

Institute for Public Policy and Governance

The Influence of Local Government and Its Impacts on Social Cohesion____

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Setting the context

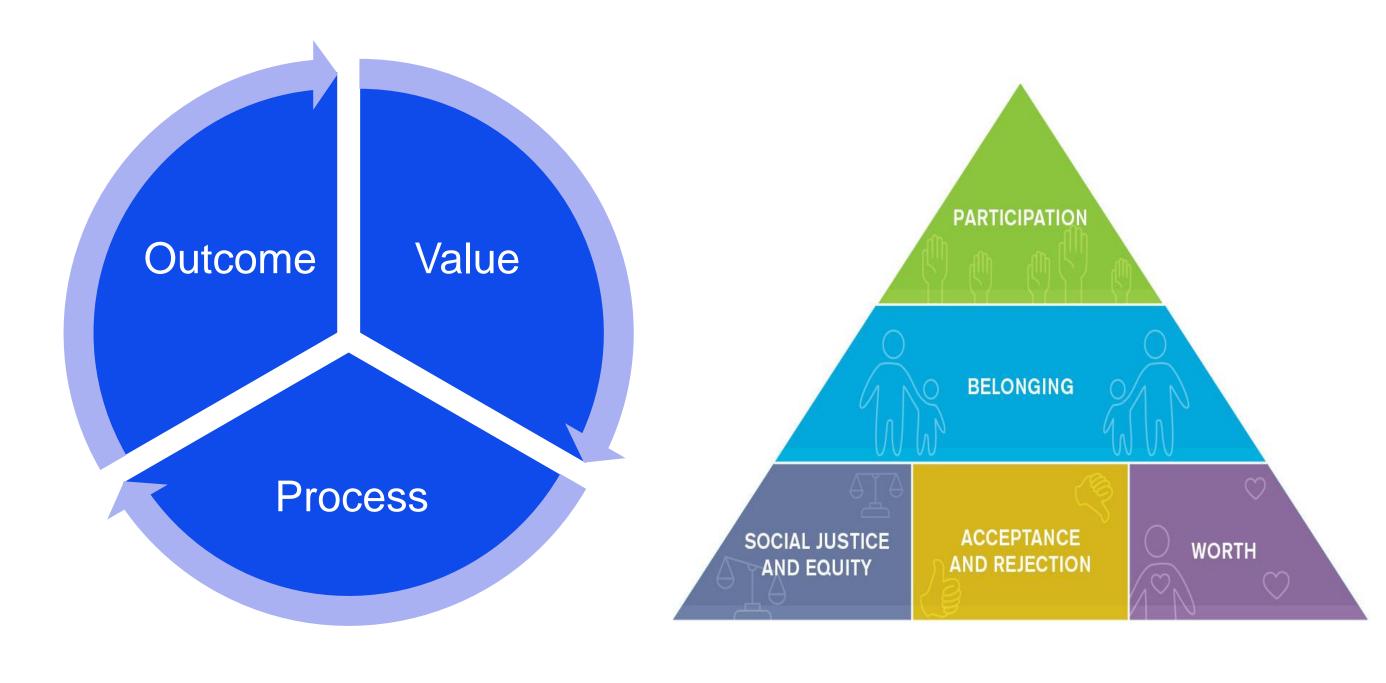
- Rise in populist politics
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Muslim immigration
- Citizenship debates
- Revisiting multiculturalism







Social Cohesion

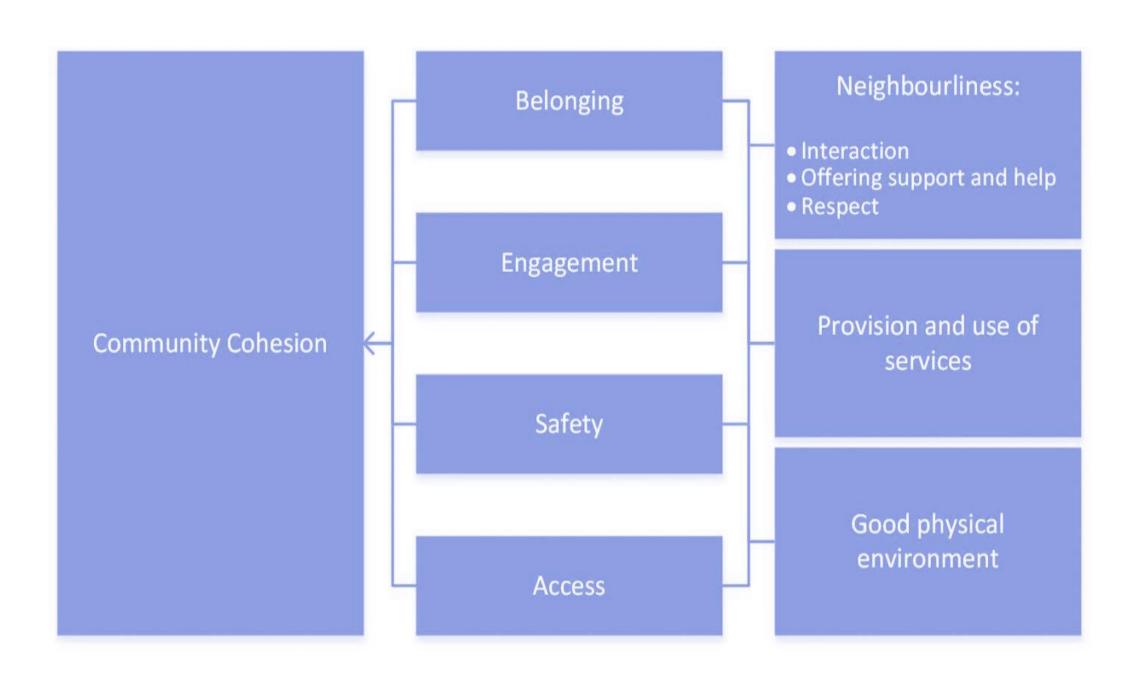


SECTORAL DIFFERENCES

Drivers for social cohesion, division and conflict

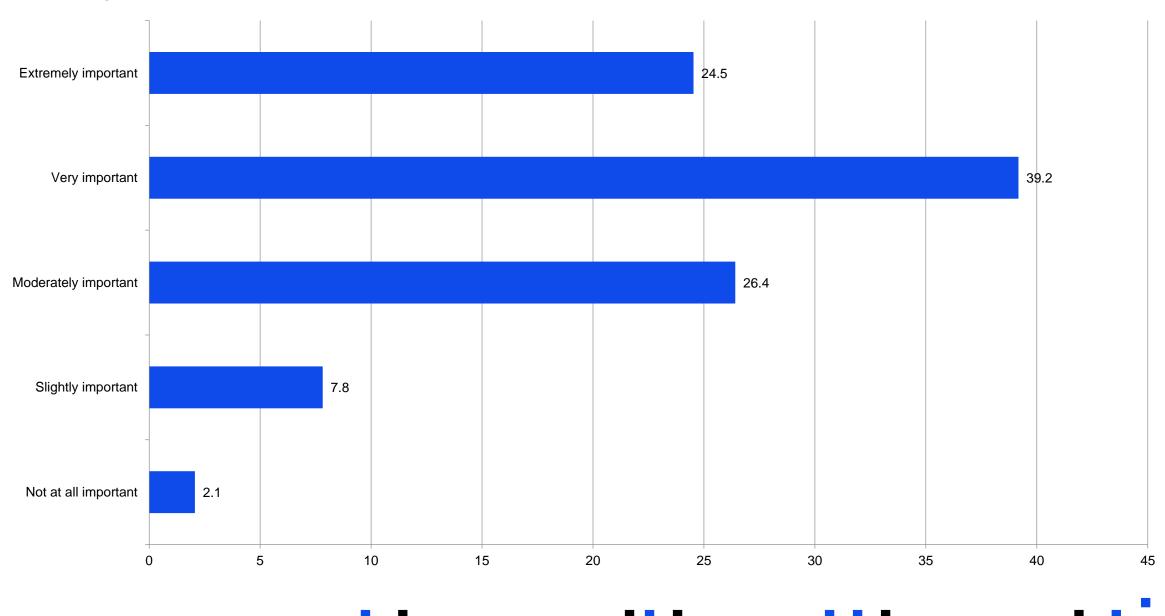
- The recognition of Indigenous Australian cultures and history
- Equality of access to resources
- Ignorance and stereotyping
- Real and perceived cultural differences
- Intercultural contact
- Community activities and social spaces
- A whole-of-government- and-community approach

Thinking about the role of government

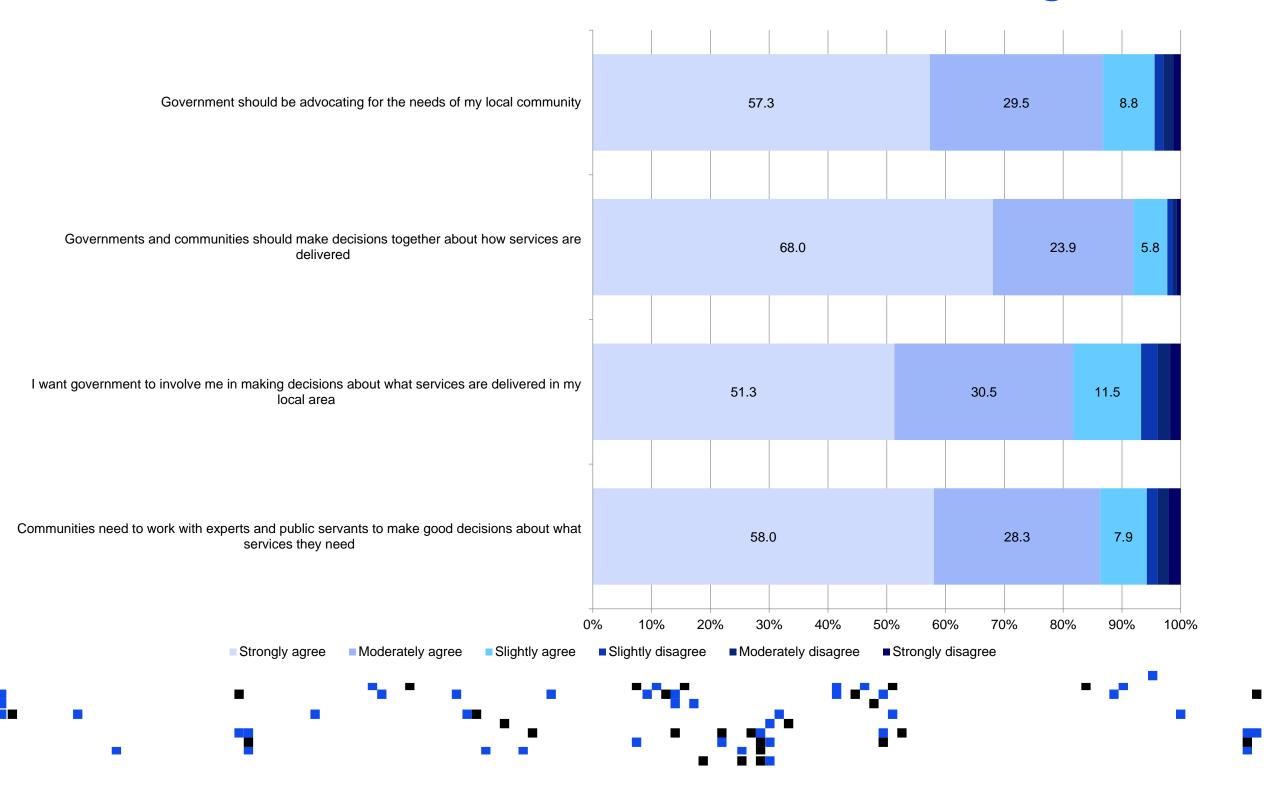


Why does local government matter?

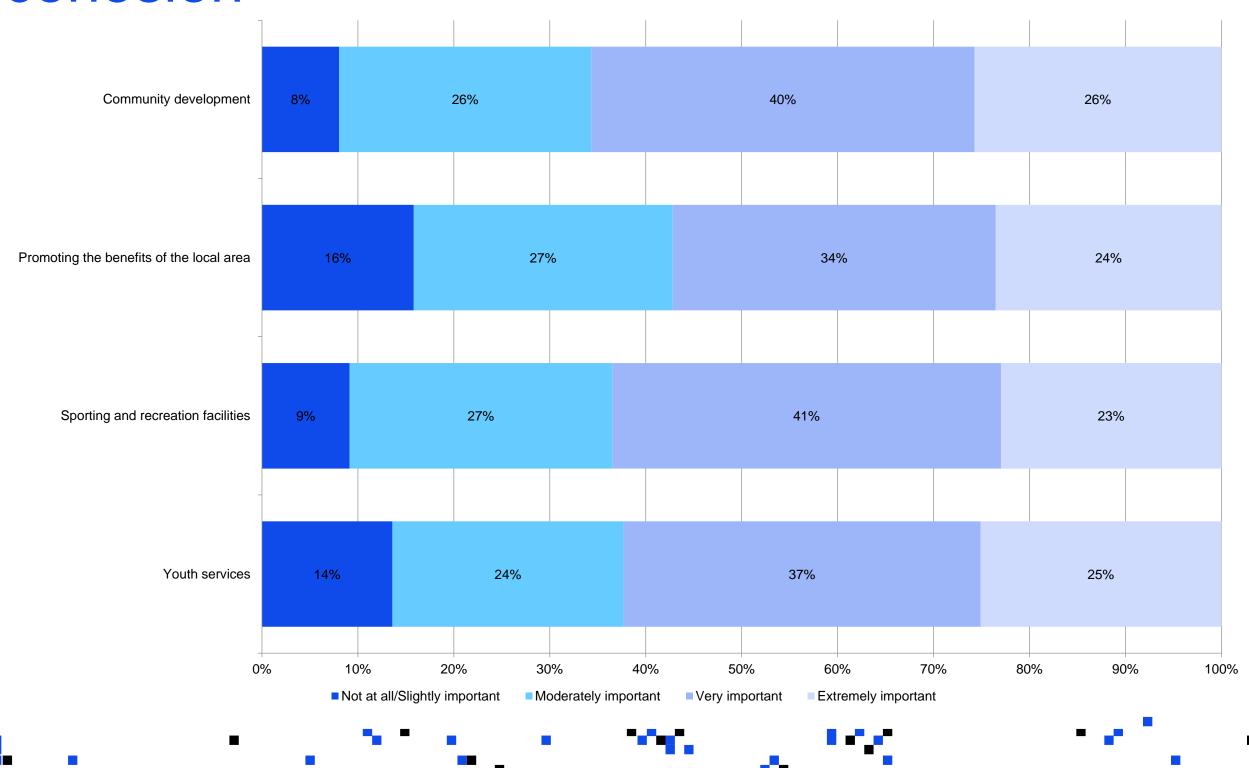
Do respondents value social cohesion in their local area?



Advocating for the needs of the community and involvement in decision making



Provision of services that support social cohesion

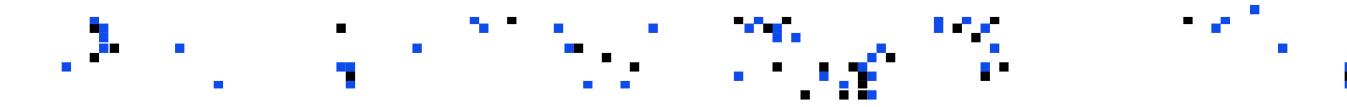


SECTORAL DIFFERENCES 9

Local government and social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to positive social relationships – it is the bond or 'glue' that binds people.

- Local government can build strong, socially cohesive communities by:
 - Understanding their communities and measure their strengths and weaknesses
 - Engaging their communities and build partnerships between key stakeholders
 - Preventing and responding to incidents of racism or conflict between groups if they arise
 - Strategically planning for the needs of their communities now and into the future
 - Monitoring, evaluating and sharing outcomes



Local government and social cohesion

Why local government matters looks at the different services that local government can provide that may help build social cohesion.

- This includes:
 - Involvement of the community in decision making
 - Advocating the needs of the local community
 - Community development and promoting the benefits of the local community
 - Targeted services including sports and recreation facilities, and youth services.

- Respondents place a high level of importance on the services and functions of local government that can help build social cohesion.
- Residents from non- metro areas are more likely to place extreme importance on the kinds of services that may help build community cohesion.





Research with Muslim African Migrants

...for us as a community to participate in the local government we have little understanding what the laws in the local government and there is no any consultation and there is no any information to get my people to understand the laws and I think this is very a very important point. They don't understand what the laws are. If you have been here like you've got your citizenship I think you have the right to vote, you have the right to say yourself this they don't understand what's going on, they don't know and there is no program to empower them to pick up all these things.

Male Sudanese community leader

How to engage and how we educate the local community of that...I'm yet to see a good engagement of that here yeah. I think we need to **start from grassroots level.** I mean we do, we have started that with cultural days at the schools, different schools in primary and in kindy. Basically at this moment we are dong you know like origami and dances and food and then slowly we hope to bring in the multi-faith sort of education. So you know it is a slow process. I have to take it very easy and slow here we are a little bit different. So you know each town ship has its own little way of dealing with things.

Female multicultural community worker

[Local government could] meet with community members and just enquire what are your needs, how could we help you. And I don't know if they've done that before I can't say but that would be helpful. just for acknowledgment you know. As a community worker I only engage with the council if there is something that we need to discuss with them or if we would like to invite them to come to an event or program.

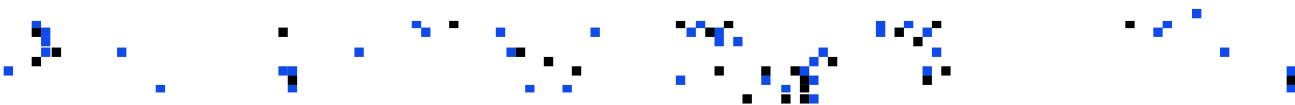
Female community development worker

Building Social Cohesion in our Communities

Online Resource

- First sector-specific resource to focus on social cohesion
- Supported by a strong evidence-base of current, validated research and local government case studies.
- It aims to help local governments to:
 - Understand their communities and measure social cohesion
 - Engage their communities and build partnerships between key stakeholders
 - Prevent and respond to incidents of racism or conflict between groups
 - Strategically plan for the needs of their communities now and into the future
 - Monitor, evaluate and share outcomes.





Conclusion

- Social cohesion is complex
- It requires a range of actors but...
- Think of local government first







