

# Factsheet for Stream 3: Community Satisfaction Survey Review Technical Working Group

This document outlines the scope of the technical working group tasked with reviewing the conduct and use of the Community Satisfaction Survey.

## Background

Since 1998, Local Government Victoria (LGV) has coordinated an annual community satisfaction survey on behalf of councils. LGV efficiently manages the survey through a provider, and the associated costs are invoiced to the participating councils for their respective surveys. Councils have the option to include additional survey questions alongside the core survey questions that are asked to all councils. Surveys are conducted annually or quarterly as required.

The survey is conducted as a representative random probability survey, targeting residents aged 18 years and above in each participating municipality. Computer-assisted telephone interviews are employed for data collection. Survey samples are carefully matched to the demographic profile of each council, based on recent ABS population estimates. These samples are procured from an accredited supplier of publicly available phone records. The survey maintains a minimum sample size of 400 respondents per council, ensuring high reliability and a low margin of error.

Participating councils receive confidential individual reports directly, which LGV does not have access to. It is at the council's discretion whether they choose to make their report public. Furthermore, councils can request briefings from the supplier on their survey results. A State-wide report is also published on the LGV website, providing a broader overview of the survey findings.

Councils who choose not to participate are required to conduct their own auditable community satisfaction survey as per the conduct requirements (See Appendix A: Conduct of the Community Satisfaction Survey).

In November 2023, the LGPR Steering Committee endorsed a review of the community satisfaction survey with the focus on seeking improvements and enhancements.

# Scope

## Focus

Feedback from the LG Chief Executive Forum and LGPro have highlighted concerns regarding the suitability of the methodology and products offered through the Department's Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) which has been running in its current form since 2012. The CSS is a service, coordinated by Local Government Victoria, but paid for in its entirety by the participating councils.

## Key tasks and discussion

The LGPR Steering Committee is seeking advice and recommendations from councils and peak bodies on the following key points:

- The ongoing function and purpose of the sector-wide and council community satisfaction survey
- The optimal data collection method for conducting a sector-wide community satisfaction survey
- Products offered by the sector-wide community satisfaction survey
- Best value for money delivery options

## Finalisation

Upon completing the exercise, the technical working group is required to reach a consensus on any suggested changes, which will subsequently be presented to the Steering Committee for deliberation and decision.

Upon acceptance of these recommendations and if required, Local Government Victoria will initiate a procurement process to seek a supplier to commence with the 2025/2026 financial or 2026 calendar year.

In addition, if necessary, new guidelines will be issued to replace the current conduct requirements (see Appendix A).

# Participation

## Eligibility Requirements

### For councils

To qualify for participation, you must be an employee of council and hold a senior manager to executive-level position within the organisation. As the council representative, you will be tasked with speaking on behalf of the organisation within the working group and managing internal discussions as necessary.

A thorough understanding of the current community satisfaction survey process and the use of the survey results within council is crucial.

Additionally, you will be required to leverage your existing internal network, particularly across your council. Your responsibilities include coordinating with subject matter experts within your organisation and articulating their perspectives to the working group.

Council may only nominate one participant per council.

### **For peak bodies**

To be eligible to participate, you must have the support of your Local Government Performance Reporting Steering Committee representative.

The peak body may only nominate one participant per peak body.

## Commitment

### **Workshops**

Workshops will be scheduled to occur between June to August 2024. Participants should be available for a maximum total of 6 – 8 hours for workshops during this period.

Workshops will be a combination of online and in-person sessions, depending on participant numbers and locations.

### **Additional work**

In addition to attendance at workshops, you may be asked to review discussion papers and conduct internal discussions with subject matter experts to gain a broader understanding of the impacts of any proposed changes.

## Registration

To register for Stream 3, please complete the LGPRF 2024 [Technical Working Group Registration form](#) and select Stream 3.

# APPENDIX A – Guidelines for the conduct of the CSS

## Practice Note 14

### Background

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) is an annual reporting framework which requires councils to report 58 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 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.