

LGA (SA) Women in Local Government Strategy

Introduction and Context

Like many other sectors of the workforce, women are under-represented in Local Government, both as Council Members and Senior Staff. Following the 2006 elections 26.6% of Council Members in SA are women, including women in the Mayoral position. 16% of senior managers in Councils are women, and only 2 of the 68 Councils state wide have female CEOs.

The Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) commissioned research into the issues prohibiting better participation by women in 2001 and reviewed progress in 2007. *The Way Forward publication resulting from the ALGWA research project*, concluded that the changes that have taken place have not substantially increased the number of women in decision making positions.

As the sphere of government closest to the people, Councils need to understand and reflect the communities they serve. Since women make up 51% of the population the current representation falls well short.

Notwithstanding the issue of equity and diversity, the pressing skills shortages facing Councils cannot be ignored. If Local Government as a sector continues to have difficulty attracting and retaining female participants it is in a weaker position to respond. It is noteworthy that many of the issues identified as inhibiting participation by women are also relevant to the young skilled employees needed for future prosperity.

Many of the strategies outlined in the LGA's Strategy do not apply specifically to women, but will assist generally in strengthening diversity and leadership within Councils. Others are short term initiatives designed to provide an initial impetus or redress the current inequity.

The LGA(SA) *Women in Local Government Strategy* is an aspirational document which identifies a broad range of initiatives. Many require strong partnerships to be sustained, such as those with the LGA's Women in Local Government Committee and Local Government Managers Australia. The majority depend on the 68 Councils for ultimate success.

1. Senior Officers: Data Collection and Analysis

Strategy	Priority Action	Key Partners
1.1 Ensure sufficient relevant data is available to allow comparison across industry and the public sector, locally and nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine appropriate performance measures and targets • Consult with Councils to on the proposed performance measures and targets for improvement • Encourage adoption of standardised performance reporting, including targets for improvement, nationally as well as in all States and at an individual Council level 	<p>LGA/LGMA/State Government</p> <p>ALGWA, LGMA</p>
1.2 Establish minimum reporting standards including trends over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gender related data in the LGA 's Annual Report and in the reports of Councils • Review and enhance the gender related data included in the Grants Commission return • Define, collate and publish minimum data sets, including state and national comparisons • Use data to refine strategy development 	<p>LGA</p> <p>LGA/State Government/Grants Commission</p> <p>LGA/State Government</p>
1.3 Identify the primary/secondary reasons why women leave Local Government to identify strategies to improve attraction and retention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and analyse entry/exit data from Councils and recruitment agencies • Establish a process to enable update annually • Monitor and review data and strategies and refine on an annual/biannual basis 	<p>LGA/Human Resources Group/LGMA/Private Sector</p>
1.4 Assist Councils to develop forward plans on human resource targets which include greater participation rates of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate this issue into the LGA's Workforce Planning Project; • Provide Councils with examples 	<p>LGA/Human Resources Group</p>

2 Senior Officers: Promotion, Attraction and Retention

<p>2.1 Promote Local Government as an Employee of Choice for women(<i>Link to Org culture</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a marketing strategy to attract women to work and remain in Local Government • Develop information packs for Centrelink Offices and high schools which encourage an interest in Local Government as a career • Incorporate into the Shape Your World strategies specific information about working in Councils and feature women • Target the LGA's Summer School/Traineeship and other programs as sources of promotional activities • Encourage Councils to take up the challenge and promote best practice and examples, including child care provision 	<p>LGA/LGMA/Metro CEOS Committee/Regional LGMA/ LGMA</p>
<p>2.2 Inform CEOs about options for flexible working arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and share best practice examples, including current flexible arrangements in Local Government Enterprise Agreements • Highlight and develop strategies to assist CEOs to consider the benefits/constraints of part-time and job sharing roles in senior management positions 	<p>LGA/Human Resources Group</p>

<p>2.3 Ensure maximum use of inclusive selection practices(Link to Training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for legislative amendments to require at least one man/woman on staff selection panels established for selecting CEO positions in Local Government • Design and promote a model code of practice and guidelines for the selection of CEOs in Local Government for Council Members to use, including development of an online training option; • Design and promote guidelines for the selection of senior officers, including development of an online training option 	<p>LGA/LGMA/Human Resource Officers</p>
<p>2.4 Identify barriers to women's successful appointment to senior positions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with recruitment firms to research recent senior appointments within Councils on a confidential basis, including number of women who applied and reasons for success or failure • Use the findings to define further support strategies 	<p>LGA/Private Sector/Human Resources Managers</p>
<p>2.5 Create a central register of opportunities for secondment of women within the public sector, including part time positions, job sharing and other flexible arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the issue of job exchanges/secondment between State and Local Government on the Minister's Local Government Forum Agenda; • Obtain agreement from other spheres of government, including that eligibility would include employees on parental leave seeking flexible working arrangements on their return, or development opportunities while on leave • Advocate for improved transfer arrangements of leave and service entitlements for movement between State and Local Government 	<p>LGA/Minister for State/Local Government Relations</p> <p>LGA/South Australian and Federal Public Sector HR departments</p> <p>LGA/State Government/Unions</p>

<p>2.6 Feature women who have won awards for endeavour related to local government at the LGA State Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate data on all relevant awards (<i>link to data</i>) • Promote through LGA circulars and place on LGA “women’s” website page • Integrate into LGA State Conference program annually • Encourage and sponsor Managers in local government to enter the LGMA, SA Telstra Business Woman of the Year and other Awards 	<p>LGA/LGMA</p>
<p>2.7 Promote local government careers to young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the “Shape your World” campaign • Continue to form links to relevant university courses and professional associations 	<p>LGA LGA/Universities</p>
<p>2.8 Establish strategies for improved childcare support for women officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make representations to State and Federal Government • Encourage Councils to provide a childcare option such as subsidisation • Encourage work from home options for selected positions and incorporate general strategies into Enterprise Agreements 	<p>LGA/LGMA/LGWA SA Branch</p>

3; Senior Officers: Induction, Training and Development

<p>3.1 Facilitate greater awareness of work/life balance and flexible work policies and practices (<i>link to Org Culture & Attraction, Retention</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a model policy based on current best practice examples • Develop and promote training programs for managers on the effective implementation of work-life balance practice • Promote the recommendations of the SA Parliament “Report of the Select Committee on Balancing Work and Life Responsibilities” and the LGA’s submission to the Committee and seek Council engagement in implementation of the recommendations 	<p>LGA/LGMA/Human Resources Group</p>
<p>3.2 Support women’s participation in leadership training and professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and promote suitable programs (<i>link to training</i>) and/or develop new programs to meet gaps in provision • Monitor and report on participation including by women on extended leave or working part time(<i>link to data</i>) • Track progress of participants over next two years (<i>link to data</i>) • If deemed necessary work with other spheres of government to develop gender specific leadership programs open to senior and aspiring leaders from all public sectors • Create scholarships for worthy applicants 	<p>LGA/LGMA</p>
<p>3.3 Encourage short secondments and exchanges as a development opportunity for women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide LGA Website as a place to post secondment opportunities • Establish a register of senior officers willing to provide short term “at the elbow” mentoring. • Identify funding sources to assist Council’s (especially rural Councils) to release aspiring leaders. 	<p>LGA/LGMA</p>

3.4 Identify retraining programs for women re-entering the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with program providers to encourage applicants	LGA
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4. Senior Officers: Organisational Structure and Culture

4.1 Encourage the adoption of Paid Maternity Leave provisions in Enterprise Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop standard policies that could be adopted across the sector and promote them• Encourage the use of a consistent standard across LG	LGA/LGMA /Unions
4.2 Encourage Councils to adopt an Equity and Diversity Human Resource Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and promote a model policy	LGA/Human Resources Group/Unions
4.3 Encourage Councils to formally endorse the revised National Framework for Women in Local Government and form Gender Matters Panels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect and publish information about those Council's which adopt the framework• Monitor the activities of Gender Matters Panels	LGA/LGMA/Minister

5: Senior Officers: Other

5.1 Encourage and promote networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research optimal conditions for successful networking amongst women in the sector • Identify and engage with synergistic networks outside of Local Government • Work with professional associations etc to create and publish a calendar of events • Offer minor grants to support networking forums • Ensure that networking opportunities include women at lower levels 	LGA LGMA Professional Associations Unions
5.2 Encourage and promote mentoring for women with leadership aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a register for potential mentors (including men) and mentees • Provide training programs for both the mentors and mentees along with resources to assist in the process • Promote participation • Monitor outcomes 	LGA/LGMA
5.3 Encourage women officers to nominate for appointment to outside bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use calls for LGA nominations on outside bodies to emphasise the opportunities for women 	LGA
5.4 National Forum for Women in Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation of a national forum for women in LG • Investigate the concept of Adelaide as the hosting venue 	LGA/LGMA
5.5 Create an award for Councils which are considered best practice employers of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise Councils which actively adopt the strategies outlined herein 	LGA/LGMA
5.6 Inspire CEOs to lead the reform agenda in their organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to Metro Mayors group and CEOs and Regional meetings 	LGA/LGMA/MM&CEOs

6. Council Members: Data Collection and Analysis

<p>6.1 Ensure sufficient relevant data is available to allow comparison across the local government sector, locally and nationally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine appropriate parameters for data collection • Establish performance measures and base line targets • Consult with Councils to gain agreement on the targets for improvement • Encourage adoption of standardised reporting, including targets for improvement, nationally as well as all States and at an individual Council level 	<p>LGA Electoral Commission</p>
<p>6.2 Establish minimum reporting standards including trends over time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gender related data in LGA Annual Report • Advocate for gender related data to be included in Council Annual Reports and Grants Commission data collection • Define, collate and publish minimum data sets, including state and national comparisons • Use data to refine strategy development 	<p>LGA</p>
<p>6.3 Use information on the reasons for low participation by women to improve attraction and retention strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and analyse data from unsuccessful candidates, new members, ongoing and retiring members • Consider a partnership with a university politics department to interview and report findings from unsuccessful candidates, new members, resigning and retiring members 	<p>LGA Universities</p>

7. Council Members: Promotion, Attraction and Retention

7.1 Create a marketing strategy to encourage women to stand for Council in the 2010 elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use print media and talkback radio to call for candidates • Offer support mechanisms such as childcare to women candidates during elections 	LGA/Electoral Commission/State Agencies that have “outreach” programs to key groups
7.2 Act as a contact point for women considering running in the 2010 elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the LGA's website to ensure it targets the elections • Establish a mentors group • Create an interactive Q & A page and a link to mentors 	LGA/ALGWA
7.3 Enhance the information and advice programs provided to potential candidates by Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customise information packages to attract women of different ages and cultures • Ensure current legislative entitlements such as child care expense reimbursement are promoted • Consider needs based support to candidates (both men and women) to contest Council elections 	SA Electoral Office/ALGWA/LGA
7.4 Enhance the induction workshops run by Councils for all members of Council post 2010 election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use feedback from LGA's New Members survey to design a series of induction workshops which can be run primarily in house • Integrate with New Council Members Strategy 	LGA/ALGMA
7.5 Develop an induction and welcoming program for Members elected to local government in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a social event to allow newly elected members to meet and network 	LGA/ALGWA

<p>7.6 Identify and advocate for improvements in Council practices which would assist women members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and share best practice examples such as duration of meetings, allowances etc • Distribute to Mayors and CEOs 	<p>LGA</p>
<p>7.7 Introduce/reinforce awareness of LG roles and responsibilities through education system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence the “civics” curriculum in SA schools • Assist Councils to introduce programs for students such as Be A Community Kid (City of Charles Sturt) 	<p>LGA/SA Education Department</p>
<p>7.8 Create a list of women who may be prepared to stand for election and provide support to interested parties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the opportunity to use the working name “Grace’s List” to promote women in elected positions • Publicise the existence of the list and nature of support offered through media and community groups 	<p>LGA</p>

8. Council Members: Induction, Training and Development

<p>8.1 Ensure the Model Code of Conduct made available to Councils post 2010 election is enhanced to reflect the concerns of women members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the EEO principles in the LG Act 	<p>LGA</p>
<p>8.2 Support women's participation in leadership training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and promote suitable programs (<i>link to training</i>) • Monitor and report on participation (<i>link to data</i>) • Track progress of participants over time (<i>link to data</i>) • Work with other spheres of government to develop gender specific leadership programs open to aspiring leaders from all levels of government • Create scholarships for worthy applicants 	<p>LGA/ALGWA</p>
<p>8.3 Encourage Council Members to visit other Councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and promote a register of Councils willing to host formal and/or informal visits from Councillors Promote the benefits of sharing ideas and best practice 	<p>LGA</p>

9. Council Members: Organisational Structure and Culture

9.1 Improve the appeal of becoming a Council Member for women in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policy position on family friendly practices which can be adopted by Councils • Prepare and consult on any legislative amendments necessary 	LGA/LGWA
9.2 Improve the support available to Council Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the passing of the legislation to establish an independent review of the remuneration and allowances paid to Councillors ensure that the LGA's submission take into account the special needs of women • 	LGA
9.3 Ensure that Council Members undertake appropriate cultural diversity awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Cultural Diversity training in the post election training package 	LGA
9.4 Encourage Councils to formally endorse the revised National Framework for Women in Local Government and form Gender Matters Panels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and publish information about those Council's which adopt the framework • Monitor the activities of Gender Matters Panels 	LGA

10. Council Members: Other

10.1 Encourage and promote networking opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research optimal conditions for successful networking amongst women in the sector • Create and publish a calendar of events • Offer minor grants to support networking forums 	LGA/LGWA
10.2 Encourage and promote mentoring amongst women with leadership aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a register for potential mentors and mentees • Provide training programs • Monitor outcomes 	LGA/LGWA
10.3 Encourage women Council Members to nominate for appointment to outside bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use LGA's calls for nominations to emphasise the opportunities for women; • Advertise the opportunities available in the State Government to register interest in being considered on State bodies/committees 	LGA/LGWA
10.4 Support the Biennial National ALGWA Conference being hosted by the SA Branch in Adelaide in April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the upcoming event to Councils • Consider a scheme to subsidise travel and accommodation for rural applicants from South Australia 	ALGWA/LGA
10.5 Inspire Mayors to lead the enhanced participation of women agenda in their Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to Metro Mayors and CEOs group and State Conference • Support the formation of a Women Mayors group 	LGA/LGWA