

*Tendered by Professor Ryan.
27 July 2015.*

Why Local Government Matters



► Presented by Associate
Professor Roberta Ryan
ACELG Director

 **ACELG**
Australian Centre of Excellence
for Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Rationale – sector positioning

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ Little empirical research
- ▶ Increasing skepticism about governments
- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Move beyond traditional conceptions – representation and service delivery
- ▶ Draws on other successful examples
- ▶ Difficult to ask about directly



Little empirical research to determine why (or if) local government matters to communities

Increasing skepticism about the intrinsic value of governments at different levels

Increasingly complex understandings of governance

Necessitates local government to move beyond traditional arguments about local representation, and service satisfaction

Draws on successful examples used to articulate the value of policy fields such as the arts, disability and the environment

Difficult to ask about levels of government (value-laden, respondent uncertainty of who provides, bias due to local contexts, lack of understanding)

Cannot ask about levels of government, so questions designed to provide nuanced understanding of the value of local government

Factor analysis between what the survey reveals about how the community conceives the *inputs* (demographic characteristics/societal values), *processes* (community participation/decision-making) and *outcomes* (place/services) of governance will identify preferred governance typologies and, by inference, why local government matters to the community.

Governance is the *overarching and most appropriate* lens to reveal why local government matters as it acknowledges the *complexity of the inputs, processes and*

outcomes that shape local communities, and responds to the ***unbounded nature of the concepts being tested:***

- the *services* communities use ***know no boundaries;***
- the *community's understanding* of how and who provides services ***knows no boundaries;***
- the *processes* of, and influences on, *community value* formation ***know no boundaries;***
- the *places* communities experience ***know no boundaries;*** and
- *how people conceive of communities and decision-making* ***know no boundaries.***

For these reasons, the survey will only ask 3-4 questions directly about local government, and at the very end of the survey. These questions are a proxy for community connectedness to local government.

Purpose of Study

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ Determine if local government matters
- ▶ Establish foundational understanding
- ▶ Sector-influencing research
- ▶ Establish baseline
- ▶ This does not ask about individual councils and *is not* a community satisfaction survey or measure of performance

ACELG
Australian Centre of Excellence
for Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Determine if (or not) local government matters to communities

Establish foundational understanding of what it is that communities value (or not) about local government

Sector-influencing research, developed in collaboration with the sector

Establish baseline for future benchmarking and provide local governments with more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the value communities see in local government

This does not ask about individual councils and *is not* a community satisfaction survey or measure of performance

Federalism has buttressed the role of both central and state governments, local government has been viewed as the least capable arm of government and can often find it difficult to move beyond the charge of being a 'creature of statute' attending to rudimentary service functions ('roads, rates, rubbish').

A priori arguments about the value of local representation and measures of service delivery satisfaction aside, little empirical research has been done to determine why (or if) local government matters to communities.

The study is not designed as a means to ascertain citizen perceptions of their local Council's performance. Many studies of local government in Australia have focused on this issue, often comparing levels of satisfaction with people's expectations of their Councils.

Team effort

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ Associate Professor Roberta Ryan
- ▶ ACELG Research Advisory Committee
- ▶ Ronald Woods
- ▶ Catherine Hastings
- ▶ Alex Lawrie
- ▶ Dr. Bligh Grant
- ▶ Dr. Shaun Wilson (Macquarie University)
- ▶ Dr. Liana Wortley
- ▶ Dr. Eidin O'Shea
- ▶ Therese Alvarez
- ▶ Sasindu Gamage

 **ACELG**
A Research Centre of Excellence
for Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Conceptual Framework – 1

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ Why does local government matter?
- ▶ Local government enables service and infrastructure delivery to people at the local level, which drives satisfaction with where they are living and attachment to place in which they live.
 - ▶ attachment to place (measured)
 - ▶ aesthetic
 - ▶ emotional and
 - ▶ instrumental dimensions
- ▶ Local government is responsible for or can influence delivery of services which people rely on every day
 - ▶ service delivery preferences, including service priorities and levels, willingness to pay, and delivery models (measured)

Local government's role as a place shaper and its importance in meeting the needs of citizens that drive attachment and satisfaction with the area in which they live;

The preferences of communities for how their services are delivered at the local level and the ability of local governments to offer flexible and community specific service delivery;

Conceptual Framework – 2

Why
Local Government
Matters

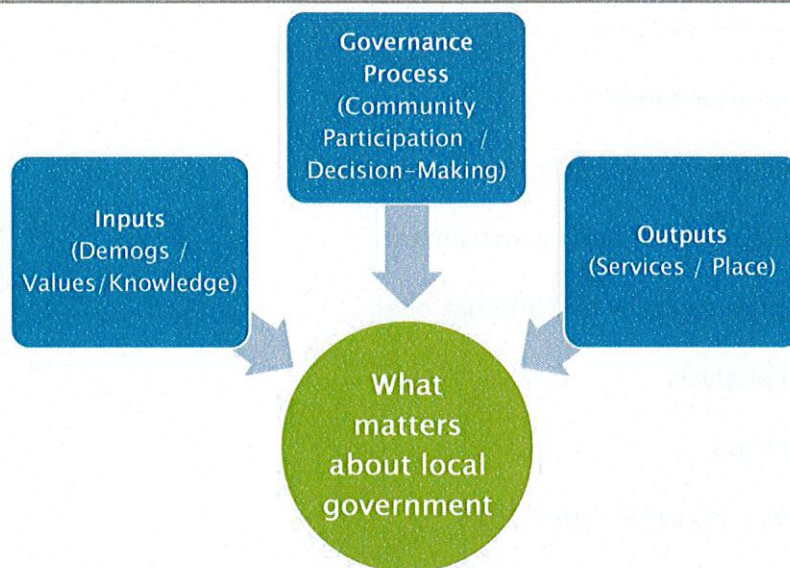


- ▶ Local government is the 'closest' level of government to people and is more easily able to be responsive to the governance preferences of citizens
 - ▶ participatory democracy
 - ▶ role of government including
 - ▶ big vs. small government
 - ▶ public vs. private provision of services
 - ▶ government's role in the market and
 - ▶ public value creation

ACELG
Australian Centre of Excellence
for Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Theories of governance, particularly community beliefs about big versus small government and its role in the market, the appropriate role for the private sector in local service provision, the preferred extent of public participation in government decision making, and preferences for the realisation of public value;



The project so far

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ Sector consultation
- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Development of conceptual framework
- ▶ Development of survey instrument
- ▶ Telephone survey n=2006 national
- ▶ Data analysis
- ▶ Reporting
- ▶ REPORT LAUNCH – June 2015



1. Sector consultation including the ACELG RAC
2. Literature review “Citizen perceptions of local government” (April/May 2013)
3. Development of conceptual framework (September 2013 – March 2014)
Including literature reviews on place attachment; governance; service delivery; public value; world values survey
4. Development of survey instrument (March – September 2014)
3 x panel (online surveys) to test questions – specifically interaction of service delivery and governance questions
5. CATI survey n=2006 National. Age, gender and ACLG quotas. (October-November 2014)
6. Data analysis (November 2014 – current)
7. Reporting – report containing all univariate analysis and significant/interesting associations; context, objectives, methodology (February 2015 – current)
8. REPORT LAUNCH – June 2015

What we asked about – Including....

Why
Local Government
Matters



- ▶ community views about what they value about where they live
- ▶ understandings of local democracy
- ▶ how they want to engage in decision making
- ▶ service delivery preferences
- ▶ what role they would like to see local government play
- ▶ knowledge of local government
- ▶ what they think about local government amalgamations.

Why local government matters to people across the whole spectrum of its activities

ACELG
Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Why Local Government Matters



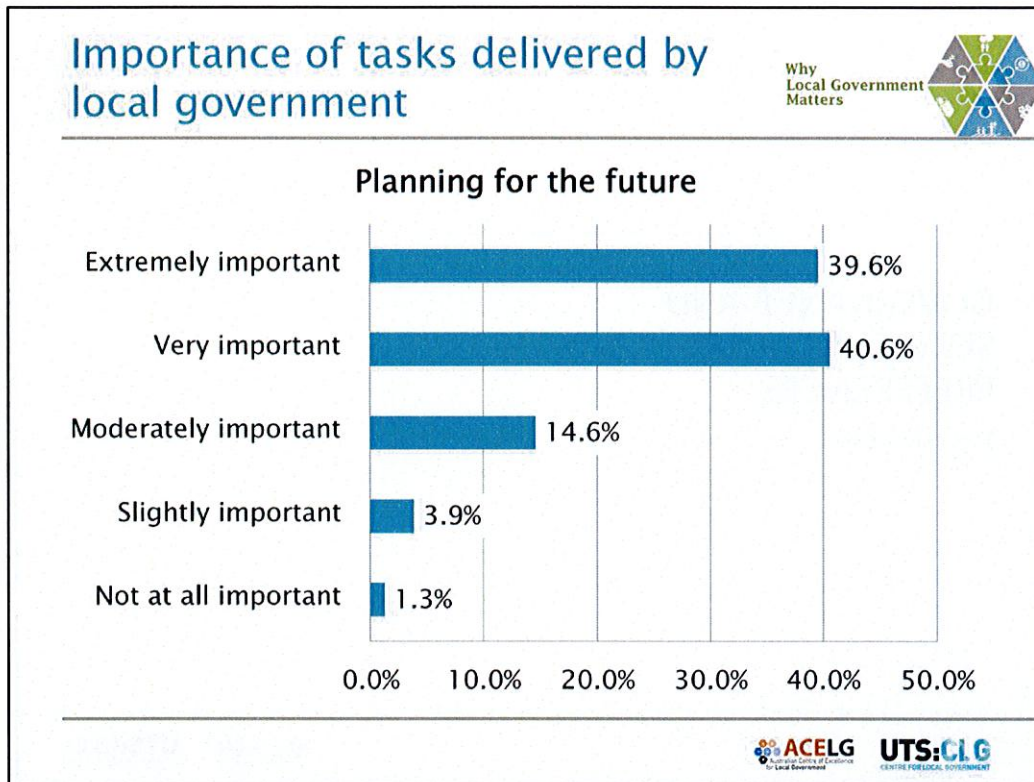
► Some results!





GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY PREFERENCES

SNEAK PEEK



Participants were asked “how important it is to you that local government does each of these things”. They were then provided with a list of tasks that local government may be involved in.

“Planning for the future” was identified by 80.2% of respondents as extremely or very important (Figure #). This was particularly important to people who were more engaged with the local government. Respondents who had actively participated in service clubs or sporting, social, welfare, emergency services or recreation group in your community (44%), or could name the mayor correctly (43%) were more likely to report extreme importance than those that hadn’t been involved (36.1%) or couldn’t name the mayor correctly (37.3%). In addition, those from urban regional areas (46%) were more likely to place extreme importance on this task being delivered by local government than the general population (39.6%).

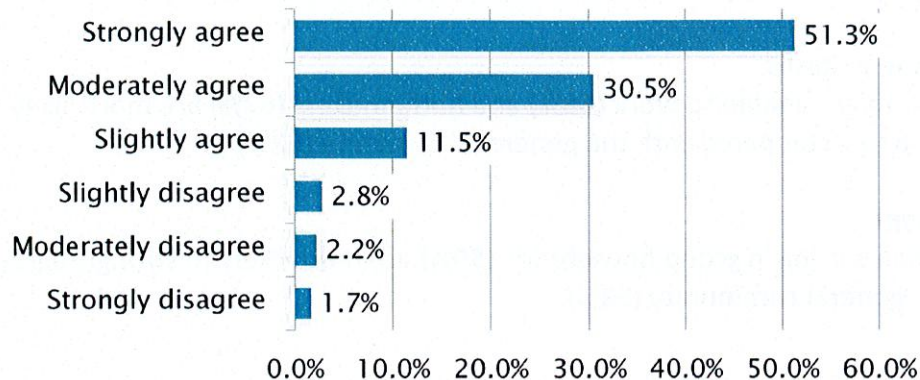
Extremely important 39.6%
 Very important 40.6%
 Moderately important 14.6%
 Slightly important 3.9%
 Not at all important 1.3%

Community participation in decision making

Why
Local Government
Matters



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



ACELG
Association for
Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

51% of respondents strongly agree they want the government to involve them more in making decisions about what services are delivered in their local area, a further 30% of respondents moderately agree.

Strongly agree 51.3%
Moderately agree 30.5%
Slightly agree 11.5%
Slightly disagree 2.8%
Moderately disagree 2.2%
Strongly disagree 1.7%

Association Highlights

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

Gender

Women (55%) are more likely than **men (48%)** to strongly agree.

Age

Respondents between the ages of **60 to 69 (57%)** are more likely to strongly agree compared with respondents between the ages of **30 to 39 (47%)** and **70+ (47%)**.

Education attainment

Increased levels of educational attainment lower the likelihood of strong agreement. **(56% for those with a school education level compared with 47% for those with postgraduate degrees).**

Household income

People with **\$300,000 or more (44%)** in household income are less likely to strongly agree compared with respondents who earn **\$30,000 to \$39,999 (51%)**.

Employment status

People who are **unable to work (68%)** and **homemakers (67%)** are more likely to strongly agree compared with the **general community (52%)**.

Family type

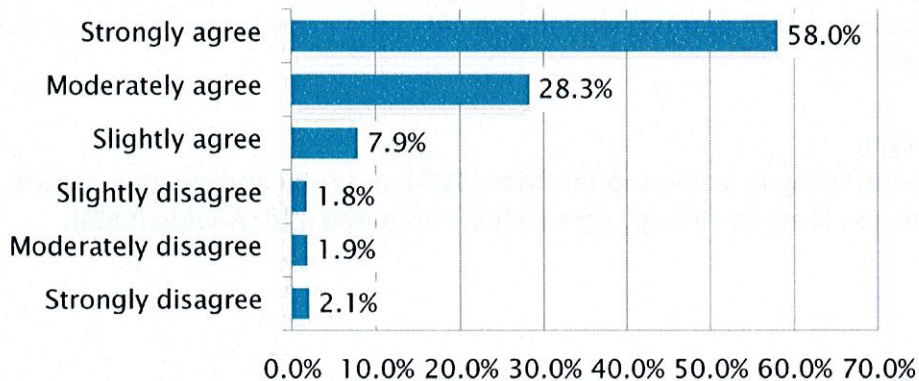
Respondents living in **group households (59%)** are more likely to strongly agree than the **general community (52%)**.

Community participation in decision making

Why
Local Government
Matters



Communities need to work with experts and public servants to make good decisions about what services they need



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government Centre for Local Government

Respondents strongly agree that communities should be involved with government in making decisions about how and what services should be delivered in their local area.

Communities need to work with experts and public servants to make good decisions about what services they need

58% of respondents strongly agree that communities need to work with experts and public servants to make good decisions about what services they need, while 28% of respondents moderately agree.

Strongly agree 58.0%
Moderately agree 28.3%
Slightly agree 7.9%
Slightly disagree 1.8%
Moderately disagree 1.9%
Strongly disagree 2.1%

Association Highlights

Communities need to work with experts and public servants to make good decisions about what services they need

Politics

People who would normally vote for **Labor (62%)** are more likely than people who

vote for the **Liberal/National Party (55%)** to strongly agree.

Employment status

When compared with the **general community (58%)**, **students (66%)** are more likely to strongly agree. Age, however, is not a significant factor.

Length of time living in the local area

A strong agreement is less likely among people who have lived in the area for **less than 2 years (43%)** than those who have lived in their community for **more than 10 years (59%)**.

Council type

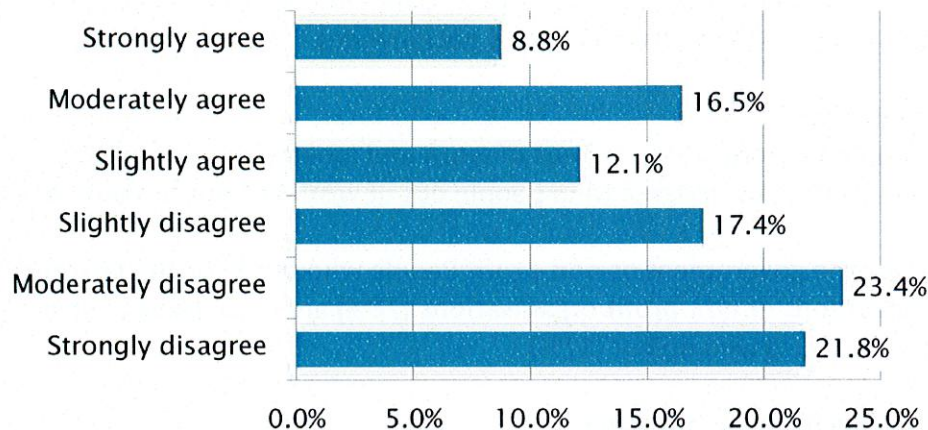
Respondents living in **urban capital cities (51%)** and **rural and remote councils (53%)** are less likely to strongly agree when compared **nation-wide (58%)**.

The role of the market in service delivery

Why
Local Government
Matters



The private sector delivers the best value services



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government Centre for Local Government

23% of respondents moderately disagree that the private sector delivers the best value services, while 22% of respondents strongly disagree. Only 9% of respondents strongly agree and 17% of respondents moderately agree that the private sector delivers the best value services.

Strongly agree 8.8%
Moderately agree 16.5%
Slightly agree 12.1%
Slightly disagree 17.4%
Moderately disagree 23.4%
Strongly disagree 21.8%

Association Highlights

The private sector delivers the best value services

Politics

Labor Party (30%) voters have higher levels of strong disagreement than **Liberal/National Party voters (11%)**.

Age

Respondents between the ages of **60-69 (29%)** are more likely to strongly disagree than respondents between the ages of **18 to 29 (13%)**.

Education attainment

As education attainment rises, levels of strong disagreement also rise (**16% for school education level attainment** compared with **25% for postgraduate degree holders**).

Household income

Respondents who earn household income of **\$300,000 or more (9%)** are less likely to strongly disagree (**compared with 22% nationwide**).

Employment status

People **unable to work (29%)** and **out of work and looking for work (28%)** are more likely to strongly disagree than people **out of work but not looking for work (10%)**.

Working for the government or non-profit People who **work for the government, public institutions or non-profit organisations (26%)** are more likely to strongly disagree than those who do not (**17%**).

Length of time living in local area

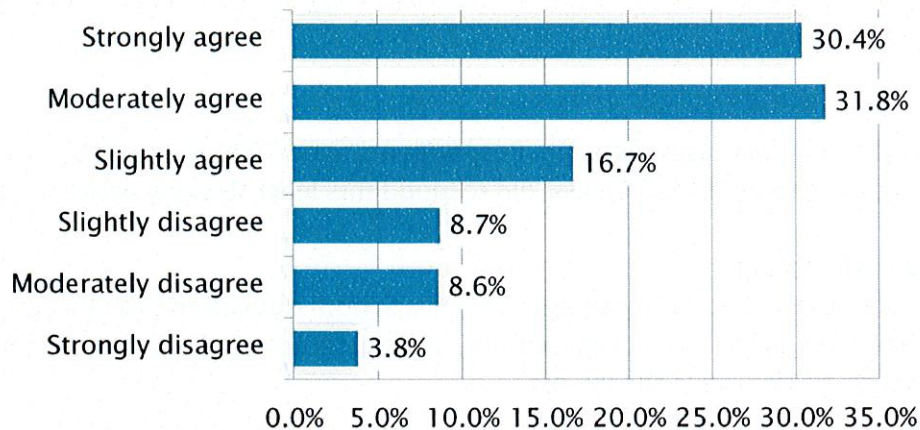
Respondents who have lived in their local area for **more than 10 years (23%)** are more likely to strongly disagree compared with respondents who have lived in their local area for **less than 2 years (16%)** and those who have lived in their local area for **more than 2 but less than 5 years (16%)**.

Knowledge to make decisions about what services are needed in the local area

Why
Local Government
Matters



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



ACELG UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Close to two-thirds of respondents either strongly agree (30%) or moderately agree (32%) that communities know enough to make good decisions about what services they need.

Strongly agree 30.4%
Moderately agree 31.8%
Slightly agree 16.7%
Slightly disagree 8.7%
Moderately disagree 8.6%
Strongly disagree 3.8%

Association Highlights

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

Community participation

Respondents who had **actively participated (34%)** are more likely to strongly agree than respondents who had **not participated (27%)** in local clubs or groups.

Politics

Liberal/National (35%) voters are more likely to strongly agree than **Labor (28%)** voters; respondents whose **votes change from election to election (27%)**; and **Greens (27%)** voters.

Knowledge of mayor's name

Respondents who **correctly (32%) name their mayor** are less likely to strongly agree compared with those who do so **incorrectly (39%)**.

Gender

Male (25%) respondents are less likely to report strong agreement than **female (35%)** respondents.

Age

Strong agreement increases with age. Respondents aged **70 and over (40%)** most strongly agree, and **18-29 (22%)** year old respondents least strongly agree.

Education attainment

As education levels rise, strong agreement falls. **School education (38%)** level holders have the highest strong agreement, and **postgraduate (20%)** and **bachelor (23%)** degree-holders have the lowest.

Household income

In general, strong agreement decreases as household income increases. Respondents with household incomes of **\$10-\$19,000 (40%)**; **\$20-\$29,000 (47%)**; and **\$30-\$39,000 (48%)** have the highest strong agreement. Those with household incomes of **\$150-\$199,000 (17%)**; **\$200-\$299,000 (17%)**; and **\$300,000 or more (22%)** have the lowest.

Employment status

Respondents who are **retired (41%)**; **unable to work (41%)**; and **homemakers (39%)** report the highest levels of strong agreement. Respondents who are **students (22%)**; **employed for wages (26%)**; and **out of work but not currently looking (33%)** report the lowest levels of strong agreement.

Family type

Respondents of **one-parent families (38%)** are most likely to strongly agree. **Couples with children (28%)** and **couples with no children (31%)** have lower levels of strong agreement, while non-family group households have the lowest (17%).

Council type

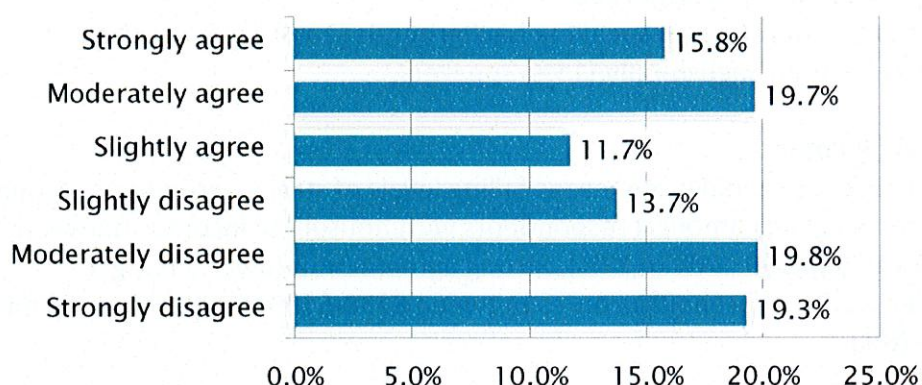
Strong agreement is lowest at **urban capital cities (22%)** and **small/medium urban development (24%)** councils. It is highest at **urban regional (36%)**, followed by **rural and remote (35%)** councils.

Public value

Why
Local Government
Matters



Decisions about how services are delivered in my area should be made primarily on value for money



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government Centre for Local Government

20% of respondents moderately agree that decisions about how services are delivered in their area should be made primarily on value for money, while 16% of respondents strongly agree. A slightly larger proportion (39%) either strongly disagree (19%) or moderately disagree (20%).

Strongly agree 15.8%
Moderately agree 19.7%
Slightly agree 11.7%
Slightly disagree 13.7%
Moderately disagree 19.8%
Strongly disagree 19.3%

Association Highlights

Decisions about how services are delivered in my area should be made primarily on value for money

Politics

Liberal/National (21%) voters are most likely to strongly agree, followed by respondents whose votes **change from election to election (19%)** and **Labor (14%)** voters. **Greens (3%)** voters have the lowest level of strong agreement.

Knowledge of mayor's name

Those who **name their mayor incorrectly (21%)** have the highest strong agreement

compared with all other respondents (**16% nationwide**).

Age

Strong agreement rises with age. Respondents aged **18 to 49 (11% to 13%)** have the lowest levels of strong agreement. Respondents aged **70 and over (27%)** have the highest strong agreement.

Non-English Speaking Background

Respondents of **non-English speaking backgrounds (28%)** are more likely to strongly agree than **English-only (15%)** speakers.

Household income

Overall, rising household income sees falling levels of strong agreement. Strong agreement is highest amongst respondents with household incomes between **\$10,000 and \$49,999 (21% to 23%)**. Strong agreement is lower amongst respondents with household incomes between **\$150-\$199,000 (12%)** and **\$300,000 or more (8%)**.

Employment status

Respondents who are **retired (24%)** are most likely to strongly agree, followed by those who are **self-employed (19%)** and **unable to work (19%)**.

Students (4%) are least likely to strongly agree, followed by respondents who are **out of work and looking (8%)**.

Family type

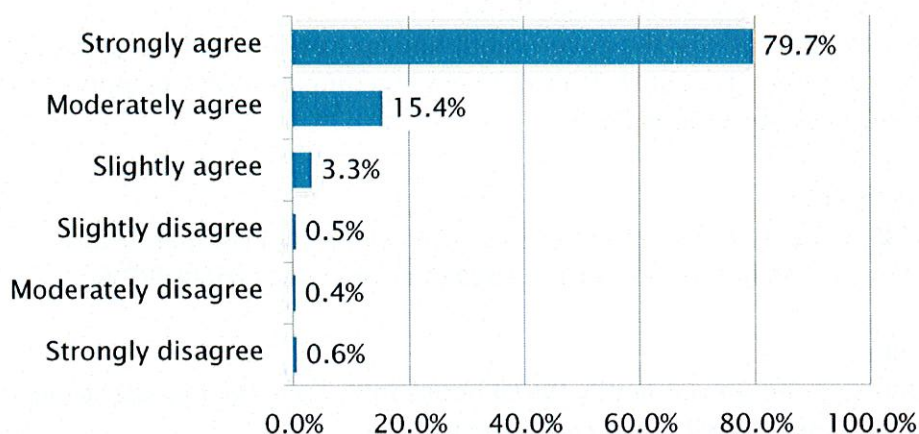
Lone-person (18%) households and **couples with no children (18%)** report higher levels of strong agreement compared with **(one-parent families (8%)** and **couples with children (13%)**.

Public value

Why
Local Government
Matters



I want governments to deliver services that contribute to a healthier and fairer society



ACELG
Association of Councils of Local Government
UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The majority of respondents, 80% (n=1585) strongly agree that they want governments to deliver services that contribute to a healthier and fairer society, while 15% of respondents (n=307) moderately agree.

Strongly agree 79.7%
Moderately agree 15.4%
Slightly agree 3.3%
Slightly disagree 0.5%
Moderately disagree 0.4%
Strongly disagree 0.6%

Association Highlights

I want governments to deliver services that contribute to a healthier and fairer society

Politics

Greens (95%) voters are most likely to strongly agree, followed by **Labor (85%)** voters and respondents whose voting preferences **change from election to election (81%)**. **Liberal/National (72%)** voters express lower strong agreement.

Gender

Female (83%) respondents report higher strong agreement compared with **male (77%)** respondents.

Employment status

Respondents who are **out of work and looking for work (87%)**; **students (83%)**; and **employed for wages (82%)** most strongly agree. Respondents who **are out of work but not currently looking (60%)** least strongly agree.

Working in government and Not-for-Profit

Respondents who work for the **government and/or not-for-profit organisations (84%)** are more likely to report strong agreement compared with respondents who **work for other organisations (79%)**.

Housing tenure

Renters (85%) are more likely to express strong agreement compared with respondents whose homes are **on a mortgage or owned outright (79%)**.

Family type

Respondents of **one-parent family (86%)** households have the highest strong agreement (compared with **80% community wide**).

Council type

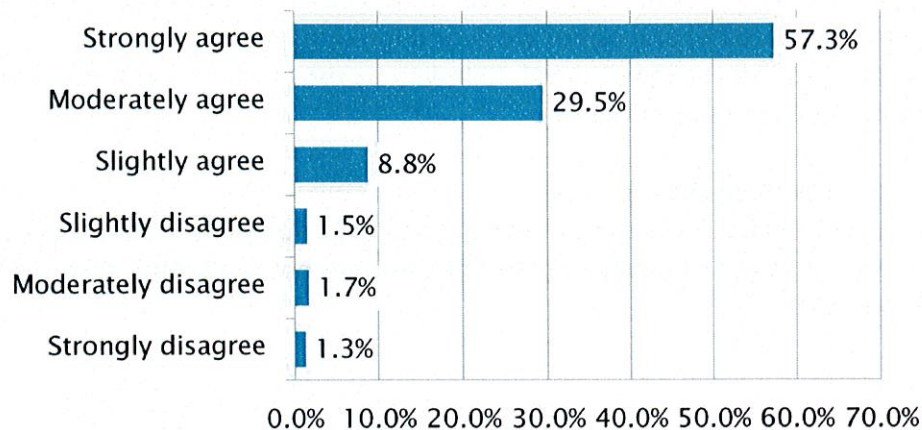
Urban development small/medium (82%); **urban regional (82%)**; and **urban development large/very large (81%)** councils report higher levels of strong agreement. Respondents of **urban capital cities (75%)** report the lowest levels of strong agreement.

Public value

Why
Local Government
Matters



Government should be advocating for the needs of my local community



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government Centre for Local Government

The majority of respondents, 70% (n=1399) strongly agree that governments should work with each other and other service providers to provide local services, while 22% moderately agree.

Strongly agree 57.3%
Moderately agree 29.5%
Slightly agree 8.8%
Slightly disagree 1.5%
Moderately disagree 1.7%
Strongly disagree 1.3%

Association Highlights

Government should be advocating for the needs of my local community

Community participation

Respondents who **had actively participated (62%)** in clubs, services or groups in their local community are more likely to strongly agree than those who had **not actively participated (53%)**.

Gender

Female (61%) respondents are more likely to strongly agree compared with **male (54%)** respondents.

Age

50-59 (64%) year old respondents have the highest level of strong agreement. Respondents aged **70 years and over (48%)**, followed by **18-29 (54%)** year olds, have the lowest levels of strong agreement.

Employment status

Homemakers (67%) report the highest level of agreement, followed by those who are **unable to work (62%)** and **out of work and looking (61%)**.

Students (47%) report the lowest level, followed by those who are **out of work but not currently looking for work (52%)**.

Length of time living in the local area

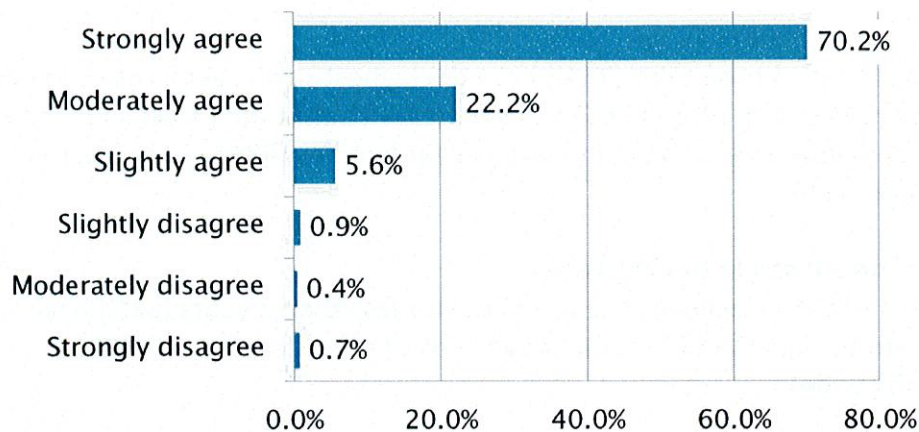
Respondents who have lived in their local area for a **period of less than 2 years (46%)** have lower levels of strong agreement compared with all other respondents (**57% nationwide**).

Public value

Why
Local Government
Matters



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



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government

The majority of respondents, 70% (n=1399) strongly agree that governments should work with each other and other service providers to provide local services, while 22% moderately agree.

Strongly agree 70.2%
Moderately agree 22.2%
Slightly agree 5.6%
Slightly disagree 0.9%
Moderately disagree 0.4%
Strongly disagree 0.7%

Association Highlights

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

Age

Levels of strong agreement rise between **18-29 year olds (64%)** and **50-59 year olds (75%)**, then fall for those **aged over 70 (68%)**.

Employment status

Individuals who are **unable to work (75%)**; **homemakers (73%)**; **employed for wages (72%)**; and **retired (71%)** are more likely to have higher levels of strong agreement. Those who are **out of work but not currently looking (57%)**; **students**

(59%); and out of work and looking (59%) have lower levels of strong agreement.

Dwelling type

Dwellers of flats, units or apartments of 4 stories or more (85%) are more likely to strongly agree compared with respondents living in a **separate house (71%)** and **dwellers of flats, units or apartments of 3 stories or less (65%)**.

Family type

Non-group family households (75%) have the highest strong agreement, followed by **couples with no children (74%)** and **couples with children (72%)**. Individuals of **lone-person households (66%)** and **one-parent families (68%)** voice lower levels of strong agreement.

Length of time living in the local area

Individuals who have lived in their local area for **less than 2 years (62%)** have low levels of strong agreement in comparison with all other respondents **(70% community wide)**.

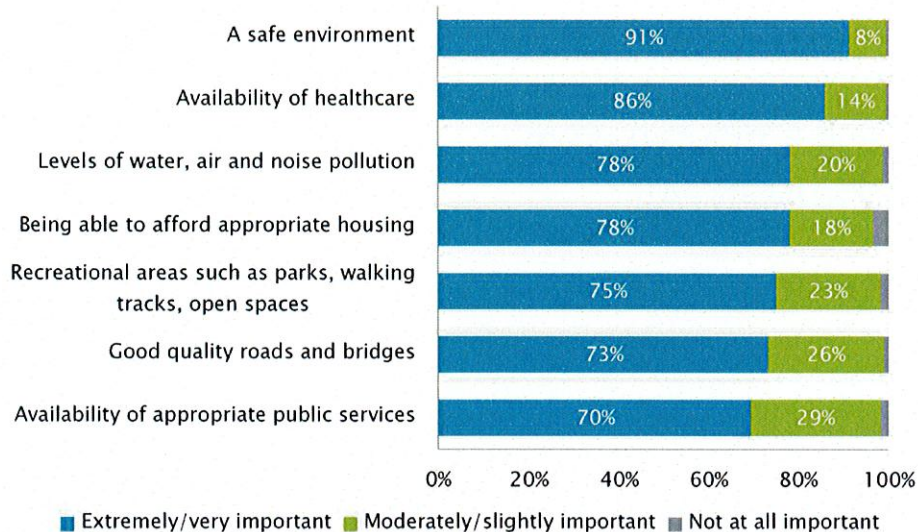


PLACE ATTACHMENT – INSTRUMENTAL

SNEAK PEEK

Place attachment – instrumental

Why
Local Government
Matters



ACELG UTS:CLG
Centre for Local Government

A safe environment

58% of respondents feel that having a safe environment is extremely important, while 34% feel it to be very important.

Availability of healthcare

48% of respondents feel the availability of healthcare in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Levels of water, air and noise pollution

42% of respondents feel that seeing to the levels of water, air and noise pollution in their local area was extremely important, while 37% feel it to be very important.

Being able to afford appropriate housing

40% of respondents feel that being able to afford appropriate housing in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces

36% of respondents feel the presence of recreational areas in their local area is extremely important, and 40% feel it to be very important.

Good quality roads and bridges

33% of respondents feel the availability of good quality roads and bridges in their local area is extremely important, while a further 41% feel it to be very important.

Availability of appropriate public services

29% of respondents feel the availability of appropriate public services in their local area is extremely important, a further 40% felt it to be very important.

Availability of good schools

36% of respondents feel the availability of good schools in their local area is extremely important, while 33% feel it to be very important.

A positive economic outlook

30% of respondents feel the presence of a positive economic outlook in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Convenient public transport

31% of respondents feel the availability of convenient public transport in their local area is extremely important, while 33% feel it to be very important.

Job opportunities

29% of respondents feel the availability of job opportunities in their local area is extremely important, while 30% feel it to be very important. Nearly a quarter of respondents feel the availability of jobs is either only slightly important (9%) or not at all important (14%).

A supportive and cohesive community

25% of respondents feel the presence of a supportive and cohesive community in their local area is extremely important, while 39% feel it to be very important.

Being close to my family

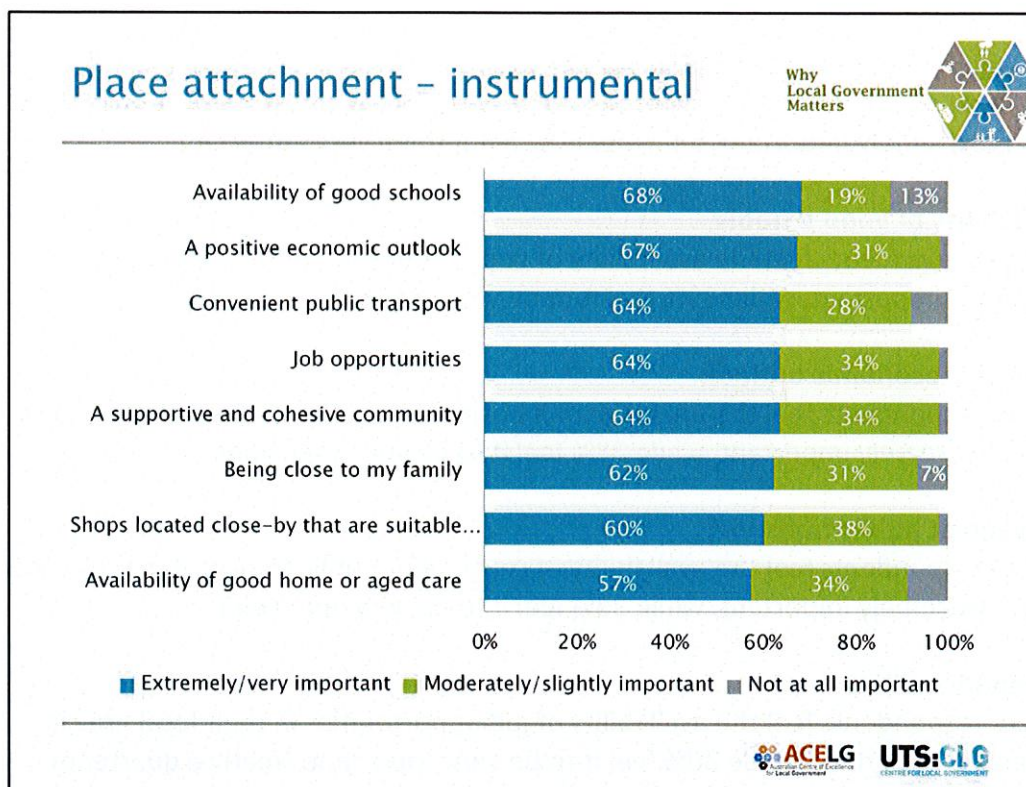
35% of respondents feel that having shops located close by that are suitable to their needs in their local area was extremely important, while 28% feel it to be very important.

Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

24% of respondents feel that having shops located close by that are suitable to their needs in their local area is extremely important, while 37% feel it to be very important.

Availability of good home or aged care

27% of respondents feel the availability of good home or aged care in their local area is extremely important, while 30% feel it to be very important.



A safe environment

58% of respondents feel that having a safe environment is extremely important, while 34% feel it to be very important.

Availability of healthcare

48% of respondents feel the availability of healthcare in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Levels of water, air and noise pollution

42% of respondents feel that seeing to the levels of water, air and noise pollution in their local area was extremely important, while 37% feel it to be very important.

Being able to afford appropriate housing

40% of respondents feel that being able to afford appropriate housing in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Recreational areas such as parks, walking tracks, open spaces

36% of respondents feel the presence of recreational areas in their local area is extremely important, and 40% feel it to be very important.

Good quality roads and bridges

33% of respondents feel the availability of good quality roads and bridges in their local area is extremely important, while a further 41% feel it to be very important.

Availability of appropriate public services

29% of respondents feel the availability of appropriate public services in their local area is extremely important, a further 40% felt it to be very important.

Availability of good schools

36% of respondents feel the availability of good schools in their local area is extremely important, while 33% feel it to be very important.

A positive economic outlook

30% of respondents feel the presence of a positive economic outlook in their local area is extremely important, while 38% feel it to be very important.

Convenient public transport

31% of respondents feel the availability of convenient public transport in their local area is extremely important, while 33% feel it to be very important.

Job opportunities

29% of respondents feel the availability of job opportunities in their local area is extremely important, while 30% feel it to be very important. Nearly a quarter of respondents feel the availability of jobs is either only slightly important (9%) or not at all important (14%).

A supportive and cohesive community

25% of respondents feel the presence of a supportive and cohesive community in their local area is extremely important, while 39% feel it to be very important.

Being close to my family

35% of respondents feel that having shops located close by that are suitable to their needs in their local area was extremely important, while 28% feel it to be very important.

Shops located close by that are suitable to my needs

24% of respondents feel that having shops located close by that are suitable to their needs in their local area is extremely important, while 37% feel it to be very important.

Availability of good home or aged care

27% of respondents feel the availability of good home or aged care in their local area is extremely important, while 30% feel it to be very important.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

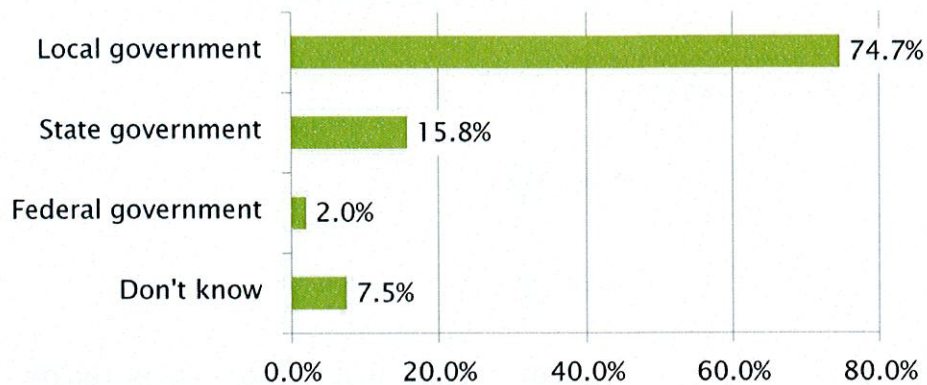
SNEAK PEEK

Level of government and decisions about the local area

Why
Local Government
Matters



Thinking about where you live, which level of government is best able to make decisions about your local area?



ACELG
Australian Centre of Excellence
in Local Government

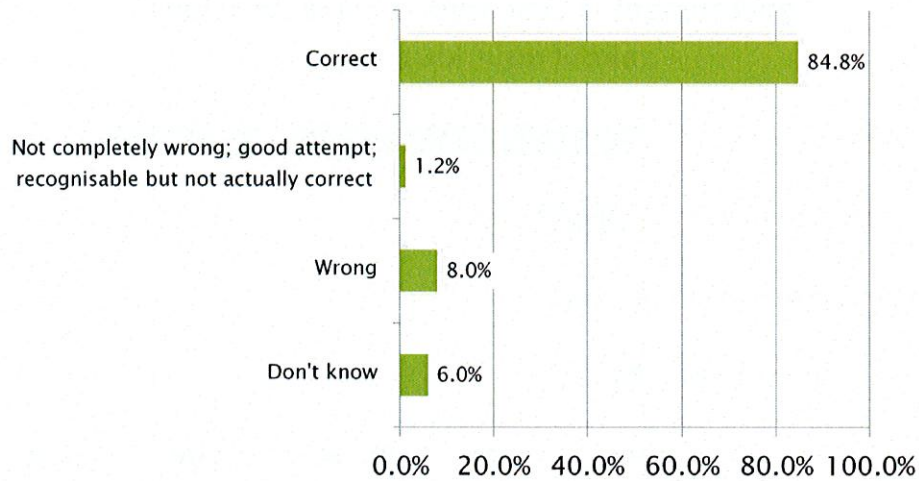
UTS:CLG
University of Technology Sydney
Centre for Local Government

Level of government and decisions about the local area

Why
Local Government
Matters



What is the name of your local Council/Shire



ACELG
Association of Councils & LG Associations
for Local Government

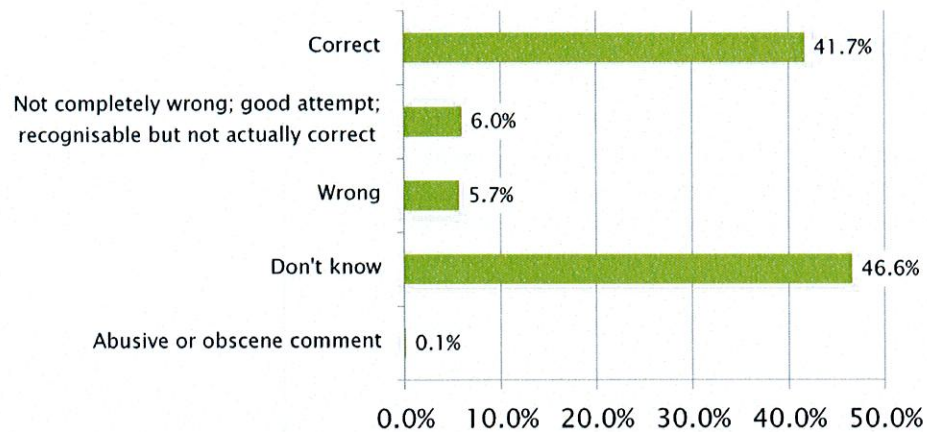
UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Level of government and decisions about the local area

Why
Local Government
Matters



What is the name of the Mayor/President of your local Council/Shire?



ACELG
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

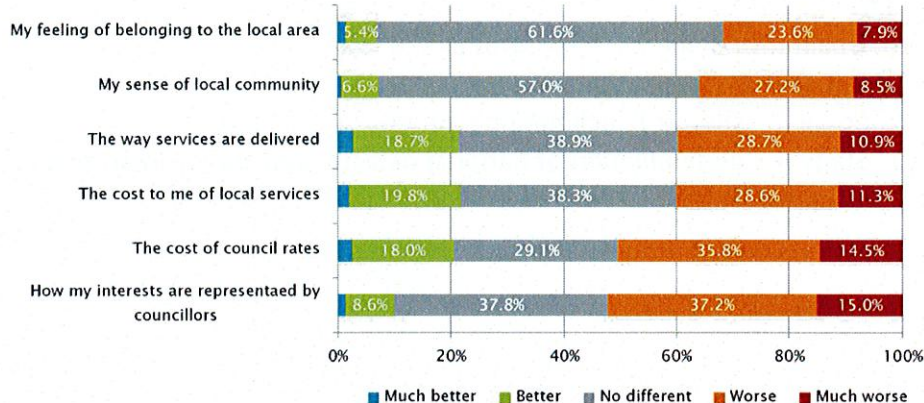
UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Amalgamation

Why
Local Government
Matters



Imagine that your local government is to be merged or amalgamated with another to form a new local government area. For each of the following, tell me if the amalgamation would make things much better, better, no different, worse or much worse?



ACELG UTS:CLG
Association of Councils of Local Government
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

The Future of Local Governance – people are not against amalgamation

Respondents are most concerned about the impact of amalgamations on how their interests are represented by councillors. Just under half (47.7%) think that representation of their interests will get worse or much worse (13.7%).

Representation is different to community identity- Community participation in decision-making is a critical issue. Respondents strongly agree that communities should be involved with government in making decisions about how and what services should be delivered in their local area. Further research is required with the community to explore what it means to be represented within their locality.

Why Local Government Matters found that respondents were most positive about the impact of amalgamation on the cost of council rates, the cost of local services and the way services are delivered. However when broken down older people, those owning or mortgaging a dwelling and respondents in rural and regional areas, the issue of the impact of amalgamations on local government representation and rates is significant. Most people in metropolitan areas are not particularly concerned by the prospect of their local governments amalgamating. Where they do report concern, it is generally about how their interests are represented by councillors and any impact of amalgamations on costs. Amalgamations need to be carefully managed and include a place management approach to protect local identity and sense of belonging. For some respondents, who have lived in an area for a substantial period, own a house and have other connections in the area, there is a sense of locality, which transcends local government boundaries. The idea of

locality and that “communities are not defined by lines on a map” should be explored further.

Representation

Politics: People who would normally vote for or most identify with the political party The Greens are more likely to think representation will get worse or much worse (58% compared to 52% community-wide).

Council type: Respondents living in rural and remote councils are more likely to believe representation will be much worse after amalgamation (21% compared to 15% nation-wide). However residents of large/very large urban councils are less likely (9%) to believe representation will be worse.

Council Rates

Council Type: People in urban regional (56%) and rural and remote (57%) councils were more likely to think the cost of council rates will get worse or much worse compared with those in urban development small/medium (49%) and large/very large (46%) councils.

Cost of Services

Gender: Men are more likely than women to think that the cost of local services will get better or much better (25% compared with 18%).

Age: However those aged 70 and over are more likely than those aged 18-29 to think things will get worse (49% compared with 25%).

Family Type: People living as part of a couple with children (26%) are more likely than a lone parent (13%) or person living alone (12%) to think the cost of local services will be better or much better after amalgamation.

Council type: also had a bearing on results, with people living in urban regional (17%) and rural and remote local government areas (19%) less likely to think that the cost of local services will get better or much better compared with those in urban development (city) local government areas (26%).

The way services are delivered

Council type: Respondents living in rural and remote councils are more likely to believe service delivery will be worse or much worse after amalgamation (47% compared to 39% nation-wide).

Sense of community

Age: As people get older they are more likely to think their sense of local community will get worse, with 42 percent of those aged over 70 compared to 26 percent of those aged 18-28 thinking it will get worse or much worse.

Dwelling type: Respondents living in dwelling types that were mortgaged or owned outright are more likely than those who are renting to think their sense of local community will get worse or much worse (37% compared with 29%).

Belonging to the local area

Length of time in area: For those who have lived in an area for 10 years or more, concerns that feelings of belonging will get worse or much worse are higher compared with those who have lived in the area for less than two years (35% compared with 16%).

Participation: Also people who have participated in their local community in the last 12 months are more likely, compared to those who haven't, to think that amalgamation will make their feeling of belong to the local area worse or much worse (33% compared to 30%).

Why Local Government Matters



 **ACELG**
Australian Centre of Excellence
for Local Government

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

