Establishment of a National Local Government Workforce Data Set

Fourth National Local Government Workforce Development Forum

Project Background

- Funding from the Local Government Reform Fund for ACELG to implement the National Local Government Data Project.

- A major national priority endorsed by the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council (LGPMC).

- The funding will enable ACELG to compile and maintain data sets linked to the National LG Workforce Strategy, Women in LG and asset and financial management.

- Stage 1: a scoping study which will develop options for implementation.

- Stage 2: development of the data sets and tools for collection, analysis and dissemination

Scoping Study Tasks

- Background research and detailed consultations with agencies and stakeholders to determine:
  - What current data is currently being collected and by what means (and also what isn't being collected, and why)
  - To what extent it is feasible, given likely resources, to standardise key data nationally (and what people really want to collect)
  - How best to collect and collate nationally consistent data (and how best to analyse it on an ongoing basis).

- Preparation of a preliminary report outlining proposed <u>minimum</u> data sets for workforce, asset and financial management and women in local government.

- This will form the basis for implementation in Stage 2.

Scoping Study Progress to Date

- Commenced literature review.

- Held preliminary round of consultations with key stakeholders for all data sets.

- Beginning process of reviewing:

  - Stakeholder reasons for collecting data

  - Current data collections and processes

  - Current gaps, issues and opportunities in data collection

  - What stakeholders would like to collect (both minimum and desirable data sets).

- Seeking feedback from Roundtable and Forum.

Why Stakeholders want to collect data 1

- To support other Local Government Reform Programs and programs (LG Workforce, Women in LG, financial and asset management):

  - Quantify current situation

  - Identify issues

  - Develop programs

  - Measure progress against goals.

- Need evidence-based responses to access government workforce programs and other funding and to build LG advocacy.

Why Stakeholders want to collect data 2

- Identify and respond to current and projected staff shortages, particularly in key occupations.

- Specifically, respond to the challenges of an ageing LG workforce.

- Respond to demands on LG arising from changing community expectations and increasing strategic role in governance.

- Identify and respond to LG workforce training and skills needs.

- Measure and increase participation of under-represented groups in the LG workforce.

Data collection issues – National 1

- Limited data collected nationally by the ABS:
  - Census data provides some information, but only at five-year intervals
  - Employment and earnings data provided at quarterly intervals only shows total size of the workforce
  - Some occupational and other data available from other government departments and agencies
- Reflects limited ABS collection of linked employer-employee data

Data collection issues – National 2

- However, the ABS is reviewing data collections in two key areas:

  – Investigations into Options for the Development of Linked Employer-Employee Data (ref: 6106.0):

  – Review of the Labour Household Survey Program (ref: 6105.0):

- Both these reviews are seeking input and may be an opportunity to improve national LG-related data collections.

Data collection issues – State

- Survey of stakeholders is incomplete.

- However interviews so far confirm previous findings of very variable and inconsistent levels of data collection across jurisdictions.

- Best examples (so far) are:

  - Local Government Association of Queensland

  - SA Local Government Grants Commission

  - NSW Division of Local Government

Qld, SA and NSW data collection comparisons 1

- Local Government Association of Queensland
  - Annual census, 120+ fields
  - Emphasis on award, wage levels and age breakdowns

- SA Local Government Grants Commission
  - Annual Grants Commission return, 320+ fields
  - Detailed occupational breakdown, emphasis on gender and employment and award status

- NSW Division of Local Government
  - Quadrennial census, 200+ fields
  - Detailed breakdown of gender and workforce diversity

Qld, SA and NSW data collection comparisons 2

- Workforce Diversity:

    - Age – partial match but different age brackets – SA and NSW a closer match

    - Gender – match only at totals – SA and NSW a partial match by employment status

    - ATSI and CALD – match only at totals

    - Disability – match at totals, SA and NSW only

Qld, SA and NSW data collection comparisons 3

- Employment Type:
  - Full Time, Part Time – close match (SA FTEs)
  - Permanent, Temporary, Casual – close match (SA FTEs)
  - Senior and other positions – partial match (SA FTEs)
  - Award classifications – potential match, SA and Qld only
  - Terminations – partial match, SA and Qld only

Roundtable Feedback: Why are we collecting data?

- National Minimum Data set needs to cover all four areas - Workforce, Women in LG, Asset and Financial Management

- Workforce issues are critical to council sustainability

- Workforce costs make up a significant and increasing proportion of council budgets

- Potential to build capacity of councils, particularly HR, to collect data for their own workforce planning processes

What we should collect?

- Important generally to know about council workforce functions

- Employment classification and qualifications by gender is important, especially for Women in LG project

- Need to get consensus even if there is a small number of items we can agree on

- However we could look at a combination of census, with limited data, more detailed surveys, qualitative research and ABS data

How should we collect data? 1

- Need to minimise duplication – issue of the number of returns that councils need to provide

- Need to be very clear about the question and what the data is and how it will be used

- Ask questions that will deliver a return on investment in time by Council and is relevant to them

- Be consistent about what we ask and seek the information on a regular basis, preferably annually

- Need easy-to-use software or website tool

How should we collect data? 2

- HR/Payroll mainly responsible for workforce data – but potential for software/website to allow other parts of council to contribute

- Alternatively use existing processes where possible, e.g., Grants Commission

- FAGS legislation requires review of LG process, which provides access to councils and incentives for them to participate

- ABS Labour Force and Linked Employer-Employee reviews provide an opportunity to get additional data

How should we analyse it?

- National level is looking only at aggregated data, but spatial issues are also critical – we need the ability to report back on national, state, regional basis

- Need to produce reports for councils which are timely and relevant to them, eg, one-page fact sheets

- Issue to manage the issue of comparisons between councils v. need to make data as publicly available

- Issue of resourcing of data collection and analysis – especially in the longer-term

- But we need to get the ball rolling – hopefully jurisdictions and councils will see the benefit – the main thing is to make it useful

Items for Discussion:

- Core data needed by sector.

- Options for data collection models.

- Exploration of best methodology for establishment, collection and maintenance of data set.

- Alignment and coordination with State and Territory LG Depts and LG peak body activities.

Data Project Scoping Consultant Contact Details:

Alex Gooding

Director, Gooding Davies Consultancy Pty Ltd

0418 164 759   alex@goodingdavies.com.au