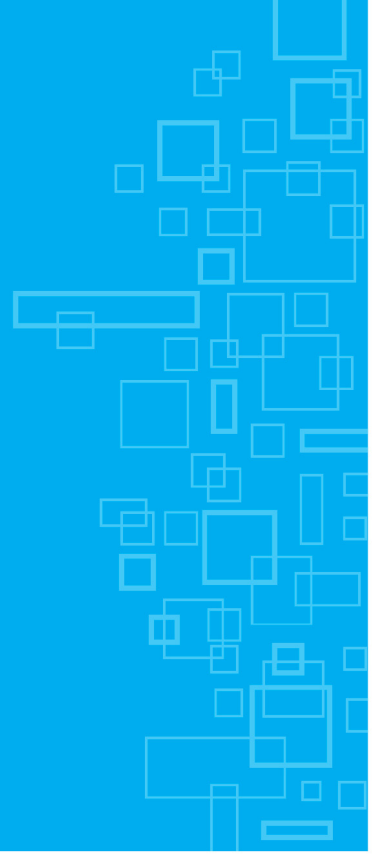




Department of Local Government and Planning



Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program 2011-2012

Tomorrow's Queensland:
strong, green, smart, healthy and fair

Toward 
Tomorrow's Queensland

 **Queensland**
Government

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Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program 2011-2012

1. Purpose

The Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program aims to develop a shared responsibility for improvement between the Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) and Indigenous councils.

This program builds on the success of the Community Governance Improvement Strategy 2004-2009 and the 2010 Capability Program Plan which delivered a range of training, mentoring, networking and other developmental activities.

2. Priorities for 2011-12

In 2011-12, the program will build the capacity of Indigenous councils in four strategic areas:

1. audit and financial accountability
2. governance training and development
3. long term financial and asset management capability
4. land use planning and development of appropriate administrative systems

3. Capacity building—how, who by, and who for?

3.1 How will it be done?

The main method of capacity building will be through on-site case-management—i.e. at each council's office or area of operation.

Wherever possible, capacity building activities will use councils' own data and information to deliver a product which councils can actually use and build upon.

3.2 Who will do it?

Capacity building strategies may be delivered by a range of providers including:

- Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) staff
- local government industry and professional bodies
- Indigenous Councils' Taskforce—which will continue to assist councils with audit, financial management and accountability improvement initiatives and, where necessary, appointment of business coaches
- local government consultants.

3.3 Who will benefit?

Elected councillors—there will be a range of activities for elected councillors, with a priority on decision and policy making responsibilities.

After March 2012, new councillors will be assisted to quickly gain knowledge and skills of the local government system and the strategic nature of their role in planning for the future.

Key council staff—there will be a mix of targeted mentoring and training for key council staff, for example:

- on-the-ground 'champions'—such as works managers and supervisors who will be identified, mentored and supported to lead implementation of asset management and land use planning at the local level



- accredited training will be offered to council staff through certificate courses, the Diploma of Local Government administration and other relevant courses.

4. Why is capacity building needed?

There are various reasons why capacity building is needed in Queensland Indigenous councils:

- The Auditor-General's reports to the Queensland Parliament indicate an ongoing need to assist Indigenous councils to complete budgets and annual financial statements within statutory timeframes and to be 'audit ready'.
- Local government sustainability frameworks adopted nationally and by the Queensland Government require Indigenous councils—like all councils—to develop long term financial and asset management plans. The Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program recognises the need for capacity building to understand, develop, maintain and systematise long term asset management practices.
- Land use planning and systems administration for Indigenous councils is an emerging need as planning schemes are being progressively implemented in 2011 and 2012 through the Department of Communities' Program Office. The Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program will assist Indigenous councils get ready to administer planning schemes.

5. What is improved capacity?

The effectiveness of the Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program will be indicated by the number of Indigenous councils which:

- develop integrated planning, budgeting, reporting and evaluation systems
- adopt a budget based on key community priorities and a comprehensive analysis of projected revenue and expenses
- provide well targeted, cost effective and quality municipal services and infrastructure
- generate own source revenue through per-capita levies and utility charges—e.g. water, sewerage, cleansing—based on actual costs
- exhibit appropriate levels of expenditure on core municipal services including operation and maintenance of essential services—both existing and planned assets
- have an up-to-date asset register and a clear understanding of the assets they own or control
- have capability to administer a land use planning scheme
- complete financial statements on time
- obtain a satisfactory audit report from the Auditor-General.

6. 6. Funding for capacity building

Funding includes:

- \$2 million in 2011–12 specific purpose funding under the Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building Program
- \$0.7 million from the Australian Government's Local Government Reform Fund to assist Indigenous councils to achieve long term financial and asset management capability
- \$3.35 million over 3 years (2011-2014) for capacity building under the Australian Government's Water Sustainability Strategy.



7. Program governance

A steering committee made up of representatives from various Queensland Government departments, the Indigenous Councils' Taskforce, Queensland Audit Office, Local Government Association of Queensland, Local Government Managers Association and other industry bodies as required will oversee the program.



8. Implementation plan

Element 1: Audit and Financial Accountability		
Goal: Assist Indigenous councils to meet audit requirements through improved financial management and accountability.		
Actions	Outcome sought	Implementation timeframe
1.1 Monitor and as necessary provide intensive assistance to ensure completion of annual financial statements	All Indigenous councils meet 15 September deadline for lodgement of annual financial statements	15 September 2011 Completed
1.2 Assist with completion of Annual Reports post audit	All Indigenous councils have audit certificates completed by 30 November 2011	30 November 2011
1.3 Develop audit action plans for moderate and high risk councils	Audit action plans are completed within one month of Auditor-General's report Two visits per annum by DLGP to review statutory compliance and progress of audit action plan implementation	December 2011 February 2012 May 2012
1.4 Support medium and high risk councils—financial management support; governance systems reviews; policy development / implementation	Manage implementation of audit action plans in high risk councils	February 2012 June 2012
1.5 Appoint business coaches to provide intensive support for high risk councils	Manage implementation of audit action plans in high risk councils	February 2012 to June 2012
1.6 Establish a mentoring network for councillors (needs basis) and council staff Mentor council staff to support Certificate and Diploma participants (see actions 2.4 and 2.5)	Suitable mentors e.g. ex-mayors and councillors are identified and supported to mentor mayors of Indigenous councils with focus on new mayors Certificate and Diploma participants are supported through a programmed mentoring service - minimum two days per month	April 2012 (new mayors) August 2011 to June 2012 for Certificate and Diploma
1.7 Trial a shared services arrangement for IT, payroll and accounts payable for three to four councils with Cairns offices	Efficiencies and savings are generated for participating councils Demonstration trial can be evaluated in response to Auditor-General's recommendations for bureau-	Commence 2012



Element 1: Audit and Financial Accountability		
Goal: Assist Indigenous councils to meet audit requirements through improved financial management and accountability.		
	type services	
1.8 Finance Managers Network practice and professional development meetings (4 per year)	<p>Problem solving and leadership forum to consider systemic issues and sector-wide policy and priority for local government financial management</p> <p>Identification and sharing of good practice examples</p>	July 2011 to June 2012
1.9 Deliver Tropical (model) Annual Financial Statements training package	Training is delivered to all Indigenous councils either on-site or through a workshop mode	May 2012

Element 2: Governance Training and Development		
Goal: Councillors and staff of Indigenous councils are assisted to gain knowledge and skills to deliver good governance		
Actions	Outcome sought	Implementation timeframe
2.1 Deliver Understanding Financial Reporting and Effective Meetings, Policy Making and Performance Management to all Indigenous councils	Improved time management at meetings, learn how to monitor chief executive officer and council performance and develop long term decision making strategies.	August 2011 Completed
2.2 Offer pre-election training for intending councillors to all Indigenous communities	Intending candidates are aware of <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> requirements, separation of powers, roles and responsibilities of councillors.	October to December 2011
<p>2.3 Deliver induction training to all Indigenous councils for newly elected councillors covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction to <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> • roles and responsibilities. <p>Also redeliver Understanding Financial Reporting and Effective Meetings, Policy Making and Performance Management</p>	<p>New councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have knowledge of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> • understand the separation of powers • are able to make effective and lawful decisions • monitor chief executive officer performance 	April 2012 to June 2012
2.4 Accredited Training Certificate III, IV in Local	<p>Council employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand local government 	January to December 2012



Element 2: Governance Training and Development		
Goal: Councillors and staff of Indigenous councils are assisted to gain knowledge and skills to deliver good governance		
Government Administration – two courses per annum, 10 participants per intake	<p>compliance and reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have competence in local government operations and administration 	
2.5 Diploma of Local Government Administration (Administration, Finance, Environmental Health disciplines) – five courses per annum, two places per intake - total 10 places, to be spread across the three disciplines)	<p>Council employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieve a nationally accredited qualification which articulates into a degree course have the skills and knowledge to move into senior management or chief executive officer positions 	January to December 2012
2.6 Provide funding and operational support for LGMA to convene chief executive officer professional development forums (two per year)	<p>Indigenous councils' chief executive officer network promoted</p> <p>Information and awareness raising on DLGP strategic agenda for councils</p>	November 2011 and April 2012

Element 3: Long term financial and asset management capability		
Goal 1: Develop asset management competence/ skills for councillors / staff		
Goal 2: Long term financial and asset management plans are robust and integrated with budgeting and other planning processes		
Actions	Outcome sought	Implementation timeframe
3.1 Local Government Reform Fund—deliver a program of activities to develop the asset management capabilities of Indigenous councils (\$0.7M)	<p>Indigenous sensitivity training for consultants completed and Indigenous specific asset management templates developed.</p> <p>Development of 10 year financial models for Indigenous councils.</p> <p>Initial assessment of asset management competence against national sustainability framework completed for 17¹ councils.</p> <p>Action plans and Asset management plans for individual asset classes under development for 17 councils</p>	January 2012

¹ Comprises 16 Indigenous councils and Torres Shire Council



Element 3: Long term financial and asset management capability		
Goal 1: Develop asset management competence/ skills for councillors / staff		
Goal 2: Long term financial and asset management plans are robust and integrated with budgeting and other planning processes		
<p>3.2 Deliver targeted on-site training and assistance for all Indigenous councils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop councillors' skills in asset management planning and embedding in annual budget cycles ➤ develop systems, adopt best practice and baseline standards for services and infrastructure ➤ identify, train and mentor key personnel within councils to maintain asset management systems 	<p>Councillors understand and make informed decisions on asset management and service levels with priorities reflected in annual budgets.</p> <p>Indigenous councils have appropriate systems in place for key asset classes – with the minimum number of asset classes under management</p> <p>Train and mentor asset management 'champions' e.g. local managers, works supervisors for each council to drive change</p> <p>Contractors to deliver initial training to Indigenous councils with ongoing implementation of asset improvement programs to be led by regional staff (see Action 3.3)</p>	<p>August 2011 to June 2012</p>
<p>3.3 Water and Waste Water Strategy (\$3.35M)</p> <p>3.3.1 Infrastructure Systems Develop appropriate asset management systems for water and waste water infrastructure within Councils that are integrated into Councils planning and budgetary process</p>	<p>Water and waste water assets effectively maintained throughout their whole life cycle</p>	<p>2011 - 2013</p>
<p>3.3.2 Support for Service Providers Deliver capacity building initiatives to enable Councils attract and retain quality staff</p>	<p>Councils have well trained workforces at all levels with traineeships</p>	<p>2011 - 2013</p>
<p>3.3.3 Service standards Develop best practice service standards for Councils to manage risks associated with water / waste water provision</p>	<p>Councils have effective risk assessment and water quality assurance regimes so that water and waste water services meet required standards</p>	<p>2011 - 2013</p>
<p>3.3.4 Ongoing support Provide technical support to Councils and their staff</p>	<p>Councils effectively operate and maintain their water and waste water infrastructure</p>	<p>2011 - 2013</p>
<p>3.3.5 Appropriate technology Improve technologies to assist Councils to operate and maintain water and waste water services</p>	<p>Improved technologies suitable to operational environments</p>	<p>2011 - 2013</p>



Element 3: Long term financial and asset management capability		
Goal 1: Develop asset management competence/ skills for councillors / staff		
Goal 2: Long term financial and asset management plans are robust and integrated with budgeting and other planning processes		
3.3.6 Responsible water use and conservation Pilot and evaluate demand management programs in targeted councils	Efficient use of potable water by local communities	2011 - 2013

Element 4: Land Use Planning Schemes and Administrative Systems		
Goal 1: Councillors and staff understand responsibilities in administering planning schemes		
Goal 2: Councils have administrative systems and appropriate land use assessment capability		
Actions	Outcome sought	Implementation timeframes
<p>4.1 Deliver targeted on-site training and assistance for all Indigenous councils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop councillors' understanding of responsibilities in administration of planning schemes ➤ establish systems for development assessment processes appropriate to council's land area, environment and population ➤ identify, train and mentor key personnel within councils – or groups of councils - to undertake basic assessment activities ➤ establish an appropriate professional service to assist with complex planning matters ➤ explore shared services arrangements to be explored between Indigenous and non-Indigenous councils 	<p>Councillors understand and make informed decisions on asset management and service levels with priorities reflected in annual budgets.</p> <p>Indigenous councils have appropriate administrative systems in place for development assessment under planning schemes</p> <p>Train and mentor at least 2 staff per council to administer local assessment processes</p> <p>Planning matters above a threshold are referred to external assessors</p> <p>Contractors to deliver initial training to Indigenous councils with ongoing implementation of planning scheme administration to be led by regional staff.</p> <p>Indigenous councils utilise existing expertise and systems within neighbouring councils to administer new planning schemes with resulting cost savings.</p>	January to December 2012
4.2 Coordinate planning scheme development by the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office and contracted consultants with DLGP capacity building actions	Engagement with councils by DLGP as part of the planning scheme development	July 2011 to June 2012

