# Codesign Integrated Strategic Planning & Reporting

**Codesign Round 1:**
Engagement
Findings Report

VICTORIA
State
Government

Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions

# LIMITATIONS OF USE

This report has been prepared by MosaicLab and ASDF Research on behalf of and for the exclusive use of Local Government Victoria.

The sole purpose of this report is to provide the methodology and a summary of the findings from the Round 1 engagement (codesign) undertaken for Local Government Victoria's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting project.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by Local Government Victoria. In preparing this report, MosaicLab has relied upon the data generated during the Round 1 codesign activities. Local Government Victoria can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit.

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*MosaicLab is a team of engagement practitioners and facilitators based in Victoria. We work with government agencies, community groups, industry and commercial organisations and support them to have meaningful conversations that lead to action. Our processes bring diverse people together to solve complex problems and make a positive difference to decision-making.*
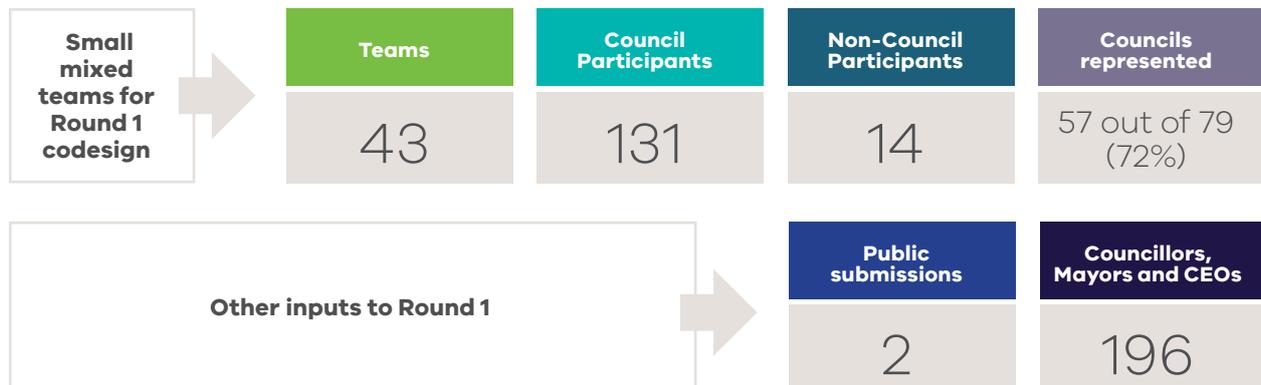
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## 1.1    Overview

Throughout July and August 2020, Local Government Victoria (LGV) commenced Round 1; the first phase of community engagement as part of the LGV co-design process for integrated strategic planning and reporting. This process will help LGV make strategic planning and reporting more integrated, so it works better for councils and their communities. 145 people in council and non-council roles participated in this co-design process.

Round 1 was launched with a 1 hour webinar session, providing context and insight into the overall process to ensure the sector had a clear understanding of the process and the opportunity to participate.

Round 1 involved mixed teams of 3-4 participants that were self-managed, responding to 5 engagement questions as a group, providing insights into improving integrated planning, frameworks, and suggesting a list of priority 'supports' for council.

## 1.2    Participation at a glance

| Small mixed teams for Round 1 codesign | → | Teams | Council Participants | Non-Council Participants | Councils represented |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 43 | 131 | 14 | 57 out of 79 (72%) |

| Other inputs to Round 1 | → | Public submissions | Councillors, Mayors and CEOs |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 | 196 |

## 1.3    Summary of data

### 1.3.1    Round 1 data

This report captures and analyses all of the data received in Round 1 from the 43 small codesign teams, as well as two public survey responses and responses provided by Councillors, Mayors and CEOs who participated in an online briefing session. This data will be used in the Round 2 codesign workshops to dive deeper into priority themes,  and will also be used to inform the supports developed as a result of this overall codesign process.

The core data under consideration is the work of the 43 small codesign teams. Those teams responded to five engagement questions, each with subparts. Questions 1 to 4 were the key questions focused on the integrated framework and setting the scene for deeper dive workshops in Round 2. The data analysis from Questions 1 to 4 is found in Part 5 of this report.

Question 5 was comprised of eight sub-questions, which focused in detail on the eight specific elements of the integrated framework (e.g. Community Vision, Council Plan, Asset Management Plan etc). The data analysis from these more detailed questions is found in an Appendix to this report.

### 1.3.2 How the Round 1 data informs the Round 2 codesign workshops

The Round 1 codesign teams were asked 'what supports would enable councils to implement the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework?' and to identify their top three priorities. Fifteen (15) key 'supports' were identified as priorities by the groups in Round 1. All the ideas for support from Round 1 will progress to be considered in more detail in Round 2.

MosaicLab and LGV considered these 15 requests for support and themed them under three themes, which will be the focus of the Round 2 codesign workshops, as detailed below.

#### Theme One: The Overall Framework

Theme One will cover everything to do with **improving the overall framework** and **integration between the elements**.

Theme One will include the following ideas/priorities from Round 1:

- Framework/model: practical model/s that show how the elements interrelate and can be flexible or scalable for the needs of different councils – 44% of groups nominated this as a priority
- Procedure/process/timing: clear map of process steps and timeframes including how the inputs & outputs from each element are linked– 9%

#### Theme Two: Organisational capacity and culture change

Theme Two will cover everything to do with **increasing the capacity of councils** to implement the integrated strategic planning and reporting elements of the Act, taking into account the how the roles of councillors, staff and communities need to change.

Theme Two will include the following ideas/priorities from Round 1:

- Training: to ensure consistency and build skills - 28%
- Guidance/review/support: regular and ongoing support from LGV – 21%
- Templates: with guidelines, templates to ensure consistency and allow for flexibility – 14%
- Resourcing/capacity – internal: having staff with skills and time to support integrated planning and reporting – 16%
- Easy to find documents/links to policy: central library – 16%
- Communities of practice to learn from each other – 14%
- Case Studies/best practice: case studies to highlight best practice – 12%
- Funding/resourcing (external): access to funding and/or experts especially for small councils – 9%
- Community engagement: guidance on engaging communities, access to online platforms and understanding of deliberation - 9%
- Stakeholders - internal and external: who is responsible for what, clear communication across the organisation and how to involve external stakeholders – 7%

#### Theme Three: Data, indicators and supporting technology

Theme Three will cover with everything to do with data, indicators, software and reporting platforms.

Theme Three will include the following ideas/priorities from Round 1:

- Software to integrate all elements of the framework particularly reporting and financial components – 9%
- Data sharing/reporting platform: online dashboard for all data requirements and covering all service providers – 9%
- Indicators/outcome measurement to assist with consistency – 7%

# 2. INTRODUCTION

## 2.1    Project Context

The Local Government Act 2020 requires councils to take an integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting. Local Government Victoria (LGV) is responsible for managing and overseeing the implementation phase of the Act. As the Act is principles based, LGV is seeking not to be prescriptive in 'telling' councils how to implement the strategic planning and reporting sections of the Act but rather working with councils and 'codesigning' the supports identified as being needed by councils to implement the provisions of the Act. These supports may be guidance materials, training, communities of practice etc.

LGV has put in place a large scale codesign process involving staff from all councils plus peak bodies and professional associations. It has two rounds of codesign; the first to identify the supports needed by councils and the second to further define and scope those supports that have been identified as the highest priority.  In addition, LGV has developed a discussion paper that includes a draft model framework to illustrate how the various strategic plans could be integrated.

In developing this discussion paper and draft framework, LGV is very conscious of the varying scale of operations across metropolitan, regional, and rural councils and therefore is not looking to mandate a one size fits all approach. It is anticipated that councils will adopt a 'continuous improvement' approach to implementation and that the framework will evolve over a reasonable timeframe. Implementation and application of the framework within individual councils will depend on the size of the council, available resources, and capability as well as the sophistication of pre-existing and reporting processes. The framework may be useful for some councils, others already have something similar in place.

The purpose of the codesign is to consider and improve the draft framework as one of the key supports, along with identifying all other supports needed by councils. The intent is to add value and build on the current planning approaches and expertise of councils, not to replace the work of councils.

**The overarching question (remit) posed to participants in the codesign process is:**

*How do we make strategic planning and reporting more integrated so that it works better for councils and their communities?*

## 2.2    Purpose of the report

This report contains the findings of Round 1 of community engagement for the LGV's codesign process for integrated strategic planning and reporting. MosaicLab has prepared this report, based on data analysis completed by ASDF Research, to provide a record of participant feedback.

The data received from Round 1 will also inform the themes for participants to explore in more depth in Round 2.

## 2.3  Overview of the engagement process

### 2.3.1  Engagement promise

**In undertaking the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting codesign process, LGV promises to:**

- Listen to what participants say

- Document and record all inputs

- Report back on what we have heard

- Base the final version of *the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework and the associated support needed by councils to implement an integrated approach* on the outcomes of the codesign process to the greatest extent possible

- Where we can't incorporate a recommendation from the codesign process we will clearly explain why

- Provide transparent, progress updates during codesign process

### 2.3.2  Objectives

**The objectives for the engagement process are:**

- To provide an open, transparent codesign process that builds understanding of integrated planning and an acceptance of the engagement process and outcome

- To ensure a diverse range of participants from councils, peak bodies and LGV participate in the co-design process

- To build on the existing capability, capacity and maturity of council staff and LGV with respect to integrated planning and encourage learning, autonomy and innovation

- To provide a genuine level of influence over the final framework and 'supports' provided

- To work with the sector to co-design materials that give councils the confidence and independence to deliver the requirements of the Act easily and effectively

**The final outputs of the co-design process will be:**

1. An integrated strategic planning and reporting framework that can be tailored by individual councils to suit their own needs

2. A range of 'supports' identified through the codesign that are developed to support councils to undertake integrated strategic planning and reporting

### 2.3.3  Scope

This codesign process sits within a broader setting of how councils will choose to implement the provisions of the Act. It is a principles based Act and in this context the provisions and the principles of the Act are non-negotiable.

The approach to how councils implement the principles and requirements of the Act, including how they develop an integrated framework for planning (their own or the one developed as part of this project) is up to each individual council. The principle of integration is non-negotiable, it is the approach and framework that is negotiable. It is also for each council to decide on the extent to which they take up the approach of the framework – councils may wish to apply a basic standard or more innovative or better practice approaches.

Overall, participants will have a *collaborative level* of influence over this project, as offered by LGV, and defined by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum.

**The following scoping relates only to the codesign process and not to the wider implementation of the Act.**

## Participants can influence:

1.  The contents of an integrated strategic planning and reporting framework

2.  The types of support to be provided by LGV to enable them to implement an integrated strategic planning and reporting framework

3.  The priorities for the support to be provided by LGV

4.  The content for specific elements of the support being provided

5.  A culture of learning and sharing across the sector particularly in relation to the practice of integrated planning
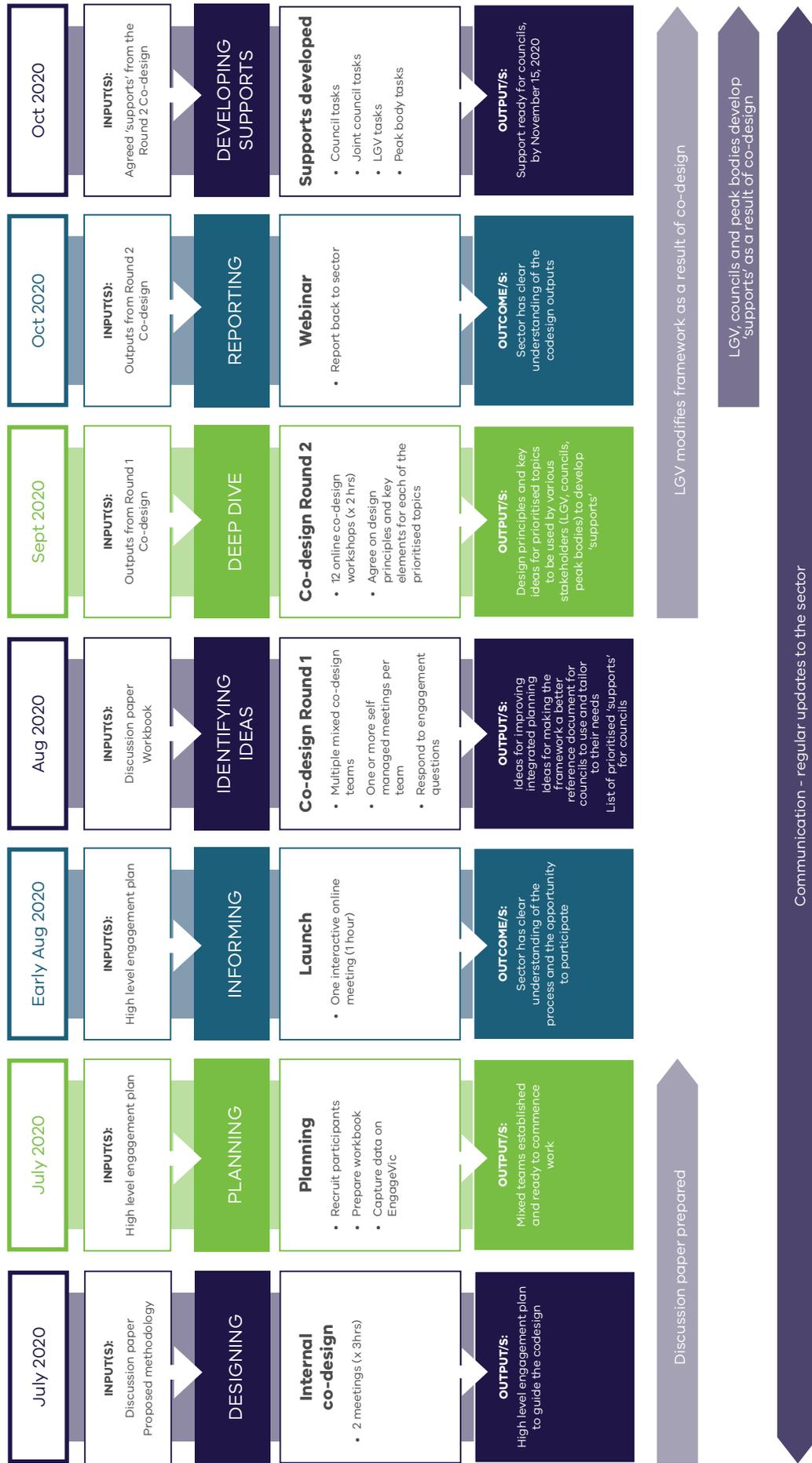
## Participants can't influence:

1.  The provisions and principles of the Act including the requirement to deliver nine key plans and timeframes set by the Act

2.  Any elements that LGV chooses to mandate e.g regulations, minimum standards, Ministerial Guidelines

3.  Set standards eg accounting standards

## 2.3.4  Roadmap

The following roadmap provides an overview of the engagement process being undertaken by LGV.

| | July 2020 | July 2020 | Early Aug 2020 | Aug 2020 | Sept 2020 | Oct 2020 | Oct 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INPUT(S):** | Discussion paper Proposed methodology | High level engagement plan | High level engagement plan | Discussion paper Workbook | Outputs from Round 1 Co-design | Outputs from Round 2 Co-design | Agreed 'supports' from the Round 2 Co-design |
| **Stage** | DESIGNING | PLANNING | INFORMING | IDENTIFYING IDEAS | DEEP DIVE | REPORTING | DEVELOPING SUPPORTS |
| **Activity** | **Internal co-design**<br>• 2 meetings (x 3hrs) | **Planning**<br>• Recruit participants<br>• Prepare workbook<br>• Capture data on EngageVic | **Launch**<br>• One interactive online meeting (1 hour) | **Co-design Round 1**<br>• Multiple mixed co-design teams<br>• One or more self managed meetings per team<br>• Respond to engagement questions | **Co-design Round 2**<br>• 12 online co-design workshops (x 2 hrs)<br>• Agree on design principles and key elements for each of the prioritised topics | **Webinar**<br>• Report back to sector | **Supports developed**<br>• Council tasks<br>• Joint council tasks<br>• LGV tasks<br>• Peak body tasks |
| **OUTPUT/OUTCOME** | **OUTPUT/S:** High level engagement plan to guide the codesign | **OUTPUT/S:** Mixed teams established and ready to commence work | **OUTCOME/S:** Sector has clear understanding of the process and the opportunity to participate | **OUTPUT/S:** Ideas for improving integrated planning Ideas for making the framework a better reference document for councils to use and tailor to their needs List of prioritised 'supports' for councils | **OUTPUT/S:** Design principles and key ideas for prioritised topics to be used by various stakeholders (LGV, councils, peak bodies) to develop 'supports' | **OUTCOME/S:** Sector has clear understanding of the codesign outputs | **OUTPUT/S:** Support ready for councils, by November 15, 2020 |

Discussion paper prepared

LGV modifies framework as a result of co-design

LGV, councils and peak bodies develop 'supports' as a result of co-design

Communication – regular updates to the sector

## 3.1 Overall structure of the codesign

The codesign is taking place in two rounds. This report covers Round 1 where multiple small teams of council staff worked together to identify ideas for improving the draft framework and prioritizing the types of 'supports' councils need to achieve the integrated planning and reporting requirement of the Act. A public survey was made available and a briefing with councillors and CEOs was held during Round 1.

The small teams were recruited, an online information webinar was held and each small team received the Discussion Paper and a Workbook with a series of five questions, which they answered in self-facilitated sessions co-ordinated by the teams themselves. The ideas from these discussions were logged on the EngageVic website. The data has since been analysed and the findings are provided in this report.

Each team in Round 1 nominated one or more members to participate in the 'deep dive' co-design workshops in Round 2. The Round 2 workshops will focus on specific topics identified in Round 1 as priorities for the sector and will identify design principle and key ideas for the 'supports' required.

## 3.2 Recruitment for small teams

Council and LGV staff were invited via email on July 17 2020 and randomly allocated to diverse teams by the Sortition Foundation. Overall, there were 14 LGV staff members and 131 council staff members representing 57 councils.

Participants were asked to give the following information:

- Name
- Email address
- Council
- Interest Area (in one of following categories):
  - o Asset management and finance
  - o Community engagement, community/council planning and communications
  - o Corporate planning
  - o Governance & strategy
  - o HR and workforce planning
- Years of experiences (in one of following categories):
  - o 0-7 years
  - o 8-15 years
  - o 16+ years

Participants were separated into teams of 3-4 ensuring a random mixture of experience, interest area, council and council type in each team. The teams are comprised of people from a range of interest areas as this project is about integration; how the various strategic plans of council are integrated. Hence it is important to bring together people from different interest/functional areas of councils and be able to consider how the different functions relate to each other in councils. The mix of council types is also intentional in terms of learning from each other's experiences within different size councils.

## 3.3 Discussion Paper

The purpose of the discussion paper was to initiate and inform the codesign process on the development of an integrated strategic planning, reporting, and monitoring framework.

LGV has reinforced that the discussion paper outlines just one way the Act can be read and translates this into a contemporary structured and integrated approach to planning and reporting, it does not represent a final view. The discussion paper also includes a series of prompt questions that are posed to stimulate dialogue and deliberation. They mirror the questions included in the co-design workbook

The document is structured in four sections:

- **Section 1:** Narrative snapshot – provides a description overview of the requirements of the new Act.

- **Section 2:** Two diagrammatic views posed for consideration

  o Overview and outcomes - schematic view of the requirements of the Act providing and overview and possible outcomes.

  o An Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework – schematic view that starts to look at linkages, relationships, and hierarchy between elements of the framework.

- **Section 3:** Policies and principles – this section explores how the principles and key policy requirements under the new Act might apply.

- **Section 4:** Technical Discussion – each element of the integrated framework is explored in greater depth.

## 3.4 Codesign workbook for small team meetings

The workbook was designed to make it easy for each small team to meet in Round 1 and provide inputs to the co-design process. It included questions used for each small team to consider and answer, and an overview of the co-design process and purpose. The workbook also instructions for the teams about the steps to follow, timing expectations and guidelines to support respectful conversations.

Each team was required to submit their responses to the questions on the EngageVic portal no later than August 21st 2020. The responses submitted to the portal by the small teams were then analysed by ASDF research and will form the basis of the Round 2 discussions.

## 3.5  Public Survey

Members of the public were able to participate in the Integrated Planning and Reporting codesign process by completing a survey hosted on the EngageVic website, running concurrently to the Round 1 small team codesign process.

The survey received two responses, both from members of council staff who had not elected to participate in the small teams.

The questions asked in the survey were:

1. What would you add, change or remove from the framework discussion paper to make it a better reference document? Why is this idea important?

2. Do you have any ideas for improving the linkages between the various plans and elements in the framework? (e.g. Community vision, council plan, financial plan, asset management plan, 4 year budget, revenue and rating plan, annual report, workforce plan)

3. What 'supports' would enable councils to implement an improved, integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting? Describe the support needed and why it is important.

## 3.6   Councillor and CEO engagement

A briefing for the councillors and CEOs was held on the 21st of August to inform them about the purpose of the codesign and to seek their insights into the challenges they face as leaders and how they could best be supported. Almost 200 people attended, broken down as follows:

| Attendees | | Council Type | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor | 34 | Metropolitan | 51 |
| Councillor | 56 | Interface | 15 |
| CEO | 49 | Regional City | 20 |
| Other | 20 | Rural | 58 |
| Position not provided | 37 | Other | 6 |
| | | Type not provided | 46 |

The following questions were asked of the councillors and CEOS who attended the session:

1. What is one challenge you face as a leader in this change process?

2. What is one thing that will help you as a leader during this change process?

3. If LGV could do one thing to support you as a leader, what would it be?

## 3.7  Data analysis

The data collected from the 43 small teams' responses submitted to the Engage Vic portal and responses to the public survey have been combined and professionally analysed by ASDF Research. Data from the CEO and councillor session has been analysed and compiled by LGV.

## 4.1  Small teams participants

Participants were asked to supply information about their council, interest area and years of experience in order to provide an overall profile of participants and to enable them to be placed into teams with a mix of council type, years of experience and interest area.

| Teams | 43 |
|---|---|

| Participants | |
|---|---|
| Council | 131 |
| Non-Council | 14 |
| Total | 145 |

| Councils | |
|---|---|
| Nominated | 57 |
| Not nominated | 22 |
| Total | 79 |
| *Council participation (as percentage of all councils)* | 72% |

| Participants per type of Councils | No. of participants | % of council participants |
|---|---|---|
| Metro (71 ppl) | 71 | 54% |
| Rural (37 ppl) | 37 | 28% |
| Regional City (23 ppl) | 23 | 18% |

| Councils per type | No. of participants | % of council participants |
|---|---|---|
| Metro (27 councils) | 27 | 47% |
| Rural (23 councils) | 23 | 40% |
| Regional City (7 councils) | 7 | 12% |

| Highest representation | No. of participants | % of council participants |
|---|---|---|
| Mornington (metro) | 8 | 6% |
| Brimbank (metro) | 7 | 5% |
| Geelong (regional) | 7 | 5% |
| Campaspe (rural) | 6 | 4.5% |
| Melbourne (metro) | 6 | 4.5% |

| Interest area | No. of participants | % of council participants |
|---|---|---|
| Asset management and finance (47) | 47 | 36% |
| Corporate Planning (34) | 34 | 26% |
| Community Engagement / Community Planning (26) | 26 | 20% |
| Governance & Strategy (19) | 19 | 14% |
| HR / Workforce planning (5) | 5 | 4% |

| Years of experience | No. of participants | % of council participants |
|---|---|---|
| 0 -7 years (41) | 41 | 31% |
| 8 - 15 years (52) | 52 | 40% |
| 16+ years (38) | 38 | 29% |

**Participants by types of council**



**28%** rural

**17%** regional city

**55%** metro
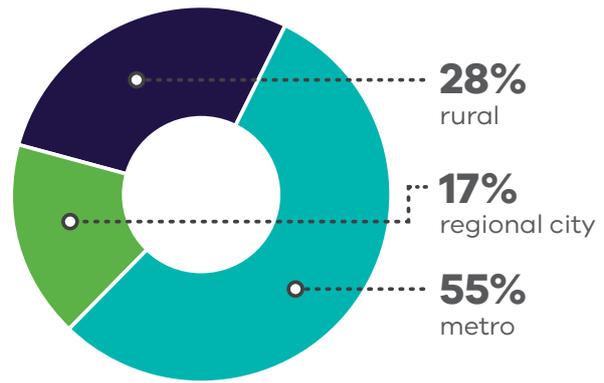
**Participants by Interest Area**



**26%** Corporate planning

**15%** Governance & Strategy

**3%** HR / Workforce planning

**36%** Asset management & finance

**20%** Community engagement / planning
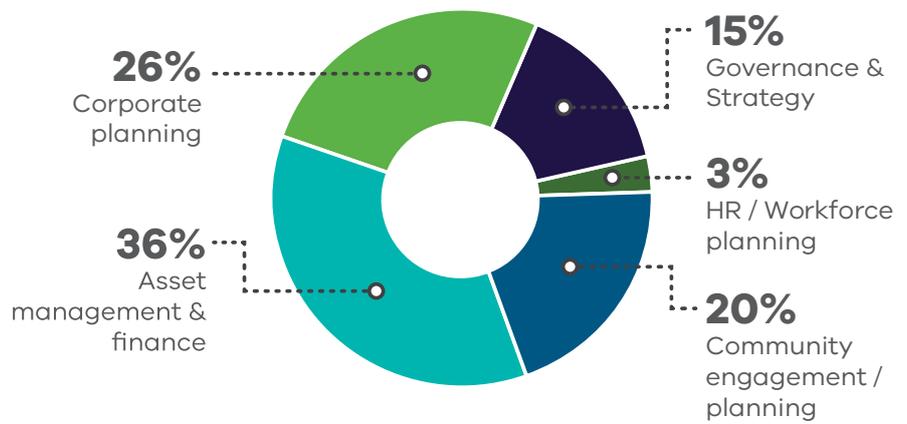
**Participants by Years of Experience**



**29%** 16 + years

**31%** 0-7 years

**40%** 8-15 years
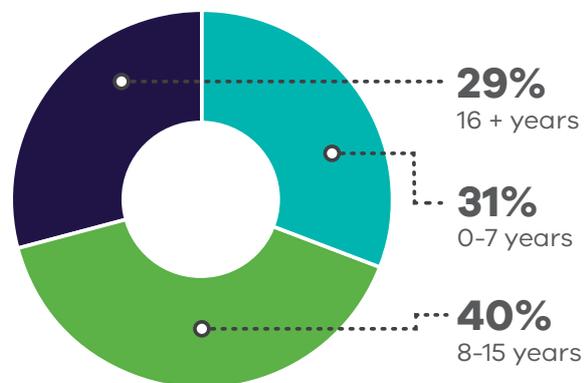
## 4.2  Non- council participants

| LGV | VLGA | IPWEA |
|-----|------|-------|
| 9 | 3 | 2 |
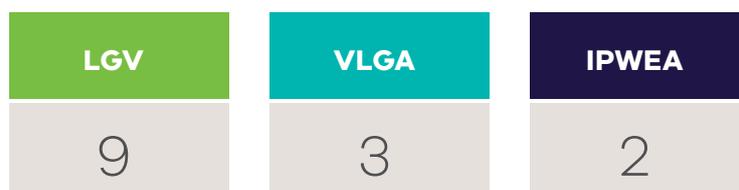
## 5.1    Round 1 Small Team Findings

| Q | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1.1** | What would integrated planning and reporting ideally look like? | **pg 16** |
| | **1.2** | What would the ideal outcomes of integrated planning and reporting be? | **pg 24** |
| | **2.1** | What are the 'tailwinds' that help you plan and report in an integrated way? How can we use these tailwinds to make integrated planning and reporting better? | **pg 32** |
| | **2.2** | What are 'roadblocks' that hinder integrated planning and reporting currently? How can we overcome these in the future? | **pg 40** |
| | **3.1** | What would you add, change or remove from the framework to make it a better reference document? Why is this idea important? | **pg 50** |
| | **3.2** | Do you have any ideas for improving the linkages between the various plans and elements in the framework? | **pg 61** |
| | **4** | What 'supports' would enable councils to implement an improved, integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting? Describe the support needed and why it is important. | **pg 68** |
| | **5** | Detailed questions on each element of the framework. | **Appendix 1.** |

## Q1.1 What would integrated planning and reporting ideally look like?

Clear linkages, hierarchy and connectivity between elements of integrated planning is the key to successful integrated planning. It also needs to be easy to understand with clear processes and timelines, and be driven by community input.

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Visible connections and linkages | 83% |
| Easy to understand | 38% |
| Community engagement | 36% |
| Process and timelines | 36% |
| Driven by Community Vision | 26% |
| Scalability and flexibility | 19% |
| Documents / scope | 19% |
| Councillors | 14% |
| Progress indicators measures | 14% |
| Resources | 12% |
| Informed decision making | 12% |
| Long term planning | 10% |
| Consistency | 10% |
| Sector | 7% |
| Software | 7% |
| Portals and data sharing | 7% |
| Other | 29% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

## THEME
# Visible connections and linkages

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 35 | 83% |

**SUMMARY**

Integrated planning needs to show the connections between all items of the framework, with inputs and outputs for each item. It is seen as important to help overcome silos within councils by showing a clear hierarchy of documents ('line of sight' is used a lot in the comments).

Some say that the Community Vision needs to be at the top of the hierarchy, driving all other documents, while others say it should be the Council Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Each plan needs to integrate like a web, talk to each other and reporting needs to be fully integrated.'*

*'Relationships and influence between different elements are clear and transparent'*

*'It provides a line of sight through every department in Council to the community vision'*

*'Better connection across the organisation. Clear hierarchy and linkages between all the documents.'*

*'Utilise community vision to influence each decision made on allocation of resources; ingrained in everything we do'*

*'The Council Plan leads all other plans'*

*'10Yr Asset and Finance Plans need to be integrated and created together'*

## THEME
# Easy to understand

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 16 | 38% |

**SUMMARY**

Many teams mentioned the need for integrated reporting to be easy to understand. Comments were referring to both the framework itself, as well as reporting back the outcomes to the community.

**QUOTES**

*'Start with a visual representation of a framework that is simple, easy to understand and anyone can understand'*

*'Be simple so that it is easily understood by the organisation, the community, and the elected representatives.'*

*'Reporting is meaningful and is used, rather than being a process that is 'reporting for the sake of reporting'*

*'Easy to navigate roadmap supported by a set of corresponding products (not limited to documents) that the community can understand and interact with'*

THEME
# Community engagement

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

It is recognised that community engagement is key to developing the Community Vision, that then guides the rest of the framework. Engaging with the community raises challenges for some, specifically relating to:

- Reaching representative samples.
- Defining the scope of deliberative engagement.
- Recognising varying levels of engagement amongst the community.

**QUOTES**

*'Ensuring that there is a true representation of 'communities'.  Defining who is the community.'*

*'Use of deliberative engagement to get better representation from community & stakeholders'*

*'The ideal framework combines information, from community and from research, with known costs and existing plans'*

*'The community create the vision, the Council owns it'*

*'Deliberative engagement leading to a clear direction'*

THEME
# Process and timelines

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Clear timelines and processes are key to integrated planning and reporting for most teams. This includes clearly articulated steps, ensuring that timelines for reporting and document revisions line up with internal and external processes, and avoiding duplication.

**QUOTES**

*'Strategic planning process gets done in-front of the budget process.'*

*'Clear timelines that support meeting the requirements of legislation.'*

*'Meaningful and timely reporting is critical'*

*'each stage representing the building blocks to the next stage and avoiding duplication or gaps within clearly defined  timeframes resulting in a cohesive framework'*

*'Duplication of effort needs to be eliminated from all steps in the process'*

**THEME**

# Driven by Community Vision

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 11 | 26% |

**SUMMARY**

The Community Vision was commonly seen as the document which should be driving the framework, and that all other documents should link to it.

**QUOTES**

*'Driven by the community vision – drives the framework'*

*'Alignment of documents, cascading from top to bottom, and enabling a line of sight from staff back up to the Vision.'*

*'A clear picture which enables us to see how our community vision impacts on Council's costs, assets, workforce and legislated responsibilities'*

*'Utilise community vision to influence each decision made on allocation of resources; ingrained in everything we do'*

**THEME**

# Scalability and flexibility

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

Scalability and flexibility is required so that planning and reporting can be adapted for different council sizes and flexible in the case of emergencies.

**QUOTES**

*'Scalable to meet the needs of different councils and their communities'*

*'An integrated planning and reporting framework can hopefully make service planning more manageable, scalable and fit for purpose.'*

*'Medium term planning – built in flexibility to adapt to changing environments (e.g., COVID-19)'*

*'Scaleable, sets a base level of standards/expectations'*

**THEME**

# Documents / scope

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

A range of comments were made relating to the scope of documents, from queries regarding what should be included (just strategies, or operational as well) to including all items within the same document.

**QUOTES**

*'Document hierarchy is clear as to where strategies sit or plans sits'*

*'Determine what needs to be included, for example the 'strategic things', the Community Vision, Council Plan, given you're creating a strategic planning and reporting framework. Operational plans or processes don't fit the 'strategic' category, leave them out.'*

*'Documents are integrated, not just aligned'*

*'One plan - council plan, service plans, asset plan, financial plan'*

*'A suite of documents with same overall look and feel - clearly shows the linkages between them'*

## THEME
# Councillors

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 6 | 14% |

**SUMMARY**

It is important to ensure the councillors are involved in the process, although the extent to which councillors can influence the documents needs to be determined.

**QUOTES**

*'Councillors are partners in the process as is everyone else, including community and staff.'*

*'The councillors need to own the development and outcome of the strategic direction'*

*'Legacy information provided to new Councillors. How much does a new Council influence these documents?'*

*'Successfully balances community and Councillor views, and enables their informed input.'*

*'Can't be so cumbersome it overwhelms prerogative of Councillors as representatives of the community.'*

## THEME
# Progress indicators and measures

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 6 | 14% |

**SUMMARY**

The need for clear, robust and meaningful measurement of progress is needed.

**QUOTES**

*'Ensure meaningful performance indicators aligned with the outcome statements in the Vision'*

*'Report against tangible deliverables to measure success (evidence base, effectiveness, achievement, measures that are auditable and collected with rigour)'*

*'Measurable actions, robust & standardised measures'*

*'Should be presented in such a way that allows the community to evaluate the performance of a Council against the community contract & what they value the most'*

*'Make a commitment to monitoring and evaluation both process and impact measures and how they contribute to achieving longer term goals (community vision)'*

## THEME
# Resources

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

A number of teams mentioned the need for integrated planning to take into account resources, both in terms of document scope as well as the cost for undertaking the planning itself.

**QUOTES**

*'Providing a comprehensive view of available resources and commitments...enabling alignment of objectives and capabilities, and budget process is easier, help our resource placement'*

*'Realistic based on resources (staff, finances, rate capping etc.)'*

*'Recognises that the burden of reporting has a cost'*

*'The framework has to provide value for the amount of work and cost burden....Should be accountable in its cost and implementation burden, providing value for ratepayers.'*

## THEME
# Informed decision making

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

It was recognised that integrated planning and reporting can help make more informed decisions and generate conversations.

**QUOTES**

*'Better and more informed decision making and increased transparency to the community'*

*'Really good information and data to generate conversations (create boundaries about what is possible and feasible)'*

## THEME
# Long term planning

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 10% |

**SUMMARY**

There was recognition of the need for the planning to be more long-term than a single council term.

**QUOTES**

*'Cradle to grave approach, a longer-term planning view and reporting on progress toward that plan.'*

*'Clear and measurable long medium and short term planning and reporting'*

*'Long term strategic planning beyond the duration of a council term (a vision does not meet this brief because it is not deemed a strategic planning document).'*

## THEME
# Consistency

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 10% |

**SUMMARY**

The desire for consistency includes internal aspects such as document design (consistent colours and symbols) as well as consistency across councils.

**QUOTES**

*'Consistency across Councils in how we report and plan, supported by the same tools'*

*'Simple, consistent approach across council'*

*'No contradiction'*

*'Use themes, colour coding, symbols and other clues that show the connections. Consistent use of language – common set of words, definitions, objectives, goals titles – they mean the same thing from one document to the next'*

**THEME**

# Sector (consistency)

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

There is a recognition that consistency is required across the sector (local governments) to enable shared learning and benchmarking.

**QUOTES**

*'When we look at integration we can take a more holistic approach with a sector wide view, benchmarking of other councils, working towards similar targets, so that comparisons can be made.'*

*'Need a uniform process across organisations.'*

*'Partly standardised to align approaches and share learnings across LGAs'*

**THEME**

# Software

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

A number of teams mentioned the desire for software to assist with performance reporting across all framework components, with consistent software used by all councils.

**QUOTES**

*"Translatable into a software solution across Council relevant to all departments.'*

*'Software solution/tools to improve reporting on performance...using the same platform to achieve sector wide outcomes'*

*'Implementation of the plans is missing, i.e. business/team plans, individual objectives/performance plans (a software system, including dashboard reporting, would be useful for this)'*

**THEME**

# Portals and data sharing

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

A couple of groups envisioned a shared data portal for reporting across councils.

**QUOTES**

*'Local Government Victoria, to create a portal with our collective results, broader than LGPRF.'*
*'One source of truth, with reporting through one channel.'*

**THEME**

# Other

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 12 | 29% |

**SUMMARY**

Other comments include: templates for the Community Vision, define strategic (it doesn't mean operational), a formal direction from LGV that Integrated Planning and Reporting is a requirement for Councils, councillor elections should be moved, CEO KPIs aligned to the Council Plan, budgets are for accountants, not the community and there should be a place for 'business as usual' to be captured in the planning process.

**QUOTES**

*'There needs to be a formal direction from LGV that Integrated Planning and Reporting is a requirement for each Council. This will ensure that Managers involved understand the priority of this.'*

*'The Councillor elections should also be moved to earlier in the year, which would allow for the new Council to be more involved in the planning process.'*
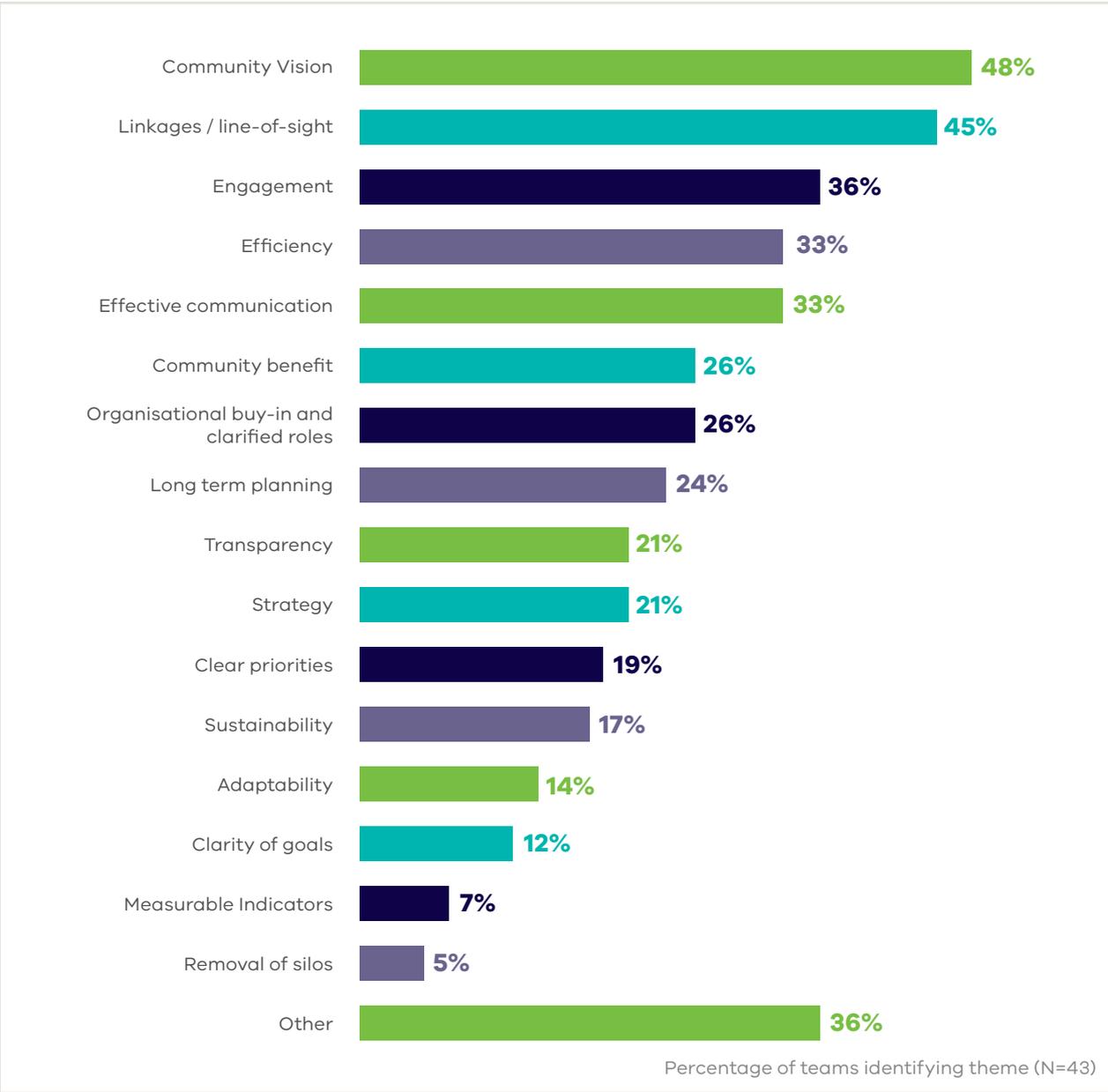
*'Budget is for accountants not for the community.'*

*'A place for 'Business as usual' to be captured in the planning process'*

**Q1.2**

## Q1.2 What would the ideal outcomes of integrated planning and reporting be?

Amongst the teams involved in this project, the ideal outcome would be integrated planning and reporting that is informed by the Community Vision and community engagement, with clear lines of sight and linkages from all documents through to the Community Vision. It would help improve efficiency, and be communicated in a way that was easily understood by all stakeholders (councillors, staff and the community).

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Community Vision | 48% |
| Linkages / line-of-sight | 45% |
| Engagement | 36% |
| Efficiency | 33% |
| Effective communication | 33% |
| Community benefit | 26% |
| Organisational buy-in and clarified roles | 26% |
| Long term planning | 24% |
| Transparency | 21% |
| Strategy | 21% |
| Clear priorities | 19% |
| Sustainability | 17% |
| Adaptability | 14% |
| Clarity of goals | 12% |
| Measurable Indicators | 7% |
| Removal of silos | 5% |
| Other | 36% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

**Q1.2**

## THEME
# Community Vision

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 20 | 48% |

**SUMMARY**

It is broadly recognised that the Community Vision should be at the top of the hierarchy of integrated planning. A number emphasised the importance of feeding back progress against this vision.

**QUOTES**

*'That the community outcomes are clearly articulated within the Community Vision'*

*'Community Engagement Policy to ensure the community has influence and sets the scene for ISPRF (Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework) delivery.'*

*'A better understanding of the vision and what the strategic plan is delivering'*

*'A community vision which clearly links to Council's 4 year strategic plan and long term financial and other strategies'*

*'Provide a roadmap and management framework for how the community vision will be achieved'*

*'That there's some accountability / monitoring and evaluation over the Community Vision and how the Council is tracking against it in the longer term.'*

## THEME
# Linkages / line-of-sight

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 19 | 45% |

**SUMMARY**

It will be important for the integrated planning to show linkages between all documents so that all stakeholders can see the line-of-sight of documents and work through the planning framework.

**QUOTES**

*'Levers interact so changes in one plan effect changes in others'*

*'Direct line of sight from all plans and staff performance through to Community Vision/Council Plan'*

*'Provides linkages using work that is done throughout the year with each engagement program, plan, strategy, group, so that they are easily accessible, and plugged in for other plans/strategies, without having to keep going out to the community for consultation.'*

*'Needs layers - high level overview, a deep breakdown of each part into more detail, and practical application of how it flows'*

*'Connection between strategic and operational planning and subsequent execution'*

**THEME**

# Engagement

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Appropriate engagement with the community is needed both to guide the development of the integrated plans, as well as communicating back the outcomes of council activities. In particular, a number of teams mentioned the need to adopt deliberative engagement practices.

**QUOTES**

*'Community has contributed through meaningful and appropriate engagement and can see how their input has helped shape their communities' long term directions'*

*'Our communities are appropriately engaged on what services local government can affordably deliver and maintain while managing risk.'*

*'Community satisfaction and increased ability to input through deliberative engagement processes'*

*'Engagement will need differing approaches, according to the different cultural/social/economic backgrounds and differing expectations; existing, new and emerging.'*

*'Inform, educate & adopt deliberative engagement practices as standard.'*

*'Ideal outcome would be that Council's actually get better and more deliberative feedback from the broader community'*

*'More Councillor engagement in the strategic planning process.'*

**THEME**

# Efficiency

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 14 | 33% |

**SUMMARY**

The integrated planning and reporting process should help avoid duplication and improve efficiency of council work.

**QUOTES**

*'That the outcomes of integrated planning and reports demonstrates the effective and efficient delivery of the community outcomes'*

*'Removal of duplication of reporting and effort'*

*'Effective and efficient implementation of council objectives.'*

*'Streamlined reporting systems and methods – reporting once but satisfying multiple requirements (at least internally).'*

*'Greater efficiencies as a result of a more seamless approach towards planning and reporting that results in a reduction in the level of resources needed.'*

**THEME**

# Effective communication

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 14 | 33% |

**SUMMARY**

Effectively communicating the documents and outcomes will be key, to councillors, staff, and the community (including external stakeholders).

**QUOTES**

*'The Community would understand how Council works, why all these strategies are necessary and where their input is required. The community would receive accurate, genuine and clear annual performance reporting'*

*'Needs to speak to different audiences, internal and external – community. One set of reporting – internal and external at the same time'*

*'Ideally, it would make it obvious to Council and the community how we are performing, and that the information is readily available'*

*'A community that understands Council priorities and Council priorities build on community needs'*

*'Councillors get the full picture of what the Council plan looks like to deliver'*

*'Raising awareness; clear view of financial capacity and constraints (what we have to provide/fund)'*

**THEME**

# Community benefit

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 11 | 26% |

**SUMMARY**

One of the key outcomes of integrated planning will be to achieve and demonstrate the benefit of council activities to the community.

**QUOTES**

*'Confidence we're delivering and investing the best mix of outputs (services and assets) to the community for the most benefit.'*

*'Striking the balance between meeting the objectives of council and meeting the expectations of the community.'*

*'Re-establish trust between the community and Council'*

*'Ideally, the articulated community aspirations, vision and needs are met and, overall, community wellbeing has been improved.'*

**THEME**

# Organisational buy-in and clarified roles

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 11 | 26% |

**SUMMARY**

Successful integrated planning and reporting requires buy-in from levels across the organisation and an understanding of the relevant role within the process.

**QUOTES**

*'Ideally the outcomes of integrated strategic planning and report could be, achieving a collective understanding and ownership (organisational) of an integrated approach towards strategic planning, monitoring and reporting. This is evidenced in the organisational culture and a joined up approach these functions and those activities that support organisational compliance with legislated planning and reporting obligations...The biggest win would be that staff understand what integrated planning and reporting actually is, what their roles are and it is valued rather than just seen as compliance exercise.'*

*'Supporting the organisation to understand its roles and responsibilities in terms of legislative requirements and organisational expectation.'*

*'Foster greater partnership as a whole organisation.'*

*'Improved organisational culture, including transcending organisational structure to collaborate for quality outcomes, and creating staff understanding of connections'*

*'Consistent and coordinated approach to planning and reporting that allows'*

**THEME**

# Long term planning

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 10 | 24% |

**SUMMARY**

Integrated planning can help ensure long term planning goals are met.

**QUOTES**

*'Make medium to longer planning easier, clearer and concise.'*

*'Looking further ahead than 4 years.'*

*'The other benefit would be for there to be realistic long term planning that allowed Councils to understand and address their long term financial sustainability'*

*'Consistent view of short, medium, long-term goals and what's required to achieve them.'*

*'For Councillor engagement/participation to consider longer term outcomes, beyond their tenure.'*

**Q1.2**

**THEME**

# Transparency

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 9 | 21% |

**SUMMARY**

A number of teams mentioned that transparency is one of the key outcomes of integrated planning. This includes transparency in decision making, allocation of resources, and reporting, particularly for the community.

**QUOTES**

*'It would facilitate clear and transparent planning and reporting, with the ideal outcome being that there would be greater transparency to the community.'*

*'Transparent and clear reporting on performance that makes sense to the community and simply communicates Council's achievements and progress against indicators.'*

*'Finally, the resources that councils have at their disposal are finite and scarce. An integrated planning and reporting framework will allow for the transparent, efficient and appropriate allocation of these resources.'*

**THEME**

# Strategy

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 9 | 21% |

**SUMMARY**

A strong strategic direction that is understood by both the Council and the community

**QUOTES**

*'Clear and consistent understanding between Council and community about what the strategic priorities are, how Council plans to achieve them and how community can influence them'*

*'Business plans which fully reflect the strategic goals of the organisation and the alignment is easy to see'*

*'Living/guiding document to drive strategic direction'*

*'Reporting that accurately reflect progress towards strategic goals rather than outputs'*

**THEME**

# Clear priorities

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

Integrated planning should help staff, councillors, the community, and other stakeholders understand council's priorities, direction, and commitments.

**QUOTES**

*'Clear direction and alignment will be good for community to see that as well – transparency will be another outcome.'*

*'Workforce Planning will enable the right resources to respond to strategic objectives and offer a better line of sight, improved accountability and less transactional approaches to the way we interact,'*

*'Clear and shared picture or direction of what we aim to achieve.'*

*'Coordinated alignment across key plans to integrate effort and direction to realise the Community Vision'*

*'Builds public trust, engagement and accountability, Council, stakeholder and community partnerships towards shared goals. Builds internal alignment around shared outcomes.'*

**Q1.2**

### THEME
# Sustainability

| Count | Percent |
|:-----:|:-------:|
| 7 | 17% |

**SUMMARY**

Ideally, integrated planning would help to ensure and demonstrate economic and environmental sustainability of the organisation, through the utilisation of long term planning.

**QUOTES**

'That every local government can demonstrate they are economically and environmentally sustainable'

'Provide sustainable long term financial & asset planning for the delivery of community priorities in the context of criticality & equity of access to services'

'Outcomes would flow and be integrated, high degree of connectivity. Reflective of community priorities and sustainability for the longer term'

'The other benefit would be for there to be realistic long term planning that allowed Councils to understand and address their long term financial sustainability while at the same time actually engaging with, understanding and seeking to address the communities aspirations.'

'Of utmost importance is the need to ensure the financial sustainability of councils, within the constraints of the rate capping environment that councils are mandated to work in.'

### THEME
# Adaptability

| Count | Percent |
|:-----:|:-------:|
| 6 | 14% |

**SUMMARY**

Councils often encounter changing circumstances, therefore ideally integrated reporting will be adaptable and flexible.

**QUOTES**

'Local government is responsive to changing circumstances.'

'Allow the organization to be more adaptive to respond to curve balls.'

'Consistency across the 79 LGs but with the ability to adapt.'

'Flexibility to report on what is relevant for our council and our vision/strategy'

### THEME
# Clarity of goals

| Count | Percent |
|:-----:|:-------:|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

Integrated planning can help provide clarity on organisational goals and plans to achieve these. This is particularly important to help the community understand the role of council.

**QUOTES**

'Knowing what you want to achieve in a timeframe and having action plans and deliverables to get there'

'Clarity on what council will deliver, how, what and why and its implications in terms of cost, benefit, services (including assets)'

'Clear and consistent understanding between Council and community about what the strategic priorities are, how Council plans to achieve them and how community can influence them'

'The community has a good understanding of what we're going to do, how we're going to resource it and whether we've done it or not'

'That the process is clear for council staff to follow around how to deliver on the required work of council and that there is a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the work undertaken to keep people / business units accountable to the organisation and community.'

THEME

# Measurable indicators

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

Indicators need to be measurable, relevant, transparent and easy for people to understand.

**QUOTES**

*'That there is relevant and transparent information to engage with the community on setting the visions, and the plans, to ensure also that there are clear performance indicators'*

*'Results on indicators which is easy for public to understand ensuring stakeholder satisfaction.'*

*'Actually measurable - if a vision is a motherhood statement, this is very difficult to measure, and any actions could be easily aligned.'*

THEME

# Removal of silos

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 2 | 5% |

**SUMMARY**

An ideal outcome would be the removal of work silos within the organisation.

**QUOTES**

*'Removal of silos (planning), all departments are utilising the same information and are aligned in what and how data and reporting is represented.'*

*'If we don't do it, people work in silos, helps council be less siloed.'*

THEME

# Other

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Other comments included improving value for Councils, improving the level of confidence of Councillors and the executive in how the organisation is delivering its objectives, being more coordinated and creating synergy between incoming and outgoing councils.

**QUOTES**

*'Delivery against desired outcomes...value for money.'*

*'Improved level of confidence of Councillors and executive on how the organisation is delivering on strategic and operational objectives in a coordinated way.'*
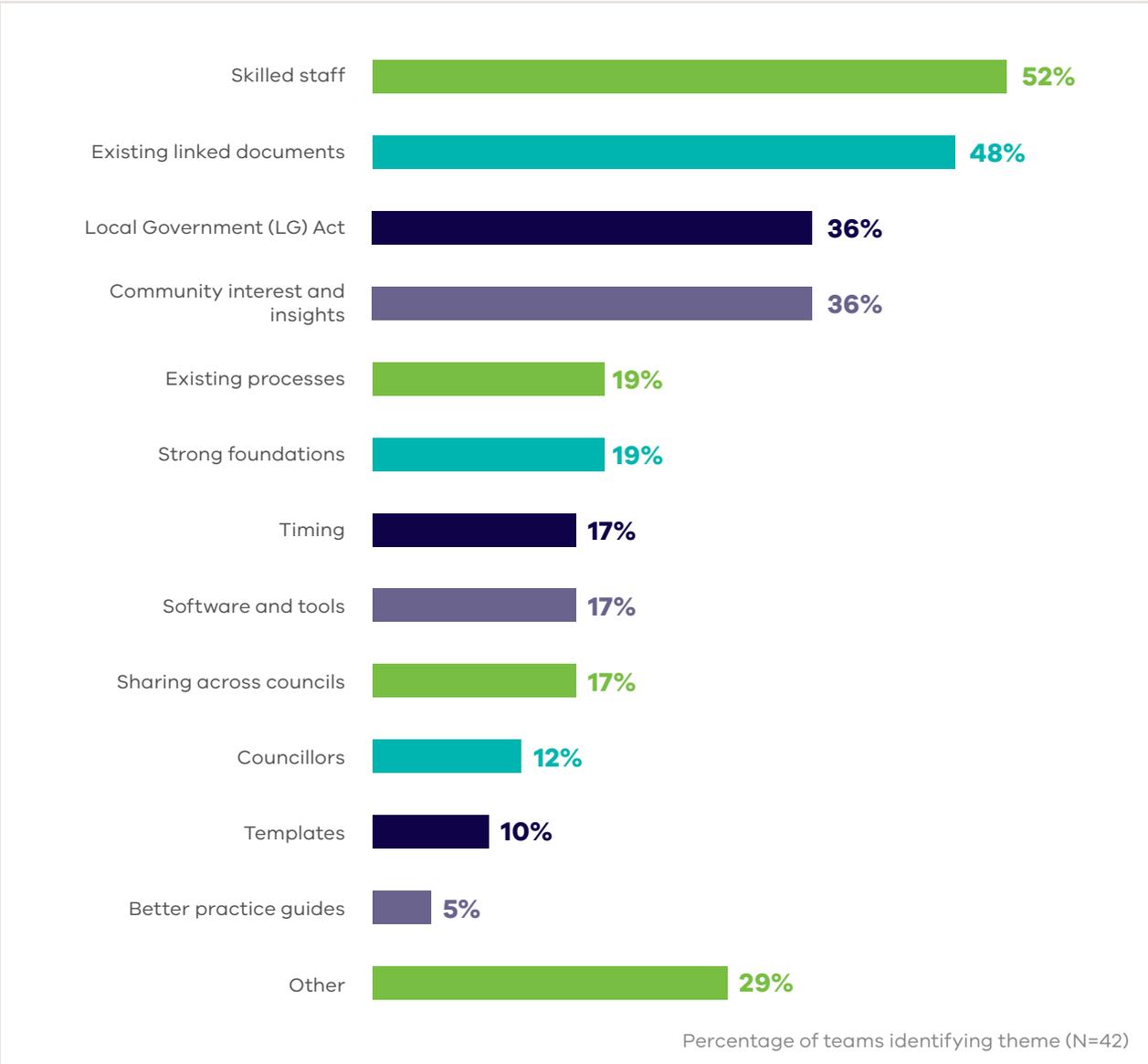
*'Eradicate single project focus by bringing all priorities into one collective view'*

*'To create synergies between incoming and outgoing councillors, to avoid singular self-interested views.'*

# Q2.1

## Q2.1 What are the 'tailwinds' that help you plan and report in an integrated way? How can we use these tailwinds to make integrated planning and reporting better?

Some councils are equipped with staff who are enthusiastic for the implementation of integrated planning and reporting framework, which can help generate buy-in across the organisation. Many councils have already been working on integrating key documents and have some of the required linkages already in place. The Act is seen as a critical foundation to mandate adoption of integrated planning and reporting, and some feel that the community will also be eager to contribute to its development.

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Skilled staff | 52% |
| Existing linked documents | 48% |
| Local Government (LG) Act | 36% |
| Community interest and insights | 36% |
| Existing processes | 19% |
| Strong foundations | 19% |
| Timing | 17% |
| Software and tools | 17% |
| Sharing across councils | 17% |
| Councillors | 12% |
| Templates | 10% |
| Better practice guides | 5% |
| Other | 29% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=42)

## THEME
# Skilled staff

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 22 | 52% |

**SUMMARY**

Many teams mentioned that they have a corporate culture and / or workforce familiar with or willing to adopt an integrated planning approach. Having staff with the appropriate skillset and experience is a tailwind. Strong leadership can help build momentum, maintain engagement and foster a sense of ownership and connection.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Understanding everyone's role and responsibility in the process - who leads, who drives, who provides input'*

*'Organisational culture of accountability to the public interest and community vision'*

*'Strong leadership, Good governance… Adequate resourcing – right people in the right job'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Get some strong sponsors or champions within the council to lead and get involved.'*

*'Strong leadership in guiding the direction and managing the relationship between the organisation and council.'*

*'Share the problem, tap into the collective knowledge and get buy in across the organisation and community to help solve the problem.'*

## THEME
# Existing linkages between documents

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 20 | 48% |

**SUMMARY**

Already having many (or all) of the necessary documents for the framework is seen as beneficial. Many councils already have clear linkages between documents (e.g. Council Plan and Budget). Clear linkages can help avoid duplication and provide sector-wide insights.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Link between the council plan and the annual plan each year - makes it clear on the outcomes and achievements and what council are spending on'*

*'Linkage between our Community Vision, Council Plan, Budget and Long-Term Infrastructure Plan.'*

*'Most Councils have already established good policies, strategies, visions, Council Plans, Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans that integrate with the financial statements.'*

*'Sharing the same strategic themes and priorities across the community plan and council plan, assist the organisation in understanding how priorities contribute to delivery of Council work.'*

**THEME**

# Local Government (LG) Act

| Count | Percent |
|---|---|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Having the Act is considered a tailwind as it provides a good foundation of requirements, and serves to mandate the adoption of an integrated framework.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Principles based, outcome focussed'*

*'Clear legislative requirements for the sector.'*

*'Ability to leverage off the Local Government Act 2020 to legitimately drive change toward integration'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Provide pro-forma guidance for creating and reviewing key plans in the framework, along with a best-practice reporting model'*

*'Leverage off Local Government Act 2020 and its principles to develop systems (approach and technological) to integrate, align and streamline planning and reporting.'*

**THEME**

# Community interest and insights

| Count | Percent |
|---|---|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Having a community that is interested in providing input, and systems in place (including software) to collect insights from the community can provide impetus for continuous improvement. Furthermore, these community insights can be used to drive the community vision and other documents.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Community has an appetite for being engaged in better democracy (particularly younger generations)'*

*'Community expectations, community groups, social media are great tailwinds and if Council isn't more transparent, it could be more damaging in the long run - community talks more freely these days.*

*'A community vision that clearly sets out the community's aspirations for the future - these are easy to understand and translate into a Council Plan and then operationalise and deliver'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Provides an impetus to review and enhance continuous improvement. Requires being efficient, questioning the role of LG in certain services, looking for different ways of doing delivery.'*

*'Widening the community reference point is the strongest anchor you can get. Articulates the strongest areas for the council to make a difference and balance the expectation amongst the many community groups.'*

*'Use community engagement mandate in Act to improve communications (ongoing and closing the loop) to stakeholders, first and foremost the community.*

**THEME**
# Existing processes

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

A number of teams said they already had processes in place that can assist in implementing the integrated reporting, embedding best practice and enabling continuous improvement.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Development of an annual Corporate Planning Calendar which helps us operationalise the framework on an annual basis, highlight dependencies and communicate expectations to the organisation.'*

*'Templates and processes – each council has their own processes, and everyone is satisfied to various degrees that they meet their needs'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Formalise, operationalise and embed best practice annual planning and reporting calendar/s that captures all of the elements in the integrated framework.'*

*'Ensure continuous improvement is embedded in process'*

**THEME**
# Strong foundations

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

The framework being built on past requirements is beneficial as it means that some councils have already undertaken much of the necessary work to meet the legislative requirements. Some have strong foundations in governance, leadership and processes that can make the transition smoother.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Established strategic planning and reporting framework for corporate planning and reporting'*

*'Having a longer term vision, particularly the Asset Plan, the Workforce plan'*

*'Good foundational activities, i.e., budget allocations, skilled and experienced staff, governance arrangements and monitoring'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Use tailwinds to have a rigorous approach to be less '"busy-ness"", prevent duplication, maintain focus'*

*'Take learnings of 'what worked / is working' and embed these into the new framework'*

**THEME**
# Timing

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 17% |

**SUMMARY**

The introduction of the new Act just prior to council elections was seen to be good timing by some, especially given all councils will be undertaking the process at the same time. This introduces the opportunity for councils to learn from and support each other.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Timing – new Act, new elections - All at a review/beginning stage'*

*'All Councils are doing this same piece of integrated planning at the same time.'*

*'Legislative dates and process is currently clear but bureaucratic'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'More formalised support groups of like Councils that can discuss issues and opportunities that arise during the process of developing the framework.'*

*'New Councils / Elections are an opportunity to set new expectations and build greater understanding of the benefits of integrated strategic planning, within a complex political environment.'*

**THEME**
# Software and tools

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 17% |

**SUMMARY**

The availability of technology, tools and software to assist is seen as a tailwind. These include software systems to help manage data capture / engagement, project management, planning, reporting, and analytics, as well as innovative communications tools that support community engagement. These tools foste opportunities for collaboration and more meaningful use of data.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Strong systems for capturing data'*

*'Access to fit for purpose planning and reporting software i.e. Pulse software... Access to information in a simplified way i.e. dashboard reporting, this takes significant time to establish but once done, the process is easier after this'*

*'Having a strategic planning and reporting software to coordinate plans and commitments'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Could councils use LGPRF/ 'Know Your Council' website as a central site for data sets.'*

*'Software such as PowerBi as well as many others give Councils the ability to understand the impact of strategies and initiatives. But we need to agree on a system that we all use so we have much more buying power as a group of 79 Councils than as a single one'*

THEME
# Sharing across councils

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 17% |

**SUMMARY**

The ability to share experiences, resources and ideas across councils through Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and other knowledge sharing opportunities can be used to build consistency across the sector and improve efficiency.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Strong industry and profession already in asset and corporate planning; lots of cross functional capacity'*

*'Cross council collaboration= Increase knowledge and awareness across council of integrated planning process'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Utilise shared knowledge within councils to build consistency across sector'*

*'Leverage off current networks, e.g. Regional networks…Opening up and promoting networks like the LGPro Corporate Planners Special Interest Group'*

THEME
# Councillors

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

Councillor enthusiasm for integrated planning, and their community networks, can be used to help drive transparency in performance. However, councillor funding requests will need to be managed to ensure the integrity of the framework.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Councillor first voice of the community (they have really good networks).'*

*'Councillors also looking for this approach and want to understand more and it is encouraging to see it done especially with the act - the impetus similar to other acts e.g. charities act.'*

*'Councillors' ownership of the plan'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Build on the need for Councils/Councillors to work towards transparency of performance through the framework : reporting on kpi's for example and regularly and build on capability to change mindsets.'*

*'Funding prioritisation not based on any set criteria, prioritisation can be based on Councillor requests too often.'*

*'Ensuring Councillors are across the complexity of this work and understand Strategic Integrated Planning.'*

**Q2.1**

THEME
# Templates

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 10% |

**SUMMARY**

Templates are considered to be helpful, although they need to be updated to incorporate improvements.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Updated reported templates linking back to vision/council plan'*

*'Consistency and templates - LGs aren't that different in their needs'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Regular review and updating of templates and processes to incorporate improvements'*

THEME
# Better practice guides

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 2 | 5% |

**SUMMARY**

Better practice guides can help councils learn from the experiences of others.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'Better practice guides have been good and worthwhile – model budget and annual accounts are more aligned and linked.'*

*'Best practice guidance has been really useful - planning and reporting Strategic Resource Plan (SRP), budget, Annual Report - helps overcome lack of corporate knowledge.'*

**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'The model budget helps create a basic structure and is reasonably in good order and if Councils used the guidance of the model budget – this could be a one shoe fits all approach.'*

*'Training required in the development and delivery of corporate documents - be able to use expertise in other councils.'*

**Q2.1**

# Other

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 12 | 29% |

**SUMMARY**

A range of other ideas were put forth as tailwinds, such as available grant opportunities from Commonwealth and State Government, increased consultation between Local and State Governments, and partnerships with other government agencies, businesses and community.

**WHAT ARE THE 'TAILWINDS' THAT HELP YOU PLAN AND REPORT IN AN INTEGRATED WAY?**

*'There are going to be many grant opportunities to assist with seeking commonwealth and state funding for recovery.'*

*'Increased consultation between Local and State Governments on the planning at the State level and how this will impact local communities'*

*'Rate capping – Focus on cost'*

*'Level of accountability and transparency ...LGPRF  - management check list'*

*'Partnerships with our community'*

*'Appetite for change. The intent and purpose of integrated strategic planning is recognised as a 'no brainer', the challenge lies in 'how' to embed it across 79 vastly different Councils and their services'*
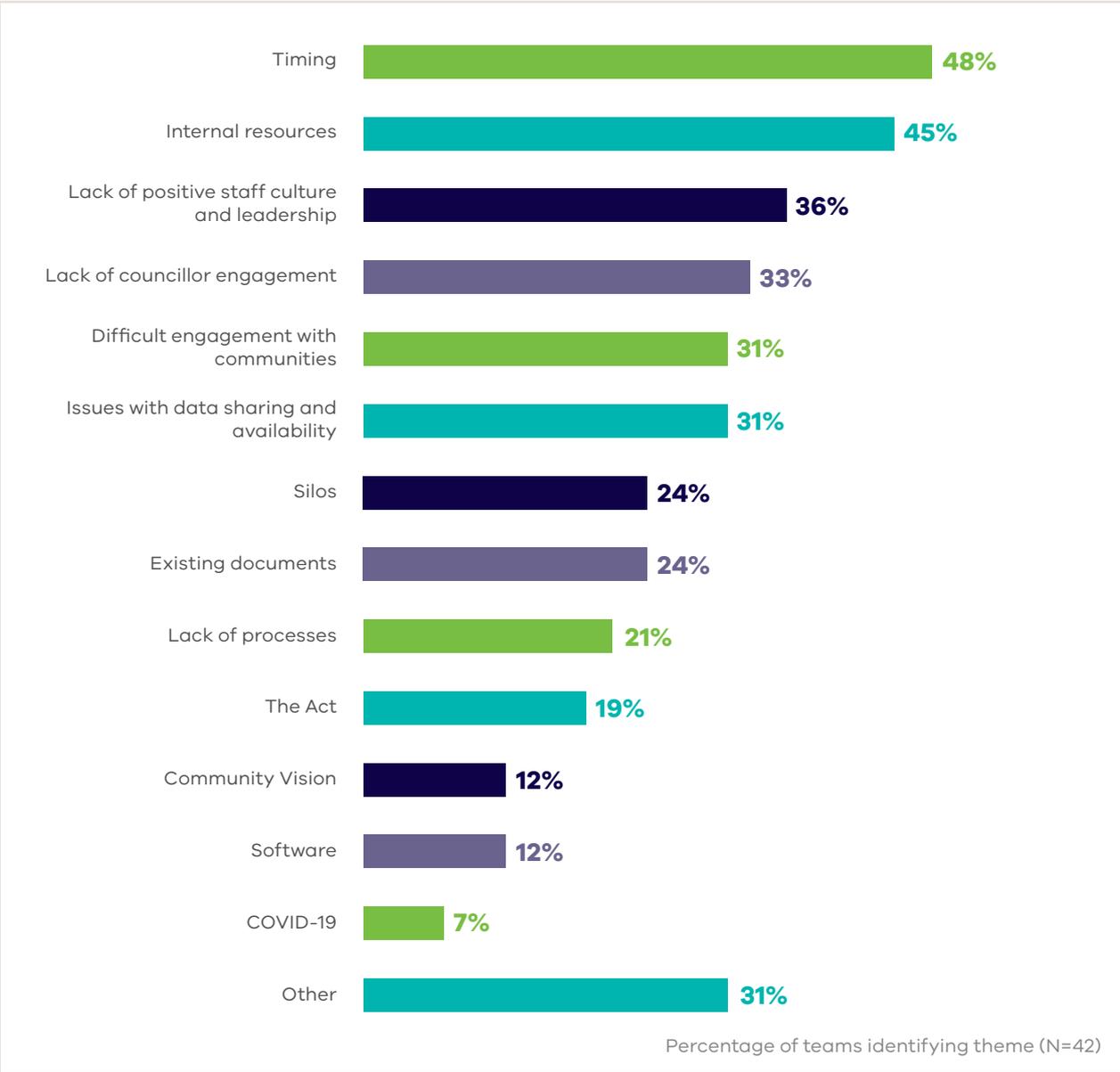
**HOW CAN WE USE THESE TAILWINDS?**

*'Help make sure that the outcomes of the integrated planning position Councils well for seeking grant funding.'*

*'Understanding how we leverage these partnerships more effectively and ensuring that all agencies know what their defined role is and the boundaries of those roles. This includes other government entities, local agencies, NFP's, businesses, volunteers, community/sporting groups.'*

## Q2.2 What are 'roadblocks' that hinder integrated planning and reporting currently? How can we overcome these in the future?

The timing for implementation may be challenging for some councils initially, but also in the future when document review cycles don't line up (4 year versus 10 year). Some councils don't have the funds to undertake integrated planning or indeed implement the community vision. Furthermore, lack of staff knowledge and experience regarding strategic planning can also prove challenging, and the culture of departmental silos can hinder true integration. There may be a need to bring councillors and the community on the journey to improve engagement and enhance understanding.

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Timing | 48% |
| Internal resources | 45% |
| Lack of positive staff culture and leadership | 36% |
| Lack of councillor engagement | 33% |
| Difficult engagement with communities | 31% |
| Issues with data sharing and availability | 31% |
| Silos | 24% |
| Existing documents | 24% |
| Lack of processes | 21% |
| The Act | 19% |
| Community Vision | 12% |
| Software | 12% |
| COVID-19 | 7% |
| Other | 31% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=42)

## THEME
# Timing

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 20 | 48% |

**SUMMARY**

Whilst some teams thought the timing was a tailwind (given the upcoming council elections), many teams considered timing to be a roadblock, specifically due to the need for all the planning to occur at the same time and very quickly. There were concerns that the pandemic and council elections could impact on councils' ability to meet timeframes, especially with the need to undertake deliberative engagement on key documents. The appropriateness of document terms (4 years, 10 years) was also questioned by some groups, noting a lack of alignment of review years.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Annual cycle/ planning: too small a window to plan within – med to long term planning will help address planning.'*

*'Current timing for delivering the key documents for the Act is too tight.  A bottleneck for delivery has been created, with the Covid-19 pandemic also having impacts.... Speed of change means 4Yr and 10Yr Financial and Asset plans become outdated quickly.'*

*'Misalignment of 10-year Community Vision/Asset Plan horizons and 4-year Council Plan/Budget horizons given asset creation lead-times and useful asset life timeframes.'*

*'Timeframe and resources to implement an integrated strategic planning framework and clearly communicate it, bring our community along on the journey and engage meaningfully with them to ensure their input has impact'*

*'Time for deliberative engagement for every piece that makes part of Integrated Planning'*

*'Budget needing to be adopted by June 30 means that the Budget will not effectively represent resourcing/delivery of the Council Plan.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Better use of trended data to support decision making '*

*'Reduce prescriptive detail for these 10Yr Plans,4 yearly review of 10Yr plans may be reasonable if uncertainties are manageable.  This refresh would be aligned with a council's 4yr planning cycle for a new Council Plan.  A mid-term review may be triggered if there is a need to change assumptions.'*

*'Timeframe and resource requirements for strategic work and their associated implementation requirements should be identified upfront and processes for doing this should be embedded in key documents (e.g. CE Policy).'*

**Q2.2**

THEME

# Internal resources

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 19    | 45%     |

**SUMMARY**

Finding budgets to resource integrated planning may be challenging for some councils, with concerns that rate capping may not leave councils with sufficient finances to implement community priorities. Furthermore, finding staff with the experience to undertake the work may also be challenging for some councils.

These concerns could be addressed through better budget prioritisation processes, grants, guidance documents and staff training.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Resourcing of Councils varies significantly across the State yet the expectation and requires are that same.'*

*'Resourcing and capacity of councils in a constrained environment'*

*'Costing of proposed actions, and identification of funding streams to be undertaken when strategies are developed. Funding to be considered in context to the Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Shared service arrangements? Or linked up planning?'*

*'Budget to deliver on the council plan priorities and requirements.'*

*'Advocacy and grant seeking from State and Federal Governments... Special low-interest loans for sector initiatives and payment shared across all councils.'*

*'Prioritising what needs to get done based on objective evidence. Asset plans will certainly help with this but business/service planning will be of greater importance.'*

*'Improved planning for funding and resources.'*

*'Articulate with Government departments (internal) any funding issues related to planning & reporting, and as a group work out how to overcome these.'*

**THEME**

# Lack of positive staff culture and leadership

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 36% |

**SUMMARY**

Whilst some teams mentioned organisational culture and staff skills as a tailwind for integrated planning and reporting, others mentioned that it was a roadblock. The main challenge identified was a lack of staff interest or experience in strategic planning. Teams said this could be overcome by working on organisational culture and staff training.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Capabilities of officers in strategic planning and thinking'*

*'Engagement of Senior Management to buy into an integrated approach – varies amongst Councils.'*

*'Internal ownership and accountability of planning tasks and lack of value placed on collaboration, coordination and community accountability. Asking busy people to change (shifting management approach).'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Ensure that Senior mgmt. understand the benefits of integration, by demonstrating the outcomes and how this helps with strategic and critical thinking.'*

*'Establish Executive oversight and management accountabilities in the development and management of integrated planning and reporting.'*

*'Improve culture to be more positive and can do, more strategic including strategic leadership. This needs to be modelled by the senior leadership team, building a better culture, including education and skill building on how to achieve better integrated planning.'*

**THEME**

# Lack of councillor engagement

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 14 | 33% |

**SUMMARY**

Similar issues to staffing are reported from a councillor perspective, with the perception that councillors may have a lack of engagement with or understanding of the strategic element of integrated planning and reporting. Suggestions for overcoming these roadblocks include building capacity through training and managing expectations.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Councillor engagement in council plan.... Getting people interested in Asset Plans (how to get people interested/engaged in that?)'*

*'Councillors may engage with lobby groups, and may want to push a particular agenda, which could prevent the integrated planning principles... Short-termism and immediate agenda needs by Councillors may prevent longer term plans.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Building the capacity of candidates/then Councillors to recognise their ability to contribute to longer-term shared goals and to harness the technical skill of staff and make the most of the strategic and leadership roles and functions of councils.'*

*'More expectations set out of the strategic nature of the Councillor role and the link to the Community Vision holistically (mitigate individual short term agendas).'*

*'Training for the councillors and their responsibilities at the strategic level...Additional training in early stages to build culture, trust relationships... Provided by someone external to council.'*

THEME
# Difficult engagement with communities

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 13 | 31% |

**SUMMARY**

Although some teams mentioned community engagement as a tailwind, others mentioned it as a roadblock, specifically the challenges of doing community engagement well and counteracting low engagement from the community or capturing diverse voices. The challenge of engaging with the community with COVID-19 restrictions in place was also raised. Ideas for overcoming this roadblock include using councillors as advocates for engagement, and improving consultation methods and scheduling.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Diversity of communities, it is difficult to have one community vision that speaks for everyone'*

*'Councils are sometimes afraid of their community and it becomes a vicious cycle of lack of trust'*

*'The internal appetite for community engagement, some departments approach is to 'inform' the community rather than demonstrate deliberate engagement…The level of participation in community engagement – it tends to be the same groups, who tend to disagree, that engage with Council.'*

*'Ability to engage all of the community - we want to hear from those we don't normally hear from.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Do we start with Councillors who are elected to represent the community?'*

*'Opens up opportunities for different forms of community engagement with new technologies in place. Also allows for a stop and think about what community engagement actually is and become more creative in our approach.'*

*'Establish a consultation calendar to coordinate calls to the community for input so as to prioritise and not exhaust the community.'*

*'Understand who you're trying to target and provide them with options to consult'*

**THEME**
# Issues with data sharing and availability

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 13 | 31% |

**SUMMARY**

Data related roadblocks include KPIs not aligning with strategies, lack of data sharing, and poor timing of data availability. Potential ways to overcome these roadblocks include making KPIs more dynamic and making measurement more meaningful and timely.

### WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?

*'Data is stored in numerous locations and extremely difficult to draw relationships between cause and effects'*

*'At times the way we have captured the deliverables/actions in our plans limit the capacity for us to reliably measure and report on the achievement of our objectives – we need to set SMART objectives that support objective reporting'*

*'Lack of strategic, data driven planning'*

*'Top-level management KPIs can be contradictory to the benefit of the community'*

### HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?

*'Looking at a solution together as Local Government and not as a single Council. Maybe through MAV or something like that.'*

*'As an industry we need to better align Outcomes and Outputs – measuring what you are trying to achieve in meaningful ways. More accountable.'*

*'Make KPIs more dynamic, consider possible conflicts as a result of these KPIs and put in place real, reportable safeguards against them.'*

*'Lining up data to be ready for council planning processes... need a data centre – one stop shop for demographics – that is updated regularly and accessible for LGs and reflects local level access. Release available data from State level (e.g., housing, pop demographics, Child protection).'*

**THEME**
# Silos

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 10 | 24% |

**SUMMARY**

Departmental silos within councils present challenges to true integrating planning and reporting, with some teams reporting challenges related to internal council teams not wanting to work together. Teams said linkages between documents should help overcome this roadblock, and that it could also be addressed through measuring performance through community outcomes (which span multiple business teams).

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Disconnection and lack of understanding of what is driving what and decision making, connecting dots would help to eliminate silos and achieve a common understanding of what everyone is doing'*

*'Siloed approaches exacerbated by Councils structure, competing KPIs, traditional practices, staff and thinking'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Identify key points in planning process where organisational collaboration and co-design should be encouraged and enabled.'*

*'Organise, incentivise, and measure performance of business units, teams, and departments based on community outcomes – being the services as the community view them.'*

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 10 | 24% |

**THEME**
# Existing documents

**SUMMARY**

Whilst many teams mentioned that pre-existing documents were a tailwind, others felt that this could present a roadblock. Specifically, there are many pre-existing strategies which are not included in the framework which could prove challenging to link and may not work together. It was suggested this could be overcome by integrating key municipal strategies into the framework, service planning or undertaking more work to create linkages.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Council Plan: Council's role not clear, Need to include the key partnerships in achieving the strategic objectives i.e. Police, SCHS etc. Unsophisticated system used to track performance against Council Plan, Limited budget allocated, Too many strategies.'*

*'Proliferation of existing strategies (with their own action plans) is affecting line-of-sight to Vision or Council Plan'*

*'Presentation of council items in isolation of consideration of strategic planning and resource documents'*

*'There is a significant gap in that service delivery (BAU) is not a core component of the Council Plan, nor the strategic planning process and as such many services create additional strategies to raise their profile with Council...Strategic planning is not linked to operational planning.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Revise the framework to include 'Key Municipal Strategies' as a link between Vision and Council Plan. Encourage councils to identify their Key Municipal Strategies, and then explore opportunities to consolidate - one for each theme in the Vision. All other lower-order strategies refocused as Actions Plans to enable the Key Municipal Strategies (see City of Melbourne model).'*

*'An oversight team that can guide the connections to ensure we do develop a suite of integrated plans - it can be challenging to change how people have done things in the past, this will help with accountability'*

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 9 | 21% |

**THEME**
# Lack of processes

**SUMMARY**

Some teams suggested that their organisations didn't have the processes in place to smoothly implement integrated planning or reporting. This could be overcome through sector learnings and advice, and additional internal resourcing.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Too onerous & overly bureaucratic process with no clear purpose at times, therefore no buy in which leads to no accountability.'*

*'Not optimal work planning, if work planning came down more linearly from the council plan, business unit plans, into individual team work plans and personal work plans.'*

*'Not having adequately defined processes that have buy in across the organisation.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Resourcing the capacity and development of strategy'*

*'Adopt mandatory organisational strategic planning processes.'*

*'The legislation of the integrated planning and reporting does give focus.'*

THEME
# The Local Government Act

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

### SUMMARY

Whilst many teams saw the usefulness of the Act to mandate integrated planning and reporting, others felt that it uses inaccessible language and doesn't provide clear enough direction. Potential ways to overcome this would be through the use of simplified language and clearer guidance / templates.

### WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?

*'Lack of understanding of the terminology and the definitions of all the components.'*

*'No clear direction on development and implementation of other strategic plans'*

*'Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and LGA 2020 don't cross refer and expectations regarding leadership/ strategic roles of councils not consolidated.'*

### HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?

*'Simple communication material for planning leads in Council to use with internal stakeholders, and participating community.'*

*'Tools to provide guidance.'*

*'Also ensure that any reporting back to LGV or other Government body is structured and made the same for all Councils. Similar to the LGPRF – all councils need to answer the same performance measures.'*

THEME
# Community Vision

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

### SUMMARY

Further guidance regarding the Community Vision is needed by some councils, specifically what it should include and how to monitor progress.

### WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?

*'Community Vision - Not enough detail, not integrated, not clear on Council's role, no KPI or outcomes articulated , not enough data available for our region to assist with performance reporting (if available it is too old)'*

*'Performance monitoring of progress against Community Vision. We review progress of each Council Plan and don't really report this back to the Community Vision.'*

*'Integrate Community Vision expected outcomes into the annual and 4 yearly reporting cycle.'*

| | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 12% |

**THEME**

# Software

**SUMMARY**

Some teams reported that their councils don't have the appropriate software to implement integrated planning and reporting and are often working with too many systems that don't talk to each other. Suggestions for overcoming this mostly included investing in appropriate software and training.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'Limited access to or use of technology or software to support effective planning, monitoring and reporting'*

*'Limited financial/IT integration with strategic planning platform, but would be helpful'*

*'Systems such as excel, do not provide the security to data and user friendliness to be efficient across the organisation.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'By streamlining reporting systems and methods. Reducing reporting requirements and methods.'*

*'Further investment in evaluation and business intelligence analysis. Support Corporate Planning Software (example, Pulse, Corporate Planning and Reporting).'*

| | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 7% |

**THEME**

# COVID-19

**SUMMARY**

COVID-19 introduces challenges relating to undertaking engagement but also highlights the challenges of maintaining planning and reporting in crisis situations. Suggestions for overcoming this roadblock include providing tools to help deal with volatility and allowing for flexibility within the framework.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'The volatility of the world we live in, and impacts to long term planning, e.g. pandemics or natural disasters.'*

**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THESE IN THE FUTURE?**

*'Need to be better in control of the things/elements that we are in control of, e.g. obtaining a sector wide system for managing key element outputs, i.e. Asset Management.'*

*'Opportunity to look at community planning and council planning from a different angle. Also opportunity to look at the need to build flexibility into the planning framework. With the likely economic downturn looming, a strategic integrated planning approach for supporting the community and delivering on Council objectives is needed now more than ever before.'*

*'There is still great opportunity to look and shape what communities look like coming out of the pandemic.'*

| Count | Percent |
|:-----:|:-------:|
| 13 | 31% |

**THEME**

# Other

**SUMMARY**

Other roadblocks include politics, linkages to external organisations, and the extent of reporting requirements across the sector.

**WHAT ARE 'ROADBLOCKS' THAT HINDER INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CURRENTLY?**

*'The political actors (councillors, other government agencies) – don't always think objectively, or long term strategically, the political interference impacts what has been agreed in the Council Plan/Community Vision.  The ISPF and deliberative democracy will help with this.'*

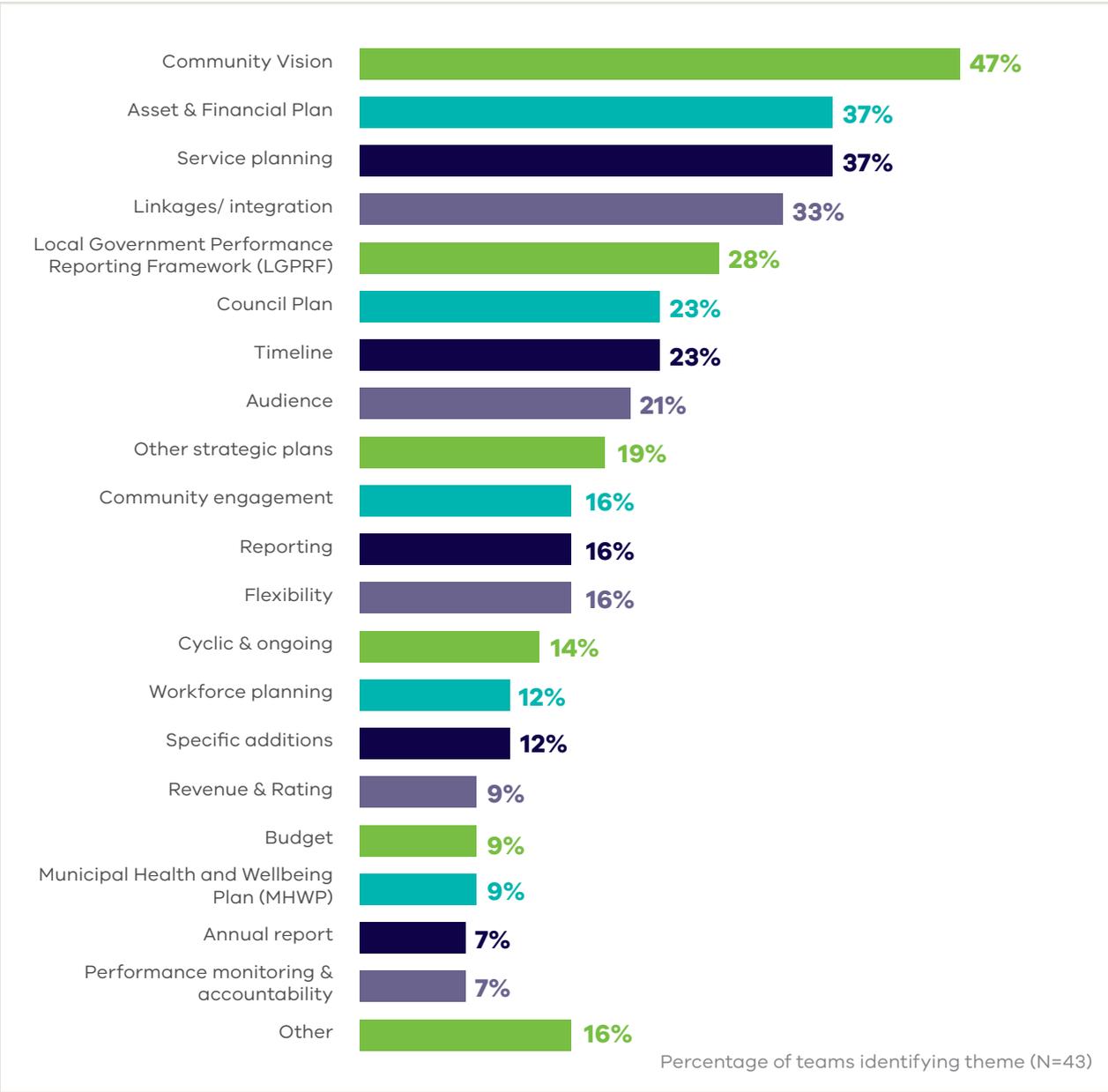*'Linkages with local organisations, State and Federal agencies – strategic directions'*

*'There is so much reporting to so many different agencies (ESC, VAGO, LGV, ABS, even MAV, and COVID-19 is adding another layer). ESC, VAGO and LGV should sit down together and rationalise, cutting out duplication and unnecessary overlapping. LGV could provide online tools for necessary engagement and reporting to simplify the process for Councils and provide consistency. Tools like the LGPRF template are a good start but are glitchy and don't work with common tools like HPE'*

*'The nature of politics and the influence this has on short term objectives that conflict with long term objectives / community vision.'*

# Q3.1

## Q3.1 What would you add, change or remove from the framework to make it a better reference document? Why is this idea important?

The framework could be made clearer by moving the Community Vision to the top of the hierarchy, better showing linkages between the Asset and Financial Plan with other elements, making service planning more prominent, better demonstrating the linkages between the elements (perhaps with a cyclical diagram) and by better demonstrating the ties between the LGPRF and the Annual Report (perhaps even removing the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF).

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Community Vision | 47% |
| Asset & Financial Plan | 37% |
| Service planning | 37% |
| Linkages/ integration | 33% |
| Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) | 28% |
| Council Plan | 23% |
| Timeline | 23% |
| Audience | 21% |
| Other strategic plans | 19% |
| Community engagement | 16% |
| Reporting | 16% |
| Flexibility | 16% |
| Cyclic & ongoing | 14% |
| Workforce planning | 12% |
| Specific additions | 12% |
| Revenue & Rating | 9% |
| Budget | 9% |
| Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP) | 9% |
| Annual report | 7% |
| Performance monitoring & accountability | 7% |
| Other | 16% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

**THEME**

# Community Vision

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 20 | 47% |

**SUMMARY**

There was a desire for the framework to more clearly show that the community vision is at the top of the hierarchy with all documents within the framework linking through to it, and for the vision to be longer than a 10 year document. One team also mentioned that the act doesn't require reporting on the Community Vision so this should be clearer.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'More clarification on what 'Reporting on Community Vision' looks like - Clarify minimum requirements of Act. This submission recommends any reporting on the Vision is done through annual reporting on the Council Plan.'*

*'Placement of the Community Vision – should be at the top of the Hierarchy, ideally all plans should relate/ reference it'*

*'Is framework meant to be strongly hierarchical or is it more iterative – should be one or another. If hierarchical, vision should be pinnacle.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'The Act does not mention community vision reporting so this could be misleading, how Councils do this will vary from Council to Council so should not be prescribed but left for each Council to determine their approach'*

*'A clear high-level document that aligns to the plans that can be picked up and understood by community and council, and that aligns to the community vision and assist in keeping Councils accountable to the vision'*

## THEME
# Asset & Financial Plan

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 16    | 37%     |

**SUMMARY**

It is felt that the diagram doesn't clearly show how the Asset and Financial Plans link to other documents within the framework. There was also mention of the need to align the Asset Plan with Service Planning, and perhaps clarify the scope (is it the Long Term Infrastructure Plan?).

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'The Community Vision and Council plan are visibly connected, but Asset and Financials Plans (connected to the budget) are not connected more strategically via the framework diagram. These should be explicitly connected to the Council Plan and Community Vision'*

*'Asset plan and financial plan needs to be linked to the Community vision and inform both Council Planning and budgets and other plans such as service planning, social infrastructure, workforce planning, etc.'*

*'The asset and financial plans need to connect and inform the Council Plan BEFORE influencing the budget.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Support councils by identifying the assumptions and parameters to be considered that will benefit the creation of these plans and provide more clarity on the key deliverables to be found within these two documents'*

*'The community would benefit from a greater awareness of earlier/current commitments, asset creation lead-times and useful asset life, whilst a first-hand appreciation of long-term community aspirations and service level requirements would enable a proactive asset management approach (e.g. re-purposing or strategic disposal) that would better inform the Council Plan and Budget.'*

## THEME
# Service Planning

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 16    | 37%     |

**SUMMARY**

Many felt that Service Planning should be more prominent within the framework, and more closely aligned with Asset, Financial and Workforce Planning.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Greater emphasis on Service Planning at all levels of the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework (ISPF)'*

*'Business and service planning - How do we factor ongoing service delivery into the framework, recognizing the importance of this planning, but also understanding the demands and constraints that are already placed on council staff (particularly rural councils with smaller staff numbers)'*

*'Define the need for a "Service Plan" that outlines the list of services, roles, and functions that Council provides and collates the quality, level of service, resources, assets and cost for each service.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Understanding the outcomes through the Community Vision can better inform Services and Service planning for mid to long term. Service planning goes beyond operational and short to midterm, particularly in relation to robust Asset Management and Financial Management planning'*

*'Service planning should be reviewed ongoing but it must first be established within the same level of alignment as the Asset Plan and Financial Plan, as these are enablers relative to the prescribed services, roles, functions and levels of service – driven by the vision and Council Plan.'*

**THEME**

# Linkages/ integration

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 14 | 33% |

**SUMMARY**

Some felt that the framework diagram doesn't show all of the linkages between documents. In particular, it doesn't show inputs and outputs for each aspect, or how documents influence each other. Two teams suggested that it is too linear and needs to be more circular to incorporate the feedback loop.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Still presents as a flowchart. Doesn't necessarily present all aspects as being integrated and informing one another. It appears too linear, which will result in some documents informing others but not an integrated approach where all documents both inform and are informed by the other aspects of the framework.'*

*'Does not pick up on the feedback/iterative plan part (e.g., business planning and policy can feedback and influence budget and workforce planning).'*

*'Must have a feedback loop. Needs to be more circular'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'It's meant to be integrated. All documents inform one another and all need to be tackled at the one time. This is critical to understanding the long-term financial position and the long term asset needs.'*

**THEME**

# Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF)

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 12 | 28% |

**SUMMARY**

The positioning of the LGPRF elements was questioned, with the suggestion that it should be either removed or directly aligned with the annual report.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'The LGPRF doesn't need to be separately shown in the framework - A council's LGPRF sits within the annual report and is not separate.'*

*'LGPRF (Local Government Performance Reporting) should have a two way arrow to the annual report'*

*'LGPRF is a handy reporting reference for process measures. However, the framework's short-medium and longer term reporting doesn't suggest a 'golden thread', i.e., we do these initiatives/actions (provide an inclusive, informal mental health outreach service through attendance at storytime at the library) because they contribute to an impact'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'The annual report should be within the LGPRF.  Reconsider the flow of arrows to more clearly articulate this'*

*'Informs the community that performance of Council is being monitored by State Govt and compared to other LGA's'*

**THEME**

# Council Plan

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 10 | 23% |

**SUMMARY**

Some teams want clarity about the positioning, content and scope of the Council Plan, and to clearly show that reporting on this document occurs through the Annual Report.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Council Plan – greater degree of high level strategic and financial framework will create a stronger linkage to asset plan, financial plan and budget (now as one document). Current effort is in producing different views of the same information and less about the outcomes or insights that you derive.'*

*'There is a need to detail the key activities to be undertaken by Council to implement the strategies outlined in the Council Plan. It must list: What are we doing; When are we doing it; and How much do it cost. It needs to include detail of what will be delivered and performance measures. This needs to be in the 4-year column tied to the budget process.'*

*'Pivot the framework to show Vision to Council plan top down. Provide line of sight to strategic risk within the framework (against Council Plan).'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'So stakeholders can see exactly what is happening, when and how it will be measured. Address the full range of council's operations. Is the key 'go to' document for councillors, staff and the community. It connects (integrates) to the Asset, Financial and Workforce Plans.'*

**THEME**

# Timeline

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 10 | 23% |

**SUMMARY**

The display of the framework doesn't clearly articulate the timeline, with a suggestion that it be rotated so that the timeline component occurs across the top of the diagram. There were also some suggestions for longer document timeframes (e.g. 30 year plans).

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Consider simplified format to focus on the different timescales and key decisions at those timescales: 30yr – land-use planning; 10+yr – community vision, financial and asset planning; 4yr – Council initiatives and priorities, budget and service programs.'*

*'It would be beneficial if the planning hierarchy went from top to bottom and not across to demonstrate the hierarchy better.'*

*'It is not clear if policy and strategy review are really going over the ten years or one year or four – that bottom section is a little muddy.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Better two-way communication between community, reporting and planning.'*

**THEME**

# Audience

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 9 | 21% |

**SUMMARY**

Some questioned who the intended audience of the framework is. If it is the community then it will need to be simplified so that it makes sense to the layperson.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'One version for community one for professionals – one audience looking for how to influence, one for how to deliver. Translate into lay friendly language that is accessible to the community / average audience'*

*'Clarify if the framework is for internal use, for the community, or for both?'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Many need to understand the framework, across the Council, community, partners and stakeholders, so keep it simple'*

*'Looks messy, too many arrows, (what do the colours mean? E.g. financial audit grey other performance items yellow) should be readily understood by LG practitioners and community'*

**THEME**

# Other strategic plans

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 8 | 19% |

**SUMMARY**

The current diagram doesn't show how other strategic plans integrate with the framework. Adding a section to demonstrate how other strategies integrate could help.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'The current diagram might be displayed differently to better show how 'other strategic plans' should be within the Council Plan not separate too'*

*'Perhaps there could be a strategic section (with 10 and 4 year documents) and those that operationalise those plans (e.g.. Implementation plans, business plans, individual plans, etc.)'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Need to emphasise the cross functional input to developing strategies and plan collectively and holistically not in isolation of one another.'*

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 16% |

**THEME**

# Community engagement

**SUMMARY**

In addition to providing more information about community engagement (practices, processes etc.), it would be helpful to show which elements require deliberative engagement as per legislation.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Adding in Community Engagement practices, process and policy review and evaluation into the Cyclical section at the bottom as a 4th area.'*

*'Should indicate where community engagement applies to the various plans and strategies. It should be clear where legislated engagement applies and where it is recommended.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Participatory budgeting process which was tried by few Victorian councils. Community engagement is vital for local governments as councils are there to represent community.'*

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 16% |

**THEME**

# Reporting

**SUMMARY**

There was a call for further clarification on the project reporting component and where the linkages lie, so that it doesn't seem to only relate to finances. There was also a suggestion to add capital reporting, and provide resources to help councils better report financials in a way that is understood by the community.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Change 'Financial Audit' to 'Financial and Performance Audit' - In the Framework model (Figure 2), there is a grey box in the centre of the far-right column labelled 'Financial Audit'. It is assumed this refers to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) audit of the Financial Statements that form part of the Annual Report. Because a Council's Performance Statement is also audited by VAGO, it may be appropriate to revise the label to 'Financial and Performance Audit'.'*

*'Reporting and monitoring seems to only focus on the finances. Alternatively, rather than detailing each performance monitoring mechanism and reporting product, this information can be summarized for the purposes of a high-level framework as a generic principle that performance will be monitored and reported at every level.'*

*'Summarised reports - The annual Financial Statements are lengthy and complex and we'd suggest that the average person wouldn't necessarily understand them. Can a template for summarised Financial Statements be provided to the industry?'*

*'Capital reporting - Given that a significant portion of councils annual budgets are allocated to capital works, publicly reporting on the achievement of the funded capital projects is an accountability measure that can be added'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'It needs to be clear what is being reported on, where is the list of projects? We feel that the delivery program / major initiatives list is missing.'*

**THEME**
# Flexibility

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 16% |

**SUMMARY**

Some teams want the flexibility of the framework to be better outlined to enhance understanding of the flow-on effect of changes to meet changing environments. It also needs to cater for the differing needs and resources of different councils.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Hard to have a rigid model – because of political cycle.'*

*'Guidance on the 'materiality' for changing the integrated plans. Can / should these plans change if there is a significant shift in the assumptions that underpin them, would there need to be a new deliberative engagement exercise? '*

*'The documents do not need to be static documents, and should be able to be reconsidered with changing environment changed (not just specified in the '10 years')'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'For example COVID-19, Fair Go Rates System, Recycling Crisis. Previously Council Plan could change, however if the Strategic Objectives, Strategies or Strategic Indicators changed this required the new Plan to go through the S223 public notice process.'*

**THEME**
# Cyclic & Ongoing

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 6 | 14% |

**SUMMARY**

In the Cyclic & Ongoing section, suggestions include removing the last layer (long term financial modelling) and improve linkages to performance reporting and accountability. Two teams even suggested removing this section completely.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'The cyclic and ongoing processes – support the delivery of the mandated plans and strategies, and should be better linked/aligned to Performance reporting and accountability.'*

*'More clarity needed for 'Cyclic and Ongoing Processes' - Readability not clear'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'It is repetitive and not adding value. All the processes in the diagram are cyclic and ongoing.'*

THEME
# Workforce Planning

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

The framework could better show linkages between Workforce Planning and Service Planning, and further articulate what this involves.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Focus for Workforce Plan should be on resource allocation for service delivery '*

*'Link to individual employee plans - Assists with alignment and decrease turnover'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'While mandated it is unclear at this stage what is required'*

*'Service planning should drive the workforce plan – as it should outline future service direction/provision, resourcing requirements and skills/capabilities required to deliver the service. Changes to service delivery models will impact on staffing numbers and skills'*

THEME
# Specific additions

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

Specific items to be added include continuous improvement and risk management.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Continuous improvement; Should be in there, '*

*'Adding in performance monitoring on asset and infrastructure'*

*'Risk management - There doesn't seem to be any consideration of risk, both strategic and operational, but particularly strategic risk. Most councils will experience the same strategic risks, so considering how these need to be addressed in the Financial Plan or the Annual Budget may be helpful'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'More integral, council needs to be on the front foot.'*

THEME
# Revenue & Rating

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 9% |

**SUMMARY**

Suggestions include moving revenue and rating to before the budget, or integrating it with the workforce plan.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Revenue and Rating plan appears to come after the fact'*

*'Distribute Revenue and Rating matters into 10Yr Financial Plan and 4Yr Budget rather than have separate - Explore opportunities to consolidate plans.'*

*'There is an opportunity to incorporate the Revenue & Rating Plan and Workforce Plan (and possibly the Asset Plan) into the Financial Plan (or remove that and bring / simplify it to a resourcing plan – refer NSW framework also.)'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Acknowledging that there is a set known portion of revenue strategy, however, future strategies for revenue opportunities including grants management or other opportunities as aligned with Service Planning and service delivery strategies, should be considered in the mid to long term aspects of Service planning.'*

**THEME**

# Budget

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 9% |

**SUMMARY**

Some mentioned the need for showing the link from the budget to other key documents.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'There is a definite need to ensure that strategies and plans (other strategies and plans graphic) are funded in budgets, so a direct linkage between these items would be beneficial. '*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'To minimize the duplication of effort. Budget is an extract of the ten year plan. Better alignment and consistency having it all in one doc. More streamlined process'*

*'Otherwise, councils can adopt as many strategies as they like but unless funding through a budget is provided, the strategies are less likely to come to fruition.'*

**THEME**

# Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP)

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 9% |

**SUMMARY**

Consider combining the MHWP and the Council Plan, and better clarify the need for annual review of the MHWP.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'It would be good to add the MPHWP annual review in the 'performance and monitoring accountability' column as a legislative requirement'*

*'MPHWP, MSS, Other Strategic plans – these should sit in the 10+year Vision, Strategy and Policy space. In practice, MPHWP, land use planning and other strategic documents take a longer-term view than the Council Plan and, together with the Community Vision, are key inputs into the 4yr Council Plan. '*

*'Further explanation between MPHWP and where that is allowed to sit and be represented.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'It is a shame that it needs to sit in its own in a silo, incorporating in the Community vision or plan can enhance its profile and connect it to Council work.'*

**THEME**
# Annual Report

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

It was suggested that the LGPRF component could be combined with the Annual Report.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Reporting – it appears that the Annual Report and the LGPRF are separate '*

*'Create a link between annual reports and long-term plans. Results are very important for plan and implementations. Annual results should be an important channel for feedback and assessing of the long-term plans.'*

*'Annual Report - it's not necessarily what the community is interested in, but its prescriptive in its contents.'*

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'The annual report should be within the LGPRF.  Reconsider the flow of arrows to more clearly articulate this'*

**THEME**
# Performance monitoring & accountability

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 3 | 7% |

**SUMMARY**

Some felt the performance monitoring section could be moved to better show how it integrates with strategies, and have a number of items added such as service reviews and continuous improvement.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Move Performance Monitoring and Accountability down a level'*

*'Performance monitoring column - Perhaps there is a need to report on implementation of council policies, strategies and plans.'*

**THEME**
# Other

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 16% |

**SUMMARY**

Other comments include mentions that it is a bit complicated to follow.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

*'Internal and external responsibility requires buy-in from both sides. It needs to be achievable through the budget.'*

*'Too much in one diagram'*

*'Add key to the diagram'*

*'Remove the operational and process stuff, they are not strategic'*
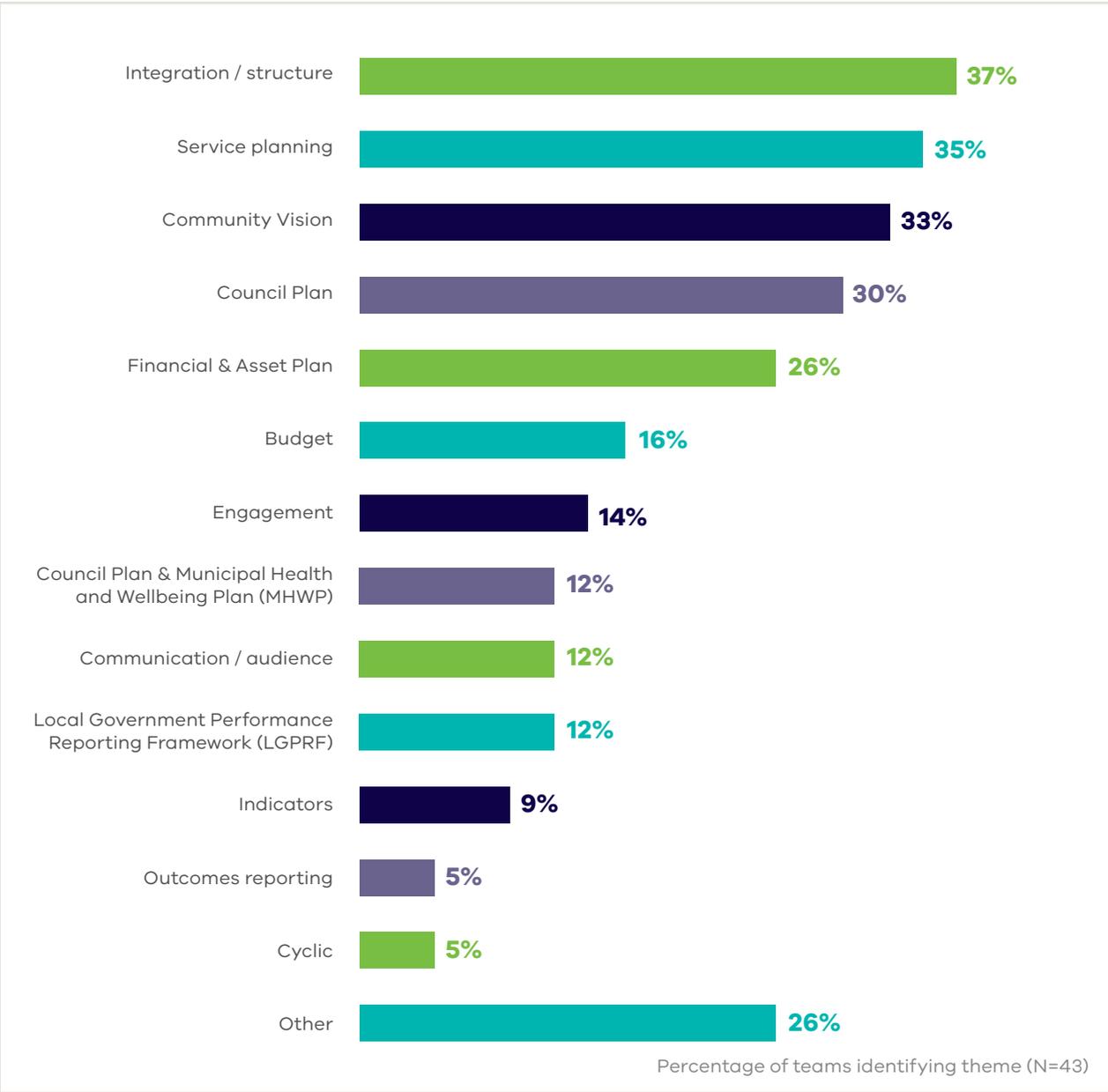
**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

*'Can the graphic be broken down into layers – e.g., when you click on the Asset Plan, where does that take you?'*

*'The shapes and colours are not intuitive.'*

**Q3.2**

## Q3.2 Do you have any ideas for improving the linkages between the various plans and elements in the framework?

Many linkage improvements were mentioned in Q3.1. In response to this question most talked about the general structure of the framework and how it could be improved by switching  to horizontal (with the timeline at the top) or cyclical. The main linkages mentioned related to bringing service planning up into the main part of the framework, and having the Community Vision at the top of the framework, with all other documents linking through to it.

| Theme | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Integration / structure | 37% |
| Service planning | 35% |
| Community Vision | 33% |
| Council Plan | 30% |
| Financial & Asset Plan | 26% |
| Budget | 16% |
| Engagement | 14% |
| Council Plan & Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP) | 12% |
| Communication / audience | 12% |
| Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) | 12% |
| Indicators | 9% |
| Outcomes reporting | 5% |
| Cyclic | 5% |
| Other | 26% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

**THEME**

# Integration / structure

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 16 | 37% |

**SUMMARY**

Many teams mentioned a general need for improving linkages and the framework structure without reference to any specific components. Key ideas put forth were to switch it to a horizontal structure with the timeframe on the horizontal axis, or make it more cyclical. It also needs to better represent how all of the items link to each other. Some also questioned whether some of the components could be combined.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'There needs to be a more cyclical system in this framework to achieve integration of planning and reporting'*

*'Colours need to be presented as what they identify - Identification or legend'*

*'Do they all need to be separate documents, can they be one document together?'*

*'Service planning needs to be much more prioritised than an operational, cyclical thing subsidiary to the main planning.'*

*'Business and Service planning, review, delivery needs to be expanded to provide more clarity about required outputs from Council.'*

**THEME**

# Service Planning

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 15 | 35% |

**SUMMARY**

There should be more direct linkages to the Service Plan, particularly with the community vision, policies, strategies and financial planning.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'The community vision, via the council plan, should link more directly to the Service and Asset Planning, not via the budget rather it should inform the budget - It determines what services and service levels are required that will then in turn determine budget required.  See CT Management Framework below.'*

*'It would be clearer if the linkages between 'policy and strategy' and 'business/ service planning' were better aligned to ensure better integrated reporting and achieve tangible outcomes.'*

*'Service planning/service plans should be recognized as key input into financial and asset plans, and budget. Services are the underlying link underpinning financial, asset planning and budgeting. If the IPF can add a workforce plan –why not add a service plan(s) (isn't a service plan a more apt name for a workforce plan that is more closely tied to community outcomes?)'*

## Q3.2

**THEME**

# Community Vision

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 14 | 33% |

**SUMMARY**

The Community Vision needs to be at the top of the hierarchy and clearly connected to all other components, particularly the Asset and Financial Plans, although one team felt it may be too aspirational to drive these plans. It needs to clearly show how the Community Vision informs the other elements of the framework.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Community vision should be a set of broad vision statements rather than specificity about what will be delivered, council plan should be strategic objectives with some key high level deliverables which is in direct correlation with community vision statements and must demonstrate this etc. etc.'*

*'The Community Vision and Council plan are visibly connected, but Asset and Financials Plans (connected to the budget) are not connected more strategically via the framework diagram. These should be explicitly connected to the Council Plan and Community Vision.'*

*'Ensure there is little or no duplication of effort across the documents, but that there is strong linkages and cross-referencing that is easy to be interpreted by community (how the elements of the framework work together to achieve community's vision).'*

*'Linking 'Other strategic plans' and 'MSS' directly to 'Community Vision' as these documents do not necessarily happen through the Council Plan.'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'Important for community to be able to interpret, understand and see the holistic picture of council is working to achieve the community vision'*

**THEME**

# Council Plan

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 13 | 30% |

**SUMMARY**

Show linkages between Council Plan and asset, financial and budget documents, and also clarify what content should be in the Council Plan document.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Provide line of sight to strategic risk within the framework (against Council Plan)'*

*'Link Workforce Planning to Service & Business Planning and Council Plan
Putting more emphasis on the results part and use the result as one of lead (like community vision) for the long-term plan.'*

*'Consideration of finances/resources required to deliver the Council Plan - Include this information in the Council Plan e.g. old Strategic Resource Plan'*

*'There might be a component in the Revenue and Rating plan that picks up the underlying/base services not mentioned in the Council Plan. Services associated with transformational change would be referenced in the Council Plan because these services will have a link to the Community Vision.'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'By showing the stronger linkage between the elements, would help Community and Council understand this alignment better, in particular how a Council is performing.'*

THEME
# Financial & Asset Plan

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 11 | 26% |

**SUMMARY**

Some teams felt these two plans should be linked together (Financial and Asset) and have stronger links to other parts of the framework, specifically the Community Vision.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Financial plan, budget and asset plan – to be consolidated and produced annually. Should be one document, to heighten consistency, while being more concise and eliminating repetition in documents, without increasing the volume of the existing budget document, rather just doing things smarter (e.g. 10 columns instead of 4) in regards to both capital works program and regular financial statements.'*

*'Services that link to the Financial and Asset Plan and service planning needs to be much more prioritised than an operational, cyclical thing subsidiary to the main planning.'*

*'The Asset Plan should cover at least a 10-year planning period, ideally 20-years so community trade-offs on service, cost and risk can be clearly communicated as a consequence of what is funded in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). Why? So that decision makers can appreciate the service, cost and risk trade-offs past year 10 in the LTFP. The LTFP is audited for compliance (i.e. aligned, credible, reliable and up to date) and accounts for the service level lifecycle forecasts projected in the Asset Plan. Why? Ensures service, cost and risk trade-offs are appropriately communicated and catered for.'*

*'Asset plan and financial plan - should have arrows up and down between two plans'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'Improved understanding of the services that we provide and why and how they link to them and how much it costs and the assets required.'*

THEME
# Budget

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 7 | 16% |

**SUMMARY**

There is a need to better demonstrate how the budget integrates with 10 year plans. One team felt the budget shouldn't feed into the workforce or revenue & rating plans. There should also be linkages between the budget and the Asset Plan, Financial Plan and Strategic Risk Register.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'To minimize the duplication of effort. Budget is an extract of the ten year plan. Better alignment and consistency having it all in one doc.'*

*'Need to explain how / if the 10 year plans can be updated to reflect changes that occur and will appear in the rolling Budget – for example rate cap, EBA rises, major service changes.'*

*'Budget feeding into workforce plan and revenue and rating plan -should not have any arrows feeding in, arrows to be removed'*

*'Strategic Risk register – not shown – has a link to the Financial Plan and the Budget'*

**Q3.2**

# Engagement

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 6 | 14% |

**SUMMARY**

The framework needs to better represent where community engagement is required to inform document development.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Participatory budgeting process. Budget is a vital process as it sets the future direction of council spending. Community should be involved in the process so that budget actually represent community interest. There were two approaches tried by Victorian councils in past with Participatory budgeting: 1. The whole budget was put on the table and community was asked how they would like to spend. 2. Only a portion of the budget, say X amount of dollars were out on the table and community was asked how best to spend it.'*

*'So many of these documents are required to be informed by community engagement and community engagement policy, therefore this should be spelt out more clearly in this section of the diagram.'*

*'Community Consultation to be more integrated into the day to day activities instead of being a separate item i.e. Council sets up a service feedback mechanism to collect feedback from users on a continuous basis in an effort to improve services.'*

*'Support community engagement and the community vision being seen as apolitical/policy neutral as possible to inform two cycles of elections and Council Plan development.'*

**THEME**

# Council Plan & Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP)

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

Some want to combine the Council Plan and the MHWP so the framework needs to allow for the flexibility to do this.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'It needs to be flexible enough to allow for different council approaches for the requirements within the intent of the legislation i.e.: combining MHWP within Council plan. Councils should be able to simplify via combining approaches if desired.'*

*'Add connector from MPHWP/MSS and other strategies to the Budget. Not all actions included in strategies will feature in the Council Plan'*

*'Do they all need to be separate documents, can they be one document together?'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'By showing the stronger linkage between the elements, would help Community and Council understand this alignment better, in particular how a Council is performing.'*

**Q3.2**

# Communication / audience

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

If the framework is to be communicated to the community, it will need to be simplified.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Explanations for officers that don't have the strategic knowledge. Communication in layman's terms - this benefits staff and community.'*

*'Simplify to ensure easily understandable and accessible by community and council staff alike.'*

*'Doesn't make sense, some things work in isolation when they should be joined up.'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'Ease of communication to help council staff, councillors and community understand the interrelationships between key strategic planning work and its relevance to them / their work.'*

**THEME**
# Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF)

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 5 | 12% |

**SUMMARY**

Stronger linkages between the LGPRF and the Annual Report need to be demonstrated in the framework, or even remove LGPRF completely as it is part of the annual report.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'LGPRF measures can't account for everything in terms of breadth of service offering.'*

*'Information flows both ways as the LGPRF can assist in formatting the annual report and vice versa'*

*'Remove LGPRF as this reported in the Performance Statement and Annual Report'*

**THEME**
# Indicators

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 4 | 9% |

**SUMMARY**

The need for clearer specification of indicators and measures that need to be reported to the community was mentioned by a few teams.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Where is the performance monitoring and accountability and reporting of the health and Wellbeing Plan and MSS and other strategic plans? For example, how do we report on the master plans, place plans, strategic plans? Why? Need to report back on all plans.'*

*'Focus on less rather than more performance indicators. For long-term sustainable asset and financial planning, only three are required: 1. Operating Surplus Ratio; 2. Net Financial Liabilities Ratio; 3. Asset Renewal Funding Ratio.'*

*'What performance monitoring and accountability items are reported to the community and how?'*

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

*'To monitor how these are tracking and evaluate how they are being implemented and the value to the community.'*

*'If the community is asked to have input into plans the reporting should be obvious to the community.'*

**THEME**
# Outcomes Reporting

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 2 | 5% |

**SUMMARY**

Two teams mentioned the need for simplified Outcomes Reporting.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'Reviewing usefulness of information reported in the Annual Report - The Annual Report is heavily compliance based. Who is our audience (i.e. who benefits from its preparation)? Instead, consider simplified and concise reporting for our community that discharges our governance and transparency requirements.'*

**THEME**
# Cyclic

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 2 | 5% |

**SUMMARY**

Two teams suggested that the framework be presented in a cyclical format.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'The cyclic and ongoing processes should be linked to the budget etc. via arrows, to show they link and aren't a separate section of the framework. There could be a conflict between cyclic/ongoing processes with what we are trying to achieve in the long run.'*

*'Cyclic and ongoing processes - no arrows to indicate relationships, including to the vision/strategic'*

**THEME**
# Other

| Count | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| 11 | 26% |

**SUMMARY**

A variety of other comments were put forth, mostly relating to adding or removing various components.

**IMPROVEMENT**

*'A Common chart of account among local government sector. It will be easy for community to compare their council with neighbouring councils if all councils are following a common chart of accounts for reporting purpose.'*

*'Need a link to an annual operation plan.'*

*'Careful establishment of cross organisational project teams and ways of working.'*

*'There is a need for audit and follow up of the elements in the framework. Suggest this is a role for the Audit & Risk Committee. Why? Demonstrates integration of the working elements in the framework ensuring better outcomes for the community.'*

*'The reporting element of whether service levels/ standards have been met appears to be a gap.'*

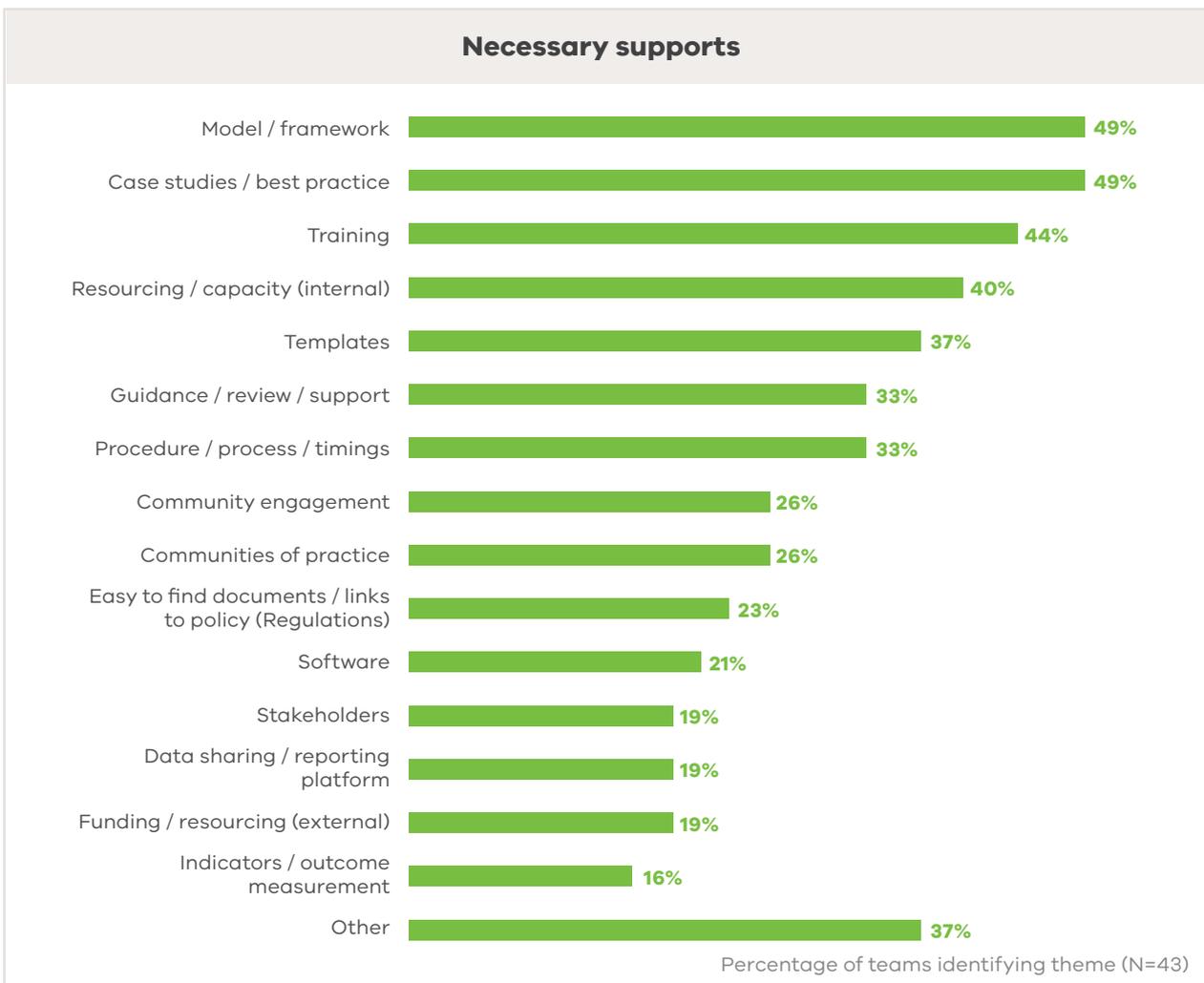*'Strategic means strategic so remove the operational and process elements'*

*'Better alignment of deadlines for the elements. For example, the budget has to be completed by 30 June. However other documents are the 31 October, the year after the Council election. The budget relies on information from the other elements so the different timeframes impacts on council's getting their budgets right.'*

*'Workforce plan (apart from resourcing which can be element of the financial plan) is not important to the framework.'*

**Q4**

## Q4 What 'supports' would enable councils to implement an improved, integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting? Describe the support needed and why it is important.
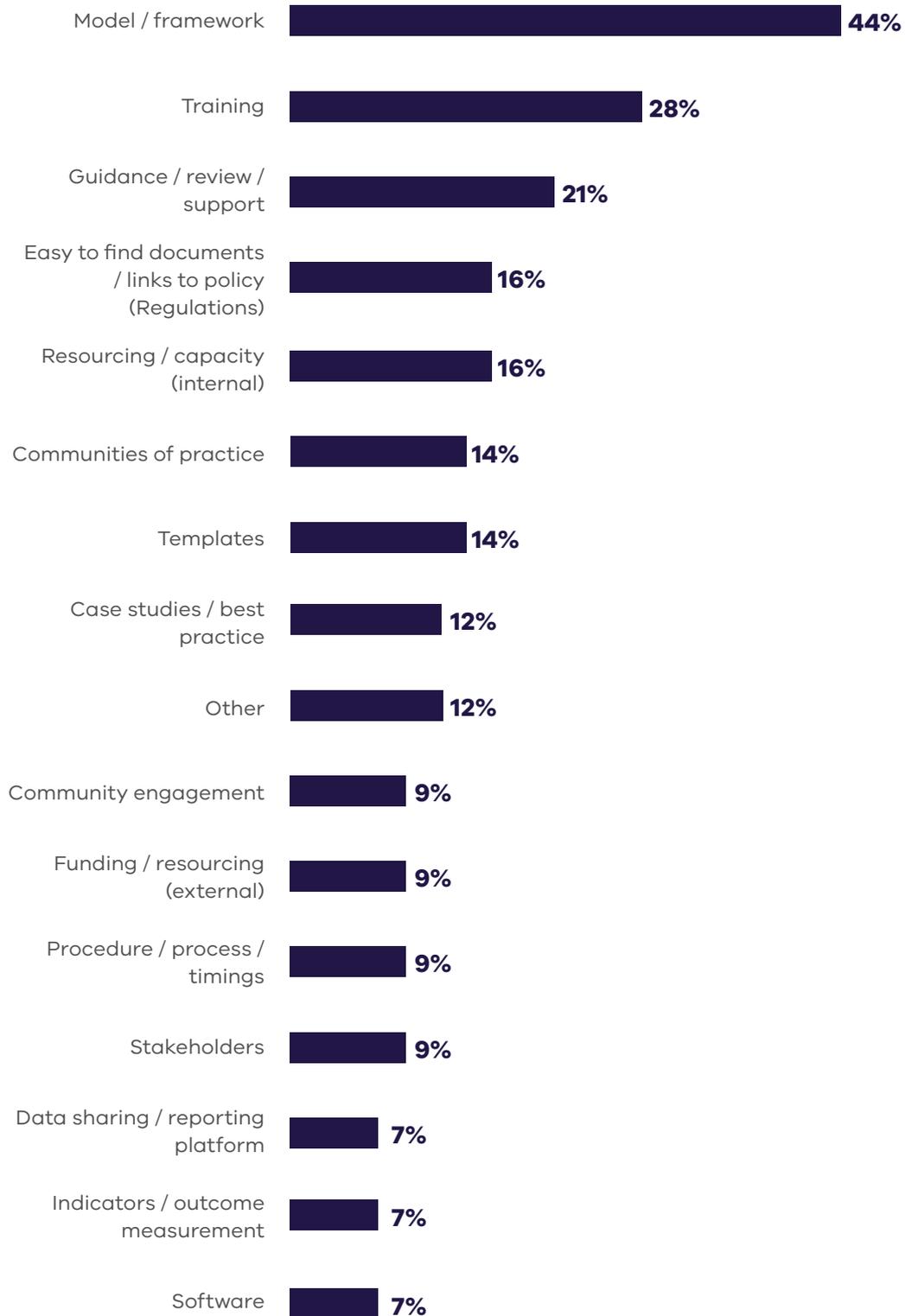
It is clear that councils need a variety of supports to implement this approach. Given the challenges councils face with resources and capacity, templates and models are needed to ensure consistency, with ongoing training on how to use them.  Case studies and best practice guidance can help councils implement the new approach. Furthermore, direct guidance from LGV is needed to ensure councils are on the right track, particularly in the first few years.

The following tables show the supports identified by the 43 small teams. The first table shows the percentage of teams that identified each support as necessary (e.g. 49% of teams said a model / framework was needed). The second table shows how the supports were prioritised (e.g. 28% of teams identified training as one of the top 3 supports needed).

### Necessary supports

| Support | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Model / framework | 49% |
| Case studies / best practice | 49% |
| Training | 44% |
| Resourcing / capacity (internal) | 40% |
| Templates | 37% |
| Guidance / review / support | 33% |
| Procedure / process / timings | 33% |
| Community engagement | 26% |
| Communities of practice | 26% |
| Easy to find documents / links to policy (Regulations) | 23% |
| Software | 21% |
| Stakeholders | 19% |
| Data sharing / reporting platform | 19% |
| Funding / resourcing (external) | 19% |
| Indicators / outcome measurement | 16% |
| Other | 37% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

## Priority supports

Groups were asked to rank the top 3 supports needed. The percentages show how many groups ranked a support in their top three.

| Support | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Model / framework | 44% |
| Training | 28% |
| Guidance / review / support | 21% |
| Easy to find documents / links to policy (Regulations) | 16% |
| Resourcing / capacity (internal) | 16% |
| Communities of practice | 14% |
| Templates | 14% |
| Case studies / best practice | 12% |
| Other | 12% |
| Community engagement | 9% |
| Funding / resourcing (external) | 9% |
| Procedure / process / timings | 9% |
| Stakeholders | 9% |
| Data sharing / reporting platform | 7% |
| Indicators / outcome measurement | 7% |
| Software | 7% |

Percentage of teams identifying theme (N=43)

**THEME**
## Model / framework (Guidance materials)

| Count | Percent | Top 3* |
|-------|---------|--------|
| 21 | 49% | 19 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Councils want models that show how documents interrelate, and which stakeholders/staff would typically contribute to different parts.

A number of groups mentioned the need for these to be flexible to account for different council sizes, budgets and types. Incorporated into this flexibility should be specification of minimum requirements to meet State Government obligations.

Consistency across councils is viewed as valuable, both for staff as well as the community.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Most responses specified that their comments related to all components of the framework.

There were single mentions of the need for this for the Community Vision, Council Plan, Annual Report, Asset Plan, Service Plan and Financial Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Models that are flexible enough for different council approaches – for example, differing thresholds depending on revenue of Councils; provide something to follow, and scalable; tap into those existing Special Interest Groups (SIG) and practices'*

*'A library of models and templates councils can use to develop their own documents'*

*'Standards regarding sector reporting into State Government, statutory planning, maternal and child health, environmental health, immunisation. This helps to reduce duplication and reporting burden on the sector'*

*'A good practical model of how assets are linked directly to services  --  Asset Plan and Financial Plan --  It is important to have an understanding about how certain services are supported by a percentage of asset and subsequently, being able to make decision on future asset management/planning for future growth/decline of services – to make best decisions given there are constraints on resources.'*

*'For the Vision/Plan, an update to a policy framework and "lay of the land" would be of major support. Could be an LGV role, which looks at the changes across the sector and the key services to support councils in ensuring that they're "connected" correctly in line with State / Federal areas'.*

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\* Teams were asked to nominate which supports were their top 3 priorities. This number relates to the number of teams who included this support within their top 3.

\** Teams were asked to specify if their response related to all elements of the framework or specific elements.

**THEME**

# Case studies / best practice

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 21 | 49% | 5 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Case studies that highlight best practice were mentioned as something that would help councils to develop consistent good practice across the sector and contribute to successful implementation of the framework. Councils expressed a desire for case studies as a way to build on best practice and not 'reinvent the wheel' each time they do something new.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO….**

Some said this was needed across all elements (and the overall framework), whilst others named specific elements: Budget, Annual Report, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Community Vision, Asset Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Support standardisation of practice and effort across the organisation'*

*'Start with 'LGV review and circulation of learnings from 'tailwinds' question (Q2).'*

*'Best practice, what is the gold standard that you would like to provide to community PR exercise vs something that adds value'*

**THEME**

# Training

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 19 | 44% | 12 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Training was referred to in a variety of ways, mostly using the term 'training', but some used the term 'education'.

Training was seen as valuable to help ensure consistency across the sector and help ensure adequate skills in councils with high staff turnover. Due to staff turnover considerations, some groups suggested that this training needs to be available on an ongoing basis to allow for new staff to get up to speed.

A range of modules will be required, targeting different attendee needs, from officers and corporate planners through to senior staff, CEOs and also councillors.

Training will need to cover strategic level assistance, as well as modules to explain how to use guidance documents.

In terms of format, the most commonly mentioned formats were online webinars. A few mentioned Q&A sessions (online) and videos.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO….**

Generally this would be required across all elements.

**QUOTES**

*'Show people how to do this the right way the first time'*

*'Improving knowledge of asset management principles will assist local governments in providing services in a financially sustainable manner.'*

*'Specialised training for all leaders, Senior Executives and Councillors. Why? So everyone's included, not just officers'*

*'Ongoing training and capacity building within organisations will be important as staff turnover has also been a contributor over the years'*

**THEME**

# Resourcing / capacity (internal)

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 17 | 40% | 7 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Resources and staff capacity was identified as a challenge. It is a challenge for councils, especially smaller councils, to source staff with the requisite skill sets and time allocation in their roles to develop and update the elements required under the Act.

The extent of internal resourcing and capacity varies significantly across councils, with some having large teams to manage these policies and strategies, whilst others may only have a couple of people. Technical expertise also plays into this, which links closely with the need for ongoing training.

This also extends to increasing councillor's capacity / understanding so they can use the relevant elements to inform their work.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Some said this would be required across all elements of the framework, whilst others specifically mentioned the Budget, Council Plan, and Annual Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Scalable templates and guidelines that are not prescriptive but guide Councils and allow us to meet community need and our resourcing capability and capacity and providing minimum expectations'*

*'Resourcing for smaller councils - People are only capable of doing so much, and we already ask so much of our people'*

*'There is inequity in resourcing across the sector and this should be considered during implementation'*

**THEME**

# Templates

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 16 | 37% | 6 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

There was a desire for templates across all elements of the framework. Templates were especially mentioned in relation to financial planning and budgets.

Templates need to be flexible to allow for different council characteristics and needs.

Templates help ensure consistency of approach.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Eight teams mentioned that this would be needed across all elements. In terms of specific elements, the most commonly mentioned were the Community Vision (4 mentions), Budget (3 mentions), Financial Plan (3 mentions), Asset Plan (3 mentions, and then single mentions for the Service Plan and Annual Report.

**QUOTES**

*'(Clear guidelines etc....) would be great but not overly prescriptive templates so we can still make it our own'*

*'Templates. This helps to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, reduce resourcing requirements at LG level and ensures there is some consistency across the sector.'*

*'Provide councils with best-practice document and project-planning templates for creating and reviewing their plans'*

*'Detailed guidelines, supporting detailed manuals, tools and templates on what to do and how'*

**THEME**

# Guidance / review / support

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 14 | 33% | 9 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Personalised ad-hoc guidance provided by LGV to assist councils with implementing the framework.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

This would be required across all areas of the framework.

**QUOTES**

*'An ability to have regular follow ups, collectively and via LGV to ensure consistent interpretation, measuring success and provision of ongoing support'*

*'The type of support needs to be varied and responsive to individual needs'*

*'Where consultancies are necessary can LGV provide access to a panel to help in the space, can Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or LGV assist with procurement? '*

**THEME**

# Procedure / process / timings

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 14 | 33% | 4 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Having a clear map of realistic timeframes, responsibilities, and process steps would help councils get started, plan sequencing and fit the work within staff workplans.

These would also serve the purpose of providing clear deadlines (with an added note that they need to be realistic / achievable).

In addition to timeframes, councils would like to see how the inputs and outputs of the different aspects of the framework link and procedurally flow together ('operating rhythm').

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

The teams who mentioned procedure / process / timing said it would be needed across the whole framework.

**QUOTES**

*'Clarity around deadlines, what takes precedent.  Clarity around measures, requirements'*

*'Roles and responsibilities for all councillors/CEO etc. whole organisation involvement'*

*'Structuring of performance monitoring. Across the timelines 10, 4 and 1 years i.e.. Outcomes, actions, measures, benchmark/target etc.'*

*'Timeliness is key – it is important to provide information such as model documents with an appropriate lead time'*

*'Resources need to be provided well in advance of implementation, to ensure proper utilisation'*

# Community engagement

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 11 | 26% | 4 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

The recent introduction of the term 'deliberative practices' into the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) requirements is causing some challenges. Groups asked for guidance on the minimum level of engagement necessary to meet the 'deliberative practices' requirement.

Furthermore, councils want guidance on: effective ways to engage their communities to assist with the framework development process and ensure they are making informed decisions; how to communicate with the community the importance of the process and scope of what is achievable; and in some cases access to online engagement resources (e.g. engagement platforms).

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Whilst this is a general need, some specifically referred to the need for assistance in this area when developing their Community Vision

**QUOTES**

*'Engage Vic platform made available to all Victorian local government organisations'*

*'So we can set an non-negotiable level of engagement that is mandated'*

*'Dedicated resourcing for community engagement given deliberative engagement is such a focus. Many councils have this as part of many staff roles and/or don't have a dedicated officer'*

**THEME**
# Communities of practice

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 11 | 26% | 6 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

The term 'communities of practice' was not always used, but the concept was addressed throughout, with common references to Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

It was felt that this would be particularly useful to councils with limited staff resources so they could learn from the experiences of other councils. One of the suggested methods for implementing this was online Q&A sessions and/or forums.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**
This would be required across all elements of the framework.

**QUOTES**

*'…That identifies where people have strengths and how they can be utilised to assist another council to achieve the requirements'*

*'Opportunities for Local Governments to exchange ideas - Sharing sees innovation and allows for standardisation based on industry need'*

*'Need a review after first year of operation (eg Dec 2021) that all councils can contribute to. A shared experience review. We're all doing the same thing, so how can we continue to co-design this framework ongoing?'*

**Q4**

**THEME**

# Easy to find documents / links to policy (regulations)

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 10 | 23% | 7 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Councils want an easy way to access relevant policies and legislation, and identify the relevant sections. It was suggested that this could be done through a central library of documents and/or clear references. This would be provided by those knowledgeable of policy requirements and the framework, and may even extend to technical assistance for online training modules. This service could also review and check council's documentation to ensure compliance.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

While some groups said this is needed for all elements of the framework, others made particular mention of the Asset Plan, Financial Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan, and Disability Action Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Package together and maintain the state and national plans that councils are expected to consider.'*

*'Comprehensive overview of all the regulations, and legislation and requirements that need to be complied with - for planning'*

*'A library of models and templates councils can use to develop their own documents'*

*'To make it easy to implement, know exactly what we need to do, have all information on one clear page (the current websites are a little tricky to navigate)'*

**THEME**

# Software

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 10 | 23% | 3 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Software that integrates all elements of the framework can help with consistency and efficiency, both within an individual council as well as across councils (where all use the same software). It is felt that this will make it easier to comply with regulations. It was perceived that this software should support the whole system, but in particular the reporting and financial components.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Software can help to integrate all elements of the framework, however of particular importance is Asset Management (3 mentions), Budget, Financial Plan, and Workforce Plan.

**QUOTES**

*'Universal (sector wide) software system for Asset Management would be a priority: Would support various elements, Budget, Asset Plans, Long term Financial plan, Workforce plan'*

*'Integrated sector wide software for all Councils for data collection and data sharing. Why? so we can equally access data.'*

**THEME**

# Stakeholders (internal and external)

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 9 | 21% | 4 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Identification of key stakeholders for each component of the framework / process can help ensure that there are no gaps. This covers both internal stakeholders (who is responsible for what) as well as external stakeholders who need to be involved and/or could provide assistance.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Understanding stakeholders across the whole framework is required for some, although one team said this is particularly required to help define who should contribute to the Community Vision.

**QUOTES**

*'Advice on who in Council needs to be involved in discussions around each of the key documents in the framework – It will help raise awareness of who should be consulted in Council and help to promote collaboration and ensure the documents were produced in an integrated manner.'*

*'Guidelines for implementing the framework, whose role is it within a Council, what are the responsibilities'*

*'Clear communication across the organisation about what strategic planning and reporting is, and how their role contributes. How to find out specifically how/what they are contributing to.'*

**THEME**

# Data sharing / reporting platform

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 8 | 19% | 3 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

There was a call for a data sharing and reporting platform (e.g. online dashboard) that provides data submitted by councils as well as relevant data from  service providers (water retailers, Victoria Public Health Services (VPHS) etc.).

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

This is required across all elements.

**QUOTES**

*'South East Water has so much data about the community but they can't share with local council'*

*'Shared dashboard reporting on the Council Plan and the LGPRF reporting.*
*- It would allow Councils to understand what best practice reporting to the community might look like'*

*'Community then can compare apples to apples when comparing their council with neighbouring councils'*

THEME
# Funding / resourcing (external)

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 8 | 19% | 4 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Some councils, especially smaller regional councils, raised a need for access to funding or access to resources/experts who can assist with community engagement and the development of the various elements required by the Act.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

Needed across the entire framework.

**QUOTES**

*'Resources for grass roots engagement'*

*'Funding for small regional councils or access to expertise'*

*'Resources to enable implementation (e.g. funding, grants, access to state resources)'*

THEME
# Indicators / outcome measurement

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|-------|---------|-------|
| 7 | 16% | 3 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Clearly specifying the indicators and outcome measures would help ensure consistency in approach. Some councils may not have the in-house expertise to develop these.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

This consideration is particularly important for the Council Plan and Annual Report.

**QUOTES**

*"Clearer/not as many outcomes (page 7 of Discussion Paper) - It is suggested that there be only a handful of outcomes for the overall framework, rather than per plan.'*

*'Definitions and examples of appropriate strategic indicators for use in Council Plan'*

*'Less things to report on is more'*

*'Shared outcome measurement between state and local government – and not changing measures constantly e.g. VPHS. WHY: Allowing councils to improve based on positive experiences of others. Community Indicators Victoria was a useful resource when it existed for population-level outcome measures LGPRF generally doesn't cover outcome measurement – e.g. you can reduce cost of service delivery, but in doing so, this may compromise community outcomes.'*

**Q4**

**THEME**
# Other

| Count | Percent | Top 3 |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | 37% | 5 |

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

Other comments include:

›   legislation/regulation changes to ensure stakeholder buy-in and help with asset planning (2 mentions),
›   change management assistance for councils with limited expertise (2 mentions),
›   consistent Chart of Accounts across councils (2 mentions),
›   clearer definitions (2 mentions),
›   communication materials that councils can use to generate buy-in internally as well as amongst the community (2 mentions), foster collaboration in reporting,
›   consider COVID-19 impacts,
›   reduce reporting duplication across agencies, and
›   consideration of the usefulness of cross-council benchmarking given how different they can be, and
›   streamlining the bureaucracy.

**THESE CONSIDERATIONS RELATE TO....**

For legislative change / regulation one team mentioned this is needed for the Community Vision, whilst another said it is needed for the Asset Plan.

## 5.2 CEO and Councillor Session Findings

A briefing for the councillors and CEOs was held on the 21st of August to inform them about the purpose of the codesign and to seek their insights into the challenges they face as leaders and how they could best be supported. Almost 200 people attended, broken down as follows:

| Q1. What is one challenge you face as a leader in this change process? | |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of council** | **Challenges identified** |
| **Metropolitan** | **Accountability:** Holding councillors to account for poor behaviour<br><br>**Time & resources:** In sufficient time and resources within the council to meet deadlines.<br><br>**Communication:** Lack of corresponding process & governance from State Government in the consideration of change to the Local Government Sector<br><br>**Diversity:** Reaching all constituents when population has disability requirements. |
| **Interface** | **Time and resources:** implementation of new Act, induction of new council and business as usual<br><br>**Community engagement:** Understanding the types and extent of engagement |
| **Regional City** | **Diversity:** Ensuring that we hear from a diverse set of representatives<br><br>**Community engagement:** Over consultation has occurred in the past and the community are critical of council community engagement process<br><br>**Remuneration for councillors:** Inadequate to fully undertake a deeper delve into the role. The State should lead by acknowledging the work undertaken by councillors and not leaving remuneration reviews to local governments. |
| **Rural** | **Time and resources:** Same output required from a small council as a metropolitan council, with limited resources and less expertise<br><br>**Pandemic impact:** The impact of the pandemic on direct face to face communication<br><br>**Community engagement:** Getting the community interested in things that are of interest to council but not the general public e.g. finance and asset plans |
| **Type of council not provided** | **Ward structure:** Education required on why single-member wards are being introduced, lack of understanding of rationale and evidence-base<br><br>**Communication:** Consultation constraints under the current pandemic situation. Uncertainty regarding current status and new normal. |

| Q2. What is one thing that will help you as a leader during this change process? | |
|---|---|
| **Type of council** | **What will help?** |
| **Metropolitan** | **Communication:** Requires good state level communication<br><br>**Conduct:** Information on councillor Code of Conduct |
| **Interface** | **Resources:** Some examples of best practice and access to common resources. Clear quality information on what is required - templates, guidance material, helpline |
| **Regional City** | **Connectivity:** Improve digital connectivity and telecommunications to rural and regional areas.<br><br>**Communication:** A public information campaign giving the community a heads up of changes coming and how to get involved |
| **Rural** | **Resources:** Well designed and implemented community engagement process to build the Community Vision as this underpins everything<br><br>**Conduct:** Improve councillor respect and behaviour<br><br>**Training:** Effective training including high quality and granular induction in relation to ISPRF. |
| **Type of council not provided** | **Communication:** Balancing transparency and information overload<br><br>**Education:** Ensuring key staff are up to speed so they can guide elected members<br><br>**Communication:** Advice in a timely manner from Government. |

| Q3. If LGV could do one thing to support you as a leader, what would it be? | |
|---|---|
| **Type of council** | **Desired support from LGV** |
| **Metropolitan** | **Communication:** More of these webinars. Very efficient way to focus the sector on one issue, especially when a deadline is looming.<br><br>**Resources:** Model Engagement Policies/Standards<br><br>**Pandemic impact:** Developing a Community vision in a recovery era is not great. Flexibility to revisit that would help not withstanding set timelines.<br><br>**Accountability:** Review big spending projects to check motivation and if substantiated by sound business cases before councils engage expensive consultants<br><br>**Governance:** Stop politicisation of councils<br><br>**Communication:** Simple one page info for councillors and community about these detailed policies and strategies. |
| **Interface** | **Communication:** Regular webinars or pre-recorded sessions on elements of change<br><br>**Communication:** State-wide Community Service announcements to inform the community with the changes/opportunities to engage & contribute |
| **Regional City** | **Resources:** Understand challenge of short timelines and templates and guidance and assistance required for smaller shires.<br><br>**Conduct:** More support dealing with people issues with problem councillors. |
| **Rural** | **Resources:** Provide funding for an additional resource for to manage and deliver this work<br><br>**Resources:** Greater development of template documents which allow resource constrained councils to customise to their needs with as little additional cost/resource as possible<br><br>**Training:** Ensure induction for councillors covers community engagement and strategic planning as well as financial and governance aspects.<br><br>**Connectivity:** Connect us early with groups across different LGs for likeminded councillors<br><br>**Resources:** Clearer guidelines with dealing with poor councillor behaviour |
| **Type of council not provided** | **Connectivity:** Continue mayors catch up online saves travel from remote areas<br><br>**Nil.** Doing a good job. There have been lots of opportunities for us to engage and contribute.<br><br>**Conduct:** Support councillors in dealing with the poor behaviour of other councillors. |

# 5.3 Public Survey Findings

Two council staff members (who were not participating in the Round 1 small team codesign) completed the public survey. Their responses are summarised below.

1.  **What would you add, change or remove from the framework discussion paper to make it a better reference document? Why is this idea important?**

    - Framework needs to highlight the Municipal Health & Wellbeing more clearly since it is a requirement that needs to develop at the same time as the Community Vision and Council Plan.

    - Framework should also include measurement requirements to make council, councillors and management more accountable, as well as points to trigger reviews or plans when objectives aren't achieved.

2.  **Do you have any ideas for improving the linkages between the various plans and elements in the framework? (e.g. Community Vision, council plan, financial plan, asset management plan, 4 year budget, revenue and rating plan, annual report, workforce plan)**

    - There should be guidance for how the Community Vision should inform the integrated development of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. If not, there is a danger for this framework to be relegated if it is the primary source of guidance for corporate planners.

    - The vision and strategies should be assessed based on current resources and allocation to give executives and councillors an idea of the difference between the desired vision and current status. Once this gap is identified, management and planning can be built with reasonable objectives and targets.
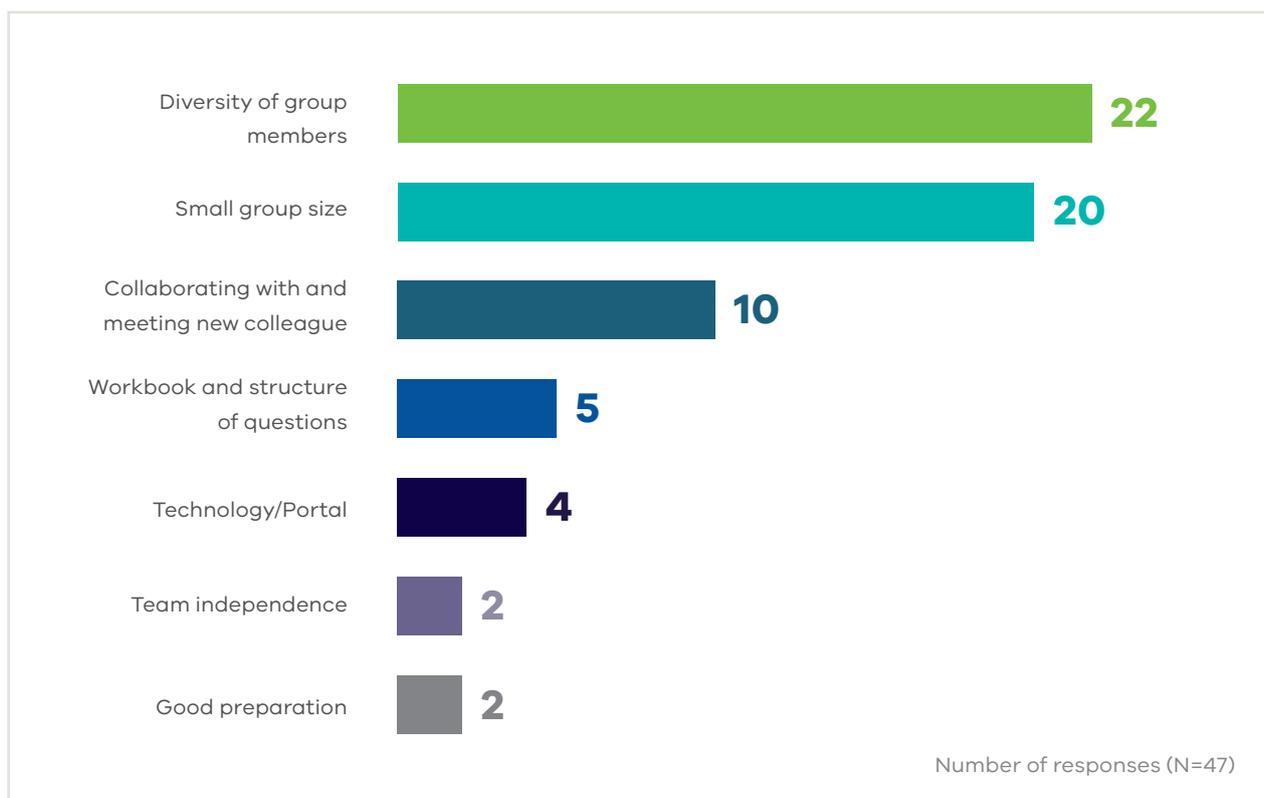
3.  **What 'supports' would enable councils to implement an improved, integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting? Describe the support needed and why it is important.**

    - A much clearer link to Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing planning; how are DELWP integrating with DHHS?

    - Provision of some explanatory notes to practitioners when implementing these integrated reports.

    - A board or panel to review and provide ongoing suggestions and recommendations and maintain consistency of practice and resolve practical issues.

Participants were invited to complete a survey following the completion of Round 1 in order to provide feedback on the process. 47 of the 145 participants responded (32%).

## What worked well about this small group process?

| Category | Count |
|---|---|
| Diversity of group members | 22 |
| Small group size | 20 |
| Collaborating with and meeting new colleague | 10 |
| Workbook and structure of questions | 5 |
| Technology/Portal | 4 |
| Team independence | 2 |
| Good preparation | 2 |

Number of responses (N=47)

### Diversity of group members

| | Count |
|---|---|
| | 22 |

**The diversity of members from varied council types, interests areas and experience enhanced the quality of conversation for most groups, allowing them to hear and value input from differing perspectives.**

*'It allowed each of the group members to share and talk through their experience and areas of interest as well as it was an opportunity to also listen to these different perspectives to help inform our own opinions and viewpoints.'*

*'Diversity of roles and interest areas was useful and avoided 'echo chamber' conversations.'*

*'It was good to hear from people in roles who within our own orgs we'll need to work with on what the council planning process and the bit that they have to deliver is like from their perspective.'*

### Small group size

| Count |
|---|
| 20 |

**The small group size made it easy for groups to meet, hold each other accountable, and ensure all members of the group had the opportunity to contribute and participate**

*'The small groups made it easy to contribute and learn, without dominance. All ideas were discussed'*

*'Key items were not getting lost or sidelined that can tend to happen in a large group discussion.'*

*'Small groups keep you a bit more accountable and generate decent conversation'*

*'Small groups meant that the conversation wasn't directed by the 'louder' minority as larger forums sometimes are.'*

### Collaborating with and meeting new colleagues

| Count |
|---|
| 10 |

**Participants appreciated the opportunity to network with other members of council and forge relationships with those doing similar work.**

*'Able to talk with other stakeholders and expand the network'*

*'Getting to know others from different councils in different roles that I wouldn't normally get to meet'*

*'Ability to start building relationships.'*

### Workbook and structure of questions

| Count |
|---|
| 5 |

**Some participants appreciated the structure the workbook gave to their small group discussions.**

*'Questions directed to keep us focused on the information that we were being asked to provide'*

*'Having a workbook to follow and questions to guide our conversation were a good idea.'*

### Technology/Portal

| Count |
|---|
| 4 |

**The portal made it simple and easy to submit responses.**

*'It was well organised and the portal approach helped too.'*

*'The document entry portal was good.'*

### Team independence

| Count |
|---|
| 2 |

**Some participants enjoyed the independence teams had to go at their own pace and set their own meeting times that suited them. This was also referenced as a factor of the small size of each team.**

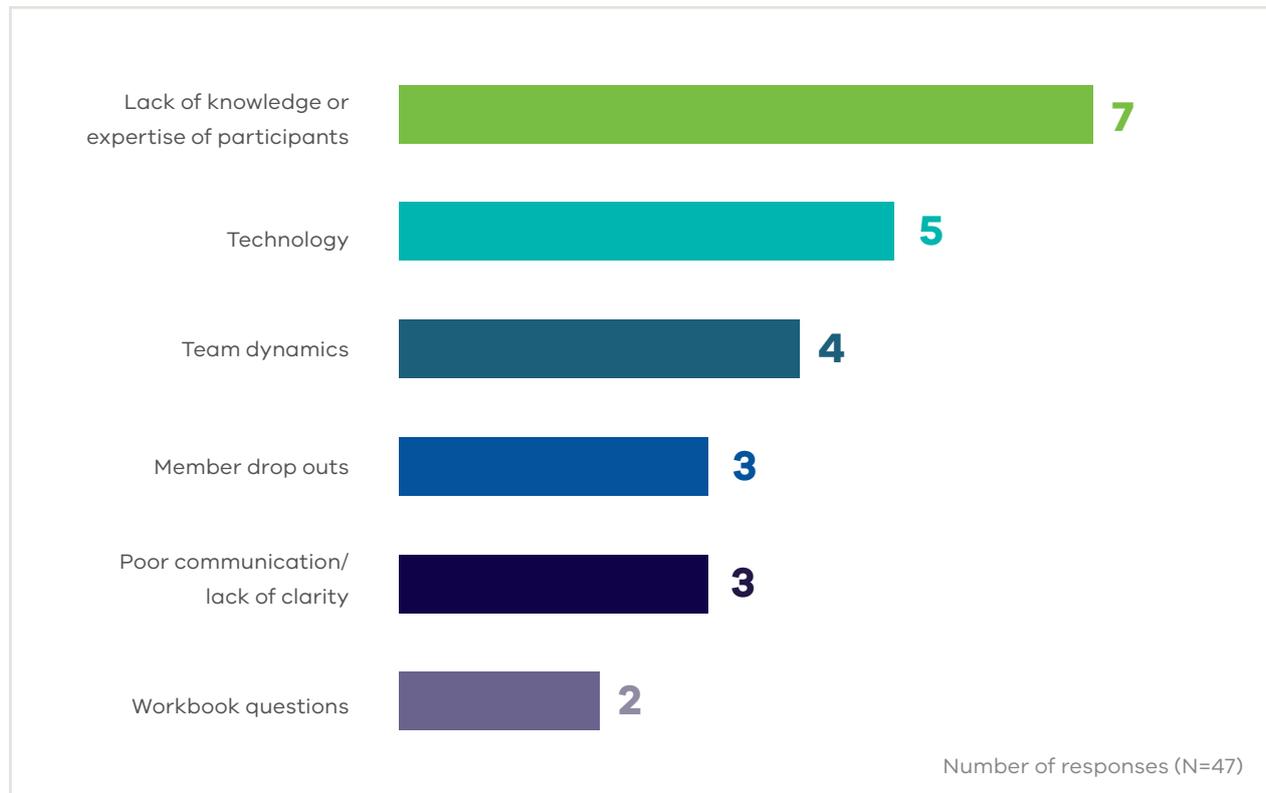*'Leaving groups to figure out what worked best for them'*

### Good preparation

| Count |
|---|
| 2 |

**Some participants noted the preparation and organisation of team members made the process work well for them.**

*'Everyone had read the work and done the homework.'*

# What was challenging about this small group process?

| Challenge | Count |
|---|---|
| Lack of knowledge or expertise of participants | 7 |
| Technology | 5 |
| Team dynamics | 4 |
| Member drop outs | 3 |
| Poor communication/ lack of clarity | 3 |
| Workbook questions | 2 |

Number of responses (N=47)

## Lack of knowledge or expertise of participants

**Count: 7**

**It was challenging for some groups to accomodate for different levels of knowledge and experience of team members, and answer questions outside of their knowledge or expertise.**

*'The level of knowledge required to answer all of the questions. Not everyone is an expert in Workforce plans, Asset Plans etc. so was difficult to provide the same level of information and input for those questions.'*

*'We were asked questions about specific document (e.g. Assets) that was not in our area of expertise'*

*'Some participants had little or no experience concerning the topic so were there to learn. I would argue this made the process difficult given we were working with complex information and challenging deadlines, understanding how Council plans and reports integrate was a critical requirement to perform the necessary work. Having to school someone in this took up time that needed to be spent on the task'*

## Technology

**Count: 5**

**Technology posed a challenge for some participants. Internet connectivity and facilitating complex discussion in an online environment was difficult for some. The online portal was frustrating some participants.**

*'The online feedback form did not give enough space for all the group wanted to give.'*

*'Context, background and a common understanding of the task at hand are more difficult to build in the current virtual environment.'*

### Team dynamics

| Count |
|:-----:|
| 4 |

**Personal team dynamics were challenging for some groups, making discussion and decision-making difficult.**

*'I noticed that depending on the scribe, the message of what the group was saying may or may not have been captured - one pen, one voice'*

*'Difficult to have robust conversations with people who hadn't built any relationship or understanding of where each council is at. It became more of a documentation of each persons views, in may cases the group simply agreed with others.'*

### Member drop outs

| Count |
|:-----:|
| 3 |

**With teams of only 3-4 members, the absence of one or more participants made a significant difference to the teams affected.**

*'Two members could not attend one or two sessions.'*

*'One member wasn't able to participate due to other workload commitments, so the depth of shared insights was thereby reduced.'*

### Poor communication/ lack of clarity

| Count |
|:-----:|
| 3 |

**Some participants found a lack of clarity about the process and communication challenging.**

*'Lack of clarity about how input would be used or considered'*

*'Did we know enough about the whole process'*

### Workbook questions

| Count |
|:-----:|
| 2 |

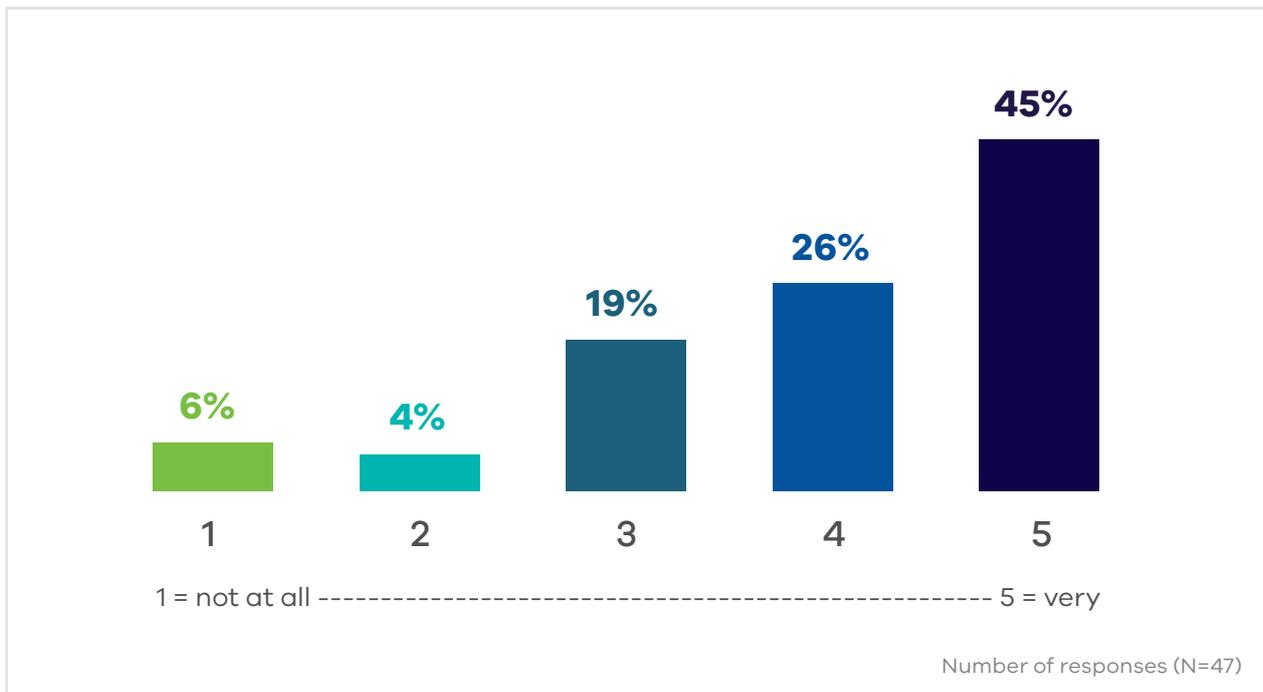**The structure and phrasing of the questions in the workbook was challenging for some teams.**

*'Some of the questions were repetitive or felt a little bit like leading questions.'*

*'Also the questionnaire was specific but didn't always capture some of the wider concerns and feedback that we had on the whole process.'*
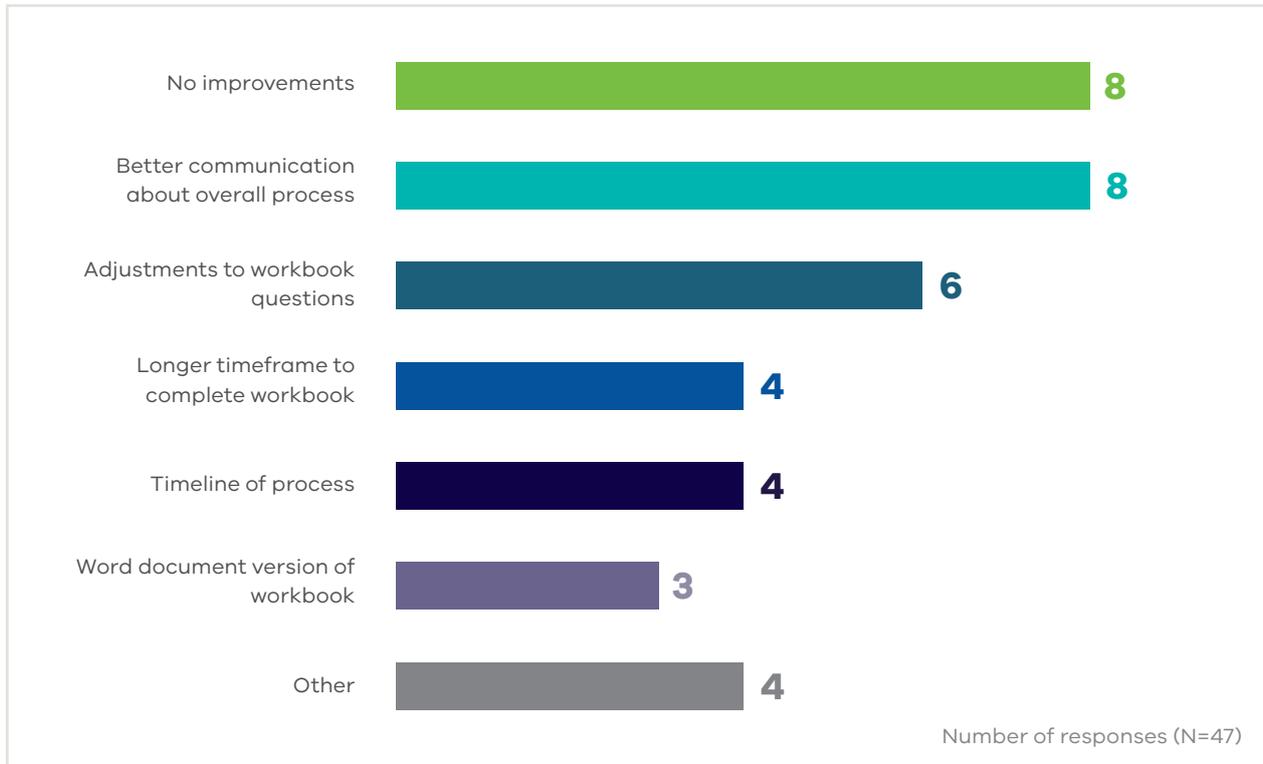
## Confidence that input will influence the supports provided to the sector



1 = very doubtful ------------------------------------- 5 = very confident

Number of responses (N=47)
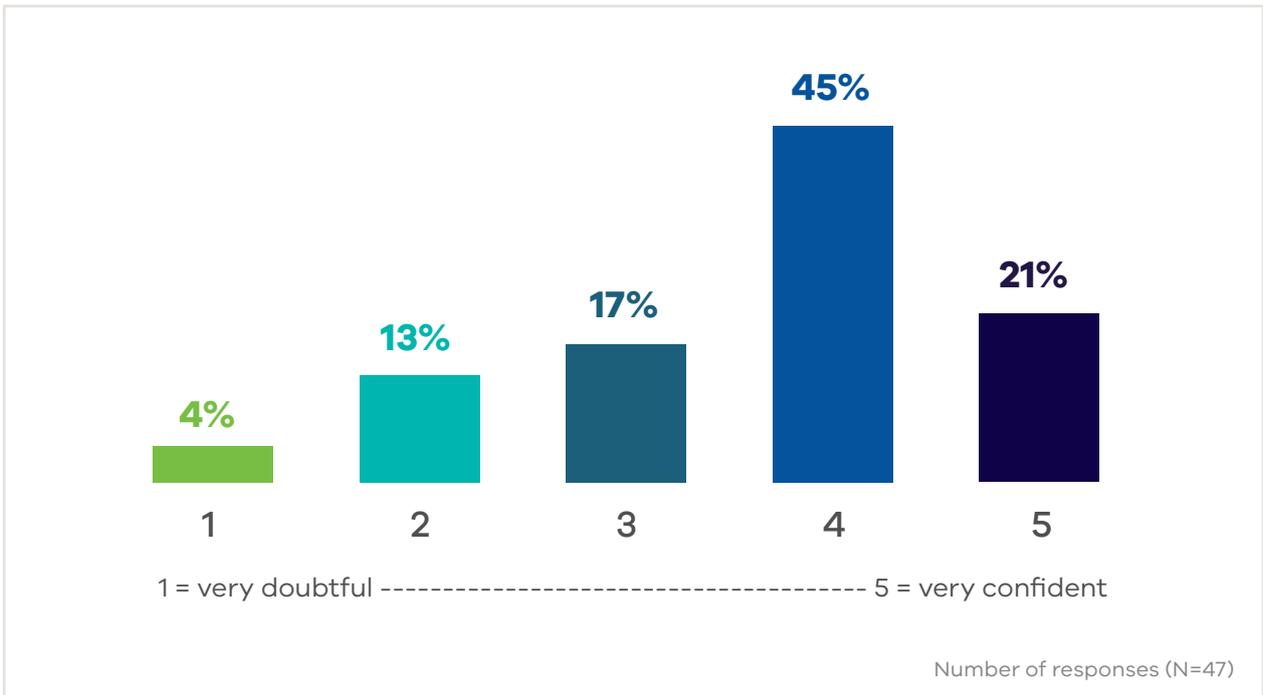
## How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile this process has been



1 = not at all ------------------------------------------------- 5 = very

Number of responses (N=47)

## Are there any improvements you would suggest for a similar process in the future?

| Category | Count |
|---|---|
| No improvements | 8 |
| Better communication about overall process | 8 |
| Adjustments to workbook questions | 6 |
| Longer timeframe to complete workbook | 4 |
| Timeline of process | 4 |
| Word document version of workbook | 3 |
| Other | 4 |

Number of responses (N=47)

### No improvements

**Many respondents didn't feel the need to offer any improvements to the process.**

*'The process worked really well.'*

| Count |
|---|
| 8 |

### Better communication about overall process

**Some participants felt like they lacked insight into the objectives and purpose of the process overall, and thought they would benefit from more information and better communication in the future.**

*'Be good to understand how information is reviewed and used, and process for final output'*

*'More background - why does the State Government think this framework is important'*

| Count |
|---|
| 8 |

### Adjustments to workbook questions

**Participants noted that the question list could have been more refined and simplified for clarity. Some teams felt a review of the questions was needed as they appeared repetitive or leading.**

*'The technical questions felt like there is a particular solution in mind so I'm not convinced on merits of the seeking feedback around it'*

*'A review of the questions. Some questions were repetitive or very strangely worded and didn't make complete sense.'*

| Count |
|---|
| 6 |

## Longer timeframe to complete workbook

| Count |
|-------|
| 4 |

**More time to complete the workbook would reduce pressure on small teams. Participants commented that this felt like too large a task to complete in the timeframe given.**

*'It was not a realistic timeframe that everyone was given to participate. Having to turn it around in over a week after being given the material and also allocated between 2 -4 hours is a big ask. Lead up time would be strongly suggested for future activities.'*

*'More time to deliver the changes. There are already a lot of pressures on officers at the moment and we did not have a very big turnaround.'*

## Timeline of process

| Count |
|-------|
| 4 |

**Some participants would like to have seen this engagement occur earlier in the overall process. They felt as though many decisions had already been made, or it came too late since some councils have already begun working on it.**

*'Timelines and consultancy support earlier (e.g. having Mosaic and supports in from the "beginning" of the LGV Act implementation?)'*

*'It would have been more helpful if this process had been in place during development of the Act. Many of the decisions have already been made on behalf of the sector and our Council saw no change from feedback provided throughout development of the Act.'*

*'This process needed to start 6 months earlier because councils have already begun their work. If wanting to get councils on the same page from the beginning, start sooner.'*

## Word document version of workbook

| Count |
|-------|
| 3 |

**Some teams found it frustrating to navigate working between the PDF Workbook and EngageVic Portal, and feel as though a Word doc version of the workbook would have been helpful and time saving.**

*'Provide the workbook in MS Word format, pdf is useless as you can't insert your notes or capture information from the team meetings.'*

*'Uploading answers to an online site is fine but if it's not in the same sequence as the workbook, it creates more work, not ideal given we're volunteering our time and are in the middle of annual reporting. More administrative support please'*

## Other

| Count |
|-------|
| 4 |

**A variety of other comments that don't necessarily offer an improvement, but rather note other challenges.**
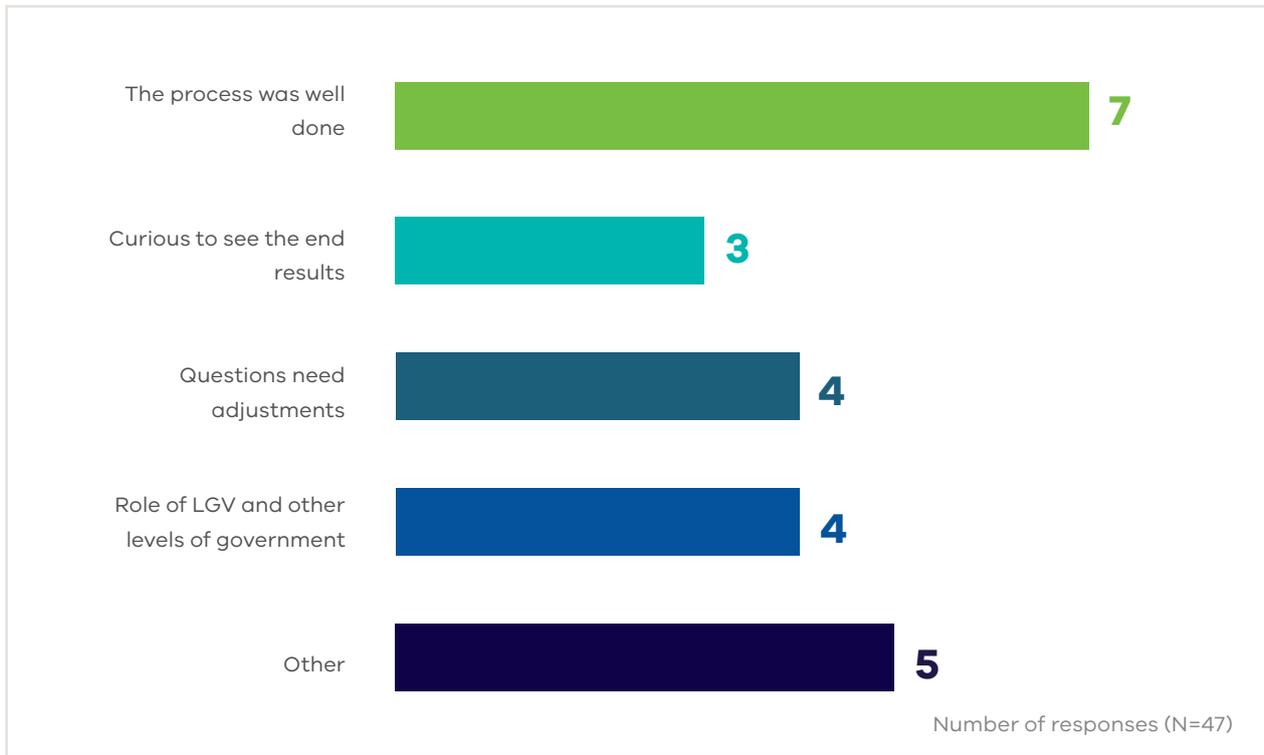
*'I think that it can be difficult collating themes from free form comments so it will be interesting to see what comes out of the process and how it influences round 2.'*

*'Perhaps a fourth person would have encouraged more discussion'*

*'It would be valuable to feedback to the 40 teams before results are posted, allow us to test and question the results, almost feel like your effort is devalued otherwise.'*

*'All participants make sure they can access the technology to fully participate'*

# Other final comments



The process was well done — 7
Curious to see the end results — 3
Questions need adjustments — 4
Role of LGV and other levels of government — 4
Other — 5

Number of responses (N=47)

### The process was well done

**Participants were impressed by the process and enjoyed being involved.**

| Count |
| --- |
| 7 |

*'This is a good attempt at engaging all involved. Only time will tell if it has been effective.'*

*'I enjoyed the process and would definitely contribute to something like this in the future.'*

*'Interesting to see best-practice engagement in practice...well done!'*

### Curious to see the end results

**A number of participants mentioned being interested in how the results turn out, what Round 2 will look like, and how their input will be implemented.**

| Count |
| --- |
| 3 |

*'Part 2 will be very interesting. It's a very timely and welcome exercise as I think the whole sector is struggling a bit at the moment. '*

### Questions need adjustments

**Some participants reflected that the questions didn't necessarily match with the reality of being a council staff member, and thus need adjustments.**

| Count |
| --- |
| 4 |

*'So much of the information provided was difficult to understand, it felt like the writer didn't understand how things worked on the ground in a local council setting'*

*'We did feel like some of the questions were 'how long is a piece of string' and it would be hard to analyse the answers for those.'*

*'A few questions were framed as though certain things that are already in the annual budget document were not in the annual budget document.'*

## Role of LGV and other levels of government

| Count |
|:---:|
| 4 |

**There were a number of comments relating to the role of LGV in this process and more widely when interacting with State and Federal Government.**

*'I imagine this is just a 'large' for a relatively small LGV team - we appreciate it. I get the sense there's a larger (untapped?) need for a stronger "central" role for LGV across 79 Councils into/out of State Government.'*

*'Given we were self-managing there was no-one to ask questions of, so we had to make our own assumptions. Not sure if that provides rigour to the process or not.'*

*'The State and Federal Governments should practice what they preach. '*

## Other

| Count |
|:---:|
| 5 |

**A variety of comments relating to elements of the process a participant enjoyed or disliked, or a challenge they encountered.**

*'Long lead times for participation and 'work' would be appreciated as people were either doing this with an already heavy workload or completing the reading the workbook out of work hours.'*

*'It was great to network with others and hear their views, amazing how similar some of our broader challenges are! '*

*'The discussions have been a good trigger for building the specific issues that may need to be tailored in my organisation.'*