

Local Government Skills Shortage

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Environmental Health

- **How the environment we live in impacts on our health & wellbeing**
- **World Health Organisation and Australian Environmental Health Strategies**
- **Recently acknowledged in the Governor General's Australia Day speech**
- **Environmental Health management has been a fundamental function of Australian local authorities since the 1800s.**
- **Not obvious to the local community, but critical when environmental health systems fail. eg food, water, pollution, poor planning.**

- **Not for profit professional organisation since 1937**
- **National Office, Branches covering all States and Territories and regional groups. All one organisation ie branches/groups not separate.**
- **Provides conferences, workshops and other professional development needs for the environmental health profession.**
- **Advocates for environmental health and member interests.**
- **Accredits university degree courses to graduate EHOs. 8 Universities accredited with a number pending.**
- **Has identified a significant worsening national shortage of Environmental Health Officers (EHO) with fewer graduates, EHOs leaving the profession and ageing workforce. Eg 50% of EHOs employed in LG in Tasmania are over 50 yo.**

Environmental Health Officer

- **Specific university degree in Environmental Health**
- **Some States have additional legislated requirements eg WA has a professional review board to practice as an EHO.**
- **EHO Workforce Reports conducted in Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.**
- **Reports show either a retiring workforce or recent graduating workforce, recent graduates predominately female, decreasing student intakes, increasing demand for EHOs (devolved legislation to LG, population increases), poor knowledge of the EHOs work within community or elected reps, increasing litigation risk for LG when unable to undertake statutory environmental health functions.**
- **Indigenous communities or Indigenous local governments are even more disadvantaged with EH standards.**

Strategies

- **Multiple entry pathways for university study ie post graduate, undergraduate and external access.**
- **Support for the ‘grow your own’ with cadetships or sharing the costs of cadet/s between local governments.**
- **Greater financial support from the State and Federal governments for cadetships. (UK Paper)**
- **Reducing the financial barrier to university study. ie local government ‘at risk professions’ with the DEST.**
- **Showcasing successful models of shared resources eg Eastern Health Authority in SA which provides the environmental health services for up to 6 local governments.**

Strategies

- Whole of government approach.
- Promoting LG and its professions eg through LG week.
- AIEH to progress mentoring schemes, futures program by some Branches, professional development and professional representation. (But only for AIEH members).
- LG financially support professional employees with professional development and membership to professional associations as part of remuneration packaging. (and not just for executives)