

IMPLEMENTING THE ABEF IN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LGBEN Survey – Summary of Responses

Today's Presentation

- A summary of LGBEN survey responses –

- Sarah Artist

- Program Manager:

- UTS Centre for Local Government

- Facilitated discussion of next steps –

- Graham Sansom

- Professor and Director:

- Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government



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

World-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21st century Australia.

The Centre'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

ACELG and Excellence

ACELG Governance and Strategic Leadership Program funding:

To increase understanding of effective strategic leadership, and to build the capacity of local government to achieve consistently high standards in leadership and governance.

- 2010 - Review existing frameworks for business excellence in local government and determine future needs; and
- 2011 - Upgrade/promote frameworks for local government excellence



LGBEN Survey Summary

LGBEN survey aims:

1. Canvass the benefits and issues of implementing the ABEF in local government;
2. Report this information back to the broader local government community to further promote the adoption of excellence frameworks; and
3. Feed this information back to LGBEN, ACELG and SAI Global to assist them in designing future support for promoting excellence in local government.

Survey methodology

- Early December – Late January
- 27 surveys sent, 18 received
- Consultation within council was suggested
- Anonymous responses: thoughts, experiences, opinions and intentions
- Occasional factual information by Council
- 2 weeks for network approval then public dissemination of report

Motivations

1. What was your Council seeking when it decided to adopt the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF)?

- Influencing the organisation culture
- Efficiencies in processes
- Team building
- Communication
- Recognition in the community
- Comparisons with other sectors
- Benchmarking and support from other councils

“A proven framework for continuous improvement of Council processes and organisational culture which could elicit, motivate and capture the participation of all Council staff.”

Time

2. How long has your Council been working with the ABEF?

Less than one year	One-two years	3-5 years	5-10 years
Newcastle	Ararat Brimbank Broken Hill Campbelltown Port Macquarie Hastings Warringah Yarra Ranges	Barossa - 3 Surf Coast - 3	Baw Baw - 5 Hobart - 10 Holroyd - 9 Marion - 5 Mildura - 6 Port Stephens - 8 Rockdale - 10 Wagga Wagga - 6

Resources

3. What resources has it taken to implement the ABEF? (\$, specialist staff, consulting services etc)

- Consulting services
 - ▣ \$10,000 - \$100,000 for the first year
 - ▣ In-house staff eventually taking over
- In-house staff
 - ▣ Human resources or Organisation Development
 - ▣ Full time or part time
- Participation time
- Resource materials, software, SAI publications, venue hire and travel to LGBEN meetings

Tailoring

4. How much have you tailored the ABEF for implementation in your Council? What kinds of materials and processes have you developed in-house?

“Much of our material has been rewritten to reflect local government language and culture. We have also redesigned the self assessment and PDSA process to align with our business planning process.”

- ❑ In-house templates
- ❑ Induction workshops
- ❑ Staff manuals
- ❑ Processes
- ❑ Policies
- ❑ Training and assessment materials

Involvement

5. Do you involve (and if so how) your Councillors? your outdoor staff? your professional staff? your managers?

- Managers and Directors are involved most closely

“Managers in our organisation drive BE and are responsible for completing annual self assessments with their teams and supporting PDSAs”

- Councillors are involved very little

“Councillors (all nine) were invited to a number of briefing sessions to receive information about ABEF, however only approximately half attended.”

- Several councils involve all staff members

Benefits

6. What have been the main benefits to your Council in adopting the ABEF?

“Other than being instrumental in introducing a continuous improvement culture, the tangible benefits have been substantial and long standing from both strategic and operational viewpoints.

A shared understanding of future direction, understanding community expectations, employee empowerment and understanding and improving processes gives a confidence in the organisation’s ability to adapt to changing circumstances.”

- ❑ Structured process for continuous improvement
- ❑ Better communication and shared commitment to improvements
- ❑ Team building and alignment to corporate priorities
- ❑ Financial savings
- ❑ Access to best practice

Business Improvements

7. Have you identified and/or quantified business improvements and efficiencies resulting from implementing the ABEF? If so, what are they?

- Increase in ABEF score
- Reduction in unplanned leave and staff turnover
- Deficits to surpluses
- Increased expenditure on asset maintenance
- Various improvements in processes

Customer/Community benefits

8. Have you been able to identify and/or quantify any customer benefit or community value from implementing the ABEF? If so, what are they?

- Customer satisfaction scores improved
- Customer and community service processes improved
- Improvements in processes overall providing customer and community benefit

Gaps or disadvantages

9. Have you identified any gaps or disadvantages to implementing the ABEF? If so, what are they?

Resources over time

“Implementing the ABEF not only requires significant organisational resources – it requires significant and enduring executive support first, followed by the strong support of at least a majority of line managers.

Without this, staff involvement and perception of the program will wane or falter.

Next, a staff member capable of driving the program and the necessary resources to maintain and develop the program is vital.

Over reliance on outside consultants results in the program being driven externally and intermittently.”

Inappropriate language

“The Leveraged Dynamic Empowerment Immersion Framework Paradigm.”

“Staff have a right to be dubious of buzzwords and phrases, and to link them with the ABEF.”

One of the most important psychological issues which should be solved is the translation of ABEF terminology into plain English terms known and used within your organisation.

If this does not occur, staff begin to lose trust/interest/sincerity in the ABEF within the organisation.”

Private sector focus

“The main area for improvement (gap) seems to be the recognition of the importance that community and Councillors play in the strategic and operational direction-setting for Councils.

Rather than focussing on ‘competitive advantage’, ‘market share’ or ‘profit’, the BEF could demonstrate a greater emphasis on creating public value, a key driver for local government.”

Lack of information

“The major issue is that the framework is the intellectual property of a commercial enterprise rather than being aligned with national government standards as per for e.g. competency standards.

This made it initially quite difficult to research much about ABEF in a meaningful way other than getting a copy of the Framework itself.”

SAI Global Support

10. What support have you received from SAI Global in implementing the ABEF? Any comments?

+

- Purchase of documentation;
- Mentoring, support and advice;
- In-house training from SAI consultants;
- Public courses leading to qualifications eg Graduate Certificate; and
- External assessment for the Excellence Awards.

—

- Difficult to access lg information;
- Cost structure prohibitive for some councils;
- Need for facilitators who can speak lg language; and
- Packaging ABEF with other tools.

LGBEN Support

11. What support have you received from the Local Government Business Excellence Network (LGBEN) in implementing the ABEF? Any comments?

“The LGBEN have been a wealth of information in establishing an implementation plan.

Support and advice is always available through phone calls and emails to network members.

Documentation on the LGBEN website has been very useful and attendance at meetings provide valuable information, ideas and encouragement to move forward with our implementation”

Further Support

12. What further support would assist you in implementing the ABEF in your Council?

Within the Council:

Support

Commitment

Resources

- *“The full support of Councillors, management and staff, and an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.”*
- *“A full time person dedicating 100% of their time to BEF. Time spent at other Councils who have it well bedded.”*

From SAI Global:

Mentoring

Training

Benchmarking

Cost-
effectiveness

- *“Continue with the same approach of having an SAI Global mentor and occasional training provider”*
- *“To assist with the establishment of long term benchmarking partnerships.”*
- *“Providing training resources and more cost effective products.”*

From other organisations:

Adoption by
other councils
and other
organisations

- *“Greater focus on the ABEF throughout the industry, education programs, benchmarking opportunities and partners.”*
- *“Elevation of the framework across both public and private sectors, and reverse the trend of the declining profile and use of the BEF in the private sector.”*

From LG BEN:

Higher fees

More
administrative
support

“The network is valuable, and there has been some discussion of how to improve its value to participants through employing administrative staff, and although this would raise the costs of participation, it really appears as if it is necessary.”

Suggested roles for ACELG:

Information

Facilitation

Local
government
specific

- Disseminate information - case studies, strategies, example tools and templates
- Facilitators for mentoring programs, networks, communities of practice
- An “open source” framework based on the local government industry



Next Steps

ACELG: Alternate Framework Review

- International Frameworks
 - ▣ EFQM
 - ▣ Baldrige
 - ▣ Public Sector Frameworks eg Scotland
- Commercially available products
 - ▣ Investors in People
 - ▣ Performance Drivers
- Government programmes
 - ▣ Best Value Victoria
 - ▣ NSW DLG Better Practice Programme
- et al....



Leading to further consultation according to the...

ACELG guiding principles:

- To be effective, the Centre must be grounded in and serve the local government system
- The Centre should be practice-oriented: whilst research is essential to promote innovation and inform policy, it should be designed to lead to practical outcomes
- The Centre should focus on adding value, filling gaps and seeding new initiatives: as a general rule it should not duplicate or compete with existing programs
- The Centre should be inclusive: it should seek the active involvement of all those with expertise and ideas to contribute
- Given limited resources, the Centre must focus on a limited number of strategic interventions.

DISCUSSION...

