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Dr Matthew Butlin, Presiding Commissioner
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Submission to the Productivity Commission re: Local Government Enquiry

Dear Commissioner,

Local Government Professionals Australia, SA makes this submission relating to the capability building of staff in local government in South Australia.

About Local Government Professionals Australia, SA

LG Professionals, SA is a not-for-profit member-based association representing professionals working in local government in South Australia. Our high-quality professional development programs and networking events are uniquely local government – reflective of the culture of the sector and sensitive to the needs of its professionals. The content of our events and programs are informed by our members and people who genuinely care about the sector. We provide a safe and supportive environment in which to grow and learn while creating opportunities to make time away from the office to work on the business or on self. We award and acknowledge achievements of excellence. We are proud to be part of a national federation of State based Local Government Professionals Australia organisations, each of which is dedicated to supporting the sector.

As part of our member offerings, we support a range of professional networks including the CEO Network, General Managers Network, Human Resources Network, Continuous Improvement Network, Performance Excellence Network and Community Managers Network.

Capability Building for the Sector of the Future

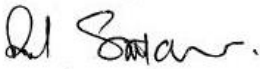
Currently, in relation to staff training and capability development, there is a lack of clarity in the sector about which body should determine the future skills required to efficiently deliver outcomes for our communities, and offer associated training and development opportunities to deliver on this skill development. Some training needs and capability analysis occurs at the individual Council level (generally at the larger metropolitan councils who have more HR / OD capability to undertake this work – but even there it remains limited), the LGA and LG Professionals, SA. An overall sector wide skills capability map is lacking. This has resulted in several observable deficiencies including: lack of data analysis capability to support efficient organisational service delivery and a lack of gender diversity, particularly in senior and traditional gender weighted areas. This has occurred through councils being highly operational in their nature and the sector not working toward a strategic capability plan.

The lack of a coordinated approach to this issue means that strategic opportunities are being missed - in terms of maximising impact of the allocated training dollars as well as duplication and misalignment of framework and content development. A further consequence is the creation of inequities between the development opportunities available to staff at metropolitan and regional councils. A coordinated approach would leverage the sector's resources to invest in relevant, future-focused, high impact content development as well as accessible and modern program delivery methods. An appropriately skilled workforce will be able to deliver efficiencies to the communities they serve.

LG Professionals, SA is well positioned as the peak local government staff professional body (as opposed to being Elected Member focussed) to undertake such work. To date, as a small independent service provider within the sector we have not had the resource or financial capacity to undertake this work. However, given the current work of the Productivity Commission and the directions its work to date has identified, LG Professionals, SA sits ready to work together with the sector to identify and deliver the professional education and development activities needed to create the capabilities required for an effective and efficient local government workforce.

If you require additional information, please contact Taryn Sexton on 0400 429 003.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Sutton
President
LG Professionals, SA



Taryn Sexton
CEO
LG Professionals, SA