Monash University
Faculty of Information Technology
FIT5107 Recordkeeping Informatics
Assignment 2: Information Culture in Victorian Local Government Councils
Greater Dandenong City Council

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Contents

Investigation of information Culture in Greater Dandenong Area

The report delves into the information culture of the Greater Dandenong Area, which is a truly diverse region. The analysis will investigate resident demographic, councils' culture and address reflecting characteristics, challenges, and current strategies. The final part of the report will include an In-depth Investigation Strategy catered to better understand the Information Culture in the Local Government Council.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic has been retrieved from greater Dandenong community profile ("Population -Greater Dandenong community profile," 2024).

Birthplace: Greater Dandenong area is diverse with around 62.2% of the population being born overseas according to Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census of Population and Housing. This percentage is particularly highlighted by significant communities from Vietnam and India, which represent 9.3% and 7.5% of the population, respectively. Malaysia is one of the fastest growing communities as well with almost a 136.3% increase in 5 years. .4% of the population is Aboriginals and Torres islanders in the area with a population of five hundred residents.

Age: The median age of people in Greater Dandenong is 36 years old with most age ranging between 25-29 years. This suggests a youthful demographic.

Religion: The religious composition is equally diverse, with 33.4% identifying as Christian, followed by 15.9% practicing Buddhism, and 14.8% adhering to Islam.

Language Spoken: The area speaks over 150+languages. Although 59% of the population has high proficiency in English only 29.3% speak English at home, 11.9% speak Vietnamese and 6.1% Khmer at home.

Socio-Economic and Income: Socio-economically, the region shows a range of income levels with 13.1% of families earning between AUD $104,000 and $129,999 annually. The area, however, faces challenges as indicated by its Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) score of 887 in 2021, placing it among the more disadvantaged in the nation. This might also coincide with the fact that 57.5% completed Year 12 or equivalent education. Also, over 58.8% families have more

than two members which might add to these circumstances by being depended on an only source income.

Reflecting characteristics in Information Culture

Due to the diverse nature of groups the council will have to consider these characteristics the information culture of the resident will be multifaceted.

Cultural Sensitivity:

High proportion of people are overseas born residents from countries like Vietnam and India. This may lead to a strong emphasis on multilingual communication channels. Cultural sensitivity should also be considered as biracial individual are more like to struggle and fit (Eid & Parker, 2023). Council should make sure proper funds are allocated for these cultural events. Moreover, Aboriginals and Torres islander residents should always be prioritized being the First peoples of Australia. Also, proper acknowledgement should be ensured to protect their rights by properly addressing sensitive issues around injustices of colonialism (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2024). Also, there should be representative from these demographics so that information is properly targeted.

Technology deliverables

According to Australian Communications and Media Authority younger people are more likely to access technology while the older people are still less likely to move towards technology significantly. (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021). Since the age itself is on a younger demographic online reports and newsletter should be prioritized. Social platforms where young adult spent most of their time can be an important way to share information as highlighted in this research by Lim that 89.1% use social media more than three or more times (Lim et al., 2022)

Physical Copies

The low socio-economic background might influence this decision. According to a case study by Australian Digital Inclusion Index low-income families have limited access to technology, higher cost for digital services and lower digital skills compared to other income groups (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2024). The council should make sure that every individual is receiving a physical news to tackle limited technology related issues.

Representatives:

The council should have representative from the dominated cultural groups within its decision-making committee so that the resident can voice there information properly and address diverse needs. Aboriginal and Torres Islander residents should be accurately represented within the council due to their strong connection to Australian lands.

Services and Consultations:

The council should have easily accessible consultations and services such as translation, community engagement considering various groups within community. This will make sure residents with all demographics can engage and understand council initiatives and decisions.

Sharing Information with Residents

Meetings and Reports

Council Meetings every second and fourth Monday where meeting minutes and agendas are shared with the resident. These meetings often bring about important and sensitive issues within the greater Dandenong area The meeting allows public question time as well allowing resident engagement ("Council meetings," 2024).

Apart from the council minutes the council also generates Reports every year. The Greater Dandenong website cited contains all important reports including Annual Plans, Annual Reports Budgets and other development plan that are shared with the resident and is easily accessible ("Council documents," 2024).

The council also regularly provides newsletter which are physical copies to all residents ensuring that resident do not have to be depended on the online Newsletter ("Greater Dandenong Council News," 2024).

Meeting Videos

The council also records council meetings and uploads them on YouTube ("Council meeting - 8 April 2024", 2024). This allows residents to obtain key information. Moreover, YouTube allows residents to view transcript and allows subtitles in their preferred language which can easily target demographics whose primary language is not English.

Services

The Council provides numerous services to suit the needs of residents. The council has a Customer Service call centre which allows variety of services. TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service) allows resident to contact the Council in own languages. The council also allows in person appointments and physical services spread out in three separate locations which allows residents with zero to no internet access information. To target a more youthful demographic that prefer Online services the council provides Online Services page in the council website. The Greater Dandenong website also allows language change within the website which targets all demographics that do not speak English.

Social Media Platforms

The council actively shares information regarding major events and council updates via all social platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. Most of the posts have key point and the layout targets the demographics identified.

Strategy Adaptation

Based on the discussions above and the demographics. The council has taken effective measures to target the demographics. The council allows open sharing of meeting and agendas ensuring voices of cultural groups and Indigenous communities are heard via public participation. The reports ensures that all plans and allocation reflect the need of all demographics. The meeting videos allows transparency in addition to the multi-language subtitle feature targeting diverse residents. Different services available within the council promotes inclusiveness and allows non-English speakers to communicate in their preferred languages. Combination of physical and online services effectively targets youthful residents and people with limited access particularly low socio-economic households. The physical news ensures information are shared with all household especially ones with unreliable internet access by bridging digital divide.

Elected Councillors and Preferred Genres'

The elected councillors are good representation of the demographic. There is a good mix of people from the dominated demographic such as Richard Lim, Sophie Tran has a Vietnamese origin, the second largest demographic in Dandenong by birthplace. Although there are no councillors from India which is the third largest demographic in Dandenong. All councillors prefer meeting minutes and annual reports as the preferred

genre of sharing information. However, the newsletter is also sometimes used as a preferred genre to provide information on topics that is relevant to the councillors. We can see a mix of preferences in genre when it comes to sharing in Social Media platforms. From quick search in Facebook, we can see that current mayor Lana Formoso has an active social media and often shares important updates via social media. From council meeting 8 April 2024 and 11 September 2023, we can see that the Counsellor actively attends various Intercultural Events to promote information exchange. "REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/DELEGATED MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS" section in the minutes is a clear indication of it ("Council meeting 11 September 2023", 2023). Moreover, we can also see acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres islanders' resident's rights such as the Yes campaign by ex-mayor Eden Foster ("Mayoral Statement: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.," 2023c).

Infrastructure

Infrastructure issues are reported in the council meeting. One evidence of it is in September 2023 council meeting one issue that was reported is the resident are not getting updated newspaper from council as delivery time for Aus Post has increased to 14 days. However, the council has asked the residents to temporarily check the online newsletter ("Council meeting 11 September 2023", 2023).

Workarounds

Greater Dandenong Council often time has no workarounds related to Information culture reported based on the meeting minutes and annual reports investigated. This might be due to the rigorous communication strategy within the council. Alternatively, a possibility could be that the council does not actively report unofficial workarounds to keep a cleaner documentation.

In-Depth Investigation Strategy

I will be using the book "Recordkeeping Cultures" as my primary reference to develop and design an in-depth investigation as follows (Oliver & Foscarini, 2020):

I will develop the data collection protocol by focusing on variety of dominant factors as per my demographic analysis in this report. I will particularly focus on "ethnographers' hat" to better get an overview of the organization.

Interviewee

I will conduct one-one meeting with key representatives and councillors. I will also have meeting from various levels of organization to better understand the council's overall information culture. I will also be doing focus group interviews with residents from as many demographics identified to have a better result. I will allow multilingual translator so that the interviewee can be expansive if their preferred language is not English. I will also conduct an in-depth interview with past councillors and employees of the council.

Questions

Some key Questions I would ask are follows:

1. Are there any meetings that regularly take place that influence information flow or information practices other than regular council meetings? (Unofficial Meetings)
2. Do you or your team have any personal information systems or procedures that help you to work more effectively within the council? (Workarounds)
3. Are there any challenges that you face in working with information within the organization?
4. Do you have a particular document or system that you think is recurrently used in the council? (Preferred Genres)
5. Can you describe the organizational culture within the council?
6. As resident, do you feel inclusive in the council? (Follow this up if they are happy with current infrastructure)
7. Have you previously used any of the services council provides? If yes, did you obtain necessary help to access these resources (Such as TIS)?

8. As an employee of the council, what do you think of the culture of organization?
9. What existing system or tools is used in council to manage information? (Infrastructure)

Factors

Factors to be investigated will be looked at from Information Culture Framework (Hessami, 2024).

Level 1 Factors:

- Council provides regular updates via minutes/reports or website.
- Newsletter are delivered every week.
- Diverse linguistic, culturally, and socio-economic background influences councils' information exchange methods.
- Technological Infrastructure to ensure accessibility.

Level 2 Factors:

- Staff and skills available to manage information overload.
- Appropriate training provided in council for records management.
- Multiple sources video, reports are efficiently accessible and cost friendly.
- Adherence to recordkeeping standards and appropriate laws

Level 3 Factors:

- Security measures in place to protect council data and providing appropriate access.
- Consistency of council's recordkeeping system to disseminate information within the council.
- Key limitations of the current EDRMS

Tools

Data Collection Protocol: Creating a detailed protocol based on "Recordkeeping Cultures" by Oliver and Foscarini (Oliver & Foscarini, 2020)

Genres: Meeting minutes/audio recordings as to record all meetings with interviewee. Focus groups, one to one physical/online interview as forms of interacting with different interview groups. Online surveys and feedback reports to understand population perspectives and gain qualitative insights.

Workarounds: Hard drive to store meeting videos and minutes before sharing or providing access to interested parties.

Infrastructure: Using shared drives to manage information

Information Profile: Creating an information to summarize results at different factor levels.

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Appendices

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References and Citation: The reference and Citations have been done in APA style. Please note that since the Dandenong website has no author I have used the title to reference and in cite using APA style based on this documentation https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_author_authors.html#:~:text=Unknown%20Author,pages%20are%20in%20quotation%20marks.