
State of Play - Around the Nation

LGMA National Forum on Skills Shortage April 2006, Canberra

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ALGA Project Scope

Summary of Current Activity

Other Developments

ALGA Project

- **Purpose and Scope**
 - Identify the major issues on workforce planning and skill shortages in Australia
 - Propose strategies that can address these issues sector-wide.
- **Role of the Working Party**
 - Identify existing research into LG workforce shortages at the State level;
 - Identify the forces contributing to workforce supply and demand imbalance and likely scenarios facing local government and in turn, the community
 - Determine the factors that will exacerbate or mitigate capacity of LG to address the supply and demand imbalance Australia-wide;
 - Recognise existing jurisdictional strategies for addressing identified workforce shortages in Australian local government and examine how they could be applied sector-wide;
 - Identify issues that must be addressed at other levels of government and in the private sector in order to resolve workforce shortages in Australian local government;
 - Consider potential partnerships between local government and other stakeholders in order to address identified workforce shortages.

Observations

- Remarkable level of effort in a number of areas across the country
 - Some councils are already doing a lot at the local level
 - Both LGMA and Associations are engaged in variety of ways
- Projects have gone past identifying the problem - now looking at what can be done or implementing strategies
 - Focus on occupational groups of immediate shortage eg planners
 - Seeking to increase the attraction of LG as a career destination (school leavers and graduates) yet little on mid career transition
 - Ongoing and longer term issue of service type, delivery methods, and cost shifting within overall financial sustainability, needs diligence and attention
- Level of State interest, engagement and funding varies
- Visibility of LG workforce issues in the Federal arena appears low
- Significant opportunity for re-use of knowledge capital exists

Conclusions to date

- We know what skills shortages exist so the focus should be on sector-wide strategies.
- Funding for such strategies should be sought from the Federal Government.
- Need to share existing resources, information and practice between the states.
- Need to improve community understanding of the work undertaken by local government and the flexible, challenging, interesting work that is available in the sector.
- Need to engage other levels of government more thoroughly.
- Issue should be framed in relation to local government's importance to the Australian community.

So who owns the problem?

Supply

Increase population

- Immigration
- Incentives to increase birth rate

Redeploy/Retrain/Retain Existing Workforce

- Increase Workforce Participation/RTW
- Provide Incentives to work longer or more flexibly

Increase Workforce Flexibility

- Substitution
- Reduce professional/trade occupational barriers to entry
- Improve portability between states

Demand

Deliver Services Differently

- Technology
- Collaboration

Smooth/delay/remove

- Eg. Reduce Red tape, simplify

Legislative derived demand

Economic and Social Forces

Demographics

'Mass customisation' expectations

ALGA Project Scope

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South Australia

Key Projects

- LGASA Planning Project (related to planning and relevant labour market skills)
- LGMA Attraction Strategy(funding for a four-year project to develop an attraction strategy for local government).
- Union LGA Youth, indigenous and ageing workforce project.

Comments

- Training modules are available in South Australia including a Certificate 4 in Planning.
- Curriculum is currently being developed for planning assistants.
- State Government funding has been provided for this three-year project which is almost completed.
- Material used for this project includes a survey of councils and Planning Institute of Australia data.
- A skills audit tool has been developed for local use. This should assist in forecasting shortages with a focus on growth areas.

New South Wales

Key Projects

- LGSA Training/Skills Taskforce
- LGSA Marketing local government as employer of choice project
- Update of LGSA Careers website and development of information pack for careers advisors, school leavers including links to courses related to local government
- Internship/Cadetship project

Comments

- LGSA is involved in a training/skills taskforce with professional associations and the State government.
- This taskforce produced a document published in July 2005 which included a multi-pronged project plan. Each member of the taskforce will manage some elements of this plan.
- LGSA is working on a project to market local government as an employer of choice. Working groups are currently working on education and training initiatives.
- A planning assistants course is currently being developed and LGSA has been communicating with tertiary institutions.
- LGSA has been working with the State department on an internship/cadetship program. The first meeting was held a year ago. UTS has expressed interest in an engineering cadetship for local government.

Western Australia

Key Projects

- LGMA formal group with professional associations, WALGA and State Government
- Scoping size of problem
- Focus on Migration strategies

Comments

- Establishing the size of the problem through existing information and material.
- Certificate 4 in planning has been developed.
- Rhetoric of workforce planning has not been matched by councils.
- Focus on short-term solutions: communication with DIMIA about skilled migration strategies. Problems related to long-term sustainability.
- Focus on planners, engineers, EHOs, and building surveyors.
- Noted councils reliance on consultancies and some resource sharing between councils.
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Tasmania

Key Projects

- Completed Skills shortages research
- Working group with the LGMA and professional associations has existed for one year.
- Skilled migration - a working group on Regional skilled migration options has been considered
- Application for careers counselor to DEST to run leading practice forums.
- Mature aged workforce discussions with the Dept of Economic Development and DEWR

Comments

- Currently developing careers information kit, web-based and PDF, includes examples of careers pathways in local government. Case studies related to candidates from different backgrounds.
- Intend Working with universities to develop placements and internships. Trying to extend existing program with universities and state government.
- Currently no undergraduate courses in planning or environmental health in Tasmania but post-graduate in environmental planning. Experiencing a dire shortage in rural areas.
- Environmental health course will commence in 2007.
- Premier's local government council has skills shortages on the agenda.
- State funding is required to support cadetships.

Queensland

Key Projects

- Research Grant
- Graduate Scheme - QGrad
- Leadership training

Comments

- Much in planning stages in terms of what councils need to do.
- Research grant will produce results in 2-3 years.
- Much work has been undertaken on the ageing workforce.
- A lot of time has been spent establishing the problem, prefer to focus on strategies rather than information.
- Graduate program has been developed in consultation with the MAV.

Victoria

Key Projects

- Completed Research Paper on workforce demographics and issues
- Conducted Forum in 2006 jointly with State to develop practical strategies
- Graduate Program “Go Grad” in place
- Participate in State sponsored taskforce on workforce participation.
- DHS project piloting MACH attraction and retention

Comments

- Research looks at local government workforce profile and major trends that will affect workforce in future. Focus on demographic change and changing economic conditions such as an increase in housing activity.
- Graduate program, GoGrad, has been running for two years.
- The State Govt has created a taskforce looking at workforce participation more generally on which there is local government representation.
- State Services Authority is looking at public sector workforce and associated risks to government
- Planning Bank and Planning Cadetships sponsored by DIIRD

WFP Project Scope (VIC)

Scope and Objectives

- Develop workforce planning policy document and define the social, political and economic issues
- Stimulate discussion through workshops and forums within the sector to develop policy recommendations and strategies
- Advocate and lobby to advance the ability of councils and the sector to proactively manage this strategic and operational issue.

Status

Complete

Complete

Ongoing, more to be done

Forum (Feb 2006)

Workshop 1

- Understanding Your Workforce -Predicting Service Demand, Labour Demand and Labour Supply: Stacy Chapman, Aruspex.

Workshop 2

- Elevating Workforce Planning into Council's Strategic Planning Process: Dr Tui McKeown, Monash University.

Workshop 3

- Branding Local Government and Selling the Sector: David Brown, Hewitt and Associates.

Workshop 4

- Delivering Services Differently: New Responses and Community Expectations: Dr Michael Henry, the Strategy Shop.

ALGA Project Scope

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Federal

Areas in the COAG National Reform Agenda

- Competition
- Regulation, and
- Human Capital

The scope of Competition and Regulation reform includes:

- Transport reform
- Infrastructure regulation
- Best Practice regulation
- Energy.

The scope of Human Capital reform includes:

- Health
- Education, and
- Work incentives.

Human Capital Reform: Education and Training

Recommendations include:

- Improvement in workforce productivity and participation require continuing skills development from early childhood through school and working life to retirement
- Establishing a working group to improve early childhood development outcomes
- Use proficiency standards and national benchmarks, to assess and report jurisdictional literacy and numeracy outcomes
- Reporting on strategies to ensure transition pathways from school to work are developed and delivered to achieve nationally agreed objectives, and to ensure that information is collected to track youth transitions
- Priority in adult learning is to increase the number of people with a base qualification and support the attainment of increasingly important higher-level VET qualifications.

Work incentives

- NRI has recommended that COAG commit to the principle that all governments should pursue strategies to improve the workforce participation of key groups such as those on welfare, mature age and women, through policies affecting attitudes, incentives, rules and regulations, and support mechanisms.