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Animal management tools and resources for the legislator, the educator, the regulator, the enforcer and the collaborator

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LG Toolbox/Gold Coast City Council

Abstract

- Local Government Toolbox is a web based knowledge management
- system delivering information to the community (public view) and
- providing tools and resources to regulatory officers (officer view).
- Local Government Toolbox includes procedures, standard letters,
- checklists, proformas, fact sheets, guidelines, policies, training programs, discussion boards, collaboration spaces and newsletters.

It is envisaged that the Local Government Toolbox will be a one-stop-shop for regulatory officers (including animal management officers). This may be to source information, share information and collaborate.

Local Government Toolbox is moving onwards and upwards, on the coast, in the hinterland, in the regions and in the outback. Local Government Toolbox is providing officers with the tools and resources to move onwards and upwards to a better result.

It is proposed to rollout the Animal Management module within Local Government Toolbox. A rollout would allow for the rapid deployment of information directly to local government regulatory officers (including animal management officers), customer service officers, business operators and the general community.

Furthermore, the Local Government Toolbox has been identified as an ideal solution to action many of the recommendations outlined in initiatives such as the Moreton Report, Red Tape Reduction Task force, Regulatory Reduction Incentive Fund, Council of Australian Government (COAG) agendas and the Productivity Commission.

Key objectives

The key objective of the Local Government Toolbox is to provide local government regulatory officers, customer service officers, business operators and the general community with access to consistent information that is up-to-date and easily maintained.

The user focused objectives of the Local Government Toolbox are to:

Business Operator/General Community interface/view

- Provide easy access to consistent and accurate information on "How to Apply", "How to Comply" and "Tools & Resources" for a range of licences, permits, approvals and registrations that local governments administer. For example: "Dog registration"
- Provide easy access to consistent and accurate information on "How to Comply" and "Tools & Resources" for the range of complaint types that local government administers. For example: "Barking dogs".

Customer Service Officer interface/view

- Provide consistent and accurate information used to deal with information requests and enquires from businesses and the general community.
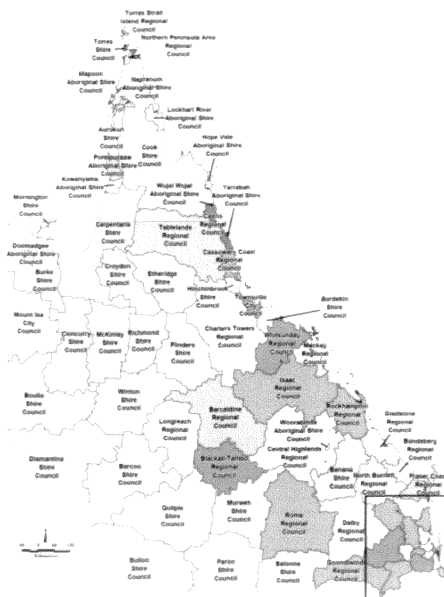
Regulatory Officer interface/view

- Provide consistent processes and interpretation of legislation, policy and standards
- Reduce duplication of work on similar issues
- Meet legislative objectives and obligations
- Improve decision making on legislative matters
- Improve the efficiency of local government

Initiative background

The initial focus of Local Government Toolbox was to provide regulatory officers with consistent information and documentation to assist them in carrying out their duties.

AusIndustry funding enabled the development of the customer interface and the customer service officer interface within the Local Government Toolbox.

The Local Government Toolbox now has information available to local government regulatory officers, customer service officers, business operators (and staff) and the general community. All four interfaces provide the 'same' information to the users based on user's profile and Council of origin. This content re-use eliminates the need to maintain content in multiple systems and ensures that users are accessing consistent, up-to-date information.

Town Square provides an online presence for the various collaboration groups that exist (including the Southeast Queensland Regional Animal Management Group SEQRAMG).

Local Government Toolbox provides a sustainable and scalable platform where service areas can be "rolled out" as required. Environmental health information has been available for many years. **Animal management information** is currently under development and includes the following key subject areas:

• Dogs	• Cats
• Horses, Cattle & Other Stock	• Birds & Poultry
• Pest Species	• Other Animals

Local Government Toolbox can be accessed through partnering Council's websites, or by direct access at www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au.

Current users and potential users of the Local Government Toolbox include:

- Regulation and enforcement bodies - Australian Government, State Government, Local Governments
- Industry professional bodies
- Existing business (eg. dog obedience schools, pet shops) and staff
- Potential business operators and staff
- Charitable, educational and training organisations (eg. TAFE)
- General community

Initiative benefits

The initiative will provide a single knowledge management system (with various interfaces) to local governments. In particular it will provide the following benefits:

State Department Benefits

- Assists with implementing devolved state legislation.
- Provides a conduit for the release of information directly to the end user.
- Demonstrates that the department (that retains accountability) is managing their organisational risk.
- Consistent state wide application of legislation.
- Supports rural and regional areas.
- Supports indigenous communities.
- Reduced infrastructure and/or software development costs through minimising duplication where possible.
- Increased levels of co-operation and partnerships between state government, local government and industry.
- System is scalable with the ability to "roll out" other modules.
- Assists in addressing national consistency issues.
- Addresses the level of confidence of community and industry in all levels of government.

Local Government Chief Executive Officer Benefits

- Assists local governments to fulfil their legislative and regulatory duties and achieve outcomes.
- Provides rigorous document control (eg. Standard procedures) minimising CEO liability.
- Risk reduction achievable through delivery of consistent practice and policy across Council services.
- Cost savings by reducing the duplication of effort in interpreting laws and maintaining policies and procedures
- Reduces infrastructure and/or software development costs through minimising duplication where possible.

- Development of "best practise" business process models leveraging knowledge management across Councils
- Caters for current and future online and mobile information trends (eg. Mobility, online access of information).
- Supports rural and regional areas.

Local Government Manager Benefits

- More efficient, effective and consistent decision making resulting in better outcomes.
- Capture, retain and share knowledge necessary to support operations within the organisation.
- Assists with training and development of new staff with clear, documented procedures and training materials.
- Synergies in collaboratively working together.
- Reduces the costs of content development.
- Single portal for professional communication.
- Provides efficiencies.
- Workforce confidence, retention and transferability.
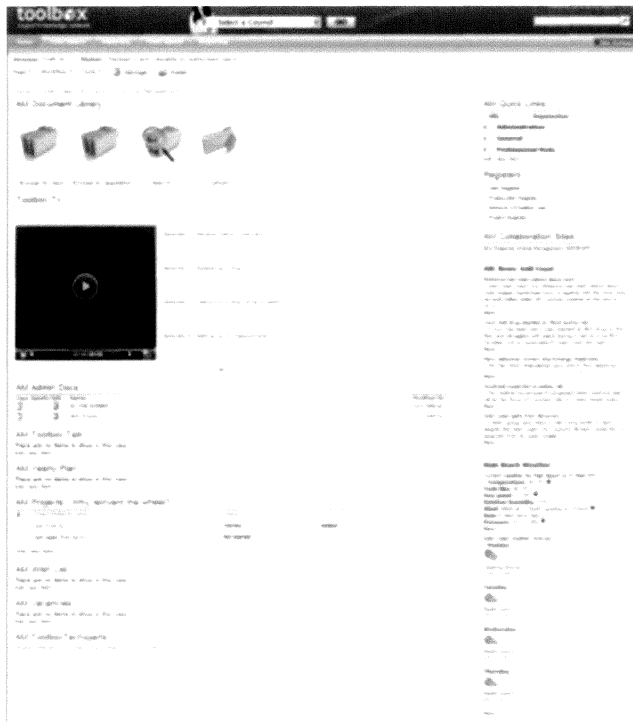
Local Government Regulatory Officer Benefits

- Access to consistent and accurate policies and procedures.
- Less effort required interpreting laws.
- Less effort required developing and implementing policies and procedures.

Local Government Customer Service Officer Benefits

- Easy access to consistent and correct customer information.

Elected Member Benefits

- Consistent procedures and decision making across the state.
- Shared level of support/commitment for local government and the relevant state government agencies.

Business Operator and Staff Benefits

- Greater transparency of Councils policies and procedures resulting from improved customer information.
- Clear compliance definitions and guidelines.
- Easy access to information (directly and indirectly).
- Reduce cost of compliance and compliance burden.
- Certainty and confidence through a consistent approach.

General Community Benefits

- Improved public health, public safety and animal management outcomes.
- Easy access to information (directly and indirectly).
- Certainty and confidence through a consistent approach.

Conclusion

LG Toolbox provides a comprehensive and effective response to the needs of business, government and the community.

LG Toolbox provides the animal management profession with a forum to formulate and distribute policies and guidelines to regulatory staff. It provides the animal management profession with a tangible and effective mechanism to influence the actions of regulatory staff and promote good regulatory practice whilst meeting obligations under legislation and more broadly to the community.

LG Toolbox can provide a range of solutions to help achieve consistent goals, targets and objectives with a minimal impact on resources.
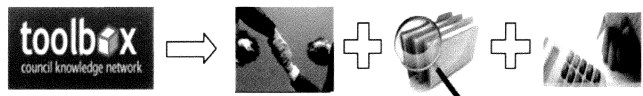
⊙ BIOGRAPHY

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Currently with the Gold Coast City Council, Dave has worked in local government (environmental health, policy, approval, compliance and knowledge management) for 17 years.