

I'm writing this separate submission to clarify the responses submitted as part of the consultation process.

I have worked in [REDACTED], and more specialised roles.

Through my own observations, and conversations with industry contacts and professional associations in Australia, it's clear that there is a lack of suitably qualified or experienced people working in Local Government. In fact, as a new arrival to Australia a few months ago, in my initial few minutes speaking to and explaining my qualifications and experience to senior members of an association representing Local Government, I was asked if I'd like a job. Unfortunately, though, I was unable to accept, as I'm studying another Master's degree at present and have limited working rights due to my visa status.

But it's clear to see by looking at the Government jobs portals online, that there are hundreds available at any one time, and there are always 'pools' being sought for qualified and experienced candidates.

However, even if I did want to accept a job in my profession, I wouldn't be able to, because from a migration perspective, many Local Government roles are not adequately covered by the ANZSCO skilled occupation codes.

The reason being that particularly in recent years, where Local Governments have sought to streamline their operations and save money, many Officers and Managers have been thrown 'extra hats' to wear, rather than replacing those who have left posts. The result has been a growth in the number of multidisciplinary Officers and Managers who don't fit neatly into migration skills assessment 'pigeonholes'. This is because in order for a professional to demonstrate their skills in the context of a skills assessment, they have to be able to show that at least 20 hours per week have been spent undertaking that specific occupation.

For example, imagine person who spent 16 years situated in a land management/recreation setting within a Local Authority context:

- They have developed specialised knowledge in land management and everything recreation-related, and deliver all their duties whilst navigating a high-pressure, politically charged, Local Government environment.
- Over time, they've been given multiple services to oversee, such as events, playgrounds, bereavement services, arboriculture, land management, licensed recreation activities, allotments, sports pitch hire, civil engineering, sponsorship, and other services.
- Now add to this, responsibility for departmental customer service and business support, being the senior point of customer escalation for a team who services over 1200 customers.
- In addition to all of this operational management responsibility, that person also develops, initiates and delivers a number of projects relating to community infrastructure, and business improvement, and whilst doing this, manages a program of projects being delivered by their staff, too.
- They also undertake the strategic planning for multiple departments, producing business plans, policy, operational plans, budget setting, business continuity planning, and the integrated planning process, amongst others.

- And for a sizeable proportion of their time, they're engaged by the wider organisation to take on big, strategic projects which span the entire organisation.

Now, that seems like a vast spread of responsibilities for one person- but that one person who delivered all of those responsibilities to an exceptional standard for many years is me. Please bear in mind that:

- I can manage a project as well as a project manager.
- I can administer a project or program as well, if not better than a project or program administrator.
- I can deliver a recreation program and activities as well, if not better than a recreation officer.
- I can administer sports hire services as well, if not better than a sports administrator.
- I can organise and deliver events as well as a conference or events officer.
- I can manage customer services as well as a customer service manager.
- I can undertake analyst activities as well as an organisation and methods analyst.
- I can undertake business analyst activities as well as a business analyst.
- I can manage an office as well as an office manager.

But what's the problem with this? I can't demonstrate that I've spent 20 hours or more in any of these occupations each week, or in the required work context, despite being competent in all of them. For example, VETASSESS advised that unless a person works in the context of a call centre, they're highly unlikely to gain a positive assessment as a customer service manager.

In ANZSCO terms, they fall between the cracks of 'General Manager', 'Corporate Services Manager', 'Specialist Managers nec', 'Organisation and Methods Analyst' and 'Information and Organisation Professionals nec'. But just being able to operate within the confines complex, political, regulatory environments is a skill in itself that many private sector workers have struggled to navigate.

It's important to note that this isn't an isolated case. There are scores of Local Government professionals like me who are disadvantaged due to their multidisciplinary experience but could fill the vacancies for specialised roles in Australia's Local Government.

How could this situation become even more challenging for us, you ask? Add in the fact that most public sector organisations in Australia will not accept applications from those without citizenship or permanent residency, as sponsorship is very uncommon. This leaves us in the unfortunate position, where highly skilled, multidisciplinary workers from the public sector do not have a clear route for migration.

With this in mind, I propose the following:

1. The skills assessment process is adjusted to reflect the more recent trends in the public sector relating to multidisciplinary roles.
2. Amendment of existing ANZSCO occupations to reflect their existence in public sector/Local Government environments.
3. Addition of new occupation(s), or amendment of an existing occupation to encompass specialised Local Government Officers or Managers.