

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The objectives of this review were to determine viable management and coordination structures for the LGA to:

- support research and development of appropriate education and training initiatives and strategies, which will benefit the Local Government, sector.
- provide for the delivery of education and training services and products that meet the needs of, and are accessible to Council Members and all occupational levels of the Local Government sector in South Australia.
- formulate responses and/or initiatives to State and National Government education and training policies and,
- assist with the identification of current and emerging education and training needs of the Local Government sector.

The Review process involved comprehensive consultation with the Sector including:

- a paper based survey of all Councils – return rate 64%
- structured telephone consultations with Regional Associations, designated Professional Groups, past Members of the LGTA Board, the LGA's interstate counterparts and the Australian Local Government Training.
- conduct of a focus group for members of the Human Resource Network.
- Liaison with LGA officers including officers responsible for the Work-Force Planning Project, the Local Government Research & Development Scheme and the management of the current LGA training program.
- discussions with the South Australian Public Administration Industry Training Board (PAITAB), the Executive Officer and current Local Government Representative, and the Office for the Commissioner for Public Employment
- desk research of current and past education and training arrangements and services for the Industry including those previously managed by the Local Government Training Authority.
- a workshop involving senior management of the LGA and the consultants to review the results of the research and to formulate a viable model for the management and coordination of future education and training functions for Local Government.

KEY FINDINGS

Across the Sector more than 50% of respondents to the consultations indicated that the following changes and challenges in Local Government would have an impact on the future education and training needs of Council Members and/or staff:

- New Local Government Legislation
- Links between the Development Act and the Local Government Act ie. strategic management planning
- Developing strategic management plans for Council
- Role and need for policy development
- Performance measurement and benchmarking
- Future enterprise bargaining and workplace change strategies
- Service delivery strategies & options eg. Competitive Tendering
- Local Government role in economic development
- Technical and operational skills development of field staff.

Priority training and education needs were identified as being:

Council Members

- Relevant LG Legislation
- Strategic Planning
- General Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members
- Communication Skills
- Other Categories:
 - Finance
 - Policy development
 - Governance and ethics
 - IT - telecommunication and related issues

Senior Management

- Strategic management/planning
- Human resource management/leadership
- Other management categories:
 - Management
 - Managing performance
 - Cultural/change management
 - Continuous improvement
 - Business/financial management
- Legislation
- Other areas included IT and telecommunications management, community access/engagement

Middle Management

- Human resource management/leadership
- Cultural/change management
- Managing performance
- Other management categories:
 - Planning
 - Strategic planning
 - Teambuilding
 - Time management
- Legislation

Professional Officers

- Professional Development
- Legislation –
- Information Technology
- Other areas included Planning, Project Management and Communication Skills

Clerical and Front Line Staff

- Information Technology
- Customer Service
- Teamwork
- Communication Skills
- Other areas included Public Relations skills and Local Government Act changes

Field Staff

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Technical Skills Development
- Other areas included Machine/plant operations, formal skills path, communication/public relations skills.

LGA Responsibilities for Education and Training in the Sector

It is accepted within the industry, as supported by the Review data, that the LGA is seen to have a responsibility to promote, facilitate, enhance and make accessible education and training services for the sector.

Specifically the Review identified that the LGA's role should be to focus on education and training initiatives that are specific to Local Government and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector. Further, the LGA should avoid duplicating or competing with the generic education and training provider market, and/or industry/sector education and training providers where services offered are seen to meet the sector's needs.

The support the sector requires from the LGA can be summarised as follows:

- provide education and training services specific to the Local Government sector eg. Council Members and Staff training and development, interpretation and implementation of relevant legislation
- provide timely responses to education and training issues affecting the whole sector
- act as an information source on education and training providers and resources for the sector.
- facilitate better coordination of education and training effort arising from liaison with Regional Associations, designated Professional Groups, Australian Local Government Training, SA-PAITAB etc.
- in consultation with the sector, formulate education and training policy and represent the industry at State and Federal Government levels .
- facilitate and encourage research and development of education and training products/services which will assist Council Members and staff to better serve their communities.

Other Issues Influencing the Proposed Management and Coordination Structure

- **Market size and impact on commercial viability** - the market is relatively small, and, it could be argued, is a reducing market given amalgamations, different service delivery strategies being used by Councils and the indications from respondents involved in the Review that current work loads are a barrier to participating in training and education activities.

A significant proportion of potential clients are located in regional areas with limited resources and are expensive to service with education and training.

The small market size and therefore the viability of servicing same is further exacerbated by the capacity of the major metropolitan Councils being able to, and preferring to, manage their own education and training arrangements.

- **Diversity of Service Requirements** - the diversity of potential customer groupings coupled with the range of required education and training services and/or expectations the Sector has identified offers the LGA a major challenge in determining what should/could be its "core" education and training functions and responsibilities.

- **Relationship Building** -there is clearly a need for a more coordinated approach to bringing together all the groups within the sector and selected external providers, with an interest in and/or educational and training products and services to offer the sector. There are synergies and capabilities that could be gained from formalising relationships and collaborative arrangements with key groups/providers so that a broader and better range of services could be offered to the Sector. Such relationship building is perceived as a primary role the LGA could play and one which would produce major benefits to the sector.

Recommendations

The Review Interim Report was tabled at a meeting between the consultants, LGA Executive Director and Directors within the LGA. Following discussion of the findings of the Review, the following recommendations are made:

- that the LGA facilitate the education and training needs of the sector in line with the key findings of the Review.
- that the LGA seek funding from the LG Research Foundation (residual funds) and the LG Research and Development Scheme to enable the appointment of a Manager – Education & Training Services for a contract period of 2 years to establish and progress the following objectives and outcomes.

Objective	Outcome
Source information about current education training providers, products and resources available to the industry. Initial information base linked to priority needs identified in the Review.	A range of reputable, quality assured education and training providers and resources are identified as being capable of servicing both metropolitan and country Councils.
Establish and promote an education and training information and support service on LGA.net.	Facilitate design of an appropriate training and education information site on LGA.net
Facilitate establishment of data/information links to education and training providers on LGA.net.	Bulletin boards and hot links to education and training providers, resources etc are established on LGA.net for access by Councils. Currency of information to be maintained by the information providers.
Prepare, promote and coordinate facilitation of an LGA specific education and training program based on six monthly forward planning cycles, commencing January 2001.	The needs of Councils for industry specific education and training programs are met through an appropriate program.
Establish formal communication links with Regional Associations, Professional Associations, PAITAB etc; determine appropriate means/level of LGA involvement and/or representation.	Opportunities for appropriate representation of LGA, exchange of information, and coordination of training and education initiatives between organisations identified and acted upon.
Liaise with/coordinate education and training effort of Professional Associations etc by facilitating establishment of data/information links re their education and training initiatives on LGA.net.	Increased awareness and promotion of training and education occurring within the industry, opportunities for joint ventures identified and acted upon.
Act as an internal consultant when required to staff within the LGA to support education and training initiatives arising from their respective areas.	Identification of gaps in industry specific training, more proactive response to training needs which are industry specific.

Estimated Funding Required:

Salary	\$50/60,000
Salary on costs	\$11,000/\$12,000
Office set up/housing	\$15,000
Seed funding for projects	<u>\$15,000</u>
Total	<u>\$91/102,000</u>

It is anticipated that any additional funding will be **project based** as specific requirements become better known. Funds for such projects will be sourced as and when required, utilising standard procedures within the LGA.

Full details of the Review process, survey and consultation results together with the issues and options considered by the LGA's senior management team in arriving at these recommendations are outlined in the interim report.