



2009 Tasmanian Local Government Elected Member Census

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INTRODUCTION

The third survey of elected members in Tasmanian Local Government, conducted in February 2009, attracted a 58% participation rate. This was disappointingly down on previous years (2004 = 69%, 2006 = 64%). However the data obtained from the census, as presented in this report, is still important in assisting LGAT to develop policies and initiate programs that are suited to the profile of elected members in Tasmania. Sound research is critical to Local Government's ability to gain public support and support from Members of Parliament when key issues are being discussed or considered.

While the 2009 survey follows a similar format to the 2006 census, some small changes have been made, with the aim of building a broader and more detailed picture of elected membership in Tasmania.

There are some additional questions in the 2009 census which will be used to inform the Governance Working Group under the Premier's Local Government Council's *Stronger Councils, Better Services* Project. These questions identify knowledge, training and communication experiences, skills and needs of elected members.

The census questionnaire can be viewed at Appendix A.

It is envisaged that another census will be undertaken early next year to pick up any changes following the October elections. Over time, it will be possible to monitor trends and undertake a more in depth and extensive analysis.

The Association sincerely thanks the 164 elected members who took the time to participate in the 2009 census.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- The majority (67.1%) of respondents were male (2006: 77%).
- The most common age range of respondents was 56-65, 39% (2006: 56-65, 43%). Male respondents tended to be older than female respondents.
- The majority of respondents were married or lived in a de facto relationship, 90% (2006: 88%).
- The majority of respondents had no dependents, 68% (2006: 59%).
- The majority of respondents were born in Australia, 87% (2006: 81%).
- 3% of respondents identified as an aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2006: 0.55%).
- English is the first language of 95% of respondents (2006: 97%). The percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse respondents has increased slightly over each census (2004: 1%, 2006 3%, 2009 5%).
- 10% of respondents reported having a disability (2006: 9%), of those, 76% believe that their Council adequately accommodates any disability-related support needs. This represents a continual decrease in satisfaction in this area since 2004.
- For 29.3% of respondents, the highest level of education reached was secondary education (2006: 31%).
- 19.5% of respondents were in full-time paid employment; 31.7% were self-employed; 15.9% were engaged in part-time work and 23.8% were retired. This is a very similar distribution to 2006.
- The majority of respondents were employed in the private sector (2006: 68%) and most employed respondents were small business proprietors or in managerial/executive roles.
- 55.5% of respondents reported a gross annual income of less than \$56,000, with 8% indicating incomes over \$116,000 – a similar distribution to 2006.
- 88.4% of respondents belonged to an organisation other than Council. Of those, 37.8% belonged to a service club, 36% to a sporting organisation, and 32.9% to a special interest organisation.
- 20.7% of respondents have served on Council 7-9 years, 12.8% of respondents have served as an elected member for a period of 4-6 years, 17.1% have served 10-15 years, 17.7% have served more than 16 years and 12.8% were elected for the first time in 2007.
- The majority (28.6%) of respondents spent 11-20 hours on their campaign, with 14.3% spending 41-60 hours. Most respondent's campaigns ran for between 1 and 4 weeks (52.4%).
- 28% of respondents reported spending over 15 hours on Council activities per week and more than 40% spend 11-20 hours a month on public contact.
- Respondents rated planning and development, rates and roads as the issues considered to be of most concern to the public.
- They also rated these issues, after financial sustainability, as the issues of most importance to Local Government as well.
- 62.8% of respondents have undertaken some training since being elected to Local Government but a significant proportion (55%) of respondents experienced difficulties in undertaking training.

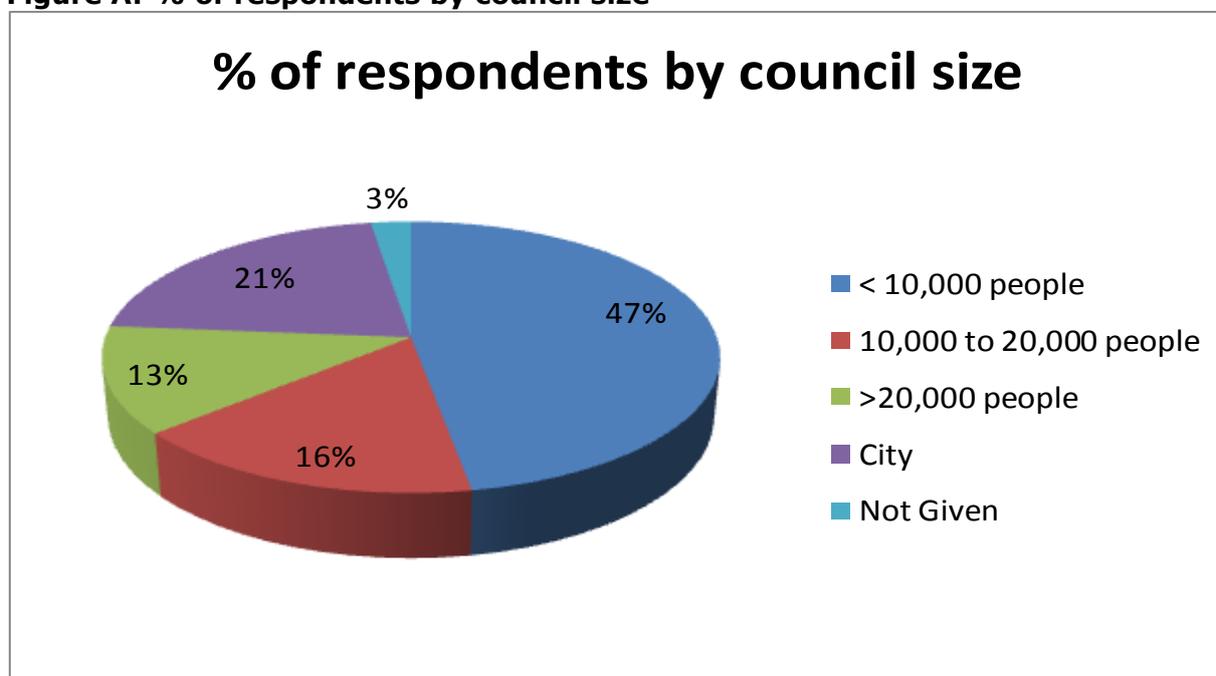
- Governance, planning and development, budget and finances were most commonly nominated training priorities.

Table A: Comparison of key demographic characteristics between Elected Members and the general Tasmanian population.

Characteristic	Elected Members (2009) %	Tasmanian Population (2006 ABS Census) %
Male	67	49
Aged 25-55 ¹	32	40
Aged 56 - 65	39	12
Born in Australia	86	83
English as second language	5	3.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	3	3.5
Secondary school not completed	4.8	35 ²
Income below \$56,000 per annum	55	64 ³
In employment (full time, part time or self employed)	67	43

The majority of respondents were from smaller councils with populations of less than 10,000 people. This is fairly reflective of the council demographics in Tasmania.

Figure A: % of respondents by council size



¹ Age ranges best available match but not exact.

² Age 20+

³ Below \$52,000

1. GENDER

As detailed in Table 1.1, the majority (67.1%) of respondents were male, compared to 27.4 per cent female. This is a smaller proportion than previous years, but males still significantly outnumber females (2006 77%, 2004: 72%).

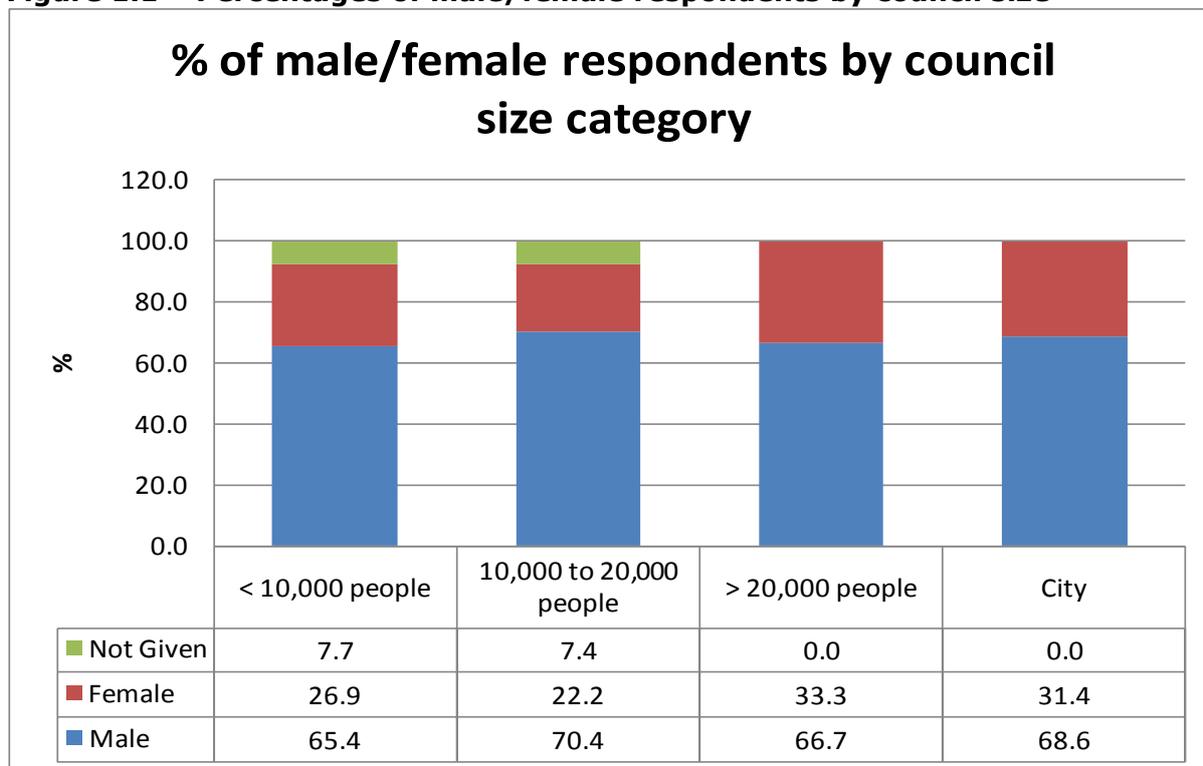
The gender profile of respondents is well aligned to the actual gender distribution of elected members: 27.4% of respondents were female vs 25.5% of all elected members being female. However the gender distribution of elected members is markedly different from the general Tasmanian population with 49% male, 51% female.

Table 1.1 – Gender of respondents.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Male	110	67.1
Female	45	27.4
No response	9	5.5
Total	164	100

Figure 1.1 shows the relative consistency in proportional response rate between genders for each council size grouping.

Figure 1.1 – Percentages of male/female respondents by council size



2. AGE

As in 2006, the most common age range of respondents in 2009 was 56-65 at 39% (43% in 2006) (see Figure 2.1). This age group comprises approximately 12% of the general Tasmanian population. Nearly 83% of respondents were aged between 46-75 years.

Only one respondent was under the age of 25 years. Just over 4% of respondents were aged over 76.

Figure 2.1 – % age of respondents in each age category

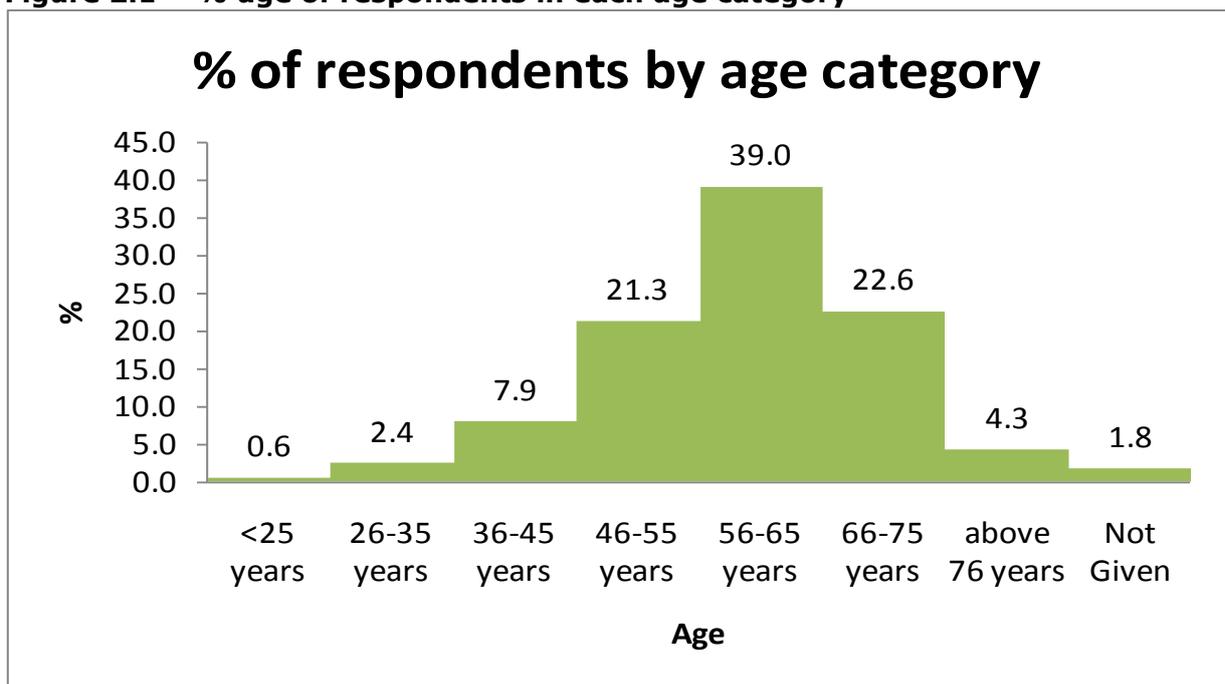


Table 2.1– Age of respondents

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Below 25 years old	1	0.6
26-35 years old	4	2.4
36-45 years old	13	7.9
46-55 years old	35	21.3
56-65 years old	64	39.0
66-75 years old	37	22.6
Over 76 years old	7	4.3
Not Given	3	1.9
Total	164	100

The largest proportion of both male and female respondents were 56-65 years old (39.1% and 40% respectively) (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 – Gender breakdown % respondents in each age category

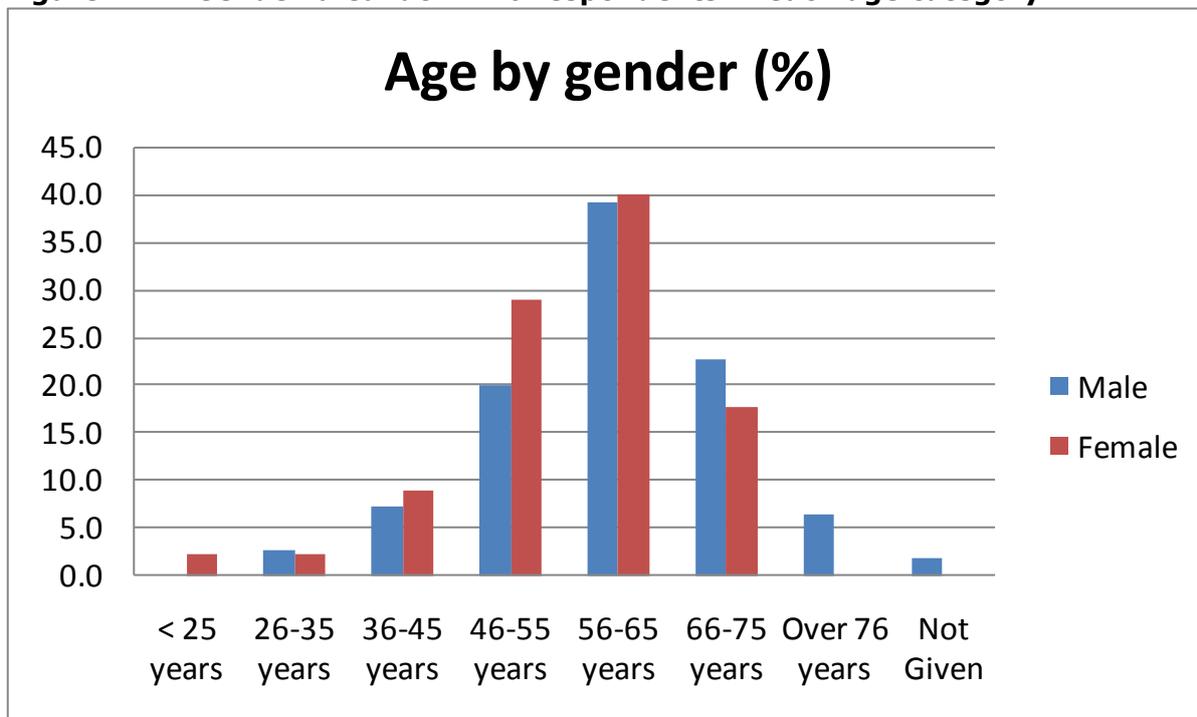


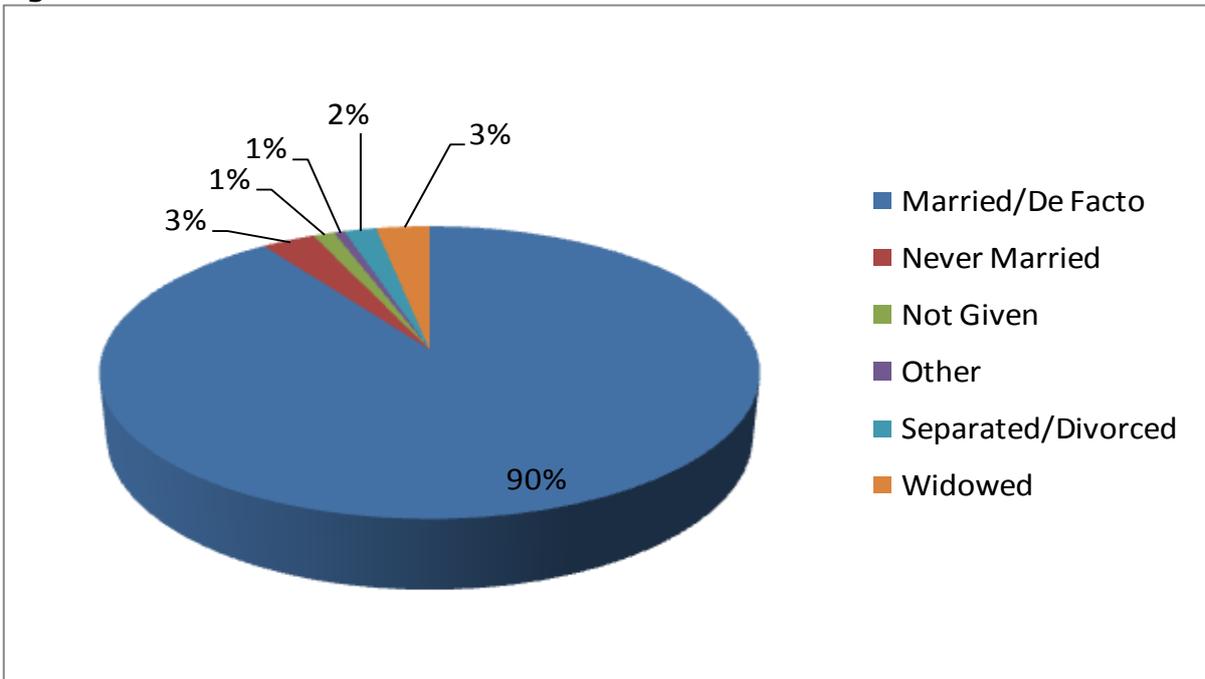
Table 2.2 – Age of respondents by gender

	Male	Female	Not Given
< 25 years	0	1	0
26-35 years	3	1	0
36-45 years	8	4	1
46-55 years	22	13	0
56-65 years	43	18	3
66-75 years	25	8	3
Over 76 years	7	0	0
Not Given	2	0	2
Total	110	45	9

3. MARITAL STATUS

As can be seen in Figure 3.1 below, the majority, 90%, of respondents were married or lived in a de facto relationship, 90%. This is higher than previous survey years (2006: 88%, 2004: 86%)

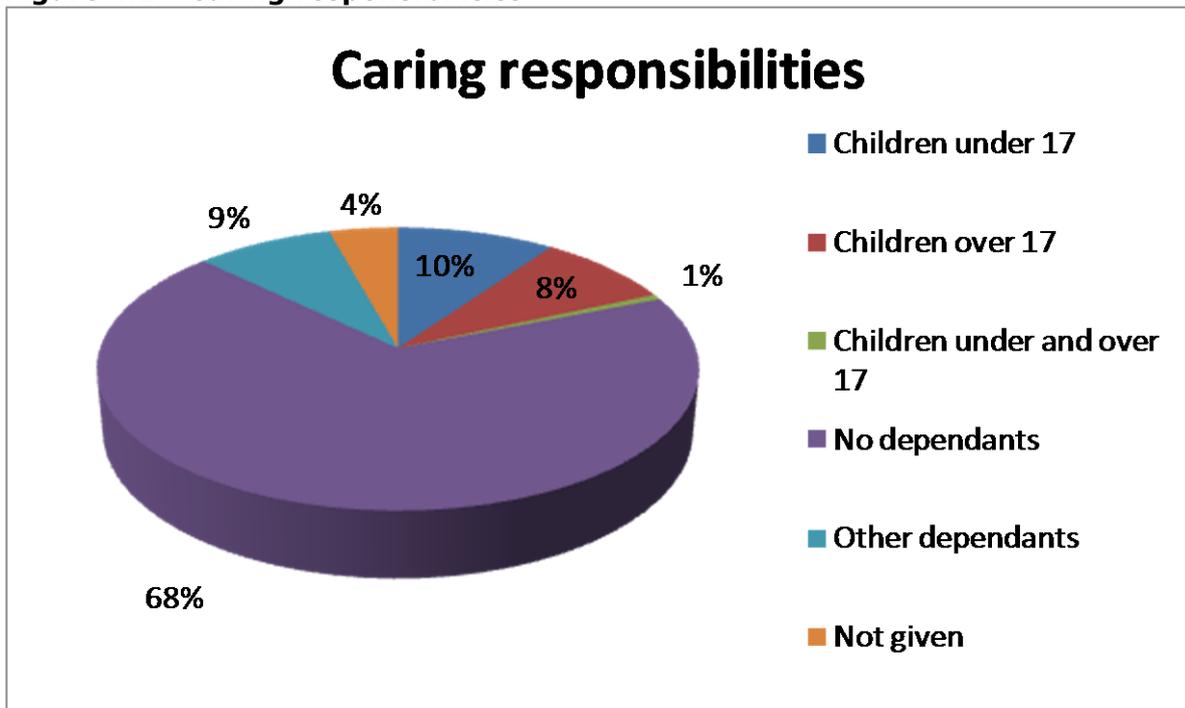
Figure 3.1 – Marital status of elected members



4. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

As indicated in Figure 4.1, the majority of respondents did not have caring responsibilities for dependants or children. This year we see an increase in respondents with no dependants, 68% compared to 59% in 2006. 10% of respondents had children less than 19 years of age. Only 4.2% had children less than 10 years of age. 22% of female respondents had caring responsibilities compared to 31% of male respondents.

Figure 4.1 - Caring responsibilities



5. BACKGROUND

Figure 5.1 illustrates that 11.25% of respondents were born outside of Australia (compared to 19% in 2006 and 15% in 2004). Those not born in Australia were most frequently from the United Kingdom (6%), and the Netherlands (2%).

The parents of the majority of respondents were born in Australia. More fathers were born overseas than mothers.

3% of respondents identified as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2006: 0.55%). This is on par with the distribution in the Tasmanian population.

English is the first language of 95% of respondents (2006: 97%). The percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse respondents has increased slightly over each census (2004: 1%, 2006 3%, 2009 5%).

Figure 5.1 – % respondents born Australia/overseas

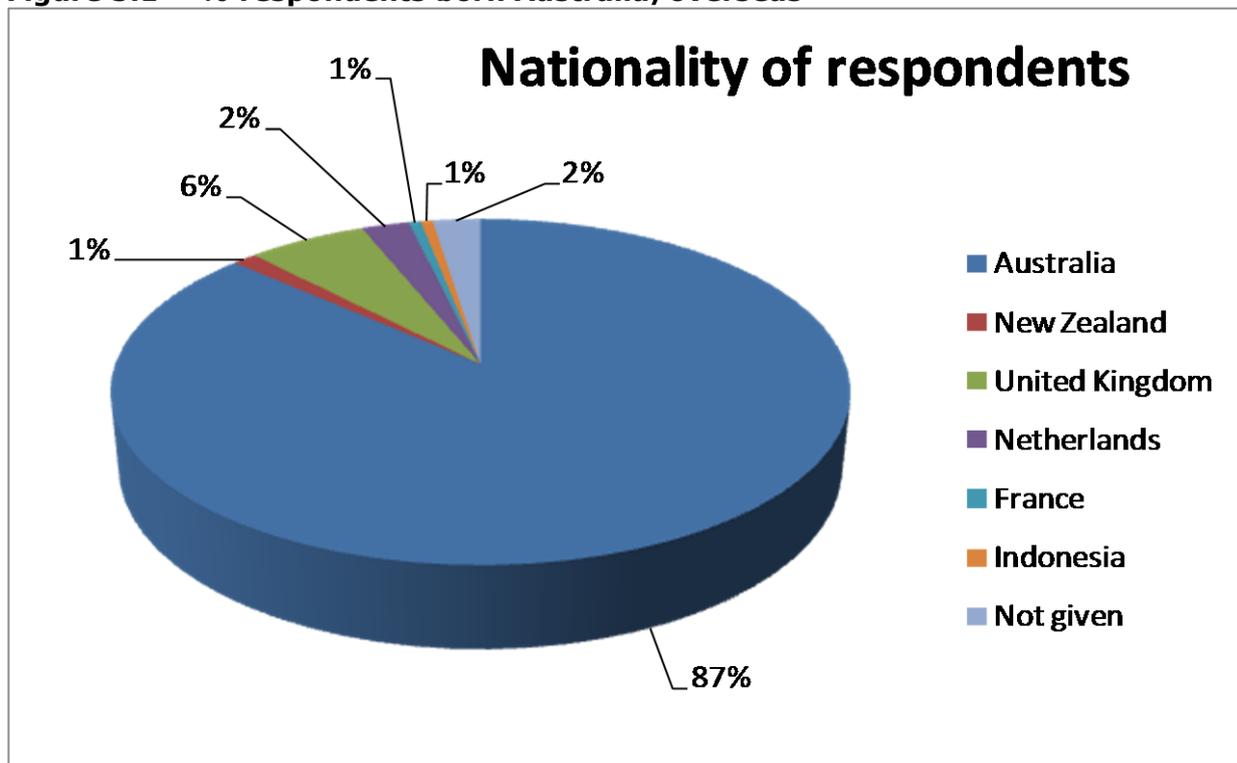


Table 5.1 – Where were your parents born?

Table 5.1a – Father

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Australia	136	83
Overseas	28	17

Table 5.1b – Mother

Number of respondents	% of respondents	Number of respondents
Australia	140	85
Overseas	24	15

Table 5.2 – Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	5	3
No	159	97

Table 9 – Is English your first language?

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	175	4.9
No	8*	95.1

*French/Dutch most commonly identified.

6. DISABILITY

10% (n=17) of respondents reported having a disability (2006:9%).

Of those, 76% believe that Council adequately accommodates any disability-related support needs.

This represents a continual decrease in satisfaction in this area since 2004 (82% 2006, 100% 2004).

7. EDUCATION

As indicated by Figure 7.1, secondary education is the highest level of education reached by the largest proportion of respondents. This is consistent with the 2006 survey.

As detailed in Table 7.1, 29.3% of elected members have completed secondary education, a further 20.1% have completed a diploma, and 15.9% an apprenticeship.

Male respondents predominantly had secondary education followed closely by apprenticeship/trade qualifications. Female respondents predominately had achieved secondary education followed diploma and then degree level qualifications. A slightly higher proportion of males than females had not achieved secondary level education. In 2006 all females had attained secondary level education (see Figure 7.2).

A small number of respondents listed other educational attainment including overseas qualifications, Company Directors Course, incomplete degrees and military service.

Degrees were proportionally more common amongst respondents aged less than 45 years but post graduate qualifications were proportionally more common among older elected members (66 years or older). Respondents aged 46-55 had the most distributed mix of educational attainment with secondary education relatively dominant amongst other age cohorts. (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.1 – Highest level of education received

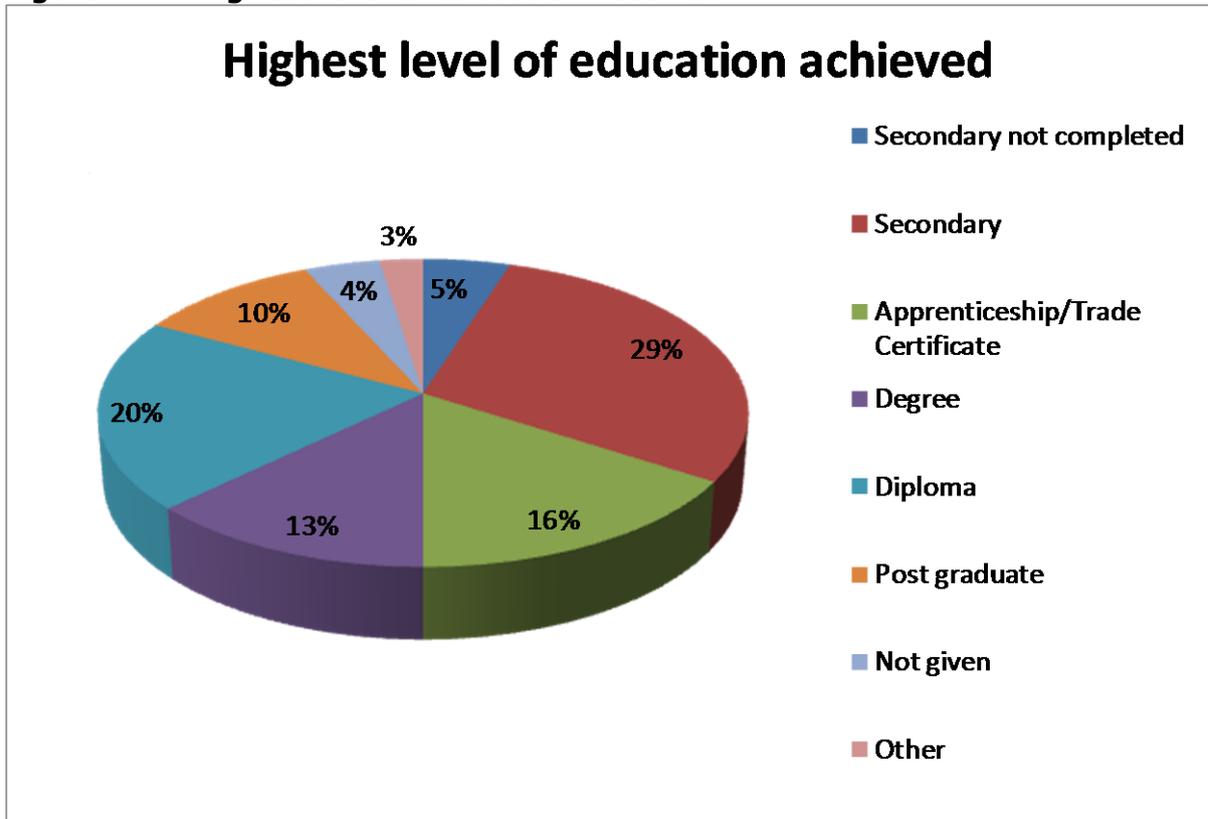


Table 7.1 – What is the highest level of education you have received?

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Secondary not completed	8	4.9
Secondary	48	29.3
Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate	26	15.9
Degree	21	12.8
Diploma	33	20.1
Post graduate	17	10.4
Not given	7	4.3
Other	4	2.4
Total	164	100.0

Figure 7.2: Highest level of educational attainment by gender

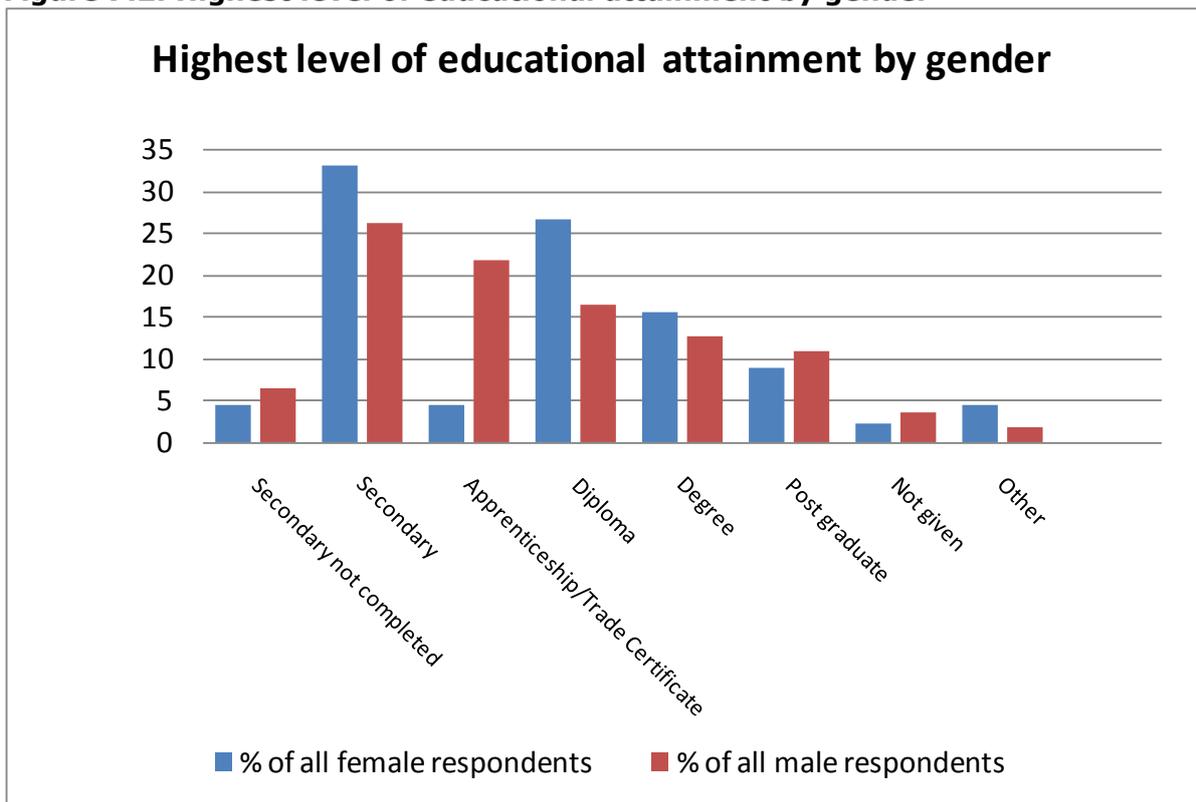
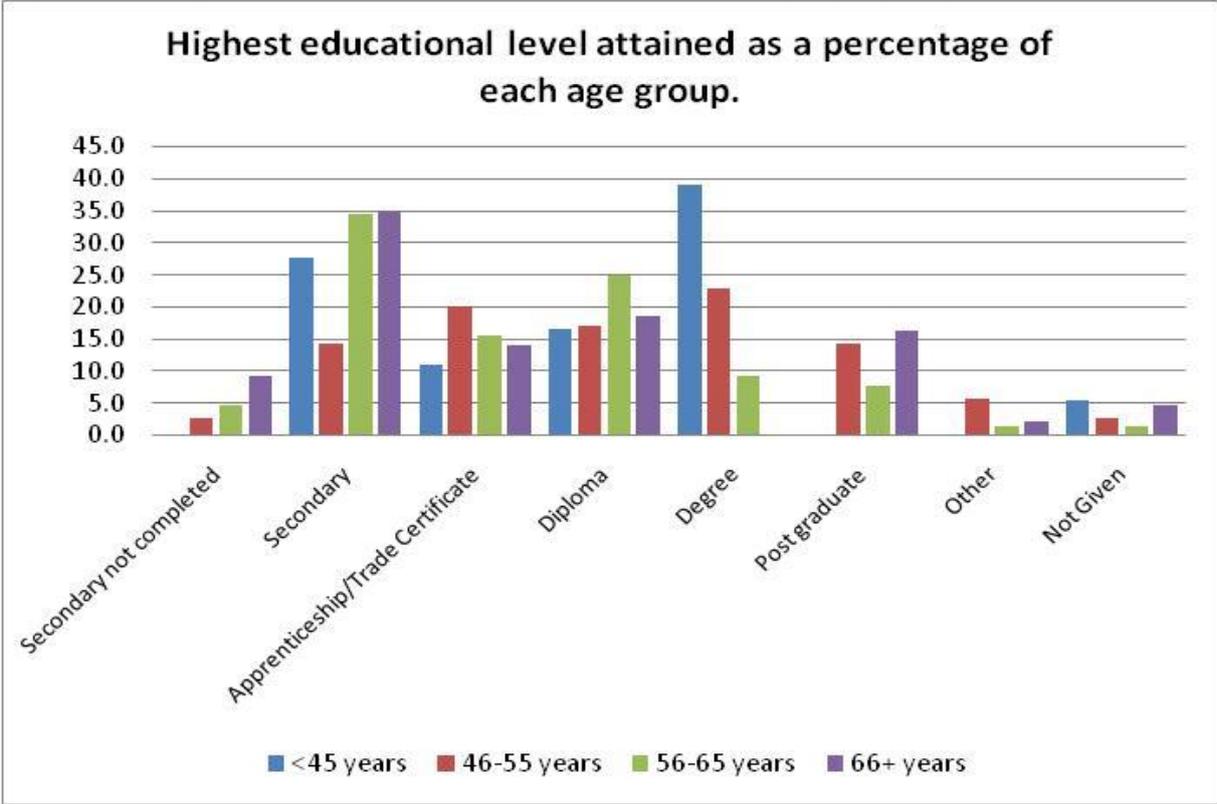


Figure 7.3 Highest level of educational attainment by age group



8. EMPLOYMENT STATUS

As detailed in Table 8.1, 31.7% of respondents were self employed, a further 23.8% were retired. In 2006 the figures were 37.0% and 23.9% respectively. This year respondents were able to indicate whether they were looking after family, this category applied to 3%.

Table 8.2 and Figure 8.1 indicate the employment status of respondents by gender. Most males were self employed or in full time paid employment. The proportion of males and females in full time paid employment was the same (20%). There was a similar proportion of males and females who were retired. No males indicated they were looking after family and no females indicated they were permanently sick/disabled.

As illustrated in Figure 8.2, the proportion of respondents in full time paid work, part time paid work and self-employed work was similar across all council sizes. City councils had a far smaller proportion of retired respondents.

Table 8.1 – What is your current employment status, excluding your work as an elected member?

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Full time paid employment	32	19.5
Part time paid employment	26	15.9
Self employed	52	31.7
Unemployed	1	0.6
Retired	39	23.8
Permanently sick or disabled and unable to work	2	1.2
Looking after family	5	3.0
In full time education	1	0.6
Other	3	1.8
Not given	3	1.8
Total	164	100

Table 8.2 – Male/female employment status

	% of all female respondents	% of all male respondents
Full time paid	20.0	20.0
Part time paid	13.3	18.2
Self employed	24.4	33.6
Unemployed	2.2	0.0
Retired	24.4	22.7
Permanently sick/disabled	0.0	1.8
Looking after family	8.9	0.0
Full time education	2.2	0.0
Not working other reason	2.2	1.8

Figure 8.1 – Employment status by gender

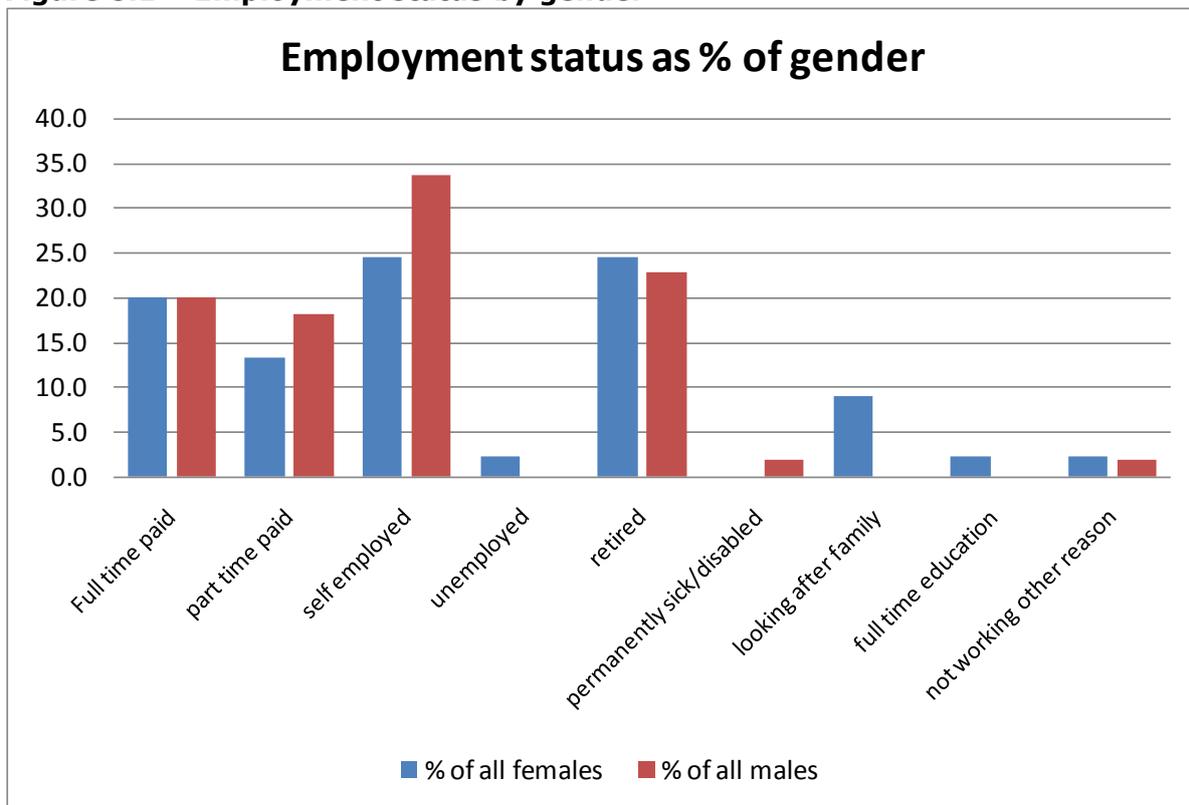
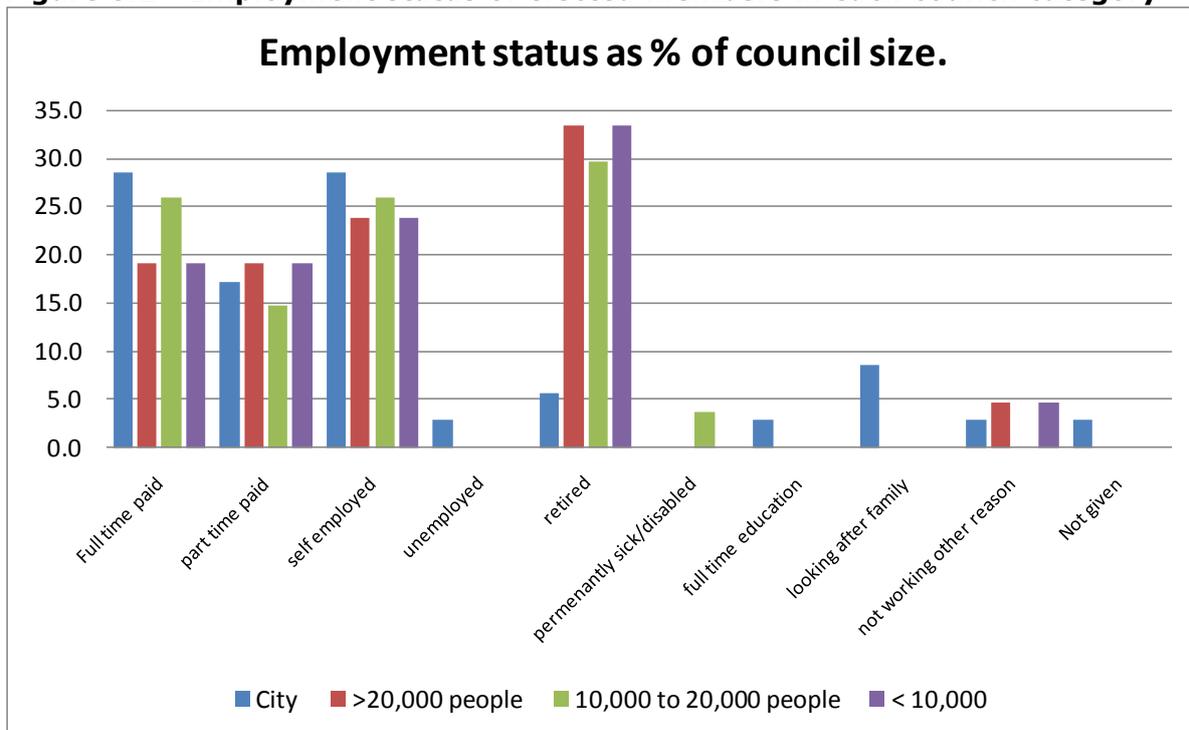


Figure 8.2 - Employment status of elected members in each council category



9. OCCUPATION

Eight respondents indicated they worked across more than one occupation category. For the purposes of this section, each occupation category they listed has been counted (ie the total number across occupation categories is greater than the number of full time, part time and self employed respondents).

Most employed respondents were small business proprietors or in managerial/executive roles. Primary producers and those in professional/technical roles were also common.

Figure 9.1 – Number of respondents by occupation category

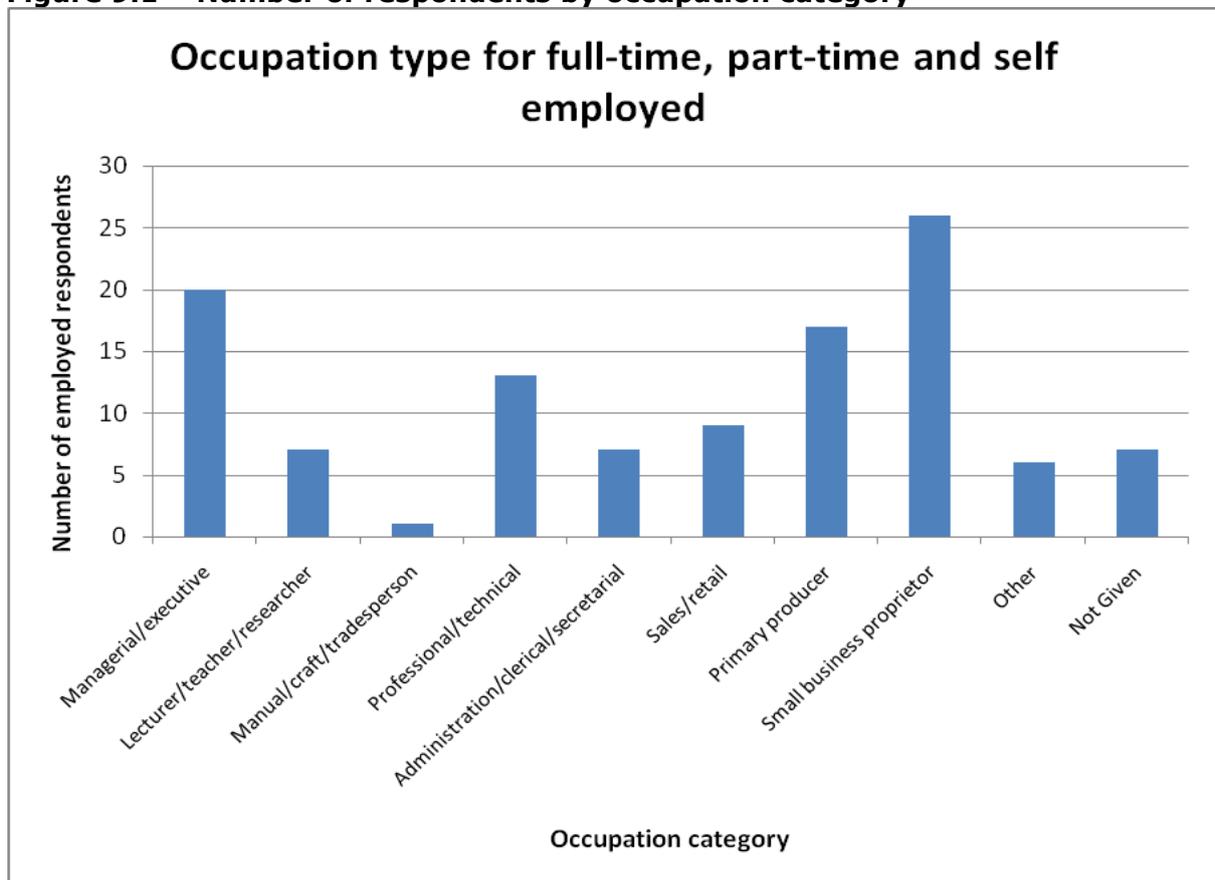


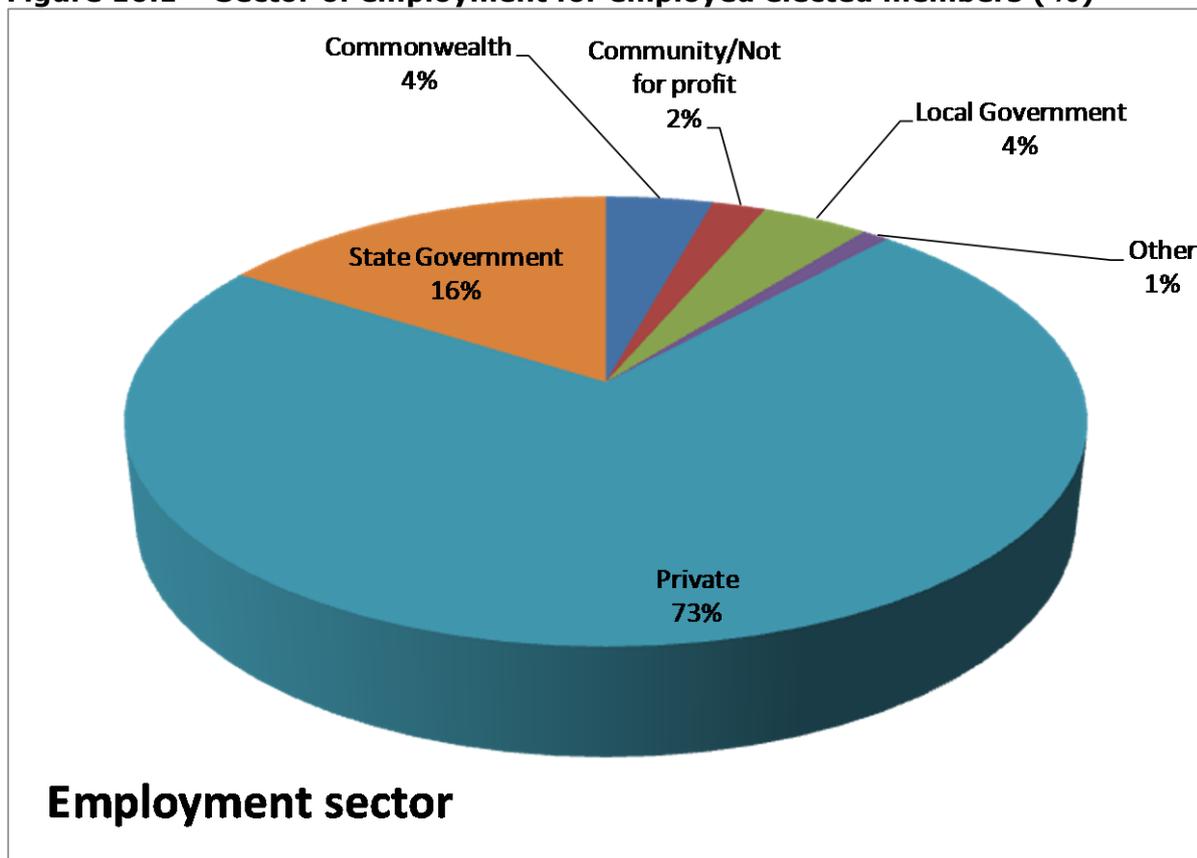
Table 9.1 – Proportion of employed respondents by occupation category

Occupation Category	% of employed respondents
Managerial/executive	19.2
Lecturer/teacher/researcher	6.7
Manual/craft/tradesperson	1.0
Professional/technical	12.5
Administration/clerical/secretarial	6.7
Sales/retail	8.7
Primary producer	16.3
Small business proprietor	25.0
Other	5.8
Not given	6.7

10. EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

Figure 10.1 indicates that the majority (73%) of respondents who undertook paid work were employed in the private sector.

Figure 10.1 – Sector of employment for employed elected members (%)



11. GROSS ANNUAL INCOME

Figure 11.1 and Table 11.1 indicate that 55.5% of respondents report a gross annual income of less than \$56,000, with 7.9% indicating incomes over \$116,000. 12.8 per cent of respondents did not provide income information.

Figure 11.1 – Gross annual income of respondents (%)

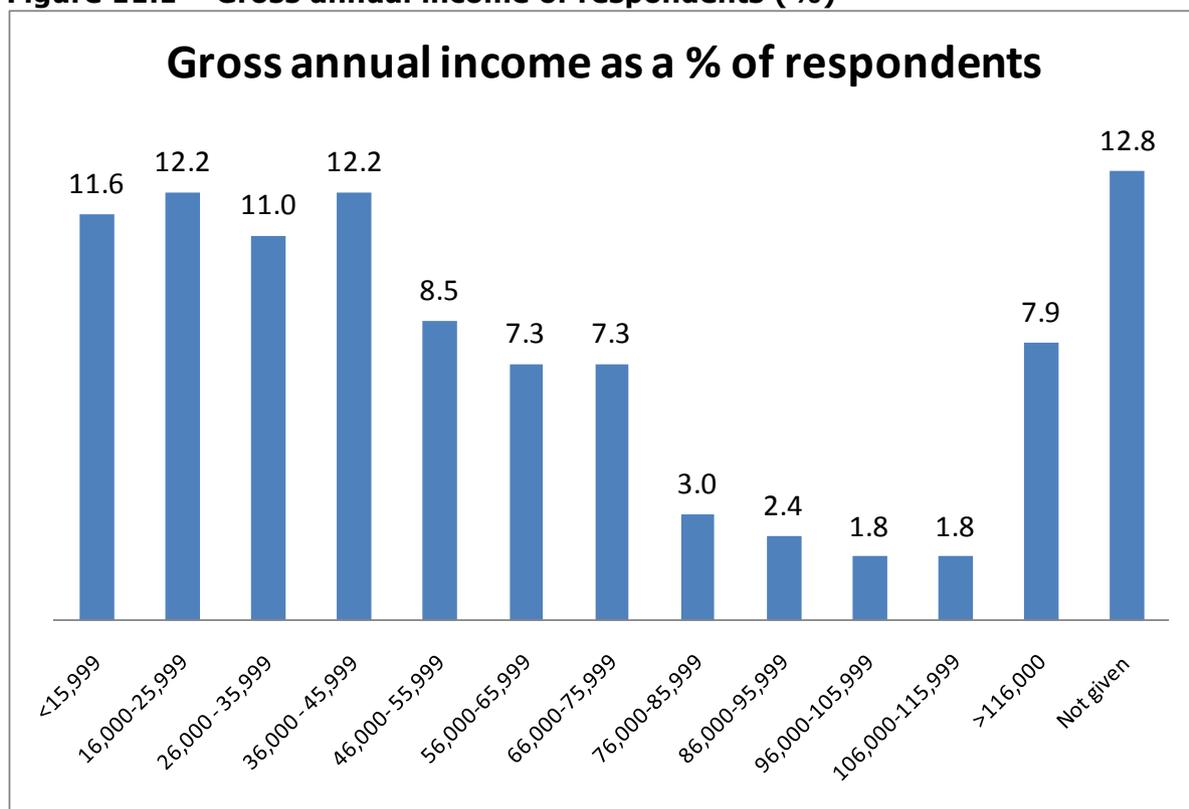


Table 11.1 - Gross annual income of respondents

Gross Annual Income (Range)	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
<15,999	19	11.6
16,000-25,999	20	12.2
26,000 - 35,999	18	11.0
36,000 - 45,999	20	12.2
46,000- 55,999	14	8.5
56,000-65,999	12	7.3
66,000-75,999	12	7.3
76,000-85,999	5	3.0
86,000-95,999	4	2.4
96,000-105,999	3	1.8
106,000-115,999	3	1.8
>116,000	13	7.9
Not given	21	12.8
Total	164	100.0

12. ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP

Table 12.1 indicates that 88.4% of respondents belonged to an organisation other than Council. While most were only a member of one organisation type, many were involved in a number of membership areas (Table 12.2).

Figure 12.1 indicates that of those who belonged to another organisation, 37.8% belonged to a service club, 36% to a sporting organisation, and 32.9% to a special interest organisation.

Table 12.1 - Are you a member of an organisation other than Council?

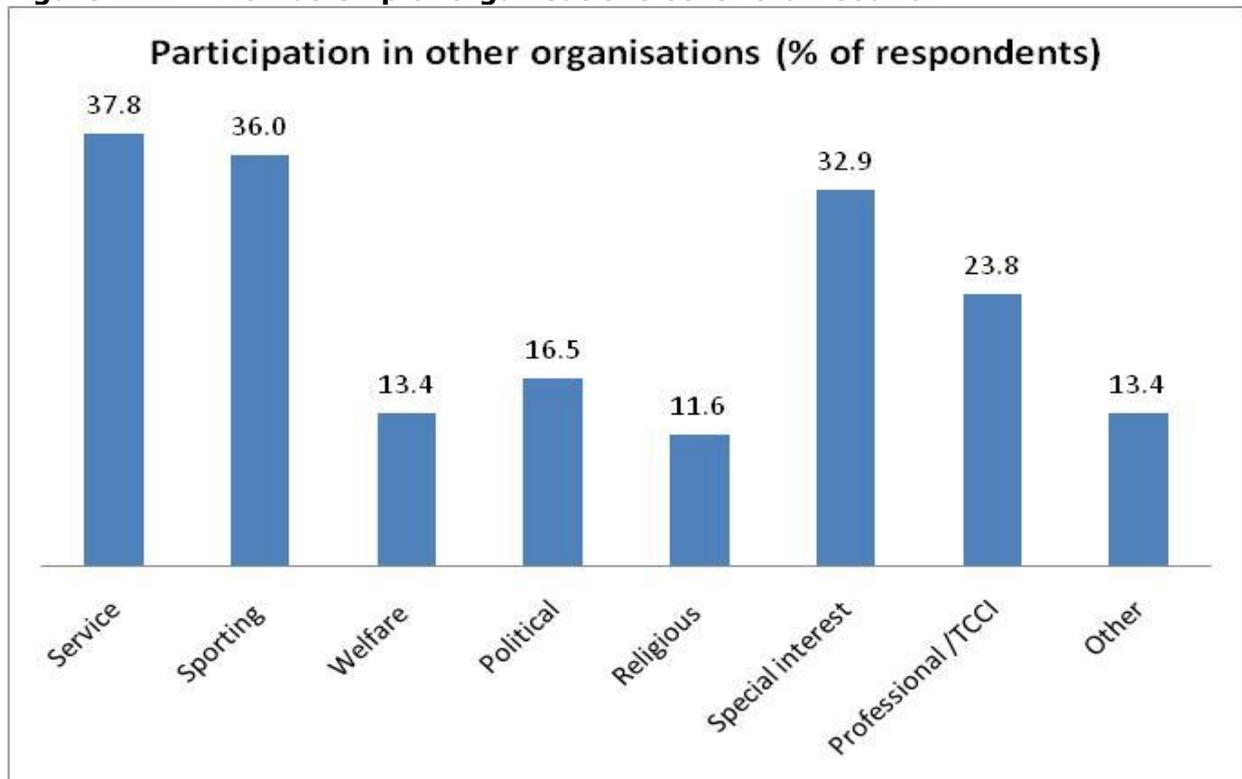
	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	145	88.4
No	19	11.6
Total	164	100

Table 12.2 Number of organisation types of which respondent is a member.

Number of organization types	Number of respondents	% of respondents
0	19	11.6
1	60	36.6
2	40	24.4
3	26	15.8
4	13	7.9
5	4	2.4
7	2	1.2

Note this is not the same as number of organisations. Respondents were asked how many organisations they were a member of, but not all provided this information. However two stated they belonged to more than 7.

Figure 12.1 – Membership of organisations other than Council



13. COUNCIL SERVICE

As Figure 13.1 indicates, 20.7% of respondents had served for a period of 7-9 years. 17.1% had served 10-15 years, and 12.8% were newly elected. A little over 5% of respondents had served more than 25 years on Council.

Most (64%) respondents had had continuous service as an elected member, with 19% stating they had broken service and 17% not responding to this question.

The majority of respondents (44.5%) had served as Alderman/Councillors but 15% had reached the level of Deputy Mayor and 23% the level of Mayor at some point in their service (see Table 13.1).

Men had most commonly served 7-9 years and some male respondents had over 25 years Local Government experience. Women had most commonly served 2-3 years or 10-15 years. None had served more than 25 years (see Figures 13.2 and 13.3).

Table 13.2 and Figure 13.4 show that for small councils (<10,000 people) the majority of respondents had served between 7 and 15 years. This was similar for those councils with between 10,000 and 20,000 people. Respondents from the larger councils, with more than 20,000 people, were most likely to be very long serving (16-25 years) and respondents from city councils were most likely to have served between 4 and 9 years.

Seventeen per cent (17%) of respondents had experienced broken service but 64% had served on council continuously since first elected (see Table 13.3).

As outlined in Table 13.4, 38.4% of respondents had reached Mayor or Deputy Mayor positions at some point in their Local Government career.

Figure 13.1 – Length of service as an elected member

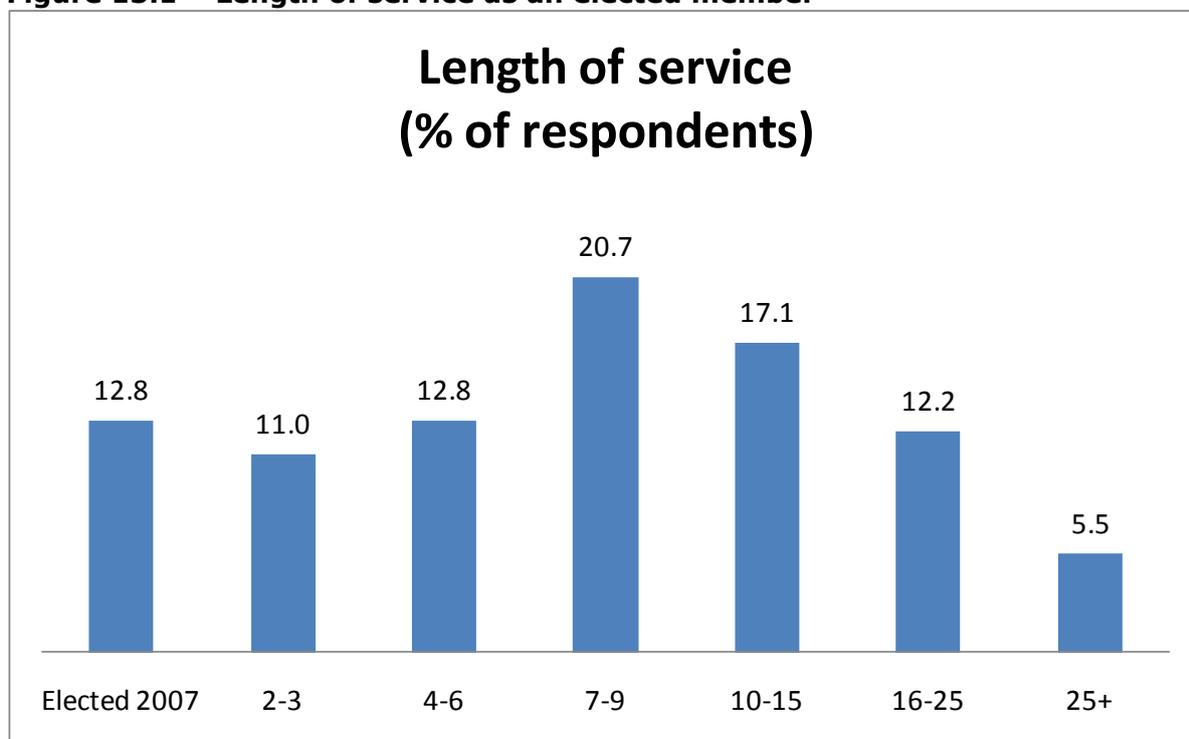


Table 13.1 - Length of service as an elected member

Time on council	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Elected 2007	21	12.8
2-3	18	11.0
4-6	21	12.8
7-9	34	20.7
10-15	28	17.1
16-25	20	12.2
25+	9	5.5
not given	13	7.9
Total	164	100

Figure 13.2 – Length of service – male respondents



Table 13.2 – Length of service by respondents by council category

	% of respondents			
	< 10,000 people	10,000 to 20,000 people	>20000 people	City
Elected 2007	12.50	16.00	15.00	9.38
2-3	15.28	0.00	10.00	15.63
4-6	13.89	8.00	15.00	18.75
7-9	20.83	28.00	15.00	28.13
10-15	23.61	20.00	10.00	12.50
16-25	6.94	16.00	30.00	15.63
25+	6.94	12.00	5.00	0.00

Figure 13.3 – Length of service – female respondents

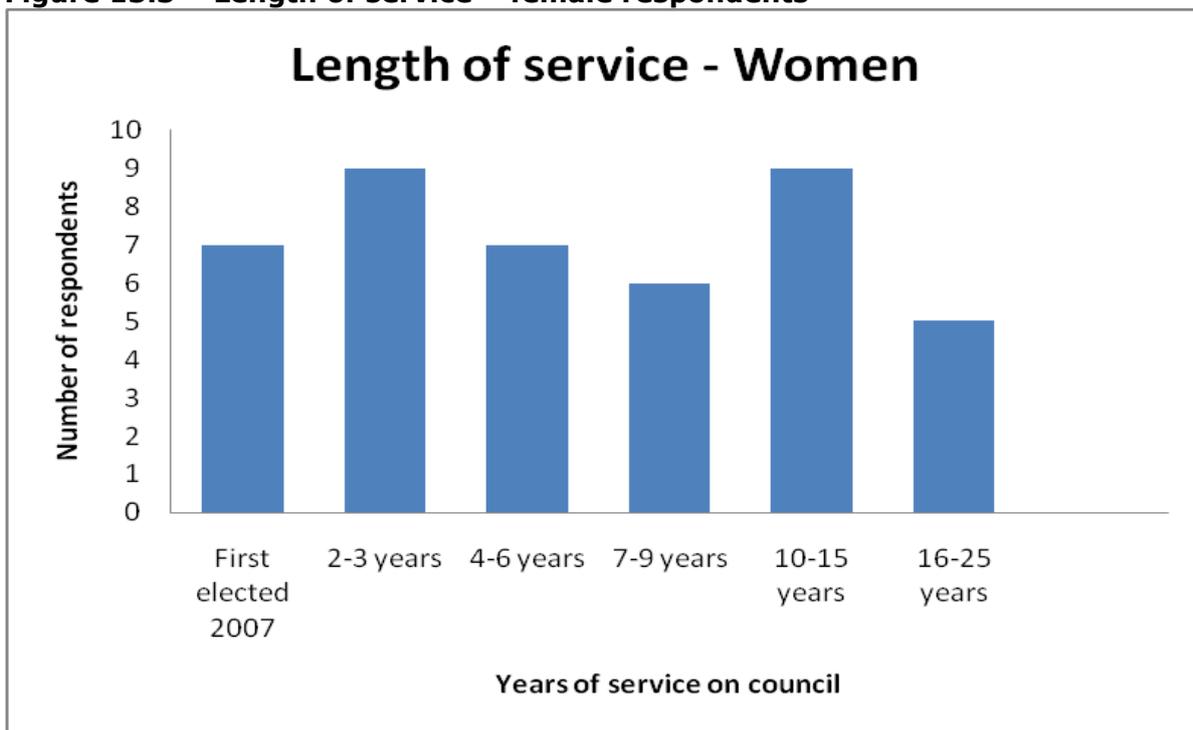


Figure 13.4 – Length of service of respondents by council category

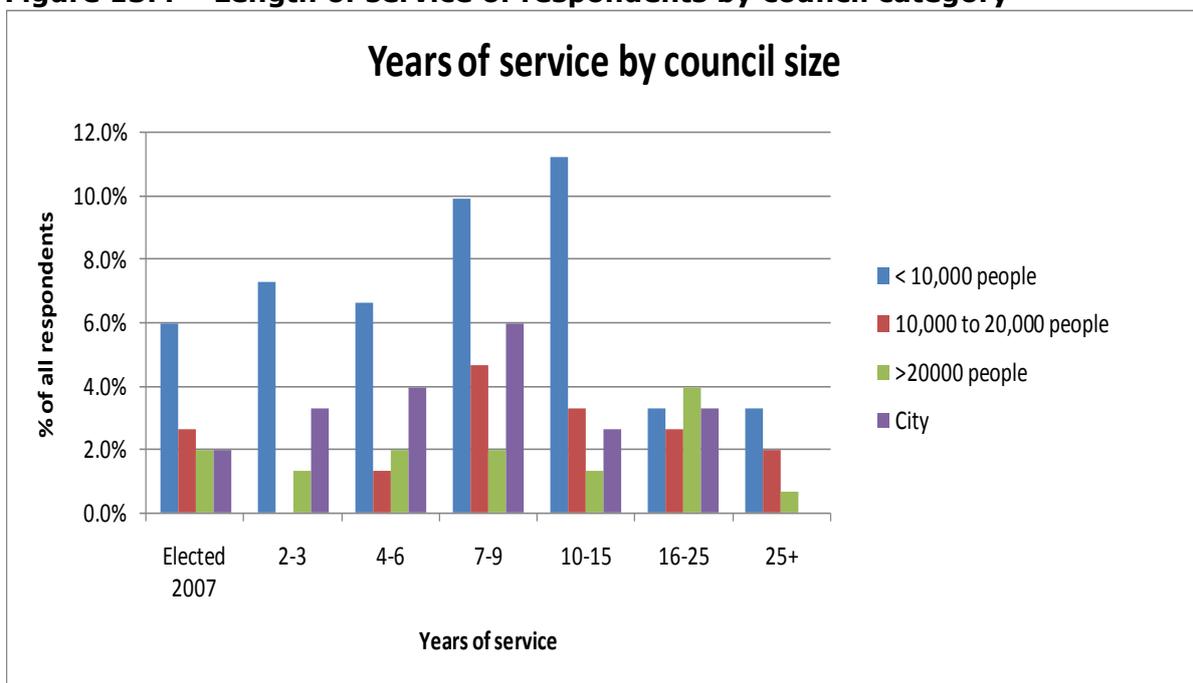


Table 13.3 – Nature of service

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Continuous	105	64
Broken terms	28	17.1
No response	31	18.9
Total	164	100

Table 13.4 – Highest position held since elected

Position on Council	Number of Respondents	% of respondents
Councillor/Alderman	73	44.5
Deputy Mayor	25	15.2
Mayor	38	23.2
Not Given	28	17.1
Total	164	100

14. CAMPAIGNS

Respondents who were first elected in 2007 were asked to provide some information on campaigning.

The following two tables (14.1 and 14.2) outline the nature of the campaign period for the 29 newly elected members who responded to the survey.

The majority (28.6%) of respondents spent 11-20 hours on their campaign, with 14.3% spending 41-60 hours. Most respondent's campaigns ran for between 1 and 4 weeks (52.4%).

Table 14.1 shows how many hours in total were spent on conducting individual election campaigns. Table 14.2 shows the overall duration in weeks of individual election campaigns.

Most new members identified existing councillors and friends, business reasons and specific issues as the reasons they first got interested in Local Government. However respondents, both newly elected and longer serving, also detailed a range of other reasons they first got interested in standing for Council. Some of these include:

- The parlous of State Government in terms of financial problems.
- Long background in governance issues.
- Believed I had something to offer community.
- Wanted to address building issues.
- Addressing community disunity.
- Family tradition.
- Desire to contribute.
- Felt the current Council was out of step with the community.
- Worried about quality of Council/staff.
- Political interests.
- Asked to stand (friends, current members, Australian Local Government Women's Association, current staff).
- Environmental reasons.
- To promote economic development.
- Concern for the future of our children.
- Desire for more young women to be represented.
- Social justice/community consultation issues.
- Other community activity.
- Local development impacts.

Thirteen (13) of the respondents who were elected in 2007 had stood for election only the once (i.e. 62%), three (3) had been elected on their second attempt.

Table 14.1 – Hours spent on election campaign

Hours Campaigning	Respondents first elected in 2007	
	No of respondents	% respondents first
0	2	9.5
1 to 10	3	14.3
11 to 20	6	28.6
21 to 40	2	9.5
41 to 60	3	14.3
61 to 100	1	4.8
101 to 150	2	9.5
Not Given	2	9.5

Table 14.2 - What was the duration of your electoral campaign period?

Duration of Campaign	Respondents first elected in 2007	
	Number of respondents	% of respondents
0 weeks	2	9.5
1-4 weeks	11	52.4
5-6 weeks	5	23.8
7-12 weeks	1	4.8
Not given	2	9.5

15. PUBLIC CONTACT/COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Figure 15.1 and Table 15.1 indicate the average level of contact respondents had with individual members of the public with a majority of respondents estimating an average 11 to 20 hours of contact monthly.

Figure 15.2 indicates the average hours per week that respondents spent on Council activities. There appears to be a relatively large workload for elected members with 28% spending on average 11-15 hours per week on Council activities and 39% spending more than 15 hours a week on Council activities.

As can be seen in Figure 15.3 and Table 15.2, female respondents were more likely to report they spent more than 15 hours a week on Council work than male respondents. A greater proportion of respondents from city councils and small councils spend longer hours (15+) on Council activities (Table 15.3).

Just over 85% of respondents stated they participated on a council committee with most spending between 1 and 5 hours on committee work (Figure 15.4).

Figure 15.1 - Average contact per month with individual members of the public

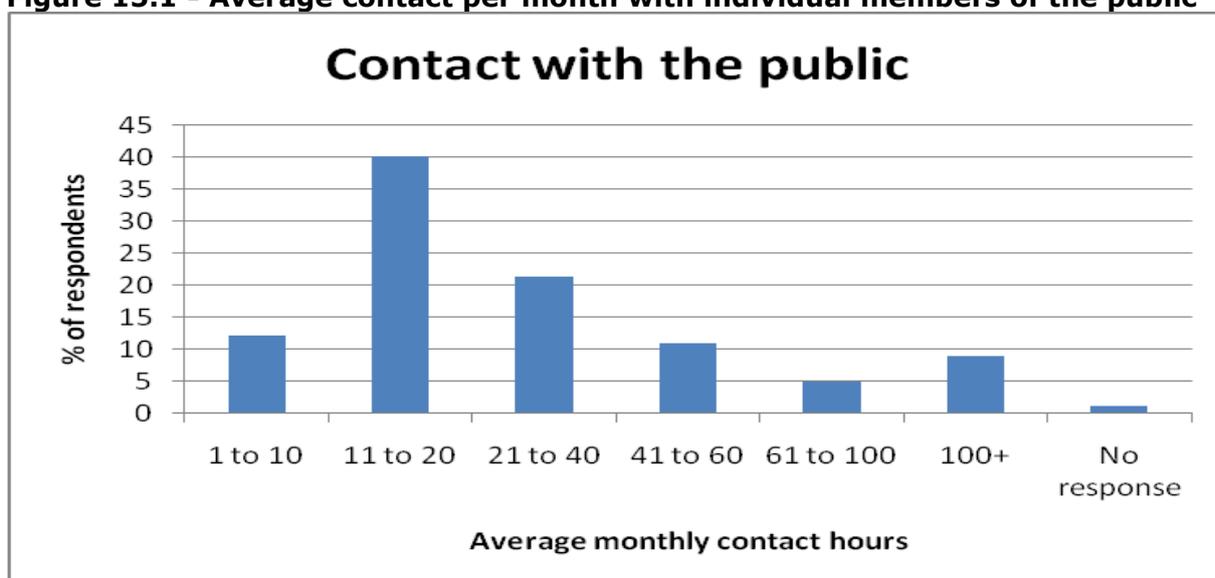


Table 15.1 – Average contact per month with individual members of the public on average per month

Average monthly contact hours	Number of respondents	% of respondents.
0	0	0
1-10	20	12.2
11-20	66	40.2
21-40	35	21.3
41-60	18	11.0
61-100	8	4.9
100+	15	9.1
No response	2	1.2
Total	164	100

Figure 15.2 – Average hours spent on Council activities per week

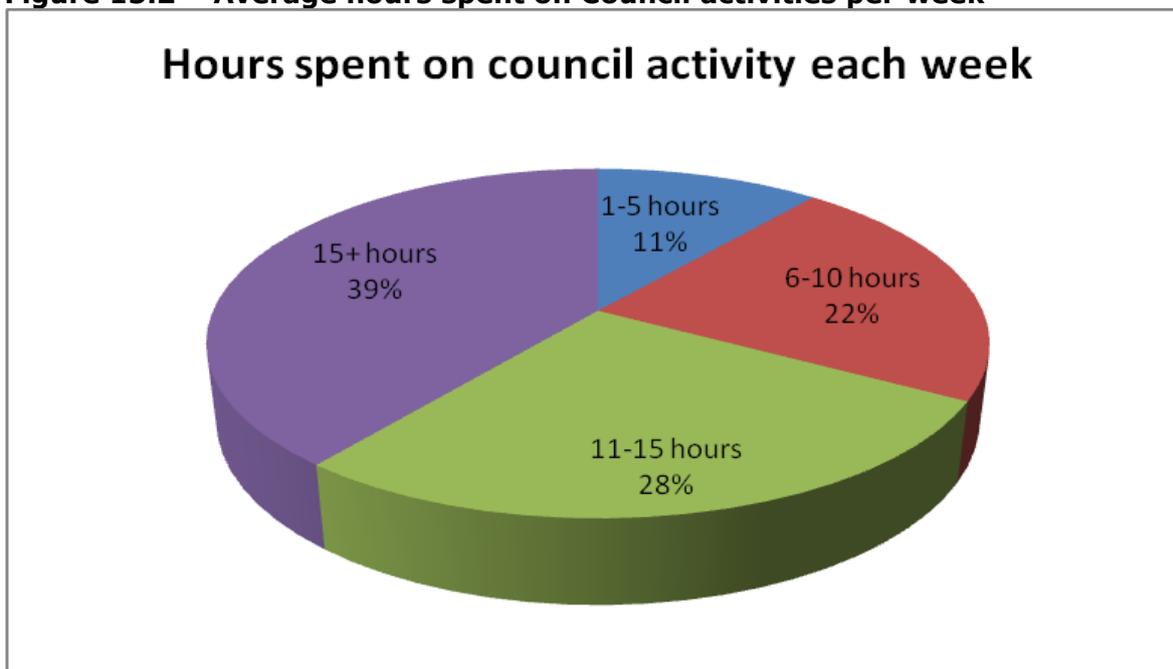


Figure 15.3 – Average hours spent on Council activities per week by gender

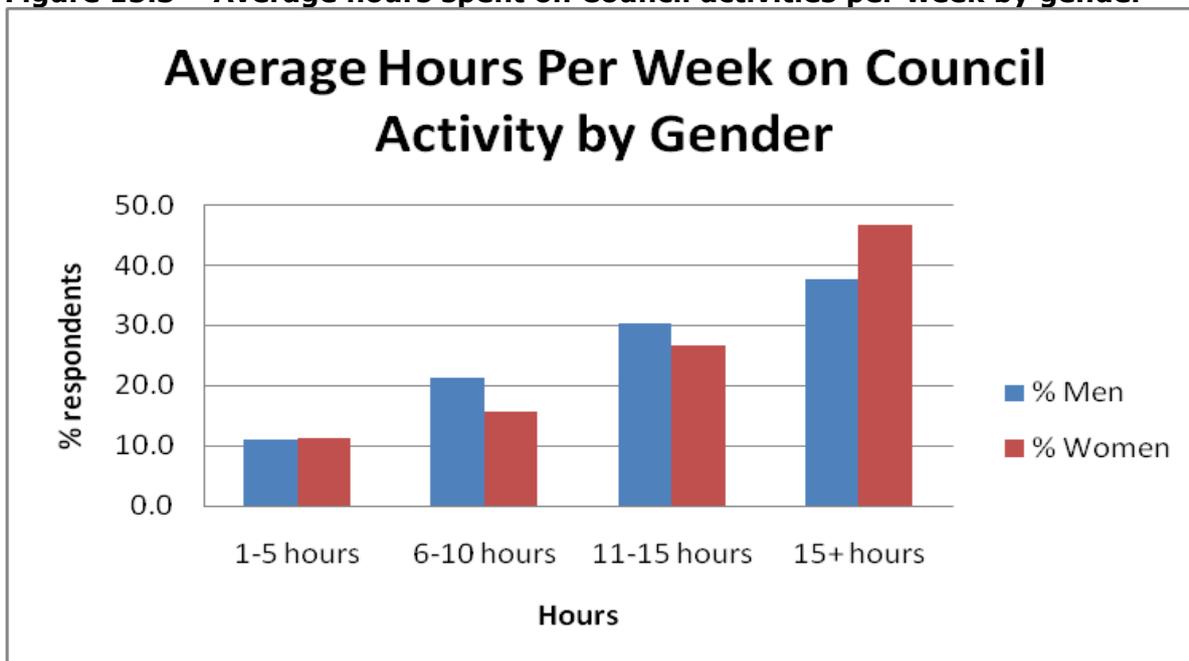


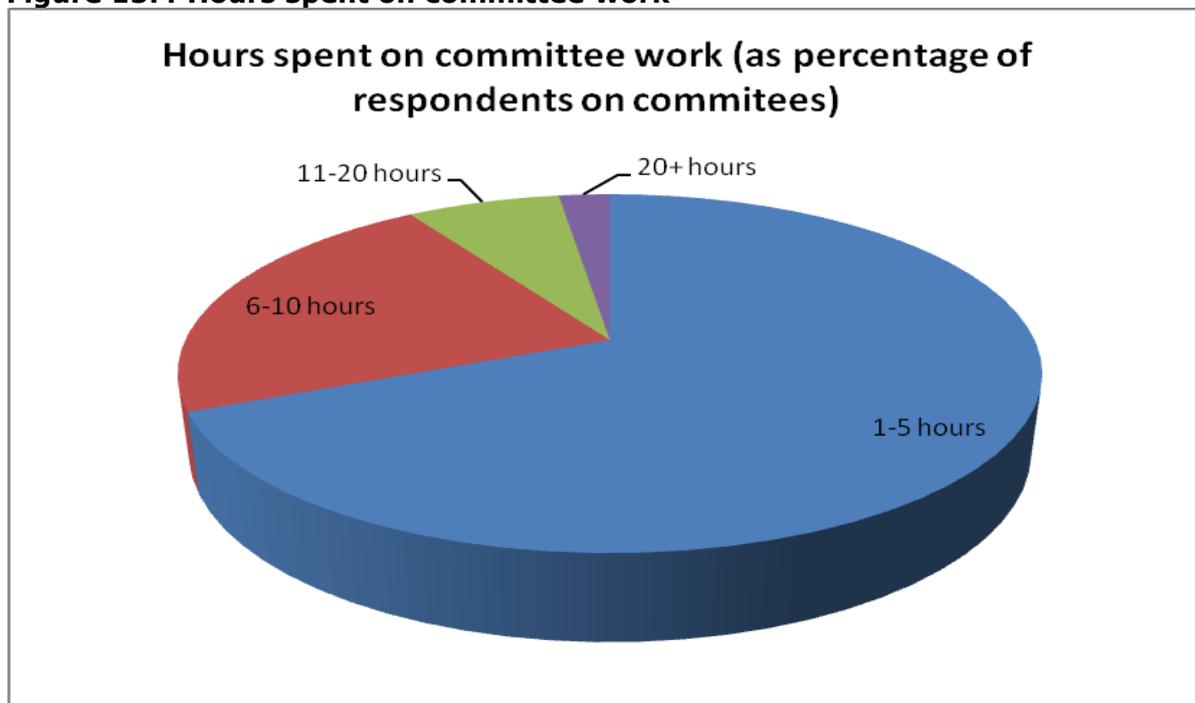
Table 15.2 - Average hours spent on Council activities per week by gender

	% male respondents	% female respondents
1-5 hours	11.0	11.1
6-10 hours	21.1	15.6
11-15 hours	30.3	26.7
15+ hours	37.6	46.7

Table 15.3 - Average hours spent on Council activities per week by council size

	City	>20,000 people	10,000-20,000 people	<10,000 people
% 1-5 hours	0.0	8.6	8.6	31.4
% 6-10 hours	11.4	14.3	20.0	54.3
% 11-15 hours	22.9	8.6	25.7	71.4
% 15+ hours	65.7	28.6	22.9	65.7

Figure 15.4 Hours spent on committee work



16. ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

PUBLIC

Respondents rated planning and development, rates and roads as the issues considered to be of most concern to the public – perhaps not surprisingly - as they rated these three, after financial sustainability, as the issues of most importance to Local Government as well.

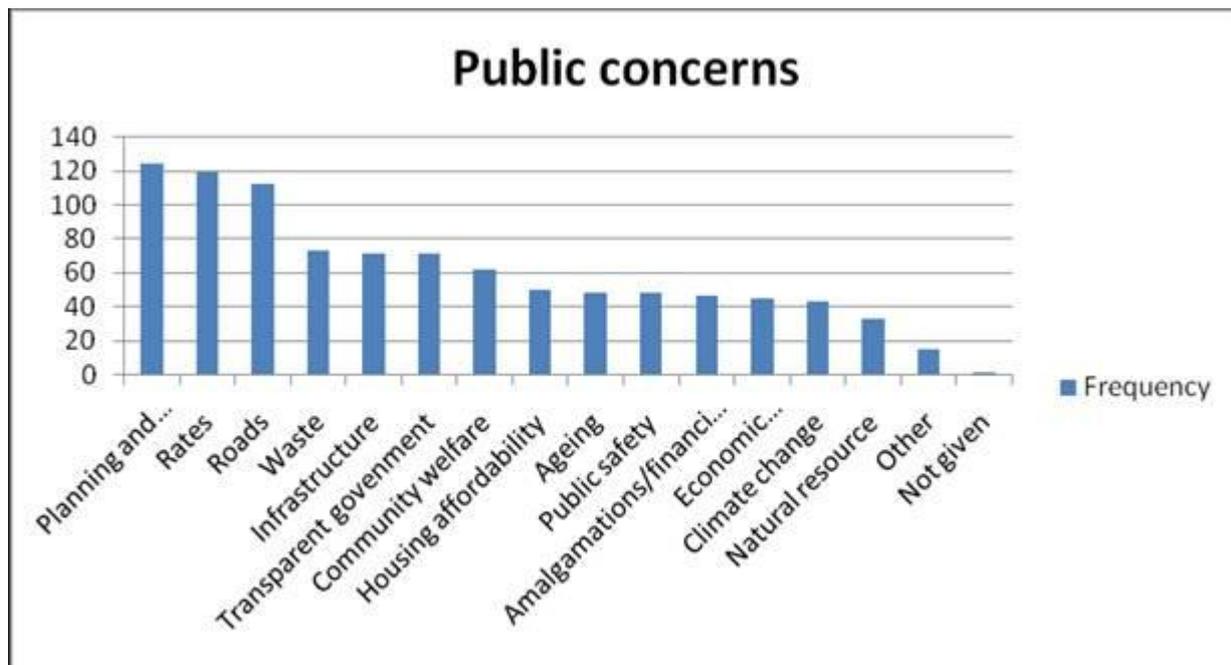
The Statewide Community Satisfaction Survey conducted around the same period as the Elected Member Census identified water and sewerage, waste management, customer services, and roads/footpaths/traffic as the areas of most importance to the residents/ratepayers who were contacted. While there is some overlap (waste/ roads) there is also some disparity that needs further consideration (eg is it a lack of ratepayer awareness of council responsibilities or that councils are not aware of issues of importance to residents?).

A few additional issues were mentioned under the 'other' category; these included: water, animal control, transport, health and wellbeing, tourism (economic development), and communications with councillors and staff (not necessarily considered part of transparent government).

Table 16.1 – Perceived public concerns

Concern	Number of times raised	% of all responses
Planning and development	124	13
Rates	119	12
Roads	112	12
Waste	73	8
Infrastructure	71	7
Transparent government	71	7
Community welfare	62	6
Housing affordability	50	5
Ageing	48	5
Public safety	48	5
Amalgamations/financial sustainability	47	5
Economic conditions/employment	45	5
Climate change	43	4
Natural resource	33	3
Other	15	2
Not given	1	0
Total	962	100

Figure 16.2 Perceived public concerns



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Respondents considered 'financial sustainability' to be the most important current issue for Local Government; other high-ranking issues were similar to those rated as of importance to members of the public.

While the 1-4 rating scale allows, in theory, the most important issue to be rated four times more highly than the least important issue, the results did not show such a significant difference, indicating that respondents consider that most of the topics are of some concern. Every topic was rated as very important at least 18 times, whereas financial sustainability was rated very important 72 times.

Twenty-eight 'other' items were included; of these, only transport (three instances) was mentioned more than once.

Table 16.3 ranks from 1 to 4 (1 being most important, 4 being least important) issues that are considered by respondents to be of importance to Local Government in Tasmania. Financial sustainability was identified as the most important issue by 72% of respondents. Other issues of importance were identified as planning and development (61%), and infrastructure (50%). Other issues identified as important are contained in Appendix B.

Table 16.2 – Importance rating of issues

Issue	Rating	Importance (%)
Financial Sustainability	596	8
Planning and development	567	7
Rate Determination	539	7
Roads	519	7
Water and Sewerage Reform	516	7
Asset Management	515	7
Waste Management	511	7
Economic development	509	6
Infrastructure	504	6
Community consultation	503	6
Environmental sustainability	484	6
Skills shortage	483	6
Climate change	417	5
Constitutional recognition	407	5
Demographic Change	386	5
Dog/Cat Control	381	5
		100

Table 16.3 - Issues that are currently important to Local Government

	1 (Most important)	2	3	4 (Least Important)	No Response
Environmental sustainability	39%	44%	8%	1%	8%
Financial sustainability	72%	19%	2%	3%	4%
Waste management	47%	35%	10%	1%	7%
Asset management	30%	51%	10%	3%	6%
Rates	34%	43%	14%	1%	8%
Dog/cat control	10%	34%	36%	11%	9%
Demographic change	10%	35%	33%	10%	12%
Skill shortage	27%	34%	24%	7%	8%
Public safety	29%	44%	13%	6%	8%
Roads	49%	35%	8%	2%	6%
Planning and development	61%	30%	0%	3%	6%
Economic conditions	45%	38%	10%	1%	6%
Infrastructure	50%	39%	3%	2%	6%

17. COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Most respondents are connected to email (86.6%). Of those connected to email, 82% said it was their preferred mode of communication. For those where email was not the preferred communication mode, phone or fax was generally listed.

A combination of email and mail was most commonly how councils communicated with respondents. Email was the one method of communication between councils and elected members for 78.6% of respondents. Mail alone or in combination with other methods was used for 73% of respondents. Fax alone or in combination with other methods was a communication tool for 36% of respondents.

Only 53.6% of respondents stated they receive the fortnightly LGAT newsletter (which is emailed). However, 96% of respondents stated they receive the quarterly LGAT News Magazine (hard copy).

Worryingly, more than 37% of respondents said they have undertaken no training, related to their role on Council, since being elected to Council. For the 62.8% who have undertaken some training, the nature of training is reasonably diverse, ranging from time management and media training to finance and strategic planning (see Appendix C).

Table 17.1 details attendance by respondents at various developmental opportunities.

Table 17.1 Attendance at training events

Event Name	LGAT General Meeting	LGAT Elected Member Workshop	LGAT Annual Local Government Conference	Local Government Division training or workshop
% of respondents who have attended.	56.7	61.6	67.6	40.2

A significant proportion (55%) of respondents experienced difficulties in undertaking training. Figure 17.1 illustrates the primary barriers. Difficulty in getting time off from paid work was most commonly cited, followed by distance and cost. 'Other' reasons given included:

- Owner operator
- Timing/ whole weekends/ other commitments
- No need/ not interested
- Too basic/lacks specificity
- Too many commitments
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of opportunities
- Not paid enough as councillor
- Caring for dependents
- Lack of accredited training
- Disability.

Figure 17.1 Barriers to training



Councillors nominated two hundred and ninety topics for training, in a free text selection. Grouping these into broad categories produces the priorities outlined in Table 17.2 and Figure 17.2 below. Governance, planning and development, budget and finances were most commonly nominated.

Table 17.2 Training Priorities

Topic	Times nominated	% of all responses
Governance	71	24
Planning & development	57	20
Budget & finance	43	15
Communications	28	10
Local Government Act	28	10
Meetings	25	9
Asset management	10	3
Personal development	10	3
Conflict resolution	6	2
Other	5	2
Legal	4	1
Climate change	3	1
	290	100

Figure 17.2 Training Priorities



The top six categories cover almost 90% of the topics, and some would seem to suggest that an increased focus is needed on induction procedures for newly elected members to improve the understanding of their role.

There is a reasonable correlation between the topics suggested for training and the issues that councillors feel are important to their ratepayers, with planning appearing near the top of both lists. There's also a reasonable correlation with issues considered important to Local Government.

Respondents were not asked to distinguish between areas where they require training and areas where they simply need access to information. Consequently, some further investigation may be needed before arranging training sessions. For example, the Local Government Act rated equal fourth most frequent topic, but having a copy readily available in council offices may satisfy at least part of this requirement.

The free format of the question raises the possibility of some ambiguity in the responses. For instance, twenty-six respondents gave as a topic the single word 'Planning'. It is not clear whether they are referring to planning schemes (Council or State), or to setting Council objectives, both of which also appeared frequently.

Any grouping of free-text topics will be to some extent arbitrary, and subject to error and overlap. In this case, the major categories are made up as follows:

- **Governance** includes the roles and responsibilities of elected members, conflicts of interest, teamwork, conduct of committees, ethics and the relationship between elected members and Council staff.
- **Meetings** may be seen as a subset of governance, but was raised often enough to be considered as a topic in its own right. The main issues raised here were meeting protocols and procedures.

- **Planning and development** covers planning schemes (LUPAA gets several mentions), planning authorities, council responsibilities and decision-making, development opportunities and regional planning.
- **Budget and finance** includes financial management and planning, setting budgets and rates, understanding financial reports and sustainability. Although raised as a separate topic, it may be appropriate to consider **Asset management** alongside financial issues.
- Among the topics suggested under **Communications** are public speaking and other personal communications skills, relating to community members, dealing with the media, networking and debating.
- Understanding the **Local Government Act** is clearly important to respondents, as are its relationship to state laws, legal responsibilities of elected members (including declarations of pecuniary interest) and other legislation pertaining to councils.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had copies of a number of key documents. Responses are outlined in Table 16.3 below. Most respondents had a copy of their key council documents (strategic plan, annual plan and code of conduct). Over 90% had a copy of the Local Government Act. Only 51.8% had council policies in a consolidated form suggesting that there may be gap in provision.

Table 16.3 Key documents held by respondents

Document	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Strategic Plan	154	93.9
Annual Plan	152	92.7
Code of Conduct	151	92.1
Local Government Act 1993	148	90.2
Annual Report	147	89.6
Local Government (Meeting) Regulations 2005	129	78.6
The Local Government Association of Tasmania's Councillor Resource Kit	126	76.8
Local Government (General) Regulations 2005	121	73.8
Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993	106	64.6
Consolidated Council policies	85	51.8
No response	5	3

Appendix A – Census Questionnaire (not original format)

Please either ✓ the relevant box or write in the space provided

1. Sex:

- Male Female

2. What type of council do you represent?

- City
 Population greater than 20,000
 Population of 10,000-20,000
 Population less than 10,000

3. Age:

- Below 25 years old
 26-35 years old
 36-45 years old
 46-55 years old
 56-65 years old
 66-75 years old
 Above 76 years old

4. Marital status:

- Never married
 Married/De Facto
 Separated/Divorced
 Widowed
 Other

5. Do you have caring responsibilities for children and/or dependents?

(Please ✓ all relevant boxes and circle the appropriate number in each category)

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children aged 0-4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children aged 5-10 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children aged 11-16 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children aged 16 – 25 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other dependents
eg. Elderly or disabled | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No dependents | | | | |

6. Were you born in Australia?

- Yes No

If NO, please specify country of birth

7. Where were your parents born?

Father

- Australia
 Overseas

Mother

- Australia
 Overseas

8. Are you an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander?

- Yes No

9. Is English your first language?

- Yes No

If no, what is your first language?

.....

10. Do you have a disability? If yes please continue. If no, please go to question 12.

- Yes No

11. Does your Council adequately accommodate any disability related support needs that you have?

- Yes No

12. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

- Post graduate degree
 Bachelor degree
 Diploma
 Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate
 Secondary education
 Did not complete secondary education
 Other, please specify

13. What is your current employment status, excluding work as an elected member?

- Full-time paid employment (more than 30 hours per week)
- Part-time paid employment (less than 30 hours per week)
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Permanently sick or disabled and unable to work
- Not in paid work – looking after home/family
- In full-time education
- Not working for some other reason

14. If you are employed, what is your occupation?

- Managerial/executive
- Lecturer/teacher/researcher
- Manual/craft/tradesperson
- Professional/technical
- Administration/clerical/secretarial
- Sales/retail
- Primary producer
- Small business proprietor
- Volunteer (not remunerated)
- Other, please specify

15. If you are employed, in which sector is your occupation?

- Private sector
- Commonwealth Government
- State Government
- Local Government
- Community sector/non-government
- Not employed

16. What is your gross annual income?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$15,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$66,000 – \$75,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$16,000 - \$25,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$76,000 – \$85,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$26,000 – \$35,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$86,000 – \$95,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$36,000 – \$45,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$96,000 – \$105,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$46,000 – \$55,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$106,000- \$115,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$56,000 – \$65,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> more than \$115,000 |

17. a. Are you a member of an organisation (other than Council)?

- Yes
- No

b. If yes, what sort of organisation(s) do you belong to?

- Service club
- Sporting
- Welfare
- Political
- Religious
- Special interest
- Professional Association/Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce

- Other, please specify

c. How many 'other' organisations do you currently belong to?.....

18. a. How long have you served Council as an elected member?

- Newly elected - **please go to question 19.**
- 2-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10-15 years
- 16-25 years
- 25+ years

b. What is the nature of your service as an elected member?

- Continuous
- Broken Terms

c. What is the highest position you have held as an elected member?

- Councillor/alderman
- Deputy Mayor
- Mayor

If you did not face election in 2007 please go to Question 20

19. ONLY FOR MEMBERS ELECTED IN 2007.

a. Approximately, how many hours did you spend on your election campaign?

- 0
- 1 – 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 60
- 61 - 100
- 101 - 150
- 150+

b. What was the duration of your electoral campaign period?

- 0 weeks
- 1 – 4 weeks
- 5 – 6 weeks
- 7 –12 weeks
- 13 – 50 weeks

c. What first aroused your interest in becoming a councillor? Please ✓ as many as are applicable:

- Family tradition
- Friends
- Business reasons
- Official recruitment campaign
- Existing councillors
- An organisation, please specify.....
- A specific issue, please specify.....
- Other, please specify.....

d. How many times have you stood for election?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

Please go to Question 20.



Question 20 onwards to be completed by all elected members.

20. What is your average contact with individual members of the public on council matters per month?

- 0 people
- 1 – 10 people
- 11 – 20 people
- 21 – 40 people
- 41 – 60 people
- 61 – 100 people
- 100+ people

21a. On average, how many hours per week do you currently spend on Council activities?

- 1-5 hours
- 6-10 hours
- 11-15 hours
- over 15 hours

21b. Do you currently sit on a Council Committee?

- Yes
- No

If yes, approximately how many hours per week do you spend on Committee work?

.....

22. Are you connected to email?

- Yes
- No

If yes, do you use email or do you prefer other means of communication?

- Use email
- Other communication preferred (please specify).....

23. How does your council communicate with you? Please ✓ as many as are applicable:

- By email
- By facsimile
- By mail
- Other

24. Do you receive the LGAT Newsletter (fortnightly by email)?

- Yes
- No

25. Do you receive the LGAT News Magazine (quarterly, hard copy)?

- Yes
- No

26. Since becoming a councillor, have you undertaken any training specifically related to your role as a councillor?

- Yes No

If 'yes', please name:.....

27. Have you attended any of the following?

- LGAT General Meeting
- LGAT Elected Member Workshop
- LGAT Annual Local Government Conference.
- Local Government Division training or workshop.

28. What factors, if any, make it difficult to undertake training?

- Cannot get time off from paid employment
- Cannot get child care
- Too far away
- Transport issues
- Cost
- Lack of support from Council
- Learning difficulties

Other (please specify).....

29. What are the most important topics for which training and/or information should be available to elected members?

Topic 1:.....

Topic 2:.....

Topic 3:.....

30. In your experience, what are the major concerns of the public?

- Planning and development
- Climate Change
- Roads
- Waste management
- Community welfare
- Public safety
- Infrastructure
- Natural Resource Management
- Rates
- Amalgamations/financial sustainability
- Ageing population
- Economic conditions/employment
- Housing affordability
- Transparent government (including at local level)

Other (please specify)

31. What issues do you consider are currently important to Local Government in Tasmania?

- 1.....unimportant
- 2.....not very important
- 3.....important
- 4.....very important

Environmental sustainability	1	2	3	4
Financial sustainability	1	2	3	4
Asset management	1	2	3	4
Waste management	1	2	3	4
Rate determination	1	2	3	4
Dog/cat control	1	2	3	4
Demographic change	1	2	3	4
Skill shortage	1	2	3	4
Climate Change	1	2	3	4
Roads	1	2	3	4
Water and sewerage reform	1	2	3	4
Planning and development	1	2	3	4
Economic development	1	2	3	4
Infrastructure	1	2	3	4
Constitutional Recognition	1	2	3	4
Community Consultation	1	2	3	4
Other, please specify				
.....	1	2	3	4
.....	1	2	3	4

32. Do you have a copy of the following? Please ✓ as many as are applicable:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulations 2005
- Local Government (Meeting) Regulations 2005
- Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993
- The Local Government Association of Tasmania's Councillor Resource Kit
- Your Council's:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Strategic Plan
 - Annual Plan
 - Annual Report
 - Consolidated Policies

Appendix B – Other Issues of Importance

Other issues identified as important by respondents included:

- accountability to community consultation
- health facilities
- ethical standards
- conserving neighbourhood integrity
- broadening the outlook of elected members
- increasing state control
- MIS distorting rural economics
- Staff/councilor dynamics
- transport
- global financial changes
- community development
- resource sharing
- mortgage stress
- road safety

Appendix C – Training Undertaken

Training undertaken by respondents includes:

- antidiscrimination,
- Australian Local Government course – Canberra (no longer run)
- budgets
- climate change planning
- communication
- Diploma in Local Government (Governance)
- election procedures
- finance
- governance
- induction
- infrastructure management
- IT
- LGAT conference
- LGAT elected member workshops
- LGMA courses
- Local Government Act
- media
- meeting regulations and procedures
- planning and development
- risk management
- strategic planning
- strategic planning
- time management
- water and sewerage workshop
- women in Local Government workshops

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