



What is the biggest opportunity facing Local Government in South Australia in the next 5 years?

POST COVID-19: TECHNOLOGY CHANGES & OPPORTUNITIES FACING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM 2020

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the paper is to investigate how South Australian councils adapted in a global pandemic that was thrust upon the world in early 2020 and to consider how technology assisted this. Councils provide a broad range of services to their communities, but generally, each council operates independently and the standard of IT systems across the councils varies dramatically.

This paper seeks to identify better ways of working post COVID-19, focused principally on technology changes. As council staff, we were personally affected and the pandemic has created many perspectives and insights into how councils can pursue opportunities to find better ways of working with technology in the next 5 years.

Surveys were undertaken of council staff and the Local Government Association (LGA). This was to gauge how councils adjusted to the pandemic, what they wanted to see changed and how the sector can better prepare in the event of a future pandemic. The surveys gathered data from IT and Human Services staff, including positive and negative outcomes; assessed impacts on council staff and resources; the impact technology had; and how councils can benefit from technology advancements, platforms and processes.

The surveys identified that councils experienced similar technology issues and barriers, however, there were notable differences between metropolitan and rural and regional councils. Principally the resource and capacity constraints of smaller rural councils tended to inhibit their ability to respond as effectively.

This report identifies a number of opportunities for better ways of working. This includes opportunities that are inward focused on council business enhancements, as well as external outward customer focused enhancements. Some of the key opportunities are:

- Enhance collaboration across all councils to share/seek advice, online platforms and programs that support shared council service provision and joint procurement of IT setup and maintenance processes, to prevent duplication and to drive better efficiency;
- Improved collaboration between IT staff, IT vendors and end users;
- Enhance programs to support the elderly in the use of technology;
- Loanable devices - to support those without internet capabilities at home;
- Opportunities for online platforms that can be used by communities across all councils to help people feel connected, for example sharing of story time;
- Electronic local news to share information to communities.

2. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has been the catalyst of change worldwide with local governments having been forced to change and adapt to meet community expectations. This has posed significant challenges upon councils which provide a broad range of services to their communities.

This paper seeks to identify better ways of working post COVID-19 focused principally on technology changes. This report identifies smarter ways of working post COVID, particularly looking at how all councils could benefit from technology advancements, platforms, and processes.

It is an exciting and challenging time with changes being implemented by technology, shared services, and improved community engagement, but due to the breadth of the subject, this report is focused on how councils can build on the lessons from COVID-19 through the use of technology. There is evidence that councils should be more actively driving change to find better ways of working in the next 5 years and this is both an opportunity and a challenge for the local government sector.

3. BACKGROUND

Prior to COVID-19, it was recognised that “customers increasingly choose a digital medium as their communication of choice” (KPMG, 2019) and that there was a need for more adequately skilled resources, clear leadership, and financial collaboration, to drive forward transformation in technology in local government.

Nearly a year on, KPMG considered the impact of COVID-19 on local government and wrote:

“Local councils are quickly realising that they are not well-equipped from a technology and workforce mobility perspective” (KPMG, 2020).

They also identify the need for investment to allow for digital transformation, which is so critical in ensuring continued service delivery to communities at this time through “modern and agile ways of working” (KPMG, 2020).

Not only do councils need to look internally at their own IT and service provision, but studies have identified the need for additional support for communities. For example, one study of the elderly, identified that of those surveyed “nearly 30% said they were interested or may be interested in learning about technology” (Anderson, 2020).

The World Health Organisation has outlined in its ‘Manifesto for a Health Recovery from COVID-19’ that:

“The use of digital technology has accelerated new ways of working and connecting with each other, from reducing time spent commuting, to more flexible ways of studying, to carrying out medical consultations remotely, to spending more time with our families. Opinion polls from around the world show that people want to protect the environment, and preserve the positives that have emerged from the crisis, as we recover” (WHO, 2020).

Governments are already responding to these new ways of working and one example of this is the SA Government’s decision to fund improved digital access to government services for businesses and the community through a \$120m Digital Restart Fund (The Advertiser, 2020).

There are various forms of literature demonstrating a need for councils to drive forward change.

4. METHODOLOGY

Aim of the study

To identify what changed from an IT and service perspective due to COVID-19; what changes remain in place; and what opportunities for technology improvement could be identified that can assist the local government sector in the next five years.

Consultation

Consultation was undertaken to gauge councils' and the LGA experiences on what has changed and to seek their thoughts on better ways of working with technology.

A survey was sent to the LGA and is contained in Appendix A. The LGA independently carried out their own analysis of the response of councils during the pandemic and the survey of the LGA was intended to capture some of the insights gained from their own analysis.

Two surveys were sent to all South Australian councils and the list of participating councils is contained in Appendix B. One survey was related to technology (Appendix C) and was sent to the IT teams within councils and the second survey was focused on human services staff within councils (Appendix D). This captured the experience of not only IT staff but the experience of teams engaged in customer service that are reliant on IT systems.

A short survey of (7) council employees was undertaken to gauge their experience working with technology during COVID-19 (Appendix E).

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 31 councils responded to the IT survey including 21 rural/regional councils and ten metropolitan councils.

A total of 52 responses were received for the services survey, noting that multiple responses were received from some councils, representing in total 23 councils, comprising:

- Rural/Regional: 23
- Metropolitan: 18
- Unknown: 11

Changes and Impact COVID-19 Brought to Councils

Councils experienced significant impacts as a result of COVID-19 such as restricted access to buildings; cessation of hire of community spaces; cancelled or postponed events and most face to face interactions.

COVID-19 had far-reaching implications for many parts of councils because of the diverse nature of the services and facilities provided. At the same time, COVID-19 had an uneven impact upon in-house teams, where some departments experienced significant disruption while others did not.

The most common action implemented by councils was redeployment of staff to other departments that were experiencing an increase in demand. For example, library services, where demand for alternate services such as click and collect and electronic books increased dramatically given the removal of face to face interactions.

There was significant reliance on IT services, with many teams shifting their staff to working from home and ongoing interaction via online communication and services. A concern of staff was the absence of interaction with colleagues which resulted in social isolation and challenges in communicating effectively. Videoconferencing was identified as an effective means of interacting as it enabled workers to communicate face to face. This was hampered for some councils by IT issues, internet speed and security concerns.

Information Technology

Investment

Council's investment to facilitate more effective remote working included hardware (laptop computers), cloud-based networking, additional virtual private networks (VPN's) and training for online virtual meetings, to enable business operation under remote working.

Over half of those surveyed, reported investing in more hardware to facilitate remote working, comprising approximately 70% of metropolitan councils and half of rural/regional councils. For the remaining 30% of councils, the investment in portable solutions was a main focus going forward along with an increase in bandwidth (i.e. to increase data transfer capacity).

Only one council reported that they made no additional spend on upgrades to facilitate remote working. Figure 1 summarises level of investment undertaken during the pandemic. Metropolitan councils reported a significantly higher spend than rural/regional councils. Several metropolitan councils had recently undergone upgrades or shifted into new premises and this enabled them to transition smoothly to remote working due to the early procurement of individual work tablets for office based staff.

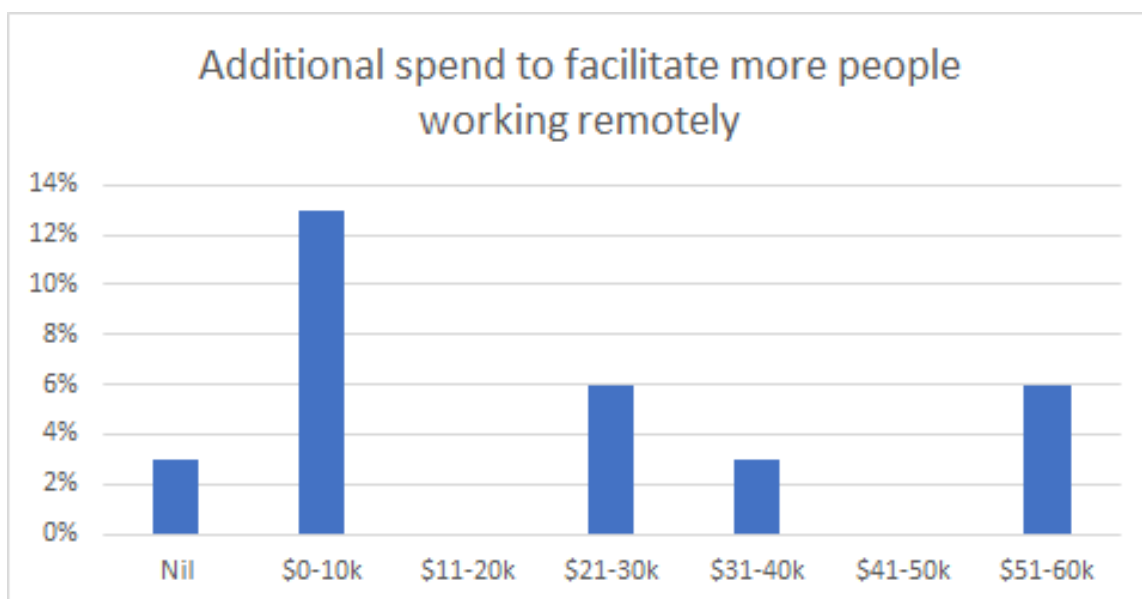


Figure 1. Financial investment by councils

When asked what software needs to be developed to make councils more effective, responses included improved and additional VPNs, digital platform for services, cloud-based solutions, ability to sign electronically/approve and video conferencing software. In addition, some councils wanted to see better backup facilities and less reliance on legacy licensing models.

Training

Almost 70% of councils reported provision of training to staff on how to use remote video conferencing software (i.e. Zoom or Teams). This is consistent with a move to remote working and reflects the increase in hardware investment reported by councils to facilitate remote working.

In relation to video conferencing, most councils preferred Zoom and Microsoft Teams with some councils choosing Skype or Cisco Webex meetings.

Security

Almost half of respondents reported security concerns from remote working – both employee information and privacy and socially engineered attacks, for which the risk was reported by IT staff to be significantly increased by remote working. IT staff reported that they would like to see improved technology changes to address this risk.

Sharing resources

Only one council reported additional sharing of IT resources, which included live streaming/video conferencing advice, and working from home protocols. Three councils already collaborate and continue to share advice and three rural councils already share an IT company. This result is encouraging as it presents an opportunity for councils to share knowledge, learnings, and experiences.

Impact on productivity and services

Of the 31 participating councils, only one reported that they were unable and/or chose not to provide a service because of technological reasons.

Regional and rural councils reported having significantly smaller IT department, with all respondents from regional/rural councils having an IT team of less than five staff, with six of these outsourcing their IT resource. Metropolitan councils indicated their IT teams consisted of six or more staff.

Councils were asked to identify what changes they will permanently implement as a result of COVID-19 (Table 1 below). Both rural/regional and metropolitan councils identified the use of Zoom/Teams for online meetings and continued flexible working arrangements (i.e. working from home), although the metropolitan councils reported a higher percentage of continuing flexible working arrangements.

Table 1. Changes to be permanently implemented by councils post COVID-19

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan
Continuing Zoom / Teams online meetings	70%	70%
Continuing flexible working arrangements	25%	60%

Services

Impact on the Community

One of the key implications of the services sector was the inability to reach and communicate effectively with high-risk clients that rely heavily on services. The aged sector is reliant upon the home assist programs for example, for transport and home maintenance. These customers typically are not users of electronic systems. The aged population also tend to demand the services within councils, such as computers in the libraries and the social interactions enjoyed in the meeting spaces at councils. There was broad concern with their welfare and the isolation that they experienced, with some councils implementing modified programs to reach their clients through telephone check-ups and driveway visits.

Another concern was the closure of regional newspapers which has left a void in access to information, particularly for regional communities.

Another significant implication of COVID-19 identified was the impact upon the volunteer sector. A high proportion of volunteers are from the aged cohort and many ceased working due to COVID-19 risks. Many councils were required to implement strategies to fill this void.

Generally, most customers reacted positively to the councils' response to COVID-19, however, there is still scope for councils to survey its residents to understand the full impact and space for improvement.

Differences between metropolitan and rural/regional councils

Many of the rural/regional councils advised they were more stretched to cover changes in staff demand from COVID-19. Many of the rural/regional councils were also dependent on outsourcing of IT support and this tended to work against them in implementing immediate changes to enable staff to work from home. The metropolitan councils tended to have a greater capacity to deliver immediate remote and electronic services.

The current environment and findings of where issues are prevalent

Figure 2 and Figure 3 outline how participating councils reported they were prepared for the pandemic. It was interesting that the rural/regional councils reported a higher level of responses to “slightly prepared” or “moderately prepared” than the metropolitan Adelaide councils.

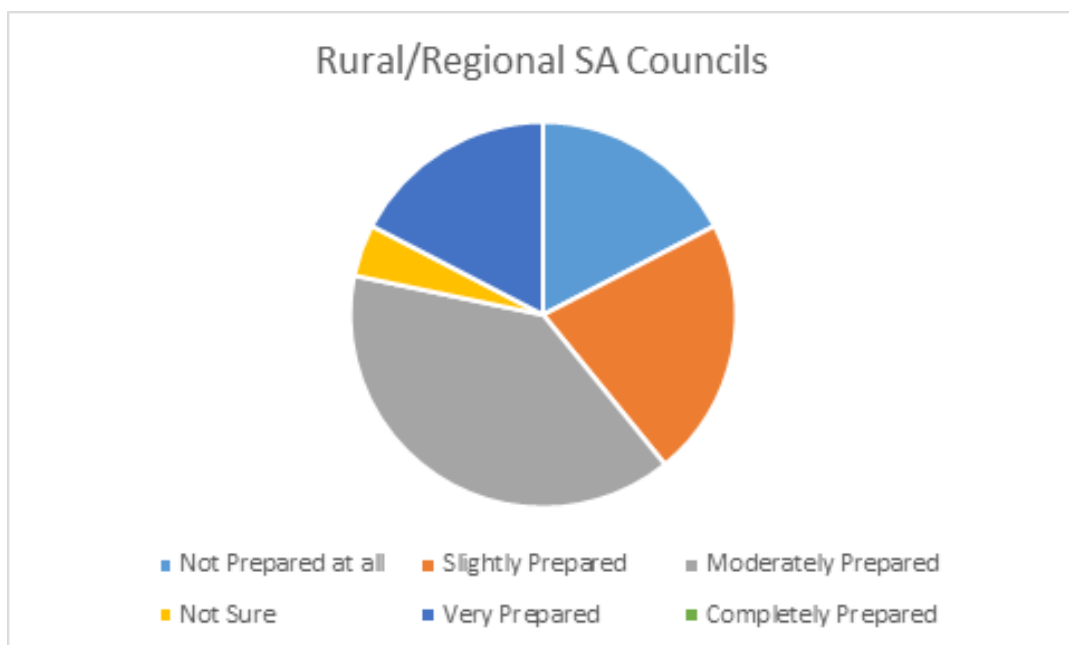


Figure 2. Rural/Regional SA Councils - How prepared were they for COVID-19

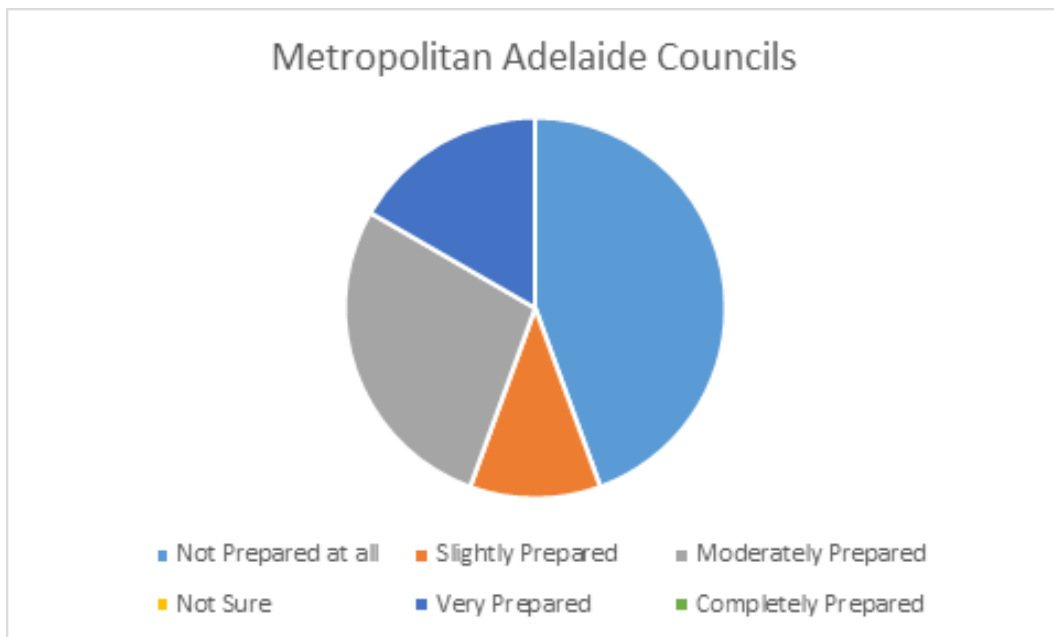


Figure 3. Metropolitan Adelaide Councils - How prepared were they for COVID-19

Councils were asked to identify the most effective communication method to engage with their communities and between staff. Table 2 identifies the key results and respondents confirmed that social media was an effective way to reach communities but the telephone was the most effective method for reaching the older population.

Table 2. Effective Communication Methods to Engage with Communities

Engaging with Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social media was an effective way to reach communities due to its significant scale, accessibility by mobile phone or tablet, is instantaneous and can communicate rapidly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Telephone was the most helpful method for the older population, many customers do not have access to a computer or speak English as their second language.</i>

Councils reported that email was the most effective internal communication method followed by video-conferencing.

Table 3. Effective Communication Methods to Engage with Staff

Engaging with Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Email was a preferred method as it is reliable, instant and well used.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video conferencing enabled meetings for remote working, it also enabled interaction/engagement between staff, minimised isolation and enabled personable communication.</i>

Participants were asked to identify barriers to providing services due to COVID-19 and Figure 4 presents the results. The most common barrier was lack of technology (computers, phones, photocopiers, etc.) and internet connection/access, followed by communication difficulties with staff and customers.

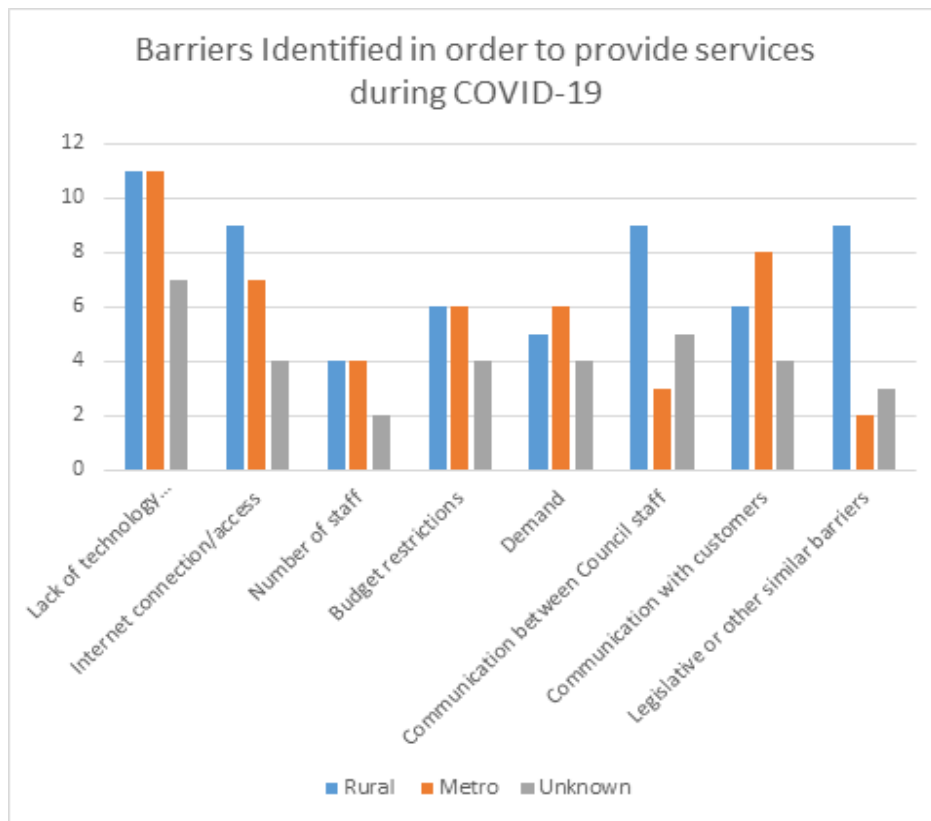


Figure 4. Barriers to providing services due to COVID-19

Participants were asked to identify what would be the principal technology desired to support remote working. Figure 5 highlights the technology programs staff would utilise in the future.

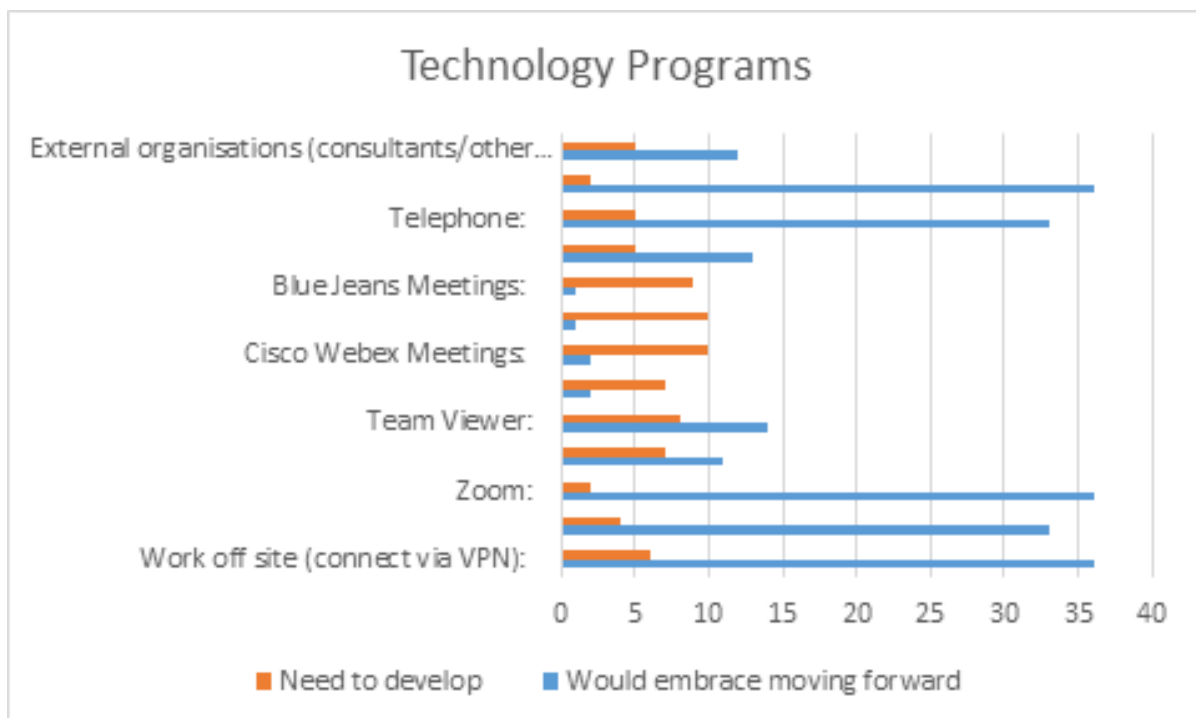


Figure 5. Preferred Technology programs

Summary of interviews of staff that worked from home

Short interviews were undertaken with seven staff from metropolitan and rural/regional councils to understand their experience working through COVID-19. Four of the seven participants worked from home.

The following technology based requirements were identified by participants as important to facilitate working from home:

- Individual tablets/laptops for staff with web-based software and programs to enable use over the internet;
- Internet connection;
- Allocation of VPN by the IT Department;
- Electronic phone system that works through the laptop (i.e. Jabba) to enable phone calls;
- Portable technology such as scanners that are essential to the individual roles of team members;
- IT support (i.e. Service Help Desk to respond to technical issues).

Table 4 outlines the programs/software identified as important to support remote working:

Table 4. Programs/software implemented to support remote working

Program/Software	Function
Trapeze and Bluebeam	Stamping and signing of plans and documents
Nextcloud	Transferring of large documents
Zoom, Zoom Chat, Microsoft Teams	Videoconferencing platform for meetings/communications
Onenote and Google Doc	Electronic notebook/documents that can be viewed/updated by teams
Jabba	An electronic phone system that connects to a laptop
MiCollab	Video conferencing and messaging as an alternative to Zoom or email

Table 5 outlines the positive and negative outcomes that participants identified about working from home.

Table 5. Positives and negatives from working from home

Positives	Negatives
More productive	Increased isolation from lack of face to face
Less time out of the office to attend meetings	Less distinction between home and work life
Less stressed – fewer interruptions	Working hours increased due to absence of separation from work life
More electronic meetings	Technology concerns – lack of dual screens, IT breakdowns, speed issues, internet access
Improved digital literacy	Lack of communication/expectations around Working from home
More flexible work arrangements	

Local Government Association

The LGA identified the need for additional IT resources and improved internet for Councils and additional support for remote working capabilities as well as training. In general, remote working was viewed positively. The LGA acknowledged there was a real ‘fast learn’ and uptake of technology.

6. CONCLUSION

The IT and services surveys identified that councils were able to maintain effective business continuity and adapt despite the challenges of COVID-19. Councils were focused on continuing to provide their communities with the services that their communities expect and the feedback from communities was overwhelmingly positive. It was apparent from the analysis that:

- Councils adapted to make necessary structural and investment decisions to enable remote working;
- Councils were focused on maintaining customer services although in a modified form.

Based on the analysis, the overwhelming finding and area for improvement in local government in the next five years is the drive for pursuit of improved online, remote, and cloud based capabilities. As stated in the background research to this study, customers have a strong desire for more digital communication methods and the pandemic has shown the importance of technology in enabling business continuity. The momentum for change that has been thrust on councils by the pandemic should continue in order to drive better service delivery and accessibility for its customers as well as *'streamline existing processes, better allocate precious resources, and free up workers up from paperwork to spend more of their time on citizen-facing activities'* (Barningham, 2020).

Councils also need to continue to invest in technology (including cyber security). While this could pose a challenge, given the climate of rate freezing and tight budgets, the costs are expected to be offset by the benefits received from increased productivity and streamlining. Shared services of IT systems and platforms are also a significant opportunity and there is prospect of significant savings being delivered from such efforts, an exemplar being the Aylesbury Vale District Council in the UK, as documented in the *"Council of the future, a Digital Guide for Councillors"*. (Tech UK, 2018).

COVID-19 has also posed challenges on the capacity of staff and resources and the constant changing environment has meant there has been limited time for reflection. As stated *"While facing the immediate pressures of managing the growing and continually shifting challenges COVID-19 delivers, pay attention to lessons learned along the way"* (Cannon, 2020). There is opportunity for councils to spend more time on reflection of what has and hasn't worked and to take note of the lessons learnt to inform future decision making. Cannon (2020) has also noted that *"as the crisis continues, capture tactical and strategic lessons to best support arguments for investment in digital capabilities when the time is right"*. If underpinned by good evidence and supporting arguments, the right future investments can be made to support the new opportunities.

The analysis has uncovered a range of opportunities for better ways of working for councils using technology post COVID-19. This includes both opportunities that are inward focused on council business enhancements as well as external outward customer focused enhancements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are made:

In-house focused

1. **Enhanced collaboration across councils in both metropolitan and rural/regional areas** to share/seek advice, online platforms and programs that support shared council service provision and joint procurement of IT setup and maintenance processes to prevent duplication and to drive better efficiency.

This recommendation is made based on the observations that there was much duplication of effort across councils and that the smaller councils tended to be less advanced in their IT systems and hardware.

2. **Improved collaboration between IT staff, IT vendors and end users** to improve the performance of IT systems.

The analysis found that there can be more effort placed on connecting the end users to the designers of IT systems and that programs are fit for purpose.

Customer focused

1. **Conduct COVID-19 community surveys** – This would ensure that we understand our customer's needs since the pandemic and enable councils to design better technological interfaces moving forward.

2. **Enhanced programs to support the elderly in the use of technology.**

The aged cohort was significantly impacted by COVID-19 and is more reliant on the traditional engagement methods like face to face and phone. There is significant opportunity for councils to upskill the elderly to support their use of technology where desired.

3. **Loanable devices – to support those without internet capabilities at home.**

The access to the internet is not consistent across the community and there is opportunity for councils to improve access.

4. **Opportunities for online platforms** that can be used by communities across all councils to help people feel connected, for example sharing of story time.

Councils transitioned many programs online and there is significant opportunity for councils to increase their delivery of services in this way.

5. **Electronic local news and similar electronic methods to share information and help communities feel connected.**

Many regional newspapers closed their printing houses and ceased publication of regional newspapers. Many are still yet to announce if they will become operational. This has left a large portion of the regional communities concerned as to how they will access information. Many residents have looked towards their local councils to provide more information in their local monthly newsletter/magazine to keep them up to date with local news and information.

The LGA has a significant role to play in fostering the above recommendations and in driving better collaboration, sharing of expertise and efficiency. The analysis identified there was limited collaboration between councils during COVID-19 and this is a significant opportunity for the sector to explore moving forward. This recommendation is also likely to benefit smaller rural/regional councils that have limited resources and tend to have limited IT expertise, which is a barrier to online platforms and remote working. An online collaboration expression of interest site could be established for example to assist all councils and there is opportunity to share templates, online recordings and online platforms.

A proposed brief implementation plan is contained in Appendix F.

8. REFLECTION

The 'My Team' project performance questionnaire was a good way for us to reflect on our teams' accomplishments and performance. Our group shared our TMP profiles so each member was aware of each individual's working style and behaviours. This allowed the group to link our leadership strengths and support each other by pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones. Each person has a unique skill set and levels of leadership experience which played a part in contributing to the team's success.

In the early stages, the group struggled to decide on a topic with many ideas thrown around the table. The discussion became more pointed and after much good debate, the group arrived at a topic that was agreed by consensus. The group prided themselves on setting clear goals to achieve targets and Project Plans were used as an organisational tool and updated following each meeting. Despite the group not being able to meet face to face due to COVID and our diverse locations, Zoom meetings became a weekly event and allowed the group to create a good team environment where everyone felt valued.

At times throughout the developing phase of the project, the group had to refocus and go back to the project outline to prevent going off topic. With open communication and joint problem solving, the group were able to get back on track with ease. We found it necessary to break into two groups throughout the process, in order to increase productivity to achieve more in a shorter timeframe. This was vital when finalising the report and creating the presentation.

Overall, the performance of our group was that of teamwork with shared commitment, motivation, loyalty, transparency and trust. Each team member provided the support required to allow each team member to contribute equally and to produce a report and presentation that the group are all extremely proud of.

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APPENDIX A - LGA SURVEY

1. *Did Councils reach out to the LGA for advice during COVID?*

Yes

If yes what were the top 3 reasons and was the LGA able to assist?

After the initial response:

1. Debrief of experience and response with council's Incident Management Team
2. Identification of possible improvements in emergency management documentation
3. Understanding what worked well and opportunities for improvement as part of lessons management processes

The LGFSG provided much advice to the council during the initial response around pool cars, playgrounds, business closures, legal advice and generally interpreting State and Federal Government announcements into what that meant for councils – they also advocated for the council as an essential service which was able to keep councils operating.

2. *It is understood that you have completed surveys of some councils looking at their response to COVID-19. What were the main findings from these surveys (If you can share)?*

- A large number of council staff felt isolated and missed human contact while working from home
- Councils who were able to retain the majority of staff were proud of this achievement and this was positively viewed across the organisation by staff
- Working from home was viewed very positively by many staff and there were several comments around improved flexibility, less travel time, better for the environment
- Communication was very important, particularly around communicating big decisions that had impacts on all staff. This was often reported as being better in person or by one person on Zoom rather than through the organisation
- Councils had to make big decisions quickly with imperfect knowledge – often those who were led by people willing to make a decision based on the best available information felt they did a good job
- The technology was an issue, though this did not cause overly great concern
- People with customer-facing roles felt at risk early in the response
- Some issues were reported specific to pool cars and playground closures where more advice would have been useful

3. *What role do you think technology played in the council's ability to continue to provide services to their community during COVID?*

The biggest role was in continued service delivery and working from home. Some councils utilised technology e.g. Zoom to continue the standard business, for instance, library storytime. Working from home was supported by technology – the better organised the council to be able to undertake remote work the better this functioned.

4. Did you identify any issues with technology provision within councils that hindered their ability to function and if so please provide a brief description?

- Not enough computers, headsets, etc
- VPN or intranet login issues
- People having to work odd hours to get access to the council's systems
- Further support required to train staff in tools like Zoom

5. Do you know of any positive outcomes councils experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Working from home was viewed very positively
- Some councils reported increase work output due to fewer distractions
- Some service improvements were identified
- There was a real 'fast learn' and uptake of technology

6. Do you know of any negative outcomes caused by COVID-19 restrictions for councils?

- Some councils made staff redundant
- EHOs have a greater workload!

7. Are there ongoing changes councils are implementing as a result of COVID-19?

- Justice of the Peace and immunisation clinic by appointment only

8. What were the biggest learnings for councils from COVID-19?

9. Were you aware of any councils sharing services during this period to assist each other?

Not that I am aware of

10. Are you aware of any community feedback to demonstrate how the community felt councils responded?

No

11. Do you have any other comments that would assist our group in understanding the impact COVID-19 had on local government in particular with improvements in the sector for the future:

No

APPENDIX B – PARTICIPATING COUNCILS

IT responses were received from 31 Councils including:

- Rural/Regional: 21
- Metropolitan: 10

Councils that provided feedback includes

- City of Adelaide
- District Council of Franklin Harbour
- City of West Torrens
- District Council of Yankalilla
- Regional Council of Goyder
- Port Pirie Regional Council
- City of Tea Tree Gully
- City of Mount Gambier
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge
- District Council of Tumby Bay
- Berri Barmera Council
- Yorke Peninsula Council
- City of Burnside
- Wattle Range Council
- City of Salisbury
- City of Charles Sturt
- Wakefield Regional Council
- City of Port Adelaide Enfield
- City of Unley
- Adelaide Plains Council
- City of Port Lincoln
- City of Playford
- District Council of Cleve
- Renmark Paringa Council
- Light Regional Council
- District Council of Kimba
- District Council of Franklin Harbour
- District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula
- District Council of Grant
- City of Mitcham

Services Survey - 52 responses were received (from 23 Councils), which included:

- Rural/Regional: 23
- Metropolitan: 18
- Unknown: 11

Councils (and departments) that provided feedback:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ● Adelaide Hills Council | Libraries and Customer Services |
| ● Adelaide Hills Council | Community Development (Positive Ageing Team) |
| ● City of Charles Sturt | Media Marketing and Comms |
| ● City of Charles Sturt | Customer Contact |
| ● City of Mount Gambier | Development Services |
| ● City of Mount Gambier | CEOs |
| ● City of Mount Gambier | Library |
| ● City of Playford | Library Services |
| ● City of Port Adelaide Enfield | Unknown |
| ● City of Prospect | Community & Planning |
| ● City of Prospect | Community & Planning |
| ● City of Prospect | Arts and Events |
| ● City of Prospect | Arts and Events |
| ● City of Prospect | Community Support |
| ● City of Prospect | Unknown |
| ● City of Prospect | Unknown |
| ● City of Salisbury | Home Assist, Community Development |
| ● City of Unley | Community connections |
| ● City of Victor Harbor | Customer Liason |
| ● City of West Torrens | Community Services |
| ● City of West Torrens | Customer Service |
| ● City of West Torrens | Customer Service |
| ● City of Whyalla | Community Services |
| ● Copper Coast Council | Infrastructure |
| ● District Council of Cleve | Administration |
| ● District Council of Franklin Harbour | Administration |

- District Council of Grant Environmental Services
- District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula Corporate Services
- Municipal Council of Roxby Downs Community
- Port Pirie Regional Council Corporate & Community
- Port Pirie Regional Council Development and Regulation
- Port Pirie Regional Council Office of the CEO
- Renmark Paringa Council Community development
- The Barossa Council Corporate and Community Services
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge IT
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge Sustainable Communities
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge Library
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge Community Services - CHSP
- The Rural City of Murray Bridge Community Services
- Wattle Range Council Corporate Services
- Yorke Peninsula Council Corporate and Community Services

APPENDIX C - SURVEY RESPONSES – IT

1. Size of the IT department

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total
Outsource	6	0	6
0-0.9	1	0	1
1-5	13	0	13
6-10	1	4	5
11-15	0	3	3
15-20	0	3	3

2. How many people had access to laptops across the organisation in the normal course of business?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total
0-25	2	17	19
26-50	1	3	4
51-100	2	1	3
101-150	0	1	1
>150	0	4	4

3. What methods were used to facilitate your current working from home arrangements?

Both rural and metro councils used multiple methods to facilitate working from home, both remote desktop connection and VPN being the most popular.

Methods used	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan
Remote Desktop Connection	12	6
VPN	11	5
Direct Access	2	5
Citrix Environment	1	0
Software-Defined Perimeter	1	1
VMWare	0	1
Did not work from home	1	0

4. Thinking about the organisation before COVID-19, how well do you think you were prepared for such an event?

Not prepared at all	2
Slightly prepared	8
Moderately prepared	12
Very prepared	9
Total	31

5. What changes (if any) were needed to facilitate more people working from home?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total	% of respondents
Purchase more hardware	9	7	16	52%
Additional technical support	8	4	12	39%
Training in Zoom/Skype	16	5	21	68%
Software upgrades	5	4	9	29%
Amendment to policies	11	2	13	42%

Additional spend

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total	% of respondents
Not provided	12	5	17	55%
Nil	0	1	1	3%
\$0-10k	4	0	4	13%
\$11-20k	0	0	0	0%
\$21-30k	1	1	2	6%
\$31-40k	0	1	1	3%
\$41-50k	0	0	0	0%
\$51-60k	0	2	2	6%

6. What percentage of people were not able to work from home due to hardware/software requirements and/or not having internet access at home?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan
0-20%	17	10
41-60%	1	0
81-100%	1	0

7. In your view, what software would need to be developed to assist in making the Council more effective?

	Total
Very little or unknown	5
No changes	3
Video conferencing software	2
VPN, a digital platform for services, cloud-based solutions, ability to sign electronically/approve	4
Customer service software	1
Less reliance on specific/tech apps	1
Office 365 suite including time procure and implement	2

8. What went wrong/challenged the Council's resilience?

Being out of the loop	11	17%
Communication issues	9	14%
Downtime	1	2%
Internet issues	8	13%
Interruptions	1	2%
No answer	2	3%
Other technology Issues	9	14%
Prioritising work	6	10%
Security	3	5%
Software issues	4	6%
Working too much	9	14%
Total responses	63	100%

9. Did the Council start using different apps/technology not previously used?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan
Yes	16	9
No	2	2

Different technology used

- Zoom
- VPN
- Microsoft Teams
- RDP Gateway
- Micillab (phone system)
- Cisco Webex

- Remote connection to the main server
- Youtube
- Video Conferencing
- SharePoint Online
- Direct Access
- Work Resources
- OneDrive
- Jabber, MFA

If yes, please list the top 3 apps/technology used.

There were three different prominent apps and technology that both rural and metropolitan councils started using to assist staff working from home, these were Zoom, MS Teams, and VPN.

10. Were there periods when Council was unable/chose not to provide services because of technological reasons?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total	% of respondents
Yes	0	1	1	3%
No	21	9	30	97%

11. Due to COVID, did you start to share any IT services/resources with another Council?

Yes	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live streaming advice • Homeworking protocol
No	29	Councils that were already collaborating shared knowledge
No answer	1	One Council shared with another Council that used the same system

12. Were there any policies or rules for people working from home?

Of the surveyed Councils, 84%

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total	% of respondents
Yes	16	10	26	84%
No	5	0	5	16%

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Total	% of respondents
Already had, no changes required	2	3	5	16%
Reviewed or updated policy or guidelines as a result of COVID-19	8	4	12	39%
Developed a policy/guideline for people working from home as a result of COVID-19	5	1	6	19%
No comment provided	6	2	8	26%

What program/s were promoted to hold meetings online?

3CX	1	2%
Cisco Webex Meetings	4	7%
Skype	4	7%
Team Viewer	6	11%
Zoom	25	46%
Micollab	1	2%
Microsoft Teams	13	24%
Total responses	54	100%

13. What security areas if any were a concern during COVID-19?

ITEM	No.
None	8
Remote access capabilities	12
Employee info and privacy	6
Socially engineered attacks	8
Remote support	1
Degraded security due to WFH and endpoint protection/antivirus software	2
Incident response protocol not reflective of the altered operating conditions	3
Cyber-physical security (smart speakers/voice assist)	3
Other = Blocked USB use out of office	1
Security of zoom	1

15. What worked well and what will you continue to implement permanently?

Metropolitan

- 7 out of 10 – zoom/teams online meetings
- 6 out of 10 – continue working from home/flexibility/remote

Rural

- 14 out of 20 respondents - zoom/teams online meetings
- 5 out of 20 – continue working from home/flexibility/remote

16. How much money would Council need to invest in network infrastructure for staff to continue to work from home?

Metropolitan Councils Responses = \$20K-60K
 Rural Councils Answered = \$5,000

17. Is there anything else Council will invest in to ensure it remains resilient and flexible in the future?

Investigate Portable computing	10	28%
No Answer	6	17%
Review Cyber Security	5	14%
Avoid Legacy Licencing Models	1	3%
Backup Services	1	3%
Cloud Adoption	6	17%
Improve Conference Facilities	2	6%
Increase Internet Bandwidth	1	3%
Increasing Wifi Capabilities	1	3%
Direct Access V VPN Access	1	3%
Implement M365	2	6%
Total responses	36	100%

APPENDIX D – SURVEY RESPONSES - SERVICES

1. *What regular activities or services were modified/discontinued as a result of the impact of COVID-19?*

Most Dominant Responses	Total
Libraries/library services and programs modified or discontinued	23
Closure of halls, meeting spaces, conference centers, community centers, community facilities hire, visitor information center, art gallery, etc.	14
Face to face meetings/reduced council visits	14
Council access closed or restricted, including front counter access and meetings by appointment only, capacity limits inside buildings and spaces	11
Events were paused/postponed	10
Group classes such as computer lessons, baby classes, school holiday programs, author events were paused	8
Hirers/volunteers/community groups were suspended	7
Social programs, social group activities, personal shopping deferred	7
Cessation of community bus, community transport, non-urgent transport	6
Modified home-based services, doorstep only, non-essential home maintenance deferred	6
Closure of playgrounds, water parks, swimming pools, skate parks	4
Graffiti removal programs deferred	3
JP meetings deferred	2
Community engagement	2
Group work	2

How did those services change?

Most Dominant Responses	Total
Electronic library services, Click & Collect, Drop & Wave, virtual Ebook Club, home delivery service	15
Programs/activities transitioned to online such as Community Youth classes, Tutorials, Baby Classes, Baby Bounce, Storytime	13
Activity Packs, craft packs, school holiday packs delivered under Click & Collect, Drop & Wave	7
Home visits changed to doorstep visits and driveway coffee and chat visits, welfare checks only, essential hampers delivered, and home delivery	6
Social distancing and strict hygiene protocols in place, no visits inside homes, increased cleansing in the office	6
Council access – reduced hours of operation, appointment only, reduced capacity	5
Electronic meetings - videoconferencing	4
Phone conference calls/phone calls	3

Staff working from home	3
Screens in front of customer-facing desks/kiosks, gloves, and masks while working in customer-facing areas	3
Vulnerable clients received a weekly phone call	3
Electronic Council meetings	2

2. Did the day-to-day operations of staff change?

Yes	40
No	11
Not Stated	1

If yes, please specify how the day-to-day operations of staff changed.

Most Dominant Responses	Total
Staff redeployed internally to busier teams, allocated other forms of work, staff assisted in alternate or new programs	23
Staff worked from home, remote work, team roster/rotation implemented, skeleton staff retained, teams split up to mitigate risk levels	21
Council supported volunteer roles, community organisations who were impacted by volunteers entering isolation, staff filled these gaps	10
Greater work pressures placed on some staff/departments, workloads increased	5
IT staff demands increased, increased demand on email and IT support	4
Vulnerable residents identified and measures put in place to assist them	3
Increased electronic meetings	3
Opportunity for training and development, housekeeping	3
Staff took leave	2
Change in working hours/roster	2
Recruitment put on hold	2

It is clear that COVID has had an uneven impact/demand upon Council services, some teams experienced a significant reduction in workload and limited change in their roles while other teams experienced a significant increase in workload and greatly impacted/changed service roles.

3.a What method(s) of communication did the Council utilise to communicate with the community during the pandemic to provide up to date information on what services and assistance were available?

Method of Communication	Total
Telephone	43
Email	37
Council's magazine/print/newsletter	31
Video Conferencing (ie. Zoom, Teams, Skype, etc.)	30
Additional Signage	30
Post	25
Media (Radio/TV)	17
Social media updates (Facebook/ Instagram)	13
Website	11
Newspaper	9
All of the above/variety of methods	5
SMS	2
Face to face	2
Information brochure	2
Provision of a Hub – all information from Council could be posted in an interactive single place	1

3.b Which method was most effective for communicating with the community and why?

Most Dominant Responses
Social media has a great reach, is easily accessible by mobile phone, is instant and can communicate rapid changes, is well used by the general population, can be updated quickly, stories can be shared, comments made, is good to reach the youth
The telephone was most helpful for the older population, some customers don't have access to a computer or English is their second language, the telephone provided some opportunity for social interaction and connectivity, welfare checks could be carried out over the phone
The website is effective for the general population, to communicate updates, can be updated quickly
Leaflets, letterbox drops, and the local newsletter were effective to reach the general audience and particularly the older population
Videoconferencing is effective for Council meetings, for community forums, and workshops, customers can log in at any time and live stream

3.c Which method was most effective for communicating with staff and why?

Method of Communication	Total
Email/Outlook	24
Video conferencing	19
Intranet such as What's App/ internal newsletters	8
Team meetings	8
CEO Updates/staff briefings	6
Phone	5
Website	2
VPN/remote connection	1

Most Dominant Responses
Email generally a reliable and trusted method of communication, can reach persons working home or in the office, all staff read and receive emails, emailable to communicate quickly, directly and able to address all stakeholders, available to all
Video conferencing enabled meetings for remote working, kept up interaction/engagement with staff, minimised isolation, enabled personable communication (could see each other)

4.a What were the positive outcomes for the community during COVID-19 restrictions?

Most Dominant Responses	Total
Maintaining service levels during the Pandemic, maintaining basic services	14
Alternate service models and programs, increased offerings of digital and online programs, electronic communication, saving in travel time	13
Increased/improved digital literacy in the community	6
Appreciation of what the Council can and does do, the support provided to the community, Council is there to support them	6
Family members stepped in to assist, many elderly clients increased their contact with family members during COVID	4
More services transitioned online, streamlining of services by electronic means	4
Families had more time for themselves, flexible working arrangements	4
Creative new ways of communicating, new ways of working, ability to be flexible	4
Community development funds, Council and community initiatives to support local business and residents	4
The common bond created by the Pandemic, the sense of coming together in the community, working to a common goal, positive community spirit	4
Rate relief, rates frozen, fees and charges frozen or waived	3

More perspective, focus on the things that are important, we are relatively well off compared to some others	3
The community response to the Pandemic, complying with directions, social distancing, hygiene control	3
Tenancy relief	2

4.b What were the positive outcomes for the Council during COVID-19 restrictions?

Most Dominant Responses
Ability to adapt to change, the increased change resilience, willingness to embrace change, positive outcomes from that change, ability to respond quickly to the situation
Adapting to working from home, to work from home at short notice, exploration of working from home arrangements, the benefits from working at home
Cross-departmental collaboration, an opportunity for working across teams, breaking down of silos, the building of comradery, increased council cohesion, sense of pride, enhanced morale
Enabled a rethink of delivery models, opportunity to be creative and apply problem-solving, to think outside the square, to try new things and new ways to get things done
Greater appreciation of Council's service offerings, the positive uplift in reputation achieved by the Council's role in the Pandemic, a greater appreciation of staff by Elected Members
Increased/improved digital literacy and capacity of staff
Council's Business Continuity Plan worked effectively
Improved communication lines between the CEO and staff
The staff could continue to work, either on-site or remotely, retention of employment, no job losses, staff able to transition to alternate roles
Live streaming and recording of Council meetings
Opportunity to provide additional support for our community groups and local businesses, the opportunity to think and interact differently with our client group

A common theme was that residents and businesses responded overwhelmingly positively to the Council's operations and performance during the Pandemic.

4.c Regarding the positive outcomes above, what changes did you make that you will continue with?

Most Dominant Responses	Total
Video conferencing for meetings/council meetings/public consultation, saves travel time, even with consultants	20
Online programming, video programs, virtual programming, electronic service delivery, activities on Facebook, maintain popular programs online	19
Working from home and more flexible working arrangements	7
Broaden home delivery and Click & Collect library offerings	3
Mayor & CEO updates/staff briefings	3
Hygiene standards/screens put up, staff more aware of and practicing hygiene	3

Continue to adapt, to discover new ways of offering opportunities for our community/being creative in how we view our service	3
Encourage greater communication with customers and to link them to our services/telephone checks of our clients	2
Increased use of portable hardware	2

5.a What were the negative outcomes during COVID-19 restrictions?

Most Dominant Responses
Not being able to interact face to face, the social isolation experienced by staff working remotely, the reduced morale for teams, lack of personal communication was noticeable
Social isolation for the elderly, many customers use Council's services such as the library and community centers as a source of social interaction, social groups could not meet, they were very isolated, there was a lack of capacity to connect in person, lack of social connection
Impact on businesses, the closure of businesses and increased unemployment, the negative effect on businesses and residents
High workloads and demands placed on some teams, the increased stresses arising from the demand
Too many video conference meetings, feeling of being overloaded by virtual appointments, mentally exhausting, change fatigue, staff tired from keeping up with all the changes
Increase in community anxiety, the fear, and uncertainty arising from the Pandemic
Increased mental health issues, domestic violence issues
Hypersensitivity to safety
Deterioration in Council's budget position arising from rate capping, waiving or freezing of fees and charges
Closure of community facilities and services, closure of playgrounds and parks
Loss of traction of community committees, Council initiatives, projects, the cultural journey that we had started
Lack of community events, the increased community connection, and strength derived from such events
The limited access available to public computers despite the increased demands placed on IT access due to the demand for access to access government websites to seek job opportunities, rental paperwork, etc.
Not having the appropriate IT and hardware such as personal laptops and remote support to enable working from home

5.b Regarding negative outcomes, what didn't work due to changing services?

Most Dominant Responses
Loss of a large volunteer base/many volunteers that support our programs, due to many of our volunteers being in the high-risk age group to COVID-19
Some staff felt isolated at home and didn't feel supported/connected, the wellbeing of staff isolated for periods

Barriers in IT/technology was an initial impediment for the transition to electronic/remote working
Difficulty in keeping socially isolated residents with no digital access connected during the shutdowns
Work/life flexibility has been difficult, staff resources were limited and high work demands placed on some teams
Our older population are not necessarily comfortable utilising many of our services online
Working from home is not appropriate/suitable for all staff and some essential services
Easing tensions created by the pandemic, many customers experienced hardship and placed many pressures and demands, the anxiety arising from the Pandemic and COVID restrictions

5.c Regarding negative outcomes, what did you learn or will never do again?

Most Dominant Responses
A clearer back up plan is needed for the loss of volunteers
To communicate the work pressures and demands caused by COVID and to be appropriately resourced/have a plan in place
Many residents in the community do not have digital access
To have the technology ready and available to support staff to work from home
To have the technology available for our community – loaning of devices or PC access outside of the library
To understand and appropriately manage the implications of remote working on staff performance and wellbeing due to isolation or technology
To respond quickly and communicate the actions to staff and customers frequently and effectively, to have consistent communication methods

6. How did customers/clients react to the changes?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Unknown	Total
Negatively	-	-	-	0
Positively	17	15	8	40
Neutral	5	2	1	8
Don't know	-	1	1	2
Not provided answer	2			2

7.a What community consultation/activities did you deliver (virtually)

Annual Business Plan & Annual Budget Community Presentation	16 responses - there was no change 4 responses - more people attended when offered virtually online
Council meetings	12 responses - there was no change 9 responses – more people attended (6 >20) when offered virtually

	1 response – had more attend in person (decrease of attendance when offered virtually)
Public Consultation on Development Applications	7 responses – there was no change 5 responses – had more attend in person (decrease of attendance when offered virtually) 2 responses - had more attendance virtually
Workshops	10 responses - had no change 3 responses – increase in attendance when offered virtually 4 responses - had more attend in person (decrease of attendance when offered virtually)
Events	9 responses - had more attendance when offered virtually
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children storytime ● Public information session (Cooper Coast Council) ● Strategic plan review ● Tutorials, school holiday activities, learning challenges ● Team meetings, training, and collaborative meetings ● School holiday activities, library story-time sessions, Lego Club ● Storytime/craft sessions ● DAIP consultation (DC Grant) ● We developed our fist Disability Access and Inclusion plan ● Storytime sessions held online ● Online programs. Cannot comment on other services or activity. ● Community (Strategic) Plan consultation and consultation on the Crystal Brook Mural project. ● Social/welfare chats with clients ● Programs ● The weekly Singing Group sessions were offered via Zoom ● Cleve District Tourism & Development Committee Meeting (Sec 41 Committee) ● Mobile food vendor consultation (v limited engagement response, timelines extended) ● We delivered consultation on all of the above during COVID- 19 and the DAIP but I am not sure what the level of participation was

7.b Did you find holding it virtually successful?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Unknown	Total
Yes	19	11	7	37
No	7	2		9
Don't know			1	1
No response	4	5	2	11

8 responses were yes and no

8. How well do you think you were prepared for COVID-19?

	Rural/Regional	Metropolitan	Unknown	Total
Not Prepared at all	4	8	1	13
Slightly Prepared	5	2	4	11
Moderately Prepared	9	5	3	17
Not Sure	1		1	2
Very Prepared	4	3	1	8
Completely Prepared				
No answer			1	1

9. What gaps or barriers have been identified in your processes in order to provide services to your customers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Rural	Metropolitan	Unknown	Total
Lack of technology (computers/laptops/phones/photocopiers/tablets)	11	11	7	29
Internet connection/access	9	7	4	20
Number of staff	4	4	2	10
Budget restrictions	6	6	4	16
Demand	5	6	4	15
Communication between Council staff	9	3	5	17
Communication with customers	6	8	4	18
Legislative or other similar barriers	9	2	3	14
Other	2	2	1	5
Please specify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent technology • BCP solid but not included pandemic (rural) • Lack of In-house skills to change online services quickly (metropolitan) • Access to technology 			

10. What technology changes would you embrace moving forward? What gaps in technologies could help that were not available or would need to be developed?

	Would embrace moving forward	Need to develop
Work off-site (connect via VPN):	36	6
Council's Facebook page:	33	4
Zoom:	36	2

Skype:	11	7
Team Viewer:	14	8
Google Hangouts:	2	7
Cisco Webex Meetings:	2	10
Adobe Connect:	1	10
BlueJeans Meetings:	1	9
YouTube:	13	5
Telephone:	33	5
Email:	36	2
External organisations (consultants/other companies, etc.):	12	5

11. Could you share any activity/service delivery with another Council or is it something only your Council can provide?

Yes	28
No / Not Sure / N/A	34

- 45% indicated they would be open to shared services and providing a service with another Council.
- An opportunity to provide library network-wide communication via mainstream media with the Public Library Services was identified. Many metro councils that are responsible for their community libraries offer virtual book readings for children. This could be an opportunity to expand this service to all libraries in SA.
- Rural Councils indicated that although some shared services are currently in place, the opportunity to expand with additional services with neighbouring Councils may be limited due to the small size of staffing numbers.
- Those departments that indicated they could not share services with other Councils were from the Aged Care / Home Assist departments where they felt every provider has different contractors, financial arrangements, and client co-payments.

12. Following restrictions lifting, have the activities/services returned to normal?

Yes	16
No	35

- A large number of those Councils that have returned to normal or indicated that they have not returned due to COVID-19 restrictions, have a new 'normal' approach that includes hygiene practices, density levels, and much more aware of social distancing. Some still have provided the option for staff to work from home.
- The areas that have yet to return to normal seem to be those that work with various demographics of our society (the elderly and children). They include home services and the libraries.
- No, or postponed large events/council-run events have taken place.

13.a Following the lifting of restrictions, have staff given feedback on how the services were delivered during the restrictions?

Yes	24
No	23
N/A	4

- Less than half of Councils surveyed indicated that no feedback from the staff had been given to the Council on how the services were delivered during the restrictions. It would be highly recommended that these Councils do seek feedback from their staff to assess their Council operations to analyse if there is any room for improvement in the future.
- Library services at a metropolitan Council received feedback that all staff enjoyed being able to provide online streaming of programs. All that were involved could use their creative abilities to provide services to the community.
- Generally, the feedback received was that staff were mostly satisfied with the delivery of services and did not feel impacted to a great extent. Those that were not satisfied indicated that they felt management was unorganised, the relevant IT equipment and software were not provided or up to date to transition staff to work from home. It was also indicated that staff were not happy with the amount of information and speed in which the information was given and there was a delay in decision making.

13.b Following the lifting of restrictions, have customers given feedback on how the services were delivered during the restrictions?

Yes	25
No	22
N/A	4

- Although 40% of survey results indicated that Councils had received feedback from the community, it could be safe to assume that a 'no' or 'N/A' response to this question would indicate that no negative feedback has been received either. This shows Councils have been able to modify their services and business operations to provide services that are meeting their communities' needs during the restrictions.
- Positive feedback indicated local communities and ratepayers were thankful to their local councils for their continuation of essential services and providing care and support to the community, particularly the vulnerable.
- The library services had a strong response in positive feedback being received. Modified or additional services provided to the community including:
 - A library drive-through service provided.
 - Additional assistance is provided to older/vulnerable residents.
 - Pick up of mobile library services by Home Services.
 - Delivery of virtual/online children's programs (eg, book readings).
 - A 'click and collect' book service was provided.
- A regional council has surveyed 480 clients as part of their Sustainable Communities program and has received around 260 surveys back to help them in moving forward in how they structure their Sustainable Communities Program and the services they provide in the future.
- Negative feedback was received indicating that due to lack of communication many one council's customers were unaware of our services during the lockdown. This raises the importance of communication between Councils and their communities/ratepayers. Not all members of the community have availability to online services to when looking at making an announcement to the community, Councils must look at their demographic to ensure they are reaching them all.

14. Can the activities that were changed or altered during COVID-19 continue to be delivered after the lifting of restrictions?

Yes	42
No	9

- Councils had to quickly adapt and make changes to their services and the way they are delivered to their community to meet the health and safety requirements that came with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 68% indicated that the immediate implementation of these changes to services has brought better ways of working for their Council and they will continue providing them this way moving forward.
- These changes include:
 - Online delivery of services will continue including video conferencing, online events held, community consultations, meetings, and presentations
 - The live streaming of council meetings has been adopted to continue.
 - The use of the softphone has been extended and the use of Video.
 - IT changes, working from home, and additional hardware devices.
 - Online interviews with artists, some exhibitions will go online now, Zoom will continue for flexible working, VPNs in all of my team to ensure we can adapt.
 - FOGO and hard waste continue to be trialed.
 - All apprentices are being kept on until they finish their qualification.
 - Some clients have opted to continue with home delivery of groceries and ordering over the phone through Home Assist.
 - Library Services
 - School holiday programs now combination of face-to-face/online/at-home/local activities,
 - Holiday craft and storytelling filmed and uploaded to Facebook.
 - Home library delivery and filming for Facebook. Take home craft activity packs maybe be able to continue alongside f2f holiday activities.
 - Library activities offered online and in-person (live-streamed/filmed and posted to social media).
Councils that indicated they could not continue the modified or changed service delivery due to budget and resourcing issues.
 -

15. Any other comments/feedback you would like to mention regarding how technology impacted how you/Council provided their services to the community during/post the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Technology-enabled the Council to continue the majority of its services.
 - We were incredibly well set up, and moved the majority of staff offsite very quickly with limited business interruption. Customer Contact and phone services are an area to improve.
 - Technology very beneficial - but also highlighted difficulties for those in the community who do not have access to technology for various reasons.
 - It would be good to have had a united response from SA Councils instead of each one doing their own thing.
 - Not everyone has good access to technology at home - don't have smartphones, etc - I don't think that this was well understood by Council and also a person's abilities to adapt and manage new technology (eg downloading apps, new systems - completing forms online). The ability to support some staff with the connection issues was at times challenging.
 - We have a lot of elderly residents and disable and residents in our areas and unfortunately, they are alone and have no idea how to use a computer or even how to work their mobile phones. There should be another form to keep in touch with these residents so I believe there should be at least some phone contact with the council our community care has skeleton staff and could not provide a complete service.
 - There are some limitations with our older demographic not having access to the internet, but we have sought to overcome this by using other means (telephone, etc)
 - Comparatively, the City of Prospect was in a great position - new office, lots of room and new technology allowed swift shift to big numbers of staff off-site, but also allowed the majority to return quickly as we had room for staff to spread out.
 - Some people had poor connections at home which impacted.
 - IT didn't have a good plan in place, it was more or less try and troubleshoot with issues (eg, working from home on an ad hoc basis). Therefore, they couldn't focus on the larger more

important things and were busy around the clock - instead of rolling out a plan in place. The staff were very confused.

- Some people still have limited access to technology. Reintroduced some public pcs as early as possible to enable people to apply for JobKeeper, JobSeeker, etc.
- Council were lucky to have the ability to use library IT resources for staff to be able to work remotely. However, not all staff could have provision for a laptop. Also due to the size of the council, we were lucky whereas larger resourced council would have more resource issues.
- With our local paper not operating, we need to find a way to share news and information with the community of Eyre Peninsula, not just our Council District. Maybe an Eyre Peninsula magazine/newsletter, a SA LG Webpage that each Council has a page that they can publish their news/info each month.
- Just a positive comment on the usage of Zoom or other for virtual meetings, a great option to continue using in some instances.
- We were fortunate to have great ITC people and sufficient devices to be able to remotely locate our staff and depots - this has led to an increasing acceptance of technology and combined with our Business Improvement processes that ran concurrently, we have now seen field staff move to using devices in the field to provide real-time information
- The support that we were provided with to work from home or remain at work and maintain good contact with our teams was exceptional.
- Being a small rural Council with limited services offered, we were able to put in place a small number of workarounds to provide the same level of service to our community during COVID 19. We didn't close our doors, and other than one period of 2 weeks, all staff were working on site.

APPENDIX E - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS OF STAFF WHO WORKED FROM HOME

1. Did you work from home during the COVID-19 restrictions?
 - a. How many days?
 - b. Is this ongoing?
2. What changes (if any) were needed to facilitate you working from home (i.e. VPN upgrades to allow additional capacity for remote working)? And at what cost?
3. What technical support and equipment did Council have for you working from home?
4. What IT programs/software were implemented during this period and have you continued to use them? Please list them.
5. Were there any policies or rules for people working from home and how did they change?
6. What form of communication did you use with other staff/management? Was this effective?
7. Did you feel more productive at home or in the office? Why?
8. Did you feel less stressed at home or in the office? Why? No, as above.
9. Do you feel overall that your mental health improved or declined while working from home? Why?
10. Outline/discuss the positives you have found with working from home?
11. Outline any negatives you have found with working from home?
12. If the Council offered you the choice of working from home permanently, would you be interested & why?

APPENDIX F - PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	Key recommendation	Responsibility	Outcome	Start	Finish
1.	Post COVID-19 community surveys	Each council	A better understanding of our communities' needs as a result of COVID-19.	Within the next 6 months	Within 8 months
2.	Investment internally within councils - Invest in technology to enable: 2.1 shared service provisions and joint procurements between councils. 2.2 communication and collaboration between councils IT staff, vendors and end users to improve performance.	Each council	Cohesive system that prevents duplication and drive efficiency across all councils. Improve communication between councils to understand each team's needs moving forward post COVID-19. Improved technology allowing more efficient service.	Within the next 3 months whilst fresh in staff's minds	Better understanding in the next 6 months Ongoing investment and roll out
3.	Investment in external technology for our customers - 3.1 in additional technology (such as loanable devices). 3.2 technology education/programs that would assist groups such as the elderly. 3.3 electronic news delivered to our communities especially where local newspapers have been lost; and 3.4 to enable more online interaction with councils.	LGA should lead the search for additional funding/grants (e.g. state or federal) to support this across all councils. LGA should provide greater support to rural councils and facilitate sharing between councils. Councils need to drive this forward too.	Greater access to technology in all communities which would aid communication, support, and service delivery.	Start now whilst COVID-19 funding is available	5 years (Ongoing)
4.	LGA should help enable councils to better collaborate, share expertise and drive efficiency.	LGA	A more supportive environment (such as an online collaboration and sharing tool) in which all councils can input and this could assist with councils becoming more efficient and help with the continuous improvement which is one of the key themes in the South Australian Government's Response to the South Australian Productivity Commission Inquiry into Local Government (Feb 2020).	Within the next 6 months	Operational within the next year