



Strengthening Workforce Capability

A capability framework for the Victorian
Community Sector

26 September 2007

Contact Details

Precision Consultancy

Suite 2/Level 5
167 – 169 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone: 03 9606 0118
Fax: 03 9606 0119
Email: info@precisionconsultancy.com.au
Website: www.precisionconsultancy.com.au

ABN: 30 056 617 728

Contents

Background	4
The Victorian Community Sector	4
Recruitment and retention	5
Turnover, attracting and retaining staff	6
Wage and salary disparity	6
Skills for Working Effectively.....	7
Leadership/management development	8
Volunteers	8
Key Workforce Challenges – Summary	8
Principles for the way forward	9
Capabilities for future community services – a possible model	10
Capabilities.....	11
Core capabilities for joined up services.....	11
Linking capabilities to qualifications	12
Certification.....	12
Advantages of a capability framework.....	13
Some models from other sectors and other countries:	14
Processes to develop the Capability Framework	16
Proposed Methodology	16
Appendix I	17
Appendix II	18
Bibliography	19

Background

The Stronger Community Organisations Project was established to look at the trends and challenges facing community organisations now and into the future, and to develop approaches for improving the capacity of the sector. It sets out to provide advice on how government, the community sector and business can work better together to meet those challenges. One of its terms of references was to look at workforce and leadership development – how organisations can attract and retain skilled and qualified staff, both paid and volunteers.

The purpose of this paper is to scan the sector in relation to these specific issues, and to propose a possible way forward. The paper argues for a radical re-think about how to approach continuing workforce issues, in relation to recruitment, retention and career paths. A new approach is required to create and retain a professional workforce able to deal with the complexity of client and service issues and to provide quality services in a joined up services model.

The paper proposes that a capability framework be developed to cover all client service positions and the management of client services within the sector. It also proposes that this capability framework be utilised to recruit, train, retain and reward staff, that it be linked to formal qualifications in both the vocational education and training and the higher education sector, and that recognition of existing capabilities through a process of formal recognition and reward be implemented. It proposes a model and some detail of what a capability framework could look like, and could achieve, and provides some case studies from other industries and other countries to provide the reader with some implemented examples.

The Victorian Community Sector

SCOP defines key characteristics of community organizations as those operating for a social or community mission, not carried on for the profit or gain of individual members and being self governing. This definition would include community arts and sport and recreational bodies. This paper focuses on a significant subset of those community organisations – those that need a professional, trained and qualified and paid workforce to deliver services on behalf of government. Although acknowledging that significant work is done in the sector by volunteers, the approach of this paper is to look at the issues of recruitment, development and retention of the paid workforce.

Community Sector Organisations (CSOs) provide the following services:

- Aged care
- Childcare
- Children and family support
- Disability
- Domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol
- Emergency relief (including Financial Counselling and Gambling)

- Education (Neighbourhood houses providing adult training, childcare)
- Housing and homelessness support
- Information and support
- Mental Health
- Multicultural services (including Migrant Resource Centres)
- Youth.

Employment Support Services, although not directly funded by the state government are a very important part of the sector and a crucial component of the 'joining up' agenda. In Australia, government funding continues to be the major source of finance of the not for profit sector, with about 80% of funding to Victorian organisations provided by government. CSOs often complement direct government service provision in health, education, employment and community services.

Recruitment and retention

The 'Australian Council of Social Services survey' (2007) indicated that of the 63 Victorian respondents to the question about recruitment and retention, 59% indicated that they had experienced difficulty attracting appropriately qualified staff in the past year compared to 41% who had no difficulty. A small Not for Profit survey report (51 organisations across Australia) conducted by Challenge Consulting Australia found that almost all organisations involved in the survey experienced difficulties in sourcing and recruiting quality staff across a range of professional functions.

While difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff are likely to affect many sectors in coming years, the influence of an ageing population, and increased participation of women in the paid workforce are noted as particularly influential to the community service sector. It has been noted that the ageing population is likely to result in increased demand for many of the services offered through the community services sector and the impact of increased participation of women in the workforce is resulting in a situation where work previously performed in 'the home' is now being sought from services.

Some specific issues have also been identified as influencing difficulty in recruitment and retention of staff in the community services sector - salaries, complexity of work, geographic issues, and limited career path.

In terms of salaries, it has been noted that it is difficult to attract staff into community service roles when salaries in other professions were much higher, and that people were more likely to choose to work in other fields – such as government or the private sector - where similar work was available at a higher salary. A detailed analysis of the difference between pay rates for similar work and the consequences of this for the community sector is provided in the submission by Hanover Welfare Services to SCOP.

The second issue contributing to difficulties in recruitment and retention is the complexity of work facing staff in the community sector. It has been noted that the complexity of issues facing clients means that the work undertaken in the community services sector is difficult, challenging and stressful. Some agencies believe that it would prove beneficial to clients if they recruited from a wider range of disciplines: that the different skill sets offered by nurses, teachers, occupational therapists and other allied health professionals etc could provide clients with access to alternative and innovative approaches to address their needs. However to attract workers from these other disciplines, potential employees would need to see that their skills they hold have application in the community sector and that there are career paths they can access.

Similar to other sectors, and in particular, health, recruitment and retention of staff within rural and regional areas of the state has also been identified as an issue for the community services

sector. The Health and Community labour force, 2001 report and the Regional Skills Shortage Survey Project, Department for Victorian Communities, both identify significant gaps in the community sector workforce in regional areas. The DVC report highlights that welfare and community workers, special care workers and child care workers were included in the range of occupation types most difficult to fill in regional Victoria.

Another issue that has been highlighted as associated with recruitment and retention is absence of clear career paths within organisations in the community sector. While some of the larger organisations within the sector are better placed to offer a career path, smaller organisations typically have limited opportunities for professionals to move into higher roles and assume different responsibilities. This is considered to be a factor influencing retention within the sector, with staff moving into the larger organisations, or other sectors to pursue a career, and expand their set of skills and experience.

Turnover, attracting and retaining staff

There is a widespread perception that the community sector has higher levels of difficulty in attracting and retaining staff than its key competitors for staff; hospitals, government and the private sector. Reportedly this is because the pay is lower, the work is more complex and demanding and opportunities for advancement and promotion are less obvious.

Staff turnover is a function of the number of staff leaving over the number of staff employed. In 2004-5, respondent agencies employed 14,991 full time equivalent staff and lost 2,391 full time equivalent staff. Average staff turnover across respondent agencies to the 2006 ACOSS survey is therefore equivalent to 15.9%, which is high compared to the all Australian industry average reported by DEWR of between 10% and 12%¹

Turnover varies between service types and is affected by many issues. CEOs of some large Victorian community sector organisations report that turnover for some areas is as high as 30%. These areas include social workers, general case workers, support or tenancy workers as well as in the middle to senior management band of larger organisations.

A study conducted by Hanover Welfare Services in 2006 examined recruitment and retention trends in four Victorian non government organisations. It found that an average turnover rate of all staff was 20.93% with variations by employee type. Every respondent organisation surveyed reported a higher number of employee exits for the 'service' employee type than any other employee type (the other two grouping were 'managers' and 'administrative').

What constitutes unacceptably high turnover is a complex issue. Some turnover is clearly desirable in providing job opportunities and ensuring new ideas and approaches are brought into organisations. Excessive turnover on the other hand may be a sign of job pressures and insufficient support for employees and can lead to a lack of continuity and corporate knowledge within organisations. Turnover is also expensive, especially where skilled and experienced staff leave and new staff need to be trained.²

Wage and salary disparity

Wage disparity between community sector organisation employed staff and those employed directly in similar roles in other areas continues to increase. DHS, Centrelink, Health Centres and local government all offer a significantly better salaries.

This makes it extremely difficult for organisations to recruit staff to deliver increasingly complex services in a very tight labour market when funding for those services will only allow for salary payments \$10,000 to \$15,000 below the current market rate. Although community sector

¹ DEWR Job Outlook June 2004

² Australian Community Sector Survey 2006: ACOSS Paper 143

organisations have some advantages in terms of rebating FBT, these advantages are shared with many of the employers with whom they compete.

Skills for Working Effectively

In addition to issues related to recruitment and retention, the sector faces challenges in seeing that staff have the skills and knowledge required to respond to changing client needs and service delivery models.

The increasing complexity of issues facing clients, and new, more holistic, service delivery approaches are significant. A broader range of skills, and higher order skill sets, are required to meet those needs. The complexity of needs facing clients is highlighted in a number of settings. In recognition of the fact that clients have a broad range of (cross program) needs, public policy in human services has moved towards encouraging mechanisms for more 'holistic' responses for clients involving greater partnerships between services and person centred service delivery responses. Stakeholders have indicated that these trends have broadened the role and skill set required of workers. Staff in community services now require a wider range of skills in terms of linking, coordinating and responding to clients in a way that is requires a cross disciplinary approach.

The traditional focus has been on separate 'professional silos'; the main limitation of this approach is that client needs do not sit within the boundaries of these silos. Staff need additional skills to respond to clients' multiple and most pressing needs and avoid sending clients on a merry-go-round of referrals. Essentially staff need cross-sectoral knowledge and flexibility and transferable skills to address clients' real needs. All this has implications for training and development. It is anticipated that in the future organisations will need to employ a greater diversity of professionals in the sector to better respond to clients' needs.

Currently training focuses on pre-service training and/or training geared towards a required vocational education and training (VET) or higher education qualification. For example aged care and disability employ many more people with VET qualifications, whilst typically mental health and homelessness employ more staff with higher education qualifications. Yet clients may be old and homeless or have physical and mental health disabilities.

At present the links between qualifications and skill sets required for different areas of work are unclear; there is no comprehensive training approach that covers all sectors and all occupational groups. There is a clear separation in the industry between those with VET qualifications (mainly Certificate III or IV qualifications linked to specific sectors through the Community Services Training Package) and those with professional qualifications through universities. It would be helpful to look more holistically at workforce skill needs, through the lens of client needs, rather than the arbitrary splits arising from professional silos or educational sectors.

Across Australian there has been an increasing focus on generic skills (sometimes termed 'employability skills'). The skills that both universities and the VET system are endeavouring to develop in their graduates, as well as discipline specific skills are:

- communication skills
- problem-solving skills
- initiative and enterprise skills
- self-management skills
- technology skills
- team work skills
- initiative and enterprise skills
- planning and organising skills
- learning skills

Employability skills research has shown that employers across all industry sectors believe that strong generic capabilities are required to underpin all types of work and that individuals need to work on effectively integrating these skills with their technical or discipline-specific skills. Individuals with strong generic skills are more likely to get the jobs they want. They are also more likely to satisfy the needs of employers and clients or customers. Organisations like the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and peak bodies for universities and VET are working to raise the awareness and importance of these skills. It seems likely that the community sector could also benefit from drawing on these skills in recruitment, development and other HR practices.

Leadership/management development

It has been noted that staff working in management/leadership roles within community sector organisations do not necessarily have relevant training and skills to undertake management roles effectively. This is by no means unique to the community services sector as few team leaders or middle managers receive any training in relation to management before they take up that initial role.

Staff in management roles often have a 'practitioner' background, and have moved into more senior roles because of their skills as a practitioner, rather than as a manager or leader. They may not have the skills to effectively manage/support the governance arrangements for the organisation, or to lead and develop the organisation and champion organisational goals/issues and activities strategically. Some quality training and development opportunities do exist to address these needs, but development opportunities need to be accessed both before and after individuals take up management roles.

The unpublished Hanover study also included an extensive literature review which highlighted the importance of sound management in retaining staff. Research from all Australian industry sectors has suggested that the biggest factor in high turnover is poor management. Staff need managers who are positive role models, actively mentor staff and demonstrate that good performance will facilitate career progression.

Volunteers

Volunteers make a significant contribution to the work of the community sector. A Department of Victorian Communities 2005 survey found that 41% of Victorian volunteers in some way to community, sporting, cultural, education of other organisations. Women and older people living in rural and regional areas are more likely to volunteer in general, and women are more likely to volunteer in the community sector. This paper focuses on the paid workforce but it should be noted that the capability framework proposed later in the paper could allow for some training and development linkages to be made with volunteers. The changing nature of volunteers, particularly those looking for volunteer work as a way of building their own career prospects in other industries, suggests that there may be an opportunity to make links with formal training.

Key Workforce Challenges – Summary

Attracting and retaining staff

Salary disparity

Professional silos and lack of career pathways, especially for experienced practitioners

Lack of agreed consistent standards for 'joined up services' across the sector

Managing with limited resources in a climate of change

Management development and leadership skills

Principles for the way forward

It is proposed that a Community Services Capability Framework would be the most effective means of addressing the workforce challenges facing the community sector over the next fifteen years.

A capability framework will make the work of the sector more transparent, assist with clarifying performance outcomes for job roles and show the links between skills used when working with different types of clients and services. Additionally it should assist with attracting more new workers – an articulated capability framework will profile the work of the sector, leading to a more positive image and a sense of opportunities and career paths.

The objectives of the proposed framework are:

1. An improvement in the overall quality and effectiveness of service provision across the sector and improved client outcomes
2. An improved capacity to provide necessary professional development and learning across the sector
3. Improved career paths, recognition and remuneration for community sector employees
4. Improved and enhanced professional and management practice across the sector
5. Improved recruitment and retention as a result of the above.

Features

The proposed framework should have a strong focus on client outcomes. It should be practical and offer ease of implementation so that organisations and individuals are encouraged to utilise it. Essentially it will enable organisations to articulate clear links between staff performance, career progression, remuneration and rewards.

Another important feature of the framework is that it will allow cross-sectoral career pathways and movement between types of service delivery and types of clients. The framework will apply to the diverse range of community organisations in Victoria; they may have different governance and management structures and varying levels of sophistication in their human resource functions. In addition the framework will provide for recognition of capabilities attained on-the-job as well as formal qualifications.

For joined up services to work effectively it is necessary to make the required staff capabilities explicit, design ways in which to judge at what level individuals have those capabilities and for government and community sector employers to develop ways to remunerate staff appropriately.

Capabilities for future community services – a possible model

The model presented below rests on some assumptions:

1. A model which shows the required skills and knowledge required for work in different areas of the sector will make career paths more transparent.
2. A model which shows the competencies required will make it easier to recruit and train staff.
3. A model linking capabilities to job roles will make recognition of prior learning easier to apply.
4. Necessary funding will be provided to develop and implement a Community Services Capability Framework
5. The existence of Lead Practitioners in organisations will increase the quality and effectiveness of joined up service delivery leading to better outcomes for clients, government and the broader community.

Community Services Capability Framework A possible model



The diagram on the previous page includes three levels of practitioner. Whilst further work would need to be undertaken to establish levels, available information indicates that staff in client services need to see career paths with recognition of their practitioner skills (traditionally good practitioners are often encouraged to become managers and there needs to be a process for encouraging the retention of high level practitioners in this role).

Capabilities

Capabilities are defined here as measurable characteristics of an individual related to work success. It includes skills and knowledge and the application of those in the context of the specific work. Behavioural indicators are used to articulate the expected work behaviours and outcomes, and can be set at different levels to provide benchmarks against which different 'levels', such as practitioner, senior practitioner or lead practitioner can be set.

The framework above sets out a number of aspects of a proposed capability model for the sector. It is not meant to be either prescriptive or detailed, but rather to explore some possible ways of linking required capabilities to job functions.

Core capabilities for joined up services

These would presumably include capabilities such as assessing and delivering services to clients with complex needs, developing and maintaining networks with representatives of other related organisations. Assuming this is the model for the way future services will be delivered, everyone working in the sector would need these core capabilities.

Specific client groups – specialist capabilities

These capabilities would be about the specific skills and knowledge required to work effectively with specific client groups. All practitioners in the sector would need these skills for the client groups with whom they regularly worked. A practitioner would need the basic skills for working competently with the client group, while the advanced practitioner would have more specialised skills, and the lead practitioner be an expert in that area.

Specific service type – specialist capabilities

These capabilities would be about the specific skills and knowledge required to work effectively in specific service areas. All practitioners in the sector would need these skills for the service type or types with which they regularly worked. A practitioner would need the basic skills for working competently within that service area, while the advanced practitioner would have more specialised skills, and the lead practitioner be an expert in that field.

Manager capabilities

These capabilities would be about the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in managing different aspects of the organisation. They relate to both organisational or business management and people management. Team leaders would require some management capabilities, but more senior managers and the CEO would require a larger breadth of competency as well as a more sophisticated depth of skill in the management competencies

Practitioner, Senior Practitioner and Lead Practitioner

The proposed framework indicates three classifications of practitioner. At this stage this is for demonstration purposes only. Whether there were two, three or four levels could be determined in the detailed development stage. However, it will be essential to identify these

roles, and to identify the core and the range of specialist capabilities required for each classification. It is the linking of these roles to specified capabilities that will enable the framework to be effective as a recruitment, retention and career management tool. The Hanover Welfare Services Advanced Skills Practitioner provides one possible model, and is detailed in a Case Study at Appendix II. The rating of different levels of practitioner would need to be determined but one Senior Practitioner for each 5 Practitioners and one Lead Practitioner for each 15 Practitioners would be a reasonable starting point.

Linking capabilities to qualifications

Capabilities as defined above could be detailed, and the results used to determine training requirements and therefore qualifications for each of the areas defined in the competency framework. It would be possible to 'map' the identified capabilities against existing qualifications and to negotiate with training providers – both in the VET sector and in Higher Education for the provision of appropriate qualifications.

Australia has a national set of qualifications delivered across the schools, vocational education and training sector and universities, known as the Australian Qualifications Framework. The Australian Qualifications Framework (commonly known as the AQF) is a unified system of national qualifications in schools, vocational education and training (TAFEs and private providers) and the higher education sector (mainly universities). The AQF was developed under instruction from State, Territory and Commonwealth Education and Training Ministers meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). Qualifications in the AQF range from the VCE to a PhD. Many positions within the community sector in Victoria require individuals to hold specific qualifications, ranging from various Certificate level qualifications. (e.g. Certificate IV in Disability Services) to degree qualifications (eg. Bachelor of Social Work).

Over the last fifteen years the Vocational Education and Training sector in Australia has progressively moved to linking its qualifications to specific sets of competencies. Units of competencies which are really a more narrowly and detailed defined capability, are combined together to form qualifications. Individuals undertake training based on the competencies and are assessed directly against the competencies, either after training, or before it through a Recognition of Prior Learning process. The RPL process requires the individual to present evidence that they are already competent and hence do not require the training.

A perception has developed over that time that any competency based qualification is a VET qualification, and that no university qualifications are based on competencies. This has led to an erroneous belief that the value of competency based training is recognised for blue collar traditional trade areas, but that the professions do not embrace the approach. Many professions use competencies or capabilities as a way of framing professional recognition or certification programs.

Certification

Usually certification is taken to mean the recognition by a professional body, licensing, regulatory authority or other group, that an individual has met certain requirements for membership or approval to practice. It is different from a qualification in that a qualification is awarded by a recognised educational institution. In this context certification could be seen more broadly as a process within the proposed framework that would enable individuals with certain qualifications to be '*certified*' as for example, a Lead Practitioner. Certification in this case could lead to an increase in the overall compensation and benefits package. Certification usually demands some additional requirements over and above qualifications based on competencies. These often involve a set time period of experience, within different work contexts, such as the specialist client group or service type, and engagement in continued professional development activities. They could also involve evidence drawn from performance management reports.

Advantages of a capability framework

At an individual practitioner level, the completed framework would provide information about:

- the skills and attributes (capabilities) required for current and future positions
- gaps in current capabilities and those they may wish to develop for career progression
- the focus for discussions with their manager about their development and career needs within the organisation
- how to develop capabilities useful across the community sector thus enhancing career progression opportunities within the sector

At a management level, the capability framework can help identify:

- the capabilities required of practitioners in the organisation
- the capabilities and behaviours they need to demonstrate as managers
- consistent selection criteria for positions
- benchmarks to aid in managing performance issues
- capability gaps
- people that demonstrate potential and inform succession planning

At an organisational level, the capability framework can help identify:

- the capabilities required for the business now and into the future
- changing priorities and gaps in learning and development programs
- a clear basis for workforce and succession planning
- consistent selection criteria
- a clearer understanding of career progression and facilitate career planning

At a sector level, the capability framework can help:

- retain skills in the sector
- improve overall sector capability
- increase efficiencies in learning and development provision
- provide a common language for HR management

At a government level, the capability framework can help:

- describe work practices and their relationship to client outcomes
- establish service benchmarks in relation to quality and effectiveness of service

Some models from other sectors and other countries:

Capability or competency frameworks are not new. They are utilised by: professional bodies (e.g. Engineers Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors) government agencies (e.g. Department of Defence, Medicare); statutory bodies (e.g. VicRoads); the VET system for qualifications. All Australian universities now also have articulated graduate attributes, which can be seen as a form of competency framework.

Many large companies also develop their own competency or capability frameworks. The practice is seen to provide a method for ensuring quality and consistency across different sites and in some cases, countries. Examples of companies with capability frameworks include: SAAB, Western Mining Corporation, the Coles Group, BHP Biliton, National Australia Bank and Mayne Health. Typically companies will not make their competency frameworks publicly available as they are regarded as providing a competitive edge.

Set out below are some brief explanations of competency or capability frameworks which contain aspects of what is proposed in this paper. In each case a website is provided as a link to further information about the particular framework or approach.

Australian Institute of Project Management

The Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) is the peak body for project management in Australia.

AIPM's role is to improve the knowledge, skills and competence of project team members, project managers and project directors. AIPM operates and controls a professional certification system for project managers, which is recognised internationally. The system is based on three 'levels' of project manager, each linked to a set of competencies which must be demonstrated for that level. The competencies are generic in that they are not dependent on industry, or context, but are specific to project management. For instance, the same project management competencies apply to a building project manager, as to one working on human resource projects in the human services industry.

AIPM stresses the difference between a **certification** (issued by a professional body) and a **qualification** (issued by a university or TAFE). AIPM have developed eight project management competencies, each of which has three levels. These link to Project Team Member QPP (for those who have been certified at Level 4, Qualified Project Practitioner), RPM (for those who have been certified at Level 5, Registered Project Manager) MPD (for those who have been certified at Level 6; Master Project Director). The levels referred to, link to levels within the Australian Qualifications Framework. AIPM has mapped existing courses, both from the Vocational Education and Training sector and from universities, to their competency framework, and endorses courses which meet their requirements.

For further detail see www.aipm.org.au

Singapore - Community Services Sector Workforce Skills and Qualifications Framework (WSQ)

Since 2003 Singapore has begun a process of identifying workforce skills (competencies) and linking those together to form recognised qualifications. The process takes an industry wide approach, attempting to identify all occupations within an industry, ranging from unskilled labour to the CEO level. In addition because this approach exists across all sectors, there is high transferability of skills both within and across sectors. Competencies are identified through subject matter expert groups and validated extensively with industry. Curriculum Training and Assessment Guides are then developed for each competency to guide prospective training providers. The main drivers for the system wide change in Singapore have been the late 90s Asian financial crisis, the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector to China, the rise of Singapore

as a commercial hub for Asia, and the ageing population. Particularly because of the demographic changes taking place in Singapore, the Community Services Sector was one of the priority areas for development. A brief schematic overview of the WSQ map is attached as Appendix I.

The Community Services WSQ details have recently been completed and the Singapore government has various incentive schemes in place to encourage training providers – at university, polytechnic and private college levels to offer the qualifications, and to provide incentives to both individuals and their employers to engage in the process.

For further detail see www.wda.gov.sg

United Kingdom – Public Sector IT Organisations Competency Framework

The Government IT Competency Framework covers the IT skills and knowledge required by everyone in the public sector with a role related to IT. It acts as a focus for IT professionals across government – both central and local government and agencies in fields such as health and policing. It seeks to support the business transformation of government by supporting complex joined up services. The Chief Information Officer Council developed a Government IT Competency framework linking to the broader industry framework which in turn links to recognised qualifications. The Core IT skills framework includes 78 skills and 5 levels of expertise. The competencies are defined at practitioner, senior practitioner, lead practitioner, manager and Chief Information Officer roles. Organisations can use the framework to design work roles, and as part of the performance appraisal or recruitment process for IT professionals. The framework aims to create professional communities based around the specific IT area – eg Service Delivery.

For further detail see www.cio.gov.uk

Victorian Public Service

Two Victorian Government initiatives, the unified VPS Career Structure and the e-Recruitment System, provided the impetus for the creation and endorsement of the Victorian Public Service Capability Framework in 2005. The VPS Non-Executive Career Structure Classification provides 6 levels and two Value Ranges. The State Services Authority was set up in 2004 with the brief to

- identify opportunities to improve the delivery and integration of government services and report on service delivery outcomes and standards;
- promote high standards of integrity and conduct in the public sector;
- strengthen the professionalism and adaptability of the public sector; and
- promote high standards of governance, accountability and performance for public entities,

It recently published The Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework – an introduction for public sector agencies, in which it reports that positive impacts have been demonstrated from the capability framework in terms of:

- Improving the quality of recruits through capability based key selection criteria in job descriptions
- Enhancing individual performance by providing a more objective tool for describing the skills and behaviours required for successful performance

- Retaining high performers through improved career planning and progression, as well as better targeted learning and development activities; and
- Aiding workforce planning through more robust analysis of the internal and external workforces and better job design.

For more detail see www.dpc.vic.gov.au

Processes to develop the Capability Framework

In order to develop the framework it would be necessary to identify the key features of a Community Sector Capability Framework and to detail the occupational areas to be covered, the required capabilities and the packaging of those capabilities into qualifications, and the linking of those qualifications to education and training providers.

The **Community Sector Capability Framework** should have the following features:

- take a whole-of-sector approach
- focus on future models of service provision
- focus on work functions and work outcomes
- apply to work at all levels of client services, including management

Proposed Methodology

A five part-process is proposed to develop the capability framework. A twelve-month timeframe would allow time for consultation and revision and provide ample time for stakeholder buy-in, however timelines could be condensed if required. The five stages would include:

- Planning and research
- Industry consultation
- Industry validation
- Qualification and certification consultations
- Finalisation and reporting

The output would be a fully detailed capability framework with qualifications linked to the determined occupational structures or levels of the capability framework.

Appendix I

Singapore Community Sector Workforce Skills and Qualification Map

See attached

Appendix II

Case Study: Advanced Skills Practitioner – Hanover

One example of one area in which this could apply, is that used by Hanover Welfare Services to develop the Advanced Skills Practitioner role. Hanover provides staff who do not wish to take on co-ordinator / team leader / program management roles an opportunity to continue their work with clients at an advanced level and receive special acknowledgement and a higher salary for their greater experience and increased skill levels.

This role had as its aims:

- the strengthening of existing professional practice
- better outcomes for clients
- the ongoing evolution of better service delivery across Hanover
- the retention of skilled staff by offering an alternative career path with higher levels of remuneration
- improved productivity.

Advanced Skills Practitioners are also expected to have developed knowledge of supplementary services and other service sectors and therefore play an important role as secondary consultants and resource people for negotiations with other services, thus working on the 'joined up services' approach.

The Hanover ASP uses a competency profile developed from the Community Services Training Package, a set of nationally recognised competencies and qualifications within the Vocational Education and Training sector. Applicants for the role of ASP have their competencies assessed through the development of a portfolio of evidence which is then assessed by a TAFE assessor.

Although the Hanover approach is limited to a specific role and to the Vocational Education and Training sector and the qualifications available within that sector, there is no reason why the model could not be expanded to other roles in the framework diagram, and why partnerships could not be forged with higher education providers as well as, or instead of, TAFE providers.

Bibliography

Australian Council of Social Service (2005), *Australian Community Sector Survey*

Australian Council of Social Service (2006), *Australian Community Sector Survey*

Australian Council of Social Service (2007), *Australian Community Sector Survey*

Chief Information Officer Council 2007, *Competency Framework*, accessed 21 September 2007 [http://www.cio.gov.uk/itprofession/competency_framework/framework.asp].

Community Sector Investment Fund (2004), *Advisory Committee Final Report to the Minister for Community Services*

Department of Human Services, Home and Community Care (2003), *Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project: Final Report*, State of Victoria

Ensuring the Sustainability of Victoria's Third Sector: an Issues and Proposal Paper, 2006

Hanover Welfare Services (2007), *Submission: Stronger Community Organisations Project*

J. Barraket (2006), *Community Sector Sustainability: Research Evidence and Public Policy Implications*, Sector Sustainability Task Group

Office for the Commission for Public Employment, *the South Australian Public Sector, Executive Leadership Competency Framework*, Government of South Australia

State Services Authority (2006), *The Victoria, public employment capability framework: an introduction for public sector agencies*, State Government of Victoria States Services Authority

VICRIAD, ACROD & CIDA (2003), *Victorian Disability NGO Workforce Analysis Project*, VICRAID Victoria.

Victorian Council of Social Service (2007), *Submission to State Services Authority Non-Profit Regulatory Review*

Victorian Council of Social Service (2007), *Submission to Stronger Community Organisations Project*

W.S.Couche (2004), *Advanced Skills Practitioner: Implementation Handbook, Part I Information and Guidelines*, Hanover Welfare Services