



# Workforce Planning: A National Perspective

Presentation to the  
Department of Local Government  
Workforce Planning Forum

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Established in 1991

Based at the University of Technology, Sydney

Postgraduate and Continuing Professional Development for Local Government

Comprising a core of academic and support staff and a network of associate consultants, researchers and presenters

Selected in 2009 as the host of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

Consortium partner of ACELG in governance and program delivery



**An Australian Government Initiative**

**The ACELG Vision highlights the pursuit of excellence. It is:**

**World-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.**

# ACELG's mission is to provide:

A national network and framework for collaboration in areas of mutual interest;

Research and development capacity to support policy formulation and drive innovation;

Leadership in promoting informed debate on key policy issues;

A clearing house for the exchange of information and ideas promoting innovation and best practice;

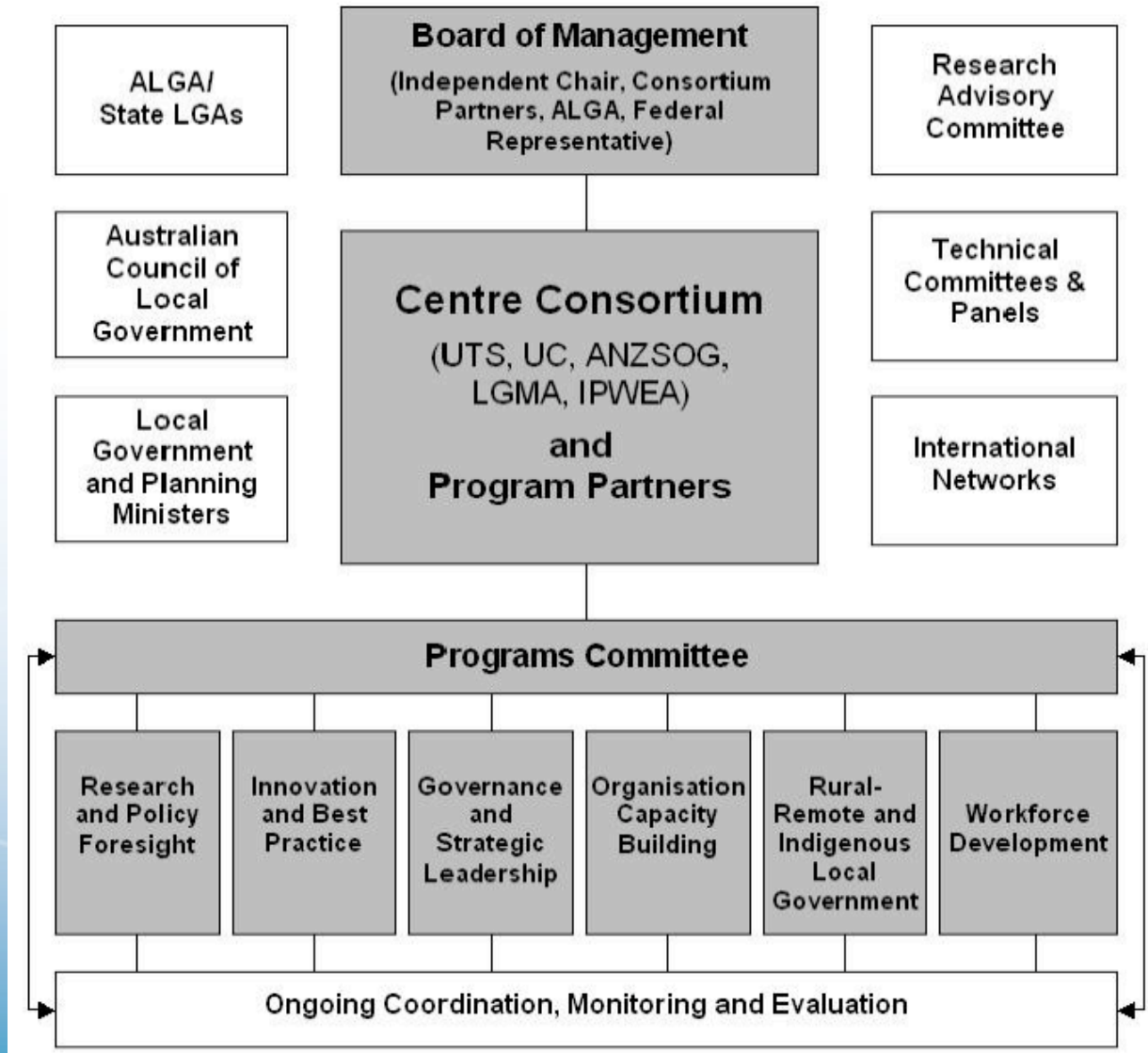
Inputs to capacity building programs on long-term financial sustainability, asset management;

Workforce development initiatives for staff and elected members;

Leadership development programs; and

A specialist focus on the particular needs of local government in rural and remote areas including Indigenous local governance.

# ACELG Governance Model -



# National Workforce Development Strategy

National funding to ACELG through the Local Government Reform Fund

An initiative of the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council in 2009

Part of the Council of Australian Government Commitments and policy priorities:

- Upgrading Australian workforce skills
- Increasing participation of women
- *Closing the Gap* – Aboriginal employment

Informed by previous five annual National Local Government Workforce Development Forums

# National Workforce Development

## Strategy: Vision

Australian local government has the workforce capability it requires for a productive, sustainable and inclusive future.

Local government has the capacity to develop and use the skills of its workforce to meet the needs and aspirations of its communities.

# The Goals of the Strategy



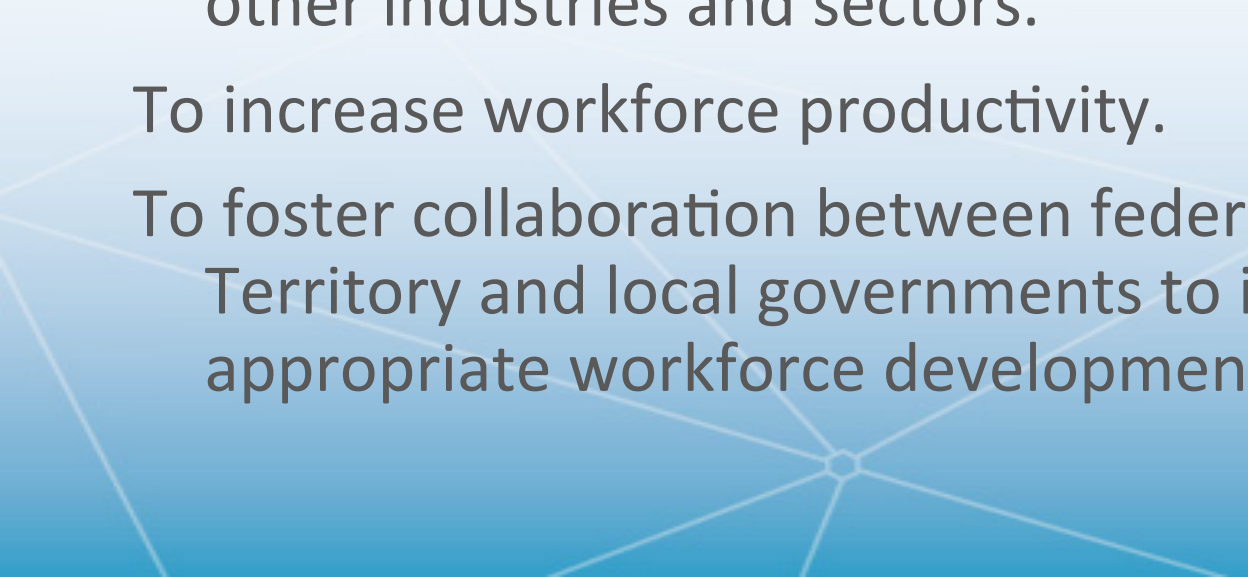
To develop a highly skilled, resourceful, resilient and respected local government workforce.

To ensure effective implementation of a range of workforce planning and development activities tailored to local needs and changing circumstances.

To address increased competition for workers from other industries and sectors.

To increase workforce productivity.

To foster collaboration between federal, state, Northern Territory and local governments to implement appropriate workforce development activities.







***Strategy 1:***

***Improving Workforce Planning and Development***

Understanding demand and supply.

Detailed assessment of the shortages and gaps.

Strategic actions to successfully retain, attract and develop the appropriate workforce.




# National Minimum Data Set



NMDS is a key component of the National Local Government Data Project

ACELG is implementing the project on behalf of the State and Federal Local Government Ministers



# Background

It is a national survey/dataset which will:

- Inform and improve workforce planning across the sector
- Inform the Close the Gap strategy aimed at improving indigenous government employment
- Support the increase of women in senior management roles in LG
- Identify genuine skills shortages
- Provide evidence based data to attract federal and state funding in support of career development and skills building activities in LG

# Development

The final 17 data variables being collected have been the subject of extensive consultation across the sector, with associations, state and territory departments and practitioners

While you can't please all of the people all of the time, they do reflect the minimum data required to address the program objectives.

There will be a staged roll-out of the NMDS taking into account the fact that not all data will be readily available at the outset.

# Data:

The key variables being collected are:

- Occupation
- Education\Training
- Employment by target groups
- Management level
- Apprenticeships
- Separations and vacancies
- Age and gender



# What to expect:

In most cases, your council will be sent a link to follow to complete the online data collection process via a customised portal

The invitation to complete the survey will come from the State government

Accompanying the invitation will be a hard copy of the data required along with supporting material explaining both the process and the data fields.

# Support:

There will be an email based help system available for anyone with questions

You will be able to stop and start the survey without losing data

You will receive a copy of the data you have entered at the end of the survey

You will receive a summary report showing your council against the aggregated results for your region or state.

We will not disclose the results of individual councils results except to the states, whose project it is.

# Timing:

The data portal is being finalised as we speak – taking into account feedback from key stakeholders

We will be seeking to pilot the data collection process with 2 councils in each state, looking to commence in 1<sup>st</sup> week September

Depending on the results of the pilot we hope to have the program ready to go live by mid to end September with data collection proper happening in 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks October.



## ***Strategy 2:***

### ***Promoting Local Government as a Place-Based Employer of Choice***

Local government can contribute to growth initiatives through the employment of local skills.

Councils provide employment opportunities that are close to home.

Promotion of consistent messages:

- growth and development opportunities
- positive work environments
- flexible workforce practices

## ***Strategy 3:***

### ***Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

Increased competition for skilled employees across all industries.

Resourceful employers continue to embrace principles of workplace diversity and equity, creating a flexible and multi-skilled workforce.

As importantly, Councils need to reflect the diverse communities they serve.

Provide community-focused services and facilities that address the varying needs of multifaceted communities.

# Indigenous Employment -

“Local Government is the place where change can happen. It is the place where big issues at the national level have their base.

Local communities are where Aboriginal people meet white people. It is the place where we talk, play sport, shop, and have a laugh and a cry.

What is important is that Aboriginal people get to the starting line... The sort of leadership local government can show is a commitment to working co-operatively with Aboriginal people.

We see harmony where councils consult effectively with their Indigenous residents, listen to us, respect our opinions, involve us in committees of council, demonstrate support for our endeavours, and respect our culture. This helps us respond with the with the generosity of our people.”

*The late Pat Dixon as quoted in the 2010 ACELG Green Paper:  
Closing the Gap through Place-based Employment.*

# Employing women

Staff answering Yes...	2006	2009	2006 (%)	2009 (%)	% change
It is important that job selection processes are fair for all candidates. Is job selection an issue for you?	175	847	46%	43%	-3%
Family friendly policies are important for women to participate in the workforce. Are family friendly policies implemented at your work place?	250	1519	66%	78%	12%
Adequate training and confidence to do the job are essential to be an effective staff member. Is training and confidence building an issue for you?	194	860	52%	42%	-10%
The culture of local government is said to be male dominated. Does the workplace culture of your council need to change to be more inclusive of women?	236	1014	65%	51%	-14%
Some women experience difficulties due to gender being used against them. Are gender matters an issue for you?	133	476	35%	24%	-11%
Is distance an issue for you?	81	419	42%	36%	-6%

Table 8 – Issues for Staff: 2006–2009

**Source:**  
**UTS CLG Research**  
**for ALGWA, 2009**



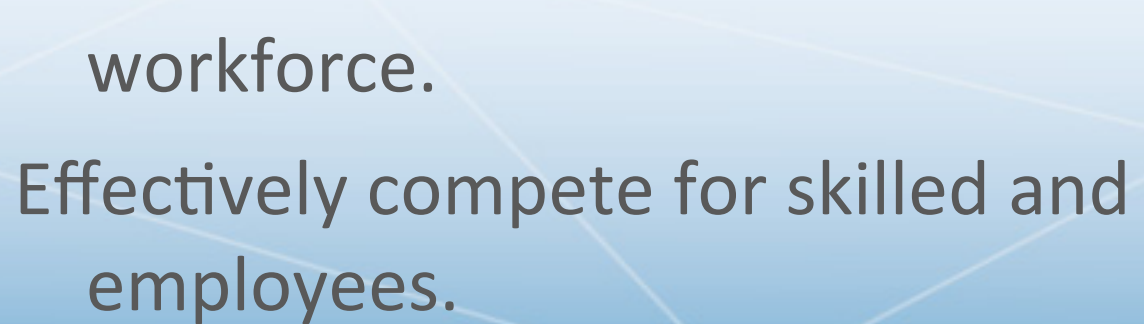
***Strategy 4:***  
***Creating a Contemporary Workplace***

Workplace flexibility and work redesign are key means for both retaining and attracting workers.

Demands of caring for family members, studying or transitioning into retirement.

Local government needs to be responsive to the needs and desires of its current and potential workforce.

Effectively compete for skilled and talented employees.



# THE FOUR MAIN REASONS WHY PEOPLE LEAVE ARE:

1

Lack of job satisfaction or career progression

2

Negative workplace dynamics or conflict with management

3

Family pressures or lack of work/life balance

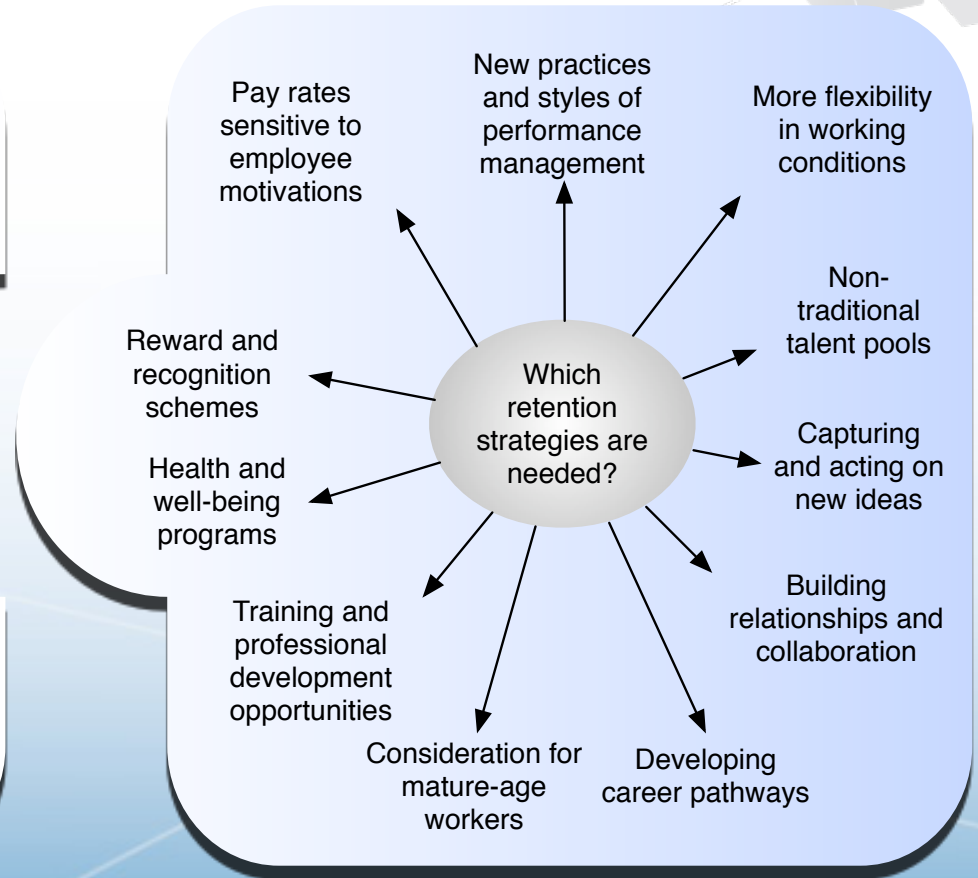
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Health issues or retirement

**Source:** PCT Outcomes Summary  
Kerry Sefton and Alison Balind,  
Griffith City Council, 2011



# Retaining Staff...



## ***Strategy 5: Skills Investment***

Currently, skills shortages exist in a range of mission critical professions, demand for workers is increasing across all areas and there is a requirement to recruit a wide variety of skilled and semi-skilled labour to fully resource local government's requirements. As such, it is timely that local government:

- Takes advantage of a range of government training programs to up-skill and retain current staff to avoid the high cost of turnover
- Invests in ongoing training and professional development of staff to enable them to be more productive
- Advocates for the advancement of learning pathways from VET or certified training to higher qualifications to enable technical officers and para-professionals to move into qualified professional roles



# LG Experiences with Education and Professional Development

Common to attend seminars and workshops

Emerging use of online learning

Very appreciative of formal and informal mentoring

Equal base of TAFE and University qualifications

High use of professional journals, low use of international literature

Mixed access to funding, high levels of self-funding

Appetite for learning – ‘inspiring and enjoyable’

*(Source: ACELG Learning in Local Government – Sector Consultations, 2011)*

# Learning from Peers...

Would you be likely to participate in the following:

Training that provides information about other council's work and innovations – 79%

Facilitated problem-solving with peers in other councils – 72%

Exchange opportunities in other councils – 71%

*“I will continue to do professional development ... and work with peers and others as regards ongoing leadership activity. My preference is to do this with peers through tailored conferences and peer group meetings/networking.”*

*“I enjoy networking with other councillors and officers to share ideas.”*

*“It is always useful to have a look at how other councils are dealing with similar issues.”*

*(Source: ACELG Learning in Local Government – Sector Consultations, 2011)*

## ***Strategy 6:***

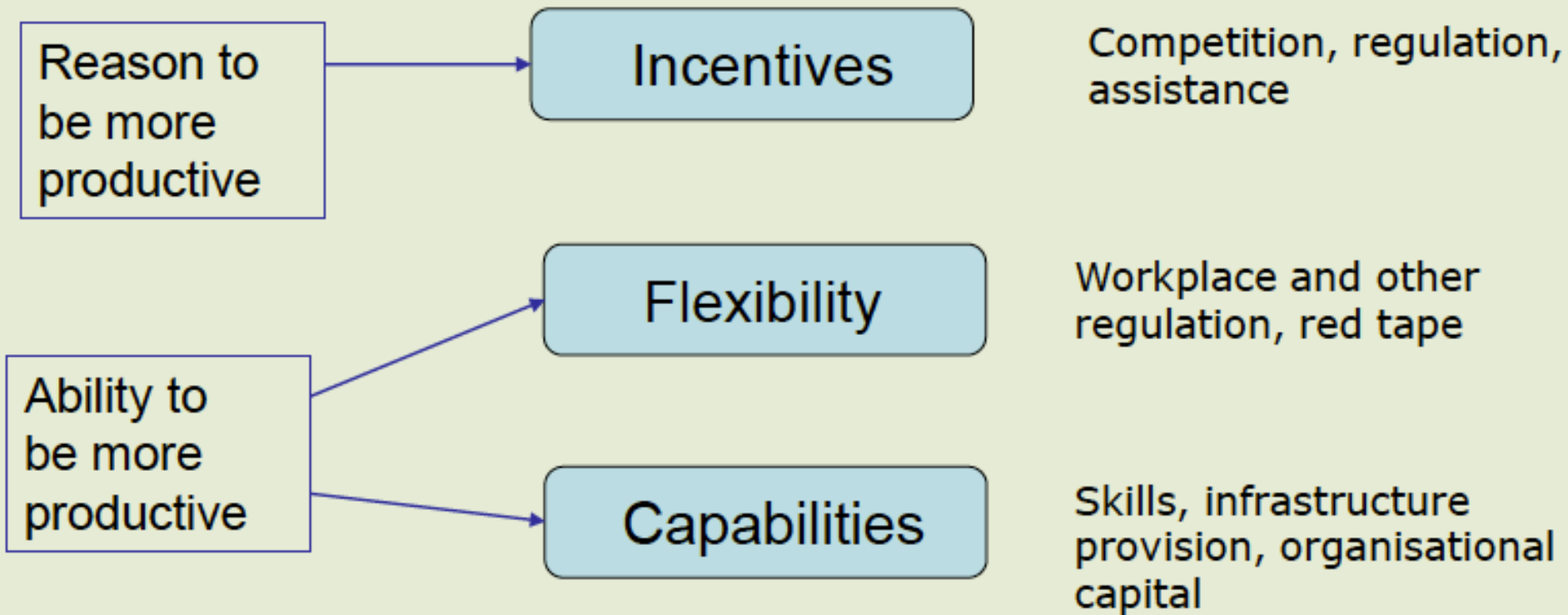
### ***Improving Productivity and Leveraging Technology***

The Australian government is making significant investment in improving our nation's productivity.

The national productivity agenda is being ramped-up and local government has a role to play.

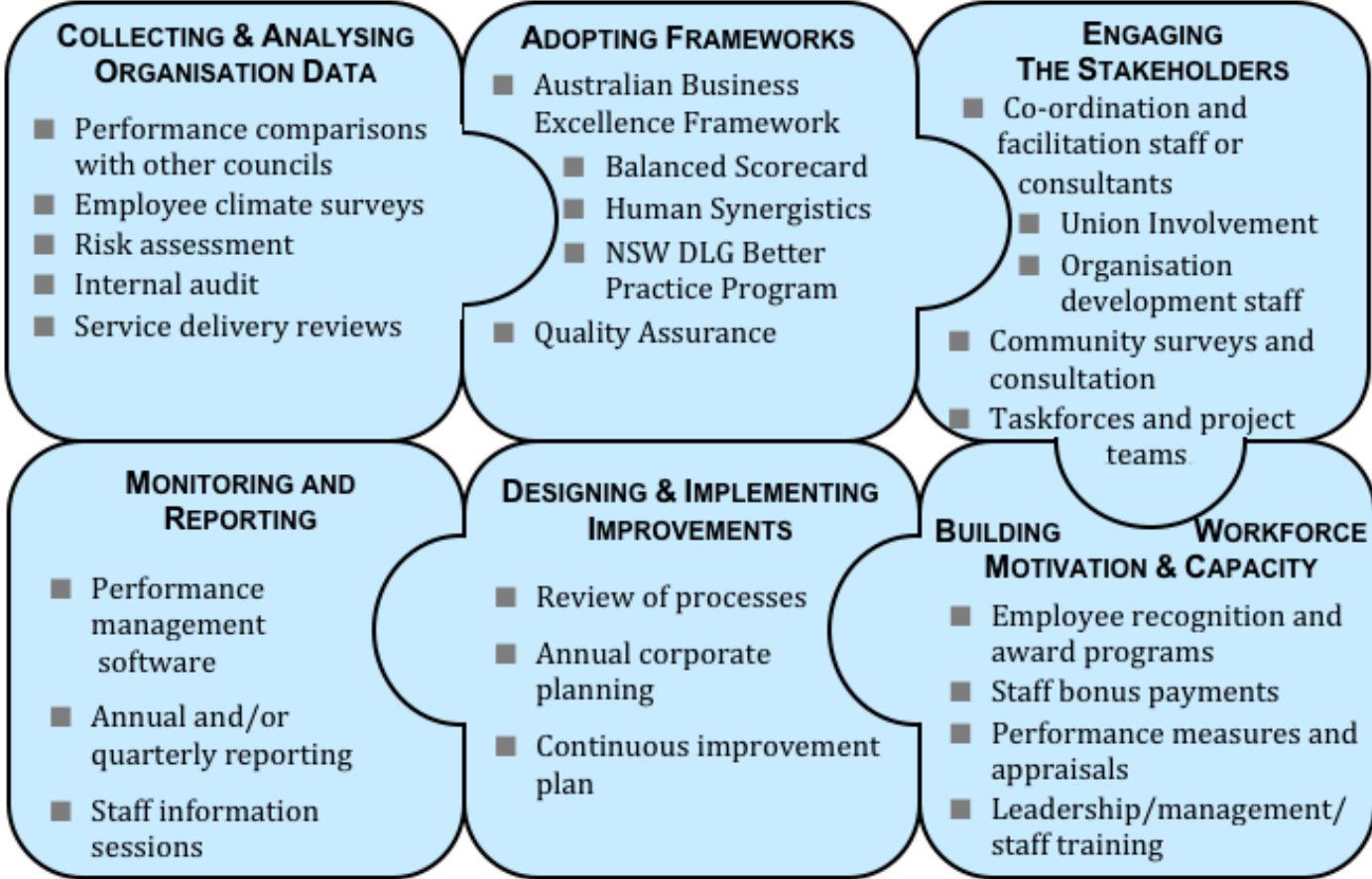
The sector needs to understand the demands of the national productivity agenda and how it can make a contribution.

# Productivity: Drivers and Enablers



*Source: Productivity Commission, 2012  
at the ACELG National LG Workforce Development Forum*

# Does your Council have a systematic approach to promoting excellence and continuous improvement? If yes, could you please describe your approach, and outline the staff and financial resources involved?



Source: ACELG (2010) Survey of 155 Local Government CEOs

## ***Strategy 7:***

### ***Maximising Management and Leadership***

Various studies conclude that employees don't leave their job or their company; they leave their boss.

High performing workplaces spend more time and effort in managing staff.

Most good organisations rate themselves at about 60% of their potential. Increasing that 60% to 70% and beyond is the job of good management, including good people management.

## THINKING

- DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING
- GENERATING IDEAS
- PROBLEM-SOLVING & CRITICAL ANALYSIS
- STRATEGIC THINKING & PLANNING
- QUESTIONING THE STATUS QUO
- UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

## PRODUCING RESULTS

- PLANNING & ALLOCATING RESOURCES
- MANAGING PEOPLE
- PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
- MONITORING & REGULATION
- FEEDBACK & REPORTING
- DELIVERING PUBLIC VALUE

## LEARNING

- KEEPING UP TO DATE
- MAKING EDUCATED DECISIONS
- PRACTICAL RESEARCH
- LEARNING FROM OTHERS
- LEARNING WITH OTHERS
- MENTORING & COACHING

## COMMUNICATING

- CREATING A SHARED VISION
- LEADERS AS STORY-TELLERS
- DEBATING NOT ARGUING
- INSPIRING PARTNERSHIPS
- SELLING IDEAS
- READING & WRITING

## MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
- UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF
- UNDERSTANDING & LEADING OTHERS
- MODELLING THE WAY
- HONESTY & LEADERSHIP
- HUMOUR & HUMANITY
- ENCOURAGING PASSION
- DEALING WITH CONFLICT

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

- THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SERVICE
- LOCAL GOVT. - ROLE & PURPOSE
- ETHICS & GOOD GOVERNANCE
- LEARNING FROM THE PAST



*ACELG LG Leadership  
Competency Framework*

# ACELG Advancing Leadership Initiative

**Advancing Leadership** is aimed at broadening leadership capacity and development opportunity for professionals working within Australian Local Government. It includes:

- a competency **framework**
- **partnership** of learning contributors are collaborating to network new and existing development programs
- creating pathway options to **postgraduate study**



# Partnerships in WA

In September 2010 an Advancing Leadership program was piloted in Joondalup

Unique partnership between LGMA WA, WALGA, Edith Cowan University, UTS-CLG and ACELG.

Edith Cowan University have accredited the ACELG programs as subjects in their own Graduate Certificate in Business

Tailored leadership pathway to post-graduate study for local government professionals

New programs between LGMA WA, ACELG and ECU are being planned for delivery within the next 6 months

- New Perspectives in LG Leadership
- Team Building and Leadership



***Strategy 8:  
Implementation and Integration***

Aligning workforce reforms with other reforms occurring in a changing political and operating environment, at national, state and local level.

Integral component of council's strategic management framework.



# Skills needed...



## **Strategy and Content**

Horizon scanning

Succession planning

Attraction and recruitment

Retention

Employee support and  
development

## **Process and Communication**

Finding opinion leaders and  
understanding decision-  
making processes

Engaging stakeholders and  
getting 'buy-in'

Facilitation, writing and  
training

Project management

Driving change



# Collaboration with the DLG WA

Memorandum of Understanding between  
UTS:CLG, ACELG and DLG WA

Shared commitment to Workforce Development  
in Local Government

Combining the ACELG Workforce Development  
program with the DLG WA agenda

Delivery of workshops throughout WA

Piloting an approach which could be rolled out  
nationally