



Local Government Association of South Australia

Voting in Local Government Elections

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Voting in Local Government Elections

At a Glance

Introduction

As part of the February 2006 McGregor Tan Household Omnibus Survey, two questions were asked of 403 Adelaide adults (aged 18+) and 103 in regional South Australia for the Local Government Association in order to investigate whether voting in Local Government elections should remain non compulsory.

These questions have been asked periodically since 1985.

What does the research show

The proportion of those surveyed who felt that voting in Local Council elections should remain **non compulsory** was similar to that recorded in the previous two Monitors, as outlined below:

- 2006 (68%)
- 2003 (66%)
- 2001 (69%)

With the previous surveys from 1985 to 1998, there was a slight trend established that moved towards people agreeing with voting **becoming compulsory**. From the initial survey conducted in 1985, every new survey had seen a rise in the amount of people who thought that Local Council elections should become compulsory. However, this trend was not continued with the results of the 2001 survey where, for the first time more people disagreed with the introduction **of compulsory voting** than had done in any previous surveys.

Please note that the surveys conducted prior to 2001 used a different question (“should voting in local council elections should be made compulsory” - with an agree

to disagree scale), while the 2001 and 2003 survey respondents were asked “Do you think it should remain non compulsory?” (with a yes/no scale). This would most likely explain the variation in results between the pre and post 2001 surveys.

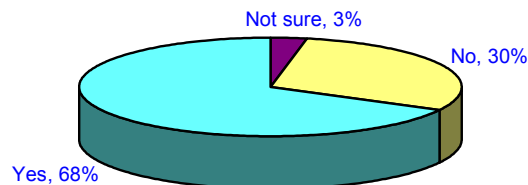
Key Findings

This section outlines the key findings of the research. For further analysis by age, gender, occupation, household composition etc. please refer to the Computer Tabulations.

Attitude Toward Non Compulsory Local Government Voting

- ❖ At present, voting in local Council elections is not compulsory. The survey respondents were therefore asked whether or not they felt that voting in local Council elections should remain non compulsory?
- ❖ More than two thirds (68%) of those surveyed indicated that they felt that Local Government **voting** should remain as it is - **non compulsory**. Conversely, just under one third (30%) were in favour of compulsory voting in these elections.
- ❖ These findings were relatively consistent among all groups surveyed, although a higher proportion of those in paid work (36%), particularly professionals/executives (41%) and white collar workers (40%), were in favour of compulsory voting.

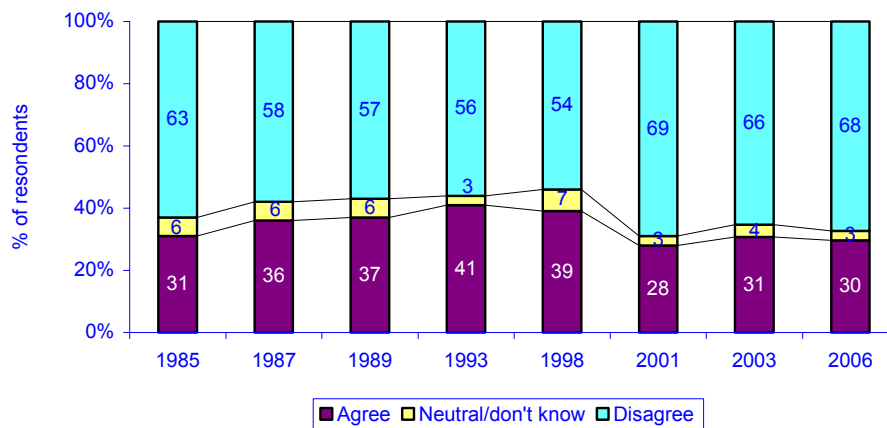
**VOTING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IS NOT
COMPULSORY. DO YOU THINK IT SHOULD REMAIN NON
COMPULSORY?**



- ❖ The following chart shows that there was a significant decline in the proportion of respondents who were in favour of compulsory voting in 2001, which reversed a previously increasing trend from 1985 onwards.

- ❖ The results for 2006 and 2003 have seen this proportion plateau, and remain in a confined range at around 30%.

OPINION ABOUT WHETHER VOTING IN LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE MADE COMPULSORY
By year



McGREGOR TAN HOUSEHOLD OMNIBUS SURVEY - FEBRUARY 2006

Q26: Voting in Local Government Elections is not compulsory. Do you think it should remain non compulsory?
Unprompted

	<u>LOCATION</u>			<u>GENDER</u>		<u>AGE GROUPS</u>								
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Metro</u>	<u>Regional</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>18-24</u>	<u>25-30</u>	<u>31-35</u>	<u>36-39</u>	<u>40-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>ALL 18-39</u>	<u>ALL 40+</u>
Yes	342 68%	278 69%	64 62%	164 71%	178 65%	46 74%	32 70%	31 61%	35 67%	93 64%	46 74%	59 68%	144 68%	198 67%
Not sure	13 3%	10 2%	3 3%	5 2%	8 3%	2 3%	0 0%	2 4%	2 4%	4 3%	1 2%	2 2%	6 3%	7 2%
No	151 30%	115 29%	36 35%	62 27%	89 32%	14 23%	14 30%	18 35%	15 29%	49 34%	15 24%	26 30%	61 29%	90 31%
No. of Respondents	506 100%	403 100%	103 100%	231 100%	275 100%	62 100%	46 100%	51 100%	52 100%	146 100%	62 100%	87 100%	211 100%	295 100%

Prepared by McGregor Tan Research (Ref: 7781-B)

McGREGOR TAN HOUSEHOLD OMNIBUS SURVEY - FEBRUARY 2006

Q26: Voting in Local Government Elections is not compulsory. Do you think it should remain non compulsory?
Unprompted

	<u>OCCUPATION</u>							<u>EMPLOYMENT</u>		<u>HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE</u>						
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Prof/Exec</u>	<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Blue Collar</u>	<u>Home Duties</u>	<u>Retired</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>In paid work</u>	<u>Not in pd work</u>	<u>Single/shared h'hold</u>	<u>Young er couple no kids</u>	<u>Young Family most kids under 6</u>	<u>Middle Family most kids 6-15</u>	<u>Mature Family most kids 15+ and at least 1 still at home</u>	<u>Mature no kids at home</u>	
Yes	342 68%	35 56% --	62 56% ---	80 70%	44 75%	82 73%	39 83% ++	177 61% ---	165 76% +++	48 74%	16 55%	36 72%	58 64%	68 71%	116 66%	
Not sure	13 3%	2 3%	4 4%	1 1%	3 5%	3 3%	0 0%	7 2%	6 3%	2 3%	2 7%	1 2%	1 1%	3 3%	4 2%	
No	151 30%	26 41% ++	44 40% +++	34 30%	12 20% -	27 24%	8 17% --	104 36% +++	47 22% ---	15 23%	11 38%	13 26%	32 35%	25 26%	55 31%	
No. of Respondents	506 100%	63 100%	110 100%	115 100%	59 100%	112 100%	47 100%	288 100%	218 100%	65 100%	29 100%	50 100%	91 100%	96 100%	175 100%	

Prepared by McGregor Tan Research (Ref: 7781-B)

McGREGOR TAN HOUSEHOLD OMNIBUS SURVEY - FEBRUARY 2006

Q26: Voting in Local Government Elections is not compulsory. Do you think it should remain non compulsory?
Unprompted

	<u>GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u>							
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Under \$20,000 pa</u>	<u>\$20,000 to \$39,999 pa</u>	<u>\$40,000 to \$59,999 pa</u>	<u>\$60,000 to \$79,999 pa</u>	<u>\$80,000 to \$99,999 pa</u>	<u>\$100,000 + pa</u>	<u>Refused</u>
Yes	342 68%	47 62%	89 73%	65 68%	44 64%	30 57%	29 74%	38 75%
Not sure	13 3%	2 3%	3 2%	4 4%	2 3%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%
No	151 30%	27 36%	30 25%	27 28%	23 33%	23 43%	10 26%	11 22%
No. of Respondents	506 100%	76 100%	122 100%	96 100%	69 100%	53 100%	39 100%	51 100%

Prepared by McGregor Tan Research (Ref: 7781-B)

Appendix 1

Question Asked

26. Voting in Local Government Elections is not compulsory. Do you think it should remain non compulsory? **Unprompted – single response**
- 1.....Yes
 - 2.....Not sure
 - 3.....No

Appendix 2

Background

What is the McGregor Tan Household Omnibus Survey

The McGregor Tan Household Omnibus Survey is a shared cost survey of 400 Adelaide adults (aged 18+) where several clients place questions on the same questionnaire, but none see any other's questions or answers. People are interviewed face-to-face at their place of residence on weekday evenings or weekends to ensure the proper representation of people in the work force.

Selection of the people to be interviewed is based on a random probability design which ensures that each and every adult in the metropolitan area has an equal chance of being selected for interview. Therefore, results gathered are representative of the correct age/gender breakdown of the Adelaide adult population. A cluster sampling technique is employed whereby 10 interviews are conducted in 40 localities throughout the metropolitan area of Adelaide.

Classifications used for analysis

McGregor Tan Household Omnibus Survey results are all analysed by gender, age (18-24, 25-30, 31-39, 40-54, 55-64 and 65+), occupation & household composition. The definitions used for occupation and household composition are provided below.

Occupation

Paid work - 5hrs+/wk regular paid work.

Professional/Executive - Director/manager of a large business (50+ staff), senior manager in a larger corporation, senior public servant, grazier, police officer (assistant commissioner and more senior), armed forces (colonel and more senior), town clerk, professional/technical executive e.g. law, medicine, engineering, architecture, academic etc.

White collar - Owner/manager of business (up to 50 employees), para professionals, computer programmer, teacher, nurse, minister of religion, sales representative, farmer or farm manager (with employees), police officer (inspector to commander), armed forces (lieutenant/major), office-based public servant, department manager, bank manager, accountant, bookkeeper, drafter clerk, typist, secretary, key punch operator, etc.

Blue collar - Tradesperson, process worker, labourer, technician, driver, shop assistant, shop keeper, care assistant, fisher, farm worker (up to overseer), forestry worker, police officer (up to senior sergeant), fire officer (up to sergeant).

Not in paid employment - Less than 5hrs/week of paid employment i.e. retired/ aged pensioner, home duties, unemployed, full time student, invalid pension, etc.

Household composition

1. Single or shared household, no children
2. Younger couple, no children
3. Family, youngest child under 6 years
4. Family, younger child under 13 years
5. Family, teenage children or older at home
6. Mature couple or single, no children at home

Who was interviewed

The following table outlines the sample characteristics and makes comparisons with population figures gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Adelaide Statistical Division. The table shows the sample is almost identical to the actual population.

Sample characteristics - gender and age	No. of Respondents	% of respondents	% of Adel. 18+¹
Males	231	46	48
Females	275	54	52
Age groups:			
18-24	62	12	14
25-30	46	9	12
31-39	103	20	18
40-54	146	29	27
55-64	62	12	11
65+	87	17	18
Total sample	506	100	100

¹ Adelaide Statistical Division; Source: 2001 Census; Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Employment and occupation

Sample characteristics - employment and occupation	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Professional/executive	63	12
White collar	110	22
Blue collar	115	23
Total in paid employment	288	57
Home duties	59	12
Retired	112	22
Other (student, unemployed, etc.)	47	9
Total not in paid employment	218	43

Household composition

Sample characteristics - household characteristics	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Single or shared household, no children	65	13
Younger couple, no children	29	6
Family, youngest child under 6 years	50	10
Family, younger child under 13 years	91	18
Family, teenage children or older at home	96	19
Mature couple or single, no children at home	175	35

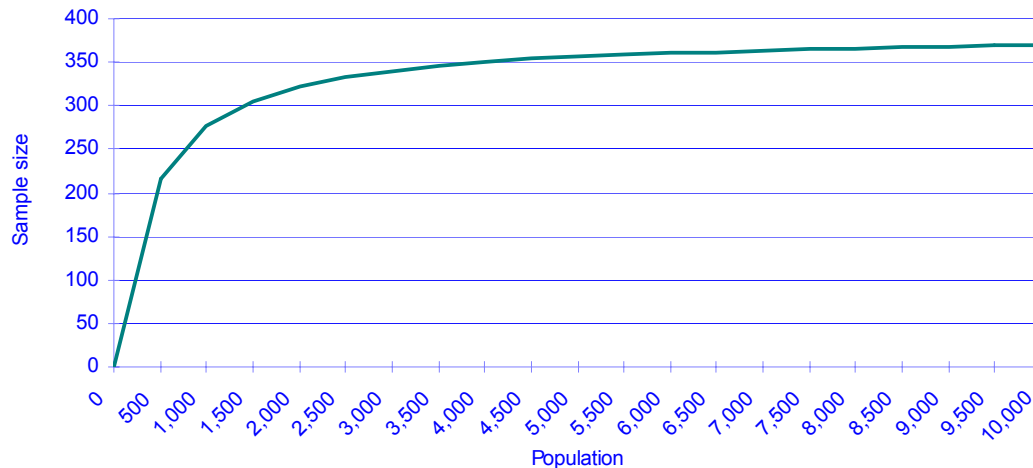
Appendix 3

Sampling Tolerance

It should be borne in mind throughout this report that all data based on sample surveys are subject to a sampling tolerance - that is, where a sample is used to represent an entire population, the resulting figures should not be regarded as absolute values, but rather as the mid-point of a range plus or minus x% (see sampling tolerance table below).

MARGIN OF ERROR TABLE										
(95% confidence level)										
SAMPLE SIZE ↓	Percentages giving a particular answer									
	5% 95%	10% 90%	15% 85%	20% 80%	25% 75%	30% 70%	35% 65%	40% 60%	45% 55%	50% 50%
50	6	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	14	14
100	4	6	7	8	9	9	10	10	10	10
150	4	5	6	7	7	8	8	8	8	8
200	3	4	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
250	3	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
300	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
400	2	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5

**OPTIMUM SAMPLE SIZES TO ENSURE A MAXIMUM VARIATION OF
±5% GIVING A PARTICULAR ANSWER (at the 95% confidence level)**



Appendix 4

How To Read The Computer Tabulations

The computer tabulations in the report show the comparisons between [1] the answers given by the total number of respondents and [2] those given by the various subgroups. This is done in the form of percentages. Under certain data, you may notice the presence of + or - signs. These indicate where there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of the subgroup (e.g. males, people over 65, etc) and the group as a whole. When the responses of the subgroup are significantly less than the group as a whole, this is shown by a minus (-) sign. If, on the other hand, there is a significantly higher response by the subgroup, then a plus (+) sign appears. The degree of significance of difference is also indicated. Where a single (- or +), double (-- or ++) or triple (--- or +++) sign occurs, you can be, respectively, 90%, 95% or 99% sure that the subgroup is in fact answering differently to the group as a whole, and that it is not just a random fluctuation in the data. (See example below)

Please note that, because of rounding, answers in single response questions will not always sum precisely to 100%.

In addition, as the base for percentages is the number of *respondents* answering a particular question (rather than the number of *responses*) multiple response questions sum to more than 100%.

Example: How would you describe yourself?

	GENDER			AGE GROUP				
	TOTAL	Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Complete non-smoker	298 72%	148 70%	150 74%	59 67%	56 63%	55 69%	78 76%	50 89% +++
No. of respondents	416 100%	212 100%	204 100%	88 100%	89 100%	80 100%	103 100%	56 100%

72% of all respondents said that they were complete non-smokers

74% of all females surveyed said that they were complete non-smokers. This is not a significantly different proportion to the total of 72% (no plus or minus signs)

63% of all 25-34 year olds said that they were complete non-smokers. We are 90% sure that this age group's response is significantly fewer than the total of 72% (single minus (-) sign)

89% of all 55+ year olds said that they are complete non-smokers. We are 99% sure that this age group's response is significantly higher than the total of 72% (triple plus (+++) sign)