



Building the human capacity of Queensland Indigenous Councils:

The Skills Bank and other strategies

Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference,
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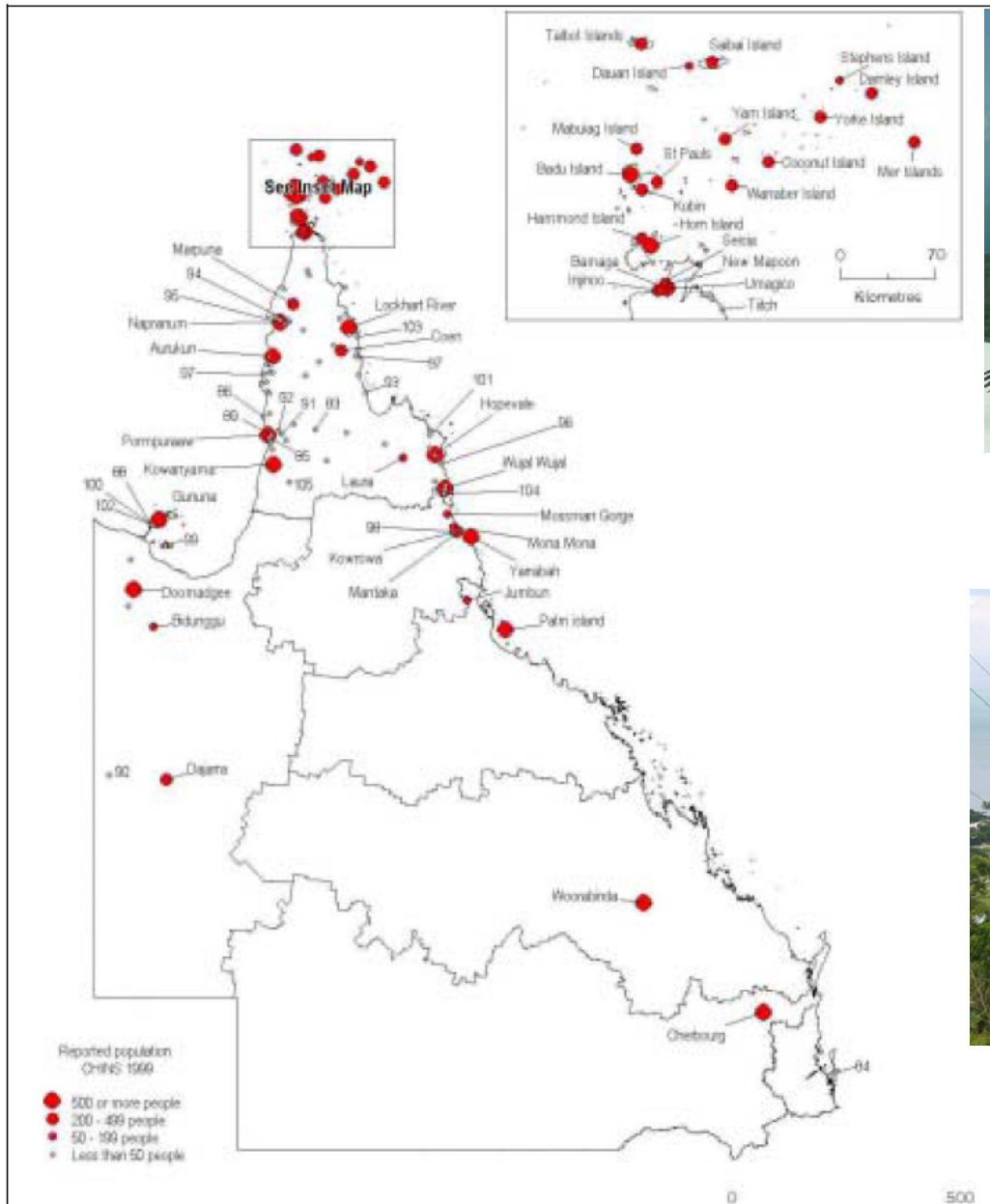
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Outline of presentation

- 1. Background: Queensland Indigenous Councils**
- 2. Key challenges for councils**
- 3. What works? Research findings**
- 4. Solutions: Capacity-building strategies**

Queensland Indigenous Councils



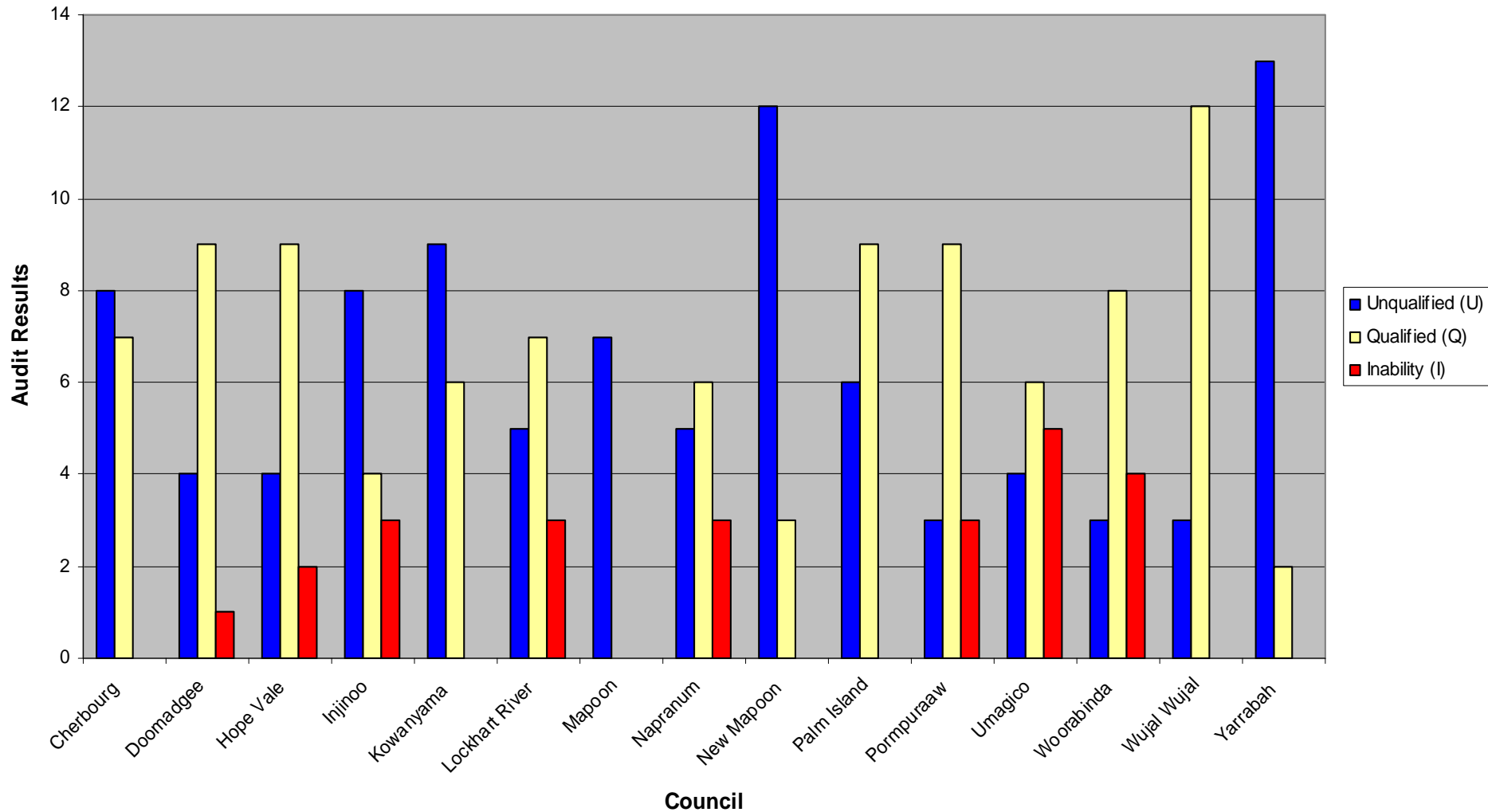


Queensland Indigenous Councils

- Queensland: church missions and reserves handed over to Aboriginal councils in 1980s
- Now 18 Indigenous Councils
- Difficulties:
 - Poor audit reports/
financial
mismanagement
 - Ineffective service
delivery
 - Allegations of conflicts
of interest/nepotism

Council audit results

Historical Audit Results for Aboriginal Councils (1992-2005)





Key challenges for councils

- Wide array of functions and responsibilities
- Small community → increased scope for conflicts of interest
- Lack of representativeness?
- Cultural/family pressures on leaders and staff
- Leadership capacity



Key challenges for councils (cont.)

- Under developed systems
- Human capacity issues:
 - Lack of local residents with required skills
 - Difficulty attracting staff (inadequate salaries, lack of accommodation, remoteness, social issues)



What works? Research findings

- PhD research findings about effective Council performance:
 - Separation of powers
 - Prevents councillor interference in operations
 - Empowers and supports managers and staff
 - Rule of law
 - Protects decision-makers from pressure
 - Strategic vision
 - Creates stability and continuity
 - Motivates staff
 - Effective, stable and supported administration
 - Stability of staffing
 - Positive HRM policies and practices
 - Supportive organisational culture
 - Investment in staff development



Solutions: Capacity-building strategies

- *Community Governance Improvement Strategy 2004-2008* (\$16.5M over 4 years)
 - Resources to improve business systems
 - Councillor Training Program
 - Council Employees Accredited Training Program
- Current directions
 - Continue councillor and staff training
 - Appointment of Financial Controllers
 - Indigenous Council Skills Bank (commencing 2010)



Indigenous Council Skills Bank

- **Goal: Build the human capacity of Indigenous councils**
(key focus on building up the skills of local staff to take on middle management and senior management positions within Indigenous councils)
- **Core function: Supply highly skilled staff to Indigenous councils to:**
 - fill key positions for a finite period on a contract basis
 - undertake skills transfer to local staff
 - develop councils' systems and capacity



Indigenous Council Skills Bank

- Funding of about \$2M per year
- Employ about 10 staff based in Cairns – senior managers, finance officers, HR managers
- Partnership between Government and Council staff
- Structural options
 - Considered establishment of an independent company with joint Govt/Council board
 - Current preference is to use the Local Government Managers' Association (Queensland)



Conclusion

- The key to corruption prevention (and effective governance) in Indigenous councils:
 - build human capacity at community level by *supporting, protecting* and *motivating* local leaders and staff