sub-headings of personal characteristics and backgrounds, including family, gender, education and employment;
- patterns and styles of recruitment of members, focussing on factors which influenced their decision to become involved;
- the nature of the election processes engaged in by the members;
- an analysis of the range of factors under the heading of relations with the community;
- attitudes of members to Council work, including time commitments;
- attitudes of members to issues of "remuneration"; and
- attitudes to the facilities and supports available to the members.

Questionnaires were posted direct to all members, with a covering letter. The questionnaire was completely anonymous. To encourage the highest possible rate of return, the respondents were not asked to identify themselves, their Council, or their position on the Council. The members were provided with a reply-paid envelope which was discarded after opening at the LGA offices. This further emphasised the anonymity of the process.

The response was gratifying, indicating a willingness of members to support the enterprise. The 1997 survey produced a return rate of 353 from the total of 850 members – 41.5 percent. The 2004 survey response was 367 from the total of 751 members – 48.9 percent.

This high response rate (in the experience of mail surveys) still left the question of the representativeness of the response. To have confidence in extrapolating from a sample of 48.9 percent to the whole membership required some evidence of this. In the absence of names, or even Councils, the only tests against objective data were gender and the type of Council.

The gender content of the respondents provided an acceptable level of representativeness. The actual breakdown of the 751 members was male 74 percent; female 25 percent. The 367 questionnaires received contained 21 where there was no response to this question. Of the remaining 356 questionnaires, the breakdown was male 71 percent; female 29 percent.

The second test was based on a categorisation of Councils. The respondents were asked to categorise their Council, and these responses were compared to objective data. The latter was based on the Australian Classification Local Governments, developed by the Commonwealth, which established 22 categories. For the survey analysis, these were refined to five: metropolitan above 50 000 electors, metropolitan below 50 000, regional city, rural-urban, and rural. For the tabular analysis in this report, these have been labelled I, II, III, IV, V.

Respondents were asked to classify their Council under these headings. The categories were relatively straightforward, but the distinction between "regional city" and "rural-urban" left some room for judgement. These data were then compared to the actual classification, with the following result.

% of Members		Actual	Survey
i	(metropolitan above 50 000)	7.5 n = 116	13 n = 47
ii	(metropolitan below 50 000)	16.1 n = 121	13 n = 48
iii	(regional city)	11.9 n = 89	15 n = 53
iv	(rural/urban)	9.6 n = 72	20 n = 71
v	(rural)	47.0 n = 353	39 n = 141

*(note: - in this and following tables, most data are presented as percent (%), and "n" refers to numbers. The percentages for the whole sample and for large sub-samples are presented with one decimal place; the percentages for the smaller numbers, especially the sub-cells in the Council types, are presented as whole numbers).*

There was a slight over-representation in the sample of the metropolitan (less than 50 000) membership, and an under representation of the rural membership. The differences in regard to regional city and rural/urban can be a result of judgements made by the respondents. The combined comparison for these categories was 21.5 percent for the actual, and 35 percent for the sample.

Overall, these comparisons, although not perfect, are satisfactory for representativeness and for comparative analysis.

The ACLG classification scheme of Councils is used widely in this report, analysing the subsets of the total respondents. The "political map" of South Australia has always included a division between metropolitan and country, and a lesser-developed division between metropolitan, regional and rural.

The analysis in the survey provides a means to establish the extent to which these "regions" are not only evident in Local Government, but display differences in demography and sociology, and in the behaviour and attitudes of members, and especially display where these differences can be characterised as significant. Hence the classification is used as a major probe into the aggregate data.

The tabulation of data in this report usually includes numbers (n) and percentages (%). It should be noted that, except where specifically stated, the percentages are based on the valid responses. Most questions produced some level of null response. The basis is therefore the (n) of the valid responses.

## A PROFILE OF THE MEMBERS

There have been broad discussions about the elected membership of Local Councils, including claims that they are too biased to males, to people with vested interests, to the middle-class people of Anglo-Celtic origin, to business people, and that they do not contain a representative "mirror" of the population.

This section provides a statistical picture of the members of Councils in 2004, and some analysis over time by means of comparisons with the results of the 1997 survey, and some comments on trends.

### **Gender**

In 1973, females constituted less than 3 percent of the total elected membership. By 1987, this had grown to 16 percent, and by 1997 to 25 percent. This has been a remarkable rise, a result of increasing interest among women about the role, increasing opportunities to be involved, and a series of campaigns to encourage women to participate.

However, in the 2004 data, there is some evidence that this remarkable growth curve has plateaued. The proportion of women in the actual Council membership is 26 percent; the proportion in the survey was 29 percent.

It may be that this plateau effect is a result of some aspects of the role of an elected member which alienate or discourage potential female participants. Parts of the questionnaire offered a potential means to analyse this (see below).

Further, the increasing involvement asks whether women approach and assess the role of an elected member differently to men. Parts of the questionnaire provide means to analyse this (see below).

The female proportions of the membership in the types of Councils were 22 per net and 29 percent in the large and small metropolitan Councils respectively, 27 percent in the regional cities, 25 percent in the rural/urban Councils, and 34 percent in the rural region. The last is a significant difference.

### **Age**

The report of the 1997 survey, noted that in 1987, "a quarter of the respondents were 40 years or under". In 1997 the proportion did not quite reach 12 percent. It also noted that the "main switch was to the 51-60 group rather than to the over-60s".

In 2004, the "ageing" trend is not only evident, but it has become a further age decade to the "main switch" - to the over-60 sector. This is unlikely to be a result of differential responses from different age groups. In fact, the relative under-representation of respondents from the rural Councils, where the trend towards the over-50s and over-60s is the most evident, may actually understate the "ageing trend".

Table 1: Age distribution of elected members over time (%)

Age Group	26-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
1987	4.4	20.5	29.3	26.2	19.1
1997	1.7	10.1	28.7	37.1	21.3

<b>2004</b>					
Age Group	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60+
	1.9	4.7	17.4	32.2	43.8
n = 363					

The categories used in 2004 were slightly different, but the trend is valid. While the young (25-34) group remained small and stable over time, the 35-44 and 45-54 groups showed a marked decline in the proportions of the total membership. This was “mirrored” by a significant increase in the more directly comparable 60+ age group.

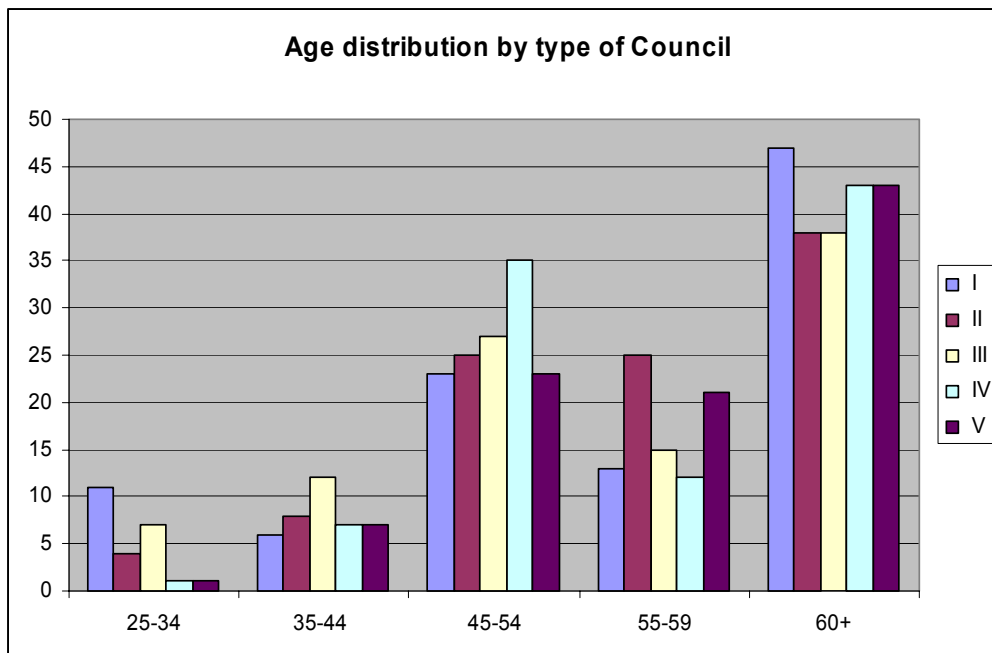
The evidence that 76 percent of the membership in 2004 was aged 55 or above poses a question, and a challenge – for the Local Government sector: how to attract younger candidates to stand for elections.

Such a trend towards older members may be due to a number of factors: an unwillingness of the young to become involved ( a factor which has been identified by surveys in relation to State and federal political involvement); an incumbency impact, through which it is difficult for younger aspirants to unseat the older, entrenched sitting members; a trend of sitting members unwilling to retire in favour of younger people; and increasing demands and expectations of society, employment, and social life to the point where younger people have “public service” at a low priority of choice.

Whatever the reason, there is clear evidence of the “ageing” of the membership of Councils, a trend evident across the categories, but most evident in the rural region. Even allowing for the possibility that the younger respondents were under-represented in the number who responded, the trend is stark. Slightly different age categories were used in 2004, but the trend is evident.

Table 2: Age distribution of elected members by types of Council (%)

	Age	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60+	
i.	Metro large	11	6	23	13	47	n = 47
ii.	Metro small	4	8	25	25	38	n = 48
iii.	Regional city	7	12	27	15	38	n = 52
iv.	Rural/Urban	1	7	35	12	43	n = 71
v.	Rural	1	7	23	21	43	n = 141
n = 359							



When the aggregate data are subdivided by type of Council, the "ageing" is obvious in each type. The large metropolitan Councils appear to have attracted the highest proportion of younger members, but they also have the highest proportion of the 60+.

These data provided evidence of a factor which needs serious consideration by the Local Government sector. The trend, the "main switch" as the 1997 survey report put it was, to some degree, to be expected in that survey.

The amalgamation processes, and the decreased number of vacancies, possibly aided the aspirations of the older, more experienced, and better known incumbents in the 1997 election after the amalgamations.

However, the continuation of the trend in the 2004 survey cannot be "explained away". This is not unique to Local Government. There is evidence of a growing unwillingness of younger people to be involved in community, group and political activities throughout Australia. There is a growing apathy about, and alienation from politics especially among the young.

Hence it may be necessary for the sector to devise "lateral thinking" means to attract younger people to service in Local Government,

### ***Family structure and situation***

A disincentive to an involvement as a member could be a young family, with parenting responsibilities or, even more a disincentive, a single-parent situation. The necessity in the modern world for both, or the only parent, to have employment is equally a factor. This could also be the explanation for the trend to older members to be increasing.

Of the 363 who responded, 82.6 percent were married or in a *de facto* relationship; 12.9 percent were single, separated or divorced; 1.9 percent were widowed.

Of the 94 who responded that they had dependent children living at home, 31 had one child, 36 had two, 17 had three, 7 had four and 3 had five children. Of these 94 respondents, 10 had pre-school children, 16 primary level, 32 at secondary school, and 20 studying at tertiary level. The relatively low proportion of parents with dependent children reflects the trend to older members noted above.

Thirty five respondents stated that they had other dependents living at home.

The time and effort necessary in the role of an elected member, and in the increasingly complex situation in Local Government establishes increasing demands on elected members. This may be a disincentive for the participation of the younger age groups in Councils.

This factor, and the evidence above, should initiate discussions in Local Government concerning the timing of meetings, the provision of child care facilities, and other means to make the role easier, and more attractive, to younger people.

### ***Education***

As Council affairs become more demanding, especially on some key issues, there are more demands on the members to read, absorb, analyse, and react to complex information.

Does this factor imply the necessity for increased education levels among members? The answer can be drawn from the analogy of State and Federal members of parliament. They also face increasingly complex issues. But this does not imply that qualifications are necessary for representatives – at any level of political representation.

The adage that there is a need for “experts on tap, but not on top” is a correct one. Elected members of Councils do not have to be experts in any or all fields. Their prime responsibility is to be representative of their electorates, and to be able to be recognised as such. The elected members individually, and the Council collectively, must be able to call upon the advice of the experts on Council staff, in the corporate sector, and outside the Council, in the same way that elected members of parliament should have access to the experts in the public service, and elsewhere. There is no democratic requirement for elected members to have any minimum level of education, expertise, or training to carry out their roles as representatives.

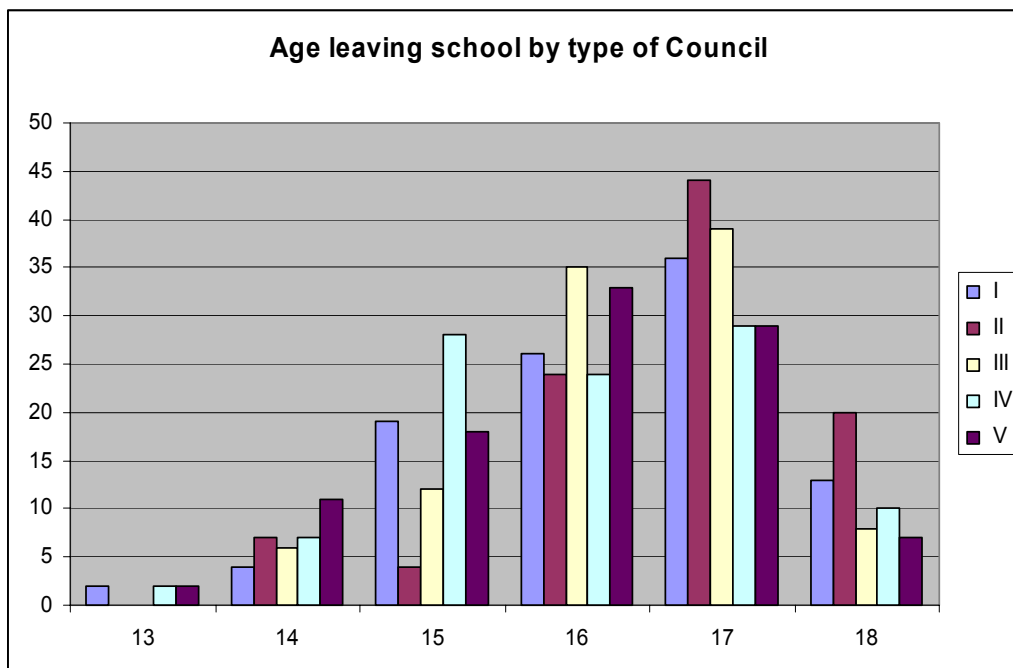
The 2004 questionnaire asked four questions about education:

- age of leaving full-time education;
- school year at leaving;
- qualifications (if any) obtained; and
- tertiary institution attended.

(A number of respondents interpreted “school year” in the second question as a date [ for example, 1967], hence the n for this question is lower.)

Table 3: Education: age leaving school (%)

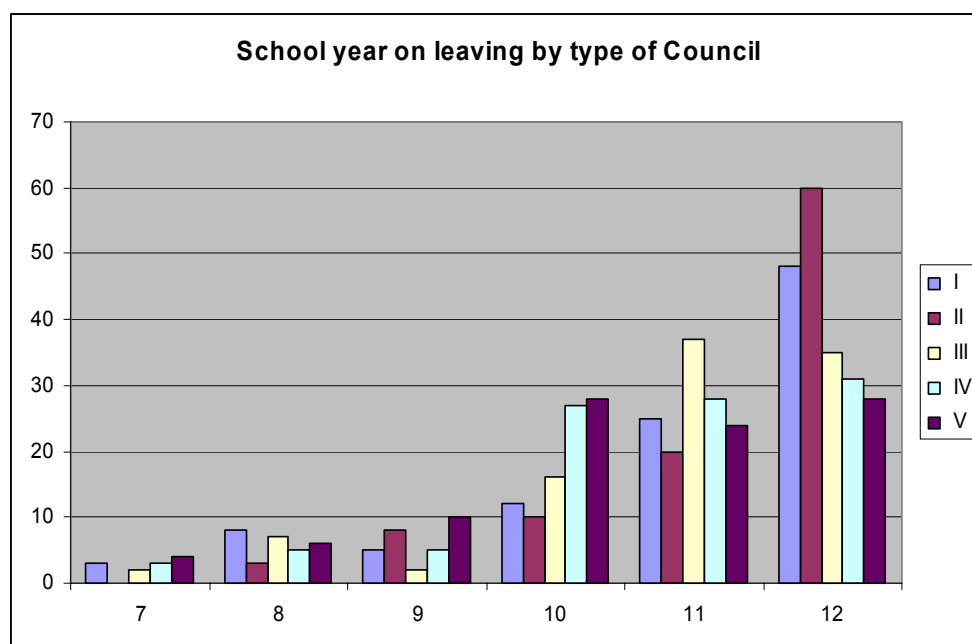
	Age	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	Total	1.5	8.0	17.7	29.1	33.4	10.3	n = 350
i.	Metro large	2	4	19	26	36	13	n = 47
ii.	Metro small	0	7	4	24	44	20	n = 45
iii.	Regional City	0	6	12	35	39	8	n = 49
iv.	Rural/Urban	2	7	28	24	29	10	n = 68
v.	Rural	2	11	18	33	29	7	n = 134



There are some different patterns in these data: the higher proportion who left school at age 15 or less in the rural/urban and rural memberships, and the “mirror” of the higher proportion remaining at school until 17 and 18 years of age in the metropolitan areas. These differences are at least partly a result of the lack of availability of higher secondary education in rural areas, and the nature of the demands of rural life on children living on farms.

Table 4: Education: school year on leaving (%)

		7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Total	3.0	5.6	6.6	21.8	26.4	36.6	n = 303
i.	Metro large	3	8	5	12	25	48	n = 40
ii.	Metro small	0	3	8	10	20	60	n = 40
iii.	Regional city	2	7	2	16	37	35	n = 43
iv.	Rural/Urban	3	5	5	27	28	31	n = 58
v.	Rural	4	6	10	28	24	28	n = 116



The data suggests that the school year of leaving is at a highest level in the metropolitan membership, and lowest in the rural areas. This is a feature which can be readily explained by a combination of older members and the nature of the rural industry in earlier years which encouraged children to leave school early to help on the farm.

Table 5: Education: qualification attained (%)

*(note: respondents could show more than one qualification. % are of n of respondents)*

		Matriculation	Apprenticeship	Diploma	Bachelor	Post-graduate	
	Total	38.1	16.4	25.3	21.0	11.2	n = 367
i.	Metro large	43	32	38	26	19	n = 47
ii.	Metro small	60	8	25	54	33	n = 48
iii.	Regional city	48	13	29	23	12	n = 52
iv.	Rural/Urban	31	23	28	11	3	n = 71
v.	Rural	30	12	19	12	5	n = 141

The variations between the types of Councils can be explained by similar factors as in Table 3C, with the added component that university studies are not readily available to people outside the metropolitan area, nor is matriculation readily available in many country areas.

Of 196 respondents who attended a tertiary education facility, 14.3% attended a CAE, 35.2% TAFE, 47.4% university, and 3.1% other.

### ***National origin and national self-image***

South Australian society, like the nation, has changed radically since 1945, and even more radically in the last 20 years. The first waves of migrants into the State were overwhelmingly British, followed closely by immigrants from Europe, especially southern Europeans – Greek and Italian people. The more recent wave, although it has affected the SA society less than in Victoria and New South Wales, has been Asian.

Many, if not most post-1945 British migrants were immediately employed, as part of the contract through which they arrived. The non-British and the later Asian migrants had two quite different and much more challenging tasks: to learn the language, and establish themselves economically. It is not surprising, then, that involvement on Local Government was not their prime aim. First-generation migrants had more pressing priorities.

The second and third generations, however, could be expected to be involved in community activities to the same extent as people of long-term Australian and South Australian heritage.

The survey results did not provide any indication that the previous patterns of the domination of the elected membership by people of long-term Australian heritage is changing significantly – at least in South Australia.

Of the 365 respondents who answered the question, 300 (82.2%) were born in Australia. Of this 300, 88 percent were born in South Australia. This, of course, includes second and third generation migrants, so the question “captured” first generation migrants only.

Of the 65 first generation migrants among the elected members who responded, the expected trend of domination by British-born was evident in 2004. 65 percent were British-born, 8 percent born in Greece, 12 percent in other European countries, 6 percent born in Asia, and 8 percent from a range of countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe and the

USA. Given the nature of immigration into South Australia, these data are close to a “mirror” of the population.

The 1997 survey, re-calculated to remove null answers, identified 82.0 percent Australian born (of whom 88.5 percent were born in South Australia); 12.5 percent of British origin; and 5.6 percent born in other countries. That is, the data are very similar between 1997 and 2004. There has been no significant change in the patterns – in fact, no real change at all. In terms of national identity, 94.5 percent of the 343 responses declared that their national identity was Australian. A total of 5.5 percent stated their identity as “shared” – for example, Australian-English, Australian-Scottish, Australian-Greek, Australian-Irish. Only one respondent reversed the linked national name to Italian-Australian.

### ***Disability***

Of 358 respondents who answered, 38 (10.6%) stated that they had a disability of some type. It is a positive comment on the efforts of Councils that 83 percent of these respondents stated that they were satisfied with the provisions of their Councils to take account of, and provide adequate supports for, their disability.

On the other hand, the 17 percent who do not believe that supports have been adequately provided could be a “wake-up” call for the Councils which have not managed to provide such “satisfaction”.

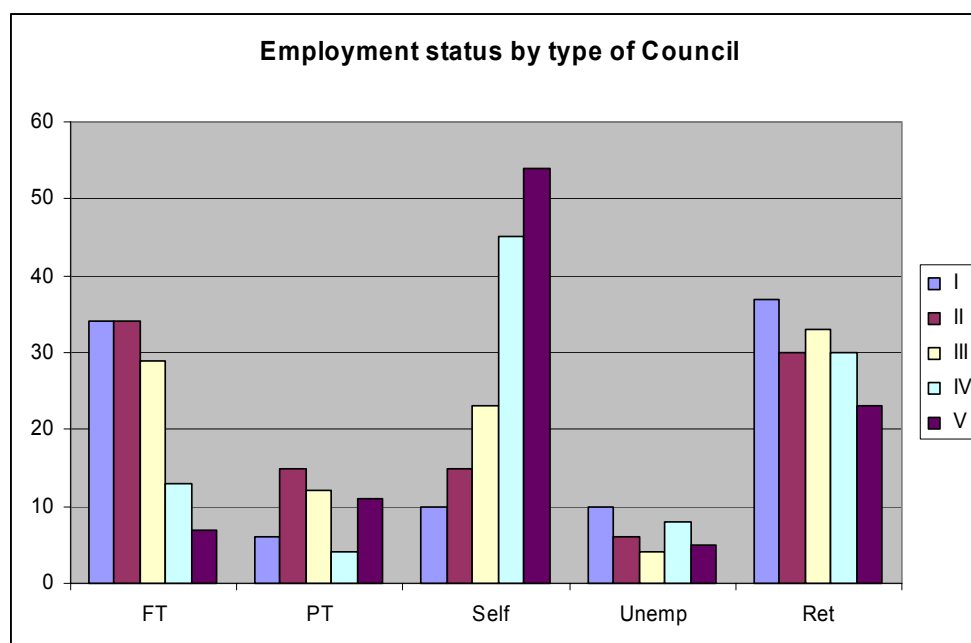
### ***Employment status***

It is reasonable to conclude that having full-time employment is a serious strain on the time and commitment of elected members of Council, and can also be a disincentive for potentially aspiring candidates for election.

To analyse the employment patterns in some detail, the 2004 questionnaire included different questions and categories to the 1997 survey. One component is directly comparable: in 1997, 21.6 percent of the members were retired; in 2004, 28.2 percent were retired. This comparison should be considered with the evidence of the increasing age of the membership, especially the marked increase in the 60+ sub-set, noted above.

Table 6: Employment status (%)

		Full-time employee	Part-time; Casual	Employer; Self-employed	Unemployed; Not paid	Retired	
	Total	18.1	10.1	37.0	6.6	28.2	n = 365
i.	Metro large	34	6	10	10	37	n = 49
ii.	Metro small	34	15	15	6	30	n = 47
iii.	Regional city	29	12	23	4	33	n = 52
iv.	Rural/Urban	13	4	45	8	30	n = 71
v.	Rural	7	11	54	5	23	n = 140
	Male	18	4	42	6	29	n = 246
	Female	15	22	27	6	29	n = 98



The patterns indicated in the geographical sub-sets are expected. The essentially urban Councils show the highest proportion of full-time employees; the rural/urban and especially the rural councils show the highest proportion of self-employed (only four respondents stated that they were employers). The latter is due essentially to the high proportion of primary producers in these regions. The proportion of retired members is similar across the regions, except for the rural areas, again due to the high proportion of primary producers, some of whom are fully self-employed well after “normal” retirement age.

It is reasonable to suggest that three categories – part time/casual, retired, and unemployed/not paid – would suffer the least in terms of balancing commitments to work and Council. At the other end, the full-time employees would have the most difficulty in allocating time and energy to both.

Employment by gender reflects State and national patterns. While full-time employment was similar for both male and female, the female members were more than five times more likely to be in part-time or casual employment.

It is worthwhile repeating the conclusion from the 1997 survey:

Domestic commitments are an obvious impediment to Council service, particularly when they run in conjunction with full-time or even part-time employment. The “second shift” is a notorious burden and to extend this to a third limits the field to the most persistent and energetic. The demands of Council work become more manageable without the daily round of attending the workforce and with a spouse to lighten the [family] load.

The continuing increase in the proportion of the members who are retired, coupled with the increasing proportion of older members, may well reflect these factors in regard to the sociology and “talent pool” of prospective Council members.

These trends, taken together, ask questions about that “talent pool”. Councils specifically, and Local Government in general, could continue to lose the input from younger people who are also attempting to develop a career, a family, or both. Some consideration is urgently needed to find a solution to this dilemma.

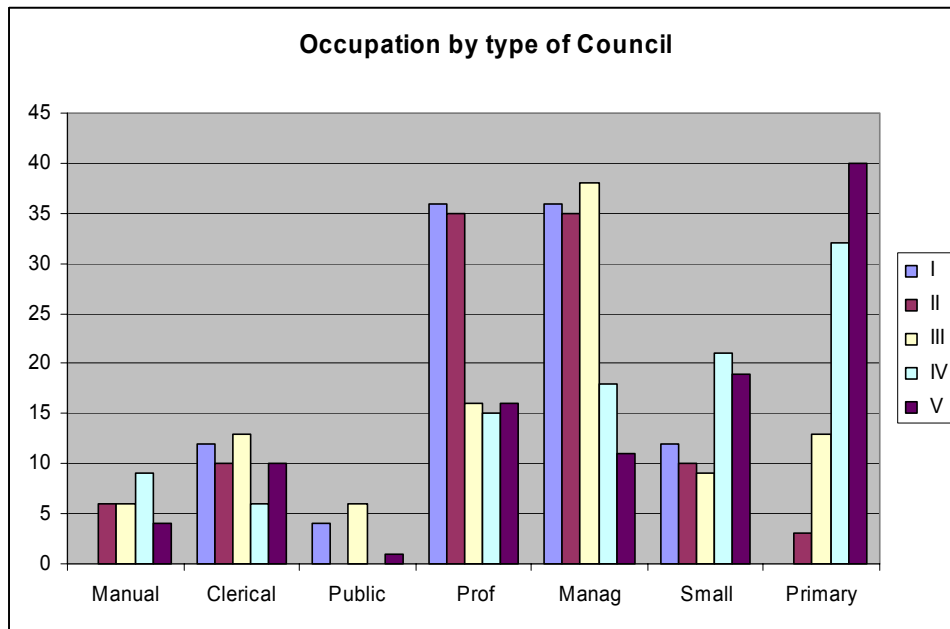
**Occupation**

The membership of Councils continues to be heavily skewed towards professional, managerial and small business activities, especially in the metropolitan and regional city Councils, and towards primary industry activities in the rural Councils.

Table 7: Occupations of members (%)

		Manual	Sales; Clerical	Public service	Professional	Managerial	Small business	Primary industry	
	Total	4.9	9.7	2.5	21.4	23.8	15.5	22.3	n = 206
i.	Metro large	0	12	4	36	36	12	0	n = 25
ii.	Metro small	6	10	0	35	35	10	3	n = 31
iii.	Regional city	6	13	6	16	38	9	13	n = 32
iv.	Rural/Urban	9	6	0	15	18	21	32	n = 34
v.	Rural	4	10	1	16	11	19	40	n = 79

Male	6	7	2	14	34	17	27	n = 136
Female	3	16	0	21	12	14	16	n = 58



The professional and managerial categories were dominant in the total membership at 44.2 percent, three of the sub-types of Councils (I, II, III), and males (51 percent). As would be expected, primary industry occupations were dominant in the rural Councils.

At the same time, the professional managerial component was strong in all types, and this reflects equivalent trends at the State and Federal parliamentary memberships.

But Local Government is the “closest to the people” of the three spheres of government. Should the membership of the sector more “reflect” the sociology of the people?

In the rural and rural/urban types, it does. There is a notable cross-section of occupations which reflect these areas. But the sectors such as manual and sales/clerical in the metropolitan membership are under-represented. Is this the ground for an emphasis on recruitment from these occupations?

Table 8: Occupational sector (%)

		Government				Private	
		C/Wealth	State	Local	Other		
	Total	3.2	16.1	5.5	1.5	73.7	n = 214
i.	Metro large	0	36	12	0	52	n = 25
ii.	Metro small	7	23	0	3	67	n = 30
iii.	Regional city	0	18	9	0	73	n = 33
iv.	Rural/Urban	6	8	0	0	86	n = 36
v.	Rural	2	12	7	0	79	n = 87
Male		3	15	4	1	78	n = 142
Female		7	22	7	2	63	n = 59

There is a strong bias to employment in the public sector in the urban areas, and especially in the metropolitan Councils, and an equally strong bias to the private sector in the rural and rural/urban Councils. There is also evidence that the female members are more likely to be employed in the public sector than males.

The employed members were asked to indicate their income categories.

Table 9: Income (%)

Less than \$15 000	12.5
16 – 25 000	13.8
26 - 35 000	13.1
36 – 45 000	15.1
46 – 55 000	12.5
56 – 65 000	7.7
66 – 75 000	6.4
76 – 85 000	2.9
86 – 100 000	4.5
over 100 000	11.5
(n= 312)	

These data have some resonance with the data on employment status and occupation. Over one quarter (26.3%) of the employed Council members have an income less than \$25 000, and nearly 40 percent an income of less than \$35 000. It is not surprising that the issues of expenses, allowances and facilities made available by Councils loom large in the reactions to the representative responsibilities of these people. Aspects of this are addressed below.

## RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

It was noted above that the age of the elected membership is rising, and that there appears to be a problem in attracting younger people to stand. Further, it was noted that this trend has strengthened over time, as shown by comparing 2004 with previous surveys.

This suggests an intractable problem in regard to recruitment. To explore this, the 2004 questionnaire asked a similar question to 1997 and 1987. Respondents were asked "What first aroused your interest in becoming a councillor?" This was an "open" question, allowing respondents to state more than one factor which influenced them, rather than the most important.

Table 10 sets out the answers, including comparisons with the 1987 and 1997 surveys. The percentages are based on the total number of answers, rather than the total respondents. This method reflects the fact that the respondents could give more than one reason for their decision to decide to become involved.

One comparison was striking: the 1997 survey elicited a high proportion of multiple answers – 699 from 353 respondents. In 2004, there was a higher proportion of the respondents who gave only one reason – there were 467 answers from 362 respondents. (The data from 1987 and 1997 were re-worked to provide a percentage of total responses.)

Table 10: Factors influencing recruitment (% of answers)

<b>Comparative: (totals)</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2004</b>
Factor			
Asked by friends	19.8	26.7	23.8
Existing Councillors	9.1	23.6	27.7
Specific issue	19.9	13.3	15.8
Family tradition	20.0	7.0	10.1
Asked by organisation	12.4	5.3	5.8
Asked by Council officers	-	4.3	0.8
Business reasons	12.0	1.7	3.3
Official campaign	1.1	0.9	2.0
Other	5.6	17.1	19.6

<b>Unpacking the "other" in 2004 (totals)</b>	
<b>"positive"</b>	
serve the community	12.2
more women in Councils	0.6
<b>"negative"</b>	
oppose existing Councillors	3.4
oppose CEO	1.1
not enough accountability	2.4

The 1997 survey report noted significant changes in recruitment factors since 1987:

The proportion asked to stand by other Councillors has increased sharply while there have been marked falls in family tradition, organizations, business reasons and specific issues as stimulants to candidacy.

The 2004 responses showed no significant changes to an extent which could be defined as "marked" in comparison with 1997. The data do suggest an increase in the proportion of respondents who reacted positively to the existing Councillors, and family tradition was slightly stronger as a factor in 2004.

One factor was shown to be weak in influence in all three surveys – the effect of official recruitment campaigns. With such a small proportion mentioning these as an influence on their decision, there could be a case for a re-assessment of the processes involved. The category of "specific issue" contained a wide range, but the majority of the responses in 2004 mentioned roads, traffic, rates and development plans.

The "other" factors revealed a strong component of "service to the community" as the reason for standing for election, which accounted for almost one fifth of the responses. Over 12 percent of the total responses included a reference to a sense of wanting to do something for the local community/ a desire to serve.

The continuing increase in the "other" category suggests that there is a growth in the idiosyncratic reasons for deciding to be involved. It is interesting and important to note that more than 12 percent of the total responses specifically mentioned, or contained a strong implication of, the concept of "service to the community" as the reason for involvement.

## THE ELECTION PROCESS

Local Government elections in South Australia, unlike State and Federal elections (and Local Government elections in some States), are not dominated by political parties. There are members of Councils who are party members (see below), and the influence of party in elections, Council affairs and deliberations, and Council decisions is growing, especially in the metropolitan Councils.

But, for most aspiring candidates, the local elections are a personal matter, with funding obtained from personal sources with, perhaps, some assistance from local organizations and groups. For most candidates there are no "armies" of canvassers, and no funding or personnel support from "head office".

Further, most new candidates, especially those employed, would be expected to have difficulty in devoting much time to the campaign, especially time to canvass widely. And such new candidates often face a powerful "incumbency factor" – contesting against a sitting member, especially one who has been a member for a considerable time and has built up support in the area, provides a severe barrier for success.

### ***Election costs***

The 2004 survey asked respondents to state (i) the total expenditure on their last election campaign and (ii) their personal expenditure.

Table 11: Election expenditure (%)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Personal</b>
Less than \$250	22.3	32.8
\$251 – 500	30.2	25.3
\$501 – 1,000	15.1	14.7
\$1,001 – 2,000	14.5	13.1
\$2,001 – 4,000	10.1	8.6
\$4,001 – 7,500	5.0	3.5
\$7,501 +	2.8	2.0
n =	179	198

Over half of the respondents who contested the election stated that the total cost of their campaign, and their personal expenditure, was less than \$500. Almost 70 percent stated that the total cost was less than \$1 000, and over 70 percent had a personal expenditure of less than \$1 000.

At the other extreme, those respondents who stated that their total and personal expenditure exceeded \$4 000 constituted only 7.8 percent and 5.5 percent of the sample.

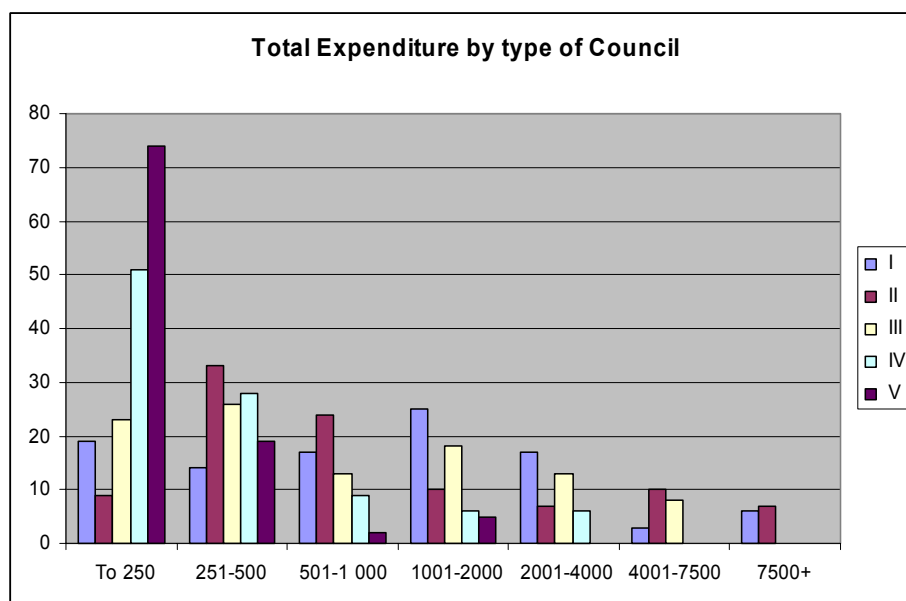
These data are a reasonable summary of the nature of Local Council election campaigns for most candidates – a personal commitment, without any significant support from party or other organizations and, in comparison with State and federal elections, a "low key expenditure" campaigning style.

The majority of the campaigns by Council aspirants appear to be similar to campaigns by independents in the State elections – personally funded and, in comparison with party campaigns, under-funded.

On the other hand, especially in the rural Councils, “local standing” can be a potent factor. This is arguably less significant in the metropolitan and large urban Councils.

Table 12: Total Election expenditure by type of Council (%)

	Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural
	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.
Less than \$250	19	9	23	51	74
\$251 – 500	14	33	26	28	19
\$501 – 1 000	17	24	13	9	2
\$1 001 – 2 000	25	10	18	6	5
\$2 001 – 4 000	17	7	13	6	0
\$ 4 001 – 7 500	3	10	8	0	0
\$7 500 +	6	7	0	0	0
n =	36	42	39	47	58



As Table 12 shows, very high proportions of the rural and rural/urban members spent, or had spent, less than \$500 on their campaigns – 79 percent and 93 percent respectively. In the former, no campaign expenditure exceeded \$2,000.

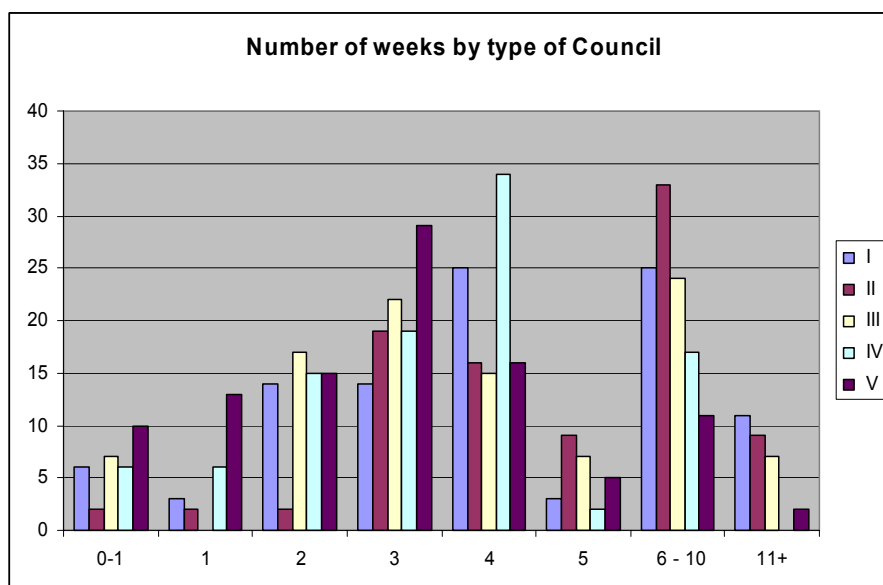
In the metropolitan Councils with populations above 50,000, 33 percent of the members stated that less than \$500 was spent; and for those with populations under 50,000, 42 percent of the members were in this category. This is a considerable proportion, but the three types of urban Councils contained the bulk of the “big spenders” and, for expenditure above \$4,001, all of them.

**Time spent on election campaigns**

The responses reported Table 13 contain significant patterns.

Table 13: Number of weeks (%)

		Weeks spent									
		Less than 1	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+	(6+)	
Total		6.4	5.6	14.5	20.9	21.4	5.1	20.9	5.2	(26.1)	n=234
i.	Metro large	6	3	14	14	25	3	25	11	(36)	n=36
ii.	Metro small	2	2	2	19	16	9	33	9	(42)	n=42
iii.	Regional city	7	0	17	22	15	7	24	7	(31)	n=41
iv.	Rural/Urban	6	6	15	19	34	2	17	0	(17)	n=41
v.	Rural	10	13	15	29	16	5	11	2	(13)	n=62



The majority of the members, in the total responses and across the types of Councils, spent between two to four weeks on their campaigns. But, at the “extremities”, there is a significant difference. A high proportion of the metropolitan members spent more than six weeks campaigning, with around 10 percent claiming to have spent more than eleven weeks.

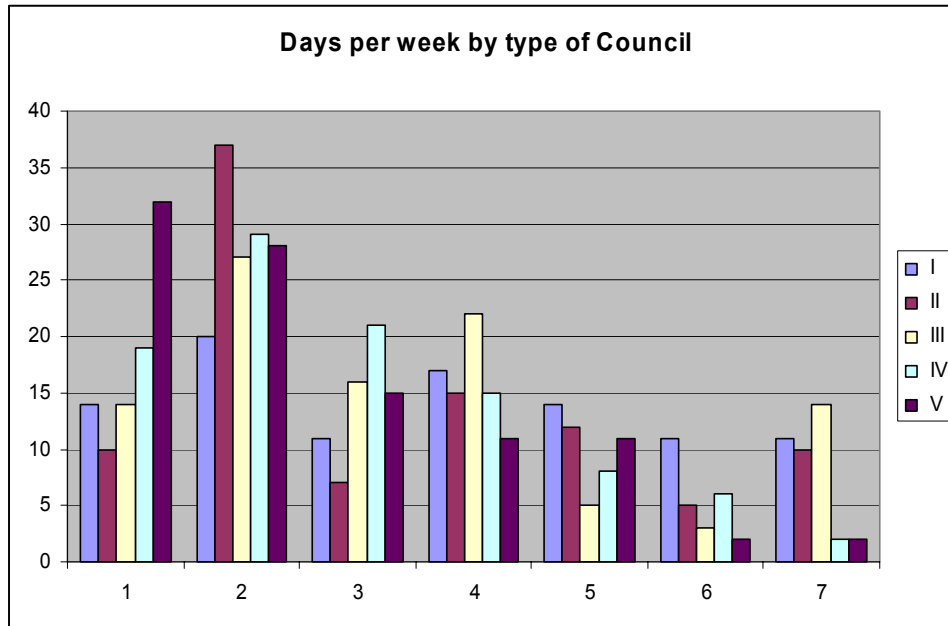
In the rural and rural/urban Councils, there was a much lower proportion who campaigned for a long time, and a much higher proportion who campaigned for less than two weeks. In fact, 47.4 percent of the total respondents, and as high as 60 percent in the rural Councils, stated that they devoted less than two weeks to their campaigns.

Given the pressures of time in balancing work commitments, it is not surprising that the majority of members, across the Council types, devoted three days or less to their campaigns. On the other hand, the number of members who stated that they campaigned five, six or seven days per week was surprisingly high, 36 percent in the metropolitan Councils with populations above 50,000. A much smaller proportion of the rural and rural/urban Councillors made a similar claim.

One explanation could be that the rural members campaigned in smaller populations, with more stable patterns of long-term residence, and that the members would already have community networks and linkages which are part of these societies.

Table 14: Number of days per week campaigning (%)

Days		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Total		18.7	28.7	14.6	15.1	10.1	5.1	7.3	n=218
i.	Metro large	14	20	11	17	14	11	11	n=35
ii.	Metro small	10	37	7	15	12	5	10	n=41
iii.	Regional city	14	27	16	22	5	3	14	n=37
iv.	Rural/Urban	19	29	21	15	8	6	2	n=48
v.	Rural	32	28	15	11	11	2	2	n=54



**Incumbency**

There is an “incumbency factor” in any election environment. In State and Federal elections, this is generally assessed at about 2 – 5 percent as a “personal vote”, depending on the standing of the sitting member.

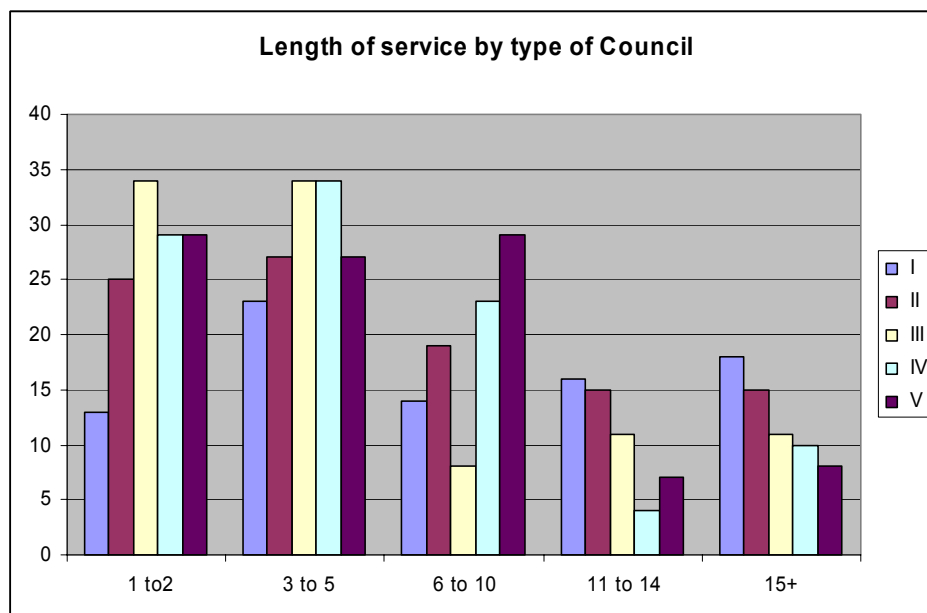
In the very large metropolitan councils, some of which have enrolments as large as the federal electorates, such “incumbency factor” is probably at a similar level. But in the smaller Councils, and especially in the lower-population rural Councils, the “incumbency factor” can be very high indeed.

A long-serving local member, who has built up networks in the Council population, and who is held in high regard, can be almost impossible to defeat in an election.

The 2004 questionnaire asked for data to explore one potential basis of the “incumbency factor” – length of service as an elected member.

Table 15: Length of service on Council (%)

Years		1-2	3-5	6-10	11-14	15+	
Total		29.3	29.1	21.0	9.2	11.5	n=358
i.	Metro large	30	23	14	16	18	n=44
ii.	Metro small	25	27	19	15	15	n=48
iii.	Regional city	34	34	8	11	11	n=53
iv.	Rural/Urban	29	34	23	4	10	n=70
v.	Rural	29	27	29	7	8	n=138



Almost 30 percent of the respondents were first elected at the latest election, and are in their first term of Council membership. A similar proportion had faced two elections. At the other end of the spectrum, over one fifth of the members had served more than 10 years as a member of Council, and a total of 11.5 percent had served more than 15 years. This suggests a “balance” – at least over the sample as a whole – of new and long-serving members.

Table 16: Elections faced (%)

		Weeks spent									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+	
Total		23	26	16	11	6	5	4	5	5	n=351
i.	Metro large	17	19	19	9	24	4	17	4	13	n=47
ii.	Metro small	18	18	18	16	14	7	17	7	7	n=45
iii.	Regional city	35	28	10	4	10	0	8	4	8	n=57
iv.	Rural/Urban	21	31	22	12	3	6	2	2	3	n=68
v.	Rural	24	27	14	12	7	5	2	7	2	n=133

Despite the trend towards older members of Councils noted above, there is clear evidence of a majority of the members, in total and across the types of Councils, who are relatively “new” members. This is especially obvious in the regional cities, the rural/urban Councils and in the rural areas where, in each case, more than half of the members have faced only three elections or less.

At the other “end” of the spectrum, there is a relatively high proportion, especially in the metropolitan Councils, who are long, and in some cases, very long-serving. In both, more than one-third of the membership has faced seven or more elections.

A cross-tabulation of number of elections faced and number contested provides evidence to indicate that the times of Council members, once elected, not being contested, are changing. There are fewer uncontested elections today, and the survey indicated the trend.

Table 17: Number of elections faced by number contested (%)

		Weeks spent									
Number Faced	Contested	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+	
	1	100									
2	25	75									n=81
3	14	29	58								n=52
4	15	15	21	50							n=34
5	5	5	29	24	38						n=21
6	31	13	13	13	13	19					n=16
7	8	8	8	0	8	23	46				n=13
8	0	18	12	12	12	0	12	29			n=17
9(+)	0	0	6	6	12	12	12	53	0		n=17

The proportions of elections faced which were contested is shown by the last figure in each row (the diagonal axis). Although not a precise correlation, with the 13 respondents who contested seven elections showing a higher than expected rate of contests, the general trend of the proportion of elections contested decreases from the 100 percent in the last election to only 29 percent of those who contested 8 elections having all of them contested. Of the same sub-set of 17 members, 30 percent had less than half of their elections contested, and of those who faced six elections, over half had three or less contested.

This suggests that, despite some evidence (noted above) of difficulties in encouraging some groups of people to stand as candidates for Local Council elections, the proportion of contested elections has increased steadily over time. This is confirmed by actual data from election statistics.

## RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Comment was made above concerning the pressures facing a member of a local Council, especially the need to balance the time and commitment to family, employment, and formal Council responsibilities. There is a further pressure: the formal and informal relations with the local community.

There are two different components in the relationship of an elected member with the local community. First, the member will be involved in the process of representation of the citizens – either in the Ward, or the Council area, or both. This is a two-way process. The citizens will approach the member for advice, assistance, an argument, a request for a matter to be taken to the Council, or a range of other reasons; the member will seek to retain contacts with the community to establish the issues of the moment, and as a “canvassing” tactic for the next election.

Second, the elected member will usually be involved with local organizations, and sometimes heavily involved. In many cases, some of this involvement would have preceded election to the Council, and retention of membership and activity within these groups is a personal decision.

But there is also a pressure on elected members, especially those who have hopes of re-election, to widen this organisational involvement. Further, many local organizations seek to have elected members of Councils involved with their organizations in the hope of better understanding of the roles they play and the requirements they face and, perhaps for some, a hope that such involvement may improve the “benefits” which could flow from the Council.

The 2004 questionnaire asked respondents to state how many and which organizations they were involved with, and to state in which ones they held office. Table 18 sets out the data. Note that some respondents stated that they were involved in “many/numerous” organizations under the various sub-headings, and did not specify which.

The overall level of involvement in community organizations was revealed by the 2004 survey to be indeed high. Very few respondents recorded “no involvement”, and a high proportion indicated involvement in most, if not all of the types of community activity explored in the survey.

This is not surprising, for two reasons. First, people with sufficient “community-mindedness” to seek to involve themselves as elected members of Councils will usually show the trait by their involvement with local groups. Second, for aspiring or incumbent members, membership of local groups is an excellent way to network, and to maintain a high profile.

Further, there is a relatively high proportion of members who have held office in these organizations, ranging from 28 percent in the “service” organizations to 50 percent for “work” organizations. That is, there is an evident strong commitment to the local bodies.

A number of respondents – up to 17 percent of the total in the case of “work” groups simply stated “many” on the questionnaire.

Table 18 sets out the results of the questions concerning group membership. Where commentary is relevant, it is provided within the table.

The percentages are of the responses, as a number of respondents mentioned more than one group in a category.

Table 18: Organisational involvement (% of responses)

<b>Work:</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Trade Union</b>	<b>Boards</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>"many"</b>
Total	35.8	22.8	19.2	3.1	4.2	15.0
(Hold office: 50%)						

These data reflect the high proportion of these professions in the membership (Table 6), with almost 60 percent involved in groups, and half on the respondents holding office.

<b>Public:</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Hospital</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>"many"</b>
Total	44.9	11.4	17.1	6.9	16.7
(Hold office: 33%)					

Involvement in school groups constituted almost half of the replies.

<b>Political:</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Pressure Group/Lobby</b>	<b>Ratepayers /community</b>	<b>Other</b>
Total	72.4	13.4	9.7	4.4
(Hold office: 35%)				

The high level of involvement with political parties does not necessarily mean that party politics dominates Council involvement. A "political" involvement in the Local Council and involvement through a party with the State and National politics are logically connected. There are some Councils where there has been a trend to party membership becoming important in Council deliberations and decisions, but that was not explored in the 2004 survey.

<b>Religious:</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Charity</b>
Total	96.0	4.0
(hold office: 38%)		

<b>Service:</b>	<b>"Service"</b>	<b>Scouts/Guides</b>	<b>Red Cross</b>	<b>CFS/SES/MFS</b>	<b>Voluntary</b>
Total	42.5	9.6	7.2	18.3	22.1
(Hold office: 28%)					

A number of different organizations were mentioned by respondents in regard to the composite "service" category, including Apex, Lions, Probus, Zonta, Rotary and Toc H. Not all of these have "service" as their prime component, but they have been aggregated in the Table.

<b>Sport etc:</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Arts</b>	<b>Other</b>
Total	82.0	12.9	5.1
(Hold office: 39%)			

<b>Other:</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Charity</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>"Many"</b>
Total	61.3	11.9	14.9	11.9
(Hold office: 26%)				

When the level of community group involvement is analysed by the type of Council, it is clear that there is a relatively consistent pattern. There are few cases where the involvement is significantly different.

Table 19 analyses these cross-tabulations for the major components of the data above. As in Table 18, the percentages are of the responses.

Table 19: Group involvement by type of Council (% of responses)

<b>Type of Council</b>	<b>i.</b>	<b>ii.</b>	<b>iii.</b>	<b>iv.</b>	<b>v.</b>
	<b>Metro large</b>	<b>Metro small</b>	<b>Regional city</b>	<b>Rural /Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Work</b>					
Business	21	25	30	44	48
Professional	7	36	37	19	19
Trade Union	50	22	7	17	10
Many	18	14	15	11	14
<b>Public</b>					
School	56	38	51	60	35
Hospital	6	14	11	2	17
Boards	20	13	25	17	21
Many	18	24	9	19	17
<b>Political</b>					
Party	82	84	61	60	73
PG/Lobby	0	10	22	15	15
<b>Religion</b>					
Church	94	75	92	100	100
<b>Service</b>					
"Service"	50	48	64	48	45
Scouts/Guides	4	20	6	4	13
CFS/MFS/SES	21	0	9	23	25
Voluntary	17	20	15	17	12
<b>Sport</b>					
Sport	74	70	85	82	86
<b>Other</b>					
Community	60	46	44	68	68
Other	20	27	10	16	12
Many	10	27	13	5	11

Comparisons across the data within any group result (rows) must be done with caution, as the totals (n) of the cells are relatively small, and this can result in a degree of skew. However, there are some comparisons which can be meaningfully made.

The “business” involvement is significantly higher in the rural and rural/urban Councils, reflecting by the heavy involvement in such organizations as the South Australian Farmers Federation, and associated or similar groups. The involvement with trades unions was significantly higher in the metropolitan Councils.

Involvement with school, church, “service”, sport and community groups was relatively consistent across all types of Councils, given the small “n” in some cells. Involvement in political party was at a higher level in the metropolitan Councils and in the rural Councils.

Involvement in sporting groups was significantly higher in the regional cities and the rural/urban and rural Councils, reflecting the role of sport in these communities.

## ATTITUDES TO COUNCIL WORK

The 2004 questionnaire included a major section seeking information concerning the attitudes of members to various elements of their Council work. A total of 14 elements of such work were presented, and respondents were asked to assess their attitude and response to each of these through a scale:

*very positive / positive / slightly positive / neutral / slightly negative / negative / very negative*

From the replies, it was possible to assess the attitudes: overall, as either negative or positive; and within gradations of both. The similar question in the 1997 survey used a five-part scale, but this still allows for a comparison of positive/negative attitudes. The 1997 survey contained fewer sub-elements; comparisons are reported on these.

Table 20 reports the full matrix of responses; Table 21 provides a comparison (where possible) with the 1997 findings. Then each component is analysed separately. This detailed analysis is justified on the grounds that the "health" of the Local Government sector can be assessed through the attitudes of the elected members to their work.

The components are listed in "shorthand" – see appended questionnaire for full wording – ranked in order of "very positive".

Table 20: Attitudes to components of work (%) – total respondents

	<b>Very positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Slightly Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Slight Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Very Negative</b>	
<b>Attitudes to:</b>								
Council Staff	45.6	36.2	8.6	3.6	3.6	1.7	0.8	n=362
Public	45.3	37.3	10.2	3.3	1.7	0.8	1.4	n=362
Meetings	40.3	32.9	15.5	5.8	3.3	1.4	0.8	n=362
Policy making	38.7	33.7	15.5	5.5	3.3	2.8	0.6	n=362
Council Members	31.3	41.8	11.9	5.8	5.5	2.2	1.4	n=362
Strategic plans	29.6	35.4	20.7	8.3	1.9	3.3	0.8	n=362
Time involved	28.9	35.1	7.6	11.2	9.8	4.2	3.1	n=356
Development Assessment	25.9	30.6	18.9	12.8	5.8	3.1	2.8	n=359
Financial Management	24.4	41.7	18.9	7.2	3.9	3.1	0.8	n=360
Planning policy	23.6	34.7	21.9	11.7	5.0	2.5	0.6	n=360
Contesting Elections	21.8	25.2	12.9	26.9	6.4	4.5	2.2	n=357
Legal issues	15.0	35.7	25.5	13.6	7.2	2.2	0.8	n=361
Financial Costs	12.8	18.2	11.7	28.8	14.0	10.3	4.2	n=358
Paper work	11.9	30.5	24.1	14.7	8.9	6.1	3.9	n=361

Two conclusions are obvious: there is a general level of positive attitudes to all components; and the level of "positive" about the some of the components is not necessarily what might be expected.

Table 21: Positive and negative attitudes to Council work, 2004 and 1997 compared (%)

	2004		1997	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Council Staff	90.4	6.1	N/A	
Public	92.8	3.9	89.5	5.1
Meetings	88.7	5.5	N/A	
Policy making	87.9	6.7	88.4	8.2
Council Members	85.0	9.1	N/A	
Strategic plans	85.7	6.0	84.7	9.1
Time involved	68.0	17.1	79.3	14.2
Development Assessment	75.4	11.7	N/A	
Financial Management	85.0	7.8	82.2	12.5
Planning Policy	80.2	8.3	N/A	
Contesting Elections	59.9	13.1	66.0	15.9
Legal Issues	76.2	10.2	72.2	20.1
Financial Costs	42.7	28.5	48.4	31.2
Paper work	66.5	18.9	N/A	

In the main, there is very little difference between the attitudes expressed in 1997 and those reported in 2004. Only one aspect of Council work has significantly changed - there has been a major decrease in the positive attitude in relation to the time involved

In terms of both sets of results, three aspects received a significantly high level of negative response: the component of the costs involved with being a Councillor (evident in both 1997 and 2004); – 79.3 percent positive in 1997; only 68.0 percent positive in 2004; reactions to the amount of paper work involved; and the amount of time involved. The last also showed a significant increase in negative attitude from 1997.

There was a high level of positive attitudes to eight of the 14 components of Council work included in the 2004 survey. Given the rare, but widely publicised, internal conflicts in some Councils, the response to the issue of relations with the Council staff is gratifying – this produced the second highest positive attitude of 90.4 percent. For good governance in a Council, a “partnership” between staff and elected members is essential – it is clear that most members have a positive attitude to these relations in their Council.

Five components which received a very strong positive response were more predictable. A person would probably not seek to stand for election to a Local Council unless he or she was interested in, and willing to work well with the public, in meetings, in policy-making, with other elected members, and on the issue of strategic plans.

The high positive reaction in relation to two issues may be surprising to some. It is not unusual to hear of difficulties in Councils, and public negative reactions, on the issues of financial and planning matters within Councils. But the attitudes expressed by the respondents indicate that the Council Members have a positive attitude to both these issues, with 85 percent positive about financial management.

Attitudes around planning matters were separated into planning policy and development assessment, with 80.2 percent and 75.4 percent respectively expressing a positive attitude.

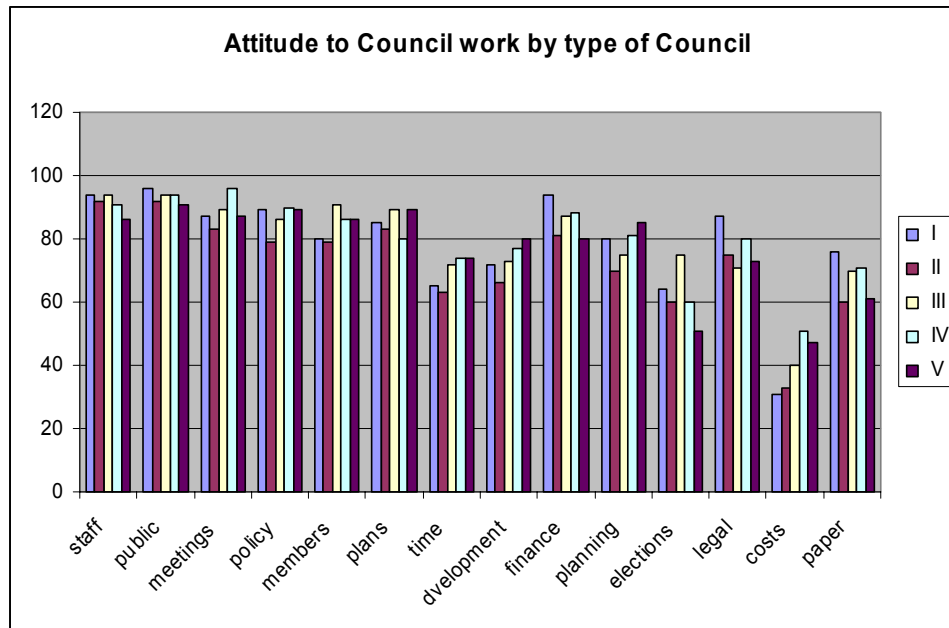
Legal issues, which require a degree of expertise, were also reported in a positive attitude – 76.2 percent.

The low level of positive attitude to elections needs consideration. There could be a number of reasons, including the costs to the candidates and the time involved, especially for people in full-time work. But it could also indicate that, for some members, elections simply loom as events in which they have to defend their records and their standing in the community.

When the responses are analysed by type of Council, there is little evidence of any significant differences in the ranges of attitudes. No are there any significant differences when the attitudes of male and female members are compared.

Table 22: Attitudes to Council work by type of Council and Gender (% "positive")

	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v	Male	Female
	Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural		
Staff	94	92	94	91	86*	90	92
Public	96	92	94	94	91	93	93
Meetings	87	83	89	96*	87	88	94
Policy making	89	79*	86	90	89	85	88
Members	80*	79*	91	86	86	86	81
Strategic plans	85	83	89	80*	89	85	89
Time	65	63	72	74	74	87	90
Development	72	66*	73	77	80	84	80
Finance	94*	81	87	88	80	86	82
Planning policy	80	70*	75	81	85	79	85
Elections	64	60	75*	60	51	60	60
Legal issues	87*	75	71	80*	73	77	75
Costs	31*	33*	40	51	47	44	40
Paper work	76	60*	70	71	61*	65	70



The data naturally reflect the various levels reported at the “total” level of analysis in Table 21. The cross-tabulations in Table 22 were conducted to establish whether there were any significant differences from the “total” patterns when the attitudes are analysed by sub-sets – geographical/sociological and gender.

The “\*” in the table indicate where a set of responses from one type of Council is different from the other types – either more or less positive. But given the relatively small populations in some cells, these should not always nor necessarily be treated as significant. Only one category shows a difference of an extent where it may be significant. The “positive” attitude to the costs of membership is much lower in the metropolitan area than elsewhere.

## COUNCILLORS' TIME "ALLOCATIONS"

Table 21 indicated that the component of time necessary to carry out the roles and functions of a local member was below the mean in terms of eliciting a positive attitude from the respondents. The 2004 questionnaire sought further information on allocation of time, across six specific roles, and a residual category:

preparing for and attending full Council;  
 preparing for and attending Council committees;  
 dealing with correspondence and reports in relation to Council meetings;  
 consulting with other Council members;  
 consulting with Council officers;  
 contact with the public on Council business; and  
 (other).

Table 23: Allocation of time (%)

Hours per month	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41+	Average	
Council	11.8	37.1	19.5	15.4	4.9	3.6	5.2	2.6	13.8	n=364
Committees	23.6	27.2	19.1	12.4	4.8	4.5	5.6	2.8	13.3	n=356
Correspondence/Reports	47.3	25.9	11.1	9.1	2.3	2.6	0.9	0.9	8.3	n=351
Members	70.4	19.4	3.7	3.9	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.6	5.3	n=355
Officers	63.6	20.3	6.1	5.0	1.7	0.8	1.7	0.9	6.5	n=360
Public	43.4	25.9	8.7	11.3	2.3	2.5	3.7	2.2	12.2	n=355
(Other)	17.3	29.1	8.2	10.9	19.1	6.4	6.4	2.7	14.2	n=110

In terms of the average time spent, omitting the "other" category, for which there is a certain vagueness about the nature of the work done, and whether it was all central to Council responsibilities, the preparation for and attendance at Council meetings is the most significant component of time allocation, with preparation and attendance at committees a very close second.

In terms of the former, just over 50 percent of the respondents spent more than 10 hours per month; in terms of committee work, 55 percent spent over 10 hours a month. At the other end of the scale, 70 percent of members spent five hours or less consulting with fellow members; 63.5 percent five hours or less consulting with staff.

The third highest commitment of time related to dealing with the public: an average of 12.2 hours per month, with 34 percent of members spending more than 10 hours per month on this role.

Table 21 showed that dealing with paper work elicited the lowest positive rating for members, yet only 26.8 percent of the respondents spent more than 10 hours per month on this task, by no means the largest "drain" on time available.

There were members who claimed significantly higher levels of time allocation. For example: 16 percent stated that they spent more than 20 hours on formal Council meetings, and the respective percentages for the other functions were committees 18 percent, correspondence/reports 7 percent, members 3 percent, officers 5 percent, and public 10 percent.

Table 24 shows the proportions of the members who spent more than 10 hours on these functions by the type of Council and by gender, and the average times spent on these functions by the type of Council.

Table 24A: Time spent on functions by Council type and gender (%)  
(spending more than 10 hours per month)

	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v	Male	Female
	Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural		
Council	51*	54	51*	59	57	50.2	53.5*
Committees	55	50	64*	38*	46	46.6	58.2*
Correspondence	43*	27	30	25	20*	26.6	29.6*
Members	13	5*	12	3*	11	8.4	11.6*
Officers	19	26	19	10	14	14.0	23.7*
Public	43*	38*	30	29	26	29.0	36.2*

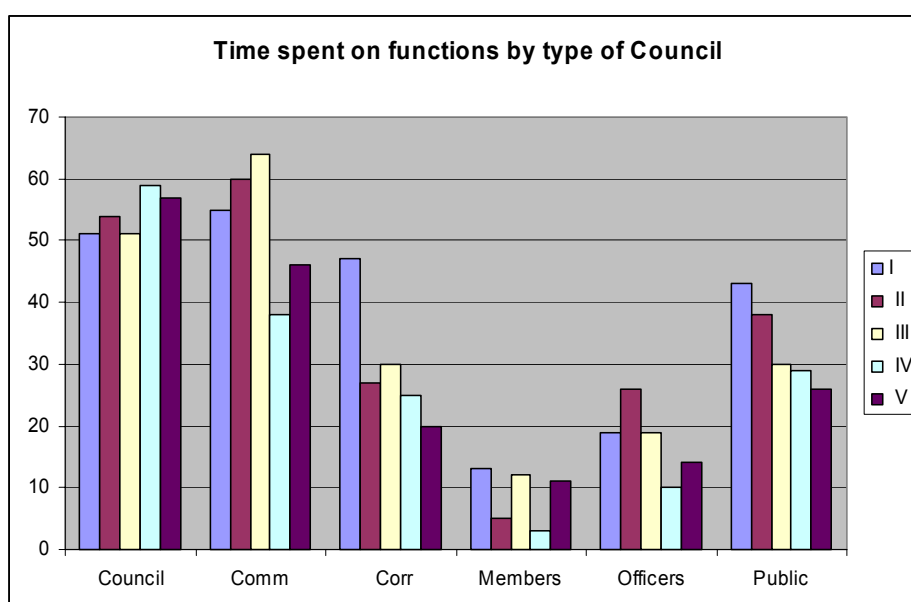


Table 24B: Average time spent on functions by type of Council (hours per month %)

	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v
	Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural
Council	17	14	14	12	14
Committees	14	16	16	12	12
Correspondence	11	10	9	7	7
Members	7	6	5	4	5
Officers	6	8	8	5	5
Public	12	10	12	10	8

Table 24A reinforces the assessment that preparation and attendance at Council and committee meetings are the highest demand on the time of members with, in all but one case, more than half of the members spending more than 10 hours per month on each.

The “\*” indicate cells which indicate a result different from the pattern within each function. For example, time spent with formal Council business was lower in the large metropolitan and regional city sectors; formal committee business was higher in regional and lower in rural/urban sectors; consultation with other members was lower in smaller metropolitan and rural/urban sectors; and relations with the public higher in the metropolitan sectors.

On the other hand, these differences, while evident, must be assessed in terms of the relatively small populations in some cells of the matrix. The differences are evident, but their extent and significance are open to debate.

The analysis of time spent by gender revealed a significant difference: a significantly higher proportion of females than males stated that they spent more than 10 hours per month on each of the functions.

Table 24B shows the average times spent on each function by type of Council. The pattern within each type of Council ( rows) is relatively uniform, suggesting that, in terms of average commitment, there is no significant difference between the Council types. However, as the previous tables have shown, there are differences especially at the extremes – low and very high time commitments.

In the final analysis, these data provide a rough method of assessing the total time demands on a member of Local Government. Using the data in Table 24B, the average hours per month allocated to these formal functions across the types of Council are (above 50,000) metropolitan 67 hours, (below 50,000) metropolitan 64 hours, regional city 64 hours, rural/urban 50 hours, and rural 51 hours.

These data show significant differences. It may be reasonable to assume, however, that the large urban Councils have more formal sub-institutions and, with larger elected memberships, formal processes which take up more time, than the smaller rural and rural/urban Councils. As well, it may be that the smaller rural Councils, smaller in membership and population, and with stronger networks within the communities, can and do resolve Council matters with less formal processes.

Further, these data of workload are based on the “average” member. When the “extremities” of the respondents are brought into the equation, then there are marked differences in time allocated. For example, taking the proportions of the members who reported that they spent less than 5 hours and more than 25 hours per month, there are many members who spend much less and much more than the average times.

Table 25: "Low, High, Average" allocations of time by type of Council (% , hours, %)

	<b>Less than 5 hours per month (%)</b>	<b>Average hours per month (n)</b>	<b>More than 25 hours per month (%)</b>
Council	12	13.8	11
Committees	24	13.3	13
Correspondence	47	8.3	4
Members	70	5.8	2
Officers	64	6.5	4
Public	43	12.2	8

## “REMUNERATION”

The use of quotation marks in the sub-title is important. The current system of “remuneration” in the Local Government sector is an allowance, based on a principle that the duties of elected members involve expenses, and that there should be compensation for this. The debates, within this basic principle, revolve essentially around the amount of the allowance.

The existing system, then, is not a “salary”, nor a “payment for work done”. It is a compensation for expenses incurred. Council Members are not paid for their time.

There are currently competing lines of argument concerning the adequacy of the allowance provided for elected members of Council, about the method by which this allowance should be determined, and about whether the concept of an allowance should be questioned.

The existing allowable range of allowance for ordinary members is from a minimum of \$1,670 to a maximum of \$6,680. In recent years, many members have argued that the maximum should be significantly increased to take account of the changing nature of the demands on electoral members, and to recognise that Local Government, especially after the amalgamation process, and the continuing “cost-shifting” by the State, involves a much more complex and time-consuming and cost consuming occupation.

A further argument, with much substance, is based on the “special” allowance range for elected members of the City of Adelaide Council - \$10,270 - \$13,700. Given that this Council, within the classification scheme above, would be classed as “metropolitan less than 50,000”, and is one of the smallest metropolitan Councils, many members ask why the “special treatment”?

The 2004 questionnaire explored the issue of “remuneration”. It included questions about the preferred form of “remuneration”, and the level of such “remuneration”.

The first question asked respondents to rank, in order of preference, four forms of “remuneration”:

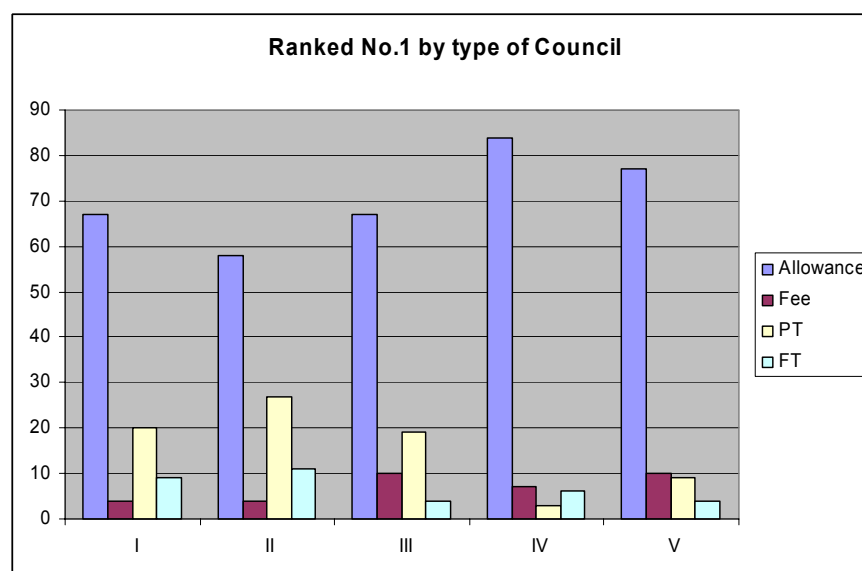
- annual allowance;
- meeting fee;
- part-time salary; and
- full-time salary.

It should be noted that the last three forms are radically different to an allowance, in that they involve a “fee for service”, a payment for work done, or a recognition that there should be a formal salary. The principle of an allowance includes none of these components.

A number of respondents made comments on this in their answers to this question. Some emphasised that the role of an elected member of Local Government is a “voluntary” one, and that it should not be made “professional”. Some commented that the introduction of a salary, or even a payment for meetings, would seriously erode the “service” principle which underlies the traditional concept of Local Government. Some, in fact, stated emphatically that the existing levels of the allowance were suitable, for significant increases could result in people joining local Councils for pecuniary interests, rather than for community, voluntary service.

Table 26: Rank orders of methods of "remuneration" (%)

<b>26A: Rank order ( n=356)</b>				
<i>(analysed on the basis of rank order (row = 100%))</i>				
	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Meeting Fee</b>	<b>PT salary</b>	<b>FT Salary</b>
Ranked No.1	72.6	8.2	13.5	5.6 (=100)
Ranked No.2	19.8	43.9	25.7	10.7 (=100)
Ranked No.3	12.0	24.0	46.7	17.4 (=100)
Ranked No.4	2.8	24.2	3.7	69.3 (=100)
<b>26B: Rank order (n= 356)</b>				
<i>(analysed on the basis of form of "remuneration" (column = 100%))</i>				
Ranked No.1	80.2	14.6	24.0	10.7
Ranked No.2	11.5	41.4	29.5	6.4
Ranked No.3	6.8	22.2	43.0	17.1
Ranked No.4	1.5	21.7	3.5	65.8
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
<b>26C: Ranked No. 1 by type of Council (%)</b>				
<i>(row = 100%)</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>5.6 (n=357)</b>
i. Metro large	67	4	20	9 (n=47)
ii. Metro small	58	4	27	10 (n=48)
iii. Regional city	67	10	19	4 (n=53)
iv. Rural/Urban	84	7	3	6 (n=71)
v. Rural	77	10	9	4 (n=141)



It is very clear that the existing principle of an allowance is the overwhelming majority choice. Of the total of "rank No.1", (Table 26A) the allowance was the choice of almost three quarters of the respondents. On the "reverse" scale, (Table 26B) 80.2 percent of the rankings for the allowance were No.1.

Support for a salary rather than an allowance was highest in the metropolitan and regional city Councils, and lowest in the rural/urban and rural Councils. In the former groups, between 19.2 percent and 27.1 percent favoured a part-time salary, and between 23.4 percent and 37.6 percent wanted to change the basis of "remuneration" from a "voluntary service" with allowance to a salary-based employment.

This pattern was different across the types of Councils, with the rural/urban and rural Council responses well above the average in support of the allowance, and with support weakest in the metropolitan Councils. Even in these, however, the allowance was the clear majority choice.

The least favoured option for "remuneration" was the full-time salary. A total of 69.3 percent ranked it their least preferred, with the strongest support from the metropolitan Council respondents, although this was still only at around 10 percent.

The second most preferred option was a part-time salary, ranked No.1 by 13.5 percent of the total respondents, with the most support for this option coming from the respondents in metropolitan Councils with populations of fewer than 50,000. The meeting fee was the first option of 8.2 percent of the total respondents, and it was the strongest supported No. 2 choice in both methods of analysis of the rankings. The strongest support (10.2%) came in the rural Council sample.

The concept of a full-time salary received only small minority support – only 5.6 percent gave it their No.1 choice, over 65 percent ranked it at No.4, although the strongest support was in the metropolitan Council respondents.

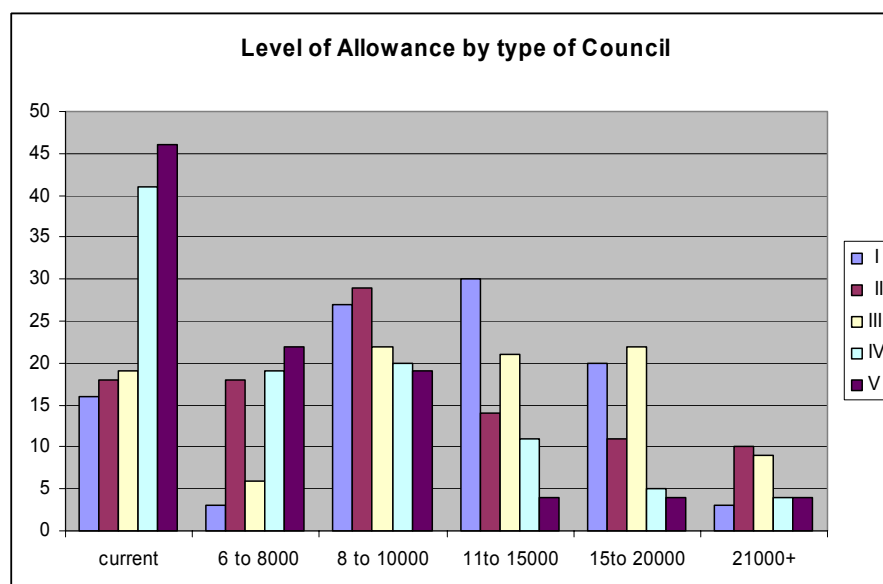
In summary, while the principle of an allowance – a "compensation" – was the clear majority preference overall, and in all of the Council types, there was a strong, if very minority support for a salary – part-time or full-time - in the metropolitan and regional city Council membership.

#### **Amount of "remuneration"**

The questionnaire asked respondents to state what level of "remuneration" should be provided in terms of their No.1 choice.

Table 27: Level of Allowance (%) Total, and types of Council

		i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.
		Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural
Current level satisfactory	8.6	13	7	13	9	6
To \$6,000	22.2	0	4	3	30	37
\$6,000 + travel costs	2.2 = 33.0	3 = 16	7 = 18	3 = 19	2 = 41	3 = 46
\$6,000 - \$8,000	16.5	3	18	6	19	22
\$8,000 - \$10,000	21.8	27	29	22	20	19
\$11,000 - \$15,000	12.3	30	14	21	11	4
\$15,000 - \$20,000	9.5	20	11	22	5	4
\$21,000 +	5.7	3	10	9	4	4



One third of the total responses opted for an allowance which would approximately continue the existing regime. But the support for this showed a significant difference between the types of Councils. In fact, the support showed a very strong trend line from the low support of only 16 percent and 18 percent in the metropolitan area to a high level of 41 percent and 46 percent in the rural/urban and rural Councils respectively. *This is one of the sharpest and most obvious differences in the whole of the data analysed in the 2004 survey by types of Council.*

A total of 16.5 percent opted for a level of allowance which would apply an approximate cost-of-living rise to the current maximum allowance - \$6001 – 8 000. *That is, almost half of the total sample either opted for the present level or for the present level with a minor increase.*

Just over one-fifth of the respondents opted for a significant increase to between \$8 000 and \$10 000, while 27.5 percent opted to seek at least a doubling of the existing allowance, of whom 15.2 percent sought an allowance above \$15 000 per year. Just under 6 percent opted for an allowance of at least \$21 000.

The responses in regard to the “fee/salary” options contained only a small number of respondents; the data are provided “for the record”.

Table 28: Level of "remuneration" – fee/salary options (%) (by ranked No. 1)

<b>Meeting fee (N= 23)</b>	
\$20 per hour	4
\$25 per hour	21.7
\$100 fee	21.7
\$200 fee	39.1
\$250 fee	4.3
<b>Part-time Salary (N= 48)</b>	
\$10 000 – 14 000	27
\$ 15 000 – 20 000	50
\$ 21 000 – 30 000	23
<b>Full-time salary (N= 20)</b>	
<i>(note – with the small numbers 5% = 1 response)</i>	
\$9,000	5
\$20,000	20
\$25,000	25
\$40,000	15
Over \$40,000	35

## FACILITIES AND SUPPORTS

### ***Available***

The allowances provided for members of Councils are a compensation for costs incurred in their roles.

This makes the assumption that the services, facilities and the supports necessary for them to carry out their functions with the optimum efficiency and effectiveness will be available to them.

Where such requirements are not provided by the Council, then there is an implicit assumption that the members will use their own technological and other facilities, and that the costs of these will either be met under the allowance, or that they will be a "donation" by the members through the "service" principle of being a member of a Council.

The 2004 questionnaire sought information specifically under the heading of supports, services and facilities made available to the members *by or in the Council*. The question asked was: "In regard to supports provided by your Council for the performance of your Council duties, please tick which are currently available to you". The question asked for responses in regard to *Council-provided* services, facilities and supports "at home, at work, at Council".

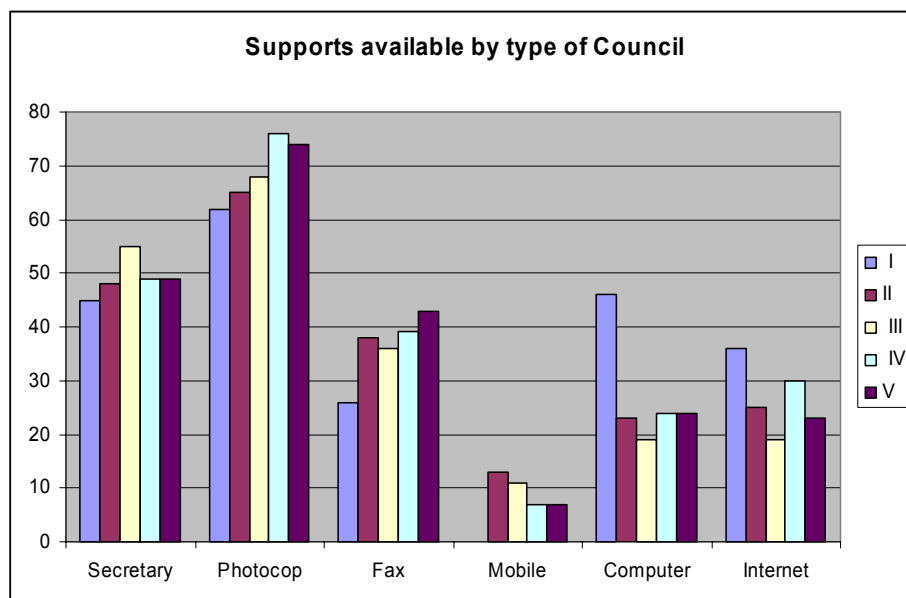
Unfortunately, there is evidence from the survey data that this question may have been either misinterpreted or it was insufficiently clarified. The responses in regard to "home/work" suggest that many respondents may not have taken into account the emphasis on "*Council provided*". Due to this possible misinterpretation, the data is too inconclusive to fully evaluate which, if any, home and work supports, facilities and services are provided by the Council.

However, the data of responses are reported (Table 29) on the assumption that they do provide some information about the availability of such supports, whether owned and paid for by the member or (in what was expected to be a very small minority of cases) provided by the Council.

Table 29: Supports available (% yes)

Total Membership	At Council	At Home	At Work
Secretarial Services	49.3	5.7	4.6
Photocopies	72.6	16.9	12.3
Fax	39.5	44.4	12.5
Mobile Telephone	7.9	30.2	9.0
Computer	27.9	49.3	12.0
Internet	26.6	44.4	12.0
	(n = 367)		

	i.	ii.	iii.	iv.	v.
By type of Council	Metro large	Metro small	Regional city	Rural /Urban	Rural
Secretarial Services	45	48	55	49	49
Photocopies	62	65	68	76	74
Fax	26	38	36	39	43
Mobile Telephone	-	13	11	7	7
Computer	46	23	19	24	24
Internet	36	25	19	30	23



The discussion will refer only to the supports available at the Council.

Given that the members of Councils are provided with an allowance as a compensation for costs incurred in their role, it could be expected that the members should be able to expect to have access to necessary supports, at least through the Council office.

What would constitute “necessary”? In the modern world, it is reasonable to define as “necessary” access to a photocopier, a fax, and a computer with internet access. These supports seem to be essential for dealing with paperwork, keeping full records of documents, correspondence and reports, and efficient access to constituents and other people and groups which are necessary for the representative’s role to be carried out properly.

Given this, to what extent should a member be expected to use personal equipment and consumables for his or her “professions”? A strong argument can be put that either the allowance should be at a level to cover the costs of such equipment, or the equipment should be available at the Council, for the use of the members.

Access to secretarial services would be an asset in the efficiency of representation. But it would be difficult to classify it as a necessity.

The survey data shows a relative lack of such “necessary” facilities at the Council. While 72.6 percent stated that they had access to a photocopier at Council, less than 40 percent had access to a fax, and less than 30 percent access to a computer.

The patterns across the types of Councils revealed few significant differences. The pattern in the total responses was generally mirrored in each of the five categories of Councils. The high proportion which had access to a Council computer in the (above 50 000) metropolitan Councils is the only obvious and significant difference

### ***Wanted***

The questionnaire asked: “What support(s) would you like to see *provided by the Council* to assist you to improve your performance as a member?” The *italics* are added, and perhaps, as in the previous section, should have been included in the questionnaire.

The question allowed multiple answers – 176 respondents gave 238 answers. That is, 191 of the 367 members had no requests for the further provision of facilities. The full list of answers is provided.

Table 30: Supports wanted (numbers of responses)

<b>Technology</b>	
Computer (often laptop mentioned, usually combined with a request for internet capability)	99
Mobile telephone	20
Phone/fax	14
Fax	4
Shredder	2
Photocopier	2
Electronic Diary	1
Office space at Council	1
Second telephone line	1
Car phone	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Financial</b>	
Car Allowance	11
Higher Allowance	10
Reduced rates	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Assistance</b>	
Training for Members	22
Workshops for Members	16
Secretariat for Members only	16
Personal Assistant	7
Stationery Allowance	2
More co-operation from staff	8
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238</b>

There were no significant differences when these requests were analysed by the type of Council. The strongest level of requests for secretariat/personal assistant was in the metropolitan Councils; the strongest level for training and workshops from the rural and rural/urban Councils.

### ***Supports non-Council***

Given the voluntary nature of the work-life of a member of Council, the relative lack of facilities and supports noted above, and the relatively low level of the allowance, some members may have to rely on "outside" support to carry out their roles with the optimum efficiency and effectiveness.

The questionnaire asked respondents to outline their non-Council supports.

Table 31: Non-Council supports (number of responses: 122 from 103 respondents)

Wife, husband, family	65
Community – unspecified	16
Flexibility of employer	9
LGA	6
From work	6
Use of fax/computer	5
Advice – general	4
Advice – legal	2
Group membership	5
Financial	4



# Council Members' Survey

## 2004

The Local Government Association of South Australia has commissioned Professor Dean Jaensch AO, Politics Department, Flinders University, to undertake a comprehensive survey of Council Members in SA to support the work of the LGA, general understanding of the profile and environment of members and in particular to support the LGA Governance Program and the Local Government Elections and Representation Review. The survey is based on work last undertaken in 1997/98 which can be found on [www.lga.sa.gov.au/goto/members](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/goto/members).

Your support in taking 20 minutes or so to complete the survey will contribute to understanding about and the capacity of Local Government across the State.

*The information provided on this questionnaire will be absolutely confidential.  
The material will be used only for the production of aggregate data.  
Any opinions offered will not be attributed.*

Note that this survey is different from the Council Members' Online Self-Assessment tool which is designed to assist you and the sector to identify skills and training needs.

***Please place your completed Questionnaire in the  
Reply Paid Envelope provided and return by 23 July 2004***

# LGA Council Members' Survey

Please either tick ✓ the relevant box or write in the space provided

Is your Council:

Metropolitan (population more than 50,000)  <sup>1</sup>

Metropolitan (population less than 50,000)  <sup>2</sup>

Regional city  <sup>3</sup>      Urban/Rural  <sup>4</sup>      Rural  <sup>5</sup>

1-3

4-5

6

## Personal Particulars:

Age 18-24  <sup>1</sup>      25-29  <sup>2</sup>      30-34  <sup>3</sup>

35-39  <sup>4</sup>      40-44  <sup>5</sup>      45-49  <sup>6</sup>

50-54  <sup>7</sup>      55-59  <sup>8</sup>      60+  <sup>9</sup>

Sex Male  <sup>1</sup>      Female  <sup>2</sup>

7

8

## Current Family Situation:

Married  <sup>1</sup>      De Facto  <sup>2</sup>      Single  <sup>3</sup>      Separated/Divorced  <sup>4</sup>

Number of dependent children: .....

How many dependent children currently in:

Pre-school ..... Primary .....

Secondary ..... Tertiary .....

Do you have any other dependents living with you? Yes  <sup>1</sup>      No  <sup>2</sup>

If yes, how many? .....

9

10

11-12

13-14

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16

**Your educational experience:**

At the time of leaving full-time secondary education:

Your age ..... school year .....

Tertiary institution attended CAE <sup>1</sup>  TAFE <sup>2</sup>  University <sup>3</sup>

Other .....

Have you attained any of the following qualifications?

- Matriculation / Year 12 Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>
- Apprenticeship certificate Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>
- Diploma Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>
- Bachelor degree Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>
- Post-Graduate degree Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>

**Place of Birth:**

Australia  Which State? .....

New Zealand <sup>01</sup>  Britain <sup>02</sup>  Ireland <sup>03</sup>  Italy <sup>04</sup>  Greece <sup>05</sup>

Germany <sup>06</sup>  Vietnam <sup>07</sup>  China <sup>08</sup>  South Africa <sup>09</sup>

Other (specify) .....

**Your National Identity:**

How do you regard yourself in terms of national identity?  
(for example: Australian, Italian, Italian-Australian, Aboriginal, Chinese etc.)

.....

Do you normally use a language other than English?

Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>  If yes, which? .....

Do you have a disability of some type? Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>

In relation to this disability, does your Council adequately accommodate your needs?

Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>

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26-27

28-29

30-31

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**Employment:**

What is your current employment status?

- Full-time paid <sup>01</sup>      Part-time paid <sup>02</sup>      Casual Paid <sup>03</sup>
- Unemployed <sup>04</sup>      Retired <sup>05</sup>
- Employer <sup>06</sup>      Self-employed <sup>07</sup>
- Not in paid work <sup>08</sup>      Full-time education <sup>09</sup>
- Other (specify) .....

34-  
35

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If employed in paid work, what is your occupation?

- Managerial/Executive <sup>01</sup>      Teacher/Lecturer <sup>02</sup>
- Manual/Tradesperson <sup>03</sup>      Professional/Technical <sup>04</sup>
- Clerical/Secretarial <sup>05</sup>      Sales/Retail <sup>06</sup>
- Primary Production <sup>07</sup>      Small Business <sup>08</sup>
- Other (specify) .....

36-  
37

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In which sector are you employed?

- Private Sector <sup>01</sup>
- Public Sector:    Commonwealth <sup>02</sup>      State <sup>03</sup>      Local <sup>04</sup>
- Other (specify) .....

38

--

What is your gross annual income?

- \$0-15,000       \$16-25,000       \$26-35,000
- \$36-45,000       \$46-55,000       \$56-65,000
- \$66-75,000       \$76-85,000       \$86-100,000
- Higher than \$100,000

39-  
40

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**Organisational Experience:**

If you are, or have been, a member of any professional or business organisation, trade union, recreational club, or other organisation, please indicate below. **(Please use \* to indicate if you have been an office-bearer)**

Work Organisations (for example: business professional, trade union etc)

.....  
.....

41  
42


Public Bodies (for example: school council, hospital board, advisory body etc)

.....  
.....

43

44

Political Organisations and Groups (for example: political party, pressure group, lobby group, ratepayers group etc. If you do not wish to specify a specific political party, please write "political party")

.....  
.....

45

46

Religious Organisations

.....  
.....

47

48

Service and Welfare Organisations (for example: Apex, Lions, Rotary, Scouts, Red Cross, CFS, SES etc)

.....  
.....

49

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Sporting and Leisure Organisations (for example: sports clubs, music, drama, arts, motoring etc)

.....  
.....

51

52

Other Organisations

.....  
.....

53

54

**Council Experience:**

What first aroused your interest in becoming a councillor? (Tick as many as are applicable)

Family tradition <sup>01</sup>  Friends <sup>02</sup>  Business reasons <sup>03</sup>

Official recruitment campaign <sup>04</sup>

55-56

Existing Councillors <sup>05</sup>

An Organisation  If yes, which? .....

A specific issue  If yes, which? .....

Other (specify) .....

**Response to your Council Work:**

Please indicate your response to the various aspects of your Council Work by scoring (circle) each of the listed aspects on the following scale:-

<b>Very positive</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		
<b>Slightly negative</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>Positive</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Negative</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>		
<b>Slightly positive</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>Very negative</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>		
Amount of time involved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	57	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial costs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	58	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contesting elections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	59	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with the public	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	60	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with Council Members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	61	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with Council staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	62	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement in policy-making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	63	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing strategic plans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	64	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding legal issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	65	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with paper work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	66	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council/committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	67	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	68	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making planning policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	69	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	70	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2003 Council Election:**

What was the total expenditure on your campaign? \$ .....

71

How much did the campaign cost you personally? \$ .....

72

Approximately how much time did you spend on the campaign:

How many weeks ..... Average days per week .....

73-  
74

**Council Service:**

What is your current length of service on this Council? (years) .....

75

Have you had any previous Council service? Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>

76

If yes, was that Council amalgamated into this one? Yes <sup>1</sup>  No <sup>2</sup>

77

In how many elections have you stood for election? .....

78

How many were contested elections (as opposed to uncontested)? .....

79

CARD TWO

1 - 3

**Council Duties:**

How many hours, on average, do you spend **each month** on Council work:

Preparing for and attending full Council? .....

4

Preparing for and attending Council Committees? .....

5

Dealing with correspondence and reports in relation to Council meetings? .....

6

Consulting with other Council Members? .....

7

Consulting with Council officers? .....

8

Contact with the public on Council business? .....

9

Other (specify) .....

10-  
11

**Financial and Support Issues:**

What is your view as to what financial compensation should be granted to members for Council work?  
**Rank 1 to 4 in order of your preference.**

Annual Allowance	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting Fee	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Part-time salary	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Full-time salary	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

12

13

14

15

What level of financial compensation should apply to your first choice?

Annual Allowance	\$ .....	Meeting Fee	\$ .....
Part-time salary	\$ .....	Full-time salary	\$ .....

16

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19

In regard to supports provided by your Council for the performance of your Council duties, please **tick** which are currently available to you:

	<b>At home</b>	<b>At work</b>	<b>At Council</b>
Secretarial services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photocopiers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20-22

23-25

26-28

29-31

32-34

What support(s) would you like to see provided by Council to assist you to improve your performance as a member?

.....

.....

35-37

38-39

What other significant supports do you receive from sources other than your Council? (please specify)

.....

.....

40-41

42

**Thank you for participating in this survey.**

**Please place your completed Questionnaire in the Reply Paid Envelope provided and return by 23 July 2004**