

# DOTARS: Local Government

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Australian Government

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# DOTARS Role in Local Government

- We are not the 'National Office' – name was changed some time ago
- DOTARS role
  - Administer annual Financial Assistance Grants
  - Write and produce the annual Local Government National Report
  - Run annual National Awards for Local Government Program and assists with Leading Practice Seminars
  - Provide advice to the Minister on Local Government Issues
- States and Territories have responsibility for Local Government



# DOTARS & Skills Shortages in Local Government

- No programmes to directly address issues of skills shortages
- Many funding programmes across DOTARS with indirect link to need for skills, including:
  - Financial Assistance Grants
  - National Awards & Leading Practice Seminars
  - Roads to Recovery



# DOTARS & Skills Shortages in Local Government (contd)

- The Australian Government is aware skills shortages being a major issue
- Series of State based reports showing the financial status of local government is poor in some areas
  - One contributing factor is a shortage of skills in financial administration and infrastructure management



# Financial Assistance Grants

- Annual programme protected by legislation
- \$1.6 billion in 2005/06 – generally indexed
  - ‘General’ component = \$1.12 billion
  - ‘Road’ component = \$497 million
- Untied grant to be used for offsetting costs of service delivery and existing road maintenance



# Financial Assistance Grants (cont)

- Allocations to councils determined by State and Territory Grants Commissions
  - Australian provides the total bucket of funding
- The Australian Government view is that Local Government has a funding source through Financial Assistance Grants to address skills issues



# National Awards and Leading Practice Seminars

- Nomination based programme
- Various categories
- Annual Award winners announced in November
- Leading Practice seminars – good showcasing and sharing of practices
- Local Government does it, DOTARS may assist with funding
- Could be used to disseminate new skills/approaches



# Roads to Recovery

- \$1.2 billion over 4 years (2<sup>nd</sup> programme already)
- Not intended to replace existing road expenditure funding
- Local Councils decide where to spend funding
- Additional programme – Strategic R2R
  - \$250 million for infrastructure to assist building sustainable regional economies and communities



# Inter-governmental Agreement

- Signed by all Australian Local Government Ministers
- Not prescriptive – acknowledges that Local Government should be compensated for activities other Governments ask them to deliver or manage
- Local Government should therefore have access to additional resources to attract skills required



# What does this all mean?

- Local Government is being assisted with Australian Government funding for certain purposes
- Local Government currently having difficulty attracting and retaining skills/capacity
- As mentioned by Minister Lloyd this morning, the Australian Government has implemented strategies to address skills shortages through other Departments



# DOTARS Local Govt Contacts

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