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1. *On the whole how would you rate Queensland local governments' handling of the pandemic?*

As the pandemic continued, I think we all improved with communication and the adjustments required due to lockdowns or new outbreaks. South-East Queensland (SEQ) felt the brunt of the pandemic and in particular the border councils, who should be commended for the additional work required. At the same time many councils were dealing with natural disasters, supply chain challenges, as well as the Indigenous communities facing unique challenges.

2. *Generally what aspects did Queensland local governments' handle best?*

The Disaster Management framework worked well given councils' extensive disaster management experience. They were very good at understanding the needs of the community and advocating back to State. However, we all understood that things needed to be done differently to more routine natural disasters. SEQ was first to initiate relief from fees and charges for business communities. Some rural and regional councils saw opportunity and successfully promoted domestic tourism.

3. *Generally what aspects did Queensland local governments' handle worst?*

Health Directives were an area where councils wanted clearer and more prescriptive direction when applying the directives to their particular council. Initially there were concerns from councils on costs associated with enforcing directives such as QR codes, and regulation of food premises etc. There was also some confusion in identifying 'critical' and 'essential' workers.

4. *To what extent was the local government sector reliant on State Government guidance/direction?*

As mentioned previously, some councils had expectations of more prescriptive guidelines. With such wide and diverse local governments and communities across state it was not possible to be prescriptive for each council's unique situation. Directions regarding management of public facilities such as showgrounds for example, proved challenging given how they are used across councils.

5. How would you rate the local government sector's performance during the pandemic in the following (1 = worst performance, 10 = best performance)?

| Aspect | Rating | Comment |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Timing of first response?</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Structure and strategy in the response?</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Community engagement?</i> | 8 | |
| <i>Service delivery?</i> | 8 | |
| <i>Integration with other governments and their agencies?</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Enforcement of Health Directives?</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Compliance with Health Directives?</i> | 6 | |
| <i>Community support?</i> | 8 | |
| <i>Business support?</i> | 8 | |
| <i>Economic stimuli?</i> | 4 | |
| <i>Protection of their communities?</i> | 8 | |
| <i>Advocacy to State and Commonwealth governments?</i> | effort 8 effectiveness 6 | |
| <i>Vaccination encouragement/facilitation?</i> | most 9 | There were a few exceptions such as Goondiwindi. |
| <i>Border control?</i> | effort 9 effectiveness 6 | |

6. If you were to guide Councils in a future epidemic what three things would you define as paramount?

1. Be willing to work together and act as a sector,
2. Consider ways financial relief/income can be generated by thinking 'outside the box'
3. Be adaptable and work with change.

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

I would like to think that the sector is stronger and more adaptable for having lived through the pandemic. Some of the innovation required because of the pandemic are still in place today , such as virtual council meetings.