

Diversity in Local Government Strategies to improve Elected Member Diversity

Emerging Leaders Program 2021



University of
South Australia



Local Government
Professionals
AUSTRALIA SA

Jodi Farley, City of Salisbury
Devon Phelps, City of Burnside
Alison Hall, Campbelltown City Council
Dayle Arblaster, City of Mitcham
Aaron Sheng, City of Charles Sturt
Tim Casey, City of Adelaide
Melissa Mortensen, District Council of Grant

Executive Summary

Elected Members (EMs) play a key role in representing community needs, offering policy and fiscal oversight, as well as identifying and reviewing Council's strategic priorities and direction (Local Government Act, 1999). An EM's role is one of great significance which requires candidates to remain connected with the constituents they serve and representative of a broad range of competing priorities and communities. We believe there is a significant opportunity to improve Elected Member diversity by attracting talented and driven individuals who offer unique cultural, demographic, age and skill diversity.

The purpose of this report is to present recommendations to improve EM diversity and community representation. Our project group is confident that increasing diversity amongst EMs is the future to a more representative Local Government which will result in more proficient decision-making, increased trust amongst the community and the long-term sustainability of Councils.

The following key themes and findings emerged from our analysis;

1. Literature on workplace diversity is extensive, with benefits impacting all aspects of the triple bottom line (people, planet and profit). It is therefore in the LGA and Council's best interest to actively promote the opportunity to be an EM in a manner that appeals to diverse community members.
2. An understanding of an EMs role and what Local Government does is lacking, both regarding what their position entails and what function Council serves outside of the traditional 'roads, rates, and rubbish' rhetoric.
3. A lack of compulsory EM training prior to nomination results in new candidates often not knowing what is expected of them and what the role requires.
4. Frequent media articles highlighting poor EM behaviour coupled with an already tarnished public perception of local councils, has resulted in limited public interest in serving as an EM.

Following comprehensive qualitative and quantitative surveys across multiple audiences and research into best practice approaches to increasing diversity, the following recommendations are suggested;

1. Introduce a suite of mandatory and optional training and development offerings (in addition to current LGA workshops).
2. Develop a tailored communication strategy regarding nomination opportunities and voting to connect with diverse communities such as refugees, Indigenous Australians and young people.
3. Engage in a public relations campaign to improve public perception and understanding of local government's role and impact.

To implement these recommendations, a range of potential implications must be considered;

1. Adequate resourcing to support the administration, funding and training required to implement the recommendations.
2. Local Government Association collaboration and other partnerships.
3. Barriers created indirectly from implementing the recommendations (i.e. time commitment required).
4. Costs to be incurred by individual Councils and the LGA (Refer to Recommendations table).

Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	5
Methodology.....	5
Discussion.....	6
Benefits of Diversity	6
2018 South Australian Local Government elections.....	7
An Interstate and Global Perspective	9
Analysis	13
Motivations.....	13
Barriers.....	14
Training, Development and Skills.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
Recommendations	17
Bibliography	20
Appendix	22
Appendix A - Elected Member Perspective Survey.....	22
Appendix B - Administration Perspective Survey	27
Appendix C - Public Perspective Survey.....	32

Introduction

Our group believes the opportunity to *'improve Elected Member diversity'* affects all 68 Councils across our state at both a regional and metropolitan level, particularly in the lead up to the November 2022 Local Government elections (LGA, 2021). Due to the significant reach of this topic and the potential impact it can have if meaningfully addressed, our group feels this topic is a relevant and important improvement to make in Local Government in the next 18 months.

As discussed within this report, the benefits that workplace and board diversity bring to organisations is significant. Our project group is confident that increasing EMs diversity is the path to a more representative Local Government body which will result in more proficient decision-making, increased trust amongst the community and the strengthened long-term sustainability of Councils. Through our recommendations we hope that we can contribute to:

- Increasing the number of candidates in Council elections
- Increasing the diversity amongst candidates and EMs
- Improving community representation
- Improving decision making, creativity and innovation (due to greater diversity of perspectives, skills, experience, knowledge etc.)

This report will examine interstate and international case studies of Local Government diversity initiatives to determine what has been successful in other jurisdictions. Surveys and interviews with key South Australian Local Government stakeholders will allow us to determine the current state of play within Local Government in SA, and allow us to form recommendations that contribute to the aims described above.

Methodology

To explore this topic insights were sourced from 3 key audiences: Council staff, current EMs and the general public. The LGA were also a major stakeholder who provided an excellent overview of the current state, including sharing insights regarding previous projects which have focussed on increasing specific areas of diversity in recent years. In addition, extensive research was conducted to validate or disprove survey insights to develop a robust set of findings and recommendations. This important contextual research and the results from the 3 surveys (see Appendix) are analysed within this report to inform 6 key recommendations.

Low EM engagement is a notable limitation of our analysis which could be for a range of reasons including; multiple competing time commitments, EMs may not see direct relevance to their role, and some may see an increased number of candidates as a threat to their held positions. Another limitation of the survey is a lack of demographic data from respondents. Knowing more about the background of respondents could have allowed a more targeted approach to our recommendations. Bespoke online surveys for each audience captured both qualitative and quantitative data with questions based around 3 key themes; motivations and expectations, experience and training, and barriers and improvements. In addition to conducting online surveys, face to face interviews were carried out with key Council personnel and senior leaders to further investigate barriers to achieving optimal diversity, and strategies to improve representation.

Discussion

Benefits of Diversity

The advantages of diversity across business and government are well researched. Organisations need to encourage different voices, varying insights, and support discussion about diversity. (Creary, et al., 2019). This sentiment is also echoed by EMs in regional NSW (Lysaght & Corvo, 2021) who state that they want their councils to better serve changing community needs. "It's not diverse enough," said one Nigerian-born Councillor, "It's restricted to a particular set of people...I want everyone in the community to be able to make an impact."

Workplace diversity is a smart business decision and Council's should embrace the many benefits that come with it. Not only do more diverse management boards see higher financial returns, and higher income growth but other, more nuanced positive outcomes as well (Rock & Heidi, 2016). Numerous studies have found that diverse teams are more likely to focus on facts and remain objective when making decisions. Diverse teams and groups also tend to process these facts more carefully, as they consider the different perspectives and experiences of each member. More diverse teams are also more innovative and creative, due to the diverse intellectual pool of ideas, opinions, experiences, and beliefs.

The misalignment in the political landscape has been evident for many years, resulting in our current diverse society being significantly unrepresented (Chiu, 2021). One example in the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2018 [Leading for Change](#) report highlights that "only 4% of federal MPs had non-European ancestry, compared to 19% of the Australian population". Similar themes are being observed at a local level as many EMs use their role as a stepping stone into State or Federal politics.

The support of a diverse EM cohort was reflected by our survey results, with the majority of respondents listing the following benefits;

- Improved decision-making
- Greater representation of the community and its needs
- Improved cultural awareness
- Improved depth of experience, skills and knowledge

Of course, there are some inherent difficulties with diversity that will require careful management and consideration. Our group concedes more could have been done through our survey to identify any unintended consequences of diversity in Council's (such as communication barriers, cultural misunderstanding, discrimination or drawn-out decision making (Sapling, 2021)).

Research demonstrates that organisations who actively set out to promote diversity within their workplaces and have a strong focus on encouraging their leaders to engage in inclusive behaviours, support the engagement of staff who then practice the same inclusive behaviours (Bilimoria, 2013). Making sure demographics are recognised and represented is becoming an ever-prevalent focus in today's world. This is Local Government's opportunity to increase its representation and leverage its ever-growing diverse and multicultural community.

2018 South Australian Local Government elections

In 2016, the LGA, in partnership with key stakeholders, was asked to address the low representation of women in Local Government and in 2017, it also aimed to increase diversity in EM nominations. These two themes became the primary focus for the marketing campaign surrounding the 2018 Local Government elections. Subsequently, in February 2018, the LGA launched a Communications and Engagement guide to assist councils to develop communication and awareness strategies to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in Council elections. Material such as that seen below in *Figure 1* were distributed to each Council and used to encourage women and culturally diverse people to nominate.



Figure 1: Nomination poster, 2018 Council election campaign. Source: (Local Government Association, 2018)

The campaign achieved relative success compared to the 2014 election, seeing a 4.5% increase in the number of new candidates who nominated, a 6% increase in the number of women elected (*Figure 2*), a significant 28% increase in the number of female Mayors elected (*Figure 3*), as well as a 44% increase in the number of first-time EMs.

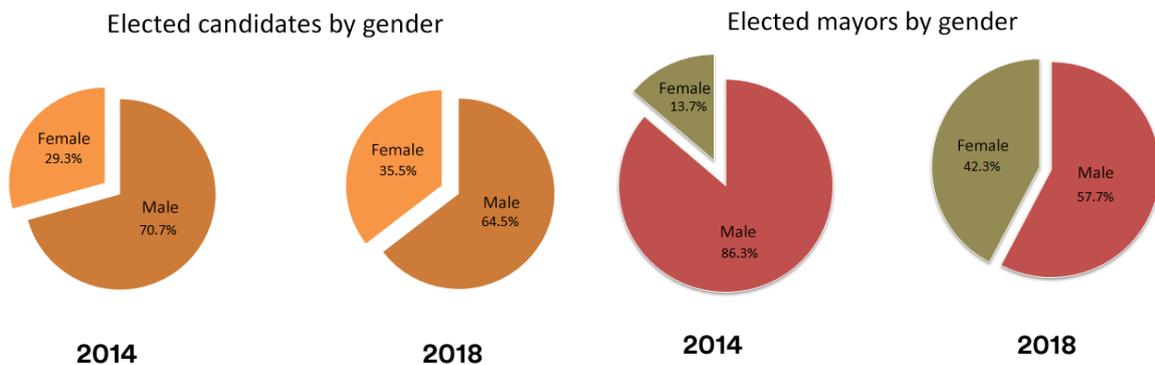


Figure 2: Elected Candidates by gender, 2018 Council statistics, (Electoral Commission South Australia, 2018)

Figure 3: Elected mayors by gender, 2018 Council statistics, (Electoral Commission South Australia, 2018)

Unfortunately, other diversity statistics did not perform quite as well, including receiving fewer candidate nominations in every age group under 54, apart from a sharp spike in the 65+ age group, as seen below in *Figure 3*. Various other diversity data including racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic, and academic/professional backgrounds were not collected during the 2018 elections,

which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about diversity amongst EMs more broadly. The LGA has committed to collecting more of this data in the 2022 elections to identify the key diversity gaps and inform further communication and engagement strategies (explored further in **Recommendations** section, page 12). Voter fatigue will also certainly be a key consideration during the 2022 elections following State and Federal elections in the same year which could result in less voter diversity.

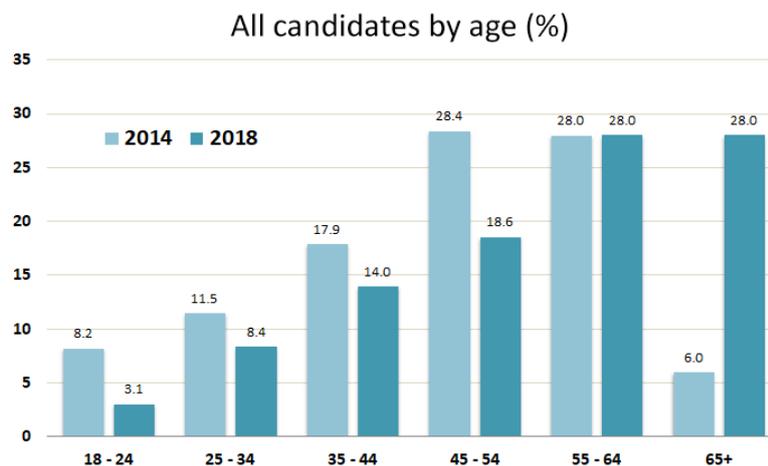


Figure 3: All candidates by age (%), 2018 Council statistics, (Electoral Commission South Australia, 2018)

An Interstate and Global Perspective

In NSW, currently only four per cent of EMs are aged under 30, with 24 of the state’s 1,293 EMs identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Office of Local Government NSW, 2021). To combat this trend, the Minister of Local Government, Shelley Hancock has launched the *Stand for Your Community -Diversity Counts* campaign. The main purpose of this campaign is to increase the number of candidates from under-represented groups at the Local Government elections on 4 December 2021. Mrs Hancock believes that to operate effectively and efficiently, councils should reflect the diverse communities they serve.

This campaign to increase diversity within Local Government has been circulating in the mainstream media and social platforms such as Facebook in various languages. To further assist candidates from under-represented groups, The Office of Local Government has launched a comprehensive online candidate training tool to improve the awareness of potential candidates. Tailored guides are also available for candidates who are female, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or members of multicultural communities.

In Queensland, its public sector is committed to bringing diversity into workplaces. In July 2021, the Queensland government published its “Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2021-2025”. Its vision for inclusion and diversity is a public sector for all, where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

According to the strategy, addressing systemic inequity and building inclusive workplace cultures begins with a willingness to be open to a different perspective (Queensland Government, 2021). Inclusive and diverse workplaces have employees who are engaged, productive and effective. Organisations that can harness the complementary strengths of their workforce are known to be high performing.

Below are some of the key actions taken to drive sector-wide cultural change:

- Initiative such as rainbow lanyards and census days to improve data reliability
- A review of gender pay equity
- The revision of the paid parental leave directive
- Career pathways initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as for youth, people late in their career and veterans

Since the first *Queensland Public Sector Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2015 – 2020* significant progress has been made towards diversity and inclusion. Women in leadership have moved to over 50% (since Jan 2015), and people from non-English speaking backgrounds represent over 10% of the total workforce. A diverse public sector can change how the general public views government bodies and attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.



Figure 4: Diversity targets progress, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2021-2025, (State of Queensland Public Service Commission), 2021

From an international perspective, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is a politically led cross-party organisation in Wales that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. In March 2021, WLGA announced an ambitious *Diversity in Democracy* program in the lead up to the elections to be held in 2022, to ensure council chambers are more representative of their communities.

WLGA Council encourage all political parties, through the WLGA political groups, to commit to proactive and coordinated activities to improve diversity in local government democracy. WLGA Council recommends that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve (Welsh Local Government Association, 2021). It also encourages all EMs to claim any necessary allowances or expenses.

The WLGA has introduced the “Be a Councillor” website, the website provides comprehensive information about:

- General duties as a councillor
- Services delivered by local councils
- Support councillors receive
- Stories of councillors from diverse backgrounds
- A step-by-step guide to become a councillor

The website has a strong focus on encouraging people from minority communities to stand for election.

In addition to this, WLGA provides member mentoring programs, a commitment to the *Civility in Public Life* campaign and a wide package of training, development and support for future EMs from diverse backgrounds.

Analysis

Motivations

In order to attract a more representative candidate pool for local government elections, we sought to first understand what motivated current EMs to nominate for the role. As part of the survey's EMs and Administrative staff were asked what they believe are key motivators for an individual to nominate to become an EM. Current EMs were also asked why they first decided to nominate to represent their communities. Across both groups, the most common answer was that these individuals wanted to make a difference and contribute positively to the community (Admin 38%, EMs 56%). Of the public respondents who answered 'Yes' to whether they had considered nominating to become an EM, 45% stated it was because they wanted/felt they could make a difference in their community. This theme was consistent across all 3 audiences.

"(I was motivated to nominate as an Elected Member) to serve and represent my community, and to bring a younger voice to local government". - EM

Approximately 18% of responses acknowledged that another motivator for someone to run in their local election is that they are dissatisfied with their Council, or that they feel that a particular issue that they are passionate about has not been addressed or handled well.

"I wanted to make change in my community, so my family's concerns were addressed". - EM

Many Council staff acknowledged that this was the case when EMs are first elected, however, once they become more familiar with the work that Council is doing, they often switch to become Council advocates. This highlights that many in the community are not aware of the work done by their local Council's beyond 'roads, rates and rubbish', which is an area worth further consideration.

The third most common motivator (roughly 16% response rate) was that many nominate because they have political aspirations and see Local Government as a steppingstone to State or Federal politics. Coupled with this is a perceived desire for 'status and power'. While not necessarily a negative (many EMs have gone on to become successful State and Federal politicians), there is perhaps an opportunity to ensure that this group does not outweigh those without political aspirations.

"I was first motivated by the prospect of increasing my personal profile to support progression to other levels of government" - EM

Other responses included wanting to represent the community in grass roots matters, financial reasons, past experience working with community groups, wanting a leadership opportunity or their desire to 'keep staff honest'. Once again, after 12 months in their roles, many EMs acknowledge the hard work, dedication and passion of Council staff and instead want to increase community awareness around this.

Barriers

All survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a list of possible barriers for individuals nominating to be an EM. The most common barrier respondents strongly agreed or agreed with was a lack of knowledge about the role of Local Government / Council (71% of Council staff, 77.8% of Public, 57.2% of EMs). This could deter residents with a passion to make a difference in the community who may not fully understand the role of an EM in Local Government.

"[It] comes down to lack of knowledge, lack of understanding of what it involves, lack of interest and not having time to commit to something else in my life." - Member of the public

"I don't think people understand the diverse services Council provides; there is a quite negative image of Council in the community." - EM

The second most agreed upon barrier was the time commitment involved with being an EM (66.2% Council staff, 77.8% of Public, 71.5% of EMs). The majority of respondents believed that on average EMs spend about six to ten hours per week fulfilling their duties. The difficulty in juggling employment and caring for children with the duties of being an EM can make it more difficult for younger, less wealthy people to seek nomination. A possible solution would be to raise the remuneration EMs receive and promote the opportunity for EMs to claim expenses for childcare/full time care of dependant's while fulfilling council duties. Another solution would be to review the structure of council meeting proceedings and delivery format (time, location, formalities). This could make it easier and more time effective for EMs to attend and participate.

“The time commitment will be a barrier for many simply as they will not have the time able to dedicate to Council given everything else in their lives” - EM

Other barriers to nomination included poor chamber behaviour, the negative perception of Council in the media, cultural/language barriers, and age as many young people are more focused on studying or career development and may feel that they do not have enough experience in this type of role.

“I feel there needs to be an increase in younger EM's, more female, more cultural, etc. This would give the community a better representation across more minority groups” – Administrative staff

Training, Development and Skills

When asked about the amount of training and development offered, 43% of EMs responded that there was too little training, with the remainder stating the training offered was just right. The majority of Council staff who responded to the survey felt that there was not enough training provided, with just 19% stating that there was sufficient training for EMs. In terms of additional training, one EM stated they would benefit from;

“Ongoing opportunities for tertiary education in politics and policy, ability to complete the AICD course, tertiary level communications and PR training”. - EM

The value of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) program was reiterated by Council staff with 12% of these respondents mentioning the course. The importance of the timing of training was also noted by one EM, who said;

"the timing of training elements over a 4 year term is important. Too much too early and you are overloaded" - EM

EMs stated that prior leadership/management experience, and critical thinking skills were beneficial to them while performing their role. Council staff were also asked what prior skills and experience they believed were needed to be an effective EM. 34% of staff responded that strong interpersonal skills were needed. Key interpersonal skills identified were: empathy; being open minded; effective listening; being a good communicator; and compassion.

Conclusion

As demonstrated within this report improving EM diversity ensures communities are well represented, in turn maximising Council's ability to achieve exceptional outcomes for the public. EMs play an important role in our communities; however elected bodies are not providing an accurate reflection of current diversity. Many subgroups are underrepresented and face multiple barriers regarding participation in both the nomination process and following election. As identified through qualitative and quantitative research there are a range of recommendations that can mitigate current barriers to diversity being achieved amongst the elected body. If these recommendations are implemented and resourced appropriately, we feel EM diversity can and will improve, enabling better democratic representation of our vibrant and diverse communities.

Recommendations

Table 1. Recommendations and implementation Plan to improve Elected Member diversity

Recommendation	Description	Resources required	Expected outcome	How will this be implemented	Timings of implementation	Monitoring & Measurement
1. Introduce a suite of mandatory and optional training and development offerings prior to candidate nomination (in additional to current LGA workshops)						
1a. Introduce mandatory pre nomination training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents stated that more training needed to be provided prior to candidates nominating • This would encompass a range of topics such as; community expectations, meeting procedures, ‘A day in the life of..’ EM video diary etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to oversee training program • LGA engagement • Medium financial investment 	Candidates gain a deeper understanding of the requirements and specifics of the position	Managed by LGA	Trainings offered 9-12 months prior to nomination closing date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post surveys conducted to capture baseline and final learnings
1b. Introduce mandatory pre nomination exposure to Council administrative practices and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents stated that candidates should be exposed to more Council and role specific information/ interaction prior to nominating • This would include a range of options including; Q&A with former EMs and executives and shadowing council staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to oversee offering • Engagement from current Executive, Governance team and past EM alumni • Small financial investment 	Candidates gain a deeper understanding of the requirements of the role and Council environment	Managed by individual Councils	Sessions offered 9-12 months prior to nomination closing date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post survey conducted to capture baseline and final learnings

1c. Strongly encourage completion of AICD or Local Government micro credential	Respondents indicated successful candidates would benefit from additional qualification to succeed in the position	Large financial investment (approximately between \$2,000 per candidate depending on course selection) 2 candidates per Council.	Increased knowledge and capacity to fulfil requirements of the role	Managed by individual Councils, supported by LGA to provide an overview of relevant courses / advocacy to tertiary institutions	Enrol in course within 18 months of being elected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture additional courses as part of existing professional development reporting processes
1d. Develop mentor program consisting of EM Alumni which matches potential candidates with ex EMs from external Councils	Respondents suggested a knowledge sharing system would be beneficial for incoming EMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retired EMs Staff to oversee program Small financial investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge sharing Fast track learning and onboarding process External, experienced impartial mentor/ advisor 	Managed by LGA	Optional mentor program offered to successful EMs as part of their induction process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review conducted Pre and post surveys conducted by both current and retired EMs to capture successes and potential improvements.
1e. Introduce mandatory pre nomination attendance at a specified number of council meetings	Respondents indicated potential candidates would benefit from exposure to Council meeting processes, structure and familiarisation with reporting and minutes	Council staff to communicate with candidates	Increased knowledge of role requirements	Managed by individual Councils	6-9 months prior to nomination closing date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track attendance to ensure meeting minimum requirements Pre and post survey conducted to capture baseline and final learnings
2. Develop a tailored communication strategy regarding nomination opportunities and voting to connect with diverse communities such as refugees, Indigenous Australians and young people	Respondents indicated improved promotion and awareness is an opportunity to mitigate barriers to EM nominations, specifically to encourage diverse representatives to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGA engagement in collaboration with local Councils Small financial investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased community awareness of opportunity to nominate Increased participation from diverse groups 	Managed by LGA	Campaign begins 12 months prior to election until election concludes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data captured via ECSA within nomination process Compare 2022 candidate demographics with future years for analysis

3. Engage in a public relations campaign to improve the public perception and understanding of local government's role and impact.	Respondents stated a significant barrier to nominating is due to poor EM behaviour and a negative perception of local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA engagement in collaboration with local Councils • Local influencers and media identities engaged in campaign • Medium financial investment 	Improved positive community perception	Managed by LGA	Campaign begins 12 months prior to election until election concludes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community perception survey conducted pre and post campaign
4. Explore efficiencies in role requirements of EM (such as reviewing Council reporting structure to ensure and encourage concise and easy to digest reports)	Data highlighted a significant barrier to nominating was time commitment, namely time required to read reports which can be quite complicated for an 'average' person	Support from Governance	Reduce time required by both staff and EMs to prepare and read reports	Managed by individual Councils	Implemented as per Council's priorities (ideally prior to 2022 election)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own Councils to opt in. Data captured from EMs during annual review process • Quantitative data captured from EMs to capture average weekly time commitment
5. Improve the capture and reporting of candidate demographic and diversity data	Insights are required to define a current state for diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA engagement in collaboration with ECSA • Low financial investment 	Diversity insights are captured which enables gaps to be identified and strategies to be developed	LGA to communicate priority data/questions to be captured	In line with ECSA timeframes for inclusion in 2022 election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data captured via ECSA within nomination process • Compare 2022 candidate demographics with future years for analysis
6. Review the structure of Council meeting proceedings and delivery method	Respondents indicated that time commitments were a significant barrier	Support from CEOs and EMs	More effective and flexible use of time in Council meetings.	Managed by individual Councils	Implemented as per Council's priorities (ideally prior to 2022 election)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own Councils to opt in. Data captured from EMs during annual review process • Quantitative data captured from EMs to capture average weekly time commitment

Bibliography

- Bilimoria, R. S. B. & D., 2013. *Emeral Insight*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EDI-02-2012-0010/full/html>
[Accessed 26 September 2021].
- Chiu, O., 2021. *Australian politics should*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australian-politics-should-be-diverse-its-people>
[Accessed 20 September 2021].
- Creary, S. J., McDonnell, M.-H. ", Ghai, S. & Scruggs, J., 2019. *When and Why Diversity Improves Your Board's Performance*. [Online]
Available at: <https://hbr.org/2019/03/when-and-why-diversity-improves-your-boards-performance>
[Accessed 20 September 2021].
- Electoral Commission South Australia, 2018. *2018 Council statistics*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/elections/2018-council-statistics>
[Accessed 10 October 2021].
- Government of South Australia, 2021. *Local Government Act 1999*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz/c/a/local%20government%20act%201999.aspx>
[Accessed 9 July 2021].
- LGA, 2021. *Local Government in SA*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/sa-councils/about-local-government/local-government-in-sa>
[Accessed 9 July 2021].
- Local Government Association, 2018. *Make a Difference Booklet*, Adelaide: LGA.
- Lysaght, G.-J. & Corvo, S., 2021. *Growing diversity of regional Australia on display for upcoming NSW local government elections*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-07-18/diverse-council-nominations/100298036>
[Accessed 20 September 2021].
- Office of Local Government NSW, 2021. *Stand for Your Community – Diversity Counts*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/programs-and-initiatives/local-government-elections-4-december-2021/stand-for-your-community-diversity-counts/>
[Accessed 22 September 2021].
- Queensland Government, 2021. *Inclusion and diversity commitment*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/working-in-the-public-service/about-the-public-service/inclusion-and-diversity-commitment>
[Accessed 22 September 2021].
- Rock, D. & Heidi, G., 2016. *Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter - Harvard Business Review*. [Online]
Available at: <https://hbr-org.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/hbr.org/amp/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are->

smarter

[Accessed 10 October 2021].

Sapling, 2021. *Top Challenges of Diversity in the Workplace—And How to Address Them*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.saplinghr.com/blog/top-challenges-of-diversity-in-the-workplace-and-how-to-address-them>

[Accessed 10 October 2021].

Welsh Local Government Association, 2021. *Councils commit to ambitious action on diversity*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.wlga.wales/councils-commit-to-ambitious-action-on-diversity>

[Accessed 28 September 2021].

Appendix

Appendix A - [Elected Member Perspective Survey](#)

22/09/2021, 15:30

Nominating for Council in Local Government - Elected Member Perspective Survey (Edit) Microsoft Forms

Forms(<https://www.office.com/launch/forms?auth=2>)

? Dayle Arblaster



Nominating for Council in Local Government - Elected Member Perspective Survey

7

Responses

16:53

Average time to complete

Active

Status

1. Firstly, please share with us what motivated you to nominate to be an Elected Member.

Latest Responses

7

Responses

"Have good knowledge & wanted to volunteer in a significant way."
"I was first motivated by the prospect of increasing my personal profile..."
"Improving the media we live and improving myself"

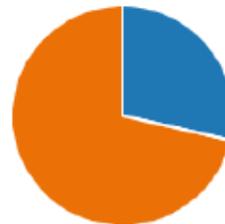
2. When you nominated, did you fully understand the role and commitment required?

Yes

2

No

5



3. What would have assisted you to better understand the role and commitment required?

5

Responses

Latest Responses

"Local government being more obvious in its role"
"More engagement from myself"

4. Has your Elected Member experience differed from what you expected it would be?

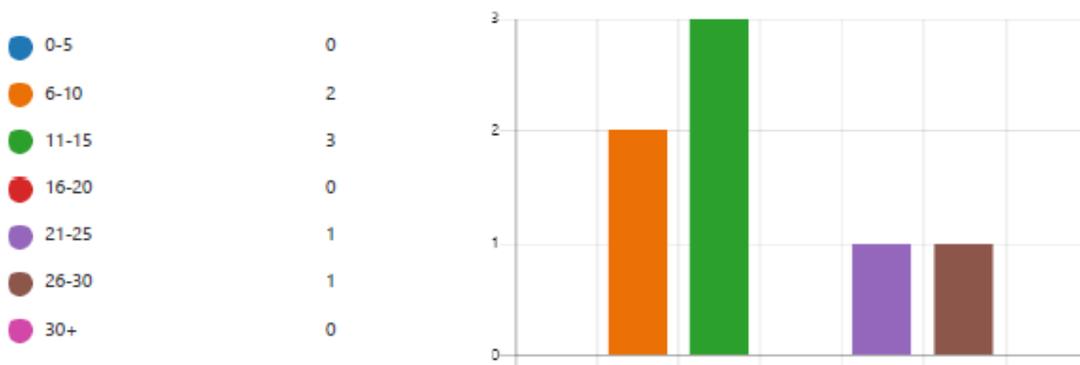


5. How has your experience differed from your original expectations?

6
Responses

Latest Responses
"I didn't expect other councillors to be so mean"
"We have to make decisions in very different topics with many details ..."

6. On average, how many hours do you dedicate to your Elected Member role each week?



7. What prior skills and experience have benefited your Elected Member role?

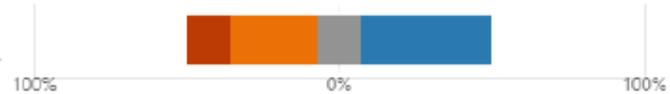
7
Responses

Latest Responses
"Broad professional background, experience on many local committees..."
"Management and leadership experience, critical thinking skills, prior c..."
"I was a teacher."

8. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

The induction process (LGA, Council) equipped me with the skills and knowledge I need to be an effecti...



9. Please list any suggestions you have to improve the induction process for future Elected Members.

6 Responses

Latest Responses

"More practical ways to work with co ward Ems & other EMs."
"It needs to be information and experience rich. It should not be comp..."
"workshops"

10. Please select an option that best completes the statement:

Too little Just right Too much

The amount of training and development I have been offered as an Elected Member has been...



11. What other training or development opportunities do you think would benefit you in your Elected Member role?

5 Responses

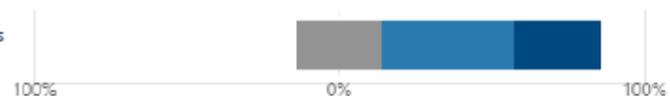
Latest Responses

"The timing of training elements over a 4 year term is important. Too ..."
"Ongoing opportunities for tertiary education in politics and policy, abili..."
"See the work in other councils "

12. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

The Elected Member nomination and election process was easy to understand and navigate.



13. Please list any suggestions you have to improve the nomination and election process.

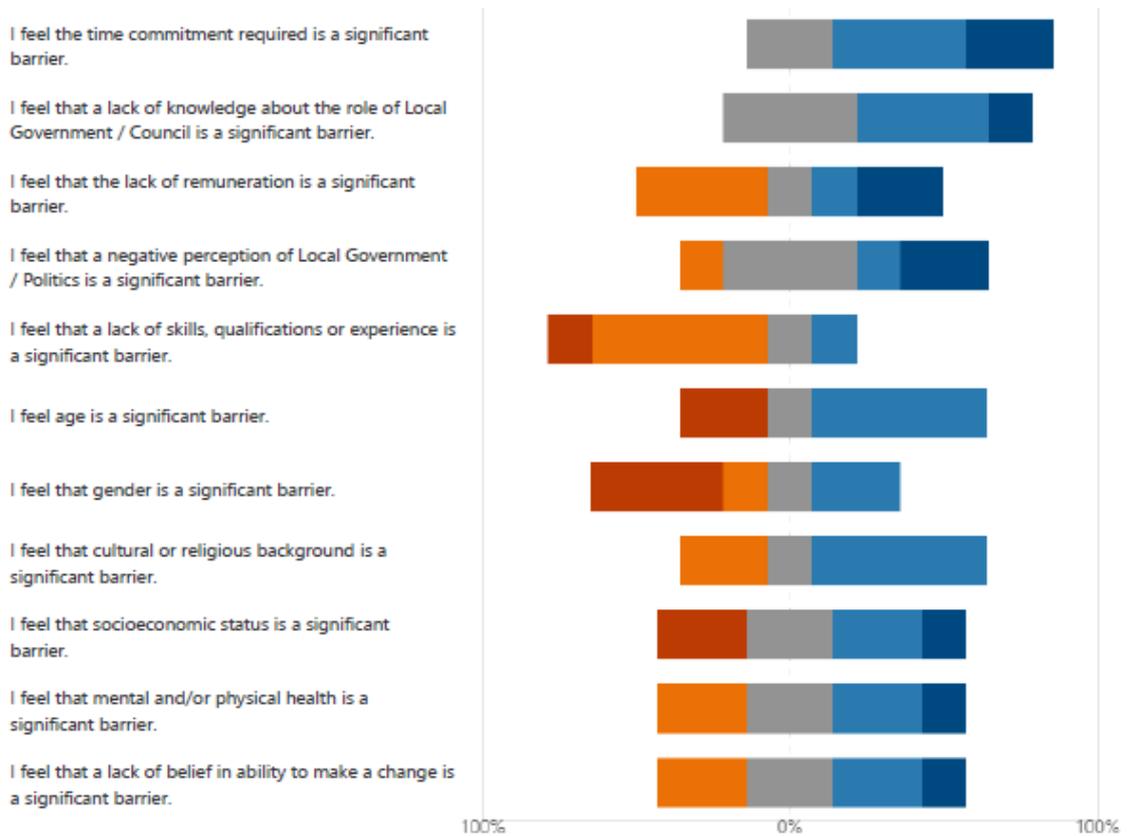
1
Responses

Latest Responses

14. Our initial research indicates there are several deterrents and barriers to individuals nominating to be an Elected Member.

Please rate your level of agreement to the below statements, regarding barriers to nominate to be an Elected Member.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



15. For those you 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' are significant barriers to nominating to be an Elected Member, could you please explain why.

7
Responses

Latest Responses

- "Time: For those with demanding family commitments - generally you..."*
- "I have been approached by a number of intending candidates to help ..."*
- "The requirements are high, topics sometimes complicated, the council..."*

16. If you are aware of other barriers and deterrents to individuals nominating for Local Government elections, please describe below.

3
Responses

Latest Responses

- "To be a migrant, not sufficient knowledge of the language"*

17. Do you have any other recommendations or insights that will support Councils to 'attract more candidates to nominate for Local Government elections?'

5
Responses

Latest Responses

- "Campaigning to be elected is a grueling, expensive & time consuming..."*
- "Councillors are under resourced. No staff, no office, no provision of sof..."*

18. Please list the Council you are connected with.

7
Responses

Latest Responses

- "Mitcham"*
- "City of Mitchm"*
- "Mitcham"*

Appendix B - [Administration Perspective Survey](#)

22/09/2021, 15:31

Nominating for Council in Local Government - Administration Perspective Survey (Edit) Microsoft Forms

Forms(<https://www.office.com/launch/forms?auth=2>)

? Dayle Arblaster



Nominating for Council in Local Government - Administration Perspective Survey

149

Responses

22:09

Average time to complete

Active

Status

1. Firstly, please share with us what you believe motivates individuals to nominate to be an Elected Member.

149

Responses

Latest Responses

"Either the wish to represent and contribute to their community and or...

"Wanting to make improvements to the town they live in"

"Helping to lead to change "

2. Do you believe Elected Members fully understand the role and commitment required when they nominate?

● Yes

12

● No

137



3. What do you think would enable them to better understand the role and commitment required?

134

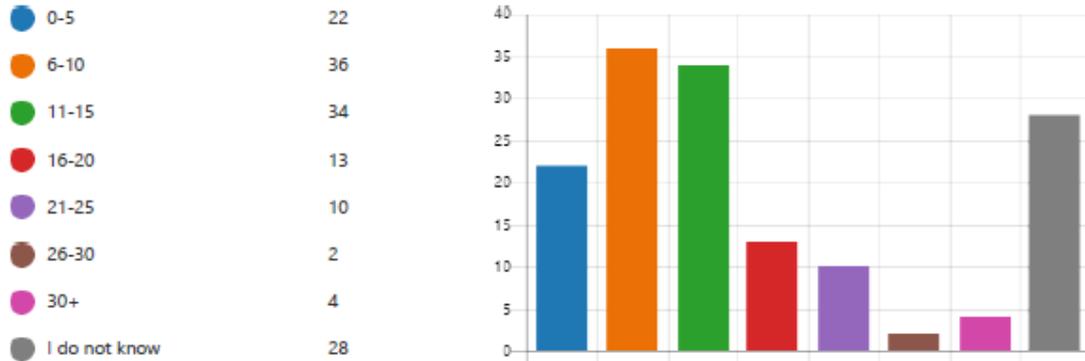
Responses

Latest Responses

"A pre nomination info pack of some sort "

"More information provided to them before they nominate"

4. On average, how many hours do you believe Elected Members dedicate to their roles each week?



5. If you are aware, please share with us the number of candidate nominations your Council received at its last election.

93

Responses

Latest Responses

6. What prior skills and experience do you believe an individual needs to be an effective Elected Member?

147

Responses

Latest Responses

"An understanding of the council area and some leadership experience..."

"Experience within the community and good people skills"

"Political correctness and being able to communicate with all types of ..."

7. What do you believe are the benefits associated with a diverse Elected Body with different skills, backgrounds and experiences?

146

Responses

Latest Responses

" A more robust and representative council."

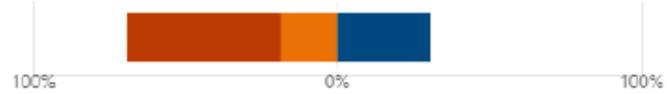
"A broader range of experience brings different skills to the elected bo..."

"Multi skilled different perspectives adaptability and learnings from pr..."

8. Please select an option that best completes the statement:

■ Too little ■ Just right ■ Too much ■ I do not know

The amount of training and development offered to Elected Members is...



9. What other training opportunities do you think would benefit Elected Members in their role?

142
Responses

Latest Responses

"Dealing with conflict, listening, negotiating and debating skills."

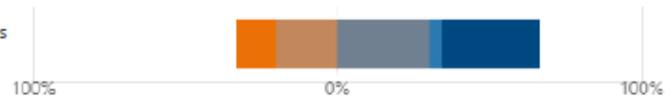
"Spending time with existing elected members"

"Could be a broad concept, due to not many days or situations being t..."

10. Please rate your agreement with the following statement:

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ I do not know

'The Elected Member nomination and election process is easy to understand and navigate'



11. Please share with us any suggestions you have to improve the nomination and election process.

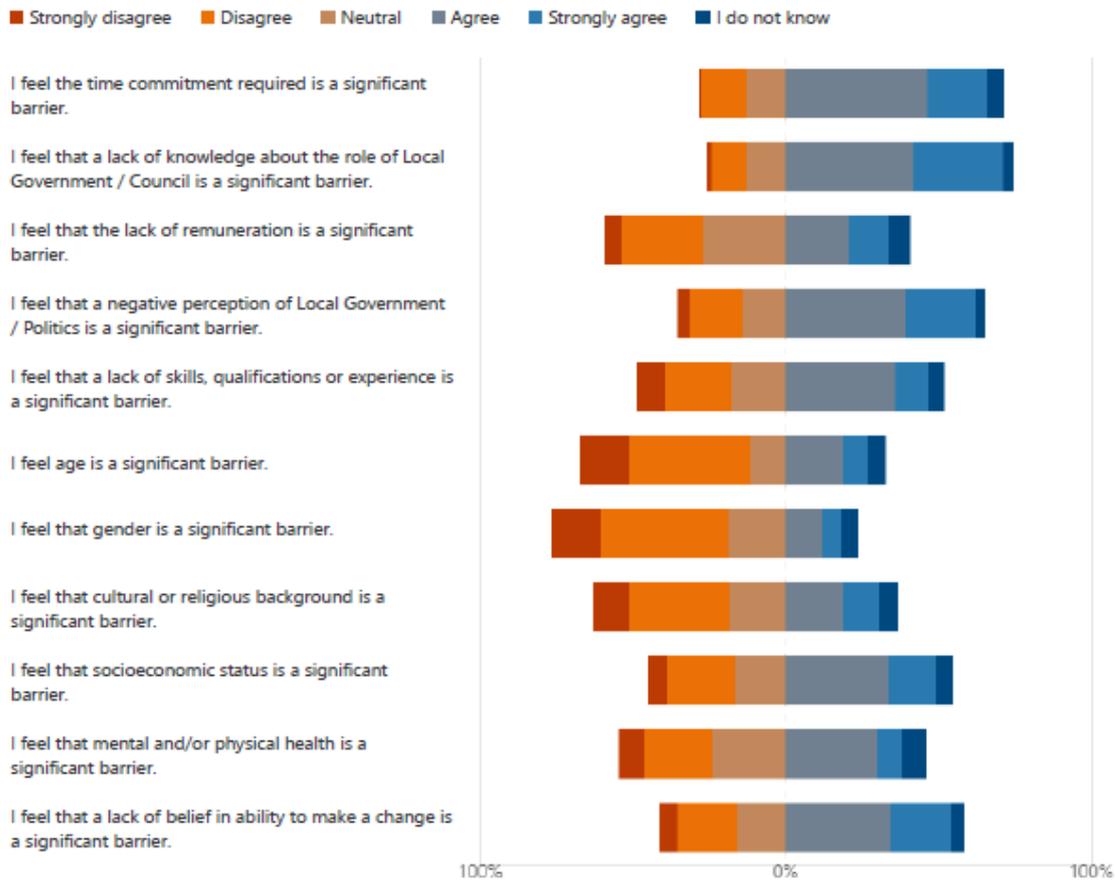
81
Responses

Latest Responses

"Implementing diversity and finding the people with the passion to fill ..."

12. Our initial research indicates there are several deterrents and barriers to individuals nominating to be an Elected Member.

Please rate your level of agreement to the below statements, regarding barriers to nominate to be an Elected Member.



13. For those you 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' are significant barriers to nominating to be an Elected Member, could you please explain why.

115 Responses

Latest Responses

"Many people are time poor and for others I believe that there is a lack..."

"All of these things could be possible deterrents to potential elected me..."

14. If you are aware of other barrier/s to individuals nominating for Local Government elections, please describe below.

67

Responses

Latest Responses

15. Do you have any other recommendations or insights that will support Councils to 'attract more candidates to nominate for Local Government elections?'

95

Responses

Latest Responses

"Not that I can think of at this stage "

"No"

"Promoting the benefits local governments has and how the elected m..."

16. Please list the Council you are connected with.

140

Responses

Latest Responses

"District Council of Grant"

"Port Pirie"

Appendix C - [Public Perspective Survey](#)

22/09/2021, 15:33

Nominating for Council in Local Government - Public Perspective Survey (Edit) Microsoft Forms

Forms(<https://www.office.com/launch/forms?auth=2>)

? Dayle Arblaster



Nominating for Council in Local Government - Public Perspective Survey

20

Responses

06:06

Average time to complete

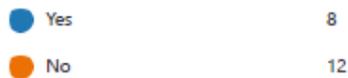
Active

Status

1. Firstly, have you ever received information from your local Council or the Local Government Association (LGA) on nominating to become an Elected Member for a Council?



2. Have you ever considered nominating to be an Elected Member at your local Council?



3. Why did you consider nominating to be an Elected Member?

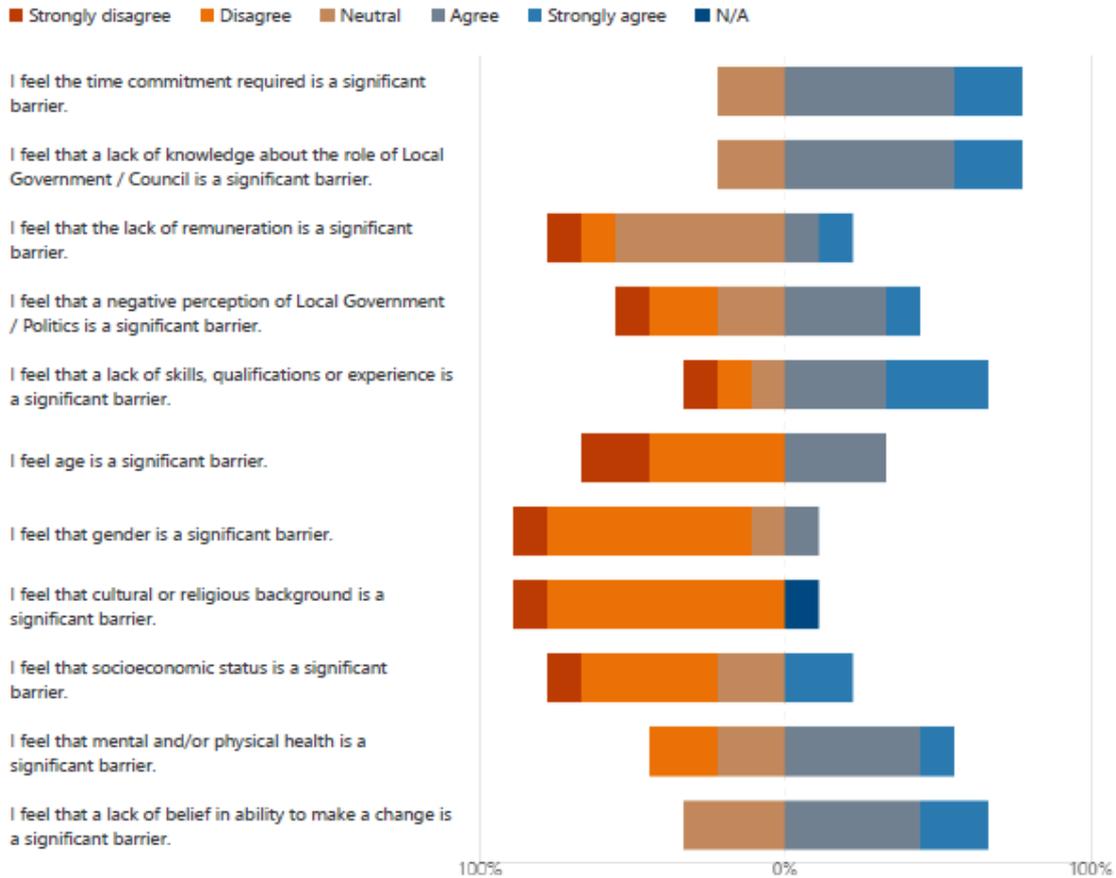
10

Responses

Latest Responses

4. Our initial research indicates there are several deterrents and barriers to individuals nominating to be an Elected Member.

Please rate your level of agreement to the below statements, regarding barriers to nominate to be an Elected Member.



5. For those you 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' are significant barriers to nominating to be an Elected Member, could you please explain why.

9 Responses

Latest Responses

"Na"

"Because mental health can be a huge barrier in a number of things"

"Work family life to busy to make time for council stuff"

6. What more could your local Council or the LGA do to attract yourself or others you know to nominate to be an Elected Member?

18
Responses

Latest Responses
"Na"
"Exempt from paying council rates "

7. Have you ever voted in your local Council election?

● Yes 13
● No 7



8. What motivated you to vote in your Council election?

13
Responses

Latest Responses
"Change "
"Thought I had to"

9. Why have you never voted in your local Council election?

7
Responses

Latest Responses
"I don't really like to vote"

10. What more could your local Council or the LGA do to encourage yourself or others you know to vote in your local Council elections?

20
Responses

Latest Responses
"Actually do what they promise "
"Be more realistic"
"Put on a family day with stuff for the kids to play on "

11. Do you have any other recommendations or insights that will support Councils to 'attract more candidates to nominate for Local Government elections?'

12

Responses

Latest Responses

"Nope"