Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

2015/16 Reporting Period Review

Contents

Introduction

This paper aims to review the data collection and submission process for the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework. The results of this review have been analysed by process, resources, website and indicators, with recommendations made throughout.

Now in its third year, the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) has seen a great deal of success, with more than 200,000 unique users and more than a million page views since launching in November 2015.

The Performance Reporting Analysis and Support Team (PRAST) has worked closely with each council's Primary User to both develop the LGPRF and support the sector through the development of reporting processes. The Primary User is the key contact at each council on the LGPRF, and coordinates data from each of the relevant service areas. On average, PRAST has more than 10 interactions with each council's Primary User throughout the reporting period, via phone and email. This has enabled LGV to ensure a high-quality dataset is collated, maintained and presented to the public.

2015/16 survey results show council attitudes to the LGPRF and Know Your Council website have improved, likely due to a greater understanding of the reporting process and how it is undertaken. As a result, LGV has also seen an improvement in the quality of data submitted and positive engagement with councils wanting to assist in the continuous improvement of the LGPRF and reporting processes.

The success of the framework so far has seen the LGPRF be awarded runner up, Government 2.0 category at the 2016 Australian Government ICT awards, and be shortlisted for the 2016 IPAA Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence. This could not have been achieved without the commitment and cooperation of councils, in particular, Know Your Council Primary Users.

Survey

A survey consisting of 57 questions was conducted after the conclusion of the 2015/16 LGPRF reporting period. All 79 councils participated, with 163 validated responses collected from councils and Regional Library Corporations. Feedback shows that overall, councils are more satisfied with the framework than in the 2014/15 period, and that councils are gaining increasing value from utilising the Know Your Council website.

Survey responses also suggest that councils are becoming increasingly consistent in their reporting processes, and that the sector would like Local Government Victoria (LGV) to further enhance service area specific guidance and work more closely with other state government departments to reduce the reporting burden on councils. Councils have provided a great deal of valuable feedback through this survey which has been detailed in this document.

This paper aims to continue the consideration process for updates and improvements to the LGPRF. It is laid out in to four sections:
1. Reporting Process
2. Resources
3. Website and Portal
4. Indicators

An analysis of the media, social media and online blogs, websites and newsletters has also given LGV an understanding on views from residents, ratepayers, interested stakeholders as well as the sector on both the framework, website and its contents.

In some cases, LGV has already begun to implement changes to make reporting easier for councils. LGV will seek to continue making improvements to the framework and resulting processes, and to work with councils and other state government departments to build on the aims of Know Your Council.

After two years of reporting, both councils and LGV have been able to better understand areas for improvement, any gaps in the framework and opportunities for future indicators. The suggestions made in the survey have allowed LGV to make suggested updates to current guidance for the consideration of the steering committee and to identify council suggestions for the addition of new indicators or removal or improvement of existing indicators.

Process

Responses regarding the ease of data collection and reporting in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15 were generally positive, with over 70% of respondents indicating that it was the same, easier or much easier. Responses to this question covered the whole reporting process including data collation, the LGPRF reporting process and the audit process. These responses are therefore representative of engagement with a number of stakeholders and internal processes.

It should be noted that due to rollout difficulties with the Child Development Information System (CDIS), council staff experienced a number of difficulties in the reporting process, including additional work for affected councils in cleansing and verifying data.

Did you find the data collection and reporting process was easier in 2015-16 compared to 2014-15?

- Don't know/first year of LGPRF
- Much easier
- Easier
- Neutral
- More difficult
- Much more difficult
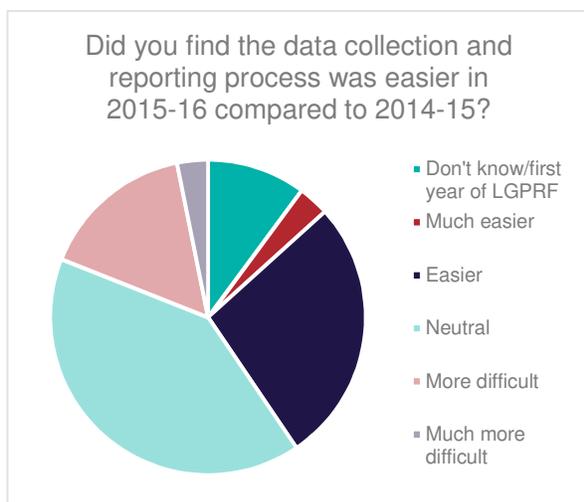
Timelines were deemed to be the same or easier than 2014/15 by over 65% of respondents, however 50% of respondents didn't notice a difference year on year.

Review process

During the reporting period LGV undertook two main reviews of each council's data; an initial review which was undertaken prior to the external audit where possible, and a secondary review which was undertaken following the external audit. LGV provided feedback on data inconsistencies for each indicator, including a comparison of 2014/15 data and 2015/16 data, and advice on the commentary provided by councils. Following each review, council staff liaised with internal and external stakeholders who had provided data to respond to the feedback. The reviews were provided to each council's Primary

User in each council, therefore some respondents to the survey would not have received their council's review from LGV.

Initial review

Of the respondents who received their council's initial review, around 80% found it useful, with those who didn't find it useful sighting reasons such as:

- Receiving feedback on commentary which was not deemed useful by council.

- Receiving queries from LGV which councils believed was explained in their commentary.

- Conflicting advice from LGV and VAGO auditors during the audit process.

- Having an early audit.

The majority of respondents (76%) indicated that their council completed the initial submission for review prior to their external audit. Those councils that didn't have data reviewed before their audit cited an early audit (61%), and difficulty collating data in time (35%), as reasons for being unable to submit an initial submission for review.

Secondary review

Of the respondents who received their council's secondary review around 80% found it useful.

The aspect of the secondary review which was considered most helpful was identification of errors in the submission (59%) with respondents also commenting that the review assisted them to refine their comments or provide commentary where it was missing. Only 10% of respondents selected "None of the above" for this question.

The aspect of the secondary review which was considered least helpful was that the review was received too late for changes to be made (23%), and councils also commented that they were not prepared to amend data approved by the auditor and that timing was challenging. Respondents also noted that feedback regarding the application of material variations should be based on council set thresholds. Almost half of respondents (49%) selected "None of the above" for this question.

Communication

Over 90% of respondents either found communicating with staff at LGV to be easy, neutral or did not have a need to contact us. The most common method of contact was email to LGV staff (45%). When asked for suggestions to improve communication between LGV and councils, 50%

had no suggestions, and the most popular suggestion was more regular emails (25%), with comments flagging the need to ensure all council staff are aware of clarifications to indicators. Respondents also called for clarity on the use of Yammer, however they were split on whether to use it.

Overall, how did you find communicating with staff at LGV?

- No contact
- Very easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very difficult

Recommendations

1. LGV to review the communications plan to make best use of existing and potential communication tools

Accepted

Issues and challenges

When asked whether they were affected by any other issues or challenges during the reporting process, 44% said no, followed by collating data from service areas (27%) and the audit process (26%). Many of the responses regarding how LGV could assist with these issues included working more effectively with other areas of government such as VAGO and other relevant departments.

Resources

Template

In the third section of the survey, 19% of respondents indicated that they would like to provide feedback on the reporting template. Many of the comments were regarding formatting changes to the template and additional features such as the ability to annualise data for quarterly and half yearly reporting. LGV will incorporate this feedback for the 2016/17 reporting period.

The timing of the template issue was selected as concern by 43% of respondents to this section, with all of these respondents requesting the template be issued earlier in the financial year. Earlier release of the template will be possible in future years as reporting processes are bedded down over time.

Indicator workbook and Better Practice Guides

The indicator workbook was the most commonly accessed resource (84%) out of Indicator workbook, Report of Operations Better Practice Guide, Strategic Resource Plan Better Practice Guide, Planning and Reporting Better Practice Guide and Performance Statement Better Practice Guide. The most popular better practice guide was for the Report of Operations (46%).

These resources were most commonly accessed from the Council Portal or the DELWP website (both 47%), and 92% of respondents found the resources easy to access.

Feedback was provided by 21% of respondents about improvements to these materials, with 93% providing feedback on the indicator workbook. Most of this feedback was to provide more detail in the workbook and make version details more obvious. As with the template, LGV will incorporate this feedback during the update process for the 2016/17 reporting period.

Webinars

A large number of respondents (60%) indicated that they have never accessed the webinars, however the majority of these (77%) identified as CEO/executive team members or service area staff members (i.e. animal management, libraries) who have not been the target audience of the webinars in the past. Most of those who did access them found them useful or very useful (61%). The most popular

webinar was on the data upload process, which was viewed by 92% of those who accessed them.

There were 16% of respondents who indicated that they would like to see more webinars, with some of the topics suggested being audit tips, materiality thresholds and service area specific webinars.

Training

Just over half of respondents (60%) indicated that it would be useful if LGV created a training pack for each service area and the general framework. Comments were positive and included requests for guidance targeted at service area staff and more detailed information on each indicator. The most popular formats for these packs were guides of 3-10 pages (67%) and fact sheets of 1-2 pages (46%).

Recommendations

2. LGV to create a suite of specific guidance to assist councils with collating data specific to each service area

Accepted

3. LGV to consider survey feedback when updating resources for the 2016/17 reporting period

Accepted

Practice Notes

There were 72% of respondents who found the practice notes useful, very useful or neutral, with 27% having never accessed them.

How did you find the practice notes?

- Never accessed
- Very useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Not useful
- Not at all useful
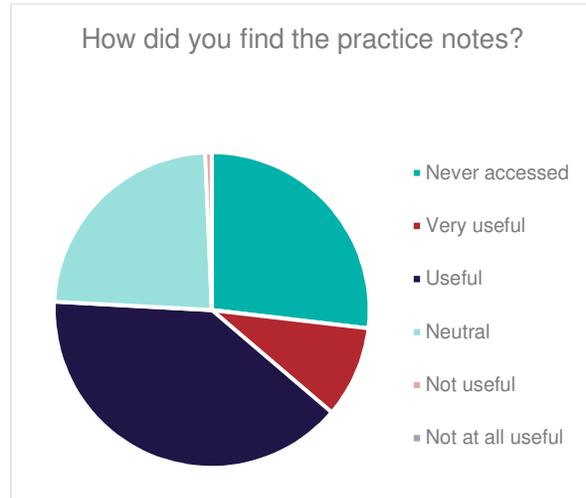
Website and Portal

Know Your Council website

More than half (52%) of respondents found the new year on year trend data on the website to be easy or very easy to understand, with 24% indicating that they did not access the site until after the update occurred.

How do you find the presentation of the new year on year trend data on the website?

- Did not access the site until after the update
- Very easy to understand
- Easy to understand
- Neutral
- Difficult to understand
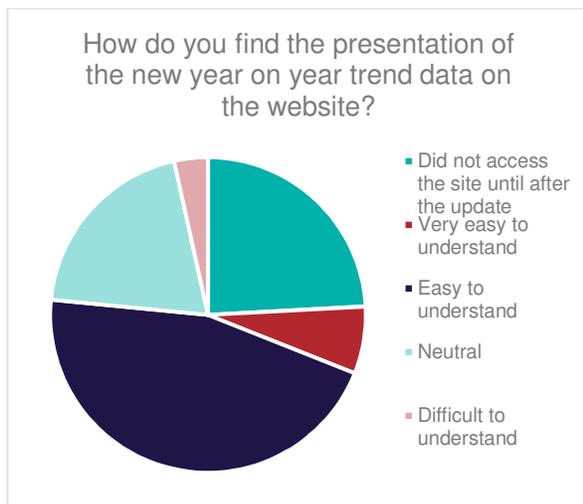
Only 12% of respondents indicated that they wished to suggest improvements to the website, which included making the Council Says commentary more visible and providing the ability to compare more than four councils.

There were 15% of respondents who indicated that they had received feedback from their municipality or organisation since it was launched in November 2015, which was mostly positive indicating that it was easy to use and a good resource.

The News Tab had been accessed by 26% of respondents and 26% indicated that their council would be interested in contributing stories, where 12% of respondents said yes to both questions.

Council Portal

Just over half (54%) of respondents have accessed the council portal, with 78% indicating that it was easy or very easy to use. Of those who had accessed the portal, 18% wished to suggest improvements, which focused on greater use of the dashboard, the ability to upload one data file at a

time rather than all three, more functionality when comparing councils and a review of the content and layout of the resources tab.

Recommendations

4. LGV to provide more frequent updates via the Council Portal Dashboard

Accepted

Indicator Review

The indicator review section of the survey gave respondents the opportunity to provide suggestions of indicators for addition, improvement, removal and alignment with other reporting.

Indicator Development Process

The process for considering changes to the framework was outlined in a discussion paper distributed to the steering committee in June of 2016, and is depicted in the diagram above.

Current indicators have been developed across the three thematic areas of service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity, with the common objective of developing indicators that were suitable across all councils. The two overarching dimensions of performance, effectiveness and efficiency, also helped to determine what would be considered a suitable performance indicator. Below these overarching dimensions, each indicator set maintains its own set of dimensions.

It is anticipated that any updates to the framework to be made as a result of recommendations in this paper would fit existing principles. These would then be endorsed by the steering committee, developed with the sector and finally approved by the Executive Director, Local Government Victoria.

Should the steering committee choose to endorse further indicators for development, a technical sub-committee would need to be established. This working group would work with both PRAST and a number of councils to assess the viability and benefits of any new indicators proposed.

Recommendations

5. Steering Committee to endorse establishment of a Technical Working Group to review and develop indicators

Accepted

Methodology

Councils were able to suggest 3 indicators (or general service areas) for each category, and were asked to provide feedback for each indicator suggested. The overwhelming majority of suggestions were to improve indicators and/or the guidance around those indicators. This has been captured below by each indicator service area:

- Aquatic Facilities
- Animal Management
- Food Safety
- Governance
- Libraries
- Maternal & Child Health
- Roads
- Statutory Planning
- Waste Collection
- Finances
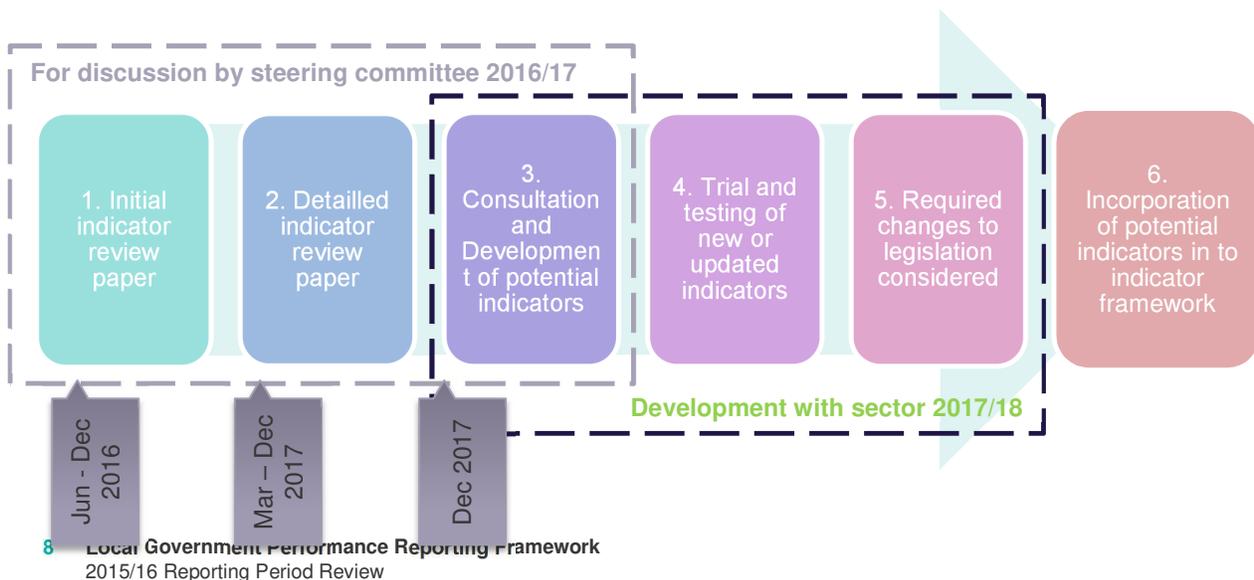
- Sustainable Capacity
- Other

A summary of the feedback received has been compiled under each service area, with recommendations made for consideration by the steering committee. The number following each service area heading indicates the number of responses received through the survey. This also aligns to the quantity of feedback received on each service area during the reporting period.

Relevant feedback will be considered and incorporated in to the Local Government Better Practice Guidance and 2016/17 Performance Reporting Indicator Workbook. Other feedback, such as developing more consistent reporting processes across councils, will inform other support work undertaken by PRAST.

Where there were responses which could be identified as duplicates based on the name provided or unique IP address, the response with the least number of questions completed was removed to reduce the chance of double counting. Responses where no more than the demographic information was completed were also removed, along with responses which were nonsensical (i.e. text responses with random letters).

Feedback by service area

Aquatic Facilities (23 responses)

Responses referring to Aquatic Facilities totalled 23. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 1

Improved: 13 (AF2, 3, 4, 6)

Removed: 9 (AF1, 2, 3)

Suggested for addition was *'Attendances per square metre of building area'*, as it would allow for showing high usage of small facilities and better reflect the amenities of facilities.

Aquatics and Recreation Victoria (ARV) currently have a review underway which plans to address how councils report on recreation facilities. LGV will continue to liaise with ARV on the outcomes of their review.

AF2 - Health inspections of aquatic facilities (3)

- Some concerns that as this indicator only counts inspections by EHOs, and given inspections are not mandatory, this indicator gives the impression that very few inspections are being undertaken.

AF3 - Reportable safety incidents at aquatic facilities (7)

- As this is a raw figure, it does not consider utilisation rates or population figures in its calculation, therefore creating a discrepancy between facilities of different sizes and uses.

AF4 - Cost of indoor aquatic facilities (4)

- Council would like to be able to classify a majority outdoor pool with some indoor facilities (ie. 80% outdoor use) in accordance with its prevailing use as an outdoor pool, given costs for repairs and maintenance vary considerably.
- The wording for this measure should reflect the net financial performance of the facilities.

Recommendations

6. Steering Committee to consider recommendations resulting from Aquatics Recreation Victoria's (ARV) review in to facilities reporting, which is currently being undertaken

Accepted

Animal Management (47 responses)

Responses referring to Animal Management totalled 48. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 3

Improved: 30 (AM1, 2, 3, 4)

Removed: 11 (AM2, 3, 4)

Aligned with other departments: 3

Suggested for addition:

- Euthanasia rates: to encourage reduced euthanasia rates as is recommended in the state government's *'Improving the Welfare of Animals in Victoria'* action plan. These rates are already being reported to DEDJTR annually as part of each council's Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP).

- Number of animals rehoused or adopted.

- Number of dog attacks.

LGV met with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources' (DEDJTR) Animal Management division, which administers the Domestic Animal Management Act. Discussions centred around feedback received by team regarding reporting on Animal Management indicators in the LGPRF.

DEDJTR staff expressed concerns regarding consistent reporting despite aligned reporting requirements between the DAMPs. DEDJTR staff also strongly suggested the addition of Euthanasia rates to the framework, together with the number of animals rehomed as these are already being reported by councils. LGV resolved to provide greater clarity on indicators and to continue to work with DEDJTR staff on the potential development of future indicators.

AM2 - Animals reclaimed *(21)*

- Numerator definition should be updated to count all animals reclaimed, not just those already registered at the time of impoundment.

- Denominator definition to be updated to specifically count feral animals.

- There is a potential to include animals that are rehomed or rehoused in this indicator.

- Specifically exclude animals received at the pound that are legislatively not able to be released back to the public. eg. restricted breeds, sick or diseased animals.

AM3 - Cost of animal management service (3)

- Concerns that the indicator does not currently reflect Council's true service provision due to the inclusion of feral animals.

AM4 - Animal management prosecutions (11)

- A decreasing number of prosecutions does not always result in positive outcomes, particularly in cases where it increases registrations or improves community safety.

- Councils adopt different approaches as to whether or not to proceed to prosecution and is not a reflection of the performance, rather it is a management choice.

- Several proposals to review indicator to measure the percentage of successful prosecutions out of the total number of cases presented to the Magistrates Court; aims to better measure the number of successful prosecutions and the success of prosecution/representation in court on behalf of ratepayers.

Recommendations

7. Technical Working Group to review viability of adding animal euthanasia indicator and adoption rate (rehoming, rehousing) indicator

Not accepted

8. LGV to update AM2 numerator to ensure animals are counted upon being registered and returned to owners

Accepted

9. LGV to update AM2 to ensure feral animals are included in the denominator

Accepted

10. Technical Working Group to review AM4 to better measure successful prosecutions

Accepted

Food Safety (57 responses)

Responses referring to Food Safety totalled 57. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 1

Improved: 33 (FS2, 3, 4)

Removed: 9 (FS2, 3, 4)

Aligned with other departments: 14

Suggested for addition was *'Food Sampling numbers, compliance and costs'*.

Strong feedback was provided on Food Safety indicators which suggested better alignment between LGV and DHHS reporting (ie. Automatic integration of DHHS data in to LGPRF, better alignment of definitions for the purposes of reporting). LGV has met with the Food Safety and Streatrader teams. Discussions centred around potential alignments and opportunities to reduce reporting duplication. As a result, DHHS has agreed with LGV to develop a trial for obtaining this data in the 2016/17 reporting period.

Feedback suggests a next step of meeting with the Streatrader team at DHHS to understand data collection processes and discuss reporting alignment opportunities.

FS2 - Food safety assessments (11)

- As this is already reported through mandatory reporting requirements to Food Safety Reporting to DHHS, look at ways to reduce duplication.

- Work with DHHS to improve reporting from the Streatrader system to the LGPRF, and update in guidance.

- Assessment requirements may need to be realigned to be in line with registration year, not financial or calendar year, as required by the Food Act 1984. There may be some inconsistency across councils in interpretation of the reporting period.

FS3 - Cost of food safety service (12)

- Councils would like the denominator to be amended to include only fixed premises (i.e. not Streatrader) or only class 1 and 2 premises.

- The EHO is regularly engaged in servicing a number of other services such as Aquatic Facilities or tobacco inspection and compliance, with the cost not easily split.

FS4 - Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications (18)

- As only one inspection per premises can be recorded under this system, this may not reflect the workload of councils in dealing with non-compliant premises.

- A large number of the non-compliance outcome notifications are received in the last quarter of the year, and currently only notifications that are received in the last month of the quarter are not counted towards to total number of notifications. This can cause a misrepresentation of how many notifications have been followed up.

- This indicator should be measured by calendar year as is reported to DHHS.

- Definitions to match the DHHS terminology to reduce confusion and reporting to be aligned with DHHS.

Recommendations

11. LGV to review reporting alignment with DHHS for all food safety indicators; trial run collection of data directly from DHHS.

Accepted

12. LGV to meet with Streatrader team to discuss potential to reduce reporting duplication

Accepted

Governance (12 responses)

Responses referring to Governance totalled 12. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 2

Improved: 8 (G1, 4)

Removed: 2 (G2, 5)

Suggested for addition:

- Councillor performance indicators such as 'the number of times an Arbiter was required' or 'number of Councillor Conduct Panels/VCAT held' which would give an indication of how councils are dealing with conflict resolution.

- Include an indicator to reflect decisions made on contractual matters, or incorporate it in G1.

G1 - Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public (5)

- Provide further guidance on procedural motions.

G3 - Councillor attendance at council meetings (1)

- The attendance indicator could be expanded to capture attendance by Councillors at scheduled briefings, or at public presentation sessions, which would give an indicator of how well they are informing themselves of matters coming before Council.

- Provide clearer guidance in notes for calculating councillor attendance at meetings to ensure vacancies due to resignations, death, failure to take the oath of office or going out of office under section 28(3) of the Act are excluded.

G4 - Cost of governance (3)

- Change the name of this indicator to the cost of Councillors as the true cost of governance involved in managing Councillors is not included here (ie support staff and legal advice) and the current title may be unclear to the public

Recommendations

13. Technical Working Group to research potential new indicator to better reflect consideration of matters in confidence

Accepted

14. LGV to update guidance to include clearer calculations for councillor attendance

Accepted

15. Technical Working Group to update indicator title for G4 to more accurately reflect that the cost per Councillor is being measured

Accepted

Libraries (61 responses)

Responses referring to Libraries totalled 61. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 6

Improved: 45 (LB1, 2, 3, 4)

Removed: 6 (LB4)

Aligned with other departments: 4

Suggested for addition:

- Patron satisfaction or engagement with library services expressed as a percentage, potentially to be included in the Community Satisfaction Survey.

- An indicator which measures the impact of library services on the community, such as literacy and community engagement.

- Usage of libraries including computer/wifi use, attendances to programs and activities, and door counter figures for visits.

The high number of responses to this indicator may be due to the survey being completed by Regional Library Corporations (RLCs) in addition to council staff, and as a result of LGV's close working relationship with library staff.

Both the feedback provided in the survey, and to LGV throughout the reporting period, suggests more detailed and specific guidance be provided to RLCs to improve consistency in reporting. For example, it is difficult for RLCs to determine which ebook was borrowed in which municipality, and as such, calculation methods vary between each RLC.

Feedback also suggests that collection of LGPRF data duplicates much of the work undertaken in compiling the Library Annual Report. LGV will be presenting to the Public Libraries Victoria Network (PLVN) to discuss further guidance.

LB1 - Library collection usage (7)

- The Library collection usage indicator has been problematic to report on, as RLCs are unable to determine the municipality in which ebooks are hired.

- Ebook data is not easy to access from a range of vendors.

LB2 - Standard of library collection (4)

- "Standard of library collection" is a subjective phrase which implies something quite different from what this actually measures. The indicator should be called "Proportion of collection purchased in last five years".

- The allocation of non-physical items such as ebooks to a particular LGA is not possible.

- While up-to-date library resources are an important consideration for borrowers, this measure does not actually measure the quality or standard of selected resources for community need; it assumes new is best.

LB3 - Cost of library service (7)

- Cost includes the provision of ebooks however this is not counted in the visits, which only measures physical visits not digital ones.

- The calculation of the Direct Cost to Council or Library service to be workshopped with a team of Library Service Managers to get agreement on methodology.

- The denominator - Number of Visits only includes the door count and excludes on line visits, WiFi use outside the Library, outreach and off site activities undertaken by the Library service and included in the Direct Costs to Council.

LB4 - Active library members (31)*

- Should include numbers of public accessing broader services ie. public computer, public programs, e-resources, etc.

Recommendations

16. Technical Working Group to review title of LB2 indicator to ensure it accurately represents the measure

Accepted

17. Technical Working Group to consider the usage of more library facilities in LB4 denominator, such as meeting rooms and PC usage

Accepted

Maternal and Child Health (27 responses)

Responses referring to Maternal and Child Health totalled 27. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 0

Improved: 12 (MC1, 2, 3, 4)

Removed: 6 (MC1, 3)

Aligned with other departments: 9

There were a number of issues with the reporting of MCH data this year, largely related to the rollout of the CDIS reporting system.

Councils also voiced concerns that participation (MC1 & MC4) were not good indicators of satisfaction.

MC1 - Participation in first MCH home visit (2)

- The first home visit is frequently the initial contact someone has with the service and may not be an indicator of satisfaction. It may be more indicative to measure the two week key age and stage or even the 4 month.

MC2 - Infant enrolments in the MCH service (1)

- The results for MC1 and MC2 will always be very close, so only one measure is required.

MC4 - Participation in the MCH service (3)

- An MCH staff member indicated that for satisfactory 'participation' for MCH service, they would consider 6 out of the first seven Key Ages and Stages consultations in the first 12 months of the infant's life to meet the satisfactory attendance rate.

- The Home Visit (first of the Key Ages and Stages consultations) is received by 98% of families due to the legislative requirements. After this visit families make the decision whether to engage or not. This would also be a good indicator if the family are satisfied with the service.

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Recommendations

18. Technical Working Group to review MC1 and MC4 for potential improvement to satisfaction measures

Accepted

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Roads (18 Responses)

Responses referring to Roads totalled 18. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 2

Improved: 7 (R2, 4, 5)

Removed: 8 (R2, 3, 5)

Aligned with other departments: 2

Suggested for addition:

- The number of unsealed road requests
- Cost to regrade/ repair unsealed roads.

Feedback also included a suggestion to align reporting with that of the Victoria Grants Commission.

R2 - Sealed local roads below the intervention level (5)

- Improve wording of indicator, as it is not clear what is defined as being below or above the intervention level.

R3 - Cost of sealed local road reconstruction (3)

- The indicator does not take in to account municipalities with high numbers of unsealed roads

- This indicator does not take in to account the quality of reconstruction

R4 - Cost of sealed local road resealing (2)

- This indicator does not take in to account the quality of resealing, suggestions that this be split between asphalting and spray sealing.

R5 - Satisfaction with sealed local roads (2)

- Concerns that this takes in to account VicRoads roads, and not just council roads.

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Recommendations

19. Technical Working Group to review viability of the addition of unsealed road indicators for non-metropolitan councils

Accepted

20. LGV to improve guidance for R2 indicator to make clear which roads are below the intervention level

Accepted

21. LGV to ascertain whether alignments with VGC data collection can be made to reduce the reporting burden

Accepted

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Statutory Planning (32 Responses)

Responses referring to Statutory Planning totalled 32. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 2

Improved: 17 (SP1, 2, 3, 4)

Removed: 3 (SP3, 4)

Aligned with other departments: 10

Suggested for addition:

- VicSmart decisions should be captured as a separate indicator to SP2
- Application 'complexity' (Estimated Assessment Effort) data.

Local Government Victoria has been working with the PPARS team at DELWP to review reporting alignment opportunities, and to reduce reporting duplication. LGV also discussed VicSmart planning applications and how these can be considered in the framework.

SP1 - Time taken to decide planning applications

- Better utilise data from PPARS.

SP2 - Planning applications decided within 60 days (3)

- Timeframes for planning applications differ between VicSmart (10 days) and regular planning applications (60 days). At present, the data does not reflect the timelines for VicSmart applications received. This indicator should be updated to cater to both planning application types.

SP3 - Cost of statutory planning (6)

- Suggest changing the denominator to 'PPARS Total Applications Received' to allow for the inclusion of Amended and Combined Permit Applications.
- To be a true reflection of the cost of processing a planning application, additional activities such as general enquiries, secondary consent applications, subdivision certifications, phone and counter enquiries should be taken in to account.

SP4 - Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT (10)

- Consent orders should be considered in this calculation as VCAT is moving towards negotiated outcomes rather than outright decisions through agreed consent orders.
- Seek to coordinate with PPARS.

Recommendations

22. LGV to amend regulations to account for introduction of VicSmart planning applications

Accepted

23. LGV to review opportunities for greater PPARS alignment and data provisions

Accepted

24. LGV to provide more explicit costs for statutory planning service

Accepted

25. Technical Working Group to review changes to VCAT processes to be captured in measure

Accepted

Waste Collection (9 Responses)

Responses referring to Waste Collection totalled 9. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 3

Improved: 5 (WC1, 2, 3)

Removed: 1 (WC1)

Aligned with other departments: 0

Suggested for addition:

- Cost of green waste service
- Kerbside garbage levels and kerbside recyclable levels to demonstrate the proportion of recyclables against rubbish going to landfill. This will show whether councils are reducing the community's output of garbage and increasing the recyclables.

Feedback also suggested LGV continue to work with Sustainability Victoria to consider and review reporting alignment opportunities.

WC1 - Kerbside bin collection requests (3)

- General feedback suggests this may not be the best indicator to measure satisfaction.

WC2 - Kerbside collection bins missed (1)

- The definition of a 'missed bin' should be clarified as to whether it is a bin that can still be picked up within 24 hrs of being missed, or if applies to any occasion when a resident reports a bin as genuinely being missed.

Recommendations

26. LGV to meet with SV to continue to review reporting alignment opportunities

Accepted

27. Technical Working Group to review viability of suggested indicators

Accepted

28. LGV to update guidance around 'missed' bins and those which were not put out by residents

Accepted

Financial Performance (28 Responses)

Responses referring to Finances totalled 28. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 2

Improved: 17 (E1, E3, O1, O3, S2)

Removed: 5 (E3, L2, O2, OP1, S2)

Aligned with other departments: 9

Suggested for addition:

- Average salary costs

General feedback regarding financial reporting included:

- Use one format and calculation across LGV, VAGO, ESC and VGC and use across all.
- Use information included in council budgets rather than duplicating reporting.
- Include indicators in financial statements rather than in the performance statement.

LGV has already begun meeting with the VGC to determine where reporting reductions can be made, and has recently met with the ESC to discuss opportunities to align reporting. LGV will continue meeting regularly with VAGO to share learnings and facilitate ongoing communication on the LGPRF.

E1 - Average residential rate per residential property assessment (2)

- Consider all average rates (i.e. residential, farm, commercial, etc.), or break down to reflect individual property classifications, as it is not a true reflection of the average, especially for rural councils.

E3 - Resignations and terminations compared to average staff (4)

- Measure doesn't provide for expected or unexpected terminations (ie. voluntary or involuntary termination of employment).
- Provide more clarity around 'temporary' employees, and whether this includes senior council staff on contracts.
- Forecasting of this indicator is difficult and not particularly useful, as councils are unsure as to when staff will leave, and can cause anxiety for staff as to their future employment.

L2 - Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities (2)

- Request to add 'Other reserves' to line 45 of Input 3 of the template, where Councils can put 'other reserves' and use the comments column to provide information for LGV about the nature of reserve.

O1 - Asset renewal compared to depreciation

- Concerns this indicator only works for 'established' councils that have a normal asset condition distribution, otherwise it appears Council is not funding its renewal requirements.

OP1 - Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)

- Underlying revenue is calculated by removing certain line items from total revenue, however the template does not exclude recurrent capital grants, which are also used to fund capital expenditure.

- The LGV template also excludes losses on the disposal of assets, share of joint ventures, and fair value adjustments, which may be inconsistent with the guidance. The template also excludes losses on the disposal of assets, share of joint ventures, and fair value adjustments which may be also inconsistent with provided guidance.

Recommendations

29. LGV to continue to regularly meet with VAGO to maintain dialogue around auditing of the LGPRF

Accepted

30. LGV to review template calculations, in line with suggestions

Accepted

Sustainable Capacity (9 Responses)

Responses referring to Sustainable Capacity totalled 9. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 2

Improved: 4 (C2, 3)

Removed: 1 (C2)

Aligned with other departments: 0

Suggested for addition:

- Absenteeism - lost time (days or hours) per FTE per annum. This should include uncertified sick / personal / carers leave. It is an indicator of organisational health in an economic environment where resigning and finding a different job is problematic.

On the whole, feedback on the sustainability indicator set shows that these indicators are not well understood as part of the framework. LGV plans to address this with upcoming guidance.

Recommendations

31. LGV to create further guidance on sustainable capacity indicators to improve sector knowledge

Accepted

32. Technical Working Group to consider the context in which sustainable capacity indicators differ from service area performance

Accepted

Other indicators (34 responses)

Respondents were given the opportunity to suggest other indicators for addition to the framework, with responses totalling 34. Of these responses, suggestions were for indicators to be:

Added: 24

Aligned with other departments: 10

Feedback on alignment with other departments mostly reiterated the desire for LGV to continue working with other departments and agencies to reduce the duplication of reporting. The Essential Service Commission (ESC) and Victorian Grants Commission (VGC) were both highlighted as opportunities to align reporting through a single reporting portal.

Areas suggested for addition:

- Family violence outcomes.

- Review existing economic development indicators.

- Customer service such as time to answer calls, number of complaints to council and time to resolve complaints.

- Parks and open space and recreational facilities.

- Environmental impact indicators such as satisfaction with progress, greenhouse emissions by council.

- Human resources and corporate services.

- Parking management.

Recommendations

33. LGV to work with DPC and DHHS on the best way to report on family violence outcomes

Accepted

34. LGV and Technical Working Group to work with councils and Economic Development Australia to review and recommend economic development indicators to the Steering Committee

Accepted

35. LGV and Technical Working Group to identify relevant areas of state government where suggested areas for addition are currently reported or being developed

Accepted

Recommendations

Process

1. LGV to review the communications plan to make best use of existing and potential communication tools - *Accepted*

Resources

2. LGV to create a suite of specific guidance to assist councils with collating data specific to each service area - *Accepted*

3. LGV to consider survey feedback when updating resources for the 2016/17 reporting period - *Accepted*

Website and Portal

4. LGV to provide more frequent updates via the Council Portal Dashboard - *Accepted*

Indicators

5. Steering Committee to endorse establishment of a Technical Working Group to review and develop indicators - *Accepted*

Aquatic Facilities

6. Steering Committee to Consider recommendations resulting from Aquatics Recreation Victoria's (ARV) review in to facilities reporting, which is currently being undertaken - *Accepted*

Animal Management

7. Technical Working Group to Review viability of adding animal euthanasia indicator and adoption rate (rehoming, rehousing) indicator - *Not accepted*

8. LGV to update AM2 numerator to ensure animals are counted upon being registered and returned to owners - *Accepted*

9. LGV to update AM2 to ensure feral animals are included in the denominator - *Accepted*

10. Technical Working Group to Review AM4 to better measure successful prosecutions - *Accepted*

Food Safety

11. LGV to review reporting alignment with DHHS for all food safety indicators; trial run collection of data directly from DHHS - *Accepted*

12. LGV to meet with Streatrader team to discuss potential to reduce reporting duplication - *Accepted*

Governance

13. Technical Working Group to research potential new indicator to better reflect consideration of matters in confidence - *Accepted*

14. LGV to update guidance to include clearer calculations for councillor attendance - *Accepted*

15. Technical Working Group to update indicator title for G4 to more accurately reflect that the cost per Councillor is being measured - *Accepted*

Libraries

16. Technical Working Group to review title of LB2 indicator to ensure it accurately represents the measure - *Accepted*

17. Technical Working Group to consider the usage of more library facilities in LB4 denominator, such as meeting rooms and PC usage - *Accepted*

Maternal and Child Health

18. Technical Working Group to review MC1 and MC4 for potential improvement to satisfaction measures - *Accepted*

Roads

19. Technical Working Group to review viability of the addition of unsealed road indicators for non-metropolitan councils - *Accepted*

20. LGV to improve guidance for R2 indicator to make clear which roads are below the intervention level - *Accepted*

21. LGV to ascertain whether alignments with VGC data collection can be made to reduce the reporting burden - *Accepted*

Statutory Planning

22. LGV to amend regulations to account for introduction of VicSmart planning applications - *Accepted*

23. LGV to review opportunities for greater PPARS alignment and data provisions - *Accepted*

24. LGV to provide more explicit costs for statutory planning service - *Accepted*

25. Technical Working Group to review changes to VCAT processes to be captured in measure - *Accepted*

Waste Collection

26. LGV to meet with SV to continue to review reporting alignment opportunities - *Accepted*

27. Technical Working Group to review viability of suggested indicators - *Accepted*

28. LGV to update guidance around 'missed' bins and those which were not put out by residents - *Accepted*

Financial Performance

29. LGV to continue to regularly meet with VAGO to maintain dialogue around auditing of the LGPRF - *Accepted*

30. LGV to review template calculations, in line with suggestions - *Accepted*

Sustainable Capacity

31. LGV to create further guidance on sustainable capacity indicators to improve sector knowledge - *Accepted*

32. Technical Working Group to consider the context in which sustainable capacity indicators differ from service area performance - *Accepted*

Other indicators

33. LGV to work with DPC and DHHS on the best way to report on family violence outcomes - *Accepted*

34. LGV and Technical Working Group to work with councils and Economic Development Australia to review and recommend economic development indicators to the Steering Committee - *Accepted*

35. LGV and Technical Working Group to identify relevant areas of state government where suggested areas for addition are currently reported or being developed - *Accepted*

Action

- Steering Committee to endorse above recommendations

- Steering Committee to assist LGV in the establishment of a Technical Working Group

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