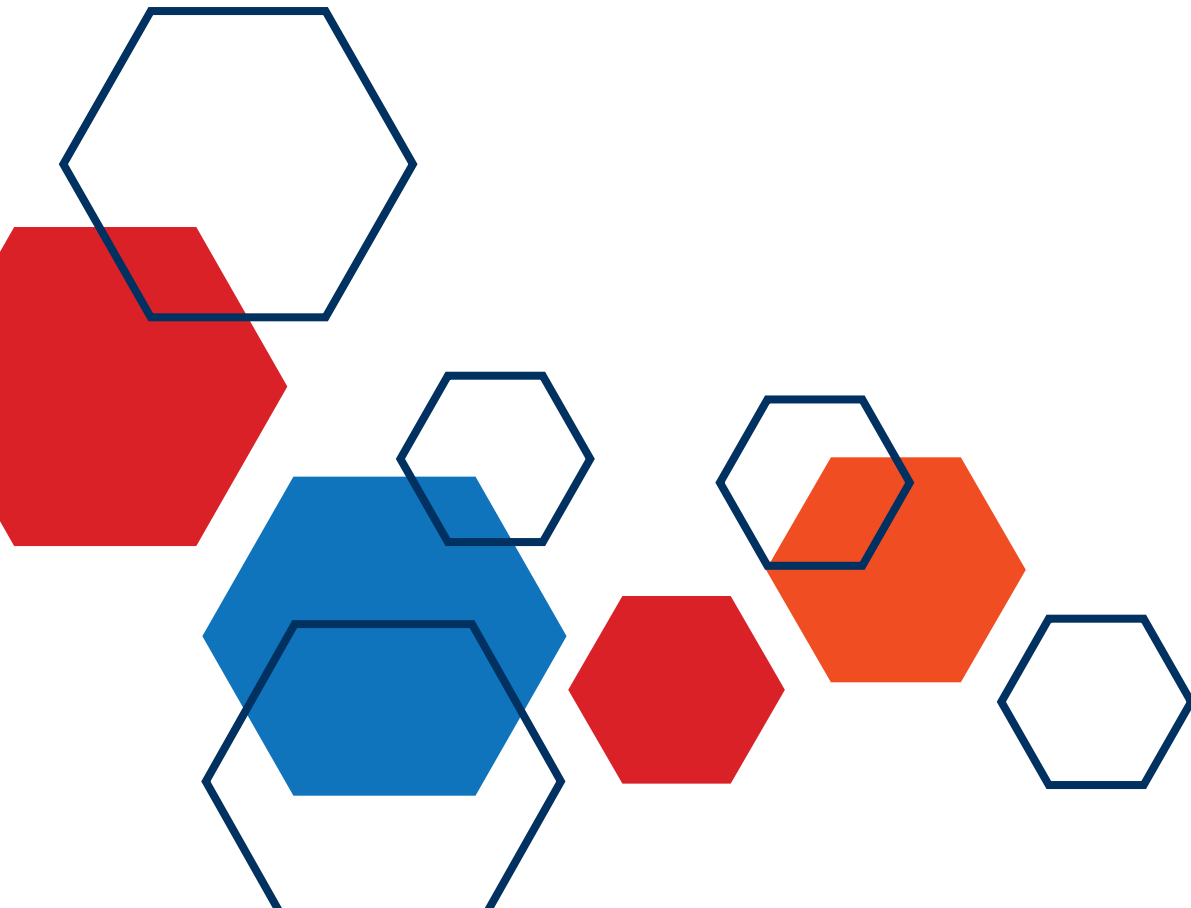


# Whitepaper

## Australian Local Government Leaders

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# Executive summary

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The current research endeavoured to obtain insight into what differentiates local government leaders from their counterparts in the private sector by exploring differences in relation to personality and multi-rater performance.

Understanding what differentiates local government leaders and the strengths and opportunities that tend to be most prevalent amongst local government leaders is valuable in supporting the development of local government leadership talent.

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- Significant differences were found in relation to day-to-day personality tendencies which may contribute to differences in leadership styles and the approaches adopted when comparing local government leaders to leaders in the private sector. Significant differences were found in relation to day-to-day personality tendencies which may contribute to differences in leadership styles and the approaches adopted when comparing local government leaders to leaders in the private sector.
- Significant differences were also found in relation to derailment tendencies which may contribute to differences in development needs and responses when in situations such as when under pressure or complacent. Specifically, leaders within the local government were less likely to derail by overreacting to situations and being tense under pressure; cynical of others and fault-finding; overly confident and ignoring one's shortcomings; taking unnecessary risks and acting impulsively; being overly perfectionistic and micromanaging others.
- When looking more closely at derailment tendencies for local government leaders, the most prevalent derailment tendencies for these leaders were associated with holding exceptionally high standards of performance, being perfectionistic, exhibiting micromanaging behaviours, being inflexible and failing to delegate work to others. The second most prevalent derailment tendencies were associated with overvaluing one's independence and being privately resentful regarding requests and work-related suggestions; and taking unnecessary risks, acting impulsively without thinking through the potential implications, and downplaying one's mistakes.
- There were also significant differences between local government leaders and leaders in the private sector in relation to motivators and drivers which may contribute to differences in the types of work environments or cultures that they are likely to foster as a leader. Specifically, local government leaders were relatively more likely to embrace values associated with helping others and making a positive contribution to society; dedication to strong personal beliefs; and innovation, creativity, and style. On the other hand, leaders in the private sector were relatively more likely to embrace values associated with opportunities to stand out and be noticed; opportunities to socialise; competition and getting ahead; focusing on commercial outcomes; experiencing fun and variety.

- When looking more closely at motivators and drivers for local government leaders, the most prevalent values were associated with opportunities to help others and contribute to society; and with engaging in analytical problem solving and objective decision making. Other values that were relatively more prevalent included having an interest in high standards and appropriate social behaviour; valuing innovation and creative problem-solving.
- When looking at differences in relation to performance on multi-rater assessments, there were a number of similarities including in relation to self-management, relationship management, and working on the business (i.e. adding value through innovation and strategic planning). However, there were also some leadership capabilities where local government leaders scored lower relative to their private sector counterparts. Specifically, local government leaders scored lower on working in the business (i.e. achieving operational excellence), accountability, and being driven by internal and external customer needs.
- There were some similarities in the top-rated strengths and opportunities to improve when looking at local government leaders and private sector leaders. This speaks to common leadership strengths and needs. In terms of strengths, these were having solid technical ability, experience, and knowledge; having a strong work ethic; being steady and calm under pressure; having a professional approach. In terms of opportunities to improve, these were stop taking on too much and spreading oneself too thin; challenging poor performance; delegating more; motivating others and improving morale.
- There were also some differences in ranked strengths when comparing local government leaders and private sector leaders. Specifically, local government leaders were tended to be rated relatively higher on the strengths of having high ethical standards and integrity, being empathetic and supportive, and being visionary and strategic. In terms of opportunities to improve, local government leaders tended to be rated higher on the opportunities of setting clearer goals and performance indicators; listening more and letting others have their say; and improving their time management and organisational skills.
- The implications associated with the strengths and opportunities to improve that emerged for local government leaders are explored. Recommendations are also provided for addressing some of the key development areas that were identified for local government leaders in Australia.

# Background

**Leaders within Australian local governments are faced with a number of unique and complex challenges that differ from those faced by other public sector leaders and by private sector leaders (Hutchinson, Walker, & McKenzie, 2014).**

While there have been various pieces of research looking into differences between leaders in the public and private sectors (e.g. Anderson, 2010; Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Hooijberg & Choi, 2001), there is an opportunity to look more specifically at local government leaders to obtain insights into what can help contribute to their success in driving performance and achieving desirable outcomes. The present research aimed to help increase an understanding of the strengths and opportunities of local government leaders by exploring their performance on personality and multi-rater assessments. This research involved looking at the prevalence of certain tendencies, strengths, and opportunities amongst local government leaders as well as how they compare to those within the private sector.

Personality has been found to be predictive of leadership performance and proposed to play an important role in shaping a person's leadership behaviour and style (Hassan, Asad & Hoshino, 2016; Howell, 2017; Judge et al., 2002; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). By understanding the prevalence of personality-based tendencies amongst local government leaders and how they differ compared to their private sector counterparts, we may be able to shed some light into their likely leadership behaviours and styles as well as their likely strengths and areas for development. These insights can be used to help support the selection and development of leadership talent within Australian local government.

The present study looked at three aspects of personality, specifically day-to-day tendencies, derailment tendencies, and motivators. Understanding the day-to-day personality-based tendencies may provide insight into how the personality of local government leaders shapes their leadership style and approach and provide insight into aspects such as their decision making. By also examining their derailment tendencies, we can obtain insight into how local government leaders are likely to respond during times such as when they are under pressure and what are likely to be key areas that should be targeted for their development. Finally, by looking at motivators and drivers we can obtain a greater understanding of what kind of cultures or work environments that local government leaders are likely to foster.

The present study also examined the multi-rater performance of local government leaders including how they performed relative to leaders within the private sector.

**Multi-rater assessments can be used to measure leadership effectiveness and provide insights into strengths and development opportunities that may not be seen from a single perspective (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan, 1994).**

The present study examined the key strengths and opportunities to improve for local government leaders including whether there were differences in performance across various leadership competencies when comparing local government leaders to their private sector counterparts.

# Methodology

## Participants

This study drew on two samples of data for Australian executives and managers in the public and private sectors collected during 2012 and 2019. Each sample included participants from a wide range of industries (including but not limited to) banking and finance, building and construction, education, hospitality, IT and telecommunications, manufacturing, mining, professional services, and sales and marketing.

- Sample one consisted of data from 37,448 Australian executives and managers who completed the Hogan personality assessments. The sample consisted of 1,571 local government leaders and 35,877 leaders within the private sector.
- Sample two consisted of data from 4,782 Australian executives and managers who completed the Hogan 360. The sample consisted of 244 local government leaders and 4,358 leaders within the private sector.

## Measures

### Hogan Personality Assessments

The following assessments were completed by the sample as part of an assessment of personality and values:

- Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI; Hogan & Hogan, 2007): measures day-to-day personality characteristics and provides information about an individual's typical behavioural tendencies and how they are likely to be perceived in the work environment.
- Hogan Development Survey (HDS; Hogan & Hogan, 2009): measures personality when under stress and pressure, and describes an individual's strengths which, when overplayed, can potentially derail performance at work.
- Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory (MVPI; Hogan & Hogan, 2010): provides insight into an individual's core values that motivate and drive their behaviour.

### Hogan 360

The Hogan 360 (Peter Berry Consultancy, 2015) is a multi-rater survey that gathers leadership feedback from a variety of key stakeholder groups (i.e. managers, peers, direct reports and others such as customers or stakeholders).

As shown in Figure 1 below, the tool covers four key domains and 14 underlying competencies.



Figure 1. The Hogan 360 Leadership Model

In its current form, the Hogan 360 includes:

- 50 scaled items rated on a 7-point scale where 1 is 'Does not describe this person at all' and 7 is 'Describes this person exactly'. The 50 items are all mapped to the four quadrants of the Hogan 360 Leadership Model and their corresponding sub-themes.
- Ranked items designed to identify the top four key strengths and top four key opportunities to improve. Raters choose the top four strengths/opportunities from 26 items where the top selected item has a weight of 4, the second has a weight of 3, the third has a weight of 2, and the fourth has a weight of 1.
- Three open-ended questions focusing on strengths, opportunities, and overused strengths
- This study focuses on data from the scaled items and ranked strengths and opportunities to improve items.

## Statistical Analyses

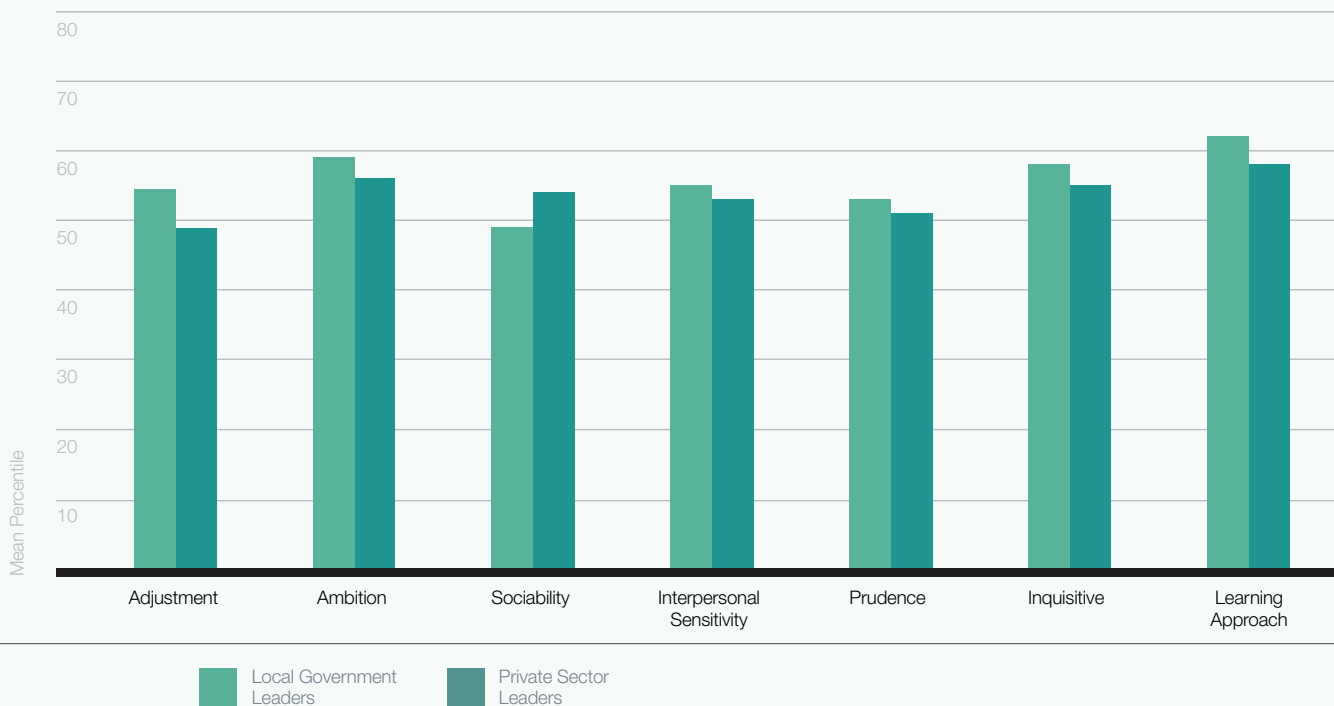
Independent samples t-tests were carried out to assess where there were significant differences between public and private sector leaders. The level of statistical significance used to assess for differences was based on  $p < .05$ .



OUTCOMES

# Personality Comparison

## Hogan Personality Inventory



**Local government leaders were found to score significantly higher on Adjustment relative to private sector leaders. This suggests that local government leaders may tend to be more resilient and less susceptible to daily stresses and pressures relative to their private sector counterparts.**

Local government leaders also scored significantly higher on Ambition. This indicates that local government leaders may tend to be more driven, focused on achieving results, and exhibit higher levels of confidence and initiative.

Local government leaders scored significantly lower on Sociability relative to leaders in the private sector. This suggests that they may not be as active in seeking opportunities to engage, communicate and collaborate with others relative to their counterparts in the private sector.

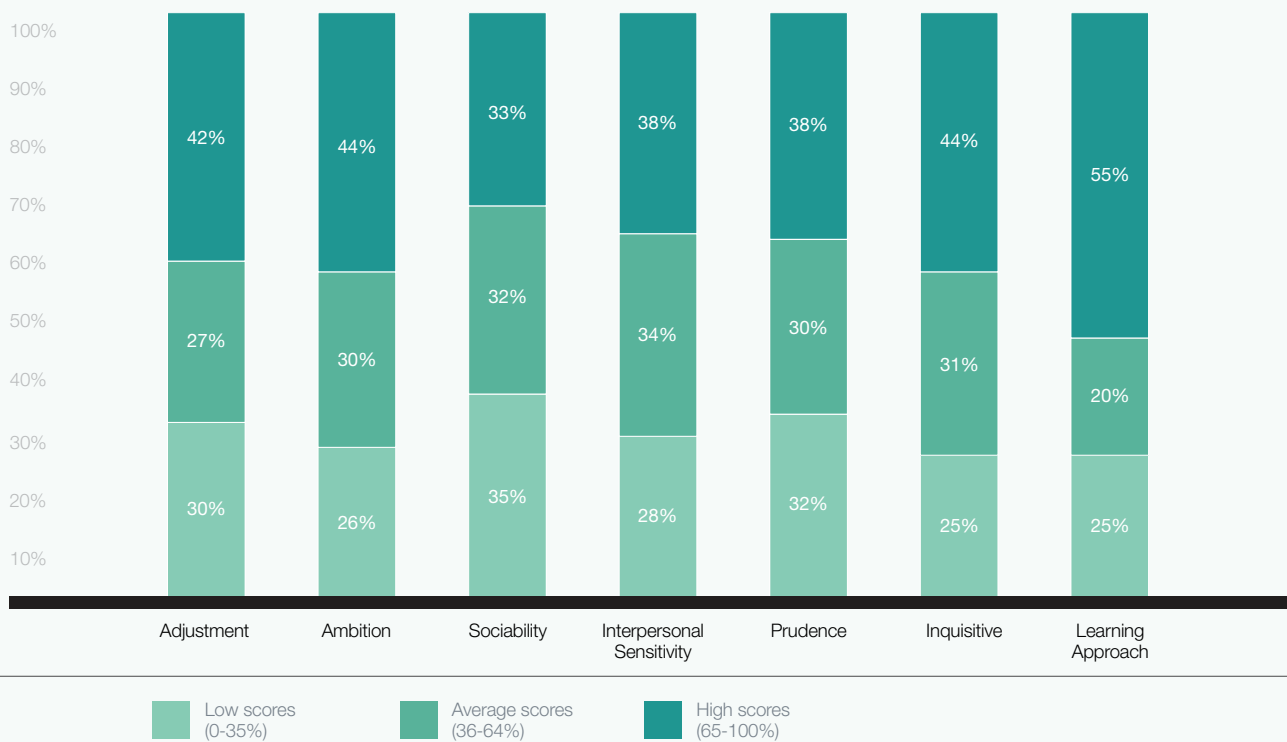
There was not a statistically significant difference for Interpersonal Sensitivity when comparing leaders working in the local government and private sector. This suggests that they are likely to be similar in the extent that they exhibit tendencies associated with being perceptive

and considerate of others and adopting a tactful and diplomatic approach.

Local government leaders scored significantly higher on Prudence relative to leaders in the private sector. This indicates that leaders within the local government may be more inclined to adopt high standards of performance, be procedurally driven and attentive to aspects such as ensuring compliance with rules and considering potential risks.

Local government leaders also scored significantly higher on Inquisitive. This suggests that they may be more inclined to focus on the bigger picture and take an innovative approach to problem solving relative to leaders in the private sector.

Additionally, local government leaders scored significantly higher on Learning Approach which indicates that they may be more inclined to value training and development activities and actively seek opportunities to stay up to date with issues, trends, and developments applicable to their role.



When looking more closely at how local government leaders tended to score on the Hogan Personality Inventory scales, a large proportion scored in the high range on the Adjustment scale. This suggests that a large proportion of local government leaders are likely to present as resilient and composed in the face of everyday stressors and pressures.

A large proportion of local government leaders also scored in the high range on Ambition indicating a tendency to present as highly motivated and driven to achieve results.

There was a fairly even spread in relation to a preference for social interaction and being around others as indicated by roughly a third falling within the low, average, and high ranges on the Sociability scale.

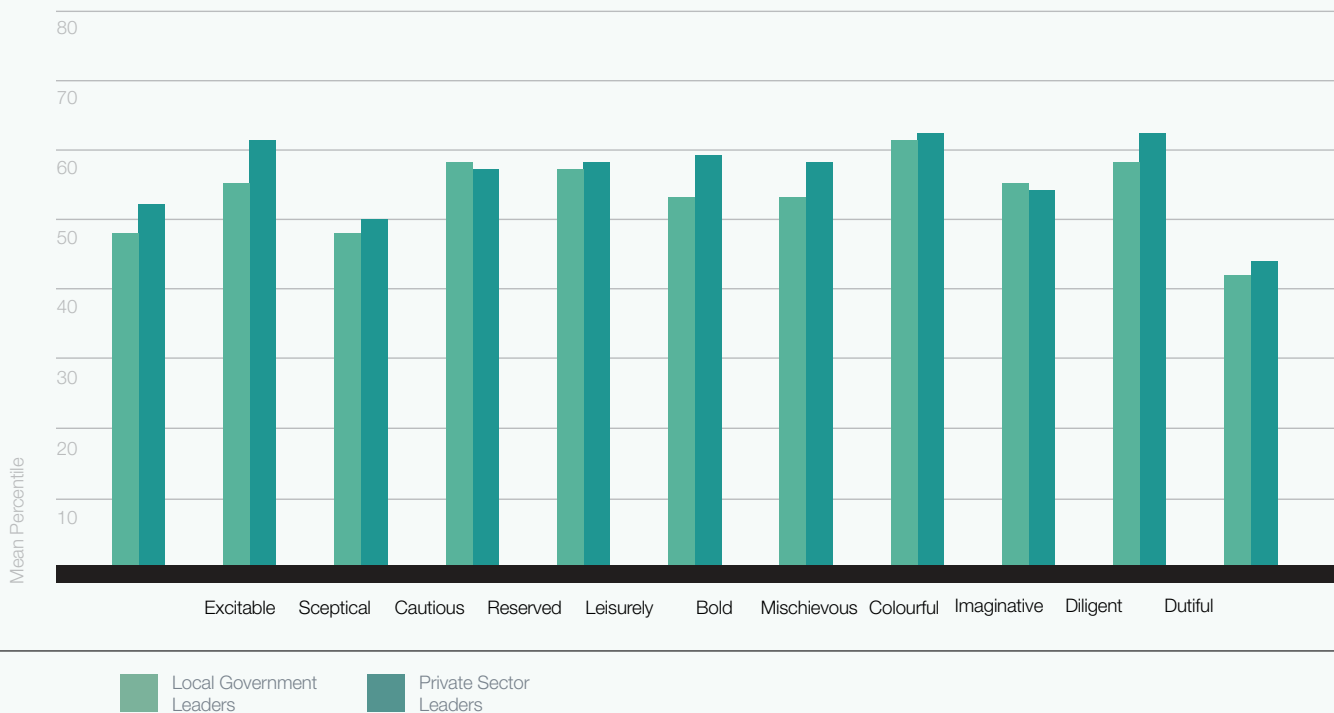
A large proportion of leaders scored within the average to high range on Interpersonal Sensitivity. This suggests that a large proportion of local government leaders are likely to display a reasonable degree of tact and consideration when interacting with others.

A large proportion of leaders also scored within the average to high range on Prudence. This suggests that a large proportion of local government leaders are likely to display a reasonable degree of attentiveness to details, rules, procedures, and risks.

A large proportion of local government leaders scored within the high range on the Inquisitive scale, speaking to a tendency to be curious, open-minded, and interested in the bigger picture.

The majority of local government leaders scored high on Learning Approach. This indicates that the majority of local government leaders are likely to actively seek opportunities to engage in ongoing learning and to stay up to date with issues, trends, and developments applicable to their role.

## Hogan Development Survey



**Derailers can have a significant impact on the performance and reputation of leaders including by impacting their leadership style. These tendencies can emerge when a leader is not actively self-managing such as when they are under pressure or complacent and can hinder their overall leadership effectiveness.**

Local government leaders scored significantly lower on Excitable relative to their private sector counterparts. This suggests that they are less likely to derail by overreacting to situations and being tense under pressure when compared to private sector leaders.

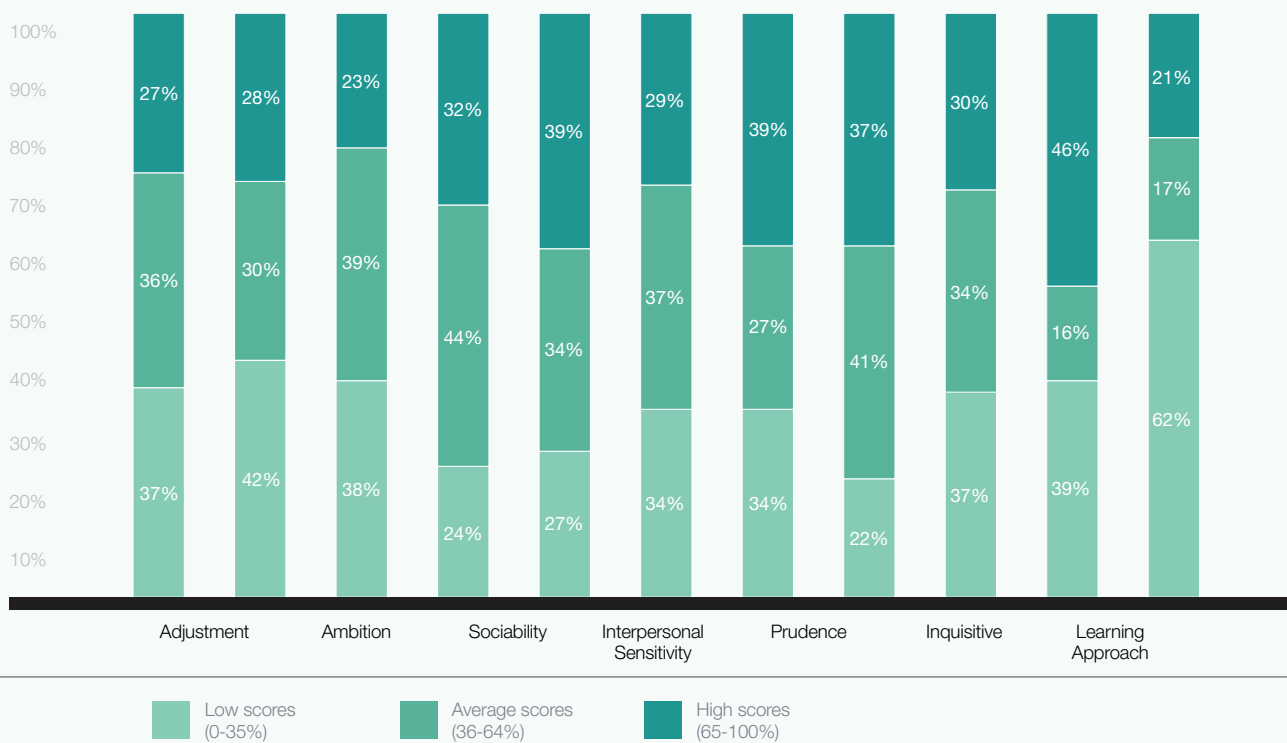
Leaders in the local government also scored significantly lower on Sceptical which indicates that they are less inclined to derail by being overly cynical, mistrusting, and prone to fault-finding relative to their private sector counterparts.

Additionally, local government leaders scored significantly lower on Bold compared to leaders in the private sector. This suggests that they are less inclined to derail by being overly self-confident and self-promoting in comparison to leaders in the private sector.

Local government leaders also scored significantly lower on Mischievous when compared to leaders in the private sector. This indicates that they are less likely than their private sector counterparts to derail by acting hastily or taking unnecessary risks.

Leaders in the local government also scored significantly lower on Diligent relative to their counterparts in the private sector. This suggests that when not self-managing, local government leaders may be less inclined to derail by being overly perfectionistic, exacting in their expectations, and inflexible in their approach relative to leaders in the private sector.





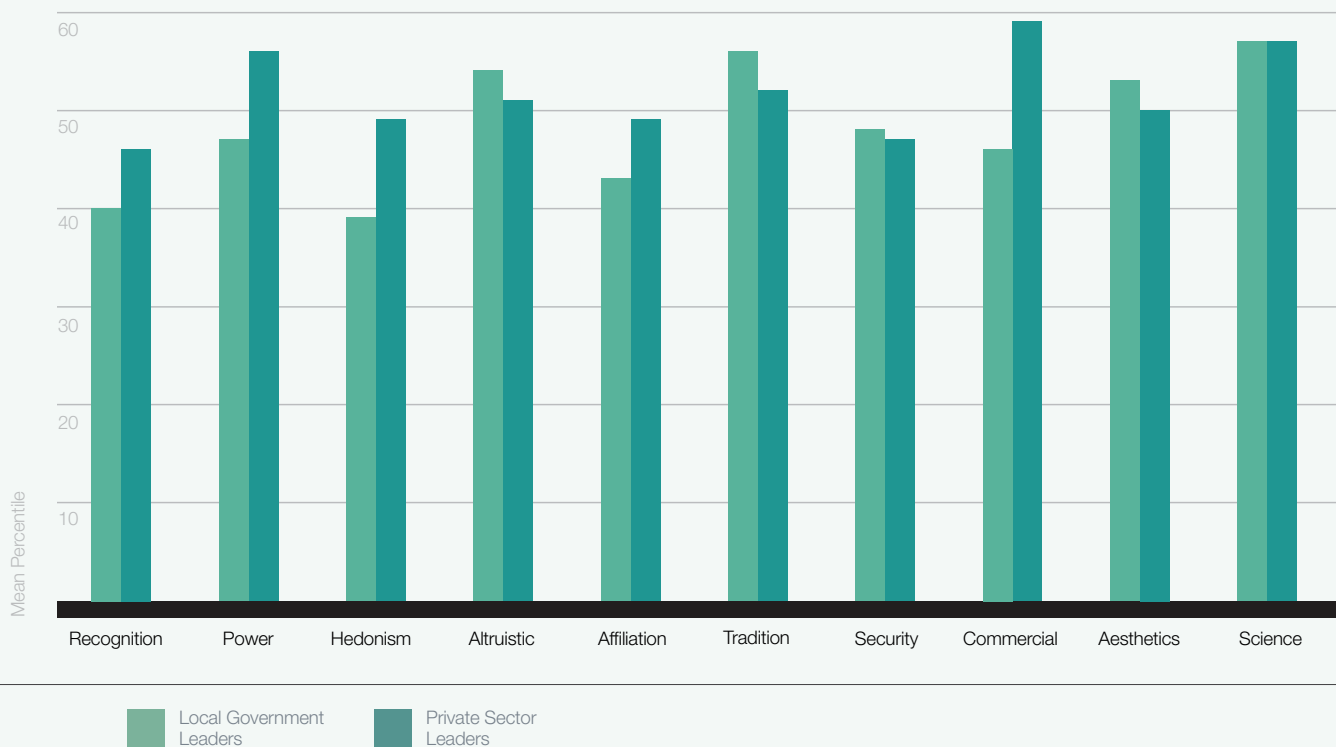
When looking more closely at how local government leaders tended to score on the Hogan Development Survey, the Diligent scale tended to have the highest proportion of leaders scoring in the moderate to high risk range. The Diligent scale concerns being hardworking, detail orientated and having high standards of performance for oneself and others. When not self-managing, those who score within the moderate to high risk range on the Diligent scale may derail by exhibiting tendencies associated with being perfectionistic, micromanaging, inflexible, and finding it difficult to delegate.

The second most prevalent scales based on scores in the moderate to high risk range were Leisurely and Mischievous. When not managing, those who score within the moderate to high risk range on the Leisurely scale can derail by exhibiting tendencies associated with overvaluing their independence and being privately resentful regarding requests and work-related suggestions.

Moderate to high risk scores on Mischievous are associated with derailing by exhibiting tendencies associated with taking unnecessary risks, acting without thinking through the potential implications and using charm to downplay one's mistakes.

The third most prevalent scale based on scores in the moderate to high risk range was Colourful. When not self-managing, those with scores in the moderate to high risk range may derail by exhibiting tendencies associated with dominating social interactions, being attention-seeking, and easily bored.

## Motives, Values and Preferences Inventory



**Values, interests, and drivers play an important role in the type of work environment and organisational culture that leaders are likely to foster. They can impact the kind of behaviours that leaders encourage and discourage from their staff and influence their decisions including in relation to strategy.**

Local government leaders scored significantly lower on the values associated with status interests (i.e. lower on Recognition, Power, and Hedonism). This indicates that local government leaders are less likely to value opportunities to stand out, be noticed or get ahead, or experiencing fun and variety in the workplace relative to leaders in the private sector.

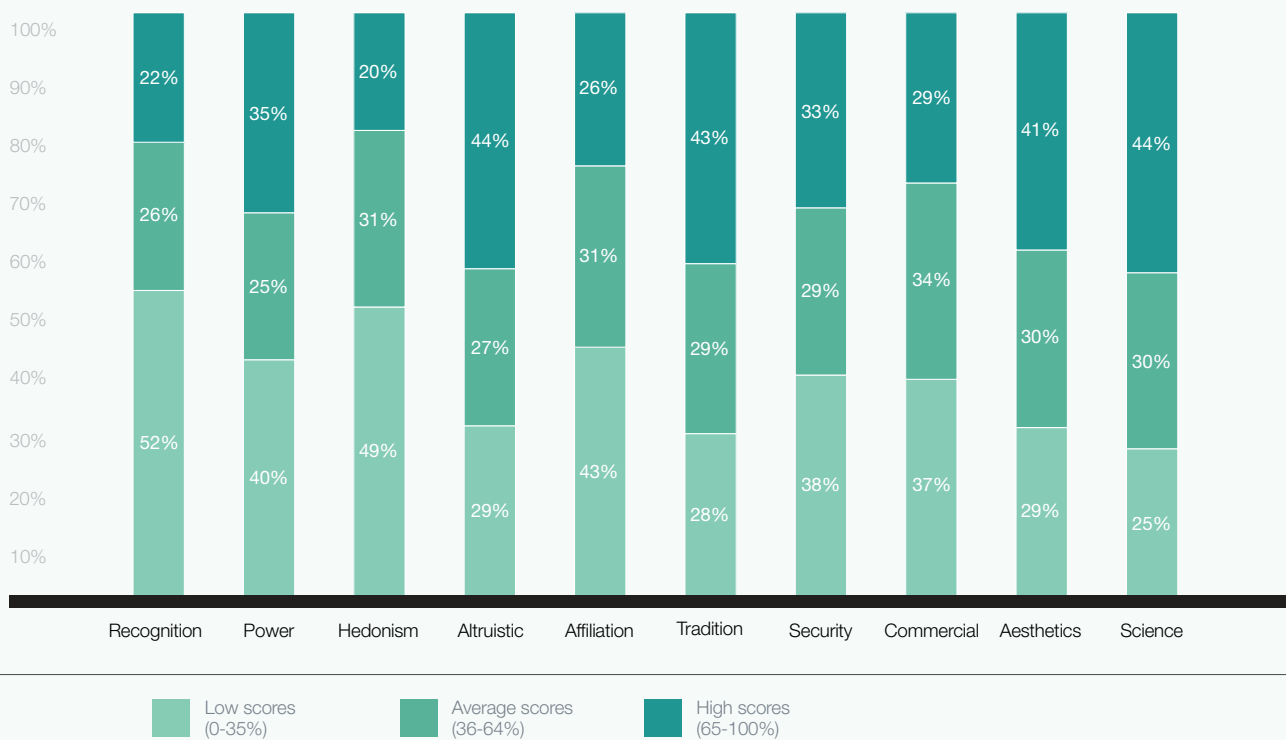
Local government leaders were also found to score significantly lower on Commerce which suggests a lower inclination to focus on commercial outcomes in comparison to their counterparts in the private sector.

Additionally, local government leaders scored significantly lower on Affiliation which indicates that they are less likely to value opportunities for social interaction and collaboration when compared to private sector leaders.

However, local government leaders scored significantly higher on Altruistic compared to leaders in the private sector. This suggests that they are more likely to value opportunities to help others and make a positive contribution to society relative to leaders in the private sector.

Leaders in the local government also scored significantly higher on Tradition in comparison to leaders in the private sector. This indicates that they may be more likely to have an interest in appropriate social behaviour and organisational cultures marked by rules and uniform procedures compared to private sector leaders.

Additionally, local government leaders scored significantly higher on Aesthetics relative to private sector leaders. This suggests that local government leaders are more inclined to value innovation and creative problem solving and to focus on quality and style.



When looking more closely at how local government leaders tended to score on the Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory scales, Altruistic and Science tended to have the highest proportion of local government leaders scoring in the high range. Leaders who score high on the Altruistic scale tend to strongly value opportunities to help others and contribute to society. They also tend to have a strong focus on fostering a culture that cares about the morale and wellbeing of others, providing quality customer service, and that emphasises fair treatment, civil behaviour, and respect for others.

Leaders who score high on the Science scale are more likely to value analytic problem solving and objective decision-making processes. They are also more likely to focus on fostering a culture that emphasises rigour and defensibility of decisions and plans.

The third most prevalent driver for local government leaders based on the proportion scoring within the high range was Tradition. Leaders who score high on Tradition tend to have an interest in high standards and appropriate social behaviour. They also tend to be more inclined to focus on fostering a culture marked by formality, rules, and uniform procedures.

The fourth most prevalent driver for local government leaders was Aesthetics. Leaders who score high on Aesthetics are more inclined to value innovation and creative problem solving and to foster a culture that emphasises a focus on quality and style.



## OUTCOMES

# Multi-Rater Performance Comparison

## Hogan 360 Overall and Leadership Competency Scores

	Local Government Leaders	Private Sector Leaders
Overall Score	5.49	5.57
Self-Management	5.61	5.66
Integrity	5.67	5.74
Resilience	5.55	5.54
Relationship Management	5.42	5.50
Communication	5.42	5.49
People Skills	5.39	5.45
Team Player	5.39	5.48
Customer	5.49	5.61
Working in the Business	5.64	5.73
Capability	5.89	5.99
Efficiency	5.40	5.51
Results	5.67	5.75
Engaging	5.60	5.69
Working on the Business	5.30	5.38
Accountability	5.28	5.42
Motivation	5.18	5.27
Strategy	5.28	5.32
Innovation	5.45	5.48

**Local government leaders were found to have significantly different scores for one of the quadrants and four subthemes in the Hogan 360.**

**Specifically, local government leaders scored significantly lower on the Working in the Business quadrant relative to their counterparts in the private sector.**

This quadrant refers to having the experience, capability, and efficiency to consistently deliver great results. Within this quadrant, local government leaders scored significantly

lower on the subthemes of Capability (i.e. having the requisite ability and experience to do one's current role) and Efficiency (i.e. prioritising and managing time and effort for maximum benefit) relative to leaders in the private sector. Local government leaders also scored significantly lower on the subthemes of Customer (i.e. being driven by internal and external customer needs that drive improvement) and Accountability (i.e. managing performance by providing consistent and constructive feedback) relative to their counterparts in the private sector.

## Top Strengths & Opportunities to Improve Results

Strengths	Local Government Leaders	Private Sector Leaders
Has solid technical ability, experience, and knowledge	1	1
Works hard with a strong work ethic	2	2
Has high ethical standards and integrity	3	8
Is steady and calm under pressure	4	5
Has a professional approach	5	4
Has a positive and enthusiastic attitude	6	6
Is action-oriented and gets things done	7	3
Has strong leadership skills	8	11
Is empathetic and supportive	9	15
Is customer focused, and good with clients	10	7
Builds effective relationships	11	10
Strong communication skills	12	13
Good at planning and thinking ahead	13	16
Is visionary and strategic	14	25
Has strong people skills	15	12
Is competitive and determined	16	9
Is good at solving problems	17	14
Is well organized	18	17
Suggests new and innovative ideas	19	20
Good sense of humour	20	21
Makes the tough decisions	21	23
Sets clear goals and drives results	22	18
Shows loyalty	23	19
Is a positive role model	24	22
Challenges poor performance	25	24
Motivates and inspires others	26	26

**For the top five rated strengths, there were several similarities when comparing local government leaders to leaders in the private sector.** These were:

- Has solid technical ability, experience, and knowledge
- Works hard with a strong work ethic
- Is steady and calm under pressure
- Has a professional approach

**Local government leaders were more likely to be rated higher on the following strengths relative to leaders in the private sector:**

- Has high ethical standards and integrity
- Is empathetic and supportive
- Is visionary and strategic

## Similarities and Differences in Top Opportunities

Opportunities	Local Government Leaders	Private Sector Leaders
Stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin	1	1
Challenge poor performance	2	2
Delegate more	3	3
Set clear goals and performance indicators	4	11
Motivate others and improve morale	5	4
Show leadership on issues	6	7
Be more assertive	7	9
Be more available and visible in the workplace	8	8
Share knowledge and resources	9	5
Listen more and let others have their say	10	13
Give appropriate feedback	11	6
Improve your time management and organizational skills	12	16
Communicate better	13	10
Build more effective relationships	14	12
Be more action-oriented and make it happen	15	17
Look at the big picture – the organization's overall goals	16	14
Improve your people and interpersonal skills	17	15
Acquire better job and/or industry knowledge	18	19
Be more open to change	19	18
More customer and/or client focus	20	21
Treat people fairly and without favouritism	21	23
Be more empathetic	22	20
Be more positive	23	24
Be more of a team player	24	22
Be less aggressive	25	25
Be less moody and control your temper	26	26

**For the top five rated opportunities, there were several similarities when comparing local government leaders to leaders in the private sector. These were:**

- Stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin
- Challenge poor performance
- Delegate more
- Motivate others and improve morale

**Local government leaders were more likely to be rated higher on the following opportunities relative to leaders in the private sector:**

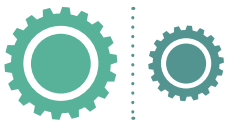
- Set clear goals and performance indicators
- Listen more and let others have their say
- Improve time management and organisational skills

**On the other hand, leaders in the private sector were more likely to be rated higher on the following opportunities relative to leaders in the local government:**

- Share knowledge and resources
- Give appropriate feedback
- Communicate better

# Implications

Understanding similarities and differences in the personality and multi-rater performance of public and private sector leaders can help support the selection and development of leadership talent. The current research provided insights into the personality-related tendencies and multi-rater strengths and opportunities that may tend to be common across leaders as well as those that are likely to differentiate between leaders in the public and private sectors.



## Personality Differences

Several significant differences were found when comparing the personality results of local government leaders and private sector leaders, including in relation to day-to-day tendencies, derailers, and motivators. In terms of differences in day-to-day tendencies, local government leaders were more likely to exhibit tendencies associated with being resilient; driven and results-focused; independent; attentive to details, rules, procedures, and risks; curious, open-minded and focused on the bigger picture; and interested in learning and staying up to date. These differences in day-to-day tendencies may contribute to differences in leadership styles and aspects such as decision making. For instance, personality has been proposed to play a role in shaping a person's leadership role and styles and previous research has found differences in the type of leadership styles adopted by leaders in the public and private sectors (Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Hassan, Asad, & Hoshin, 2016; Hooijnerg & Choi, 2001; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011).

There were also significant differences in the likelihood of engaging in certain derailers when not self-managing which suggests that there may be differences in the likelihood of having certain development opportunities when comparing local government leaders to their private sector counterparts. Specifically, local government leaders were relatively less likely to derail compared to their private sector counterparts by overreacting to situations and being tense under pressure; being cynical of others and prone to fault-finding; being overly confident and ignoring one's shortcomings; taking unnecessary risks and acting impulsively; being overly perfectionistic and micromanaging others. This indicates, that relative to leaders within the private sector, local government leaders may be less inclined to require development in relation to these derailers.

When looking more closely at the prevalence of derailers amongst local government leaders, the most prevalent derailer that emerged related to exhibiting tendencies associated with being perfectionistic, micromanaging, inflexible, and finding it difficult to delegate. Local government leaders may need to ensure that they hold realistic standards and expectations of others including being mindful that others may not be able to handle the same level of workload or pressure as them. They may also benefit from developing a system for evaluating priorities and identifying opportunities for delegation so they can ensure that they are spending an appropriate amount of time focusing on those areas where they can be most impactful and add value as a leader (e.g. focusing on strategic priorities).

**One of the second most prevalent derailers that emerged for local government leaders related to exhibiting tendencies associated with overvaluing one's independence and focusing on one's agenda and being privately resentful of requests and work-related suggestions.**

While leaders who tend to exhibit this derailer often have good interpersonal skills, when derailing they may say one thing (e.g. voice agreement or commitment) and then do another (e.g. proceed with following their own agenda or priorities) which can potentially have a detrimental impact on levels of trust. These leaders are likely to benefit from ensuring that they follow through with the commitments that they make to others and from considering strategies to build trust. They may also benefit from considering how they can more clearly communicate their agenda and priorities to others (rather than keeping it private) while also remaining open to others' suggestions and requests.

The other second most prevalent derailer that emerged for local government leaders involves tendencies associated with taking unnecessary risks, acting without thinking through the potential long-term implications, and using charm to downplay one's mistakes. Individuals with this particular derailer can sometimes ignore their commitments and use their charm to manipulate others which can potentially erode others' trust in them as a leader. They can also be prone to taking risks and acting impulsively when not self-managing and are likely to benefit from considering whether there are times when they may need to slow down their decision making to ensure a realistic appraisal of the likely long-term implications of different courses of action. When taking risks, it may also be important to ensure that they clearly communicate with those who are likely to be impacted why the risk is necessary and/or worthwhile and show consideration of how their actions may affect others.

The third most prevalent derailer that emerged for local government leaders involves exhibiting tendencies associated with dominating social interactions, being attention-seeking, and easily bored. While leaders with this particular derailer are often seen as socially skilled and engaging leaders, they also need to be mindful that they provide others with sufficient opportunities to have their voice and contributions heard.

There were also several significant differences when comparing the values and drivers of local government leaders to their private sector counterparts.

### Local government leaders were more likely to value and be driven by helping others and making a positive contribution to society.

This was one of the most prevalent values that occurred amongst local government leaders and aligns with previous research which has found that those in the public sector are more likely to value work that contributes to society (Lyons, Duxburn, & Higgins, 2006; Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012). Leaders who score high on this particular value typically care about others' welfare and enjoy fostering a sense of community. They also tend to foster cultures and work environments marked by fair treatment, civil behaviour, respect for others, and focus on providing quality service.

The other most prevalent value for local government leaders involved valuing knowledge, research, technology, and data. The results indicated that a large number of local government leaders are likely to value objective decision-making processes and place an emphasis on the rigour and defensibility of plans, goals, and decisions. They are likely to readily encourage others to justify their positions and opinions with logic and data and this is likely to have positive implications for the quality of decisions made by those within local government.

Relative to leaders in the private sector, local government leaders scored significantly higher on the value associated with having a dedication to strong personal beliefs, high standards and appropriate social behaviour. This was the

second most prevalent value for local government leaders, with the results indicating that a large proportion of local government leaders are likely to focus on fostering a culture marked by formality, rules, and uniformed procedures.

Local government leaders were also more likely to value innovation, creativity and style when compared to leaders in the private sector. This was the third most prevalent value that emerged for local government leaders. Local government leaders who hold this particular value are likely to encourage a focus on the quality, look and feel of work outputs and also encourage exploring creative and innovative ideas and solutions. Local government leaders may be able to leverage this value when required to pay attention to issues of appearance and layout such as when involved in projects that are being undertaken within their local community (e.g. development or refurbishment of parks, shopping precincts, libraries etc).

On the other hand, leaders in the private sector were more likely to strongly value opportunities to stand out and be noticed; competition and getting ahead; fun and variety; opportunities to socialise; focusing on commercial matters. This is consistent with other research which indicates that those working within the private sector are more likely to value work that is prestigious, status-driven, and financially incentivised (Lyons, Duxburn, & Higgins, 2006; Gkorezis & Petridou, 2012). Relative to leaders in the private sector, local government leaders may be less inclined to foster a culture that is competitive, commercially-focused, 'work hard/play hard', or where social interaction is readily encouraged. They may benefit from considering whether there are times when it would be beneficial for them to place a greater emphasis on some of these qualities such as attending to profitability and cost containment and encouraging collaboration and open communication to facilitate the achievement of desirable outcomes.



### 360 Performance

Local government leaders had similar performance across a number of aspects of the Hogan 360 including in relation to their overall score and scores looking at Self-Management, Relationship Management, and Working on the Business (i.e. adding value through innovation and strategic planning). Similarities were also found when looking at the sub-themes of Results (i.e. delivering on commitments and expectations to a high standard) and Engaging (i.e. bringing positive energy to the workplace).

However, there were some significant differences, particularly in relation to Working in the Business (i.e. achieving operational excellence). Specifically, local government leaders received significantly lower ratings



in relation to Capability (i.e. having the requisite ability and experience to do one's current role) and Efficiency (i.e. prioritising time and effort for maximum benefit). As a result, there may be greater opportunities to improve in these areas for leaders working within local government relative to those in the private sector.

For Capability, this may include looking at how succession planning can be improved by better equipping future leaders with the knowledge, abilities and skills that will help them succeed as a leader working within local government. That said, it is important to note that although local government leaders scored significantly lower on Capability relative to their private sector counterparts, having solid technical ability, experience and knowledge still emerged as one of the top strengths for local government leaders.

**In terms of Efficiency, local government leaders may benefit from considering how they can more effectively prioritise their time and effort for maximum benefit.**

Consideration should be given to which pieces of work are going to enable them to have the biggest impact and provide the most value and what should be delegated to others so they can spend most of their time on what is most important. Successful leaders appropriately balance working 'in' and 'on' the business by focusing on where they can add extra value through being strategic and not just operational (Peter Berry, 2020).

**Another capability that local government leaders scored significantly lower on when compared to leaders in the private sector was Customer (i.e. being driven by internal and external customer needs to drive improvement).**

Local government leaders may benefit from considering how they can effectively identify their internal and external stakeholders, obtain their input and feedback to understand their needs and expectations, and use metrics to measure performance in relation to internal and external stakeholder satisfaction. They may also benefit from considering how they can include goals and KPIs in relation to stakeholder satisfaction as part of business planning.

**Local government leaders also scored significantly lower on the capability Accountability (i.e. managing performance by providing consistent and constructive feedback).**

To enhance this capability, local government leaders may benefit from ensuring that there are clear goals, KPIs and performance standards in place and that performance is regularly measured. They may also benefit from ensuring that feedback (i.e. both positive and constructive) is regularly provided and used as a means to drive accountability. Local government leaders should also consider how they can effectively challenge inappropriate behaviour and address performance issues.

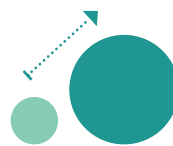


## Strengths

When reviewing the ranked strengths for local government leaders, there were some similarities in their top-rated strengths when comparing them to leaders within the private sector. Specifically, the following strengths were ranked amongst the top five strengths for both local government leaders and their private sector counterparts: has solid technical ability, experience, and knowledge; works hard with a strong work ethic; is steady and calm under pressure; has a professional approach. This indicates that regardless of whether a leader works within local government or within the private sector, these tend to be common strengths that are seen amongst leaders.

**That said, local government leaders were more likely to be rated higher on the following strengths: has high ethical standards and integrity; is empathetic and supportive; is visionary and strategic.**

These are strengths that local government leaders may be able to leverage to help achieve desirable outcomes. It also aligns with some of the personality differences that were found. For instance, having high ethical standards and integrity aligns with local government leaders being more likely to exhibit tendencies associated with being rule-abiding, less likely to derail by taking unnecessary risks or acting impulsively, and more likely to value high standards and appropriate social behaviour. Being empathetic and supportive also aligns with local government leaders being more likely to strongly value helping others and less inclined to derail by being overly cynical and fault-finding. Additionally, being visionary and strategic aligns with local government leaders being found to exhibit greater tendencies associated with being focused on the bigger picture and willing to explore innovative ideas.



## Opportunities

When looking at the top opportunities to improve, some similarities emerged when comparing local government leaders to their private sector counterparts. Specifically, the following opportunities to improve were ranked amongst the top five opportunities for both local government leaders and their private sector counterparts: stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin; challenge poor performance; delegate more; motivate others and improve morale. This indicates that regardless of whether a leader works within the local government or within the private sector, these tend to be common development opportunities. As a result, it may be beneficial to include

a focus on these areas as part of leadership development programs due to their tendency to be relatively common development needs amongst leaders, including local government leaders.

Local government leaders are likely to benefit from considering how they can improve their workload management as indicated by 'stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin' and 'delegate more' being highly ranked as opportunities to improve. As mentioned earlier, consideration should be given to which pieces of work are going to enable local government leaders to have the biggest impact and provide the most value and involve finding an appropriate balance working 'in' and 'on' the business. Local government leaders may be able to draw on their relative strength of being more strategic when it comes to improving their workload management.

Local government leaders are also likely to benefit from considering how they can more effectively challenge poor performance and ensure that they have difficult conversations in a timely manner. Some key actions that they may want to take are identifying any poor performers in their team, planning and conducting a conversation with these individuals, and developing timeframes for improving their performance. A six-step model that can be used to plan and conduct the conversation is as follows:

1. Be clear about the issue – what is the performance issue or behaviour to be addressed.
2. State your expectations and how they are not being met.
3. Be clear about the impact of the issue on performance or the team.
4. Get the other person's point of view by asking them questions.
5. Explain the consequences (i.e. next steps) if the issue is not fixed.
6. Get an agreement by discussing the details of the way forward.

A timeframe should be set for improving poor performers (e.g. 90 days) in which regular reviews occur to monitor improvements in relation to the individual's performance. If performance is still not improved, then the leader may need to consider removing the individual.

There were also some opportunities to improve that were ranked higher for local government leaders compared to their private sector counterparts. These were: set clear goals and performance indicators; listen more and let others have their say; improve time management and organisational skills.

For the opportunity 'set clear goals and performance indicators', local government leaders should ensure that they have a clear business plan that clearly articulates key goals and KPIs. They may be able to draw on their strengths of being visionary, strategic, and altruistic to help

set meaningful goals and performance indicators. It may also be beneficial for local government leaders to consider how they can involve others who will be impacted by the goals and KPIs so there is an increased level of buy-in and accountability. Additionally, regular reviews and updates can help with monitoring progress and reinforcing the goals and should include taking time to celebrate success for achieving important goals and milestones as this can help promote engagement and motivation.

For the opportunity 'listen more and let others have their say', local government leaders may need to ensure that they are providing others with sufficient opportunity to have their voice heard. As seen in the personality results, one of the more prevalent derailleurs that emerged for local government leaders relates to exhibiting tendencies associated with dominating social interactions at times. They may need to ensure that they balance talking with listening during their interactions with others and consider how they can demonstrate to the other people involved that they have heard and understood what they were trying to say.

For the opportunity 'improve time management and organisational skills', this relates to local government leaders scoring significantly lower on the capability Efficiency and opportunities to improve in relation to workload management that were previously discussed. Local government leaders may benefit from considering how they can more effectively plan ahead and prioritise work so they are spending the majority of their time and energy focusing on what is most important and where they can provide the most value as a leader. This includes identifying opportunities to be more strategic when it comes to workload management and considering where they can delegate more routine and less urgent roles and responsibilities.

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## Concluding Comments

Overall, the findings from the research highlight that local government leaders tend to have several strengths that they may be able to further leverage to help achieve desirable outcomes and address some of the common opportunities to improve that emerged. Some of these strengths that local government leaders may be able to further leverage include their tendency to be passionate about helping others and contributing to the community, being innovative and focused on the bigger picture, a strong focus on rigour and defensibility in decision making, and their dedication to high standards and ethical behaviour. The research highlighted that while there are some common opportunities to improve for leaders regardless of sector, there were also some opportunities to improve that appear to be more prevalent for local government leaders. Those responsible for the development of local government leaders may benefit from incorporating a focus on these opportunities as part of development conversations and programs to help target those areas that may contribute to improving leadership performance including workload management and performance management.

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