



NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS SURVEY 2008

Conducted by:

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FOREWORD

Acknowledgement of participants of the Focus & Consultative Groups:

Focus Group:

Mayor Ivan Brooks (Mitcham)
Ray Pincombe (Unley)
Trevor Starr (West Torrens)
Chris Umapathysivum (Holdfast Bay)
Lisa Mara (Norwood Payneham St Peters)
Jenny Gerlach (Office for State/Local Government Relations)
Marjorie Schulze (Optimum Consulting)
Michael Kelledy (Wallmans Lawyers)

Consultative Group:

Mayor Miriam Smith (Tea Tree Gully)
Mayor Allan Suter (Ceduna)
Mayor Ann Ferguson (Mount Barker)
Mayor Allan Aughey (Clare & Gilbert Valleys)
Mayor Mary Lou Corcoran (Victor Harbor)
Cr Anne Picard (Mallala)
Cr Trent Rusby (Alexandrina)
Cr Helen Nichols (Campbelltown)
Cr Ricardo Zahra (Salisbury)

INTRODUCTION

The LGA received funding from the Local Government Research & Development Scheme to conduct a comprehensive survey of new Council Members. The key aims of the survey were to ascertain, 12-18 months after their election, issues that are assisting or detracting from them carrying out their role in Councils and in their communities. In addition the LGA was keen to seek advice from new Members about strategies that would assist them in the future to undertake with roles.

Two consultants with experience in developing and interpreting Survey instruments were contracted to assist the LGA in formulating an appropriate Survey to meet the objectives of the Project.

Information sought from the survey will assist the LGA in:

- 1) enhancing the delivery of training programs for new and continuing members;
- 2) gaining valuable information and insights into the information and general support needs of Members and how best to respond to these needs;
- 3) identifying Council Member and Staff relationships issues that support Members to undertake their roles;
- 4) identifying future legislative changes that may support new and continuing Members to fulfil their roles;
- 5) conducting candidate sessions in the lead up to future Local Government elections;

and other related matters.

In order to prepare a survey and final report that would elicit the information needed, two groups were formed:

- 1) **Focus Group:** comprising ongoing Council Members, CEOs, representatives of the Office of State/Local Government Relations and the LGA, and providers of education and training services and other support to new Members.
- 2) **Consultative Group:** comprising new Council Members, including newly elected Mayors, whose involvement has and will continue to be central to the conduct of the project.

These groups provided invaluable information regarding the issues to address in the survey, feedback on the actual survey instrument and on the final project report, including suggested recommendations. Their support is acknowledged.

This report provides the outcomes of the survey. The LGA will now prepare responses and recommendations in consultation with Councils.

PROCESS

A survey, with a covering letter was posted to each of the 164 newly elected Members of Councils. The Questionnaire was completely anonymous. The respondents were not asked to identify themselves or their Council. The survey contained 73 questions in total and sought to obtain information across the following 11 sections:

1. Profiles

This component of the survey enabled assessment of responses and consideration of trends related to: broad geographic location of the Council, position of the Council Member, Age, Gender, and Occupation.

2. Competence

This area of the survey gathered information on what skills new Members perceived they brought to the role and the skills they believed they were developing or had developed since election. In addition, the survey assessed the views of respondents regarding the value placed on their skills by their colleagues and feedback on the qualities Members felt were important to be an effective Council Member.

3. Resources & Support

The issues explored in this area of the survey relate to the nature and type of resources and support that assisted Members to undertake their roles and whether their needs were being met.

4. Induction & Mentoring

The LGA was keen to better understand the nature of induction, mentoring and training being provided by Councils, when it was provided and the form it took. It was also considered important to gain feedback regarding the timing of the deliver of these supports and those persons from whom support was being provided. The LGA was also interested in querying with respondents whether some forms of support ought to be mandatory.

5. Access to Information

This section of the Survey explored the nature of information being sought by new members and whether it was easily accessible. In addition it sought feedback on the form the information could best be received and any obstacles incurred in gaining information.

6. Commitment & Motivation

The LGA was keen to assess whether commitment and motivation of new Members was greater on election than it was after 12 months or so in the role and the issues that contributed to greater or lesser motivation/commitment.

7. Confidence

This section of the Survey tested with respondents areas where confidence as a Council Member was important and attempted to gauge whether confidence levels were increasing or decreasing during their term. This section also sought to determine what positive/negative experiences contributed to levels of confidence.

8. Expectations & Reality

This section of the Survey was designed to gain feedback on whether the expectations of new Members were met against the "reality" that they were experiencing in their roles. A key area of inquiry related to the time spent on Council business.

9. Relationships

This section of the Survey aims to determine newly elected Council Members satisfaction levels with the relationships they have forged with their peers, including the Mayor/Chairperson, senior staff and their communities.

10. Networks

The impact that networking has on the role of the Council Member and ease of finding and using these networks was also an area considered important to survey.

11. Summary Assessment

This component provided an opportunity for respondents to make further comments which may assist the LGA in determining future strategies for enhancing the overall performance of new Members.

SUMMARY

The response was gratifying. 98 completed Questionnaires were returned, a response **rate of 61 per cent**. This is a high response rate in comparison with other postal surveys.

The tabulation of data in this report is generally based on percentages of the respondents who replied to each question. The total numbers in each case are identified by n=. In the case of open-ended questions, however, where there are multiple answers possible, the percentage bases are the total of responses. These cases are identified.

The Survey included a high proportion of open-ended questions. These data are reported as numbers of responses (n), noting the number of respondents where there was the opportunity for multiple answers.

The Survey gave the opportunity for cross-tabulation of a number of variables, notable gender (female / male) and type of Council (metropolitan/regional city/rural). However, the low numbers in some cells produced a high margin of error. Hence such cross-tabulations are incorporated only when the significant differences were higher than the margin of error.

PROFILES

Type of Council

Metropolitan	31
Regional City	16
Rural	53

n=98

Position Held

Mayor	1
Chairperson	1
Member	98

n=97

Age

18-24	5
25-34	5
35-44	11
45-54	26
55-64	38
65+	15

n =98

There has been concern for many years regarding the prominence of older people as elected Members. In 1987, only one quarter of Members were under 40; in 1997, the proportion was less than ten per cent. In a 2004 survey, only five per cent of Members were under 45 years of age, and the over-60 content had grown to 44 per cent. The data from a survey of candidates in 2006 showed 40 per cent above 60 years of age. The pattern from this Survey reflects these data.

Gender

Female 36	Male 64	n = 98
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In 1973, females constituted three per cent of the Members of Councils. By 1987, this had risen to 16% and by 1997 to 25 per cent. In the candidate survey of 2007, there were 29 per cent females, but only 27 per cent of first contest candidates. The gender disparity is again reflected in this Survey.

Member of a Political Party

Yes 21	No 79	n = 98
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These data mirror those established by the 2007 candidate survey, with approximately one fifth being members of political parties.

Occupation

Professional	31
Managerial	10
Executive/Business	11
Primary Production	16
Small Business	11
Clerical/Sales	5
Manual/Trade	1
Retired	10
Other	4

n=97

These data generally mirror previous surveys in 2004 and 2006.

	2004 Members	2006 Candidate	2006 1 st contest Candidate	2008 Newly Elected
Professional	21	24	28	31
Manager, Exec, Bus.	24	26	30	21
Primary Prod	22	20	13	16
Small Bus	16	12	9	11
Clerical Sales	12	13	13	5
Manual Trade	5	4	4	1
n=	206	335	149	97

The under representation of small business, clerical/sales and manual trades is a consistent pattern. There is a continuing increase in the proportion of candidates and Members from professional occupations.

Birthplace

Australia	84
Britain	9
New Zealand	2
Germany	2
Other	3

n=98

2. COMPETENCE

2.1 Skills

*Q. Before your election, what skills did you think you **needed** to become a Council Member?*

Summary responses - 90 respondents

- Communication (50)
- Finance, budgets (20)
- Interpersonal, dealing with factions, team work (20)
- Meeting procedures (17)
- Community knowledge/involvement, people skills (15)
- Decision making (14)
- Leadership (12)
- Commonsense, experience (11)
- Intelligence, logic, analytical (10)
- Research, planning (8)
- Impartiality, integrity, honesty (7)
- Listening (6)
- Conflict management, negotiation (4)
- Other: lobbying, well-known, able to memorise, diplomacy, numeracy, literacy, public speaking, understand Local Government, time management, able to learn.

There was a very broad range of issues mentioned, although 50 of the 90 respondents, before their election, named "communication" as the skill they needed. Financial and budget skills, and the necessity for sound entrepreneurial skills were the next largest group of respondents.

*Q. What skills did you **bring with you** to your role as a Council Member?*

Summary responses - 88 respondents

- Finance, budgets, management, marketing (41)
- Communication, people skills (38)
- Clear thinking, Intelligence, common sense (16)
- Leadership, decision-making (16)
- Lobbying (12)
- Legal (12)
- Planning, policy making (12)
- Impartiality/conflict management/honesty/integrity (12)
- Meeting procedures (5)
- Research (3)
- Time management, speed reading (3)
- Other, including: community understanding/representation, flexible, big picture, administration (8)

A comparison of this with the previous data collation shows a strong correlation between skills assumed to be important and skills which the Council Members believed they brought with them. Finance, budgets, and communication skills dominated both the total respondents (47 per cent and 43 per cent respectively), and the responses (combined, 44 per cent). There were some skills “brought” which were not emphasized as “needed”, notably lobbying, legal, planning/policy-making, and meeting procedures.

*Q. Now that you are a Council Member, what **additional skills** have you discovered you require?*

Summary responses - 80 respondents

- How Councils work, deal with Council administration, meeting procedures, Act, understand legislation, procedures (28)
- Financial, budgets (20)
- Public speaking, communication, media, rational argument (16)
- Patience (11)
- Tolerance (7)
- Speed read (6)
- Conflict resolution, political issues, political parties (6)
- Development policies/practices (4)
- Other, including: heritage matters, better memory, research, IT skills tact, more assertive, networking (21)

After a year in office, newly elected Council Members identified a collection of skills they had discovered they needed. 25 % of respondents realized they needed to acquire finance/budget skills. Public speaking/media emerged as a significant new skill needed. The highest proportion of additional skills was procedures, structures and processes within the Council.

*Q. What skills, if any, have you **developed** since you were elected?*

Summary responses - 71 respondents

- Meeting procedures, how Council works, report writing, decipher reports (22)
- Public speaking (22)
- Finance/budgets, legal and finance (11)
- Teamwork, tolerance, negotiation (6)
- Know the Act (5)
- Communicate with other Members (4)
- Other, including: leadership, understand staff values, speed read, IT, networking, political nous, media (13)

These data reflect the previous collation of “additional skills”. Of the 83 responses, 55 related to Council procedures, public speaking and finance and budget skills. 71 of the 98 potential respondents stated that they had, or were forced to develop new skills since their election.

Q. How did you **acquire** them?

Summary responses - 74 respondents

- Experience, advisors (46)
- Formal training, in-house workshops, LGA courses, seminars (31)
- Asked Staff (10)
- Other Members, other Councils' Members (8)

A relatively low proportion (32 per cent) of responses stated that the necessary skill was obtained through formal training, workshops and courses. Respondents' had previously emphasised the need to develop skills regarding procedures and/or finance and budgets. However, 46 of the 74 respondents to this question stated they depended on "experience/advisors" to learn the skills, and only 31 (42 per cent) learnt through training.

Q. Do you think that your skills are **sufficiently valued** by other:

Council Members?

Yes	76	No	24	n = 92
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Q. If "No", please comment on why not?

Summary responses - 18 respondents

- Older Members not open-minded/ too conservative (6)
- Factions, party politics (5)
- Sexism, "boys' club" (3)
- Other: too much ward loyalty, too much self-promotion (4)

Only one quarter of the respondents believed their contribution was not sufficiently valued by their colleagues. The comments from one third of the 18 respondents suggested a "divide" between newly elected and established Members, an issue which re-occurred throughout the Survey. There was a significant gender difference in the data. 86 % of the male respondents felt they were "sufficiently valued", whereas only 68 per cent of the female respondents believed this to be the case.

Staff?

Yes	77	No	23	n = 92
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Summary responses - 17 respondents

- Staff control the agendas (8)
- Staff see elected Members as a hindrance (6)
- Political parties (3)
- Staff see themselves as the professionals (1)

A minority of respondents (14 of the 98 potential respondents) allude to a "divide" between elected Council Members and staff. Comments of a similar nature are repeated in other responses throughout the Survey.

2.2 Personal Qualities

Q. Before you were elected, what did you consider to be the **personal qualities needed** to be an effective Council Member

	Crucial	Important	Not very Important
Prepared to work collectively in the interests of the whole community	77	24	-
Able to respect diversity of opinions	61	38	1
Willing to stay in touch with the community	71	29	-
Committed to behaving in a manner that upholds the Code of Conduct for Council Members	66	33	1
Able to respect people whose cultural backgrounds are different from yours	53	44	3
Open to new learning and prepared to seek out information	56	42	2
Prepared to consider all issues brought to Council. Rather than adopting a single-issue approach	64	35	-
A good team player but able to exercise leadership when required	58	40	2

n= 98 for all rows

The majority of respondents considered all qualities as "important or crucial". The strongest "crucial" judgements referred to working collectively in the community interest, and the ability to stay in touch with the community. There was a gender difference in the responses to four of these issues, measured on the basis of a "crucial" assessment. This was the most distinct gender difference in the survey.

	Female "crucial"	Male "crucial"
Work collectively	83	73
Stay in touch	80	67
Uphold Code	80	59
Respect culture	69	44

The request for "other qualities" elicited 51 responses

	Crucial	Important
Consider issues	7	8
Approachable	2	1
Honest and courageous	8	3
Humility, diplomacy	2	-
Not take self seriously	-	1
Strategic, flexible	3	4
Listen, patience	4	1
Represent community	6	-
Accept majority view	1	-

Q. Has your view on one or more of these qualities changed since your election?

Yes	23	No	77	n = 96
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If "Yes", please comment

Summary responses - 16 respondents

- Council does not operate as a team, does not work collectively (8)
- I now understand the community breadth (3)
- Other: learnt to deal with party politics, now understand financial issues, too many lazy Members, realised the Code is crucial (3)

3. Resources and Supports

*Q. Before your election, what was **your expectation** about the resources and supports that Council would provide to assist you with your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member?*

Summary responses 74 respondents

- Assumed would be available (37)
- Did not expect any (13)
- Training (10)
- Access to staff/advice, collaborative staff (9)
- IT and IT support (4)
- Got more than expected (2)
- Other: Clerical, networks, full information, higher allowance (4)

Q. Have your expectations been met?

Yes	68	No	32	<i>n</i> = 95
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If "No" – please explain

Summary responses - 17 respondents

- Staff control information, do not discuss with Members (7)
- No technology provided (3)
- System is too bureaucratic (2)
- Too much "old boys' club" (2)
- Other: No secretarial help, no full financial details provided, no full financial details (3)

Over two-thirds of the respondents stated that their expectations about "supports" had been met. Of the 17 responses explaining why their expectations had not been met, a high proportion appear to have misinterpreted "information" as a resource/support". Overall, these data should be interpreted as indicating a high level of satisfaction with what was provided, an aspect supported in the following table.

*Q. After more than a year as a Council Member, do you **believe** your Council provides adequate resources and supports?*

Yes	77	No	30	<i>n</i> = 94
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If "No" – What additional resources and/or supports could be provided to assist Members to be more effective?

Summary responses - 20 respondents

- More administrative support (6)
- Better IT (4)
- More workshops (3)

- Travel allowance, more pay (3)
- Independent advice, more information (2)
- Other: Finance management advice, research facilities, mentoring for women (3)

The pattern of satisfaction with resources and supports one year after election shows almost no difference from the expectations prior to election. A total of 70 per cent believed the level of provision was adequate. Of the 20 respondents who sought more, the main requests were for more administrative support, better IT, and further workshops. There was a significant difference between metropolitan, and regional/rural Councils. In the metropolitan area, 80 per cent of respondents believed that their Council provided adequate resources and supports whereas only 67 per cent of rural and 62 per cent of regional Councils made a similar assessment.

4. Induction, Mentoring, Training

Q. Were you made to **feel welcome** when you first assumed your role as a Council Member?

Yes	90	No	10	n = 96
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If "Yes", by whom?

CEO	49
Staff	47
Members	61
Mayor	49

n=78

What impressed you about your welcome?

Summary responses - 68 respondents

- Genuine, practical (18)
- Openness, honesty, sincerity (16)
- Friendly, supportive (14)
- Everything (8) Teamwork atmosphere (5)
- Staff helpful, professional (5)
- Mayor (2)
- They were mentors (1)

If "No" – Please explain what you would you have liked?

Summary responses - 8 respondents

- More openness (3)
- More time before first meeting (2)
- Slower – was overwhelmed (1)
- More informal (1)
- More support from older Members (10)

It would appear some respondents may have confused "induction" or "experience" with "welcome". However, 90 per cent of respondents stated that they were made to feel welcome from the start. This welcome was offered by both Members and staff.

Q. Did you receive any **formal** induction after your election?

Yes	86	No	14	n = 97
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Were you consulted about it?

Yes	58	No	42	n = 91
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Q. How was it provided?

Summary responses - 63 respondents

- Workshops (31)
- Training packages/sessions (24)
- CEO/Staff (13)
- Local Government Association (3)
- Internal, but was not enough (2)

There can be varying interpretations of the two tables above. On the one hand, 86 per cent of respondents were given a formal induction and 58 per cent were consulted about the process. On the other hand, 14 per cent were given no formal induction and 42 per cent were not consulted about induction. The summary responses emphasize workshops and training sessions. The low response concerning the LGA may be explained by "workshops" including LGA activities. Analysis of the questionnaires suggests a wide variation of the "quality" of induction across Councils.

Q. Did the induction help you?

Yes	85	No	15	n = 88
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If "Yes", in what way?

Summary responses - 52 respondents

- Better understood my roles and duties (26)
- Better understood legal issues (9)
- More confident/comfortable in role/duties (9)
- Understand processes, Code, procedures (7)
- Better understood Council generally (5)
- Understood complexity of Local Government (4)
- Understand relations with community (1)

85 per cent of respondents agreed that their induction helped them.

If "No" what were the shortcomings?

Summary responses - 16 respondents

- Too late, inadequate, needed more (8)
- Too much, too soon (5)
- Seemed intimidating (3)
- Needed more earlier (1)

There were negative reactions about induction from only 16 respondents, and most of these focused on the timing of induction rather than its content.

Q. Is there a mentoring program for newly elected Council Members in your Council?

Yes	20	No	80	n = 97
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"If yes", who are your mentors?

Mayor/Chairperson	36
CEO/Senior Staff	25
Council Members	36
Community Members	3

n=16

Q. Are the re-elected Council members a source of helpful support for you?

Yes	73	No	27	n = 97
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If "Yes", please explain in what ways?

Summary responses - 66 respondents

- General advice and support (27)
- Their experience and knowledge (19)
- Regarding procedures and policies (9)
- The history of issues (6)
- As a sounding board (3)
- In formulating proposals (2)
- Other, including: patience, leadership, legal issues, ward matters (6)

If "No", what difficulties have you encountered?

Summary responses - 25 respondents

- Older Members too arrogant (11)
- Older Members not interested, too insular (6)
- Too much is left to staff (3)
- Too many not team players (2)
- Too much politics (2)
- Culture not good (2)
- No help from anyone (2)
- Sexism and bullying (1)

Only 20 per cent of the respondents reported that a formal mentoring programme existed in their Councils, and only 16 respondents claimed to have formal or informal mentors. Respondent comments suggest that there is a strong component of "help" within Councils. A total of 71 of the 98 respondents stated that the established Members had been helpful. The nature of the help covered a range of components, with 27 respondents receiving "general" support, and 19 acknowledging the experience and knowledge of the re-elected Members. However, a minority of respondents did not have a favorable view about re-elected Members and their willingness to mentor new members indicating an undercurrent/division which is evident in other areas of the Questionnaire results.

Q. Do you think that mentoring of newly elected Council Members could be improved?

Yes	59	No	41	n = 91
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If "Yes", how could it be improved?

Summary responses - 30 respondents

- Make formal, structured, in workshops (17)
- Be more supportive, collegial (4)
- Mentor by other Councils' Members (1)
- Other: less formal, more on protocols, more on finance, not by political parties, have some!, old mentor new, buddy system (7)

41 per cent of respondents appeared satisfied with the mentoring processes within their Councils. This needs to be read in concert with the data above where only 20 per cent of respondents had a formal mentoring programme available, and only 16 of the 97 respondents named their mentor(s). One interpretation could be that a proportion of respondents did not seek or expect or need any mentoring, hence were "satisfied". Among female respondents, 69 per cent stated that the mentoring process could be improved, while only 44 per cent of males felt this way. This resonates with other comparisons in the survey, with females more strongly seeking a collegial approach in Council. Of the 54 respondents who believed that the mentoring process could be improved, only 30 provided any suggestions.

Q. Before you decided to stand for election, what steps did you take to inform yourself of the role and responsibilities of a Council Member?

Attended pre-election information sessions	62
Attended Council meetings	37
Talked with current Council members	75

n of rows = 85, 86, 93

Other steps:

Summary responses - 24 respondents

- Read Council/LGA material (12)
- LGA website (4)
- Discussed with CEO (3)
- Talked top other Councils (2)
- Prior interest/involvement (2)
- Asked questions (1)

A relatively high proportion of the respondents appear to have made some effort to find out what their roles in the Council would entail. Of the 98 respondents, 81 had talked with sitting Members, 72 had attended information sessions, 43 had attended Council meetings, and 24 had taken other steps to inform themselves.

Q. When you were first elected, were you offered the opportunity to participate in formal training?

Yes	94	No	6	n = 94
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Did you take up these training opportunities?

Yes	89	No	11	n = 90
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If "Yes", how beneficial to you was this training?

Summary responses - 61 respondents

- very, excellent (34)
- Mostly good (12)
- Regarding Council operations, Act (9)
- Eye-opener! (3)
- Other: finance, confidence, networking (3)

If "No", what were the problems?

Summary responses - 17 respondents

- Too early, need more now (14)
- Too brief (4)
- Too much jargon (2)
- was in my work time! (2)
- Overwhelming (1)

The majority of newly elected Council Members were offered training and embraced these opportunities. Respondents show a high level of satisfaction with the training provided citing, in the main, its benefits. There was a minority view that the training had some shortcomings. These comments, however, appear to be less a criticism of what was offered, but more that training should be a continuing process.

Q. Is there a formalised training policy, as required by the Local Government Act, for Council Members in your Council?

Training policy?

	Yes	No	DK
Metro	73	3	23
Regional	62	-	38
Rural	40	12	46
n of rows:	30	16	52

Training plan?

	Yes	No	DK
Metro	42	14	42
Regional	31	44	25
Rural	19	31	50
n of rows =	28	16	52

Yes	55
No	7
Don't know	38
n=97	

Q. Is there a formalised training plan for Council Members in your Council?

Yes	28
No	28
Don't know	44
n=96	

Q. If your Council does have a training plan for Council Members, is it developed and implemented in consultation with Council members?

Yes	32
No	20
Don't know	49
n=82	

A high level of respondents were not aware as to whether their Council had a formal training policy (as required by the Act), and an even higher proportion were not aware of any formal training plan. Only 39 of the 98 respondents stated that they had been consulted about any training system. There was a significant difference between the patterns of responses across the types of Councils. It appears rural Councils either lack a training policy or have not activated them to the same extent as metropolitan Councils. In terms of a training plan, there is even less evidence of a commitment by regional and rural Councils.

Q. In your view, what additional training could be offered to newly elected Council Members?

Summary responses - 50 respondents

- Procedures, Act, roles (12)
- DAP, projects, policy, planning (10)
- Finance, Legal (8)
- On important issues (6)
- Should be for candidates (4)
- on-going, after six months (4)
- More from LGA (3)
- Chamber politics (2)
- Dealing with the community (2)
- Other, including: public speaking, IT, orientation days needed (8)

Q. In your view, how could training for newly elected Council Members be improved?

Summary responses - 48 respondents

- More sessions, follow-up sessions (15)
 - Visit other Councils/ region (6)
 - Make compulsory for all Members (5)
 - More LGA residential workshops (5)
 - Hold outside working hours (3)
 - Other: more on finance, procedures, handling the community, issues, encourage more to take part, essential for newly elected and older Members, make formal, do it properly (14)

Q. What on-going training will you take, or do you plan to take, during your term as a Council Member?

Summary responses - 71 respondents

- Whatever is required/ offered (37)
- Whatever I need (15)
- Dealing with the bureaucracy (9)
- All LGA offerings (6)
- financial (6)
- legal (3)
- Governance (2)
- Procedures (2)
- Community relations (1)
- depends on the cost (1)

Respondents indicated strong support for training and were keen that their training be of optimal quality. More than half requested on going training with a particular emphasis being given to procedures within Councils, project matters, policy-making, DAP, planning, and financial and legal matters. A total of 71 of the 98 respondents indicated that they would be involved with further training. Of these, 52 would take whatever training is offered/required, or “whatever I need”. This is a clear indication of a commitment to doing the job as well and as professionally as possible.

Q. In your view, Should induction training be **mandatory** for:

Prospective candidates prior to election?

Yes	42	No	58	n = 90
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Newly elected members?

Yes	90	No	10	n = 94
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Re-elected Members?

Yes	68	No	32	n = 87
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Senior Staff about induction programs for Members?

Yes	71	No	29	n = 87
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Please explain your answer

Summary responses - 27 respondents

- All need refreshers, help the learning curve, for all Members (13)
- Staff have the knowledge and need to be on board (5)
- Candidates need to know, understand (3)
- Need common understanding (1)
- Certainly for new Member (2)
- Might intimidate (2)
- Should be policy for all (1)

90% of the 94 respondents supported mandatory training for newly elected Council Members and 68 % of the respondents also supported mandatory training for continuing Members. 71% were in favour of training senior staff about the nature of, and program for, induction of new Members. The issue of mandatory training for candidates divided the respondents, with a majority opposed to the concept.

5. Access to Information

Q. Please rate your satisfaction with the information flow to you from each of the following

	Excellent	V Good	Satisfactory	Poor
From the Mayor/Chair to you	29	32	27	13
From other Members to you	12	39	37	11
From the CEO/Senior Staff to you	32	33	22	13

N of rows = 97, 97, 98

Results indicate a generally positive assessment of the flow of information to newly elected Council Members. Adding the “excellent” and “very good” cells produces a strong statement with regard to Mayor/Chair (61 per cent), and CEO/senior staff (65 per cent). The assessment of the quality of information flow from other Members was lower, at 51 per cent. However, when the “satisfactory” category is added, each component emerges with a very positive rating.

The analysis of the responses on the basis of gender suggested that the perceptions of the quality of information flow were significantly more positive among females, especially in regard to the Mayor/Chairperson. Of female respondents, 40 per cent stated the information flow was excellent, while only 21 per cent of males agreed. The number of “poor” responses were low. This needs to be kept in mind in relation to the negative answers/comments in the following questions, some of which specifically focus on the minority of respondents who were not satisfied with the information flow in their Council.

Q. Does your Council provide adequate assistance to you about obtaining information necessary for you to participate effectively in Council meetings and respond to community concerns?

Yes	76	No	24	n = 96
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If “No”, in what ways could the information process be improved?

Summary responses – 20 respondents

- Abolish “them versus” us, more open staff, better relations with staff (14)
- Open all files to Members (4)
- Provide information a longer time before meetings (3)
- More informal contacts (1)

Three quarters of the respondents were satisfied with the assistance granted by their Council in terms of obtaining information. The remaining quarter of the respondents were not satisfied with the majority citing a “them versus us” approach to newly elected Members/staff relations. This concern permeated other aspects of the questionnaire, across a range of issues – but always in a minority, often a small minority of newly elected Members who perceive a pervasive chasm between elected Members and staff. This may be due to personality differences, specific issues, or a confusion among these elected Council Members about what information is able – legally – to be transferred to them.

Q. From your experience, do re-elected Council Members readily share information with newly elected Council Members?

Always	14
Usually	45
Sometimes	30
Rarely	11

n=98

Adding the “always” and “usually”, indicates a general level of satisfaction with inter-Member information flow (59 per cent). Only eleven respondents stated that they were rarely involved with sharing information. However, there was a significant difference on the basis of gender. There was evidence that a significant proportion of females consider themselves “out of the loop”, further evidence of a perception of diminished collegiality.

Share information?

	always	Usually	sometimes	Rarely
Female	11	29	43	17
Male	16	54	22	8

n of rows= 35, 63

Q. How do you prefer to access and/or receive information essential to your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member?

Responses - 84 respondents

- Electronic or hard copy (26)
- electronic (23)
- Ask staff for briefings (14)
- Hard copy (10)
- all ways (10)
- Ask other Members (1)
- As early as possible (1)

Of the 84 respondents, 59 % stated that electronic means were acceptable for the transfer of information, with one quarter wanting electronic only. 10 respondents requested all information on hard copy which may suggest lack of IT support and/or lack of technology skills.

Q. Are you confidently able to use the technology provided by your Council to access the information you need to be effective?

Yes	84	No	16	n = 95
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If "No", what assistance do you need to make better use of the technology?

Summary responses - 17 respondents

- Have no hardware, only have mobile, only have fax (10)
- Need more training (6)
- I am not of computer age (1)

Of the 95 respondents who commented, 84% were confident in the use of the technology provided by their Council. However, ten respondents had no IT hardware, and six stated that they needed more IT training. The lack of availability of hardware in small Councils was also noted.

Q. What types of information do you find most difficult to access?

Summary responses - 40 respondents

- Previous decisions, background, history, internal correspondence, appendices (10)
- If on website, if uses IT (11)
- Strategic plans, development applications, project progress (7)
- Information which comes too late for meetings (6)
- Financial/budget (5)
- When I don't know who has it! (4)
- Regulations, by-laws (1)
- Anything controversial (1)

40 respondents indicated difficulty in obtaining information. Historical information relating to past decision making, access to strategic plans, development applications and progress on projects, details on finances and budgets were cited as the primary areas of concern.

Q. What obstacles, if any, have you experienced in accessing and/or receiving the information you need to be an effective Council Member?

Responses - 33 respondents

- Don't get full information from staff (14)
- Get it too late for meetings (6)
- IT support, quality of internet (5)
- None, all excellent (5)
- I don't know who has it!, don't know where to look (4)
- Lack of teamwork culture, openness (3)
- When community divided (1)

Almost half of the 33 respondents identifying obstacles complained about the lack of full information from staff. It may well be that transmission of full information on some matters faces legal constraints.

Q. In your view, how could access to information be improved for Council Members?

Responses - 33 respondents

- Use on-line for all, fast broadband, secure website, better hardware paid by Council (10)
- Better staff attitude, change culture to open, mandate full information (8)
- Meet informally, outside formal meetings (3)
- Simplify/streamline procedures (3)
- Need more on the history of decisions (2)
- Member access to all files (2)
- Present information earlier (2)
- Need more details (2)
- Appoint a research officer for Members (1)

Comments concerning improving access to information noted a necessity for a better quality IT system, simplify/streamline procedures and more history/detail on decisions. Difficulties with staff again emerged in responses to this question.

Q. Do you proactively seek information?

Yes	97	No	3	n = 40
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If "Yes", How do you proactively seek it?

Responses - 79 respondents

- From the relevant person (35)
- Speak to managers, staff, CEO (26)
- Longer service Members (12)
- Ask anyone and everyone (12)
- Website (2)
- Ask questions on notice, before meeting (1)

Almost all respondents stated that they proactively seek information. Of the 79 who provided a comment, 45 sought information “from the relevant person”, and/or “asked anyone/everyone”. Ten sought information from other Members.

Q. What information don't you get that you consider you should get?

Responses - 27 respondents

- Full details of issues (11)
- Full details of budget and financial matters (9)
- State government information about Local Government (4)
- Background information (3)
- Staff performance indicators, staff information (3)
- Major developments (2)
- Correct and full information (2)

This question is related to previous questions about “obstacles” and “difficulty to access”. The majority of the responses mirror those given earlier. Of the 27 respondents, 25 named “full details” and background information as their prime concerns.

Q. When confidentiality relating to sensitive information is required, do you believe this is respected by your:

- **Council?**

Yes	89	No	11	n = 97
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If “No”, please explain

Responses (5 respondents).

- There have been some major breaches (2)
- Some Members leak (2)
- staff don't comply (1)

- **Senior Staff?**

Yes	92	No	8	n = 93
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Well over 90% of respondents believed that confidentiality was respected by Council and Staff. A small minority indicated that they believed there were problems in this area.

6. Commitment and Motivation

Q. Before your election, would you have described your commitment in carrying out your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member as:

Highly committed	73
Reasonably committed	26
Somewhat committed	1

n=93

Q. Now that you have been involved with Council for over a year, how would you describe your commitment?

Highly committed	81
Reasonably committed	19
Somewhat committed	-

n=98

Q. If your rating has changed, what do you think has caused this?

Responses - 18 respondents

(more committed)

- Experience (4)
- Community support (3)
- Realised importance of the job (2)
- Workshops (1)
- Excellent staff support (1)

(less committed)

- Staff block too much information (2)
- Some negative Members (2)
- Workload too great (1)
- Red tape (1)
- old Members play politics (1)

Respondents were asked to judge the level of their commitment before their election, and after one year as an elected Council Member. In both periods, the overwhelming majority stated that they were highly committed, with all but one (before the election) only somewhat committed. The comparison of before/after showed a significant increase in the proportion highly committed. However, this was the net result of two opposing shifts. Of the 68 respondents highly committed before the election, 61 stated that they had not changed, but seven had moved to reasonably committed. The reasons (from six respondents) were based on “staff blocking”, “negative Members”, and workload/red tape. Of the 24 respondents whose commitment was reasonable before the election, thirteen had become highly committed one year later. The reasons given included experience, community support, and a realization of the importance of the job.

Q. What barriers, if any, **within the Council**, have frustrated you in carrying out your roles and responsibilities as a Council member?

Summary responses - 54 respondents

- Staff have own agendas, staff dominate, staff have silo mentality, staff don't give full information, staff resist change, CEO too dominant (26)
- A conflict between old and new Members, cliques within old Members, old Members too conservative, old Members do not co-operate (8)
- Procedures stifling, inefficient procedures (6)
- Lack of teamwork, factions (5)
- budget constraints (3)
- Not enough open communication (2)
- Council too worried about the media (2)
- Confidential meetings (1)
- Sexism (1)

The perceived chasm among a proportion of the respondents between Members and Staff became more evident in regard to internal barriers faced by newly elected Council Members. A caveat is that this question was specifically directed to those newly elected Council Members who felt that there were barriers. It should be noted that a majority of the respondents did not feel there were barriers. The two reported major barriers cited were perceptions of a poor staff attitude/relationship and recalcitrant re-elected Members. The former provided almost half (26) of the 54 responses; the latter (combining allied categories) 15 of the responses. Six respondents noted that procedures were “stifling/inefficient”.

Q. What do you think could be done to overcome the barriers?

Summary responses - 35 respondents

- Better internal communication, deal with internal divisions, less confrontation (14)
- More power to Members vis a vis staff (12)
- More professionalism (3)
- More training, workshops (3)
- PR needs improving (3)
- Stronger leadership (2)
- Other: Limit Members to two terms, actually make decisions!, less formal procedures, draft agendas earlier (6)

35 of the 53 who indicated dissatisfaction offered a comment on how to overcome the stated barriers. Of these, the main foci were to decrease confrontation, deal with internal divisions, and to further empower elected Council Members in their relations with staff.

Q. What have been the most helpful aspects within the Council that have assisted you to become more effective and committed in your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member?

Responses - 75 respondents

- Staff and CEO strong/professional/good/open door/neutral (35)
- Commitment from all, like-minded people, good culture (30)
- Older Members (7)
- Good information flow (3)
- LGA workshops, training (2)
- Experience (2)
- Good Mayor (2)

75 of the 98 respondents identified "helpful aspects" within the Council which have assisted them to become more effective.. The two dominating groups of comments related to the quality of the staff, and to the internal culture of the Council.

Q. What could be done to further increase your overall effectiveness and commitment?

Responses - 40 respondents

- More interaction with community (5)
- Members need more power over staff, need easier access to staff, need more assistance from staff (6)
- Training for all Members, more workshops (7)
- More time, I work full-time (8)
- More inclusivity, more informal contacts (1)
- Other: Cut red tape, more mentoring, stronger leadership, end "boys' club, all need laptops, need more finance knowledge, better allowance, compare with good Councils, more mentoring, less red tape, better financial knowledge, more feedback, stronger leadership (13)

40 of the 98 respondents, (a figure which suggests a clear majority are satisfied with their effectiveness and commitment) produced a wide range of proposals, including more training, better relations with staff, and more interaction with the community.

7. Confidence

This question focused on confidence over a range of 14 issues. The answers merit careful consideration.

Q. How confident are you about your role in each of the following:

	Confident	Fairly	Not Very	Not at all
Understanding and contributing to Strategic policy and decisions related to State-wide and regional issues	30	44	24	1 (96)
Understanding and contributing to the strategic goals and objectives of your Council	45	49	4	1
Understanding and working with the required processes and procedures governing your Council	38	54	6	1
Understanding and contributing to decisions related to local issues	69	27	2	1
Interacting and communicating with - CEO and Senior Staff	67	24	5	3
- other Council Members	63	34	1	1
- the Mayor/Chairperson	64	25	8	2 (96)
- the Community	67	27	3	1
Participating and contributing at Council/ Committee meetings	60	35	3	1
Understanding and developing relationships and communications that support Council decisions	48	45	5	1 (96)
Understanding and working within the Local Government Act	20	62	15	2
Understanding and behaving in a manner consistent with your Council's Code of Conduct	71	27	1	-
Understanding and acting appropriately In relation to any conflict of interest issue	69	26	4	-
Understanding and working within Local Government meeting procedures	37	52	10	-

Q. Do you believe that you have become more confident in carrying out your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member since being elected?

Yes	95	No	5	<i>n = 97 except where indicated otherwise</i>
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If "Yes", what has helped you most in strengthening your confidence?

Summary Responses - 73 responses

- Experience, time, participation (56)
- Senior Members, staff (13)
- Team culture, open door policy (7)

- Community feedback (4)
- Training (4)
- Mayor (2)
- Better understanding of issues (1)

If “No”, what has contributed to your loss of confidence?

Summary Responses – 4

- Staff intransigence (2)
- disheartened because “the community blames me!” (2)

Of the 14 “roles” listed, over 90% of respondents indicated they felt confident/fairly confident in carrying out these roles related to:

- Code of Conduct
- Local issues
- Communicating
- Strategic Goals
- Processes/Procedures
- Meetings
- Relationships
- Processes

These findings can be assessed as revealing a set of newly elected Council Members who have a high level of confidence. 95 per cent of respondents also stated they had become more confident over time, with more experience and participation. Notwithstanding this, a significant number of respondents indicated they were less than confident in:

- Understanding & contributing to strategic policy Statewide and regional issues
- Understanding and working within the Local Government Act
- Understanding and working within Local Government Meeting Procedures

Only 20 per cent stated they were confident working within the Act.

8. Expectations and Reality

Q. What were you most interested in contributing to when you were first elected?

Summary Responses - 83 respondents

- Community – consult, respond to, increase confidence of, represent (23)
- Development (16)
- Good governance, better image (12)
- Environment (12)
- Finances, budgets, economic base (11)
- Land use, planning, buildings (8)
- Represent my ward (4)
- Other, including: accessibility of services, waste management, reduce rates, everything, fire prevention, put the female view (7)

Q. What did you expect to be able to accomplish when you were elected?

Summary responses - 55 respondents

- Represent the community (26)

- Governance, sound policies, rational decisions (10)
- Financial, budget (8)
- Environment (8)
- Build public confidence in Council, more approachable (6)
- Represent ward (3)
- Planning (2)
- Other: Fire prevention, development, waste management, roads, non-financial matters (6)

Q. To what degree have you been able to realise these expectations so far?

Better than I expected	18
Satisfied to date	42
Some progress	33
Not at all	7

n= 95

Q. Is there anything in particular which has assisted you in realising your expectations?

Summary responses - 40 respondents

- Other Members, united Council (13)
- Community network (7)
- Vibrant, strong, caring CEO/staff (7)
- Hard work, time experience (6)
- Teamwork, mutual respect (4)
- Solid financial base (3)
- Committee work (2)
- Mayor (2)

Q. What barriers have you encountered that have made it difficult for you to realise your expectations?

Summary responses - 51 respondents

- Members conservative, dominant, complacent, lack team culture, negative (16)
- Staff have own agendas, are conservative, dominant (10)
- Members politicised, political parties (6)
- Lack full information (4)
- Red tape (3)
- Cost shifting, not enough money (3)
- Community apathy (2)
- Too complex (2)
- personal work commitment (2)
- Other: Agendas come too late, bureaucracy too big, too long for action (4)

Q. Before the election, how much time did you expect would be needed to carry out your roles and responsibilities as a Council Member?

Q. Now that you have been an elected member for over a year, how much time do you actually spend carrying out your roles?

Hours/week	Expected	Actual
1-2	7	2
3-5	23	9

6-8	19	9
9-11	17	13
12-14	6	5
15-17	12	15
18-20	12	23
21-23	3	18
24+	1	5
n =	90	93

The comments from 83 respondents encompassed a range of issues, which they wished to accomplish when first elected with a general category of “relating to the community “ identified as the most popular. Of the 95 respondents to “realising expectations”, the vast majority believed they had made progress, to a greater or lesser degree. A minority (7) felt they had made no progress at all. However, 51 respondents identified barriers which made it difficult for them to achieve more. The reason given repeated a number of the perceived negative comments noted in regard to earlier questions eg: Member/staff divide, criticisms of re-elected Members, red tape, cost shifting. One new issue was cited by 6 respondents - the politicisation of Council Members and the impact of political parties.

In relation to the 2 questions relating to “time taken to fulfill their responsibilities, respondents clearly underwent a “reality check” with the vast majority coming to the realisation that the time they actually spent on their duties was much greater than they expected.

9. Relationships

Q. How would you summarise your current relationships with each of the following people/groups?

	excellent	very good	satisfactory	poor
Mayor	38	28	27	7
Members	26	42	28	3
CEO/Staff	35	38	15	11
Community	39	44	15	1

n of rows = 96, 95, 97, 97

Q. Are there any specific ways by which your relationships could be improved with:

Mayor/Chairperson? Summary responses - 18 respondents

- More collegial, open, communicative (10)
- Informal meetings (6)
- Trust (2)
- Not open enough (1)

Council Members? Summary responses - 32 respondents

- Informal interchange, networking (20)
- Respect each other (10)
- Other: Less faction/party, end old/new conflict, join ALP (8)

CEO/Senior Staff? Summary responses - 24 respondents

- Better staff attitude, more open (11)
- More interactive, informal discussions (8)
- More open CEO (2)
- Less conservative/negative (2)
- Team building (1)

Community? Summary responses (30 respondents)

- Communication, formal opportunities, public forums (16)
- More time (8)
- Community should understand Council (5)
- Travelling Council meetings (1)
- Be open with community (1)

The majority of respondents indicated they enjoyed good relationships with all stakeholders. The highest area of dissatisfaction was directed at relationships between elected Council Members and staff however this was relatively low. Suggestions for how to improve “relationships” with the various stakeholders, resulted in less than half the potential respondents offering their views. Of these a general theme of more need for “informal” interaction was prevalent.

Q. In your view, does the Code of Conduct in your Council assist Council Members and Staff to:

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
Develop mature and constructive working relationships based on mutual trust and respect	21	52	15	12
Demonstrate courteous, sensitive and non-discriminative behaviour towards each other	25	43	21	11
Show acceptance and respect for the different but complementary roles each have in achieving the Council’s objectives	20	51	21	8
Demonstrate respect and valuing of individual Member’s experience, skills and abilities	18	54	15	14
Demonstrate respect for employees’ professional opinions and expertise	18	52	22	7 (94)
Have confidence in the manner in which allegations of inappropriate behaviour are investigated and resolved	23		14	13 (91)

N of rows = 95 except where shown

Combining “always” and “usually” for comparative purposes, there is very little difference between the issues, ranging from 69 per cent for “mature and constructive working relationships” to 65 per cent for “courteous, sensitive behaviour”. At the other end of the scale, the “sometimes” and “rarely” categories, identify a reasonable number (one quarter) of respondents have dissatisfactions with the statusquo in their Councils and there are sufficient numbers of such respondents to focus on recurring issues. In some ways the results in this table reflect the data and comments identified in earlier sections.

10. Networks

Q. In your view, is having a good network important to being an effective Council Member?

Yes	95	No	5	n = 95
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If “Yes”, please explain why

Summary responses - 64 respondents

- Information sharing (26)
- Feedback, communication, up to date (13)
- Identify issues (13)
- Ideas sharing, more support (8)
- Better decisions (8)
- Teamwork (3)
- In touch with community (3)

Q. Please clarify with whom networks are most valuable

Summary responses (70 respondents)

- Community, ratepayers association (27)
- Staff (26)
- Elected Members (24)
- Mayor (12)
- Everyone (7)
- Members of other Councils (2)
- Political party (2)
- Business people (2)

Of the 104 responses, 62 related to internal Council networks – formed with staff (26), elected Members (24), and Mayor (12). A total of 27 responses related to the community, of which six mentioned Ratepayers’ Associations. Seven respondents spread their networking to include “everyone”.

Q. Have you built new networks since your election?

Yes	94	No	6	n = 94
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If “Yes”, in which areas?

• Among Council members

Yes	91	No	9	n = 87
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• Among Council Staff

Yes	79	No	21	n = 89
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• Within the Community

Yes	85	No	15	n = 93
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Q. Have you built on your existing networks since your election?

Yes	91	No	9	n = 90
-----	----	----	---	--------

If “Yes”, in which areas?

Among Council members

Yes	86	No	14	n = 76
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- Among Council Staff

Yes	86	No	14	n = 78
-----	----	----	----	--------

- Within the Community

Yes	96	No	4	n = 85
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Q. In terms of building networks beneficial to you as a Council Member, are there any difficulties or obstacles which you have faced?

Yes	49	No	51	n = 92
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If "Yes", what were they?

Summary responses - 27 respondents

- Time (7)
- Some Members have personal agenda, dominant Members (6)
- No access to staff (5)
- Access to all community (4)
- Community distrusts us (3)
- Other: finding the right people, confidentiality (2)

Q. How could these be overcome?

Summary responses - 13 respondents

- More communication with community (4)
 - Trust, honesty, ethics (4)
 - Better staff relations (3)
- Other: wider contacts, education (1)

11. Summary Assessment

Q. What would you say are the best aspects of working in the Council?

Summary responses - 79 respondents

- Community: work for, better serve, contribute to, do something for, represent (50)
- Understand community (19)
- Community support, input from, appreciation from (8)
- Change peoples' lives, help people, make difference for people (7)
- Mutuality, interaction with community (4)
- Good governance (2)
- Get development occurring (2)
- Other: fascinating, meetings (2)

This question provided the highest response rate of four grouped questions. Of the 94 responses, 88 related to the community – in two "directions". Over half of the responses (50) felt that the "best" was working for/representing the Council in the community; eight thought that the "best" was positive reactions and support from the community; 19 found that the "best" part was understanding the community; seven enjoyed helping/changing peoples' lives; and four enjoyed community interaction.

Q. What are the best aspects of working with the:

• **Mayor/Chairperson?**

Summary responses - 58 respondents

- Collegial, approachable, available, mentor (20)
- Knowledge (10)
- Respects ideas, ability, inclusive (9)
- High goals, enthusiasm, passion, professional, dedicated (7)
- Effective, guidance, constructive, statesman (7)
- Honest (5)
- Compassionate, calm (3)
- Wisdom (2)
- Charisma, leadership (2)
- Community at heart (2)

• **Community?**

Summary responses - 73 respondents

- Achieve for them, they appreciate, address concerns, inspiring (31)
- Grateful, supporting, ideas (24)
- Getting different views, diversity (12)
- Forward looking, positive spirit (3)
- Consults, involves people (3)

• **CEO/ Senior Staff?**

Summary responses - 65 respondents

- Communicator, shares expertise, helpful (17)
- Open door (14)
- Professional, leadership, dedication (13)
- Supportive (11)
- Respect, trust (9)
- Competent, efficient, talented, intelligent (9)
- Patient, helpful, co-operative (3)

Other Council Members?

Summary responses - 58 respondents

- Good relations, work together, mutual help, mutual respect, Team action (42)
- Commitment, experience (7)
- Nice people, friendship (5)
- Learn from, encourager (3)
- Varied outlooks (2)

Q. In your view, is there a better way to utilise the skills, experience and knowledge of Council Members?

Yes	69	No	40	n = 83
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Please explain your answer

Summary responses - 33 respondents

- More informal discussion, open discussion, full information (8)
- Council needs to listen to Members, more support for Members, less control by staff (6)
- Identify skills, match tasks to skills (6)
- More mentoring and training for Members (4)

- Business – like approach, use portfolios, less consultants - use Members' skills (4)
- Mayor should facilitate, not boss (2)
- Need new blood, need more interesting mix (2)
- Less internal factions (1)

Q. What would you say, specifically, to a person who approached you for advice about standing for election to a Council?

Summary responses - 82 respondents

- Need lots of time, needs full-time, too much time, need family support, check size of role first (42)
- Be impartial, committed to community, respect community, be fair/honest/responsible (16)
- Go for it! (16)
- Need big effort, commitment, sacrifice needed, more work than expected (11)
- Worthwhile, rewarding (8)
- Be thick-skinned, calm (5)
- Have motivation, passion (3)
- Needs a lot of reading (3)
- Frustrating – not like a business (2)
- Other: Speak your mind, beware of red tape (2)

Q. Are there any other matters you would like to draw our attention to?

Summary responses - 24 respondents

- Child care, more pay for working family Members (5)
- Staff: too dominant, need performance criteria, do not respect elected Members (3)
- Need better staff-Member relations, Members need independent advisors (2)
- Council should not set allowances (2)
- Educate community more, better public relations (2)
- Stronger Code of Ethics (2)
- Make training free/cheaper (2)
- Other: Attract high quality candidates, Four-year term too long, more amalgamations needed, need Hansard, use new elected Members more, cut red tape, end cost-shifting (7)

This open-ended question produced an eclectic collection of responses. A minority returned to themes such as staff-Member relationships. The majority of the responses covered a wide range of issues concerning Local Government.