



International  
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2004

21-22 May 2004  
Melbourne, Australia

# CAPTURING GRADUATES

## *New South Wales, Australia*



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# C A S E S T U D Y

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# **Capturing Graduates Ten New South Wales Councils, Australia**

**ICMA International Best Practices 2004  
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# Capturing Graduates Ten New South Wales Councils, Australia

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<b>Form of Government</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Employees (FTE)</b>	<b>Operating Revenue (\$M)</b>
Baulkham Hills Shire Council	146,644	568	143.4
Canterbury City Council	146,644	630	67.5
Goulburn City Council	21,427	184	24.8
Lane Cove Council	32,333	153	20.8
Liverpool City Council	159,627	573	98.8
North Sydney Council	59,387	280	52.1
Parramatta City Council	148,854	654	103.8
Rockdale City Council	92,869	322	50.7
Warringah Council	136,662	507	94.6
Yass Council	10,295	109	12.9

General Core Functions of the Ten Councils are:

- ❑ Governance and Administration including Human Resource management and Financial Management
- ❑ Constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, and public buildings
- ❑ Building control and preservation
- ❑ Waste management
- ❑ Public Health and Safety
- ❑ Providing community services such as baby health centres, child care, community centres and services for the elderly such as meals-on-wheels
- ❑ Libraries and Cultural facilities
- ❑ Environment and Community Planning
- ❑ Environment conservation, protection and improvement
- ❑ Providing and maintaining parks, recreation facilities and community open space
- ❑ In rural and regional areas, providing water services and weed control programs.

## Currency Exchange Rates

	1,000 Australian dollars =	1,000 Indian rupees =	1,000 New Zealand dollars =	1,000 South African rand =	1,000 US dollars =
Australian dollars	1,000	31	871	204	1,353
Indian rupees	32,237	1,000	28,064	6,562	43,611
New Zealand dollars	1,149	36	1,000	234	1,554
South African rand	4,912	152	4,276	1,000	6,646
US dollars	739	23	643	150	1,000
Other currencies (per 1,000 Australian dollars)					
	410	British pounds			
	996	Canadian dollars			
	620	European euro			
	6,361,510	Indonesian rupiahs			
	80,507	Japanese yen			
	54,365	Nepalese rupees			
	39,843	Philippine pesos			
	29,132	Thai baht			
	11,642,896	Vietnamese dong			

Rates as of April 20, 2004, quoted by Expedia.com

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project Description

The Local Government Graduate Development Program (LGGDP) is a joint initiative and partnership between a consortium of ten Councils. The Program recognises the need to:

- ❑ Address the changing local government workforce age and experience demographics
- ❑ Supplement the existing top down approach to staff development with greater concentration on a 'grow our own' continuing bottom up refreshment through an active Graduate Program
- ❑ Utilise a structured Graduate Development Program to develop in local government managers and staff the current and future levels of
  - Expertise
  - Capability
  - Leadership, and
  - Performance in local government
- ❑ Work in partnership to enhance the image of local government as a preferred employer and as a provider of professional career opportunities for graduates
- ❑ Benefit from critical mass, competitive edge and economies of scale as well as the sophistication and quality of recruitment and development processes that are difficult to achieve as individual Councils.

The Graduate Development Program is managed by:

- ❑ A NSW Steering Committee and regional based Steering Committees drawn from consortium Council senior management with senior Chandler Macleod Group consultants as advisers
- ❑ Working Groups, as needed composed of consortium Council representatives to develop and manage the Graduate Development Program and Industrial Relations standards
- ❑ Human Resources managers from consortium Councils in relation to the day-to-day employment of graduates and running of the Local Government Graduate recruitment and development activities
- ❑ Chandler Macleod consultants who coordinate and monitor graduate development activities in conjunction with consortium Councils.

## Project Outcomes

The success of the project has been demonstrated through the number of graduates now seeking employment in local government and the commitment of consortium Councils to the ongoing success of the project.

The Program has also been strongly supported by several universities, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Local Government Engineer's Association of NSW, the Local Government Manager's Association of NSW (LGMA), and the United Services Union (formerly the Municipal Employees Union of NSW).

# **PROBLEM ASSESSMENT / INITIAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

## **Background**

Local Government has changed markedly in the last 25 years and the rate of change has accelerated in the last 10 years.

Councils are large and complex organisations, with advanced technology, employing up to 1,000 staff with annual budgets up to \$200M and billions of dollars of infrastructure and assets under their management.

Across New South Wales, 159 Councils employ 46,300 staff, with a total expenditure in excess of \$5B.

Councils are independent organisations, which set their own local strategies and policies within the broad framework of the Local Government Act and the long held traditional roles of roads-rates-rubbish have been extended by a range of functions the community now sees as central to the role of our industry.

Local Government is a significant contributor and partner in the economic development of areas by providing physical infrastructure, appropriate town planning controls and through partnerships or complementary services provision.

Councils increasingly care for the built and natural environments including urban vistas, impacts on public space and environmentally sound energy use. Similarly the protection of waterways, remnant bushland and air quality are all now seen as critical to the core responsibilities of local government.

Social cohesion in the community is also important. This is as broad as ensuring people from other countries feel part of our community or that people with disabilities have the ability to access our cities, both physically and socially. Social cohesion can also be very targeted, such as crime prevention strategies that promote community harmony and safety.

Even our traditional core services require a high level of expertise and consideration of a myriad of financial, technical and social implications.

Several Council services are also businesses, competing for custom like any other business and are expected to operate on business principles.

This drives the need for a wide and varied range of new skills and innovative thinking.

## **Our Response: Investing In Our Future**

Efficiency savings over the last decade coupled with 30 years of rate-pegging in New South Wales have seen little real growth in Council revenues or services. At the same time resident and customer expectations are driving the industry to improvements in service delivery and effectiveness and demanding new services.

These community expectations and business directions place major demands on our human resources to address this, we need:

- ❑ Investment in up-skilling our workforce
- ❑ New and flexible skills within our industry
- ❑ Long-term cultural and organisational change

The program arose out of discussions between a principal in one Council and a principal in Chandler Macleod concerning the poor fields in recruitment for many local government positions. The recruitment of a “new generation” of Council staff has often been slow and erratic and base grade recruitment of new graduates in particular has suffered. This has led to limited recruitment options for senior staff and management and a shortage in ‘new’ skills in the industry. These two individuals then began a series of discussions and workshops with Councils putting a range of propositions forward out of which a small number of Councils formed a working party to develop a program.

This working party developed a program and hired Chandler Macleod to provide recruitment marketing advice as well as screening and short listing individual targeted candidates.

A consortium of ten Councils is now established.

The consortium comprises of

- ❑ Baulkham Hills Shire City Council
- ❑ Canterbury City Council
- ❑ Goulburn City Council
- ❑ Lane Cove Council
- ❑ Liverpool City Council
- ❑ North Sydney Council
- ❑ Parramatta City Council
- ❑ Rockdale City Council
- ❑ Warringah Council
- ❑ Yass Shire Council
- ❑ Chandler Macleod Group

Six of these Councils are major Councils in the Sydney metropolitan area, two are mid range Sydney metropolitan Councils and two are rural.

The consortium recognised the need to:

- ❑ address international trends in changing workforce age, experience and general population demographics, where the numbers of people entering the workforce from younger generations is significantly declining increasing competition for such workers thereby threatening organization succession planning and reducing competition for senior and management positions. It also raises significant issues for accessing new skills and knowledge.
- ❑ supplement the existing top down approach to staff development with greater concentration on a ‘grow our own’, continual ‘bottom up’ refreshment through an active graduate program;
- ❑ utilise a structured graduate development program to develop in local government managers and staff, the current and future levels of expertise, capability, leadership, and performance in local government industry.
- ❑ work in partnership to enhance the image of local government as a preferred employer and as a provider of professional career opportunities for graduates
- ❑ benefit from the economies of scale, competitive edge and sophistication of marketing, recruitment and development processes that are difficult to achieve as individual Councils.

- ❑ Use the skills and infrastructure available in the private sector in designing and running large graduate recruitment programs.

The consortium was a practical response to:

- ❑ Keep a local government presence in the employment market place
- ❑ provide the attraction of joining not just a small business within a Council but a national industry
- ❑ provide a critical number of employees to form a viable number of graduates for a development program
- ❑ reduce program development, marketing, overhead costs and training costs
- ❑ Provide peer learning and opportunities for cross cultural and cross functional experience for new employees.

The consortium of Councils decided to take a long term and industry wide view of organisational development and designed a program of recruitment and training to deliver:

- ❑ Expertise
- ❑ Capability
- ❑ Leadership
- ❑ Performance

with an industry wide focus and shared cost structure. This has involved Councils taking a non-competitive stance intra-industry on recruitment processes and salary rates. It has, however, involved taking a competitive stance in the wider employment market with salary levels, with processes for recruitment and most critically with training.

All roles are marketed on-line by the private sector partner (Chandler Macleod) who screen applicants, undertake behavioural interviewing and psychological assessment and reference checks. Each Council then interviews a short list of candidates for their final decision.

A two-year comprehensive graduate learning and development program underpins the ongoing professional development of graduates within the industry. The delivery of this program places local government at the forefront of modern recruitment practice. A sophisticated electronic marketing approach is critical to attracting graduates and presents local government as a cutting edge industry going places.

The Local Government Graduate Development Program was officially launched in March 2002.

No significant modifications have been made to the original concept of the program to date. The project is based on best practice examples in graduate recruitment across a wide range of industries.

# PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

## Main Elements of the Program

The Local Government Graduate Development Program is based on accepted best practice in graduate recruitment and development schemes and encompasses:

- ❑ on-line access to information and applying through <http://lggrads.readyfit.com.au>
- ❑ targeted and structured recruitment, assessment and selection
- ❑ enhancement of graduate skills and competencies specifically for Councils
- ❑ a multi-faceted and structured approach to ongoing graduate development
- ❑ development of a broad knowledge of local government as a basis for succession planning
- ❑ effective coaching/mentoring for graduates and performance management

The program is conducted as a cooperative venture with member Councils jointly contributing to building the prominence of the program in conjunction with Chandler Macleod.

Councils collectively and individually share in the elevation of local government alongside other more traditional career options as a preferred career choice.

Both Councils and graduates benefit from a tailored, sophisticated and professionally designed two year Graduate Development Program, detailed guidelines for which are set out in Appendix “A” and include:

- ❑ Induction course
- ❑ Graduate self management of skill and competency development
- ❑ Structured Performance Review process
- ❑ Regular and structured Graduate Peer Support meetings
- ❑ An organised Mentor Program
- ❑ Individual year-long graduate Strategic Activity Projects
- ❑ On-the-job training through a structured Rotation Scheme
- ❑ Targeted personal and management skills training

## Key Phases in the Program

There are three key phases to the program coordinated by the Steering Committee to bring together the main elements of recruitment, training and development.

### *Phase 1      Establishment and Ongoing Development*

Set up, establish and promote the program. Create and progressively enhance the on-line recruitment process. Develop supporting systems and documentation. Undertake targeted marketing activities. Plan and schedule recruitment and selection processes. Prepare a post-recruitment graduate development plan

#### Objectives

- ❑ Establish a local government graduate recruitment presence
- ❑ Provide a sophisticated and competitive graduate recruitment and development process that wins wide Council support

- ❑ Attract quality graduate applications

This has involved some aggressive marketing with universities at a number of levels, career advisors, e-marketing, careers handbooks, direct with some university faculties and with student career days.

### *Phase 2 Candidate Management, Assessment and Selection*

Process, manage, assess, select and provide graduates to consortium Councils

#### Objectives

- ❑ Ensure a smooth and efficient processing of candidates
- ❑ Effectively assess candidates against target selection criteria
- ❑ Provide high quality suitable graduates to meet consortium Councils needs
- ❑ Offer graduates challenging and interesting career opportunities in local government

The process does have additional costs but emphasises ‘right fit’ for the job and the ability of local government to develop its own professional and management cadre to reduce turnover costs. Added cost has to be seen in the context of estimates of turnover cost ranging from 30% to 150% of the yearly salary of the position in addition to the benchmark that new managers take some 9 months to reach full operational capacity. An inappropriate recruitment has an even higher cost.

### *Phase 3 Post-Recruitment Follow-Up and Graduate Development*

Provide graduate development, rotation, tracking, support and program monitoring

#### Objectives

- ❑ High level retention and quality performance of graduates
- ❑ Satisfaction of consortium Councils with the benefits of the program
- ❑ Sustainability of the program
- ❑ Ultimately meeting the critical future staffing objectives of the program

Employment competition takes place at a number of levels and salary is only one of those and often not the main determinant. Prospective employees are looking for longer term career opportunities and what the employer will provide to assist the employee reach their potential within that opportunity spectrum.

The graduate program guarantees a structured approach to skill teaching and enhancement.

Graduates are permanent employees and at the end of the program are free to apply for jobs anywhere but are encouraged and trained to see local government as their employer.

## **Program Management and Partners**

The Graduate Development Program is managed by

- ❑ A Steering Committee drawn from consortium Council management with senior Chandler Macleod consultants acting as advisers,

- ❑ Working Groups composed of consortium Council representatives supported by Chandler Macleod consultants to develop the Graduate Development Program and Industrial Relations standards
- ❑ Human Resources managers from consortium Councils in relation to the day-to-day employment of graduates and running of the program
- ❑ Chandler Macleod consultants who coordinate recruitment and development activities across consortium Councils

### *Steering Committee*

The Steering Committee provides input from the consortium Councils and forms a review, evaluation and planning forum. It will ensure that the needs and interests of the consortium Councils are collaboratively represented and discussed.

The Steering Committee council members for the program are:

- ❑ Canterbury City Council
- ❑ Lane Cove Council
- ❑ North Sydney Council
- ❑ Parramatta City Council
- ❑ Rockdale City Council
- ❑ Chandler Macleod Group

### *Working Parties*

The Steering Committee is in turn supported by two Working Parties whose members are drawn from all consortium Councils. Each is responsible for designing and developing the Graduate Development Program and Industrial Relations. Both are also supported by Chandler Macleod Group.

To ensure continuity and control a member of the Steering Committee chairs the current Graduate Development Program and Industrial Relations working parties and any future working parties.

## **Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Member Councils***

**In the spirit of the collective nature of the program and for the betterment of local government as a preferred employer, consortium Councils undertake to provide the commitment and resources to ensure that their graduates are provided with the appropriate assistance, development and ongoing management, in order that the program will achieve its short and long-term aims.**

With a view to ensuring a consistent quality standard across Councils, they agree not to directly approach any graduates sourced through the program to offer them employment. Councils can continue to hire graduates outside of the program to meet their recruitment needs.

It is intended that any graduate who is recruited through the program and who begins employment at a time other than the January or July intake will automatically enter into the

next intake's Development Program.

Where an inter-Council rotation plan is in place as part of a graduate's development program, Councils are expected to comply with the timing, and support that plan.

### ***Chandler Macleod Group***

Chandler Macleod undertakes to develop and implement the program on behalf of the consortium. This includes all plans and actions to develop the program to market, source, assess and test, and provide appropriately qualified and suitable graduates to consortium Councils.

This also includes co-ordination of direct advertising and overall marketing of the program. Chandler Macleod further undertakes to provide support, guidance and advice to Councils and their graduates throughout all phases of the program. This includes pre-recruitment activities, recruitment and selection process, post recruitment activities and management reporting; graduate develop program and any supplementary work.

Chandler Macleod's role is to facilitate the successful implementation and ongoing professional management of the Graduate Recruitment and Development Program. Chandler Macleod undertakes to provide assistance to help consortium Councils achieve this aim.

Chandler Macleod agrees not to provide candidates sourced through the Program to non-consortium Councils without prior agreement with the Steering Committee and then only when the Steering Committee is prepared to allow non-consortium Councils specified access.

Consortium Councils may request graduates enter into a traditional graduate intake program, once or twice yearly to commence in January and/or July or on an as needed basis at any time throughout the year.

Each request for a graduate results in a short list of graduates, with testing results, supplied to a Council for selection. Chandler Macleod guarantees the employment relationship for six months and if it breaks down will supply other candidates at no cost.

### **Program Costs**

The program costs are divided into fixed and variable costs.

Each Council pays a joining fee and the initial membership contribution is \$4,000. Annual membership contributions consist of program costs divided across all Councils proportionately to the number of graduates.

Each graduate recruited costs the Council \$3,500 which covers short listing and a battery of recruitment tests by Chandler Macleod.

Costs for training and other support and development mechanisms are charged per participant.

# **OUTCOMES / EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM**

## **Measures**

The program's measures of effectiveness include indicators of successful outputs and outcomes.

Outputs of the program include measures of the consortium activities through implementation of the program.

Key outputs include:

- ❑ Number of Councils involved in the program
- ❑ Achievement of key milestones in the development of the program
- ❑ Continuity of involvement of consortium Councils in the program including length of time and additional take-up of graduates.
- ❑ Number of graduates assessed and placed
- ❑ Range of disciplines attracted to the industry (applicants come from every targeted discipline).
- ❑ Number of hits on the website
- ❑ Number of applications processed (over 1000 to date for the initial 20 jobs)

Outcomes of the program include measures of the benefits to graduates and the industry.

Key outcomes include

- ❑ Number of graduates recruited
- ❑ Satisfaction quality of graduates with the program
- ❑ Length of employment with consortium Councils
- ❑ Graduate continuity in the program
- ❑ Skill and management development
- ❑ Retention of Graduates within the local government industry

Outcomes for graduates are assessed through a formal Graduate Performance Review which is an essential component of the program. The Performance Review is structured to assess graduates against a range of development outcomes outlined in a Learning and Development matrix to assess competency levels and achievements.

The true success of the program will be to see a good percentage of the graduates make management ranks in local government.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of outcomes for graduates is currently being conducted with each graduate as an integrated part of the Learning and Development Program.

Results from these evaluations will be available to the Steering Committee at the completion of the first intake.

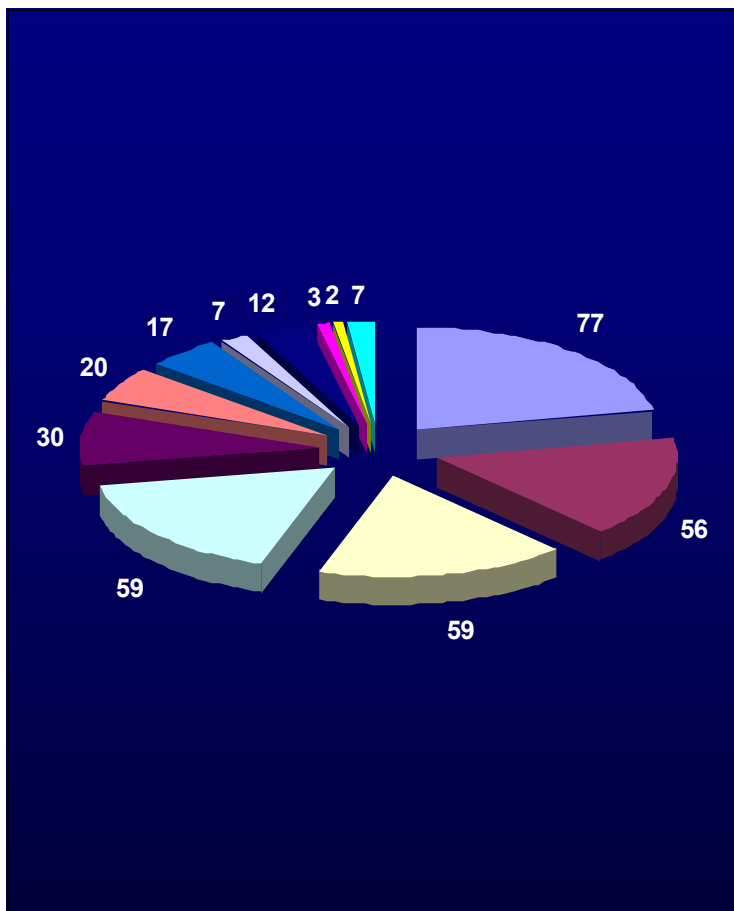
The Steering Committee is also monitoring other performance measures such as:

- ❑ Number of hits on the website
- ❑ Number of applications
- ❑ Ability to attract graduates in high demand
- ❑ Number of graduates placed in participating councils
- ❑ Range of tertiary institutions supporting the program
- ❑ Qualitative feedback from candidates and Council Managers.

The program has attracted a large number of graduates from all targeted disciplines. These are set out below:

### Application by Discipline

(data base sample of 1,000 records only)



- 77 **Business**
- 56 **Engineering**
- 59 **Arts & Humanities**
- 59 **Computer & IT**
- 30 **Science & Tech**
- 20 **Environment**
- 17 **Law & Legal**
- 7 **Health & Medicine**
- 12 **Tourism & Recreation**
- 3 **Education & Training**
- 2 **Forestry & Agriculture**
- 7 **Town Planning & Architecture**

To date managers have been universal in their praise of the quality of graduates employed. Some of the testimonials are set out below:

*“...within a short period played a key role in delivering financial planning and performance reporting.”*

*“...outcomes already evident in the workplace...”*

*“...quick learner...positive attitude...has a go...provides me with new ideas”.*

*“...arrival of the graduates has had a benefit to the unit beyond what we would expect...”*

*“...confidence to challenge the older heads in the unit and question existing practices.”*

Graduates themselves have been glowing in their praises.

*“GDP Develop skills that can only improve my career”*

*“You know LG is investing in you”*

*“Did I apply because of GDP? Absolutely!”*

*“It’s good for my development”*

*“It’s a structured program with specific outcomes and goals”*

*“LG is great for people who want variety in their work”*

*“This will enhance my skills and increase my local government understanding”*

*“The GDP gives you the training to be effective in your role”*

Employing Councils may not by law restrict the free sale by individuals of their skills and therefor graduates may apply for other jobs. However, any graduate who accepts a position outside the consortium may not access the remainder of the graduate program.

The first intake of 22 graduates has seen one graduate drop out of the program, though not out of the consortium. The remainder, after some fifteen months, are still with the program. All of these are with their original employer.

Each training program is subject to individual evaluation and feedback has been, on the whole, very positive which is evidenced by the very high retention rate.

The rotation program has been one of the more challenging elements for Councils, as graduates have rapidly become important to their individual organisations. Graduates, however, rate this element very highly. Also Councils have come to terms with the need to program their work as well as their commitment to the graduates in taking the longer term staff development view.

### **Implications and Applications to Other Organisations**

The Local Government Graduate Development Program is a significant innovation in the local government industry and is a model accessible to all Councils across New South Wales to get involved in developing and sustaining management excellence.

The program is well suited to similar developments in other Australian States in promoting local government as a real “employer of choice”. There is currently a pilot program of five councils in Victoria developing a graduate program.

Key elements of the program could also be applied to general human resources strategies and practice within individual councils.

The program challenges some of the competitive notions of local government. It challenges some notions about recruitment processes and the traditional newspaper advertisement / interview process.

Perhaps most importantly and critically it challenges organisation structures. How do we structure organisations to allow for entry skill recruitment with clear and accessible career paths? How do small local councils access such skills? How do we structure our organisations for a new generation to challenge us and our notions of relevance and process?

## **SOME LESSONS**

The major lesson from the program is to stay in the market. In the highly competitive market for quality graduates it is critical to have a program that is constantly available. This keeps the program in front of students as an option thereby reducing the sharp marketing effort to establish the programs presence. It is also necessary to have a critical mass of 16—25 entrants to run a viable program.

As a result such a cooperative effort needs a critical mass of Councils to allow for a year on year intake. Organisations of the size involved, even the larger ones, will not take on base grade graduates every year.

From a marketing perspective two initiatives proved crucial, firstly the involvement of university careers officers and secondly the creation of a professional web-site with on-line application ability.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Local Government Graduate Development Program reflects a level of management innovation and a new approach that will bring significant benefits across the local government industry.

The standard of local government management will be significantly improved through the structured induction and development of professional staff by providing them with a structured program of support and professional development that has clear benefits for both their individual careers and the local government industry.

This model promotes awareness of the level of expertise and management quality required to sustain local government excellence. It builds partnerships across local government that will be realised well into the future.

The program has shown that local government is not ‘on the radar’ for the vast majority of graduates. It has shown that with some judicious marketing graduates enthusiastically embrace the possibilities of working in local government.

The program has, however, also seen that most local councils are not aware of the demographic changes and employment market changes that are increasingly robbing them of best employees.

# Capturing Graduates

## Ten New South Wales Councils, Australia

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### WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

- |     |                                    |            |
|-----|------------------------------------|------------|
| (a) | Introduction and Setting the Scene | 5 minutes  |
| (b) | Presentation Team Account          | 30 minutes |
| (c) | Brief Working Group Interaction    | 5 minutes  |
| (d) | Workshop Exercises:                | 35 minutes |
- 1 Amongst participants at each table, briefly identify any similar ‘Capturing Graduates’ Scheme, that participants are aware of in their own neighbouring local authorities/state/country.  
(5 minutes)
  - 2 What aspects of the ‘Capturing Graduates’ scheme may commonly transfer to:
    - groups of widely dispersed, small/rural local authorities?
    - an individual local authority?
    - other State local government systems?
    - International local government systems?(10 minutes)
  - 3 What variations/adaptations to, or impediments to overcome, may be required in terms of:
    - legislative regimes
    - managerial/resource systems
    - organisational structure
    - organisational culture
    - other factorsto facilitate strong transferability of the ‘Capturing Graduates’ Scheme in the four situations outlined in question 2?  
(10 minutes)

**The next two questions are shared amongst tables**

4 Are there any key adaptations required to the ‘Capturing Graduates’ scheme to apply it to the marketing, attracting, selecting and development and training of other staff groups within local authorities?

(10 minutes)

5 What are the challenges in talent/managerial development and is there a role for base level recruitment programs?

- are talent development programs a real challenge to internal perceptions of fairness?
- should base recruitment be part of succession planning?
- will demographic changes result in scarcity of younger talented employees and drive new employment strategies?

(10 minutes)

(e) Workshop Findings

15 minutes

# APPENDIX

## GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (GDP MOU)

This document has been prepared as a supplementary ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ to the Local Government Graduate Recruitment and Development Program ‘Heads of Agreement’ signed by member Councils. It forms a basis for conducting the Graduate Development component of the Program and establishes a set of process guidelines that member Councils agree to follow.

### CONTENT

- ❑ **Defined Objectives**
- ❑ **Program Delivery**

An overview of the Program’s components

- ❑ **Program Activities**

Detailed description of Program’s components

- ❑ Induction Course
- ❑ Mentor Scheme
- ❑ Performance Review
- ❑ Rotation Program
- ❑ Peer Support Meetings
- ❑ Self-Managed Graduate Development Matrix
- ❑ Strategic Activity Project
- ❑ Personal and Management Skills Training

### GRADUATE PROFILES

- ❑ Engineer
- ❑ Town Planner
- ❑ Recreational Planner
- ❑ Commerce and Finance Officer
- ❑ Corporate Support Officer
- ❑ Corporate and Business Governance Officer
- ❑ Information Technology
- ❑ Community Services Officer
- ❑ Human Resources Officer
- ❑ Environmental Officer
- ❑ Facilities Management Officer

## DEFINED OBJECTIVES

The Local Government ‘Graduate Development Program’ (GDP) is to run over a maximum of two years, allowing for, but not encouraging, the eventuality that graduates may progress in their local government careers within the two-year period. During that time, the program is designed to achieve the following knowledge, skill and competency outcomes:

- ❑ All-round understanding of LG as an industry;
- ❑ Appreciation of the expectations of LG stakeholders, e.g.: the community;
- ❑ Commitment to achieving objectives through teaming with others;
- ❑ Recognition of the impact their role has on other LG areas;
- ❑ An overview of trends and forces that are influencing the future direction and management of LG;
- ❑ Understanding and acceptance of the probity and ethics underpinning LG activities;
- ❑ A working knowledge of:
  - Statutory frameworks
  - Organisational and political structures
  - Defined range of relationships
  - Policy process
  - Local governance
- ❑ Skill and competency enhancement in:
  - Effective thinking skills
  - Communication and basic presentation skills in LG
  - Professional report and letter writing skills in LG
  - Team building, interpersonal and relationship management
  - Negotiating skills in a LG context
  - Problem solving and conflict resolution
  - Delivery of quality customer service
  - Business acumen and political awareness needed in LG
  - Assignment management
  - Time management
  - Participation in meetings
  - Basic computer skills in the use of WP, spreadsheets and PowerPoint/Freelance

## PROGRAM DELIVERY

**To achieve the abovementioned outcomes, the delivery of graduate development will be through the following mechanisms:**

- **Induction course** that introduces the graduate to LG, the graduate development program, their role, stakeholder expectations and provides training in the working knowledge requirements as summarised in the abovementioned outcomes;
- **A structured performance review process** that operates as a supplement to and not in isolation of existing Council performance review programs. It measures against the target competencies used in recruitment, identifies individual training and development needs and facilitates the establishment of a personal career development plan for each graduate;

- **Graduate self-management of their skills and competency development.** Graduates are provided with and expected to manage a skill and competency matrix that aligns key experiences, skill and competency expectations with vehicles for their ongoing development.

As part of their performance review and mentor programs, graduates are also encouraged to proactively to enhance their professional development through external opportunities such as relevant workshops, seminars, conferences, active membership of professional bodies and post-graduate courses within the policy parameters of the Council in which they are working.

- **Regular and structured “Graduate Peer Support” meetings** to provide an opportunity for graduates to network and build relationships across disciplines and councils as well as share knowledge and discuss common issues, allowing communication upwards. These meetings have a set agenda controlled by the graduates themselves who will elect a rotating chairperson. They are conducted monthly during the first 3 months, every two months during the ensuing 9 months and quarterly during the 2nd year.
- **An organised “Mentor Program”** facilitates the development of graduates through the objective coaching/guidance of senior managers. Suitable mentors are at least one level removed from their immediate supervisor and are a senior manager in the Council. They are identified and linked to graduates prior to them starting work based on an assessment of their compatibility and development needs.

While it is expected that this mentoring will be of a continuing nature on an informal ‘as needed’ basis, it is planned that mentors would, at a minimum, meet with their mentees to discuss their progress and general guidance issues on a regular basis, adopting the same timeframe as the above ‘Graduate Peer Support’ meetings.

- **An individual graduate “Strategic Action Project”** that identifies a suitable ongoing project for each graduate to work on over the duration of the GDP. This project would be structured to provide exposure to various areas and levels of LG and will compliment the graduate’s normal work activities. They would be expected to write and present a report on the outcome of their project to the senior management of their Home council and the conclusion of their GDP. Projects begun to date include, the impact of urban intensification and change in ethnic mix on open space utilization in the LGA, cataloguing entertainment options in the LGA and their relationship to different markets,
- **On-the-Job training through a structured “Rotation Program”.** The nature of the rotation program is discussed under a separate heading in these guidelines. However, in essence, it is aimed to provide each graduate with wide exposure to LG practice across a broad spectrum of LG activities to prepare them for later management roles.
- **Personal and management skills training.** A structured training program delivers personal and management skills training in the areas of skill and competency enhancement mentioned in the above ‘defined objectives’. This training program makes use of existing Council training programs, combines compatible skill areas as much as possible to minimise attendance at training courses, facilitates competency building, utilises practical LG related activities and adult learning techniques and spreads training delivery over the two year GDP.

The training plan sets out the core topics of each course, duration and ideal training methodology and likely timing, as a basis for identifying existing LG courses that may

well suit and/or suitable training providers. This training will also being available for other Council staff.

Graduates would also be expected to take part in normal Council training programs, including those that support their technical development.

To support this GDP methodology, it is intended that:

- ❑ This supplement to the existing LGGDP “Heads of Agreement” document clearly sets out and binds member councils to the GDP policy guidelines;
- ❑ The GDP roll out does not adversely affect existing staff policies and training arrangements in member councils.
- ❑ Managers in participating Councils are briefed on the purpose and structure of the graduate recruitment and development program and the important role they play in its success.
- ❑ A set of Mentor and Mentee guidelines defining their roles is available and mentor training is conducted on an ‘as needed’ basis.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

### **Sample Course Prospectus – Induction Course**

#### **Induction Course**

The Induction Course is intended to introduce the graduate to Local Government, the graduate development program, their role, stakeholder expectations and provide training in the key working knowledge requirements. We see this course being supplementary to any individual Council orientation course and be structured as follows:

**Course Title:** Introduction to Local Government

**Who Should Attend:** All new graduates within 3 months of starting work and any other new Council staff at entry level who might benefit from all or part of the training

#### **Key Topics:**

##### **Introduction to the Graduate Program**

- ❑ Framework of the program
- ❑ The Graduate’s role in LG (Intro to generic job descriptions)
- ❑ Key outcomes and expectations
- ❑ Responsibilities and accountabilities
- ❑ Basis of the Mentor and Peer Support schemes
- ❑ Self managing the graduate “Learning and Development Matrix”
- ❑ The graduate rotation program

##### **Stakeholder Expectations**

- ❑ Recognising stakeholders
- ❑ Community consultation
- ❑ Customer focus

- Access and Equity issues

### **A Working Knowledge in Local Government**

- Organisation and political structures
- Doing business in Local Government
- Variations in Delegatory processes
- Management planning and reporting in Local Government
- Using external providers/contractors
- Probity and Ethics (e.g.: Independent Commission Against Corruption)
- Defining relationships
- Developing and implementing policy
- Local governance and Statutory framework
- Key HR policies (e.g.: conflict resolution, Equal Employment Opportunity and Occupational Health & Safety)
  - Performance Review process in Local Government
  - Introduction to Effective Time Management

**Likely Duration:** Over two days supplemented by individual Council orientation programs

**Location:** Ideally at the existing training rooms of a member Council possibly on a rotation basis or off site.

**Training Delivery:** Generally in maximum groups of 20-25, using adult learning techniques, eg:

- Presentation of basic issues
- Interactive group discussion
- Practical exercises
- Video support if available

**Training Provider:** Member Council HR professionals with the support of specialist presenters in key subject areas (eg: Local Government Shires Association, Local Government Managers Association & Technical representatives)

### **Graduate Self Management Learning & Development Matrix**

Graduates are provided with and expected to manage a skill and competency matrix that aligns key experiences, skill and competency expectations with vehicles for their development.

As part of their performance review and mentor programs, graduates are also be encouraged to proactively enhance their professional development through external opportunities such as relevant workshops, seminars, conferences, active membership of professional bodies and post-graduate courses within the policy parameters of the Council in which they are working.

With this in mind, the Learning and Development Matrix has been designed to facilitate the graduate's self-management of this process as well as progress monitoring and reporting on a periodic basis as part of the 'performance review' and 'mentor' programs.

The graduate receives a GDP booklet at his/her induction that includes:

- A blank version of the Learning and Development matrix for them to maintain during the duration of their GDP
- Background information and provision for recording notes on:
  - mentor conversations and meetings
  - peer group meetings
  - tracking inter and intra Council rotations (eg: expected and actual dates of completion)
  - recording evidence of skill and competency attainment
  - performance targets and career/training objectives
  - Chandler Macleod Group feedback sessions

### **Personal & Management Skills Training**

A training program has been established that combines compatible skill areas as much as possible to minimise attendance at training courses, facilitates competency building, utilises practical Local Government related activities and adult learning techniques and spreads training delivery over the two year GDP.

To ensure opportunities for critical mass and economies of scale/cost effectiveness are achieved, training dovetails into existing Council programs and be open for other Council staff to attend, either on a full or partial basis. Courses will be attended by all graduates on the GDP as 'Core Training' (CT) or on a "Needs Basis" (NB) arising from an assessment of current expertise and performance review feedback.

The training program in its preferred sequence is set out below.

The member Council Human Resources Management team is responsible for putting together an annual Graduate Development Program training schedule and budget each year that seeks to work within existing Council training programs and recognise the training needs of other Council staff.

- 1. Induction Course (2 days)**
  - 2. Effective Thinking (1½ days)**
  - 3. Interpersonal Skills (2 days)**
  - 4. Project Management (1 – 2 days)**
  - 5. Basic Management Skills (2 days)**
- Intermediate Spreadsheet Skills (1 day)**

- **Basic MS PowerPoint (1 day)**
- **Intermediate MS Project Manager (1 day)**
- **Report & Letter Writing Skills in Local Government (1 day)**

## **MENTOR SCHEME**

The Mentor Program will facilitate the development of graduates through the objective coaching/guidance of senior managers. Suitable mentors will be at least one level removed from their immediate supervisor and be a senior manager in the Council. They will be identified and linked to graduates prior to them starting work based on an assessment of their compatibility and development needs.

While it is expected that this mentoring will be of a continuing nature on an informal ‘as needed’ basis, mentors will, at a minimum, meet with their mentees to discuss their progress and general guidance issues on a quarterly basis in the first six months and at six monthly intervals for the remainder of the program.

A summary of the planned mentor scheme, including the ideal mentor profile, frequency and timing blueprint and roles and responsibilities is below.

### **Mentor Profile**

- ❑ Senior Manager in Home Council
- ❑ At least either at a level once removed from the graduate’s immediate supervisor or a non-supervising senior manager
- ❑ Compatible with the graduate’s development needs
- ❑ A committed and available participant
- ❑ HR Manager to act as ‘relief’ mentor in the absence of the nominated manager
- ❑ Home Council HR Manager to nominate replacement mentors, where necessary

### **Frequency**

- ❑ First meeting should occur at time of induction or within one month of starting.
- ❑ While mentors and mentees should meet as needed, it is intended that a face-face meeting occur at least quarterly during the first 6 months and the every 6 months thereafter.
- ❑ Wherever possible, meetings should be planned to coincide with and follow performance review.
- ❑ To encourage commitment and build relationships/visibility, it is proposed mentees maintain fortnightly progress email contact with their mentors
- ❑ Mentors should meet six monthly to discuss:
  - issues and trends
  - mentoring styles
  - win and loss experiences
  - graduate reactions

- Chandler Macleod will schedule meetings and monitor the mentor program on an annual basis

### **Mentor Roles and Responsibilities**

- ❑ Facilitate access to Council senior management and stakeholders
- ❑ Mentors should not take the role of a work supervisor
- ❑ Mentors should refer the mentee to other authority rather than usurp other roles
- ❑ Facilitate and encourage self resolution of issues
- ❑ Mentors should facilitate conflict resolution
- ❑ Give options rather than decisions – be a sounding board
- ❑ Avoid getting involved or acting as a counsellor on personal problems/issues
- ❑ Seek to maintain a clear business focus and guide the mentee in business dealings and development
- ❑ Draw on anecdotal and personal experiences – seek to transfer knowledge
- ❑ Encourage graduate retention and expansion of time horizons/realism in career expectations and planning
- ❑ Build graduate self esteem and encourage self development
- ❑ Have input to the nature of and discuss progress in the graduate’s ‘Strategic Activity Project’
- ❑ Mentors should attend the Mentor segment of the Induction Course
- ❑ Mentors are expected to provide a report on the outcome of the mentoring activities at the end of their association with a mentee (a report format is to be designed)
- ❑ All mentors should attend a ‘Mentor’s Role’ training workshop that addresses:
  - confidentiality issues
  - role and responsibilities
  - mentoring and coaching technique
  - communication skills
  - insight into personality styles
  - conflict resolution
  - managing realistic expectations

### **PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The graduate performance review process is structured to measure against the target competencies used in recruitment as well as identify individual training and development needs and facilitate the establishment of a personal career development plan for each graduate. The structure will comprise:

#### **Frequency:**

- ❑ Monthly feedback sessions with quarterly formal reviews during the first 6 months linking into the normal LG 3 months probation period

- ❑ A six monthly formal review session thereafter during the remaining 18 months of the Graduate Development Program
- ❑ Ongoing performance review after the completion of the 2 year GDP as part of home Council's existing review program

### **Design:**

The performance review process incorporates:

- ❑ Measurement against core behavioural criteria identified in graduate job descriptions
- ❑ Links to the selection criteria used in recruitment
- ❑ Review of performance based on agreed pre-set development objectives and progress against the GDP matrix
- ❑ A career planning and development component that identifies and sets training and performance objectives for the ensuing review period
- ❑ Provision for sign off by the graduate immediate supervisors and mentor.

### **Process:**

- ❑ The graduate performance review process will be managed by participating Councils' Human Resource Management team.
- ❑ An early joint meeting of the graduate, immediate supervisor and mentor is held to agree existing levels of competency against the GDP matrix and set initial performance and development objectives for the first three months.
- ❑ Separate reviews are completed by all immediate supervisors who have supervised the graduate for at least one month where there is more than one during the review period.
- ❑ Chandler Macleod manage and monitor the formal review process to ensure it occurs on a timely basis as well as conduct six monthly follow-up meetings with graduates to discuss their GDP progress. The feedback from these meetings is reported to Council Human Resources Managers. Chandler Macleod Group will also complete an annual report consolidating feedback issues and trends for all Council Human Resources Managers and the Local Government Graduate Steering Committee.
- ❑ A "GDP Action Project" will be set for each graduate. Chandler Macleod will monitor progress of this project and, where necessary, consolidate performance review reports for submission to Council HRM and mentors as part of its six monthly follow-up sessions with graduates.
- ❑ Chandler Macleod will conduct exit interviews with any graduate who leaves LG employment during the two year GDP and provide an individual report to the graduate's Home Council and an annual trend report to all Council HRM and the LG graduate steering committee.
- ❑ As part of its Graduate Development Program management responsibilities, Chandler Macleod Group will schedule, monitor and report on:
  - graduate performance review program
  - inter-Council rotations
  - graduate self management of their GDP matrix
  - rate of graduate career progression within LG

- analysis of turnover trends and issues affecting the GDP
- adjustments possibly needed to the graduate recruitment program to take account of the above issues.

## **Rotation Program**

An integral part of the GDP is a structured rotation scheme that supports the all round development of future LG managers through the graduate program. Graduates negotiate with other Councils in the consortium or Councils put forward opportunities to the graduate group for a placement of two to six months. The graduate carries their employment conditions with them.

The graduate has the final say on which rotation to accept.

The rotation scheme has several key elements:

### **Variables**

- ❑ Number of Councils involved
- ❑ Size of Councils
- ❑ Needs of Councils
- ❑ Council capacity to accept a rotation at any particular time
- ❑ Nature and breadth of the work available
- ❑ Individual career path and development needs

### **Management Issues**

- ❑ Identification of real projects/work bids
- ❑ Day to day management of the rotation scheme
- ❑ Resolution of conflict between Councils/managers relating to the rotation scheme
- ❑ Graduate grievances
- ❑ Input of Mentors to the rotation outcomes
- ❑ Impact of individual Council restrictions
- ❑ Financial arrangements and relocation support
- ❑ Accountability for ultimate decision on rotation issues
- ❑ Graduate availability

### **Nature of the Rotation Scheme**

- ❑ Work must be real work and be project or relief based so that graduates are able to be released when rotation ends;
- ❑ Councils are required to put forward project/relief bids every six months that can be accommodated by graduate rotations;
- ❑ The number of bids from each Council should at least match their graduate intake;
- ❑ As far as is practical, an annual rotation program is pre-planned and scheduled activities are signed off by participating Councils;
- ❑ Each graduate should participate in three or a minimum of one and maximum of four inter-council rotations over the 2-year GDP. There can be any number of intra-council rotations (i.e.: movements within a Council);
- ❑ Maximum period of any one inter-office rotation should be six months with a minimum of 6-8 weeks and ideally between 3-6 months;

- ❑ Flexibility must exist for participating Councils to negotiate an extension of a rotation that is less than six months where it can be shown it is in the interest of the Council and/or graduate to complete an assignment without disrupting another Council's involvement;
- ❑ The ideal graduate rotation model should consist of:
  - 6 months in the graduate's employing Home Council
  - minimum of two inter-council rotations
  - exposure to at least one area of LG activity outside their field of discipline
  - minimum of three months back in the Home Council before the end of the GDP

### **Ideal Core Exposure Model**

- ❑ Primary focus on exposure to work in own field/discipline;
- ❑ Exposure to the work in at least one other discipline;
- ❑ Exposure to the work of at least one other Council;
- ❑ Some time spent in a Finance and Accounting department (not necessarily a full rotation period);
- ❑ Experience attending at least one Council and Senior executive meetings;
- ❑ Contact with the various political arms of Local Government;
- ❑ Experience in a face-to-face customer service role;
- ❑ Exposure to differing delegation models and HR management practices between Councils;
- ❑ Insight into OH&S and Risk Assessment practices between Councils;
- ❑ A short period 'shadowing' a senior executive in their day-to-day work to the extent it doesn't breach confidentiality.

### **PEER SUPPORT MEETINGS**

The Graduate Peer Support Meeting provides an opportunity for graduates to network and build relationships across disciplines and Councils as well as share knowledge and discuss common issues, allowing communication upwards.

#### **Frequency:**

- ❑ The initial meeting is linked to the Induction Course and all existing graduates in the GDP will be invited to also attend.
- ❑ Following meetings are held quarterly and linked to core training courses where possible.
- ❑ As up to four groups of graduates will be progressing through the GDP at any one time, it is proposed that Peer Meetings be coordinated where possible (eg: where there they are not linked to core training) to facilitate social interaction and networking at a joint social function.
- ❑ It is envisaged that, through or irrespective of the above arrangements, all graduates within the two year GDP will come together at least annually.
- ❑ As up to four groups of graduates will be progressing through the GDP at any one time, it is proposed that Peer Meetings be coordinated where possible (eg: where there they are not linked to core training) to facilitate social interaction and networking at a joint social function.

#### **Design:**

- ❑ It is expected that meetings will be scheduled to run over around two hours with some flexibility to cover agenda items.

- ❑ The initial meeting (linked to the Induction Course) focus's on the parameters, timetable, graduate roles, expectations, meeting protocol, (eg: purpose, style of minutes and future arrangements).
- ❑ A social function is built into each meeting (self managed, defined budget)
- ❑ All meetings are organised and run by the graduates themselves with a rotating chairperson elected each time who will be responsible for setting the agenda and coordinating the meeting arrangements.
- ❑ Meetings minutes are kept and distributed to attendees, mentors and Council HR managers.
- ❑ Graduates are encouraged to have internal and/or external guest speakers address their meetings to facilitate knowledge transfer and experience.
- ❑ Possible agenda items for ongoing meetings include:
  - guest speakers
  - cross discipline/Council knowledge transfer opportunities
  - new graduate program issues and previous issues' resolution
  - progress with managing individual learning and development matrices
  - resource sharing
  - progress with individual graduate "Action Projects"
  - reporting/representations to Council management
  - social activities

## **STRATEGIC ACTIVITY PROJECT**

An individual graduate Strategic Action Project is a suitable ongoing project for each graduate to work on over the duration of the GDP. This project is structured to provide exposure to various areas and levels of LG and will compliment the graduate's normal work activities. They would be expected write and present a report on the outcome of their project to the senior management of their Home council and the conclusion of their GDP.

A summary of the design and process to be adopted in conducting this activity is below.

### **Nature and Scope**

- ❑ Must have top management support in Home Council
- ❑ Will be ongoing over a period of 12 months
- ❑ There will be a matching of real Council business needs to graduate skill development
- ❑ Will stretch the graduate in non-skill areas
- ❑ Provide exposure to broad Local Government activities
- ❑ Home Council based with flexibility to work across Councils and disciplines
- ❑ More than one graduate may have the same "Activity Project"
- ❑ Projects must have clear business value to the Home Council and link to the Council's strategic and/or business plan.
- ❑ Chandler Macleod will facilitate the identification of projects with Council HRM

## **Duration and Timing**

- ❑ A maximum time frame of 12 months is recommended with the agreed timeframe determined from the outset
- ❑ The project should start around 6 months before the first “away”
- ❑ Council rotation and end 3-6 months before the completion of the 2 year GDP
- ❑ Some indication of expected time commitment should be agreed in advance. It is expected that this will be around 60 hours in aggregate
- ❑ Time should be allocated to the project during normal working hours
- ❑ A timeline and milestones should be scheduled to cover activities

## **Reporting**

- ❑ A certificate of attainment will be issued at the completion of the project signed off by the Home Council GM, Mentor and Steering Committee chairperson
- ❑ The project outcomes should be reported in writing and presented to the Home Council senior management team
- ❑ Part of the mentor’s role will be to monitor and guide the graduate’s progress on the project

## **Type of Project Activities**

Projects should be strategic in nature and while not seeking to limit their scope may include such things as:

- ❑ Policy and procedures review
- ❑ Evaluation of ‘best practice’
- ❑ Business planning models
- ❑ Business performance measurement and management
- ❑ Assessment / measurement of existing and past projects
- ❑ Development of Key Performance Indicators for Council activities