

Municipal Association of Victoria

2009 Councillors Census

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Data collected and report prepared by Deakin's Computer Assisted Research Facility

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to gather data on a range of demographic characteristics to provide a profile of elected membership of local government in Victoria. This exercise was conducted in 2003 (see MAV 2003 Councillor Census, August 2003) and in 2006.

In 2006 there were 467 completions. In 2009, there were 480 completions (from the population of 630 councillors), which is 76% of councillors

This report incorporates data from both the 2006 and 2009 surveys and highlights changes over that period, where appropriate.

2. Summary of Main Findings

- The majority of councillors are male (67%).
- Most councillors are over 46 years of age with 56 -65 years old the most common age group.
- The majority of councillors are born in Australia.
- Four councillors are indigenous.
- 71% of councillors are married.
- 31% of male councillors and 47% of female councillors report that they have caring responsibilities.
- Most councillors work for a private company or are self-employed..
- Councillors work predominantly in managerial and professional occupations..
- Most councillors have a post-school qualification.
- The most common income level is \$52,000 to 77,999 per annum.
- The majority of councillors spend between 11 and 30 hours a week on council duties, and just over 37 hours in employment.
- 29% of councillors identify with no political party and are 'swing' voters.
- 32% of councillors are a member of a political party, of these most identify as ALP or Liberal.

3. Council areas

Table 1 shows the numbers of respondents by council area. Compared with 2006, large rural councils are under-represented in 2009.

Table 1: Survey respondents by council area, 2006 and 2009 (counts)

	Survey year	
	2006	2009
Outer Melbourne (including interface)	103	99
Inner Melbourne	72	83
Regional Cities	54	63
Large Rural	120	110
Small Rural	116	120
Not stated		5
Total	465	480

Table 2 shows distribution of male and female councillor respondents by council area, comparing 2006 and 2009. The table shows row percentages, which adjusts for the difference in numbers of males and females. In 2006, females were over-represented in the survey in Inner Melbourne and underrepresented in Regional Cities (compared to males). In 2009, females, relative to males, are overrepresented in Outer Melbourne, and underrepresented in rural councils.

Table 2: Type of council by gender, 2006 and 2009 (row percentages)

		Outer Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Regional Cities	Large Rural	Small Rural
2006	Male	22	13	13	27	25
	Female	23	21	8	24	23
2009	Male	19	17	13	25	27
	Female	25	18	13	21	23

4. Gender

Figure 1 shows that the majority of councillors are male — 67% (69% in 2006) are male and 33% (31% in 2006) are female.

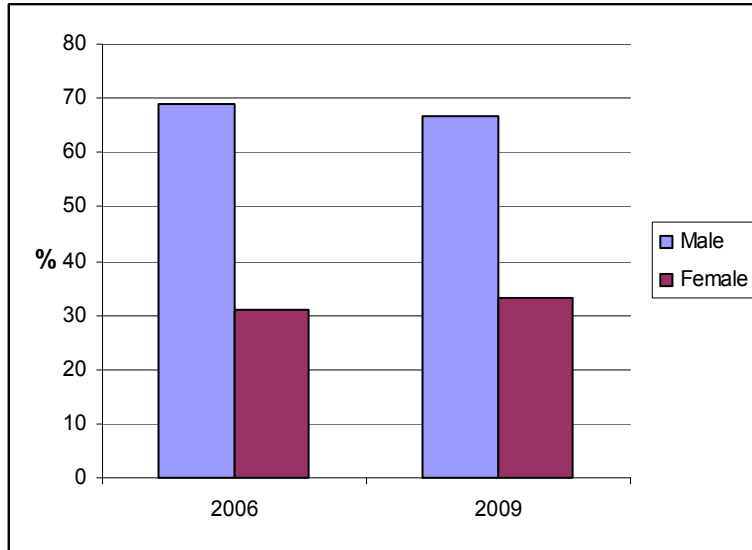


Figure 1: Gender profile, 2006 and 2009

5. Age

In both 2006 and 2009, the majority of councillors are above 46 years of age. In 2006, the largest age group was 46-55 years, but in 2009 the 56-65 year old age group was the largest.

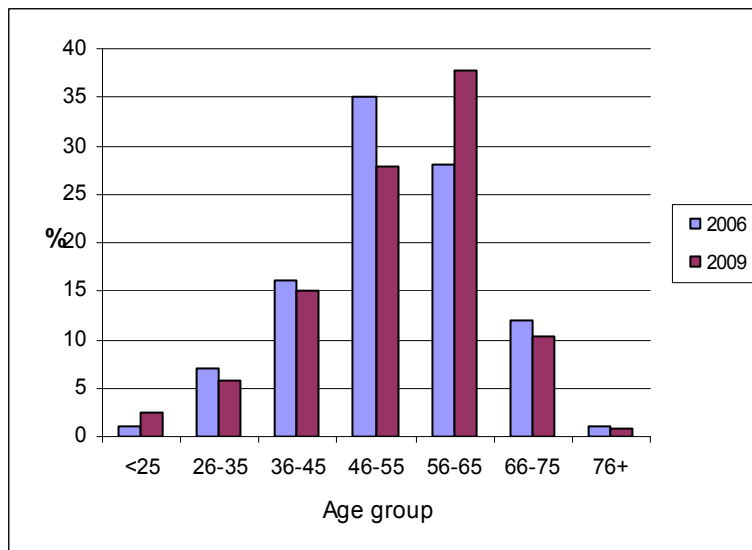


Figure 2: Age distribution of councillors, 2006 and 2009

Disaggregating by gender shows that the difference in age profiles over the two periods was greater for males, though also evident for females.

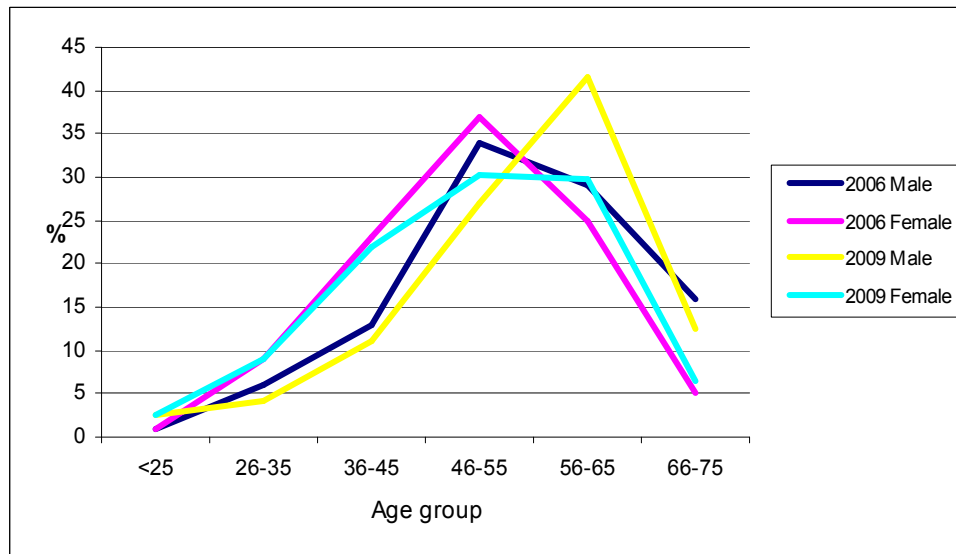


Figure 3: Age distribution of councillors by gender, 2006 and 2009

Table 3 compares types of council area by age profiles. In all cases, the 56-65 age group increased. At both periods, rural councils have a greater proportion of older councillors than do metropolitan councils. Ages became more evenly distributed in metropolitan councils, but not rural councils.

Table 3: Age profiles across types of council areas, 2006 and 2009 (row percentages)

Council area		<25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75
Outer Melbourne	2006	2	13	23	34	14	15
	2009	1	6	21	34	29	7
Inner Melbourne	2006	4	11	21	43	19	1
	2009	10	13	22	19	30	6
Regional Cities	2006	0	11	20	33	31	4
	2009	2	11	19	23	39	6
Large Rural	2006	1	3	14	33	33	13
	2009	0	2	13	32	41	11
Small Rural	2006	0	0	6	34	40	20
	2009	2	1	6	27	47	18

6. Country of origin

In 2009, 86% of councillors were Australian born (with 14% born overseas). This is approximately the same as 2006, when 87% Australian born (with some of that difference attributable to rounding error).

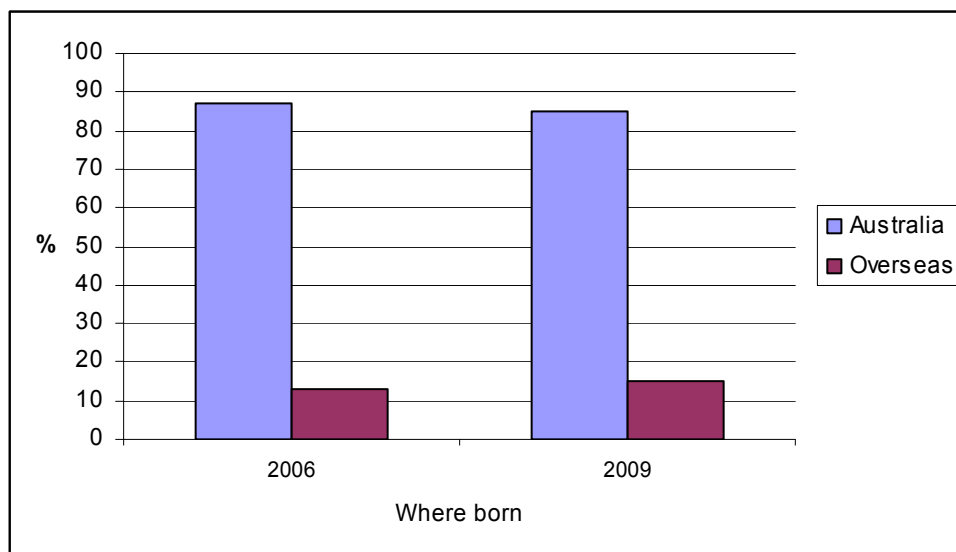


Figure 4: Birthplace of councillors, 2006 and 2009

Table 4: Birthplace of councillors, 2009

Country of birth	Frequency
Afghanistan	1
Australia	405
Cambodia	1
Croatia	1
Cyprus	2
Denmark	1
Egypt	1
United Kingdom	21
Fiji	1
France	2
Germany	2
Greece	3
Holland	4
Hong Kong	1
India	3
Indonesia	1
Iraq	1
Italy	6
Macedonia	1
Malaysia	1
Malta	1
New Zealand	5
South Africa	1
Turkey	1
USA	2
Total	469

In 2006, two (of 467) councillors identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. In 2009, four (of 430) councillors identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

7. Marital status

In 2009, 71% of councillors are married compared with 77% in 2006, with the difference between the two periods reflected in slightly higher rates in 2009 for de facto, divorced, never married and other relationships.

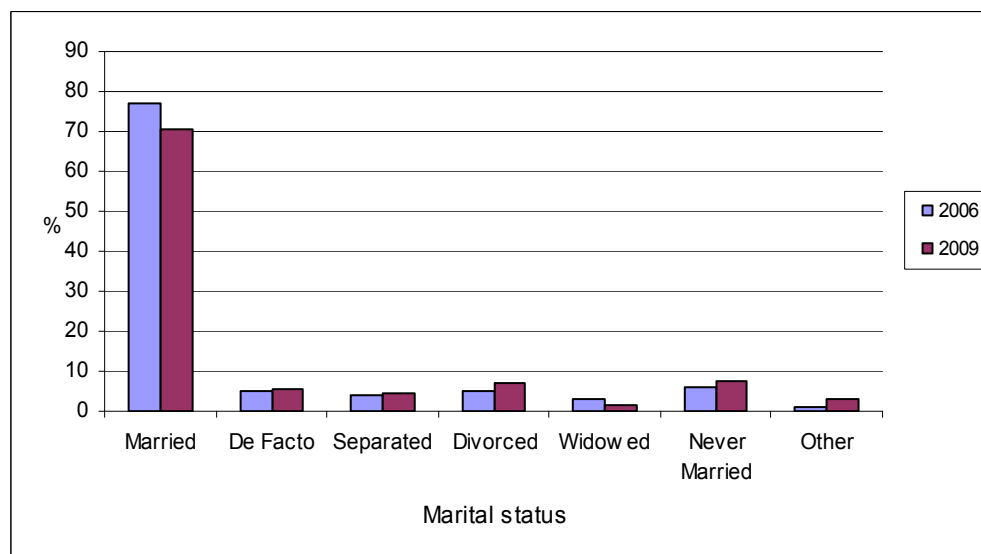


Figure 5: Councillors' marital status, 2006 and 2009

8. Living arrangements

There was very little change in councillors' households between 2006 and 2009 with the majority living with just a partner, or a partner and children.

Table 5: Councillors' living arrangements, 2006 and 2009 (column percentages)

	Survey year	
	2006	2009
A partner	41	43
A partner plus one or more children	37	36
No one, you live by yourself	10	10
One or more children	5	5
One or both of your parents	1	2
One of both of your parents plus others	1	1
One or more adults who are neither your partner nor your parents	2	2
A partner plus other adults	1	0
A partner plus one or more children plus other adults	1	1
	100	100

9. Caring responsibilities

About the same proportion of councillors reported caring responsibilities in 2006 and 2009, but the gender balance changed over the period. In 2006, 37% of males reported caring responsibilities, compared with 31% in 2009. By contrast, females reporting caring responsibilities increased from 42% in 2006 to 47% in 2009.

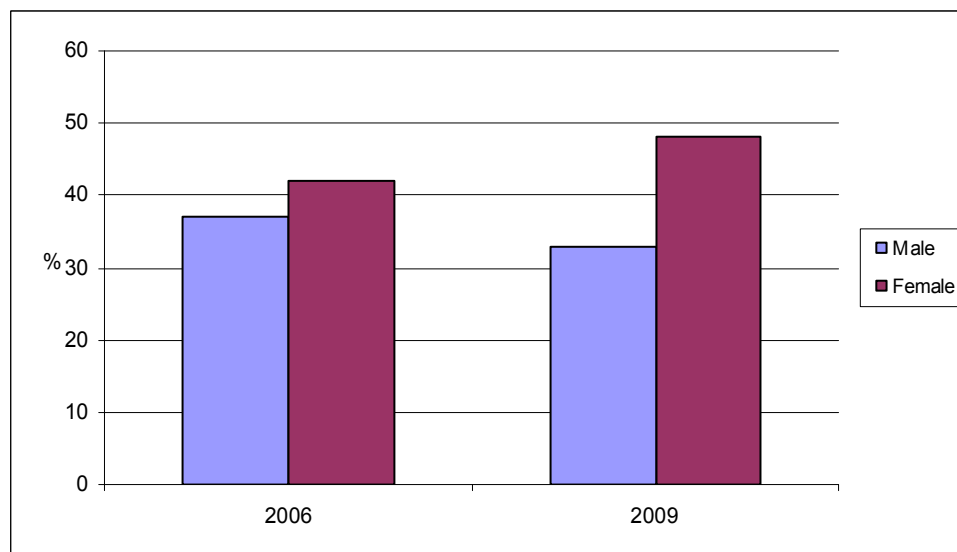


Figure 6: Percentage of councillors with caring responsibilities by gender, 2006 and 2009

10. Employment Status

Employment profiles were stable over the period, with a slight decline in self-employment in 2009, and a slight increase in the proportion of retirees.

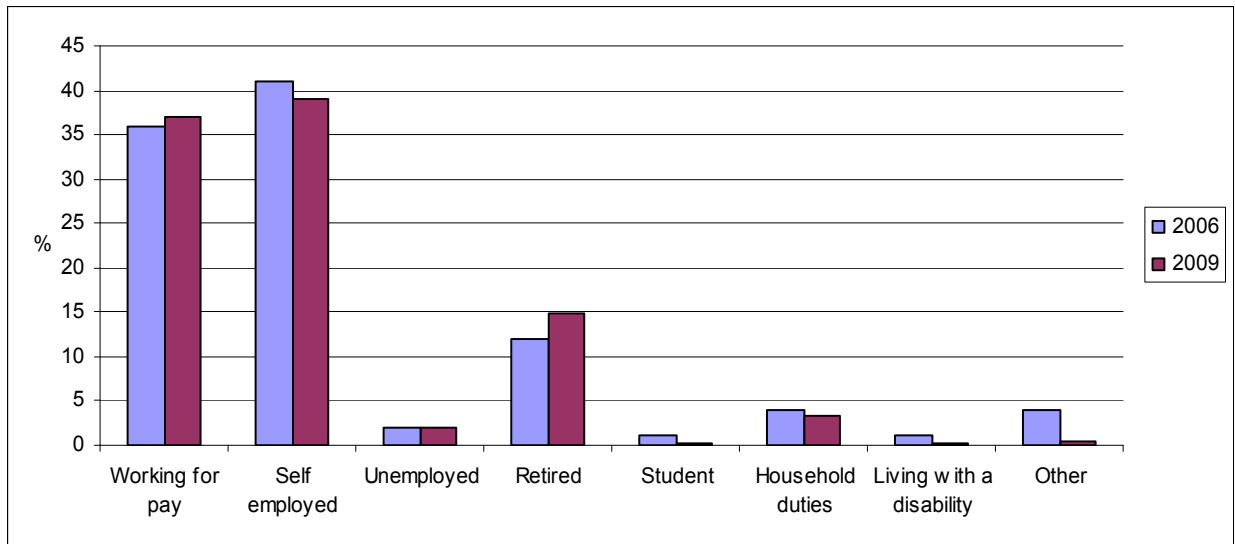


Figure 7: Employment profile of councillors, 2006 and 2009

11. Employment sector

In both 2006 and 2009, councillors were most likely to be employed by a private company or to be self-employed. This concentration increased slightly over the period, with a slight decline in those in a family business or farm. This will be a reflection of the lower proportion of respondents from rural council areas.

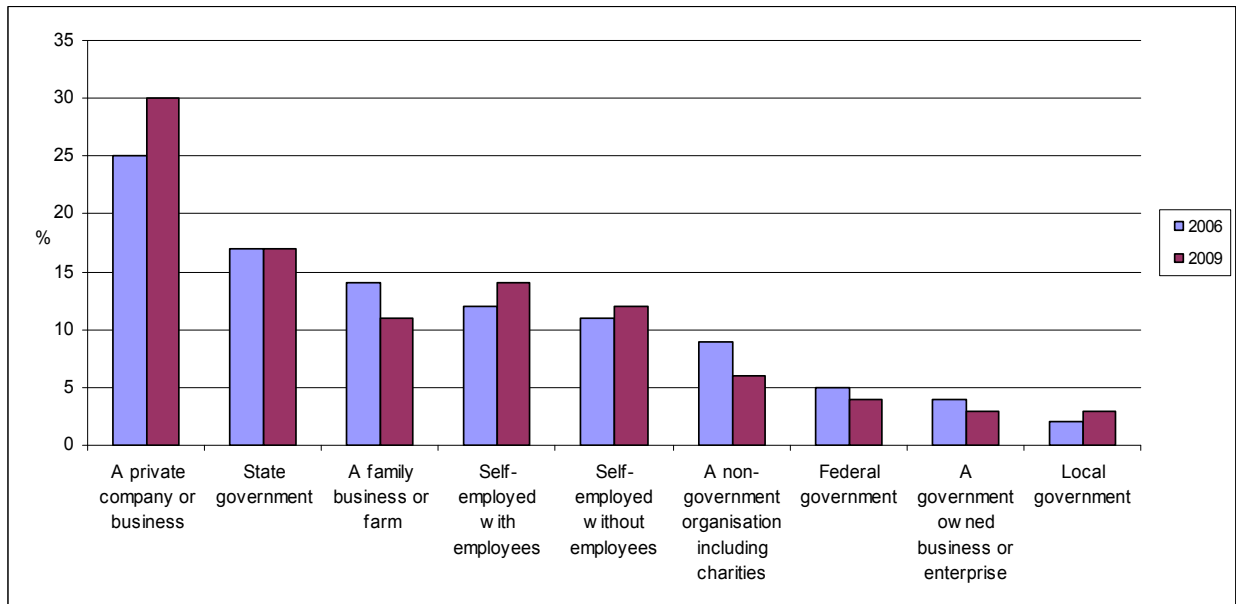


Figure 8: Employment sector, 2006 and 2009

12. Occupation

Figure 5 shows that the largest occupational group represented is Managers and Supervisors and the next largest is Professionals. These two groups accounted for 80% of the 2006 and 74% of the 2009 sample.

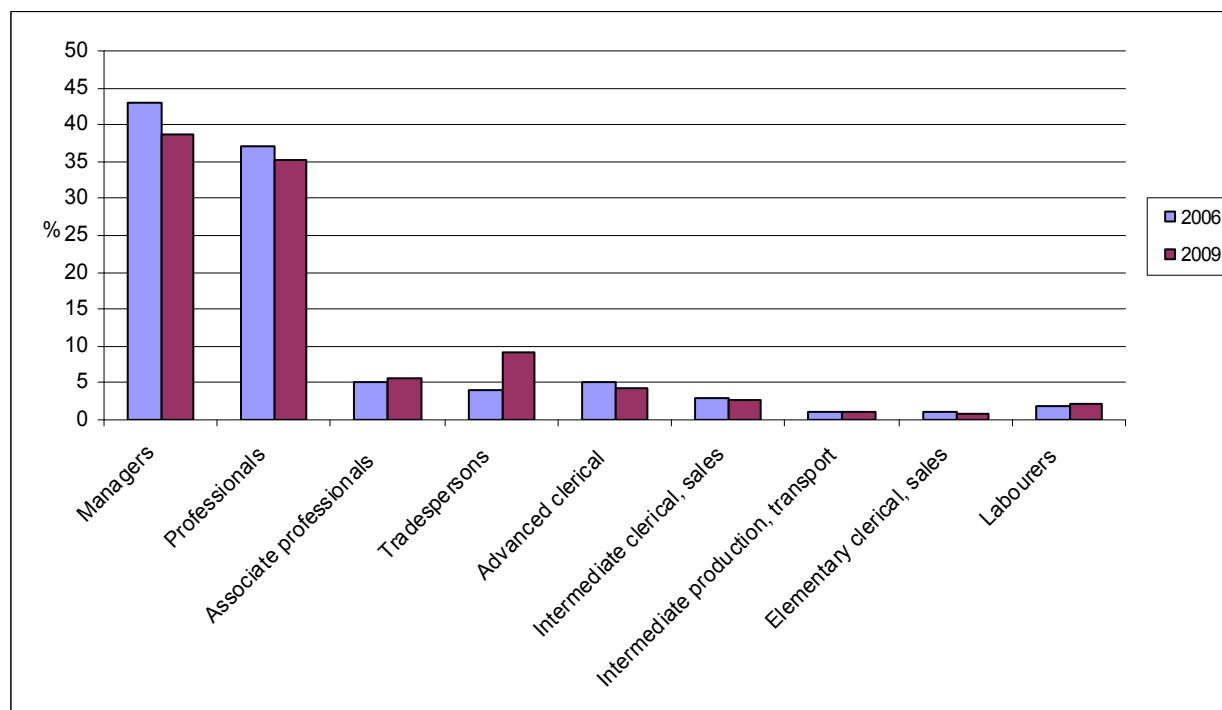


Figure 9: Councillors' occupation, 2006 and 2009

Table 6 shows that the percentage of male councillors who are in professional occupations declined as tradesmen increased. Among female councillors there was a decline in managers, but an increase in professionals.

Table 6: Occupation by gender, 2006 and 2009 (column percentages)

	Male		Female	
	2006	2009	2006	2009
Managers and administrators	44	43	40	32
Professionals	37	31	36	43
Associate professionals	4	6	7	6
Tradespersons and associated workers	6	12	1	3
Advanced clerical and service workers	3	2	9	9
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	2	1	4	5
Intermediate production and transport workers	1	2	0	1
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	1	1	1	1
Labourers and related workers	2	3	1	32

13. Working hours

Councillors were asked how many hours per week they worked for pay. Among those recording one or more hours a week (78% in 2006, 81% in 2009) there was no change in the average number of hours: 38.1 hours in both 2006 and 2009.

14. Level of Education

Figure 10 shows the percentages of councillors that have completed various levels of education, while Figure 11 separates out the genders. These show that the majority of councillors have undertaken post-school education and this has increased slightly over the 2006 and 2009 surveys with higher numbers having completed a TAFE qualification and post-graduate degree in 2009..

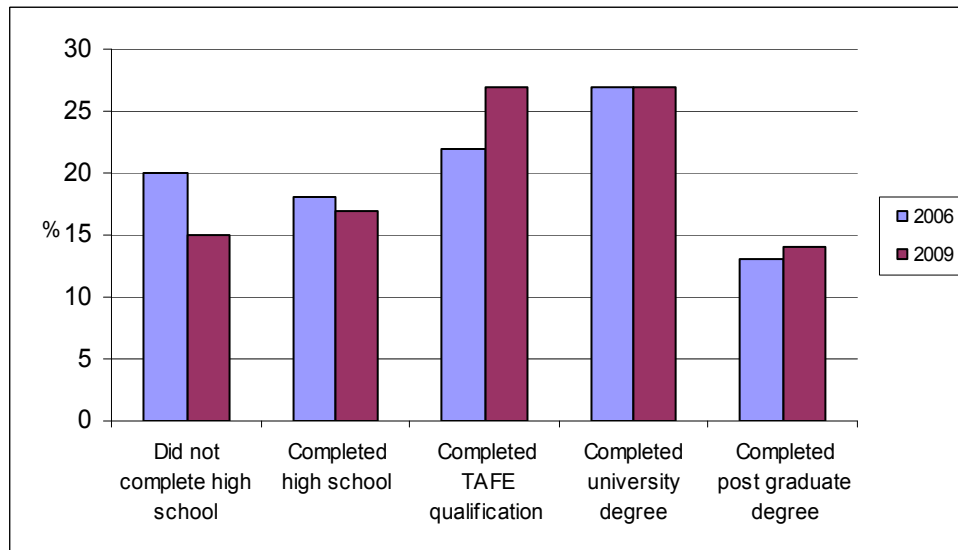


Figure 10: Councillors' levels of education, 2006 and 2009

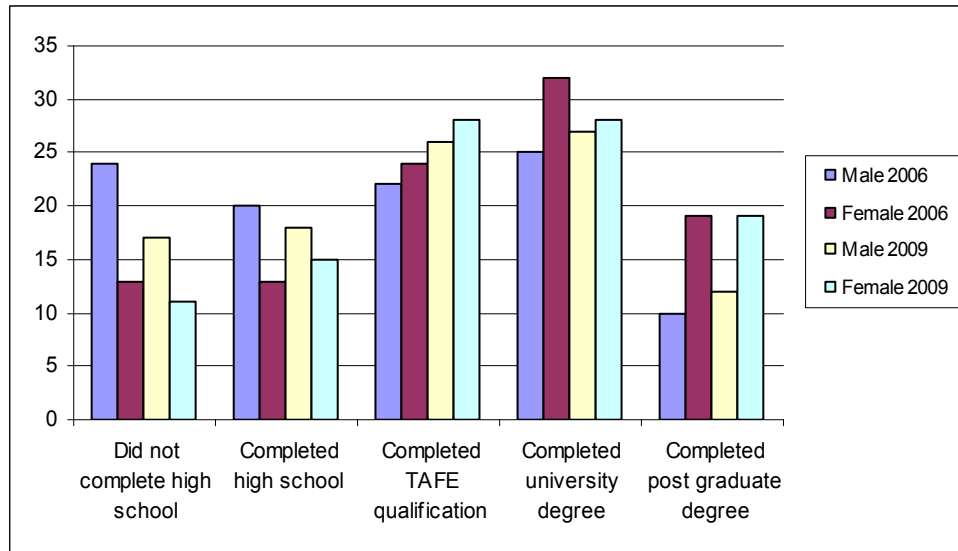


Figure 11: education level by gender, 2006 and 2009

15. Income

Figure 12 shows income levels of the councillors in 2006 and 2009. In 2009, about 22% of councillors report incomes of between \$52,000-77,999 per annum, compared with 20% in 2006.

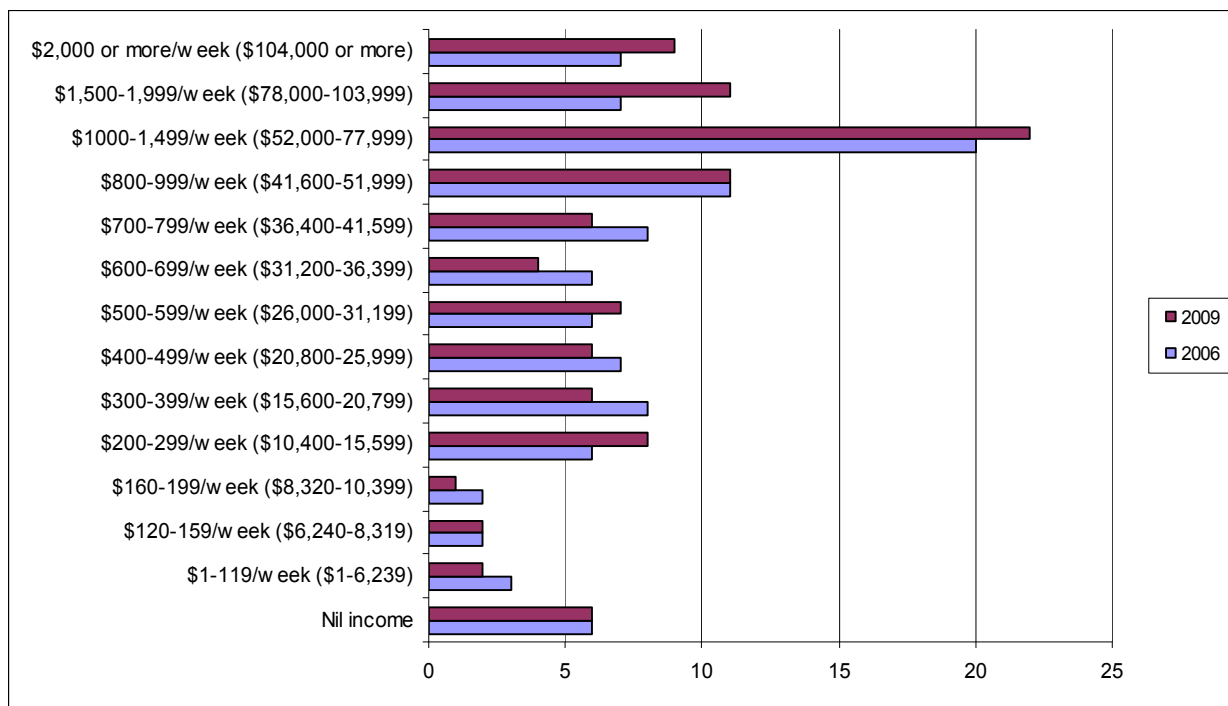


Figure 12: Income distribution, 2006 and 2009

16. Disability

In 2006, 20 councillors indicated they had a disability and, of these, 14 said their council adequately accommodates their disability related support needs. In 2009, 25 councillors said they had a disability and 18 agreed their council adequately accommodates their support needs (6 said they did not, and 1 did not respond to the question).

17. Councillor Service and Duties

Figure 13 shows that 43% of councillors in 2009 have served less than one year in contrast to 35% in 2006. In 2009 there are fewer with 2-3 years of service and slightly fewer with over 16 years.

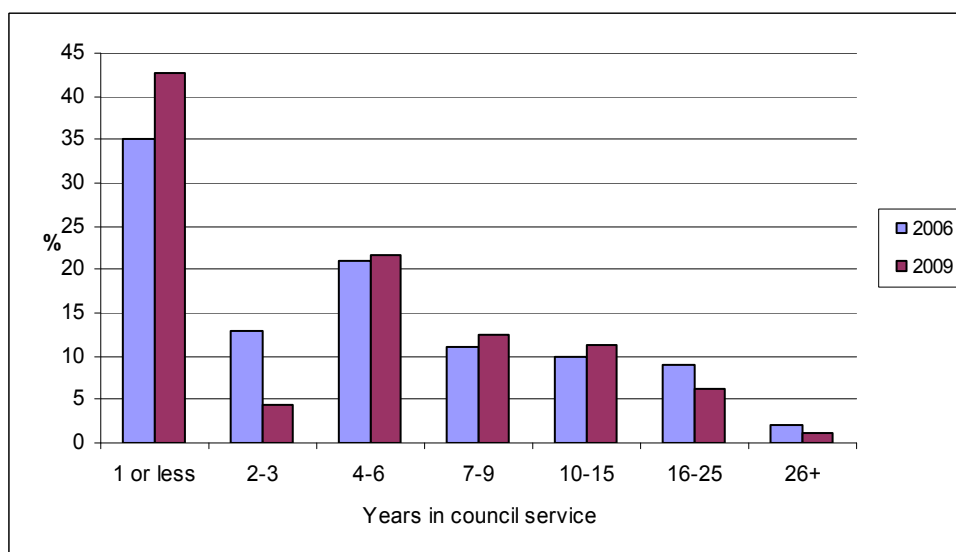


Figure 13: Years in council service, 2006 and 2009

Table 7 shows the length of council service in 2006 and 2009. At both periods, there were a substantial proportion of new councillors, but this increased in 2009, for both males and females.

Table 7: Length of service by gender, 2006 and 2009 (column percentages)

	2006		2009	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 or less	30	45	39	49
2-3	12	16	5	4
4-6	20	22	21	24
7-9	12	7	12	14
10-15	12	5	14	6
16-25	11	4	8	2
26+	2	1	2	1

Figure 14 shows that the majority of councillors spend between 11 and 30 hours a week on their council duties, and that about a further 30% spend 31 to 50 hours per week.

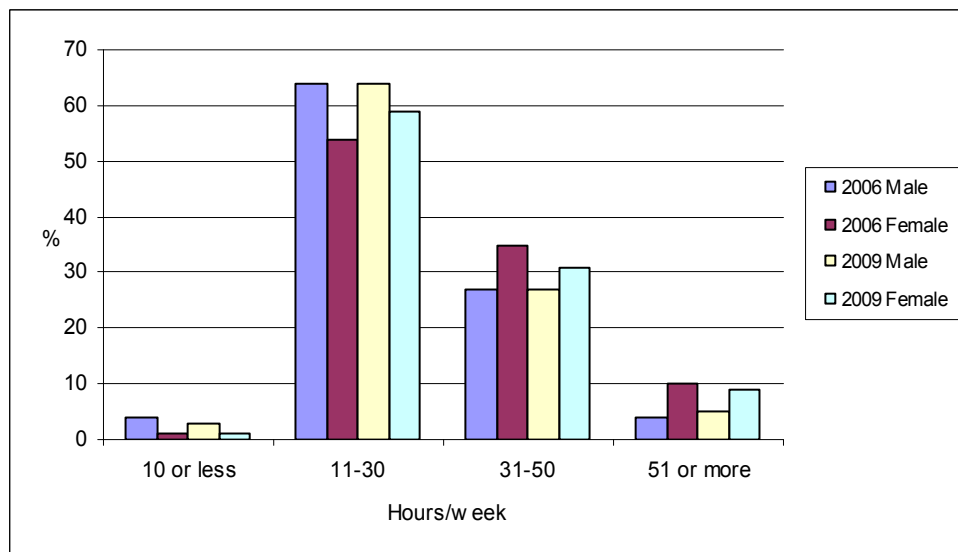


Figure 14: Hours spent in council duties by gender, 2006 and 2009

18. Political Party Membership and Identification

In both 2006 and 2009 approximately 32% of councillors reported that they are a member of a political party. However, about half the councillors do express a preference for a major political party. As Figure 15 shows, there has been little change in these preferences over the period.

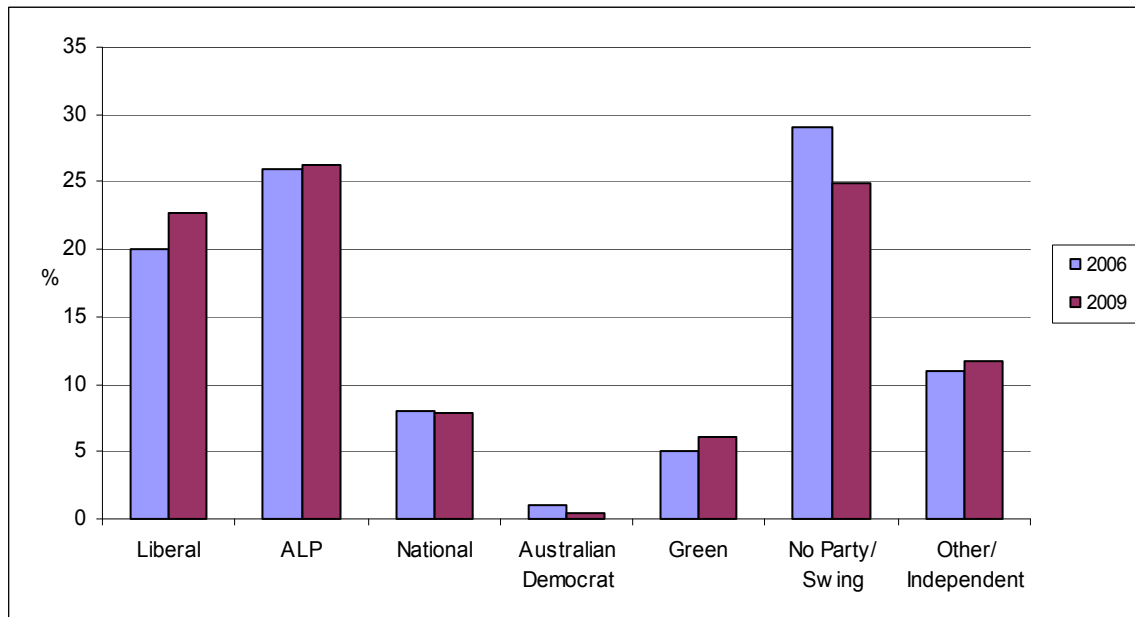


Figure 15: Political party allegiance, 2006 and 2009