

Conduct of Community Satisfaction Survey

PRACTICE NOTE NO. 14

Background

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) is an annual reporting framework which requires councils to report 59 mandatory performance indicators in their annual reporting, as part of their Report of Operations, audited Performance Statement and their Sector Performance report (Know Your Council).

Within the LGPRF, there are three indicators that present the community satisfaction with council's performance. These are:

G2 – Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement

G5 – Satisfaction with council decisions (Audited)

R5 – Satisfaction with sealed local roads (Audited)

These indicators should be a result from a representative random probability survey of residents aged 18+ years in the participating local government authority (LGA).

Local Government Victoria (LGV) offers councils the services of a recognised social and marketing research company to conduct a Community Satisfaction Survey on behalf of councils.

Councils may opt, however, to use their own provider for this service. As such, this practice note has been developed to assist councils with the minimum requirements for the conduct of a comparable community satisfaction survey.

Guidance

The key components of the CSS methodology from the 2021 onwards are as follows:

1. Minimum sample size
2. Quality assurance and compliance
3. Survey methodology
4. Consistent schedule for fieldwork
5. Consistent scoring
6. Non-English speakers
7. Quotas and weighting applied to ensure representativeness

These points are outlined in further detail below.

1. Minimum sample size

To ensure confidence in the result, the survey must survey a minimum of 400 respondents per council or a sample size to meet a margin of error of 5% or less. This sample must be loosely representative of the known population in each municipality, by age and gender according to ABS statistics.

2. Quality assurance and compliance

The survey should be conducted by a provider who can demonstrate they are a member of the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) or The Research Society (formerly the Australian Market & Social Research Society AMSRS). Alternatively, the provider must be able to supply evidence of equivalent accreditation and supply documented evidence of compliance via independent assessment.

The provider must be able to provide evidence of accreditation or pending accreditation (before commencement of the survey), under the International Standard for Market Research (AS ISO 20252).

3. Survey methodology

The provider may utilise any survey methodology or combination of methods, provided they can be verified as statistically valid and comparable.

Further years should follow the same methodology to create year on year comparability.

4. Consistent schedule for fieldwork

Fieldwork should be undertaken at a consistent time of the year.

Where the provider is providing services for multiple years, the provider must create a schedule for the complete surveying process. This schedule must be repeatable to ensure year on year consistency. The survey can be conducted annually or quarterly, depending on the council’s reporting requirement.

If quarterly, the provider must be able to compile results to form an accurate annual result.

5. Consistent scoring

The provider must supply a consistent scaling method to assess both positive and negative community responses. This scaling method should allow for scores to be converted to an indexed score. An example of an index score calculation is provided below.

Example of Index score

The Index score is calculated and represented as a score out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale). The ‘% Result’ for each scale category is multiplied by the ‘Index Factor’. This produces an ‘Index Value’ for each category, which are then summed to produce the ‘Index Score, equating to ‘60’ in the following example.

Scale category	% Result	Index Factor	Index Value
Very good	9%	100	9
Good	40%	75	30
Average	37%	50	19
Poor	9%	25	2
Very poor	5%	0	0

Index Score = 60

In this example, ‘can’t say’ responses are excluded. Any exclusions should be noted in the analysis.

6. Non-English speakers

The provider must be able to offer the provision of the survey in multiple languages to meet the demographic profile of the municipality.

7. Quotas and weighting applied to ensure representativeness

Consistent upfront sampling targets should be assigned to accurately reflect the population in each LGA (based annually on ABS data). Minimum sampling quotas of at least 40% on gender overall, and six age gender cells set to at least 40% of population proportions at known LGA levels should be applied as follows: Males 18-34, Males 35-49, Males 50+, Females 18-34, Females 35-49 and Females 50+.

Consistent post-weighting techniques should be assigned to accurately reflect the actual population in each LGA (based annually on ABS data). These are applied to the cells indicated under quotas.

Overall

Councils should discuss their proposed methodology with their auditor to ensure that their approach is compliant.