

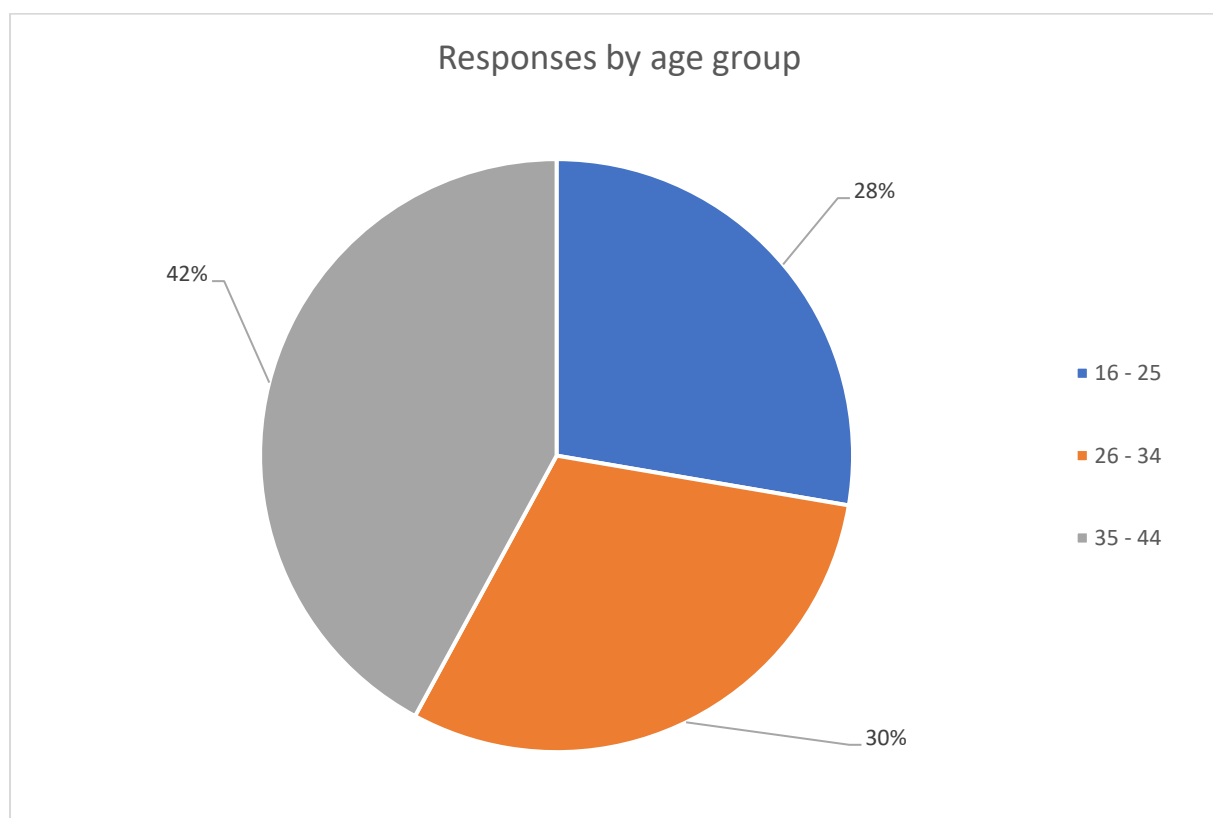
Future of Local Government Review

Report of Survey of Tasmanian's Aged 16 - 44

Introduction

As part of Stage 2 of the Future of Local Government Review (the Review), the Local Government Board (the Board) undertook a targeted engagement process for Tasmanians aged 16 to 44. The Board decided to focus specifically on this group for two main reasons. Firstly, those under 45 have a big stake in the long-term future of local government and, secondly, have been underrepresented in the Board's engagement exercises to date.

The engagement consisted of two surveys (targeted, respectively, to 16 – 25 and 26 – 44 year olds), which ran from Wednesday, 26 October 2022 to Friday, 25 November 2022. 475 completed surveys were submitted, which have been broken down into three main age sub-groups as follows:



Responses were received from across all local government area classifications¹ categories, closely mirroring the total population living within these categories (as shown below).

LGA Category	Total responses (%)	Total Tasmanian population (%) (2021 census)
Urban medium councils (UM)	63	50
Urban small councils (US)	16	20
Rural agricultural very large councils (RAVL)	14	19
Rural agricultural large councils (RAL)	5	8
Rural agricultural, small & medium councils (RASM)	2	3

Engagement Objective and Design

The surveys had two main objectives:

- Firstly, to understand the extent to which Tasmanians aged 16 to 44 engage with and feel like they are represented and listened to by their local councils; and
- Secondly, to hear what Tasmanians aged 16 to 44 believe to be the biggest issues currently facing their local area, as well as what changes may be needed to local councils to help them better respond to and manage these issues.

The surveys were delivered online, with a prize offered to incentivise participation. The findings are an important piece of information to help the Board identify and explore options for how councils can better consider the diverse range of views of their communities and consider what the future role of local government should be so that councils are able to improve the the quality of the services they provide to local communities.

Findings

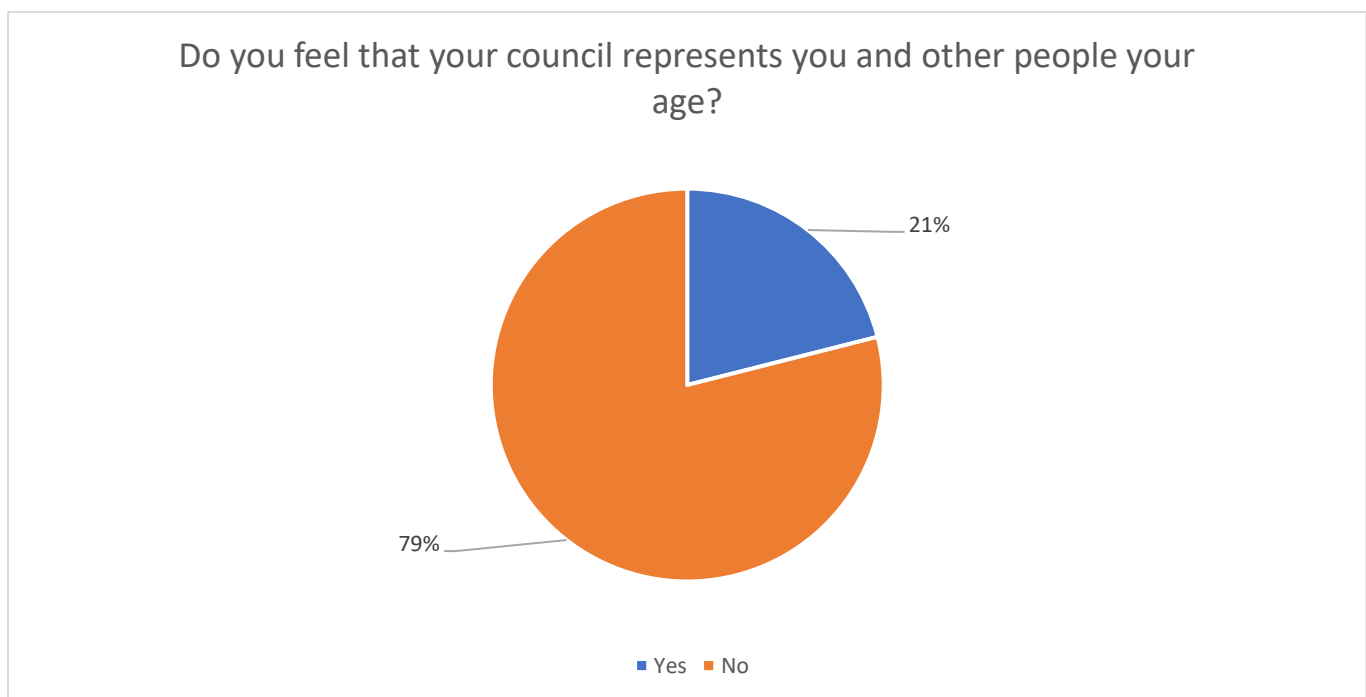
Key findings from the surveys are summarised below. Appendices 1 and 2 contain the questions for each survey.

¹ [Council Data – Future of Local Government Review](#)

Representation

79% of respondents indicated that they feel like their council does not represent them or other people their age (see below). Similarly, 67% of respondents answered that they feel their council does not provide the opportunity to have their say on local issues and decisions which impact them.

The most common reason cited for this was that the demographics of elected representatives are, in most cases, significantly older than most respondents. A perceived outcome of this, as indicated through responses, is that council services, functions and general engagement is directed predominately towards older (and wealthier) Tasmanians. Overall, there is strong sentiment that councils, by and large, serve a narrow set of interests in their community, which excludes the needs and concerns of those under 45.



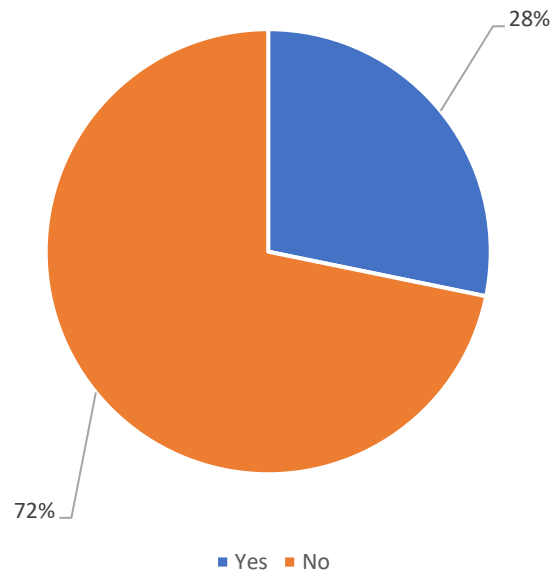
Of the 21% who indicated they feel represented by their local council, 57% were aged 35-44 and were located predominately in Urban Local Government Areas. These respondents cited the recent election of councillors close to their age as reasons for feeling represented by their council. The younger respondents who feel represented were more likely to be actively engaged with their council through participation in youth councils or other youth engagement activities.

There was also a small number of responses which identified that having elected representatives of a similar age has no bearing on whether they feel represented by their council. Often, these responses noted better gender diversity as a reason for feeling like their council represents them.

Careers in local government

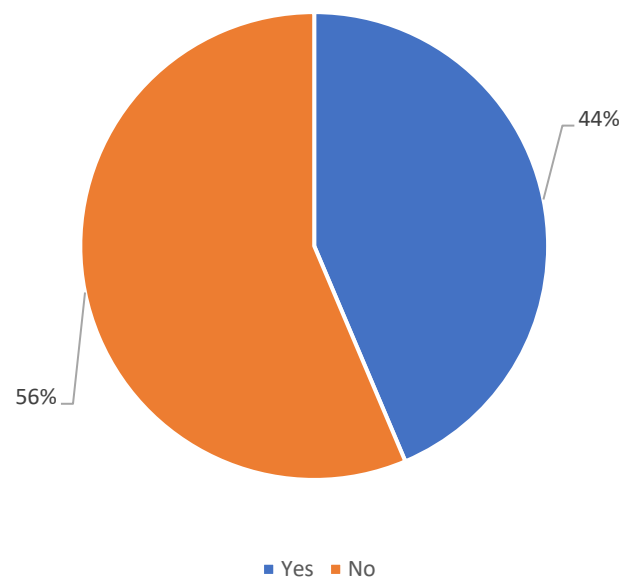
72% of respondents indicated that they had never thought about being a councillor. Reasons indicate a broad perception of poor culture, including bullying and infighting, and pursuit of self interest by elected representatives. Other responses simply noted that the remuneration and work expectations are not worth the time investment.

Have you ever thought about being a councillor?



On the other hand, when asked if they had considered a career in local government, a higher percentage of people, 44%, answered 'yes'. Many of these responses noted that a career in council presents an opportunity to work closely with, and to give something back to, their communities. Many responses indicate that as opposed to being a councillor, many people perceive working for their council as meaningful, impactful work.

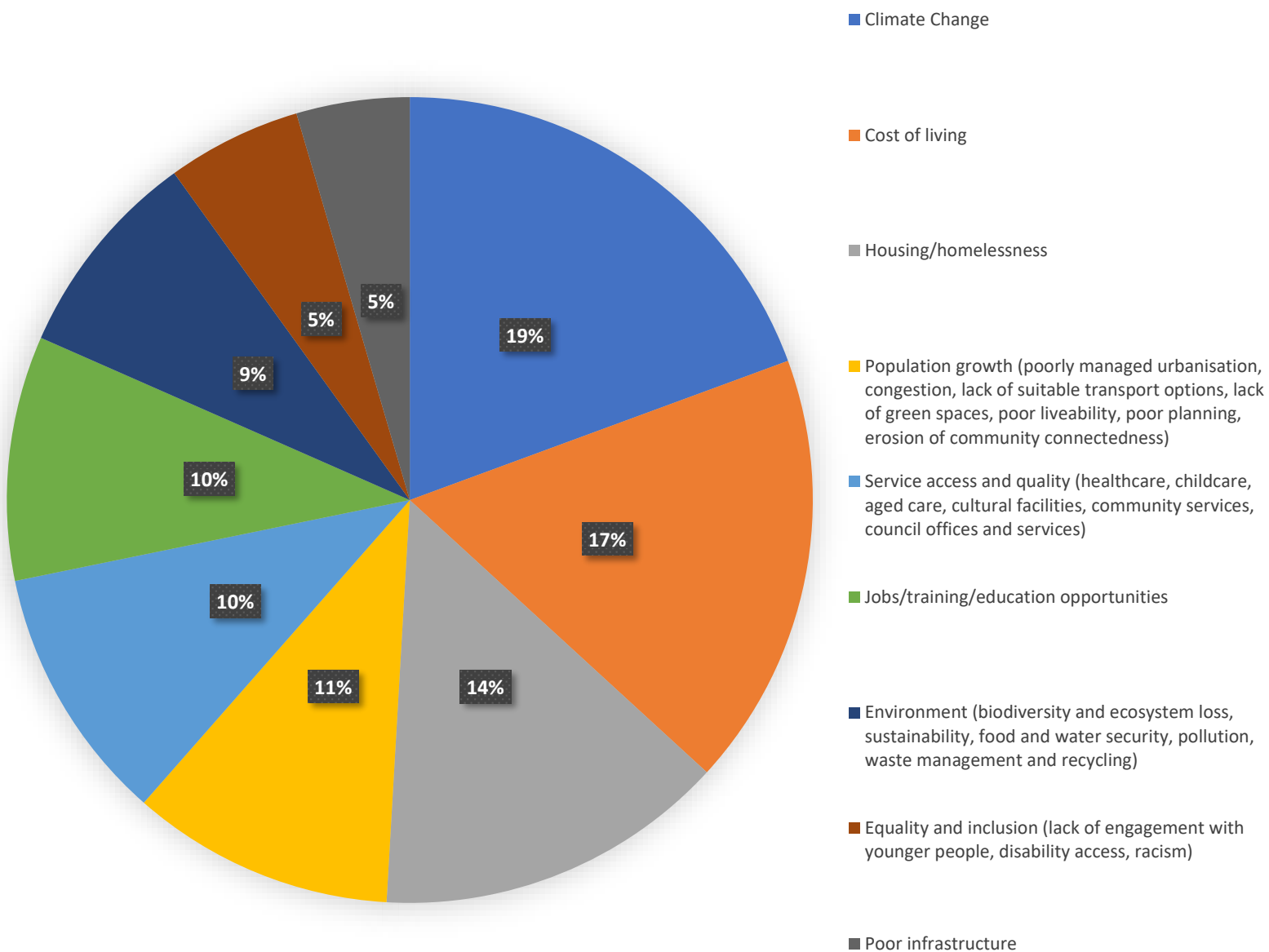
Have you ever thought about a career in local government?



Concerns for the future and the role of local government.

Respondents concerns for the future of their local area fell broadly into nine categories:

Biggest concerns for the future



Most concerns were spread evenly across all age groups, with climate change (19%), cost of living (17%) and housing/homelessness (14%) the most common answers.

Across age groups, a range of issues were identified relating to poorly-managed population growth (11%). These primarily involved the negative impacts of poorly planned urban sprawl (in metropolitan LGAs) and

greenfield development (in smaller LGAs) on liveability. Specific issues included a lack of transport options, services, green spaces, canopy coverage, and erosion of community connectedness resulting from poorly planned urbanisation. Transport was a key concern, frequently cited through a lack of access to buses and alternative measures, as well as through councils' perceived inability or unwillingness to provide alternative transport options to cars, such as bike lanes or footpaths.

Those from rural areas were more likely to identify access to essential services, including transport and health, as well as education and job opportunities for them and their families, as their biggest concerns for the future.

Those over 30 were more likely to identify poor or absent infrastructure as an issue for the future of their local area - particularly roads and transport infrastructure, stormwater, channels and "green" infrastructure (e.g. parks, EV chargers). There was also a concern expressed by a number of respondents that local infrastructure is currently not 'future proofed' from the impacts of climate change (e.g. natural disasters, the 'urban heat island effect', rising sea levels).

What role do you think local government should play to address these concerns?

Broadly, there is a consensus that councils should more effectively engage with, and listen to their communities to identify local issues, enabling them to tailor appropriate service delivery and/or advocate for services and action on issues from other levels of government.

Many submissions also identified that councils, through local leadership and policy actions, can support and facilitate individual behaviours which support environmental sustainability. Examples include supporting community gardens, and providing FOGO and recycling options (and education).

A few responses, particularly across LGAs in the Greater Hobart region, also identified a key role for councils in collaborating with each other to provide efficient and cost-effective services.

Whats next?

The Local Government Board released a discussion paper for public consultation, detailing a series of draft reform options. Those who participated in this engagement process were invited to make a submission on the draft options paper, and invited to attend one of 10 community meetings across the State. These participants will also be invited to participate in other engagement activities as the Review progresses.

Appendix 1 – Future of Local Government Survey for Tasmanians aged 16 – 25

Have your say on the future of local government

The Tasmanian Government has launched a review of local government, to make sure our councils are set up for all the challenges the future may bring.

Even though we live in a global world, we still need local knowledge and local solutions to deal with many of the challenges we face as a community. Local councils support communities in dealing with these challenges.

Objective

Through this survey we want to understand the extent to which Tasmanian's aged 16 to 25 engage with and feel like they are represented and listened to by their local councils.

Your responses will help us identify and explore options for how councils can better take into account the views of young people in their communities.

We also want to hear what you believe the biggest issues currently facing your local area are, as well as what changes you think may be needed to your council to help them better respond to these issues.

Your input will help us to decide what we think the role of local government should be, to enable them to provide the best quality services to you and your community into the future.

To thank you for your time, every person who submits a response will be entered in a draw for a new iPad. If you are successful, we will contact you via the email address you provide during the survey.

Please note, that by agreeing to enter this draw, you are agreeing to the associated Terms and Conditions

Completing this survey will take about 10 minutes.

About you

Asking for information about you helps us to understand who we have reached as part of our engagement. Please complete the following questions.

What is your year of birth? (Mandatory)

Name (Mandatory)

Where are you currently living? (Mandatory)

Please provide your email address if you wish to be entered into the prize draw

Do you want to be kept up to date with this project?

Part A: Engagement with your local council

In this Review, we want to understand how young people interact with their local councils. We also want to understand the extent to which councils provide their residents with the opportunity to be represented in local decision making.

Do you feel like you understand what services your local council provides?

How do you engage with your council? Please provide some detail.

(This could be visiting a park, playground or skatepark, viewing or asking questions at council meetings, paying bills or fines, or voting in council elections)

How often do you interact with your council?

Do you feel that your council represents you and other people your age?

What could your council do better to represent you and other people your age?

Do you feel like your council gives you the opportunity to have your say on local issues and decisions which impact you?

If you wanted to get involved with your local council or have your say on a local issue, do you know where to go?

Are you aware of or involved in any council organised youth programs or youth advisory councils?

Have you ever thought about a career in local government?

Have you ever thought about being a councillor?

What could your council do better to give you more of a say on local issues and decisions? (this could include improved engagement through social media)

Part B: The Role of Local Government in 21st Century Tasmania

The future role of councils in Tasmania will influence all the services that they will provide to your community. We believe it is important for councils to be delivering services to communities where they are the best level of government to do so.

We'd like to get your ideas on what the role of local government should be, to best support you into the future.

What do you think are the greatest challenges for your future?

As the closest level of government to communities, what role, if any, do you think your council should play in responding to these challenges?

(this could include things such as providing certain services or initiatives, lobbying other levels of government, or advocacy on issues on behalf of your community)

Do you think anything needs to change for councils to perform that role or do it better?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 2- Future of Local Government Survey for Tasmanians aged 26 - 44

Have your say on the future of local government

Local government has been supporting Tasmanian communities for over 100 years. Even though we live in a global world, we still need local knowledge and local solutions to deal with many of the challenges we face as a community.

The Tasmanian Government has asked the Local Government Board to review the role, function, and design of local government so that our councils are set up for all the challenges the future may bring.

Objective

Through this survey we want to understand the extent to which Tasmanian's aged 26 to 44 engage with and feel like they are represented and listened to by their local councils. Your responses will help us identify and explore better options for how councils can better take into account the diverse range of views of their communities.

We also want to hear what you believe the biggest issues currently facing your local area are, as well as what changes you think may be needed to your council to help them better respond to and manage these issues. This will help us to determine what we think the role of local government should be, to enable them to provide the best quality services to you and your community into the future.

To thank you for your time, every person who submits a response will be entered in a draw for a new iPad. If you are successful, we will contact you via the email address you provide during the survey.

Please note, that by agreeing to enter this draw, you are agreeing to the associated Terms and Conditions

Completing this survey will take about 10 minutes.

About you

Asking for information about you helps us to understand who we have reached as part of our engagement. Please complete the following questions.

What is your year of birth? (Mandatory)

Name (Mandatory)

What is your suburb or town? (Mandatory)

Please provide your email address if you wish to be entered into the prize draw

Do you want to be kept up to date with this project?

Part A: Engagement with your local council

In this Review, we want to understand how young people interact with their local councils. We also want to understand the extent to which councils provide their residents with the opportunity to be represented in local decision making.

Do you feel like you understand what services your local council provides?

Is there anything that you interact with your council about? Please provide some detail.

(This could be making a submission to a survey or process, community health or wellbeing, viewing or asking questions council meetings, paying bills or fines, making an enquiry or complaint, or voting in council elections)

How often do you interact with your council?

Do you feel that your council represents you and other people your age?

What could your council do better to represent you and other people your age?

Do you feel like your council gives you the opportunity to have your say on local issues and decisions which impact you?

If you wanted to get involved with your local council or have your say on a local issue, do you know where to go?

Have you ever thought about a career in local government?

Have you ever thought about being a councillor?

What could your council do better to give you more of a say on local issues and decisions?

Part B: The Role of Local Government in 21st Century Tasmania

The role of local government will influence all the services that your council will provide to you. We believe it is important that councils can deliver services to communities where their expertise matters most.

We'd like to get your ideas on what the role of local government should be, to best support you into the future.

What do you think are the greatest challenges for your future?

As the closest level of government to communities, what role, if any, do you think your council should play in responding to these challenges?

(this could include things such as providing certain services or initiatives, lobbying other levels of government, or advocacy on issues on behalf of your community)

Do you think anything needs to change for councils to perform that role or do it better?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?