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## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SKILLS SHORTAGES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

As advised in Circular 05-19, the department has established a taskforce to develop and implement strategies to assist councils in addressing workforce shortages. The Professional Skills and Training Shortages Taskforce includes representatives from the LGSA, LGMA, Department of Education and Training, councils, peak industry bodies and education providers.

The Taskforce was established to assist councils in creating pro-active approaches to address the skills shortages currently being experienced across all employment sectors. The department recognises that councils, particularly in rural and regional areas, are suffering from the impact of skills shortages in a number of professional and para-professional areas.

The Taskforce has developed, and is implementing, a number of strategies to:

- market local government as an interesting and attractive place to work
- ensure that relevant training needs are met
- provide advice and support to councils.

As announced by the Minister for Local Government at the Local Government Managers Australia Annual Conference, the department has joined with the Department of Planning to establish a Local Government Skills Shortages Scholarship Program, the key objectives of which are to:

- “seed” councils in the development of their own scholarship initiatives
- help councils to address skills shortages in the short term
- encourage the development of relationships between councils and tertiary education providers
- create awareness of Local Government as a career opportunity amongst students
- promote employment opportunities in skills shortage areas
- promote local government as an employer to tertiary institutions.

In accordance with these objectives, funds will be awarded to successful councils (or groups of councils), rather than to individual students, to support them in establishing their own scholarship programs.

Councils wishing to apply for the scholarship funds are therefore required to develop their own program and to contribute to the cost of that program. Funding will be awarded to successful councils based on the extent to which their proposed program meets the program objectives and the department's selection criteria.

Two types of scholarships are available:

*General Scholarship* – These scholarships will be available for any professional and/or para-professional area where the council is able to demonstrate a skills shortage. They will be funded jointly by the Department of Local Government and the successful councils. Six General Scholarships will be awarded to councils in 2006-07.

*Planning Scholarship* - This program will be funded jointly by the Department of Planning and the successful councils, and will be targeted to the planning profession only. Five Planning Scholarships will be awarded to councils in 2006-07.

A program outline and application form for both scholarships is attached.

Councils are invited to complete the application form and submit it to the department by **Friday, 27 October 2006**. Councils may wish to submit a joint application with other councils or through their ROC.

All applications must be signed by a sponsor. The sponsor should be the General Manager of the council or, for a group of councils, one of the General Managers of the member councils. The sponsor will be responsible for complying with the terms of the scholarship program.

A panel will assess all applications and councils will be advised of the outcome of their application.

For further information, please contact Mark Hely, Principal Policy Officer, on telephone 02 4428 4176 or via email to [mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au).



**Garry Payne**  
**Director General**

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SKILLS SHORTAGES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

## **1. Purpose of the Program**

To increase the number of tertiary students entering employment in NSW local government in areas of acute skills shortage and to raise awareness of local government as an employer.

## **2. Background**

The NSW Government recognises that local councils, particularly in rural and regional areas, are suffering from the impact of skills shortages in a number of professional and para-professional areas.

The most acute shortage has been identified in the area of land use planners, although there is also a significant shortage of engineers, environmental health officers, finance professionals and community and childcare workers.

## **3. Program objectives**

The key objectives of the Local Government Scholarship Program are as follows:

1. To “seed” councils in the development of their own scholarship initiatives.
2. Assist councils to address their skills shortages in the short term.
3. Encourage the development of relationships between councils and tertiary education providers.
4. Create awareness of Local Government as a career opportunity amongst students.
5. Promote employment opportunities in skills shortage areas.
6. Promote local government as an employer to tertiary institutions.

## **4. Scholarship types**

Two types of scholarships are available:

### *General Scholarship*

These scholarships are available for any professional and/or para-professional area where the council is able to demonstrate a skills shortage. Six General Scholarships will be awarded in 2006-07.

### *Planning Scholarship*

These scholarships are being funded by the Department of Planning, targeted to the planning profession only. Five Planning Scholarships will be awarded in 2006-07.

## **5. Program structure**

In accordance with the Program objectives, the department has structured the program to ensure maximum flexibility for councils in meeting their skills shortage needs.

Scholarships will therefore be awarded to councils, or groups of councils (eg ROCs)<sup>1</sup>, rather than to individual students. Successful councils will be responsible for allocating the scholarships to specific individuals and administering their program in accordance with their program proposal.

This approach is aimed at creating an ongoing culture of scholarship support among councils and ensuring council 'ownership' of their program.

The broad structure of the department's program includes the following requirements:

- Scholarship selection will be based on the quality of the program proposed by the council, in terms of meeting the program objectives.
- Scholarships will be funded jointly between the Department of Local Government or the Department of Planning and the successful council/s.
- The Department of Local Government or the Department of Planning will fund a maximum \$2,500 per successful council.
- Funding will be for 2006-07 only.
- Funding will be awarded to the successful council and administered by the council in accordance with its proposed program.
- Councils will be able to select the tertiary institution to partner with, and the courses to be targeted (ie degree, diploma or certificate). Appendix A provides a list of relevant university scholarship contacts to assist in this regard.

## **6. Scholarship funding**

The Department of Local Government or the Department of Planning will provide funding of \$2,500 to each successful council. Councils will be required to at least match this funding.

Councils are free to determine the form that their contribution will take and the number of scholarships they may wish to offer. A few possible examples include:

- Council A – offers one scholarship valued at \$5,000 (department funding of \$2,500, council funding of \$2,500).
- Council B – offers one scholarship with a cash value of \$2,500 (to be funded by the department), plus accommodation and/or living expenses

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of the program and the application form, "council" includes groups of councils, such as ROCs.

for the period of work experience (to be funded by the council - valued at a minimum of \$2,500).

- Council C – offers three scholarships, each valued at \$3,000, giving a total cost of \$9,000 (department funding of \$2,500, council funding of \$6,500).

## **7. Commencement of the Scholarships**

Scholarship funds will be awarded to successful councils in November 2006.

### *General Program*

While the Program does not prescribe when successful councils must award their scholarship/s to students and at what year of study they should be targeted, councils should aim to minimise the time lag between payment of the scholarship and entry of the student into the workforce. This approach is designed to maximise the potential 'return' to councils in the short term.

Councils could target their scholarship/s to students who will complete their studies in 2007. This would allow the council to develop an ongoing relationship with the recipient/s, including work experience, during the course of 2007.

For councils targeting their program at certificate or diploma level students, it may be more appropriate to award the scholarship/s at the commencement of studies.

### *Planning Program*

For the Planning Scholarship, the Department of Planning encourages councils to use the program either:

- As an incentive to attract new people into the planning profession (i.e. by encouraging people to commence a planning degree); or
- As an added incentive for current planning students to undertake the workplace component of their studies with the council. This approach may be particularly attractive for rural councils.

## **8. Status of Scholarships in the Workplace**

In order to maximise the benefits for all participants, councils need to consider broader issues including:

- Work experience for the student as a condition of the scholarship payment<sup>2</sup>; and
- Ongoing employment for the student.

In doing so, councils need to ensure that such work experience is not used to fill current established positions.

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<sup>2</sup> For the Planning Scholarships, this could relate to the compulsory workplace component of studies, which must be in the form of paid employment.

Similarly, any arrangements for ongoing employment must conform to the merit principles of recruitment, as required under the relevant Local Government Award.

## **9. Linkages with other Programs**

The Scholarship Program is designed to complement other existing recruitment programs, such as the LGMA's Graduate Recruitment Program, which the Taskforce strongly endorses.

Further, the Program should not be seen as a replacement or alternative to existing Commonwealth and State Government training incentives, such as the Existing Worker and New Entrant Traineeships and Apprenticeship Programs.

## **10. Responsibilities**

All parties in the Scholarship Program have responsibilities that must be adhered to. These are:

Department of

Local Government:

- Seek applications for scholarships from councils
- Select the successful councils through the selection panel
- Provide advice to councils on the success, or otherwise, of their application for the scholarship
- Arrange for the relevant funding to be provided to the successful councils
- Liaise with the Department of Planning re the planning scholarship
- Conduct a review of the scholarship program
- Provide feedback to councils on the results of the review

Councils:

- Develop a council program
- Liaise with the tertiary institution to arrange the placement of a student
- Select the student/s under a merit based process
- Facilitate payment of the scholarship to the student
- Arrange the work placement for the scholarship
- Provide the appropriate support and skills opportunities for the student
- Provide the appropriate induction for the student
- Complete the appropriate paperwork to obtain and review the DLG scholarship program
- Participate in promotional campaigns to highlight local government employment as requested by the DLG
- Participate in the review of the program

Tertiary

Institutions:

- Liaise with the relevant council on prospective scholarship students
- Promote the scholarship program to students, where

councils have indicated an interest in obtaining a student

- Provide the appropriate support to the student/s to ensure the scholarship is as successful as possible
- Participate in the review of the program

Students:

- Actively participate in the scholarship
- Participate in promotional campaigns as identified by DLG and the council
- Participate in the work placement component of the scholarship
- Abide by any other terms specified under council's scholarship program agreement
- Participate in the review of the program

## **11. Review of the Program**

The Department of Local Government and Department of Planning will be reviewing the program at the end of the first year of operation.

Successful councils will therefore be required to submit a brief report to the Department of Local Government outlining the extent to which the program has met the council's, the tertiary institution's and the student's expectations and needs.

Further information regarding the review will be provided to successful councils.

## **12. Council applications – Selection Criteria**

Councils are required to complete the attached application form (Appendix B) setting out a program proposal. Councils may attach additional information if there is insufficient space in the application form.

Councils' program proposal should include the following:

- Area of skill shortage(s) to be addressed, including strategies the council has already undertaken to reduce the impact of its skills shortages
- Proposed funding arrangements (refer to Section 6 above)
- Scholarship commencement (refer to Section 7 above)
- The criteria upon which you propose to award the scholarship/s (eg academic achievement, usual resident of LGA, social justice target group)
- Details of support to be provided to the student, such as on-the-job training and development opportunities and mentoring
- Possibility of on-going employment after the scholarship (refer to Section 8 above)
- How you plan to link to students and the relevant tertiary institution to identify potential scholarship applicants.

Priority will be given to regional and rural councils, as skills shortages have been identified as being more prevalent in these areas. However, all councils are encouraged to apply if they can identify that they have been suffering from skills shortages in specific professions, which they have not been able to overcome.

All successful councils will be required to complete a Scholarship Agreement.

### **13. Application sponsor**

All applications must be signed by a sponsor. The sponsor should be the General Manager of the council or, for a group of councils, one of the General Managers of the member councils. The sponsor will be responsible for complying with the terms of the scholarship program.

### **14. Assessment of applications**

The Department of Local Government will convene a panel to review and assess all applications received. The Department of Local Government will lead the selection process for the general scholarships, while the Department of Planning will lead the selection process for the planning scholarships.

A merit based selection process will be undertaken in line with the selection criteria identified above. Councils may be asked for more information, and/or to participate in an interview process if the panel requires further information to select the successful applicants.

### **15. Submission of applications**

All applications are to be submitted to:

Local Government Scholarship Program  
Department of Local Government  
Locked Bag 3015  
NOWRA NSW 2541

Applications must be submitted by **Friday 27 October 2006**.

### **16. Further information**

If you require further information, please contact Mr Mark Hely, Principal Policy Officer, on telephone 02 4428 4176 or via email at [mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au).

## APPENDIX A

### University Scholarship Contacts

University	Contact	Phone	Comments
Australian Catholic University	Marketing Director	(02) 9739 2906	
Australian National University	Undergraduate Scholarship Officer	(02) 6125 5595	Engineering
Charles Sturt University: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albury/Wodonga</li> <li>• Bathurst</li> <li>• Dubbo</li> <li>• Orange</li> <li>• Wagga Wagga</li> </ul>	Scholarship Officer  Scholarship Officer	(02) 6051 9806 (02) 6338 4834 (02) 6885 7305 (02) 6365 7537  (02) 6933 2221	Urban Planning - On campus & distance Urban Planning - On campus & distance
Macquarie University	Undergraduate Scholarship Officer	(02) 9851 7321	Environmental Planning
Southern Cross University	Equity Scholarship Officer	(02) 6620 3313	
University of Canberra	Scholarships & Prizes Officer	1300 301 727	Post Grad - Master of Urban & Regional Planning (Research)
University of New England	Admissions Centre	(02) 9752 0200	Urban Planning - On campus & distance
University of NSW	Scholarship & Loans Officer	(02) 9385 1078	Urban Planning, Engineering
University of Newcastle	Scholarships Officer	(02) 4921 5000	Engineering
University of Southern Queensland	Scholarships Officer	1800 269 500	Engineering
University of Sydney	Scholarships Officer	(02) 9351 2717	Engineering, Post Grad - Master of Urban & Regional Planning
University of Technology Sydney	Scholarship Officer	(02) 9514 2000	Engineering
University of Western Sydney	Scholarships Officer	1800 897 669	Engineering
University of Wollongong	Development & Scholarship Co-ordinator	(02) 4221 3073	Engineering



**2. Continued:**

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**3. At what year of study are you targeting, and when do you propose the scholarship/s will be awarded/commence?**

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**4. What course/s of study are to be attached to the scholarship?**

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**5. Provide a brief description of the type of activities and work placement the student would be involved in, including mentoring, skills and development opportunities to be made available to the student:**

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**6. List the selection criteria upon which scholarship applications will be assessed:**

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**7. Do you propose to make on-going employment available, and if so, how would this be implemented?**

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**8. Name of tertiary institution to be partnered with:**

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**Contact Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Phone number:** .....

**Email:** .....

**9. How do you plan to link to the tertiary institution and students to identify potential scholarship applicants?**

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**Application sponsor (General Manager):**

**Signed:** .....

**Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:** .....