



Rural-remote and Indigenous Local Government

Western Australian Scoping Study

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WA Scoping Study

❖ Objectives:

- Identify critical capacity building issues/needs
- Identify appropriate responses

- ❖ Capacity building ... revolves around building or enabling groups to be more **effective, functional and efficient**, in areas that may include **finances, governance, service delivery, policy, interaction with other groups or human resources**, in a manner that encourages participation, ownership, empowerment, co-learning and self-development.

Methodology

- ❖ Literature review
- ❖ In-depth stakeholder interviews (31 with 64 people)
 - 8 WALGA country zones & selected Shires
 - LG Associations – WALGA; LGMA WA Branch
 - Government – Minister for LG; DLG; DIA; ICC (Broome); DEEWR (Broome);
 - 6 Regional Development Commissions
 - LG consultants
 - LGA of SA
- ❖ On-line survey
 - Principally CEOs and Presidents of 70 councils
 - 46 usable responses representing at least 50% of councils

Profile of Survey Participants

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| POSITION: | | | DISTANCE FROM PERTH: | |
| CEO | 54% | | Up to 500 km | 46% |
| Senior Manager | 7% | | 501 – 1,000 km | 20% |
| President | 20% | | >1,000 km | 27% |
| Councillor | 15% | | | |
| WALGA ZONE: | % target | % Resp. | SHIRE POPULATION: | |
| Central Country | 21% | 15% | Up to 1,000 | 39% |
| Goldfields-Esp. | 11% | 13% | 1,001 – 5,000 | 30% |
| Gascoyne | 6% | 7% | 5,001 – 10,000 | 13% |
| Great Eastern | 21% | 13% | 10,001 – 20,000 | 9% |
| Great Southern | 9% | 15% | >20,000 | 4% |
| Kimberley | 6% | 13% | | |
| Murchison | 9% | 9% | | |
| North Country | 11% | 2% | | |
| Pilbara | 6% | 9% | | |

Capacity Building Issues/Needs

❖ HR issues

- ➔ Recruitment/retention
- ➔ Staff skills/competencies
- ➔ Cultural awareness/sensitivity

❖ Governance and elected members

- ➔ Councillor skills/competencies
- ➔ Strategic /long-term perspective
- ➔ Cultural awareness/sensitivity

❖ Funding and resources

- ➔ Adequacy & stability of revenues and resources
- ➔ Asset depreciation outstripping discretionary income
- ➔ High construction & maintenance costs
- ➔ Grants gearing
 - ➔ construction not operational costs
 - ➔ Physical not social capital development

Capacity Building Issues/Needs

❖ Government and agency gaps

- ➔ Regulation, compliance & reporting requirements
- ➔ Communication, cooperation, collaboration and inter-governmental/interagency relationships
- ➔ Structural reform & collaboration
- ➔ Service withdrawal & other policy/decision impacts

❖ Indigenous community challenges and needs

- ➔ Historical systemic issues
- ➔ Implications of Bilateral Agreement on LGs – normalisation of service delivery to remote Indigenous communities
- ➔ Indigenous representation in LG
- ➔ Indigenous community engagement

Capacity Building Issues/Needs

❖ Physical infrastructure

- Harsh conditions/distance – high construction & maintenance costs
- Declining/sub-standard assets

❖ Community expectations and issues

- Lead community decision-maker/employer
- Provider of last resort/fill service gaps
- Declining population/business/rates base

❖ Environmental issues

- Remoteness/distance
- Economic conditions

Capacity Building Responses

❖ Self-help responses

- Collaboration
- Partnerships
- Proactive & creative approaches to solving problems

❖ Government and agency actions

- Recognition of diversity – differential approaches
- Less burdensome regulation/compliance
- Greater collaboration, cooperation, communication, consultation
- Whole of govt systems approach to rural-remote service delivery

Capacity Building Responses

❖ **ACELG actions** – summary pp.63 of report

➤ **Advocacy/inform policy debate**

- Diversity – need for proactive, differential & collaborative/cooperative approaches to regs/compliance and remote service delivery
- Impact statements/consultation agreements
- Regulation & reporting reform
- Funding arrangements – social capital development
- Elected member training/mentoring

➤ **Research**

- Regulations & compliance – impact & optimality
- Structural/industry reform
- Intergovernmental/inter-agency rural-remote service delivery models

Capacity Building Responses

➤ **Innovation and good/best practice**

- Information dissemination strategy
- Staff recruitment & retention strategies
- Service delivery models – small rural; remote; Indigenous

➤ **Training**

- Tailor-made – staff & elected members
 - Strategic leadership
 - Integrated strategic planning
 - Cultural awareness and community/Indigenous engagement
 - Skilling for working in rural-remote councils

➤ **Workforce development strategy**

- Career development pathway/s
- Training, mentoring, cadetships, traineeships, secondments, exchanges
- Succession planning
- Better utilising Indigenous labour pools

Personal Observations and Comments

- ❖ Expect a strong local government sector

Local Government

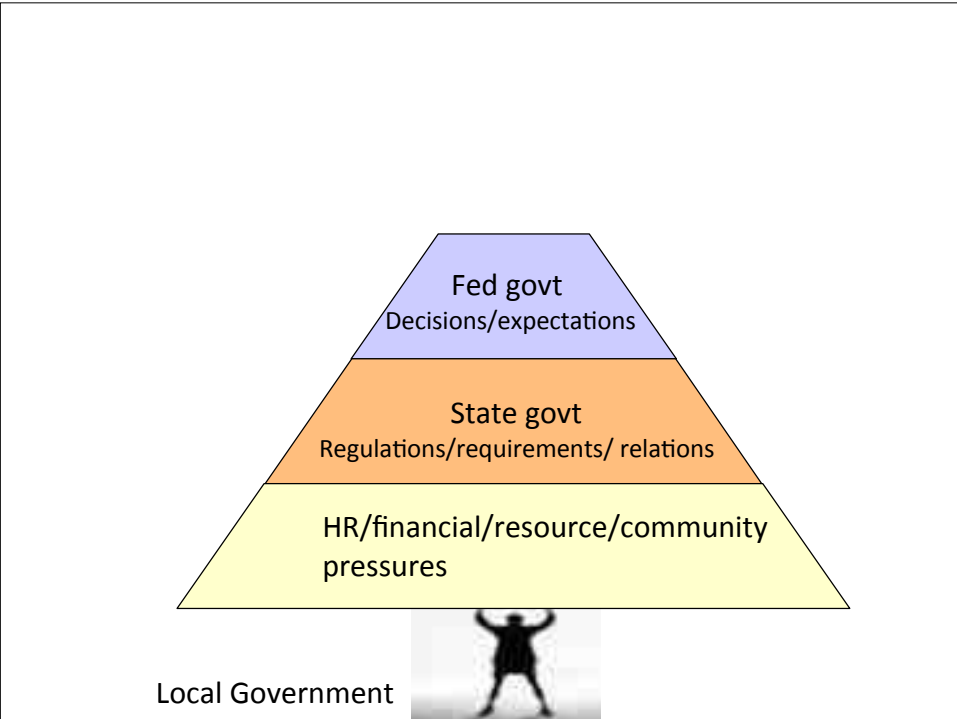
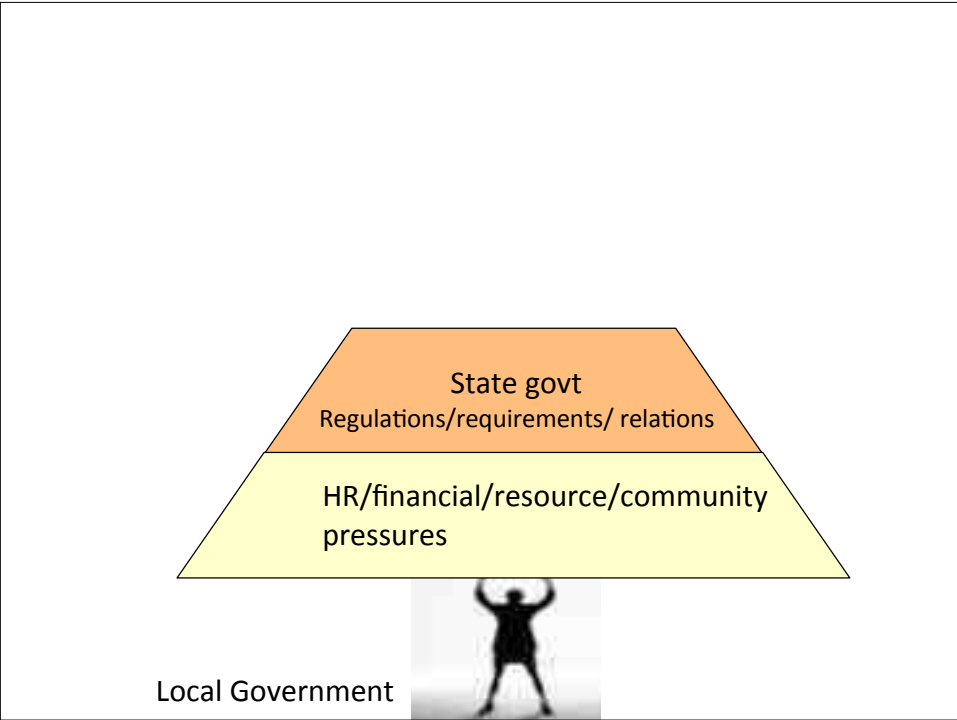


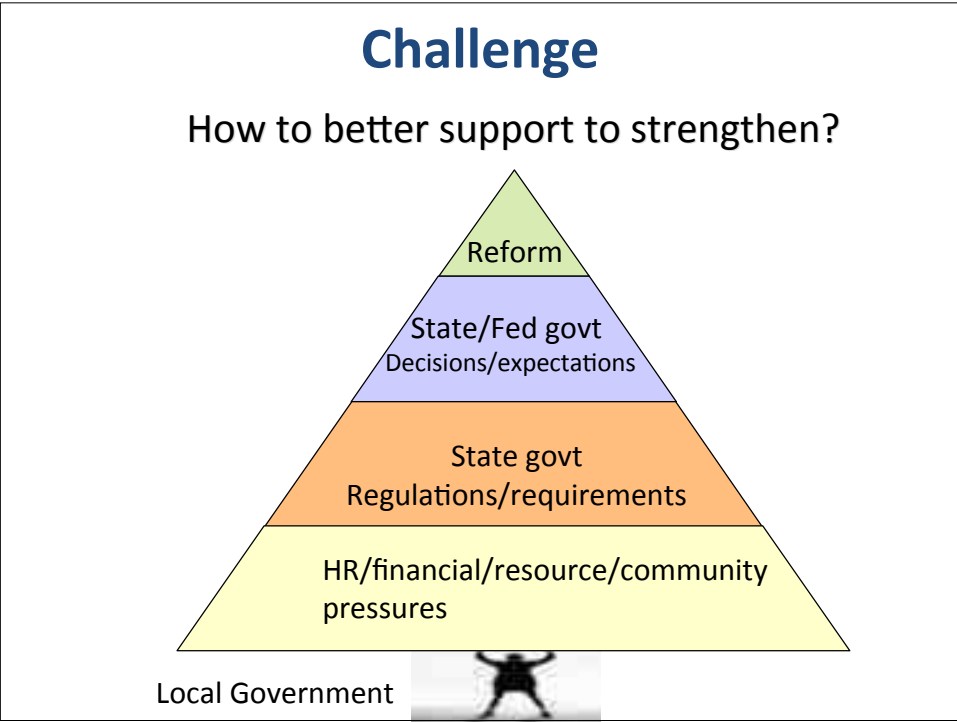
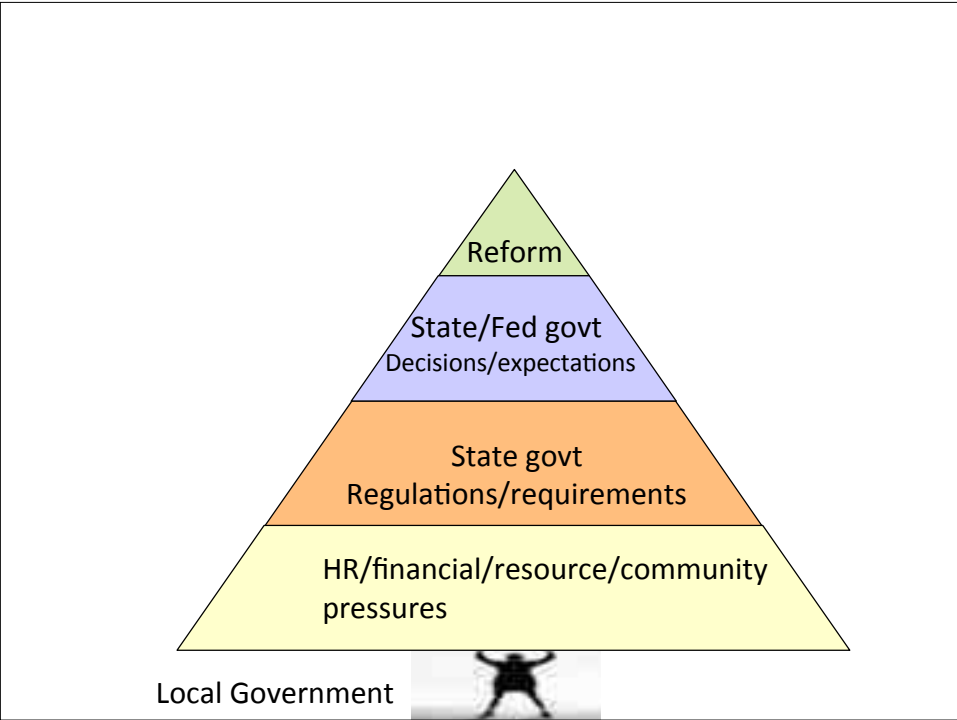
- ❖ Burdened and squeezed
- ❖ Viewed as “bottom of the food chain”

HR/financial/resource/community pressures

Local Government

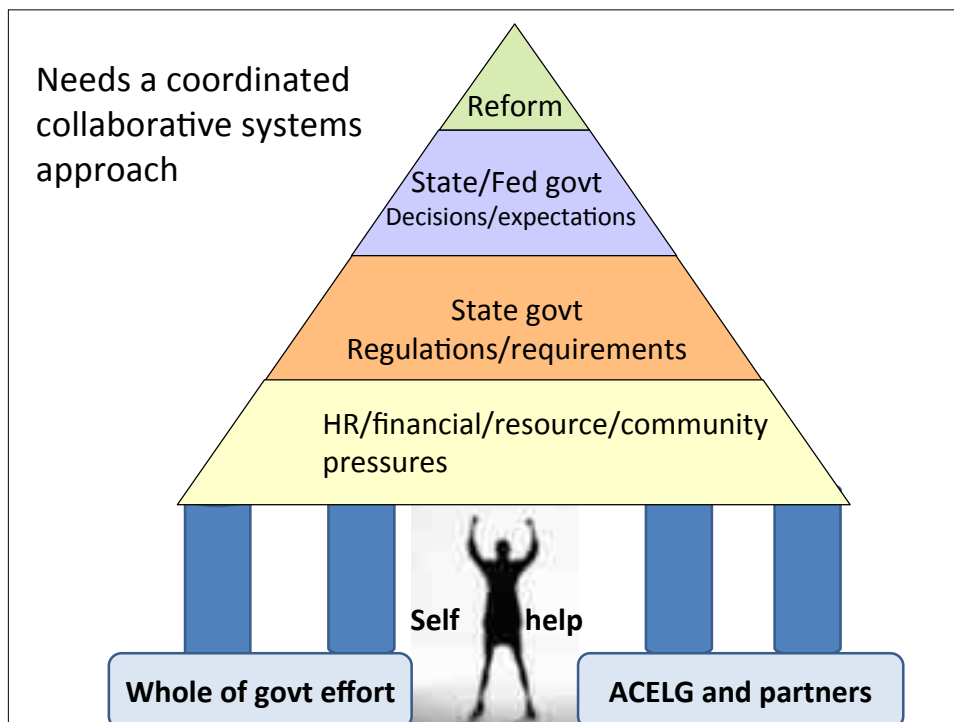






Personal Observations and Comments

- ❖ General recognition of need for change
- ❖ Degree of cynicism, skepticism and resistance
- ❖ Fear – “being left holding the baby”
- ❖ Good will – not sure of the way ahead
- ❖ Some shining stars!
- ❖ General enthusiasm towards any support and help ACELG can provide
- ❖ Building sector confidence and support critical



Questions or comments?