



University of Adelaide, South Australia

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESEARCHERS' FORUM

Thursday 6th and Friday 7th June, 2013

In partnership with



#lgresearch

Welcome



Welcome to the 2013 Local Government Researchers' Forum. This national forum is a biennial event run as part of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government's (ACELG)

Research and Policy Foresight program.

The aims of the Forum are to provide a platform for the latest local government research and to facilitate discussion and debate on how that research translates to policy and practice. The Forum is designed to support the broader aims of the Centre which are to contribute to building the capacity of local government, inform debate on current and emerging challenges for local government and strengthen the positioning of local government as a voice for local communities.

ACELG is uniquely placed to bring together councils, universities, government agencies and professional associations with an interest in local government research in Australia.

It is pleasing to have such a diversity of presentations from researchers from each state and territory included in the Forum program.

I wish to thank the Local Government Association of South Australia for partnering with ACELG to host this event, and I look forward to hearing the discussions over the two days of the Forum.

Roberta Ryan

Associate Professor and Director

Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

Table of Contents

Forum Program	2
Venue Map	4
Forum Sessions and Papers	5
<i>Local Government Finance and Revenue</i>	5
Facilitated by A/Prof. Roberta Ryan , Director of ACELG and the UTS Centre for Local Government	
<i>Political and Executive Leadership (Panel)</i>	7
Facilitated by Prof. Graham Sansom , Adjunct Prof. University of Technology, Sydney and Chair of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel	
<i>Latest in Regional Research</i>	9
Facilitated by Prof. John Martin , Director of the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, La Trobe University	
<i>Local Government as Community Facilitator</i>	12
Facilitated by Maree McPherson , CEO of the Victorian Local Governance Association	
<i>Future Workforce (Panel)</i>	15
Facilitated by Melissa Gibbs , Assistant Director of ACELG	
<i>Local Innovation</i>	17
Facilitated by Prof. Lawrence Pratchett , Dean of Business and Government at the Australia New Zealand Institute for Governance	
<i>Applying Climate Change Research</i>	20
Facilitated by Rohan Hamden , Director of Sustainability and Industry Partnerships at the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources	
<i>A Research Discipline in Local Government? (Panel)</i>	24
Facilitated by Dr Tim Robinson , Director, Environment, Public Health, Regulation and Business and Information Services, Fairfield City Council	
<i>Local Demographics</i>	28
Facilitated by Marianne Di Giallonardo , Director of Corporate Services at Maroondah City Council	
<i>Recent South Australian Research</i>	32
Facilitated by Shane Sody , Project Manager, Local Government Reform and Acting Executive Officer, Local Government Research and Development Scheme at the Local Government Association of South Australia	
<i>The Shape, Size and Future of Local Government (Panel)</i>	36
Facilitated by Prof. Chris Aulich , Professor in Public Administration at the University of Canberra	
<i>Planning and Community Wellbeing</i>	40
Facilitated by Wendy Campana , CEO of the Local Government Association of South Australia	
The Great Debate	44
'A City I Know' Poster Display	44
The Local Government Research Network	44
About ACELG	44
ACELG Publications	47
The ACELG Research Advisory Committee	48

Forum Program

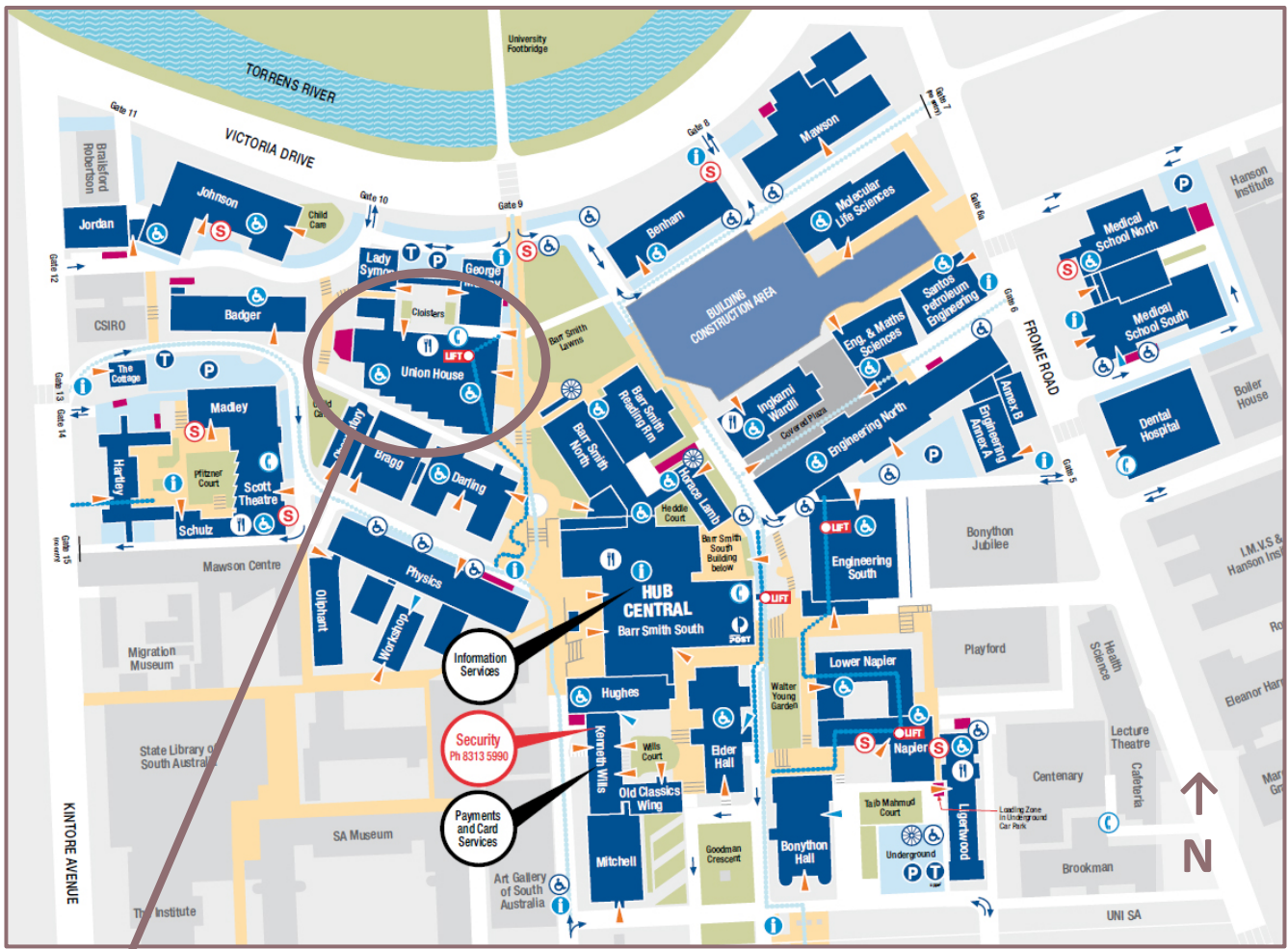
Day 1 – Thursday, 6 June 2013

9:00am	Registration and Welcome Coffee and Tea (Eclipse)		
9:30am Eclipse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome by Wendy Campana, CEO of the Local Government Association of South Australia, and the Hon. Margaret Reynolds, ACELG Chairperson ▪ Opening Address by Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, President of the Australian Local Government Association and Mayor of the City of Marion ▪ Overview of forum program and format by Prof. Lawrence Pratchett, Dean of Business and Government at the Australia New Zealand Institute for Governance. 		
10:30am	Morning tea (Rumours Café, level 6)		
	STREAM 1 (Eclipse)	STREAM 2 (Harry Medlin North)	STREAM 3 (Margaret Murray)
11:00am	LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND REVENUE <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Comrie – In Our Hands: Strengthening Local Government Revenue for the 21st Century 2. Darrin Grimsey – Strong foundations for sustainable local infrastructure Other speakers: Brian Dollery .	POLITICAL AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (PANEL) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Dr Theresa Smith-Ruig and Dr Bligh Grant – A study of the career paths of local government CEOs 4. Dr Jacquie Hutchinson – ‘You just know’: Recruiting CEOs in Local Government. Other panelists: Sophi Bruce	LATEST IN REGIONAL RESEARCH <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Julie Wilson – Regional Australia Institute research stocktake 6. Juliet Hester – Regional economies and the Upper Spencer Gulf (Case study) 7. Thomas Michel and Julie-ann Bassinder – Researching with Reciprocity.
12:30pm	Lunch and opportunity to view posters (Rumours Café, level 6)		
1:30pm	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS COMMUNITY FACILITATOR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Max Eastcott – Learning as a Driver for Change in Communities 9. Su Fei Tan – Does local representation matter? 10. Prof. John Martin – “Sensemaking” in turbulent environments. 	FUTURE WORKFORCE (PANEL) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Alex Kats and Angela Zivkovic – Overview of the National Workforce Strategy and underpinning research 12. Dr Robyn Morris – Motivating and Retaining Local Government Workers: What does it take? Other panelists: Greg McLean , Donna Galvin .	LOCAL INNOVATION <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Dr Ian McShane – Local Public Broadband: the Missing Link in Australia’s Broadband Debate? 14. Sharon Zivkovic – Local government as a facilitator of systemic social innovation 15. Prof. Valerie Brown – Transformation Science: Local Government as a key player in collective action research. Other speakers: Prof. Mark Evans .
3:00pm	Afternoon Tea (Rumours Café, level 6)		
3:30pm	Q & A ON PREPARING RESEARCH PAPERS (WORKSHOP)	STEPS FOR PUBLISHING IN JOURNALS (WORKSHOP)	MEASURING IMPACT OF RESEARCH (WORKSHOP)
4:30pm Eclipse	Day’s wrap up by Prof. Mark Evans , Director of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.		
5:00pm Eclipse	Book Launch: <i>Financial Sustainability and Infrastructure Finance in Australian Local Government</i> .		
5:15pm	Cocktails (Rumours Café, level 6)		

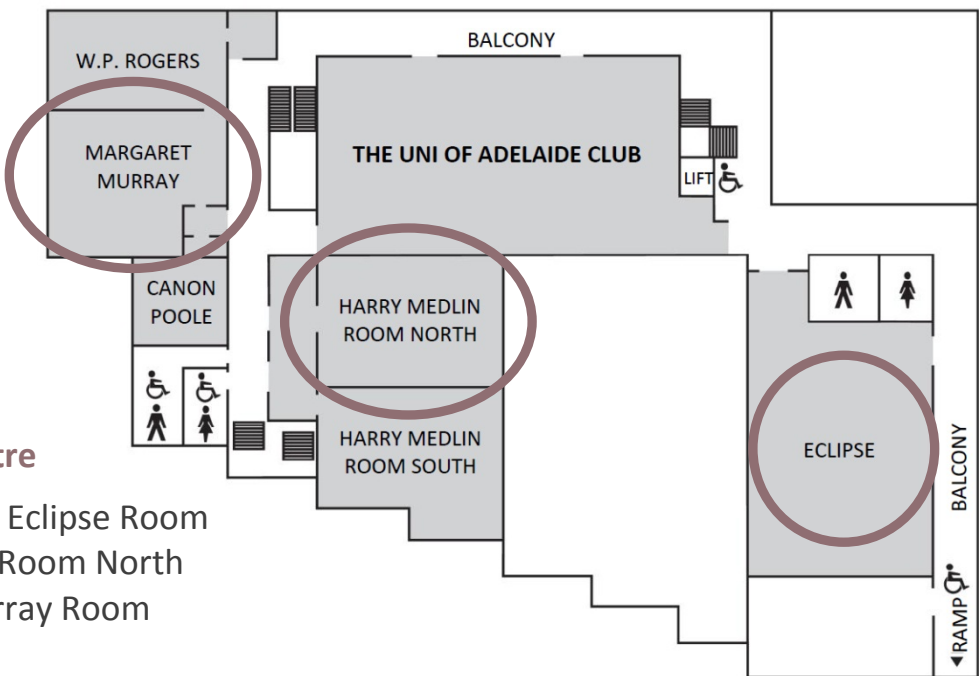
Day 2 – Friday, 7 June 2013

8:00am	Welcome Tea and Coffee (Eclipse)		
	STREAM 1 (Eclipse)	STREAM 2 (Harry Medlin North)	STREAM 3 (Margaret Murray)
8:30am	<p>APPLYING CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH</p> <p>16. A/Prof. Heather Zeppel – Carbon offsetting by Queensland councils: Motives and benefits</p> <p>17. A/Prof. Erica Bell – Planning for the health effects of climate change in rural areas</p> <p>18. Lauren Burton – Prospering in a Changing Climate: South Australia’s Climate Change Adaptation Framework</p> <p>19. Marnie Hope and Dr Caecilia Ewenz – City of Adelaide Urban Heat Island Micro Climate Study.</p>	<p>A RESEARCH DISCIPLINE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT? (PANEL)</p> <p>20. Austin Ley – Knowledge City, City of Melbourne case study</p> <p>21. Dr Tanya Styles – Research analysts at the City of Boroondara: The many hats</p> <p>22. Adele Kenneally – The lived experience of Insider Action Research in a local government setting</p> <p>23. Dr Jennifer Scott – The pitfalls and promises of an academic approach to solving real world problems in local government.</p>	<p>LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>24. Nicole Vickridge – Obesogenic environments: Investigating the role of urban form and planning in influencing physical activity</p> <p>25. John Lavarack – Looking Ahead: A Guide for Local Government Use of Demographic Data</p> <p>26. Katherine Wright – Local government research into a 'hidden' issue</p> <p>27. Prof. Chris Paris – Is anybody listening? The impact of second home ownership on local governments in Australia and elsewhere.</p>
10:30am	Morning tea (Rumours Café, level 6)		
11:00am	<p>RECENT SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH</p> <p>28. Bronwyn Webster – Development of Social Infrastructure in Growth Corridors</p> <p>29. Stuart Boyd – Youth Development in Local Government: Future Roles</p> <p>30. David Hope – Participatory Decision Making Software.</p>	<p>THE SHAPE, SIZE AND FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PANEL)</p> <p>31. Alex Gooding – Where to for ROCs: new options for regional structures</p> <p>32. Prof. Brian Dollery and Dr Michael Kortt – Local Co-Governance and Environmental Sustainability</p> <p>33. Dr Fran Flavel – Benchmarking of councils – a case against comparisons</p> <p>34. Philip Willis – ‘One size fits all?’ An appraisal as to how NSW councils have reacted and adapted to new legislation.</p>	<p>PLANNING AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING</p> <p>35. Alan Morton – Community wellbeing indicators survey</p> <p>36. Kim Dunphy – Cultural planning processes in local government in Victoria</p> <p>37. Cate Owen – Picture Adelaide’s Strategic Plan</p> <p>38. A/Prof. Andrew Kelly – Battle between amenity and conserving biodiversity.</p>
12:30pm	Lunch and opportunity to view posters (Rumours Café, level 6)		
1:30pm Eclipse	The Great Debate: <i>Local Government Reform – Just re-arranging the deck chairs on the SS Federation?</i>		
2:30pm Eclipse	Day’s wrap up by A/Prof. Roberta Ryan , Director of ACELG and the UTS Centre for Local Government.		
3:00pm	Close		

Venue Map



The University of Adelaide Club, Union House, Enter off Victoria Drive, Gate 10



Union House

Level 4 Conference Centre

Stream 1 and Plenaries: Eclipse Room

Stream 2: Harry Medlin Room North

Stream 3: Margaret Murray Room

Breaks: Level 6 Café.

Forum Sessions & Papers

STREAM 1 Local Government Finance and Revenue

1. In Our Hands: Strengthening Local Government Revenue for the 21st Century

John Comrie, *ACELG Associate*

Abstract

Is the revenue base of Australian local governments adequate and appropriate? What are the best options for local government to increase and sustain own-source revenue to meet current and future needs? Are property rates being effectively utilised by local governments?

These are some of the key questions that the ACELG Working Paper entitled *In Our Hands: Strengthening Local Government Revenue for the 21st Century*, published earlier this year, attempts to answer.

The report covers a wide range of issues concerning property tax and other sources of revenue and has an applied focus for local government leaders to draw upon to possibly improve revenue streams over time.

The lead researcher and author of the report, John Comrie believes while the sector deserves more financial support from other spheres of government, a material overall increase is unlikely in the foreseeable future. He also considers that there are strong grounds for distributing a greater share of existing grant funds to the most needy councils.

Many local governments have made considerable progress in improving financial performance in recent years. John acknowledges this but claims that more needs to be done. He argues that many local governments have more control and influence than they realise over the level of services they provide, and therefore the costs they incur and the revenue they generate.

The report suggests that many councils can make better use of their own source revenue raising powers and sets out public finance theory for the sound utilisation of user charges and property taxes. The paper highlights the advantages and suitability for use of various property rating tools in different circumstances. It concludes by suggesting that there is need for national collaboration between representatives of local government and local government regulators from all jurisdictions in order to facilitate the further equitable strengthening of local government revenues.

Biography

John Comrie is a former council Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) and the South Australian Government's Office for State/Local Government Relations. He has written much of the guidance material produced by the LGASA to assist councils to improve their financial sustainability strategies and performance. He also wrote the *Long-term Financial Planning Practice Note* published by ACELG and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA), and co-authored IPWEA's *Australian Infrastructure Financial Management Guidelines*.

2. Strong foundations for sustainable local infrastructure

Darrin Grimsey, *Ernst & Young*

Abstract

This paper looks at how local government plans, finances and delivers infrastructure. The focus is on ways in which councils can get more infrastructure from existing funding sources and the recommendations cover three broad areas: enabling councils to leverage existing funding sources for investment in new infrastructure; improving councils' access to cost effective finance; and improving councils' ability to identify and develop infrastructure and gain access to specialist skills necessary to deliver innovative financing solutions. The presentation will provide insight into the challenges of financing local infrastructure and examine the options for reform.

Biography

Darrin Grimsey is Partner with Ernst & Young's Infrastructure Advisory Group in, and a leading adviser on, infrastructure in Australia. He specialises in the delivery of infrastructure projects including commercial, strategic and financial advice, project structuring, risk identification and contract negotiations. He has extensive experience advising governments in Australia and elsewhere on infrastructure policy and guidelines as well as delivering projects in health, education, corrections, civic buildings and water.

STREAM 2 Political and Executive Leadership (Panel)

3. A Study of the Career Paths of Local Government CEOs

Dr Theresa Smith-Ruig and Dr Bligh Grant, *University of New England*

Abstract

Research examining the career paths of non-elected officials in local government in Australia is not abundant. This paper presents findings of a case study of the career paths of CEOs in the local government jurisdiction of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The study involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 12 currently serving CEOs. The research revealed that half of the participants had traditional, or linear career paths based entirely within local government. The remaining participants had careers originating outside the sector. This second cohort was comprised overwhelmingly of women. These careers were based in the community or human services sectors. Several factors were identified as constraining and enabling the CEOs careers generally, including gender and organisational culture. Many participants were 'passionate' about the influence they could have upon their organisations and communities. The sample size limits the generalizability of these findings; however the research provides the basis for a larger study. Nevertheless, the high incidence of happenstance at CEO level in NSW local government suggests that the demand for local government CEOs may well outstrip supply. The local government sector may well benefit strategically from promoting the executive careers it has to offer, particularly to potential women applicants.

Biographies

Dr Theresa Smith-Ruig, B. Commerce Hons 1st class (UNE) PhD (UNE), completed her PhD in 2006. Her thesis focused on the career development of men and women in the accounting/finance industry. Since completion, Theresa has published numerous conference papers, journal articles and book chapters on the topic of career development, and disability and employment. In 2010, Theresa also won a competitive grant from the NSW Office for Women's Policy to review the Lucy mentoring program offered by UNE and a range of other universities. The program is designed at linking female business and law graduates with a mentor in the workforce.

Dr Bligh Grant is lecturer in business ethics, professional ethics and corporate social responsibility. He is also a member of the UNE Centre for Local Government and the Wine Industry Working Group in the UNE Business School.

4. 'You just know': Recruiting CEOs in Local Government

Dr Jacquie Hutchinson, *University of Western Australia*

What is known about this subject?

- Whilst there is an abundance of research regarding leadership in the private and public sectors, very little is known about CEO leadership in local government.
- There is some research that explores the relationship between paid officers and elected members, however, there is very little literature about how that relationship impacts on CEO recruitment, performance and employment.

What does the paper add?

- Given the complexity of local government activities and responsibilities, made more so by the political nature of councils and external factors such as geographic location, local economies, and constituent socio-demographics, it is important to understand what factors influence elected members' decisions when selecting a CEO.
- Developing knowledge about what formal and informal processes and strategies are employed by elected members to inform their decision making when choosing a CEO, will help to improve the identification, recruitment and employment of local government leaders in the future.

Abstract

Executive leadership in local government has so far failed to attract the same level of public interest or research activity as leadership in the private and public sectors. This is despite the complexity and breadth of local government leadership responsibilities that straddle public, political and private spheres. This duality provides a complex leadership challenge for local government executive leaders and sets their role apart from leaders in other sectors. Therefore, the lack of insight into this very unique leadership context, may have contributed to a lack of community confidence,¹ limited diversity in leadership ranks² and overly politicised recruitment processes.³ This paper will report on a study that is exploring these leadership issues by focussing on intersecting factors that contribute to the appointment of CEOs: These are:

- How elected members and CEOs frame leadership and what qualities, experiences and attributes they consider as evidential for appointment.
- The formal and informal policies and processes that elected members use to identify and recruit CEOs.

Biography

Dr Jacquie Hutchinson came from corporate leadership roles to academia in 2003. Her main areas of expertise and research interest are in the areas of employment relationships, leadership and workplace diversity. Her doctoral thesis was on the relationship between organisational restructuring and workplace bullying in the public sector. Jacquie is currently working on specific projects related to local government, career progression in the public sector and sustainable employment for women in the mining and resources sector.

¹ S. Jones, "Superheroes or Puppets? Local Government Chief Executive Officers in Victoria and Queensland," *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* 14, no. 2 (2011): 6; A.J. Brown, "Knowing the challenge: Voter attitudes to federal constitutional recognition of local government in 2008," presentation to the Local Government Constitutional Summit, Melbourne, 9–11 December, Australian Local Government Association, http://alga.asn.au/site/misc/alga/downloads/constit-rec/Dr_A_J_Brown.pdf (accessed May 14, 2013).

² A. Diamond, *The Career Development and Identity of Victorian Local Government Chief Executives: Is Gender a factor?*, DBA Thesis (Melbourne: Victoria Graduate School Business and Law, 2007); J. Hutchinson & E. Walker, *Women in local government, still a men's shed*, Report prepared for Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women in Local Government (Western Australia: University of Western Australia, 2011).

³ C. Holgersson, "The social construction of top executives," in *Invisible Management*, ed. S.E. Sjostrand, J. Sandberg, and M. Tyrstrup (London: Thomson, 2004), 105-125.

STREAM 3 Latest in Regional Research

5. Regional Australia Institute Research Stocktake

Julie Wilson, *Regional Australia Institute*

What is known about this subject?

- A gap analysis of the information available from the Regional Australia's Regional Knowledge base has identified a number of gaps within current research on Australian regions
- The results highlighted that the majority of past research efforts have failed to explore the potential for positive change in regional Australia and the specific opportunities that exist for its growth and development.

What does the paper add?

- To overcome this, the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) is currently developing the Regional Competitiveness Index.
- The 'Index' is the first of its kind and offers a comprehensive assessment of the competitiveness of each of Australia's regions. This offers a measure of competitiveness for each local government area (LGA), but also offers a broader benchmark status for regional Australia.
- Together, these two projects will help to provide a platform for evidence based policy to improve outcomes in regional areas.

Abstract

The RAI is Australia's first national, apolitical, independent think tank devoted exclusively to regional issues. Its aim is to conduct research into priority policy areas for regional Australia. Since its creation in 2011, RAI has undertaken two key research initiatives: (1) The development of the Regional Knowledge Base and (2) the development of the Regional Competitiveness Index. The Regional Knowledge Base aimed to create a single database for research relevant to regional Australia. This was then used as a means of conducting a gap analysis to understand the scale and diversity of research currently available. The project found that the majority of past research efforts have focussed primarily on the problems associated with economic or related transitions, and also the challenges faced by regions in the provision of health and other services. Importantly, the project found that a relatively limited body of research exists that explores the potential for positive change in regional Australia and the specific opportunities that exist for its growth and development.

The Regional Competitiveness Index project was subsequently launched with the aim of plugging these information gaps. The 'Index' is the first of its kind and offers a comprehensive assessment of the competitiveness of each of Australia's regions. Analysis will take place at both the LGA and Regional Development Australia level. The findings of the project will allow local governments, regional development organisations, and residents to understand and compare their region to others. Importantly, it will assist regions to identify opportunities for policy action to develop the region.

Together, these two projects will help to provide a platform for evidence based policy to improve outcomes in regional areas.

Biography

Julie Wilson is the Research Manager at the Regional Australia Institute. Julie has an extensive background in the field of regional development and economics, and is currently undertaking a Masters of Economic and Regional Development. Her practical experience comes from her previous role as Manager of a Regional Development Australia organisation and her many years in Government working at the Local, State and Federal levels in a variety of industry sectors (microelectronics, manufacturing, investment banking, food processing, commercialisation of research, retail and tourism). Being born in Bendigo and having lived in a number of small rural and regional towns, Julie's connection to regional Australia is both personal and professional.

6. Regional economies and the Upper Spencer Gulf — Case Study

Juliet Hester, *Australian Bureau of Statistics*

Abstract

There is a high level of interest in regional economic statistics around Australia that comes from government at all levels, as well as from businesses and service providers. All are using some regional economic data to inform decisions about local infrastructure, services, business, housing, transport routes, labour market programs etc. This place-based decision making requires regional data which includes a fundamental need for local level economic data. Many policy or planning decisions have an economic outcome as a key goal, so data is needed to assess impacts on local economic circumstances. However, there are many regional data gaps.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has commenced a project entitled Regional Economic Data Directions (REDD). This project aims for ABS to:

- provide advice to data users on the use of relevant concepts and methods for collection and analysis of regional economic data
- Give good advice to data users on:
 - Regional economic data availability and quality
 - How to apply regional data to economic analysis
 - What regions to use for economic analysis and why, and
 - Identify high priority data gaps and fill them where resources permit.

Recognising that regional economic activity varies across Australia, a case study approach is being adopted. By selecting different types of regions and drawing on local knowledge, stakeholders and conditions we will be able to develop a better understanding of what methods and approaches are fit-for-purpose across different circumstances.

In addition to providing an outline of the project, this paper will present a progress update on a review of research from the Upper Spencer Gulf region in South Australia. It will also report on progress on the applicability of existing concepts and frameworks to informing regional economy.

Biography

Juliet Hester manages the Regional Analysis Team in the Director of Rural and Regional Statistics for the ABS and is based in the Adelaide office. The key objective of the Rural and Regional Statistics program is to lead and develop ABS products and services to address client demand for regional and geospatial statistics.

7. Researching with Reciprocity: Meaningful Participant-Based Research in a Remote Indigenous Community Context

Thomas Michel and Julie-ann Bassinder, *Northern Territory Researchers*

What is known about this subject?

- Measurement of customer or resident satisfaction is a common tool used by local government bodies to evaluate their performance
- Little attention has been paid to if mainstream resident satisfaction research methods are effective when applied to a remote Indigenous community setting in Australia.

What does the paper add?

- The authors argue that special ethical and practical consideration needs to be applied when non-Indigenous researchers operate in remote Indigenous settings
- Since 2009, the authors have trialled a community satisfaction tool in the Northern Territory's Victoria Daly and Roper Gulf Shire Councils, based on in-person surveys and interviews
- The methods applied have aimed to add participant reciprocity and cultural safety as central principles of the research process.

Abstract

In culturally and geographically mainstream settings, evaluation and research of local government service delivery often rely on quantitative research methods and tools, aimed at efficiently obtaining a statistically significant volume of data. These include surveys conducted by phone-, online- and computer-based tools, with random sampling methods applied. This paper argues that these approaches are not suitable in a rural-remote Indigenous community setting, and are likely to produce weak results for research purposes.

Based on their three-year research experience in the Northern Territory's Victoria Daly and Roper Gulf Shires concerning local government service delivery and community governance issues, the authors recommend some alternative – even unorthodox – methodologies and tools for participant-based research in rural-remote Indigenous community settings. Both a scale-based survey and open-ended questions were used, applying techniques such as: flexible interviewing in culturally safe locations and social groupings; deliberate strategies to overcome English language barriers; and remuneration for participants. The aim of the application of these methodologies was not only to obtain statistically reliable survey results and rich qualitative research data, but also to establish a mutually positive, respectful and beneficial experience between the research participants and researchers.

Biography

Thomas Michel has been living in the Northern Territory for eight years, and during this time has worked for the Northern Territory Government and now the Roper Gulf Shire Council. He was professionally involved with the amalgamation reform to the Northern Territory's local government sector in 2008. In 2009 he commenced a PhD program focusing on the different cultural perspectives and meanings attached to the concept of 'sustainability' of the Northern Territory's local government sector. Thomas currently lives with his wife and two children in Katherine.

Julie-ann Bassinder has had an extensive career in the private and public sector including State and Local Government. She has a Bachelor of Social Sciences, University of Sydney and is currently finalising a Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledges (Honours) at Charles Darwin University under the guidance of Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation on the topic of overcoming tensions and misunderstandings of governance in Ngukurr, South East Arnhem Land. She currently lives in Katherine, though she has spent the last three years alternating between Darwin, Katherine and Ngukurr.

STREAM 1 Local Government as Community Facilitator

8. Learning as Learning as a Driver for Change in Communities

Max Eastcott, *Gwydir Shire Council*

What is known about this subject?

- The focus of this research is the role that could be played by local government in creating a Learning Community, which has not received research attention to any great degree
- The presentation details the experience of Gwydir Shire Council and its role in creating the Gwydir Learning Region.

What does the paper add?

- The paper examines the way that becoming a Learning Community can improve social outcomes, build community capability and strengthen community governance
- Becoming a Learning Community can be used as a vehicle for the implementation of localism and better place management.

Abstract

For over ten years Hume City Council in outer Metropolitan Melbourne and Gwydir Learning Region in rural New South Wales have partnered with organisations and individuals to build a learning community framework as a driver of change within their communities. Along with a number of other town, shires, cities and regions in Australia today, both are using learning, and in particular learning partnership approaches as part of economic development, social inclusion and health and well-being strategies. Hume City Council and Gwydir Learning Region are members of the Australian Learning Community Network which exists so that Australia becomes a nation of lifelong learning communities.

This presentation draws on the experience of the Hume Global Learning Village and Gwydir Learning Region through the findings of Learning as a Driver for Change Research funded by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government in partnership with the Australian Learning Community Network, Hume City Council and Gwydir Learning Shire. It explores an approach to learning partnerships aimed at improving social outcomes, building community capability and strengthening community governance. Local government practitioners from Hume Global Learning Village and Gwydir Learning Region will talk from their perspectives about:

- The impacts and outcomes of learning community developments such as Hume Global Learning Village and Gwydir Learning Region over the period of 2003 until 2012.
- The elements of a learning community framework that can be applied to other local government areas, in particular:
 - outer metropolitan/metropolitan regions, and
 - rural and regional areas
 - as purposeful and systematic planning to improve social outcomes; build community capacity and strengthen community governance.

Biography

Max Eastcott is the General Manager of Gwydir Shire Council having been previously the General Manager of Bingara Shire Council immediately prior to the 2004 amalgamation of Bingara, Yallaroi and part of Barraba Shires to form Gwydir. Max has had extensive experience across a range of local government areas over the last 30 plus years in local government. His practical management experience is complemented with a Bachelor of Business Degree and Masters' Degrees in Sustainable Management and Philosophy.

9. Does Local Representation Matter?

Su Fei Tan, *UTS Centre for Local Government*

What is known about this subject?

- Very little research has been carried out in Australia or internationally on the issue of representation ratios at the local level.

What does the paper add?

- This paper builds on the legislative comparison of the frameworks for local representation among the different Australian jurisdictions to identify the issues of concern to stakeholders regarding representative structures.

Abstract

This paper compares frameworks governing local representation across Australia. Local representation is understood to mean to the various aspects of representative democracy at the local level whereby residents elect a council and that council is then charged to make policies and decisions in the community interest. The research flows from on-going reform processes and the need to understand the advantages, constraints and theoretical underpinnings of different approaches to representative democracy across Australian Local Government.

Initial investigations show that while there are bodies of research on many (although not all) of the aspects of local representation there is a gap in terms of thinking and analysis which brings together these different threads within the Australian Local Government context. This project compares and analyses the different approaches in the States and Territories with a view to providing a useful synthesis and promoting debate on alternative approaches to strategic leadership and better governance together with strengthening local democracy.

The paper presents the results of focus group and interviews with key stakeholders from across the Australian jurisdictions on the issues of local representation highlighted in the legislative and literature review. The work is organised around a set of themes which together address the broad topic of local representation. These include voting, the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, representative structures, role and remuneration of councillors, and decision making.

Biography

Su Fei Tan is a Senior Research Officer with the UTS Centre for Local Government. She is interested in environmental sustainability, strategic planning, local governance and supporting local government in developing countries.

10. Local Government as Community Facilitator: “Sensemaking” in Turbulent Environments

Professor John Martin, *Latrobe University*

What is known about this subject?

- ‘Sensemaking’ has been articulated by Weick⁴ as the ability to appreciate one’s context
- Local Governments exist in ‘turbulent environments’⁵
- Engaging communities such that they develop their ‘appreciate systems’⁶
- Leading and learning go hand in glove⁷
- Local Governments challenged to engage communities for fear of raising expectations.

What does the paper add?

- Engagement via techniques such as design-led planning charrettes enable constructive community conversations
- Citizens are capable from moving from local to regional scale
- Citizens are able to engage at the level of principles
- Well managed methods employing visualisation and spatial techniques to provide helpful solutions
- Effective local leadership is as much about managing the process as addressing the context of place-based planning and service delivery.

Abstract

Much is made of the local government policymaker’s ability to read the context within which they are asked to decide. For many elected members, while well-known in their community, cannot be expected to readily grasp the breadth of issues they are asked to decide on. The politics of these decisions are not always obvious and the newly elected councillor unaware of the context can be trapped into decisions that they will later regret. This is equally true of citizens asked to participate in community workshops, and related events, where they are asked to judge the likely effectiveness of strategies to address issues of community concern. Without knowing a great deal about the context that gives rise to this issue they might also be party to decisions that they too would later regret. How then do we make sense of these ‘political’ environments: where the exercise of power is not readily obvious yet essential to come to some understanding if a measured decision is desired? In this paper we will analyse, as an example, the Design-Led Planning Charrettes approach to climate change adaptation in terms of Weick’s seven properties of ‘sensemaking’.⁸ Weick’s framework enables local government leaders the opportunity to both design their own approaches to community engagement as well as analysing the various strategies put before them.

Biography

Professor John Martin FLGMA is Director of La Trobe University’s Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, based in Bendigo, central Victoria. John has a long standing research and consulting background with Australian Local Government. He has also worked for the development agencies on local government in Asia, the Pacific and Africa. His focus is on the role of local government in the sustainability of regional communities.

⁴ K.E. Weick, *Sensemaking in organizations* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1995).

⁵ F. E. Emery and E. L. Trist, “The causal texture of organizational environments,” *Human Relations* 18, no. 1 (1965): 21-32.

⁶ G. Vickers, *Value systems and social process* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

⁷ R.A. Heifetz, *Leadership without easy answers* (USA: Belknap Press, 1994).

⁸ Weick, *Sensemaking in organizations*.

11. The Evolution of the National Local Government Workforce Strategy

Alex Kats and Angela Zivkovic, *Local Government Managers Australia*

Abstract

The process that led to the publishing of the National Local Government Workforce Strategy 2013-2020 in April 2013, began in 2006. Following a national forum to explore and define skill shortages, and the creation of Local Government Skills Shortage Steering Committee, a National Skills Shortage Strategy for Local Government was published in 2007. Simultaneously, the cross-sectoral Regional Employers Alliance Project began, which looked at developing local cross-sectoral skill shortages solutions in four regional mining affected areas.

This work highlighted serious limitations to the sector's workforce capacity and capability. Issues identified as critical were the need for a national data set, improved sectoral and inter-governmental coordination and collaboration, and innovative approaches.

In 2008, the then LGPMC tasked local government officials with developing a draft workforce strategy to address local government skill shortages and enhance the professionalism of the sector, in accordance with COAG diversity commitments, for the improvement of national productivity.

In 2010, LGMA, on behalf of the newly established ACELG, was requested to complete work on developing the Strategy, with funding from the Local Government Reform Fund. A draft strategy was circulated in 2011. Since then there has been extensive consultation with key stakeholders. The final document has eight strategies, each with a number of associated actions, designed to be implemented to 2020 by ACELG and its partners.

The nearly two-year consultation process was designed to ensure that key stakeholders have buy-in to enable joint ownership. Each jurisdiction will now develop an action plan for local implementation, while ACELG will develop a comprehensive monitoring framework based on national indicators.

Biography

Alex Kats works in the Local Government Practice Unit in ACELG's Workforce Development Program. Previously, for nearly five years, he was a Program Manager at the Australian office of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation where he organised AusAID funded capacity development training programs both in Australia and across Asia. Prior to that for a few years he was advisor and electorate officer to a federal MP, where he wrote parliamentary speeches, organised a range of events in Melbourne and Canberra, and advised on foreign affairs, immigration and cultural matters. In between, he has also spent stints in Sydney, London, New York and Jerusalem working for government departments and for various film and writer's festivals. Alex completed a BA in history and management at Monash University, has participated in numerous professional development courses, and did a certificate course in Project Management at AIM.

Angela Zivkovic is Program Manager for the Local Government Practice Unit in ACELG's Workforce Development Program, a national capacity building program for the local government workforce. Before that she ran a professional development and training program for NZ screenwriters designed to improve opportunity and access. Her work experience covers a variety of roles in a number of different industries in Australia, New York and New Zealand, including publishing, new media and film and television. Tertiary qualifications include a recent community cultural development postgraduate diploma at University of Melbourne.

12. Motivating and Retaining Local Government Workers: What Does it Take?

Dr Robyn Morris, *Edith Cowan University*

Summary

- This research investigated how monetary reward and eight non-monetary work environment factors relating to job design, manager and co-worker relationships, and elements of organisational culture – some of which have not been previously examined especially within a public sector context - are related to three key workplace outcomes, namely, employee job satisfaction, discretionary effort and intention to leave.
- The findings of this research revealed that these key workplace outcomes are not only more strongly associated with non-monetary work environment factors than with monetary reward, but that there is a differential relationship between the different workplace outcomes and the various non-monetary work environment factors examined.
- This research provides local government managers with a better understanding of what key factors affect employee job satisfaction, discretionary effort and intention to leave, and offers a practical framework they can use to develop strategies for influencing these important aspects of human resource management enabling them to build a more motivated workforce and improve staff retention within their own organisations and in the local government sector overall.

Abstract

The capacity of local government to recruit appropriately qualified staff and to keep staff turnover low directly affects council performance. In addition, high staff turnover increases staffing costs and results in a loss of skill and know-how to the organisation. Yet for many years now local government managers have continued to express concerns about their capacity to find, motivate and retain suitably qualified staff. This ability is critical to public service success and reform, thus it needs to be a high priority if local government is to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

This paper presents the findings of a rigorous empirical study that formed part of a larger research program. Data was collected from 500 employees in 12 metropolitan, regional and rural local governments located in Western Australian. This paper examines what factors affect three critical workplace outcomes – job satisfaction, worker willingness to exert discretionary effort and intention to leave – all of which have important implications for workforce planning and development. The findings provide useful and usable knowledge for improving our understanding of employee motivation and retention in the public service. From a practical perspective it can enhance public sector manager capacity to maximise the potential of human resources recruited by offering a framework of mechanisms through which managers can influence employee discretionary work effort and retention. By creating an attractive place of employment local governments can retain staff and build a greater pool of talent from which to choose.

Biography

Dr Robyn Morris is currently an Adjunct Academic in the School of Law and Justice at Joondalup campus prior to which she was the Research Consultant for Postgraduate research students and a senior researcher involved in collaborative research projects on rural-remote and Indigenous local government with ACELG. Robyn has tertiary teaching and research experience in Australia and the USA. Originally based at ECU's regional campus in Bunbury WA for 15 years, she was Head of the Business Program and taught Economics, Marketing, Small Business Management and Quantitative Methods to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dr Morris has 20 years' consulting experience in the private and public sectors with a particular focus on the local government sector in Western Australia. She was a founding member of the WA Bunbury Wellington Economic Alliance, a regional alliance of local government, business and industry. She was a Board Member for 7 years and served as Chair for 2 years. Dr Morris is currently a member of the Research Advisory Committee of ACELG and is a member of ACELG's rural-remote and Indigenous Local Government reference group.

13. Local Public Broadband – the Missing Link in Australia’s Broadband Debate?

Dr Ian McShane, *RMIT University*

What is known about this subject?

- This paper draws on a research project to identify and analyse plans and programs of Australian local authorities to provide broadband (understood in its widest sense as network and internet access) to residents and visitors.
- In contrast to the large international literature on local broadband networks, there has been little published analysis of Australian developments in this field and few attempts to apply international experience to the Australian context.
- National telecommunications markets, regulatory policies, traditions of public intervention and the historical role of municipalities in planning and utility provision are major determinants of municipal involvement in the broadband field internationally.
- While Australia lags behind many other countries in providing broadband as a local public good, the experience of municipal libraries as the backbone of Australia’s public internet service is instructive for the development of further programs.
- Australian broadband policy is largely top-down, reflecting existing jurisdictional roles and patterns of utility provision; in contrast to current policy rhetoric of broadband as a ‘fourth utility’, this paper reconceptualises broadband as a new form of civic infrastructure to guide policy thinking and local initiatives.

What does the paper add?

- The paper offers a snapshot of the state of play in local broadband, internationally and in Australia, and policy options for the local government sector.
- Summarising the international literature and Australian practice, the paper identifies rationales for local-level public provision, discusses limitations risks and constraints, and outlines evaluation models.
- The paper identifies an international trend in partnership and role-sharing in the development and operation of local networks, through cross-institutional links and new network technologies.
- The paper’s argument for conceptualising broadband as a form of civic infrastructure and local public good is solidly grounded in infrastructure and innovation literatures.
- The paper makes original and useful connections between the tradition of local authority provision of physical infrastructure and new ventures in broadband provision.

Abstract

The role of local government in providing public broadband has received little attention in Australian policy debate over broadband futures. The marginal position of the Australian local government sector in broadband debates both understates local initiatives and constrains our understanding of broadband as twenty-first century civic infrastructure. Local authorities provide Australia’s public internet safety net through their funding of public internet in local libraries. There is a history of experimentation with local networks in underserved regions. Several city governments, including Adelaide, are investigating public Wi-Fi networks to boost social and economic vitality, and assist with urban management. Yet, Australia lags behind many other countries in providing broadband as a local public good. Drawing on international and Australian developments in local public broadband, this paper analyses rationales, opportunities and constraints for Australian local authorities in this field.

Biography

Dr Ian McShane is a senior research fellow in the Urban Research Centre, RMIT University, Melbourne. His PhD thesis (2008) analysed historical and policy aspects of community facilities. He has previously worked as a museum curator, education and heritage consultant, and public sector manager. His research on the provision and use of local broadband networks is part-funded by the Australian Research Council Key Centre for Creative Industries and Innovation.

14. Local Government as a Facilitator of Systemic Social Innovation

Sharon Zivkovic, *Community Capacity Builders*

What is known about this subject?

- New and innovative approaches are required to address the complex wicked problems that communities face.
- Local governments are developing new and innovative products, services and processes to address the wicked problems impacting on their communities.

What does the paper add?

- This paper argues that developing separate individual product, process and service innovations is not a suitable approach for addressing complex wicked problems.
- Instead, it argues that local governments need to take a systemic approach to innovation when addressing wicked problems.
- The paper describes a diagnostic tool that can be used by local governments to facilitate systemic innovation and systemic change in their communities.

Abstract

It is widely recognised that new and innovative approaches are required to address the complex, wicked problems that communities face. To tackle these challenges, local governments are developing new and innovative products, services and processes, and replicating innovations that are promoted as having been successfully implemented in other local government areas.

This paper argues that the approach of focusing on separate individual product, process and service innovations, and replicating these innovations in new contexts, is not suitable for wicked problems. Instead, it is argued that local governments need to take a systemic approach to innovation when addressing wicked problems: an approach that is informed by complex adaptive systems theory, is specific to an individual community's unique needs, and utilises the community's unique resources and collective intelligence.

To demonstrate this approach, a diagnostic tool for systemic social innovation which was reasoned during a research project with the City of Onkaparinga is described. This tool highlights nine areas that local governments can focus on to facilitate systemic social innovation: five of these areas enable communities to unlock their complex adaptive system dynamics, two areas assist government systems to undertake unplanned exploration of solutions with communities, and two areas assist government systems to exploit the knowledge, ideas and innovations that emerge from community-led activities. A new research project is then described which aims to investigate if this diagnostic tool can be used to affect systemic change in a local government area.

Biography

Sharon Zivkovic is the Principal Facilitator of Community Capacity Builders, a social enterprise that has developed an internationally recognised active citizenship education program. She is a Lecturer for the University of Adelaide's Social Entrepreneurship course, and is in her final year of a PhD with the University of South Australia. Prior to establishing Community Capacity Builders, Sharon held positions in the private, non-profit and public sectors. These positions include Employment Development Officer with the City of Salisbury, and positions as Senior Community Development Coordinator and Senior Project Officer Community Capacity with the SA State Government. In 2001 Sharon received the Enterprising Woman of the Year Award in recognition of her contribution towards creating strong and enterprising communities, and in 2012 her paper "Government's role in social innovation: Balancing unplanned exploration and planned exploitation" received the Best Overall Paper Award at the International Social Innovation Research Conference.

15. Transformation Science: Local Government as a Key Player in Collective Action Research

Professor Valerie Brown, *Australian National University*

Summary

- This paper aims to apply the principles of Transformation Science to the interests and experience of Local Government.
- The aim of the paper is to offer all participants in local government a tool to develop appropriate local responses to the impact of social and environmental transformational change.
- This paper finds that local government already collects much of the information required to service Transformation Science in its social, environment and economic plans and that much valuable information is carried in the minds of Local Government Officers working in the field.
- This paper also finds that, as the holder of local knowledge and of knowledge of the locality, local governments are essential informants and actors in responses to transformational changes, such as climate change, urban density and population expansion.
- This paper concludes that collective questioning at the local scale makes an essential contribution to interpreting transformational change at the regional, state and Federal government scales. It is also essential for informing the responses to change at the local scale.

Abstract

In times of change, the model of science as an objective, reductionist approach is changing too. When the changes are transformational, scientific inquiry needs to capture the full scope of the complex change. Local Government knowledge and experience will inevitably form an important part of that inquiry. This paper will offer a framework of seven questions to be answered in transformation science: personal, biophysical, social, ethical, aesthetic, and sympathetic questions, and to add them all up, reflective questions. On any issue, Local Government holds many of the answers to all of these questions, answers which are often ignored and so fail to be included in the response to the change. Transformation science brings Local Government into the group of key interests that need to be included in any study of, or action on, transformational change.⁹

Biography

Professor Valerie Brown was trained in Ecology at the University of Queensland and completed a PhD in Human Sciences at ANU in 1990. She is Emeritus Professor of Environmental Health from the University of Western Sydney and Director, Local Sustainability Project at the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University. She has worked on social change strategies in research, policy and practice in communities undergoing transformational change, in many cases in partnership with Local Government. Her research approach is collaborative action research which has been applied in over 300 communities across Australia, the Pacific and Nepal. The results of her research have been published as *Managing for Local Sustainability*¹⁰ and *Social Learning for Environmental Management* with Meg Keen and Rob Dyball.¹¹ Her latest book is *Tackling Wicked Problems through the transdisciplinary imagination*.¹²

⁹ This paper draws on a chapter "Transformation Science" from a forthcoming book V.A. Brown and J.A. Harris, *The human capacity for transformational change: the future of the collective mind*, (London: Routledge, in press 2013). The present paper addresses the significance of transformation science for local government; the book chapter is more general.

¹⁰ National Office of Local Government 1992.

¹¹ Earthscan Press 2006.

¹² V.A. Brown, J.A. Harris, and J.V. Russell, *Tackling Wicked Problems through the transdisciplinary imagination* (Canada: Earthscan, 2010).

16. Carbon Offsetting by Queensland Councils: Motives and Benefits

Associate Professor Heather Zeppel, *University of Southern Queensland*

What is known about this subject?

- Voluntary offsetting of council vehicles, events or electricity reduces carbon emissions
- Councils listed as liable entities for landfill emissions need to purchase carbon credits
- Council opportunities for voluntary offsetting include regional tree planting, while the Clean Energy Regulator registers offsets that reduce landfill methane and in revegetation.

What does the paper add?

- Seven Qld councils partially offset emissions from community events, vehicles and electricity; Brisbane City Council buys carbon credits to offset fleet, transport and landfill emissions
- Key motives for offsetting were climate concerns and supporting conservation, however, 17 Qld councils were unsure about offset guidelines or it was not a priority or necessary
- Qld councils with a climate change strategy/carbon neutral goal were most likely to offset; preferred offsets are tree planting or renewable energy with tangible co-benefits.

Abstract

Carbon offsetting provides one avenue for local councils to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions. This includes voluntary offsetting of council events or activities and purchasing carbon credits to offset emissions from transport, or landfill sites exceeding 25,000t CO₂-e. Offsets are “An investment in a project that reduces greenhouse gas emissions or sequesters carbon from the atmosphere” to compensate for emissions from other activities.¹³ Under the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011*, local councils can also earn carbon credits through managing landfill emissions, or environmental plantings. This paper evaluates carbon offsetting actions and motives by Queensland councils from a 2012 survey. Seventeen Queensland councils stated offsetting was not necessary or not a priority, due to their small size, or were unsure about offset guidelines. However, five city councils and two coastal regional councils were partially offsetting emissions mainly from vehicle fuel and electricity, or select community events. Councils with a climate change strategy or aiming to be carbon neutral (i.e. Cairns, Gold Coast, Redland, Sunshine Coast) were most likely to offset. The preferred offset action by councils was tree planting on council land or in partnership with conservation groups or offset companies (Ecofund Queensland, Greenfleet, Climate Friendly). Four councils wanted to sell/earn carbon credits, or support local landholders. The key motives for carbon offsetting included: Council concern about climate impacts; Supporting conservation; Being climate friendly; and Financially supporting offset projects. Councils preferred carbon offset methods such as tree planting or renewable energy with tangible environmental and financial benefits.

Biography

Associate Professor Heather Zeppel is a Mid-Career Research Fellow, University of Southern Queensland, within the Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development. Heather is the Coordinator of USQ’s Local Government Research Group. Her research interests include carbon management and environmental sustainability by local government and in tourism. In 2012, Heather completed a climate change mitigation survey of 32 Queensland councils for Local Government Infrastructure Services. A pilot survey of 14 Greater Adelaide councils was also conducted in 2011. Heather is a member of the Sustainable Councils Network (NSW), Local Government Research Network (ACELG), and AAEE Local Government group.

¹³ Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), *Mitigating Climate Change: An Introductory Guide for Queensland Local Government*, (Newstead: LGAQ, 2009), 58.

17. Foreseeing and Planning for the Health and Community Well-Being Effects of Climate Change in Rural and Regional Local Government Areas

Associate Professor Erica Bell, *University of Tasmania*

What is known about this subject?

- Rural and regional communities have been hardest hit by recent extreme weather events, yet practical tools for foreseeing and planning for these events are still poorly developed
- Local government needs better evidence, tools and processes to support 'grass roots' planning and adaptation responses for community health and well-being.

What does the paper add?

- This paper describes different international models for making these climate and impact risk assessments in LG contexts
- It also describes pilot data from an online tool tested in three rural and regional local government sites
- It suggests what kind of evidence for local government is needed and how it should be used to better plan for the community health and well-being effects of climate change.

Abstract

Rural and regional communities have been hardest hit by recent extreme weather events, yet practical tools for foreseeing and planning for the health and community well-being effects of such events are still poorly developed. Local government needs sound evidence, tools and processes to support 'grass roots' planning and adaptation responses in this neglected area. This paper explores the results of a completed pilot Tasmanian project, funded by the Office of Climate Change, which has developed an online community health and well-being impact and risk assessment (HIRA) tool for rural and regional contexts, specifically for use by local government. It first describes different international models for making these climate and impact risk assessments in local government contexts, for example, by the UK's Climate Impacts Programme, as background to development of the Tasmanian-led HIRA tool. It then describes data from the 2011-2012 Tasmanian pilot study which tested the online HIRA tool in three rural and regional local government sites with local government staff and stakeholders. In so doing, it explores answers to questions about: (1) what kind of evidence for local government is needed; (2) in what form; (3) where this evidence can be obtained; and (4) how it should be used, to better plan for the community health and well-being effects of climate change. The conclusions suggest why local government needs much more than local area climate science projections on smaller 'grids'—currently being promoted as the 'answer' to local community planning.

Biography

Associate Professor Erica Bell has built a program of climate change research in her role as Associate Professor and Deputy Director at the University Department of Rural Health at the University of Tasmania, having published over 100 academic and applied publications across health and education with a particular focus on applied community-based research for vulnerable groups. She is author of a book *Research for Health Policy* published 2009 by Oxford University Press, lead editor of three other books published in 2011/2012 focussing on translational research, including for climate change, and she is a chief investigator for policy research in Australia's Centre for Research Excellence in Primary Oral Health. She is Vice President of Australia's Climate and Health Alliance, an honorary adjunct Associate Professor for the International Centre for Allied Health Evidence at the University of South Australia, deputy editor of the *Australian Journal in Rural Health*, and a national research committee member of the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government.

18. Prospering in a Changing Climate — South Australia's Climate Change Adaptation Framework

Lauren Burton, *Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia*

Summary

- The Government of South Australia is delivering a community led climate change planning and decision process in partnership with the Local Government sector under the Climate Change Adaptation Framework for South Australia
- This paper describes the South Australian experience and outlines some early benefits. It covers:
 - The mechanisms to identify and empower the right community leaders to participate in planning
 - The adaptation planning processes to manage uncertainties, determine acceptable trade-offs, and identify and prioritise adaptation options
 - The management framework aims to ensure that issues raised by communities are considered in government decision making.

Abstract

When making decisions about the future, communities face a range of uncertainties. These arise not only in the climate change science, but also in economic projections, population growth, land use reform, demographic changes, as well as each community's own capacity to adapt. The Government of South Australia is delivering a community led planning and decision process in partnership with the Local Government sector, to drive real adaptation reform despite uncertainty about the future.

Ensuring prosperous futures for communities despite the impacts of climate change requires cooperation and planning across all levels of the economy and society. South Australia is adopting a bottom up driven approach that empowers regional community leaders to work together to plan and deliver on adaptation actions for their regions. The Government of South Australia is an active participant in the process, and relies on the ideas and actions arising from regional planning to develop state-wide responses to climate change.

This paper describes the South Australian experience and outlines some early benefits. It covers: the mechanisms to identify and empower the right community leaders to participate in planning; the adaptation planning processes to manage uncertainties, determine acceptable trade-offs and identify and prioritise adaptation options; the management framework to ensure that issues raised by communities are considered in government decision making; and the many benefits being achieved through this approach.

Through this process South Australia is delivering real adaptation reform and preparing our communities for the impacts of climate change.

Biography

Lauren Burton is a program manager with the internationally-recognised state government policy program, the *Climate Change Adaptation Framework for South Australia*. Having completed her honours in Laws, and environmental policy, at the University of Adelaide, Lauren uses this theory in a practical sense to lead government policy development. Her major achievements have been managing the extensive consultation and subsequent release of the *Climate Change Adaptation Framework for South Australia* in 2012. Her current work focuses on best-practice policy development in the area of climate change adaptation and project management of the *Prospering in a Changing Climate* grant program to support the implementation of the Framework. During her presentation, Lauren will highlight the benefits of the community-led adaptation planning policy in South Australia, and the partnership approach with the local government sector.

19. City of Adelaide Urban Heat Island Micro Climate Study

Marnie Hope, *City of Adelaide* and Dr Caecilia Ewenz, *Flinders University*

What is known about this subject?

- The intensity of an urban heat island (UHI) is greater under high atmospheric pressure systems, clear skies, low/weak wind conditions, and at night
- There are strong seasonal effects, such that UHI is more prominent in winter, while summer sea breezes can moderate temperature maxima
- Highest temperatures in the UHI occur generally where the highest buildings are located
- Energy consumption within buildings depends on outdoor temperature and humidity conditions.

What does the paper add?

University led research at an urban macro and micro climate into to the major contributors to the UHI effect in the CBD of Adelaide including:

- Night-time urban temperature distributions can be interpreted by an effective sky view factor (incorporating surface radiative cooling, surrounding building height and density); this factor can be used to infer the effect of increases in building heights and densities on UHI
- Hot spots have been identified in the northwest corner of the CBD during daytime and more centrally in the north of King-William St during the night
- Numerical modelling shows that air circulation from the Park Lands into the City reduces temperatures there, while observations show the moderating effect of the sea-breeze in summer. Additionally, inner-CBD green spaces moderates temperatures in adjacent areas
- Energy consumption for Adelaide CBD office buildings increases in heat waves, and is likely to increase significantly due to increasing temperatures induced by climate change.

Abstract

The urban heat island (UHI) effect is a result of a combination of factors and under future global warming, extremes of high temperatures are likely to become more frequent, more intense, more widespread and longer lasting. At a range of scales, research demonstrates that the design and form of cities, neighbourhoods, streets and buildings influences urban climate and population exposure to heat stress. Behavioural responses to heat stress in urban areas will drive an increase in demand of energy and water, to achieve reasonable comfort in cities, including in and adjacent to the buildings. Managing the UHI effect is important not only for thermal comfort, but also health and mortality outcomes.

This research project was led by Flinders University in conjunction with State Government and Adelaide City Council. The research identified implications for urban planning and building design in Adelaide, in particular that the: urban heat island is clearly observed in the Adelaide CBD and hot spots vary between day time and night time, varying with wind direction and strength; Adelaide Park Lands and sea breezes help to reduce CBD air temperatures; UHI intensity is influenced by how much sky, solar radiation and wind are blocked by buildings and their heights as well as materials in the public realm surrounding buildings; and strong correlation between weather conditions, in particular air temperature, and energy use in buildings and sensitivity to heat waves.

Biography

Marnie Hope is the Senior Sustainability Advisor at Adelaide City Council, working in the Sustainable City Program. Over the last 14 years Marnie has worked in both the private and public sector on both community development and environmental sustainability policy and projects.

Dr Caecilia Ewenz is a meteorologist with more than 25 years of experience. She was awarded a doctorate in natural sciences (PhD) from Bonn University for her work on cloud development. Her interests have ranged from studies into the effects that different land surfaces have on the weather through to the application of super computers to weather forecasting.

STREAM 2 A Research Discipline in Local Government? (Panel)

20. Knowledge City, City of Melbourne Case Study

Austin Ley, *City of Melbourne*

What is known about this subject?

- The investigation of the role of practitioner research in local government settings has been explored in papers recently, principally regarding how its value may be strengthened ‘without a default attribution of a poorer pedigree’ based on a comparison with academic research
- At the City of Melbourne, an in-house research capability has evolved over many years, from a beginning as a clustering of skills around strategic planning, to becoming an established branch of Council, known as City Research, championing Melbourne’s current position as a ‘Knowledge City’.

What does the paper add?

- Focusing on the story of this research branch, the paper addresses the key question: ‘What can be learned from the story of City Research and what contribution might an in-house research capacity make to the way a local government conducts its business?’
- Using multiple lenses, the paper explores how research manifests itself in the design and adaptability of the City, and how this capacity has allowed it to proactively set the agenda with its research partners, and to help ensure the relevance and rigour of the undertaking
- The paper contributes to an ongoing dialogue of broader relevance beyond Melbourne in relation to the development of a ‘new research tradition’ focused on local government.

Abstract

Focusing on the story of City Research at the City of Melbourne two articles are presented together to consider the role a council can take in research and how this changed the way the organisation works. They present complementary views; one is a journalist’s perspective, the other a public servant’s.

The journalist’s perspective is from Caroline Baum, independent commentator and broadcaster. Drawing on interviews with people inside Council, she explores how research manifests itself in the design and adaptability of the City. The public servant’s perspective is from Austin Ley, Manager of City Research. He traces the development of City Research from its early manifestation as research expertise clustered around planning and development, to its current form, championing Melbourne as a ‘Knowledge City’. Ley makes the argument that local government needs to proactively set the agenda with its research partners to ensure the relevance and rigour of own work.

Together the papers address questions that lend themselves to an ongoing dialogue of broader relevance:

- What can be learned from the story of City Research? In general, what contribution might an in-house research capacity make to the way a local government conducts its business?
- How would this research capacity evolve and what is needed to develop it?
- What is the scope for developing a ‘new research tradition’ focused on local government?

The paper is presented with a view to adapting and refining these questions for the local government sector as a whole.

Biography

Austin Ley is an economist with a master’s in urban planning and over twenty five years’ experience in strategic planning, economic and market research in both the public and private sectors. He joined the City of Melbourne in 1995 to establish the Research Branch which today is a team of 12 staff responsible for coordinating research across the Council. Austin understands the information needs of planners, policy and decision-makers and how to ensure Council’s research resources deliver the best outcomes. He is passionate about improving the availability and consistency of City information, across all levels of government, academia and the private sector.

21. Research Analysts at the City of Boroondara: The Many Hats

Dr Tanya Styles, *City of Boroondara*

What is known about this subject?

- The paper can be considered a case-study, highlighting the operation, activities and selected projects undertaken by a particular work unit within one Council. Therefore, the subject matter of the paper is unique.

What does the paper add?

- This paper is intended to promote ideas for projects and initiatives that other researchers in other LGAs could undertake to disseminate and apply readily available data.

Abstract

Local government is the tier of government that works most closely with the community it serves. A sound understanding of the local community is critical to local governments in the development of relevant and responsive strategies, plans and policies. The range of data sources available to facilitate such understanding is immense, and council departments benefit from access to timely analysis of relevant data to inform their work. The City of Boroondara's Social Planning Unit employs two research analysts to identify, collect and analyse data about the community. The information is then disseminated in a variety of formats throughout Council and, in some cases, to the community.

This paper provides details on the research tools developed and managed by the City of Boroondara's research analysts and outlines how these are used by Council staff and the community. It also highlights the broad range of research requests that make up the officers' day to day work, and how these inform strategic planning and service delivery. Lastly, the paper makes comment on how the location of the research analysts in the Community Development Directorate offers a unique opportunity to inform policy across the organisation.

It is hoped that the information contained in this paper will promote ideas about the dissemination and application of readily available data sources among local government staff, councillors and the community.

Biography

Dr Tanya Styles has been a senior social research analyst in the Social Planning Unit at the City of Boroondara for the past three years. She is responsible for analysing and disseminating socio-demographic data across Council. Prior to her current role, Tanya worked for seven years as a consultant in the field of road safety, specialising in road user behaviour. Tanya's Doctorate is in Health Psychology.

22. The Lived Experience of Insider Action Research in a Local Government Setting

Dr Adele Kenneally, *Glenelg Shire Council*

What is known about this subject?

- The practice and theory of Insider Action Research (IAR) has received increasing attention since 2001 through the work by Coghlan and Brannick
- IAR involves the researcher as an 'insider' or a complete member of the organisation and not one who joins the organisation temporarily for the purpose of the research and it provides a unique contribution to organisational research as it allows the researcher to develop knowledge or understanding as part of practice
- There are often unpredictable challenges in undertaking IAR due to the political and personal dimensions of undertaking action research in the researchers own organisation
- Whilst there are numerous published books and papers about this approach in educational, health and social work settings, it is rarely documented in a local government setting.

What does the paper add?

- Provides practical advice for potential researchers considering the Insider Action Research (IAR) approach in a local government setting
- Provides an example of the 'lived experience' of undertaking this style of research
- Discussion of the challenges of the tensions that arise as the researcher moves between the roles of practitioner and researcher and the ethical dilemmas that arise throughout the course of an IAR Project
- Provides advice and outlines the challenges of undertaking a PhD whilst working full time as a senior manager in local government.

Abstract

Insider Action Research is undertaken by researchers within their own organisation. The researcher is an 'insider', or a complete member of the organisation and not one who joins the organisation temporarily for the purpose of the research. Action research involves cyclical planned interventions or actions, study and review of the actions, then further revised action.

This paper describes the lived experience of carrying out Insider Action Research as a senior manager undertaking a PhD in a large rural council in Victoria. Although the insider has access to internal intelligence which can be useful in addressing and solving practical problems in organisations, this approach is not without its difficulties which can arise from the political and personal dimensions of undertaking action research in one's own organisation. Challenges arise from the tension between the need to be close to the setting and at the same time the need to create distance in order to be objective and to be able to stand back, assess and reflect.

Ethical challenges and role conflict are some of the dilemmas confronted by the researcher, and in the fast moving life of the organisation, the mental and emotional energy required to work through these dilemmas is considerable. Nonetheless, Insider research can also be rewarding and has the potential to provide an avenue for self-development and self-knowledge.

Biography

Dr Adele Kenneally has been employed working in the role of Group Manager Community & Culture at the Glenelg Shire Council in Victoria for the past seven years. This involves managing a diverse range of community services including arts and culture, aged and disability, recreation and youth, child and family, health promotion, library, Aboriginal relations and place based community planning. Adele has a Master's Degree in Education (Research), a post graduate diploma in Business (Management), a Diploma of Librarianship, and recently completed a PhD in Management (Research) at RMIT University in 2011.

23. The Pitfalls and Promises of an Academic Approach to Solving Real World Problems in Local Government

Dr Jennifer Scott, *Ku-ring-gai Council*

What is known about this subject?

- The importance of research linkages to local government is well known
- Some benefits to incorporating research activities into local government actions are understood, however they are not well quantified in comparison to more traditional deliverables
- Councils seek to focus on delivery of on ground works and services, rather than seeking to understand how to improve outcomes
- That the barriers to integrating research in to local government are varied and complex
- That the benefits of local government involvement in research flow both ways to the academics as well as to the local government practitioners.

What does the paper add?

- A case study discussion for Ku-ring-gai Council's experiences – from the council's perspective
- Consideration of the role of state government in fostering and/or prohibiting research in local government
- Discovery of key drivers for fostering a strong research culture in local government
- Identification of key benefits of thorough research integration in Local Government
- Identification of potential barriers that need to be overcome and the importance of community understanding and support.

Abstract

Traditionally many local government entities have been entrenched in a system of no change. Change has been regarded as a threat to available resources, existing projects and to top-down management control of priorities. Local governments are not usually regarded as research hubs. However, the highly localised and complex nature of many environmental management issues, in particular, often means research is essential to ensure effective and efficient management.

Dealing with issues of a high magnitude of complexity is thought to be beyond the scope of Councils and better left to state and federal agencies. In recent years this perception is proving increasingly false. Despite the lack of recognition, difficult internal management priorities and a community unaware of the benefits, several local councils have managed to create a substantial research profile designed to address important knowledge gaps.

Ku-ring-gai Council has benefited greatly from the development of a research agenda. Management has recognised the value of fostering innovation, the dangers of clinging onto the old mantra: 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' and the positive effects a culture of problem solving can have for staff and the overall wellbeing of the community. Although research into pressing environmental management issues including water, bushfire and climate change has not been without substantial challenges, the benefits of this approach are clear - ensuring that already limited resources are being spent where they will have the greatest effect. Through continued research, monitoring and review this provides a basis on which to make sound management decisions.

Biography

Dr Jennifer Scott is Ku-ring-gai Council's sustainability program leader and a part time lecturer at the University of Western Sydney. Jenny's recent work has focussed on researching local adaptation to climate change and how local communities can become more resilient to the potential impacts of Climate Change.

24. Obesogenic Environments: Investigating the Role of Urban Form and Planning in Influencing Physical Activity

Nicole Vickridge, *Knox City Council*

What is known about this subject?

- Obesity rates are growing in Australia; in Rowville the prevalence of overweight or obesity in adults is now over 50%
- There is an association between physical inactivity and obesity
- Increasing evidence supports the role of urban form and built environments for increasing physical activity levels and reducing obesity.

What does the paper add?

- Supports growing research that demonstrates local areas with a lower risk of obesity are associated with environments that are conducive to physical activity
- Numerous aspects of local urban environments can be modified through local government policy and planning to ultimately influence activity levels, and potentially contribute to a reduction in obesity across the population.

Abstract

Knox City Council is one of 12 sites in Victoria where the 'Healthy Together Communities Initiative' is being delivered. Focusing primarily on reducing rates of obesity, physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol misuse, this initiative aims to use a systems approach to support healthy behaviours. This has prompted further investigation into how the built environment within Knox may be influencing the health of its residents. The aim of this study was to examine the urban form within two suburbs, Wantirna/Wantirna South and Rowville to identify how these influence the rates of physical activity and therefore also potentially the rates of overweight and obesity.

Biography

Nicole Vickridge has over 12 years' experience in strategic land use planning and urban research. She is certified practicing planner and member of the Planning Institute of Australia. For the last three years she has held the role of Coordinator of Strategic Planning at Knox City Council.

25. Looking Ahead: A Guide for Local Government Use of Demographic Data

John Lavarack, *Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government*

What is known about this subject?

- Recent studies have indicated that strengthening local government capacity to use demographic data is one of the leading critical issues facing the sector
- Local government, as a sector developing services and infrastructure that meets the emerging needs of local communities, requires the capacity to use demographic data effectively, particularly as part of the evidence underpinning planning that addresses demographic change.

What does the paper add?

- This paper adopts a practitioner focus to provide guidance for the local government use of demographic data for planning purposes.
- The paper provides an overview of demographic issues relevant to local government, the national context of the issues, frameworks for developing planning practice in the use of demographic data, information on where to get demographic data, and practical advice on using the sources
- The case is made for strengthening use of demographic data at the local level by harnessing local government capabilities to produce more effective and efficient approaches to addressing local demographic change.

Abstract

Local government capacity to respond to demographic change has been identified as a leading critical issue facing the sector. The effective use of demographic data is a key aspect of developing this strategic capacity, particularly in addressing the constantly emerging service and infrastructure needs of local communities. Where demographic change is occurring, in terms of population growth and/or changing population composition, demographic data will form a key component of the strategic capacity of local government to both adapt to, and lead, the change.

The paper addresses two research questions:

- What does the literature say about excellence in local government use of demographic data for local government planning?
- What practical guidance would assist local government planners and decision makers in the more effective use of demographic data?

The paper adopts a practitioner focus to provide guidance for the local government use of demographic data for planning purposes. It provides an overview of demographic issues relevant to local government, the national context of the issues, frameworks for developing planning practice in the use of demographic data, information on the sources of demographic data, and practical advice on using the sources. The case is made for strengthening the use of demographic data at the local level by harnessing local government capabilities to produce more effective and efficient approaches to addressing local demographic change. It concludes with reference to National Local Government Workforce Strategy 2013-2020 to advocate for investment in local government workforce skills in the use of demographic data.

Biography

John Lavarack is a research officer at ACELG. He has worked for many years as a sustainability professional in the local government and higher education sectors. From an early career in teaching he has developed a practice focused on engaging people in the workplace with diverse information and ways of responding to it. His interest has been in supporting behaviours and cultures that adapt in order to increase ecological and community resilience. He has collaborated in research and writing on the sustainability of organisations with The University of Sydney Business School. John holds a Masters in Environmental Studies and Bachelor of Arts with Diploma of Education from Macquarie University.

26. Local Government Research into a ‘Hidden’ Issue

Katherine Wright, *City of Boroondara*

What is known about this subject?

- There is a large amount of anecdotal evidence and demographic research to indicate that homelessness among older women is a growing issue. However, there is little Australian research (quantitative and qualitative) into the issue.

What does the paper add?

- This paper outlines the findings of qualitative research into homelessness among older women at a local government level
- This paper also discusses the challenges and provides a methodology for undertaking research into a ‘hidden’ social problem
- Furthermore, this paper discusses the implications of the findings for service providers and how the findings will inform the development of local policies relating to positive ageing, health and wellbeing, and housing.

Abstract

There are increasing concerns emerging through research, demographic and service information about the marginal position of older women who lack support and resources for secure housing. Questions arise about the impact this has on their health and wellbeing as they age. In response, the City of Boroondara, with the support of Monash University, undertook local research during 2011-12 to explore the experiences and issues that place single, older women (55 years and over) at risk of homelessness or that lead to homelessness.

As the City of Boroondara is an affluent municipality, many social problems are ‘hidden’. Recruiting women to participate in the research was difficult. There were also issues in accessing supporting data from local organisations and Victorian and Australian Government departments. This paper will discuss the challenges in undertaking research into a ‘hidden’ issue at the local government level. The paper will also describe the key findings and how these will be used to inform the development of local policies relating to positive ageing, health and wellbeing, and housing. It will also discuss the implications for services providers.

Biography

Katherine Wright has been the Social Planning Officer in the Social Planning Unit at the City of Boroondara for the past three and a half years. She is responsible for overseeing policy work in the areas of social housing, Indigenous issues and responsible gambling. Prior to her current role, Katherine worked for the Australian Government for four years in a range of policy and program areas ranging from medical workforce training issues, bowel cancer screening to early childhood centres and workforce diversity.

27. Is Anybody Listening? The Impact of Second Home Ownership on Local Governments in Australia and Elsewhere

Professor Chris Paris, *University of Adelaide*

Abstract

This paper reflects on aspects of changing national and international housing markets, especially the impacts of the growth of second (and multiple) home ownership on particular places. It is argued that research and commentary on second home ownership had not yet adequately understood or analysed the combined effects of a range of processes of change, including retirement migration, seasonal movements between multiple homes, and the role of overseas-based purchasers of second (and multiple) homes. The impacts vary enormously between places, but in almost every case they generate a range of demands, problems, issues and opportunities for local governments. Examples range from the demand for service provision in inner London to problems of dealing with the legacy of failed second homes developments within the housing market crashes in Ireland and the Spanish Costas. The presentation will also review some Australian examples, case studies and areas which I think are crying out for further work. Is anybody *else* interested?

Biography

Professor Chris Paris is a research fellow in the Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning, University of Adelaide. He was Professor of Housing Studies at the University of Ulster from 1992 to 2008, when he was appointed as an Emeritus Professor of the University. He was Director of the Australian Centre for Local Government Studies at the University of Canberra from 1986 to 1989. Chris has held many full-time and visiting positions in the UK, Australia and Hong Kong. He has wide international experience of research, teaching and examination in housing, planning and urban development. He also has extensive international experience of applied research for government, statutory agencies and private sector organisations. He has recently completed a range of research studies related to older adults housing, a study of the transfer of former Ministry of Defence housing to civilian use, research on socio-economic aspects of second home ownership in affluent societies. Chris is author, co-author or editor of many books, monographs and research reports on housing, planning and urban policy as well as over 100 publications in refereed journals, professional journals and edited books. His most recent book, *Affluence Mobility and Second Home Ownership*, has been widely praised in reviews in scholarly professional and journals.

28. Planning Social Infrastructure and Community Services for Urban Growth Areas

Bronwyn Webster, *City of Charles Sturt*

Abstract

The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, launched in February 2010, outlines bold targets for urban development across Adelaide. The Western suburbs of Adelaide are the focus of much of this development with a projected increase in the number of dwellings in the range of 40,000 dwellings with an increased population of over 80,000 residents. Approximately half of these increased dwellings are expected to be created within the City of Charles Sturt.¹⁴

In response to expectations of increased infill development in the City of Charles Sturt, Council is undertaking extensive community engagement, research and planning in order to respond to the anticipated changes in our community that will result from these developments.

This presentation provides an overview of the findings from two projects that have focused on social infrastructure requirements for urban infill areas generally and more specifically in the City of Charles Sturt.

The initial study was a three stage approach. Stage one of the study analyses who is living in urban growth areas, provides an overview of resident perception and preferences regarding higher density living environments, identified key themes related to liveability in urban growth areas and identified how social infrastructure can contribute to addressing those themes and the role that social infrastructure plays in the creation of liveable urban growth area communities. This stage also involved case study research of a number of urban growth projects from Australia and overseas.

Stage two drew on the findings from the literature review and case study research to identify key trends and guiding principles for the provision of social infrastructure in urban growth areas. It also identified standards that may be applied, facility models that are appropriate to the urban growth context and canvassed specific issues such as options for funding.

Stage three involved the development of an implementation guide which is intended to serve as a relatively concise and practically focussed tool to assist councils with implementing the key findings and directions from the project.

Biography

Bronwyn Webster is Manager, Customer & Community Services at the City of Charles Sturt in Adelaide's western suburbs. Bronwyn has extensive experience in a broad range of social policy and service delivery fields. Her role at the City of Charles Sturt involves managing programs and services for people across the age spectrum from 'cradle to grave' as well as planning strategically for facilities and services to meet the needs of a growing population. Having worked in all levels of government, Bronwyn is particularly passionate about the role of local government in connecting people with their communities and in strengthening the role that community plays in helping citizens develop resilience in changing times.

¹⁴ South Australia Department of Planning and Local Government, *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide*, (Adelaide: Government of South Australia, 2011).

29. Youth Development in Local Government – Future Roles

Stuart Boyd, *Adelaide Hills Council*

Abstract

Local Government plays a significant role in the Youth sector in a multitude of ways including the direct provision of a wide range of programs and events for local young people. This project allowed for a thorough and candid examination of youth development practice and developed out of concern about the emerging challenges and changing role of Local Government. The research involved Youth Officers, Community Managers, Directors and Elected Members who represented thirty two councils across metropolitan and country South Australia. They participated through online surveys, focus groups and a workshop.

What the project reveals is that Youth Officers are doing an excellent job supporting young people and providing opportunities for them to develop skills and inform council decision making. The circumstances vary greatly from Council to Council and between Rural and Urban areas. There are however many challenges facing local government in the realm of youth development including:

- developing and implementing policies and strategies that link with council's overall strategic management plans,
- ensuring Youth Development Officers have appropriate and relevant knowledge and skills to undertake their multifaceted role,
- identifying how to best support youth development officers in their role, and
- developing mechanisms for undertaking relevant and meaningful evaluation of youth development programs and projects.

This project makes clear recommendations on how to meet these challenges and move forward. The project was generously funded by the Local Government Association of South Australia's Local Government Research and Development Scheme.

Biography

Stuart Boyd is the Manager of Community Development for the Adelaide Hills Council. Stuart has over 25 years of experience in human services and has worked in a variety of settings including Local and State Government, private industry, the non-government community sector and in tertiary education. Originally trained in Youth work Stuart has undertaken a number of youth development roles and also conducted several youth consultancies. Some of these consultancies included the development of policies and strategies for Councils in Western Australia. Stuart is also currently the chair of the Social Planning Chapter which comes under the umbrella of the South Australian Chapter of the Planning Institute of Australia.

30. Participatory Decision Making Software

A/Prof. Janet McIntyre, Natasun Binchai and David Hope, *Flinders University*

What is known about this subject?

- There is a growing demand from the community to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.
- Current community engagement practices are seen as facilitating extreme, rather than mainstream, community views
- Collecting information from the community to assist in making complex decisions is challenging and costly.
- Processes to collect and distil community views can lead to the presentation of information that has been biased by the collectors.

What does the paper add?

- Issues relating to community well-being can be explored in a participatory manner
- The use of computer-aided tools can provide an unbiased repository of information about complex issues
- Some people do not want to use computer-aided software, but can still contribute to the complex issues through the proxy of focus groups and the like or through someone transcribing their comments into the software-based repository
- More work needs to be done to make the software more intuitive.

Abstract

Local government wrestles with many challenges and generally limited resources. Any information gathering and proposed direction-setting which can be undertaken by the community, staff and elected members through a web-based process minimises the resources required to achieve equitable and community based solutions to complex problems.

Using climate change as an example, the research used a computer-aided information-gathering process designed to get facts and perceptions from members of the community ('users') and the local government community ('service providers'). The process identified: key concepts relating to climate change; the decision making context; constraints to achieving outcomes; the elements of three scenarios (denial of the need to change, too little action too late, sustainable long term adjustments); and key factors (variables) in tackling the issue of climate change.

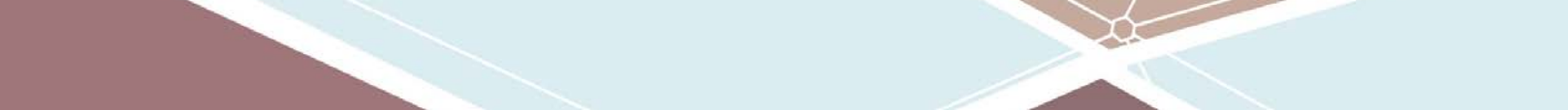
The computer-aided model provided: a framework for gathering data and perceptions; an unbiased repository of facts and perceptions from 'users' and 'service providers'; the ability to detect patterns and relationships from the facts and perceptions – a key element in understanding the complexity of the issue; a web-based tool providing access to local governments and their communities to assist in decision-making; and a tool that 'learns' (updates and grows) as more communities use it.¹⁵

The research provided a tool that can be used, with modification, to develop solutions to any complex challenge facing councils, whether individually, regionally or on a state-wide basis. (The phrase 'with modification' means to seed the model with some initial data and parameters specific to the challenge.)

Biography

Janet McIntyre is Associate Professor at Flinders University and Adjunct Professor at the University of Indonesia. Her praxis as a sociologist /social anthropologist spans over 30 years as an academic, teacher, researcher and community development specialist. McIntyre is on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*, *Action Learning and Action Research Journal*, *Community Quarterly*. Assoc Prof McIntyre is organizing a joint stream across three research committees at the International Sociological Conference (ISA) held at Guthenberg Sweden and entitled "Sociology on the Move". 11-17 July, 2010. She was elected to

¹⁵ This software platform was developed by Flinders University honours student Natasun Binchai and is adapted from software developed by Dr De Vries of Flinders University. For more information on this platform and its relevance for sustainability, see J. McIntyre-Mills & D. de Vries, *Identity, Democracy and Sustainability: Facing Up To Convergent Social, Economic And Environmental Challenges* (Litchfield Park, Arizona: Emergent Publications, 2011).



the ISA board of Research Committee 10 on Participation at the ISA conference in Durban in 2006. Her recent books include: 'Systemic Governance and Accountability' and 'User-centric design to meet complex needs'.

David Hope is the managing director of his own consulting firm in South Australia and an adjunct lecturer at Flinders University in the area of public sector management. David has had nearly twenty-five years involvement with local government as a senior executive and a consultant and has a sound understanding of the issues and challenges faced by today's council. David's role in the participatory decision making software project was in the initial development of the research parameters, seeking funding from the LGA-SA, information gathering and working with community groups and critiquing the outcomes of the project.

31. Where to for ROCs: New Options for Regional Structures

Alex Gooding, *UTS Centre for Local Government Associate*

What is known about this subject?

- Relatively little has been written comparing the different governance models of regional groupings such as Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs), Council of Mayors (COMs) and County Councils, and how these might be affected by changes such as reforms to the size, structure and operations of participating councils.
- However, as a result of local government reviews and reform processes currently underway in some jurisdictions, there are suggestions that structures such as COMs and/or a revised County Council model might offer a more appropriate form of regional cooperation, one which could potentially better complement other aspects of local government reform.

What does the paper add?

- A review of selected COMs and County Council models as they are currently implemented within Australia and overseas, and how they differ to “traditional” ROCs.
- A discussion of potential reforms to local government (particularly but not exclusively in NSW), their relevance to these approaches, and how they might affect the development and implementation of these models.
- A review of the potential implications for councils if these models were to be introduced as the key form of regional cooperation and whether and how a balance might be achieved between council reforms and regional structures in achieving better consolidation outcomes.

Abstract

This paper draws on a paper prepared by the author for the current NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel on options for ROCs in supporting enhanced regional collaboration between councils. This project which was completed late last year, drew on recent research and experience in other jurisdictions as well as consultation with selected ROCs. The paper proposed two collaboration options related to assumptions about underlying changes in local government. The first was an Incremental Model which assumed that these changes were relatively limited; the second, a Council of Mayors Model, proposed a major departure from the ROC model in the advent of more extensive changes in local government structure and operation.

This paper explores this model and related options, including proposals for revamped County Council structure discussed in the Panel’s latest paper, *Future Directions for NSW Local Government*. It explores how these bodies might operate in a future local government environment, drawing in part on some of proposals in the *Future Directions* paper and fleshing out the options proposed in the ROC paper regarding issues such as incorporation, governance, structure and shared services delivery. The paper will involve additional desktop research regarding regional local government structures in Australian and other jurisdictions. It will discuss the implications for councils and how a balance might be achieved between council reforms and regional collaboration in achieving better consolidation outcomes. While it draws primarily on the NSW context, the paper should have broader relevance.

It should be noted that as this paper is a work in progress the proposed themes and directions may change to reflect research outcomes.

Biography

Alex Gooding has extensive experience in policy research and development relating to local and metropolitan governance, planning, transport and infrastructure, including 12 years as Executive Director of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Ltd (WSROC). In 2008 he established his own independent consultancy. In recent years he has undertaken research in conjunction with a number of organisations including the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) and the local government review panels in NSW and South Australia.

32. Local Co-Governance and Environmental Sustainability in Local Government

Professor Brian Dollery, *University of New England* and Dr Michael Kortt, *Southern Cross University*

What is known about this subject?

- Co-governance represents a potentially effective method of enlisting local community assistance in tackling local environmental challenges
- However, little is known about how best to approach the establishment of co-governance structures in local government.

What does the paper add?

- This presentation outlines the challenge of local environmental sustainability for Australian local government
- It employs the Lake Macquarie City Council ('LakeMac') and its *Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program* as a case study to illustrate the general problems involved co-governance in local environmental sustainability
- The LakeMac approach represents perhaps 'best-practice' in local environmental co-governance in Australia
- Argument can be generalised to demonstrate that 'process change' through co-governance rather than 'structural change' through amalgamation represents the best way to tackle local environmental sustainability in Australian local government.

Abstract

Local environmental sustainability represents a growing challenge to Australian local government. Various conceptual approaches to the problem have been identified, including local co-governance. This presentation sets out the challenge of local environmental sustainability for Australian local government. It employs the Lake Macquarie City Council ('LakeMac') and its *Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program* as a case study to illustrate the general problems involved co-governance in local environmental sustainability. In many respects, the LakeMac approach represents 'best-practice' in local environmental management in Australia. It demonstrates that 'process change' through co-governance rather than 'structural change' through amalgamation represents the best way to tackle local environmental sustainability in Australian local government.

Biography

Professor Brian Dollery is Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Local Government at the University of New England. He has written extensively on local government, especially on local government structure, finance and reform. Recent books include *Funding the Future: Financial Sustainability and Local Infrastructure Finance in Australian Local Government* (2013), *Councils in Cooperation: Shared Services and Australian Local Government* (2012), *Local Government Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Advanced Anglo-American Countries* (2008), *The Theory and Practice of Local Government Reform* (2008), *Reform and Leadership in the Public Sector* (2007) and *Australian Local Government Economics* (2006). Over the past two decades, Brian has worked with a large number of local councils across Australian, mostly on structural reform.

Dr Michael Kortt is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Economics at Southern Cross University (SCU). Prior to joining SCU, Michael spent 10 years working in the government sector as a Research Manager for the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Department of Health and Ageing. His principal research interests fall squarely on local government economics with much of his current work devoted to empirically estimating the relationship between local government size and council cost/performance. His recent books include *Funding the Future: Financial Sustainability and Local Infrastructure Finance in Australian Local Government* (2013) and *Councils in Cooperation: Shared Services and Australian Local Government* (2012).

33. Comparisons are Odious:¹⁶ A Practitioner's View of why Comparing Councils is a Flawed Concept

Dr Fran Flavel, *Port Stephens Council*

What is known about this subject?

- There are many instances of use of benchmarking as a tool to identify best practice processes; to measure performance of local government entities against each other; and extensive reporting of these exercises
- The author has not been able to identify any literature or case studies that go to the question of why comparisons are made at all; and in the case of process benchmarking what guidelines are available are somewhat generic and do not address appropriately the use of this tool in a framework or context

What does the paper add?

- The paper argues that benchmarking and comparison is only useful under strictly defined and narrow circumstances, and almost exclusively should be applied to processes and not organisations
- The paper argues that the NSW experience of the Comparative Data¹⁷ is of limited utility and out of alignment with the new, powerful Integrated Planning & Reporting requirements of the Local Government Act
- The paper demonstrates that the shift must be made from comparisons with other councils to considerations of performance perception by a council's community, and how this can be measured effectively.

Abstract

What earthly good is comparing one council with another to assess a council's performance? Such a concept is deeply flawed – probably untenable in the new world of community strategic plans. Benchmarking appears to be poorly understood and Comparative Data – at least in New South Wales – is woeful. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate these shortfalls and, using Port Stephens Council and the NSW Comparative Data¹⁸ as a case in point, to illustrate the philosophical and statistical absurdity of current practice as a means to assess a council's performance. The focus of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) in New South Wales is on the outcomes achievable for the community, and a council's contribution – with other agencies and stakeholders – to achieving those community-specified outcomes. Whilst it can be demonstrated that many communities across the State share some common areas of focus, it is a step much too far to go from that proposition to measuring individual councils' performances against each other. However if we shift our thinking to bring it into line with the intent of IP&R, we can measure a council's performance in a relevant and meaningful way. I will demonstrate that if there is a shift to a different, qualitative approach using systems thinking and customer value it will yield a better measure of a council's performance.

Biography

Dr Fran Flavel is Corporate Strategy and Planning Coordinator with Port Stephens Council. This is her second career as she has been in local government for the last seven years, all of those at Port Stephens. Fran had a long career in marketing higher education. She has been keynote speaker at conferences on marketing higher education in US, UK and Sweden, as well as in Australia on numerous occasions. Her first role after university was in market research and she has maintained a strong interest in using data to inform strategy. Fran established the Residents' Panel at Council in 2007 and has conducted customer satisfaction surveys and community engagement surveys for Council. She is responsible for performance reporting for the LGA as well as for Council. She is a member of the Local Government Managers Australia NSW Integrated Planners Network and the Division of Local Government's Data Networking Group of councils. Fran is leading a project with other councils in the Hunter and Central Coast regions to establish a framework of community wellbeing indicators that can be used by councils of all sizes and capacities.

¹⁶ With apologies to John Lydgate, Debate between the horse, goose, and sheep, circa 1440.

¹⁷ NSW Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Comparative Information on NSW Local Government Councils 2010-11*, http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/Comparatives/Comparatives_2010_11.pdf (accessed February 26, 2013).

¹⁸ Ibid.

34. 'One size fits all?' An Appraisal as to How NSW Councils Have Reacted and Adapted to New Legislation

Philip Willis, *UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures*

What is known about this subject?

- Most change/reform is instigated as a 'top-down' exercise (via either legislation or state government directives) and as a consequence there has been limited interest in the impacts of proposed reforms on the recipients
- This paper is likely to be the first to study the subject in some detail.

What does the paper add?

- The paper will provide an understanding of the effects on councils by the introduction of major legislation
- The paper suggests that the particular circumstances of individual councils should be taken into account when considering the instigation of significant reform.

Abstract

This paper is part of a research project examining the long term impact of the reform in local government in NSW. In particular it is examining those reforms that emphasise policy creation and strategy formulation as opposed to 'day-to-day' management and operations. It takes as its starting point the 1993 Local Government Act, which was a watershed in implementing 'new' approaches in New South Wales Local Government.

The paper succeeds a previous paper; 'Panacea or snake oil? An examination of local government reform process in New South Wales'; and details the first of the three case studies providing analysis. The first case study is a comprehensive review of council plans and reports of how Canada Bay Council ('the Council'), responded to legislated requirements during the period 1994 – 2012

The paper briefly explains the State Government's objectives via the NSW Local Government Act 1993 (the '93 Act) and its subsequent amendments. It also describes how those objectives have been interpreted, implemented and established as a series of guidelines or expectations by the State Government's Division of Local Government ('the Division'). The paper also details a timeline of administrative reforms as determined by the Division. In turn, a timeline of Canada Bay Council's approach to the reforms was formulated and contrasted against the Division's expectations.

The analysis revealed that immediately following the introduction of the '93 Act, the Council was still locked into a 'departmental' mind-set, and was focussed on 'day-to-day' management and operations. However as it entered the period 2000 – 2010 the mindset transitioned to one of long-term strategic planning, and post 2010 its full focus was on strategic formulation and policy creation coupled with community engagement.

From the research and analysis undertaken to date, it is surmised that for any introduction of new legislation, as much as 12 years should be allowed to fully change the existing culture. Also, the particular circumstance should be allowed for as 'one size will not fit all'.

Biography

Philip Willis Commenced his PhD studies in 2008; his area of interest being the impact that the reform process has had on local government. Phil has 45 years experience in local government, working in various positions as a qualified civil/local government engineer. In addition to his engineering qualifications, Phil possesses a Master of Local Government Management degree from the University of Technology, Sydney. Apart from his research, which is part-time, Phil undertakes occasional consultancy work. Phil has been a member of a WorkCover Industry Reference Group with an interest in the effects of climate change on the workforce. He was also a member of a number of Australian Standards Committees, and remains an active member of the Engineers Australia Engineering Heritage Committee with a particular interest in heritage bridges and local government. He is also an active participant for a number of charitable organizations. With his remaining time, Phil enjoys reading and playing the piano.

35. Community Wellbeing Indicators, Survey Template for Local Government

Alan Morton, *Local Government Association of Queensland Associate*

Summary

- The concept of community wellbeing has been the focus of research for many years;
- Community indicator research has been undertaken in other jurisdictions in Australia and internationally, establishing the validity of such processes
- This research aimed at establishing a valid but limited set of survey questions able to provide an indication of relative community wellbeing
- The ability to benchmark performance against results from comparative surveys in other councils was also a particular focus
- Encouraging councils to use the survey template provided as a key tool to source data for their long term planning is a specific outcome desired from the project.

Abstract

This paper presents key findings from a research project undertaken for the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) and the ACELG. The research project builds on national work undertaken in developing community wellbeing indicators and contributes to the enhanced capacity of councils to plan for, measure and report on the wellbeing of their communities. Whilst the concept of community wellbeing has been the focus of research for many years, it has been revitalised by a renewed interest in how this might be measured.

A key objective of the project was to develop a tool which allows councils to: measure community wellbeing using a number of standard indicators; track changes over time in community wellbeing; benchmark performance against results from comparative surveys in councils across the Queensland and elsewhere; and identify policy measures that can improve community outcomes.

This paper profiles the process used to develop the survey template, and the results obtained from the state-wide survey using the questionnaire developed for the project. Utilisation of the scores obtained from the survey work to develop a valid set of indicators to measure overall community wellbeing is also discussed.

The use of a standard questionnaire, as developed by this project, is seen as providing an opportunity to develop benchmarks by council category, and to track performance in enhancing community wellbeing. The paper argues that the use of this survey template enables replication of the research method allowing a valid assessment of community wellbeing. Such performance measures are critical to enhancing governance and general service delivery.

Biography

Alan Morton has more than 30 years' experience consulting to local government in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia. His work has covered policy research and analysis, finance and rating, organisation structures, community planning and regional development. Alan has also coordinated LGAQ's biennial Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey since its inception in 1997.

36. Cultural Planning Processes in Local Government in Victoria

Kim Dunphy, *Cultural Development Network*

What is known about this subject?

- To our knowledge, cultural development processes in local government have never yet been formally examined in a methodical research process
- The ACELG resource library, for example, includes no references on the theme of culture, or the arts
- Individual councils must undertake their own study any time they seek to compare or contrast their own practice with others
- This indicates significant potential for research findings that can help inform councils on topics related to cultural development.

What does the paper add?

- By developing a picture of the current state of professional activity, this research offers the potential for stronger shared practice, improved collaboration and increasingly shared standards and resources between councils.

Abstract

Cultural development is a relatively new area of focus in local government, with LGAs increasingly employing practitioners in positions as cultural planners and cultural development workers within dedicated areas of council over the last twenty years. Because there is as yet no specialist training nor agreed professional standards for this area, practices tend to vary significantly between councils. The paper presents results of a state-wide survey about cultural planning processes in local government across Victoria: how cultural plans are devised; what principles inform their development; what processes are used to measure outcomes; and how cultural development is aligned with other areas of local government's endeavour. By developing a picture of the current state of professional activity, this research offers the potential for stronger shared practice, improved collaboration and increasingly shared standards and resources between councils.

Biography

Kim Dunphy is the Research Program Manager for the Cultural Development Network (CDN), based in Victoria, Australia. CDN works to promote the cultural vitality of communities throughout Australia, by supporting and resourcing cultural development practice in local government. CDN also hosts the National Local Government Cultural Forum, in partnership with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), Global Cities Research Institute (RMIT University) and the Australia Council for the Arts, Community Partnerships as part of their National Sector Development Initiative. The Cultural Forum will set medium to long-term objectives for local government cultural planning and the arts. Kim is just completing her PhD which examines the role of participatory arts in social change in Timor-Leste. Her publications relevant to local government include topics such as cultural indicators, accessibility and the arts, creativity and community revitalization in regional Australia.

37. Picture Adelaide's Strategic Plan

Cate Owen, *City of Adelaide*

What is known about this subject?

- Previous responses to consultation on Council Strategic Plans have tended to come from particular interest groups and some age groups have been under-represented
- Traditionally low levels of participation/involvement in developing high level strategic documents.
- Multiple and appropriate tools required to engage a wide cross-section of the community
- Online engagement tools are becoming a popular and accessible way for people to engage in decision making processes
- The use of smart phone apps is relatively new to local government.

What does the paper add?

- Shares the experience that Adelaide City Council had in trying new engagement techniques
- Provides an example of a staged approach which allowed the community and Council to receive the results of the consultation leading up to the formal Strategic Plan document
- Gives examples of how social media can influence the development of strategic plans
- Illustrates how offering creative and fun engagement tools can also assist other projects in local government
- Asks what might be considered the 'greatest hits' of the new engagement tools into future.

Abstract

In April 2011 the City of Adelaide launched 'Picture Adelaide', a staged approach to consultation for the Council's Strategic Plan. Traditionally Council consultation was highly structured seeking specific feedback which tended to attract self-interest groups most impacted. The aim of this new approach was to engage a cross-section of the community in a fun, eye catching, informative and future focused way. Desktop research was done to determine tools which had been successful elsewhere. This involved collection of 'raw ideas' in the first instance. Tools included an iPhone App, interactive maps, Polaroid photos with ideas and reply paid postcards.

Stage One asked what people wanted to 'Create', what they 'Love' and what they wanted to 'Improve' in the City (3,000 ideas were submitted). The emerging ideas were grouped into themes and used to come up with three 'futures' concepts in relation to community, business and creative concepts for the City (Stage Two). These were developed as an engaging way to communicate what the future of the City could look like. The third stage involved asking for formal submissions on the draft strategic plan. Finally the Strategic Plan 2012-16 was released July 2012.

On reflection:

- Feedback to Council and community on each stage was important
- The variety of tools meant we captured different people
- Creative feedback formats required creative analysis.

The outcome was an innovative campaign that allowed community input via visual and narrative form and demonstrated the worth of adopting innovative techniques.

The Strategic Plan cycle means the Council will start this process again soon...

Biography

Cate Owen is a Senior Research Consultant at Adelaide City Council in the Strategy and Innovation Program. She has previously worked in strategic planning and statistical research roles in state and local government, as well as non-government organisations. She has a particular interest in geo-demography, land use planning and community consultation.

38. Dealing with Enhancing Amenity and Biodiversity Conservation in Residential Areas: The Role of Local Government

Associate Professor Andrew Kelly, *University of Wollongong*

What is known about this subject?

- TPOs and similar instruments throughout Australia are a well-known mechanism to preserve vegetation on private residential land in urban and township areas. They have existed since planning laws were introduced. But what was devised as a basic tool to enhance local green amenity is now being expected to deal with a global resource, namely biodiversity.

What does the paper add?

- The paper intends to be positive about encouraging a form of 'green amenity' that encompasses both local attractiveness and wider biodiversity conservation issues to meld together. There is no expectation that 'pure ecology' will exist. This does not mean, however, that 'urban ecology' is not unimportant. Indeed, it is crucial. This leads to concern regarding the growth of big houses and smaller gardens at the urban periphery. What might be role of local government here in further boosting ecological amenity in private open space as it marches across the landscape? Do any councils have worthwhile stories to tell?

Abstract

A crucial conservation statutory hybrid mechanism used by local government is the Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This instrument provides a regulatory tool for local authorities to enhance green amenity in residential and other areas. While it derives from British legislation in 1943, in NSW it appeared regionally in 1951 and in urban council areas throughout the 1960s and beyond. But several issues have since arisen, especially following the 'Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006' which contains a provision entitled 'Preservation of Trees and Vegetation on Private Land'. At clause 5.9(1), the sub-aim is to 'preserve the amenity of the area, including biodiversity values, through the preservation of trees and other vegetation'. This provides an explicit step forward from improving local visual amenity to embracing global biodiversity conservation. But the two issues do not automatically coincide, demanding special attention to law, policy design and regional approaches. This paper attempts to distinguish the two factors and consider how they might be integrated.

Several related issues emerge. Firstly, the question of incorporating the provisions is no longer voluntary, leading to a standard blanket sub-instrument. Secondly, in a developmentally based system, to what extent can smaller residential gardens in new suburbs embrace biodiversity? Thirdly, what other methods might be used together with or instead of the TPO. While biodiversity conservation should be part of the strategic planning phase, consideration of amenity tends to arise after individual applications for development are submitted for appraisal, if at all. Whilst the presentation focuses on NSW, it is intended that it may lead to some inter-jurisdictional research.

Biography

Andrew Kelly is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Wollongong (UOW), NSW, and the Institute for Conservation Biology and Environmental Management. He is also a fellow of the Centre of Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney. Andrew teaches in the areas of environment law, local government law and administrative law. His research interests include biodiversity conservation and enhancing amenity at the local level, council rates and threatened species law.

The Great Debate:

Local Government Reform – Just re-arranging the deck chairs on the SS Federation?

For Against

Melissa Gibbs

Assistant Director of ACELG



Dr Tim Robinson

Director, Fairfield City Council and member of the ACELG Research Advisory Committee



The Hon. Margaret Reynolds

Former Federal Minister for Local Government and Chair of the ACELG Board



Greg Hoffman

Director of Policy and Representation at the LGAQ and member of the ACELG Research Advisory Committee

Adjudicated by **Associate Professor Erica Bell**, Deputy Director at the University Department of Rural Health at the University of Tasmania, member of the ACELG Research Advisory Committee.

‘A City I Know’ Poster Display

As part of the University of Adelaide’s post-graduate course, ‘Urbanism: Critique, Policy, Practice’, Master of Planning/Master of Planning (Urban Design) students have performed a critical exploration of urbanisation, increasing their understanding and capacity to critique urban environments. The course is vitally concerned with how people live in urban environments, interrogating urban development policy and the way it affects built outcomes. The issues addressed include sense of place, permeability, activation, patterns of use, accessibility, legibility, function, environmental character and impact and interaction of public space with transport, amongst other concerns. The course has developed students’ abilities to link an informed intellectual overview of urban histories to current opportunities and constraints regarding the initiation of well-articulated and effective change to urban environments. As part of their assessment students have selected a city they would like to investigate. Using the knowledge and skills gained in the first nine weeks of the course, they have translated their research about their chosen city to create a Poster that aims to present a visual discussion of at least four of the following topics: population change, density, environmental impacts and innovations, mobility, urban spaces, housing.



Adelaide, South Australia

- **Cara Archer:** Prague, Czech Republic
- **David Cooke:** Darwin, Northern Territory
- **Will Gormly:** Brisbane, Queensland
- **Nghia Quang Ha (Nick):** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- **Lauren Heritage-Brand:** Townsville, Queensland
- **Jessica Lewig:** Auckland, New Zealand
- **Ryan Lewis:** Canberra, ACT
- **Dacheng Liu (Danny):** Hangzhou, China
- **Olwyn Mackay:** Hong Kong
- **Victoria Masterman:** Sydney, NSW
- **Thi Minh Quyen Nguyen (Kelly):** Perth, Western Australia
- **Ross Oates:** Melbourne, Victoria
- **Youngjun Park:** Seoul, South Korea
- **Gabi Priest:** Hobart, Tasmania
- **Hamed Tavakoli:** Tehran, Iran
- **Gemma Torpey:** Geelong, Victoria.

Bonus Session:

The Climate Change Adaptation Good Practice Project

The Climate Change Adaptation Good Practice (CC AGP) project funded by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education and managed by the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, seeks to identify and communicate climate change adaptation 'good practices' Australia wide.

Time: Friday 7th, 12:30-1:00pm
Location: Eclipse

There is a growing need to learn from those who are already involved in adaptation 'good practice' processes and to understand why these approaches have been successful. The CC AGP project has identified and documented existing good practice exemplars from around Australia in order to provide practical examples of climate change adaptation good practice, guidance on what constitutes good practice and to promote and share experiences and use of adaptation good practice. This half hour presentation will be given by [Dr Jacqui Balston](#) of the University of South Australia and will seek to communicate outcomes of the CC AGP project and present the South Australian case studies chosen to be part of the adaptation good practice project.

The Local Government Research Network

The [Local Government Researchers Network](#) is a website hosted by ACELG and managed from the central ACELG secretariat in Sydney. This network aims to strengthen the Australian local government sector by providing a place to locate and discuss the latest writing and research on subjects relevant to local government. The Network site is designed specifically to build knowledge about the range of research being carried out in different areas of local government and to facilitate connections between researchers, practitioners and the information that interests them.

The Network is free and open to **everyone**; professionals, academics, students, early career researchers, local government employees and the general public are encouraged to get involved. Similarly, we do not place restrictions on the type of publications submitted by users to the Network library: research reports, case studies, commentary, academic journal articles, think pieces, dissertations, working papers, press clippings etc. are all welcome as long as they will prove of some interest and utility to people in the local government sector.

Anyone can register for a Researchers Network account. When logged in, a registered user will be able to submit publications, join discussions in the discussion forum, browse user profiles and contact other users in the network. However, the Researchers Network is largely open access and any user, registered or not, can browse the publications, user list, and discussion forum.

Title	Published	Author(s)	Topic Area(s)	Reviewed	Link
TIONS					
SIS STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE FOR THE 21ST	2013	John Cornea	Asset Management, Asset Management, Revenue, Local Government, Financial Sustainability, Grants, Long-term financial planning, Rates, Revenue, User Charges	✓	View
City: The Difference an In-House Services Unit Can Make to a Council and Its Citizens	2013	Audrii Lee, Caroline Booth, John Lavanak	Metropolitan governance and cities, new approaches to governance, Organisational Capacity Building	✓	View
Cities and Local Government	2013	Mark DUNNELL, Robyn Evende	Connecting with Communities, International Comparisons, New approaches to governance, Social Enterprises		View
Knowledge Matter: A Guide to and Documenting Research	2013	Sally Aston, Stefanie Pflanz	Research, Workforce Development		View
Measuring Indicators: Measures for Smart	2013	Alex Motlan, Lionel Edwards	Connecting with Communities, Measures of progress, New approaches to governance		View

Search local government papers and publications.

Profile picture	Name	Organisation	Research Interest
	Lynise Anstee	Council	Gender equity, Innovation, Leadership, Workforce Development, Workforce Research
	John Lavanak	ACELG	Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change, Financial Management, Metropolitan Planning
	Sasha Lenton	BOE Economics and Planning	Economic Development
	Audrii Lee	City of Balaclava	Economic Development, Financial Management, Metropolitan Planning, Organisational Capacity Building
	Michael Linnick	Linnick & Associates	Corporate governance, Indigenous councils, Local Government Legislation, Measures of progress, New approaches to governance, Organisational Capacity Building, Regional development remote councils, Social and Community Services, including health, housing and community development, Workforce Development
	John Martin	La Trobe University	Connecting with Communities, Environmental Management, including Biodiversity, Water, Air, Waste, Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change, Regional development

Connect with other researchers in the sector.

ADD A DOCUMENT TO THE RESEARCH NETWORK LIBRARY

Title *

Author(s) *

Published *

Topic *

Asset Management
 Connecting with Communities
 Corporate governance
 Economic Development
 Emergency Matters
 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change
 Ethics/Integrity
 Financial Management
 Gender equity
 Independence
 Local Government financing
 Local Government Legislation
 Local Government reorganisation
 Managing demographic change
 New approaches to governance
 Organisational Capacity Building
 Planning, development and open space management
 Rates
 Shared services and regional collaboration
 Social and Community Services, including health, housing and community development

Custom Keyword(s):

Upload your own publications for others to use and share.

www.lgresearch.net.au

About ACELG



The Centre’s vision highlights the pursuit of excellence:

World-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21st century Australia.

At the end of its initial five years, the Centre will have brought about enduring improvements in local government’s capacity and performance.



Former Federal Local Government Minister, Hon Simon Crean (centre) and the ACELG Board of Management

Background to the Centre of Excellence

At the Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG) meeting in November 2008, the then Prime Minister announced funding support for a Centre of Excellence to showcase innovation and best practice across local government and encourage the adoption of innovative practices and solutions. Following a public expression of interest process, the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) was established in mid-2009.

About the Centre and its Partners

ACELG is a unique consortium of universities and professional bodies that have a strong commitment to the advancement of local government. The consortium is based at the University of

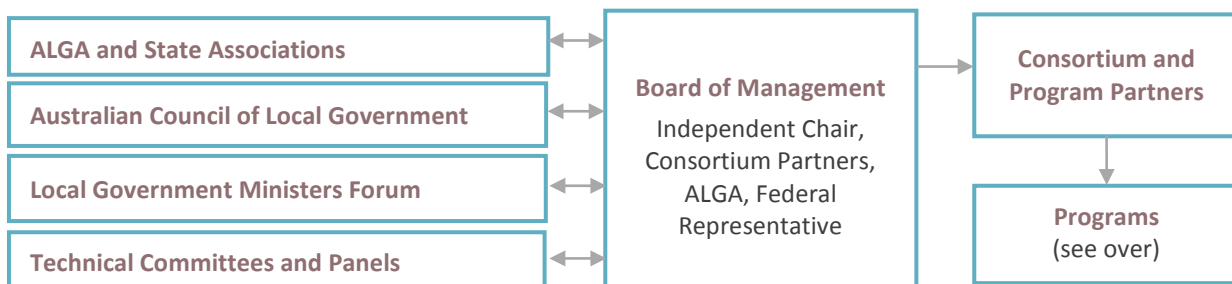
Technology, Sydney (UTS) and includes the UTS Centre for Local Government, the University of Canberra, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), Local Government Managers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia. In addition, there are program partners to provide support in specialist areas and to extend the Centre’s national reach: Charles Darwin University and Edith Cowan University.

Operating Environment and Challenges

There are currently around 560 local governments across Australia, ranging from small remote communities and rural shires to large, densely populated metropolitan cities. To contribute effectively to national agendas and to address its own sector challenges, local government needs to improve the way it works and to position itself effectively in a changing federal system. There is a need for reform emerging from local government’s own efforts to respond to the challenges it faces. The Centre is pursuing excellence by pushing the boundaries of knowledge and practice.

Governance Arrangements

ACELG has a Board of Management comprising an independent chair and representatives of the consortium, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. There are also strong reporting channels and accountability links to the Australian Council of Local Government, Local Government Ministers Forum and Local Government Associations.



Program Delivery

ACELG's activities are grouped into six program areas: Major activities include:

Research and Policy Foresight	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national research and policy development program based on key sector priorities Seminars and roundtables on key policy issues 	Contact: Stefanie Pillora, Program Manager, Research stefanie.pillora@acelg.org.au
Innovation and Best Practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN) and interactive website Showcased case studies of successful models and examples of better practice in local government 	Contact: Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director, ACELG melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au
Governance and Strategic Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high-level Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program 	Contact: Jane Durlacher, ANZSOG j.durlacher@anzsog.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national Aspiring Leaders Partnership for middle managers, including a new Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership 	Contact: Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director, ACELG melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An upgraded Business Excellence Framework for local government 	Contact: Sarah Artist, UTS sarah.artist@uts.edu.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for a range of initiatives to promote an expanded role for women in local government 	Contact: Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director, ACELG melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au
Organisation Capacity Building	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines on asset management for small communities A national framework to promote improved asset management and long-term financial planning National minimum data sets for key aspects of local government 	Contact: Chris Champion, CEO, IPWEA cchampion@ipwea.org.au
Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national strategy to address the specific capacity-building needs of small rural-remote and Indigenous local governments 	Contact: Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director, ACELG melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au
Workforce Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual Local Government Skills Forum A Workforce Development Blueprint 	Contact: Angela Zivkovic, ACELG angela.zivkovic@acelg.org.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of education and training to identify gaps and opportunities for national networking Development of new training programs 	Contact: Sarah Artist, UTS sarah.artist@uts.edu.au

ACELG Publications

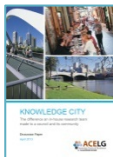
ACELG produces a number of publications across its six program areas. These publications are designed to progress the objectives of each program and also increase the knowledge base of Australian local government and inform key policy debates. To access the complete collection of ACELG publications, visit the ACELG website: www.acelg.org.au.

Recent Publications from ACELG



Community Wellbeing Indicators: Measures for Local Government

This paper outlines key research and initiatives around community wellbeing indicators, and includes a 'community wellbeing indicators survey template' that can be adapted for use by local governments nationally to measure, analyse and assess the progress of community wellbeing.



Knowledge City: The Difference an In-House Research Team Made to a Council and its Community

This paper outlines the strategic benefits that Council and the city has gained from a dedicated research initiative, and also includes key literature on the topic for broader interest by the sector.



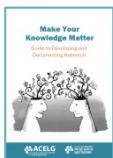
Social Enterprises and Local Government: A Scoping Study

This paper outlines current knowledge about local governments in Australia and overseas working with social enterprises to achieve collaborative place-based solutions to current challenges facing communities.



In Our Hands: Strengthening Local Government Revenue for the 21st Century

This paper distils recent findings on local government revenues and presents fresh thinking and sound evidence about how stronger revenues might be achieved to meet the ongoing and emerging needs of local communities.



Make Your Knowledge Matter: A Guide to Developing and Documenting Research

This publication offers instruction on the production of research outputs, introduces the sort of *thinking* required in constructing academic work, and offers a number of relevant research examples that are likely to build the technical skills of practitioners seeking to enhance their own research capacity.



National Local Government Indigenous Employment Position Paper - Closing the Gap Through Place-based Employment

This paper aims to encourage and facilitate increased Indigenous workforce participation in local government, and is a response to considerable workforce challenges that lie ahead for the sector.



Community Engagement in Rural-remote and Indigenous Local Government in Australia

This report considers whether rural-remote and Indigenous local governments in Australia have developed robust community engagement processes.



A National Review of Education and Training in Local Government Skills Shortage Areas

This paper was prepared in consultation with key sector organisations, and documents a national review of education and training in local government skills shortage areas.



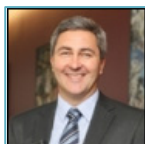
Political Management in Australian Local Government: Exploring Roles and Relationships Between Mayors and CEOs

This paper examines various dynamics of the Mayor-CEO working relationship.

These and other publications are available on the ACELG website. Visit www.acelg.org.au for more information.

The ACELG Research Advisory Committee

A **Research Advisory Committee** comprising a mixture of local government practitioners and researchers meets bi-annually to oversee current research projects and advise on future research activity with the ACELG Research and Policy Foresight program.



Professor Lawrence Pratchett is the Dean of Business and Government at the Australia New Zealand Institute for Governance. He was previously Professor of Local Democracy and Head of the Department of Public Policy at De Montfort University in the United Kingdom and prior to that Director and co-founder of the Local Governance Research Unit.



Professor Mark Evans is the Director of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government Institute for Governance. Before taking up this role Mark was Professor of Government, Head of the Department of Politics and Provost of Halifax College at the University of York in the United Kingdom where he played an international role in supporting better administrative practices in public administration.



Greg Hoffman has worked for three Councils including the position of CEO of Darwin City Council. Greg was the Executive Director of the Local Government Association of Queensland for ten years, the Local Government Commissioner for Queensland for five years, and for the last 13 years he has been the Director of Policy and Representation at the Local Government Association of Queensland.



Professor John Martin is Director of the Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities at La Trobe University. John has a strong interest in the institutions and processes that create sustainable communities. His initial training in ecology and natural resource management, sociology and a PhD in public policy provides a multidisciplinary view on sustainable development.



Dr Robyn Morris is currently a Research Consultant to postgraduate students in the Faculty of Business and Law at Edith Cowan University and is involved in a number of collaborative research projects on rural-remote and Indigenous local government in partnership with ACELG. Robyn has extensive teaching and consulting experience in the area of business and the local government sector in Western Australia.



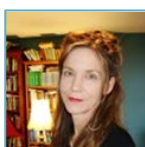
Shane Sody is Project Manager, Local Government Reform and Acting Executive Officer, Local Government Research and Development Scheme at the Local Government Association of South Australia. Shane has extensive experience in journalism, law and management, and his interests include local government rating policies, financial sustainability and governance practices.



Professor Ian Thynne is Adjunct Professor at Australian National University and the University of Canberra, and a University Professorial Fellow at Charles Darwin University. His research addresses governance and public management, with a focus on organisational types, reform leaders and strategies, and public-private mixes.



Dr Tim Robinson held senior positions in the Federal and NSW State Government before joining Fairfield City Council as a Director in 2005. Tim has degrees in management and public sector management including a PhD in the area of strategic management in local government. His research interests include local government reform and strategic leadership.



Associate Professor Erica Bell is Deputy Director at the University of Tasmania Department of Rural Health where she is also acting director of the Primary Healthcare Evaluation and Development program. She has over 40 academic journal and conference papers and presentations in areas of interest to rural stakeholders such as adaptation to climate change and youth crime prevention.



Marianne Di Giallonardo is currently the Director of Corporate Services at Maroondah City Council in Melbourne, and has an extensive 30 year Victorian local and state government career spanning Corporate, Community and Infrastructure Services portfolios. She holds a range of educational qualifications including Masters qualifications in Business Administration.

About ACELG

ACELG is a unique consortium of universities and professional bodies that have a strong commitment to the advancement of local government. The consortium is based at the University of Technology, Sydney, and includes the UTS Centre for Local Government, the University of Canberra, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Local Government Managers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia. In addition, the Centre works with program partners to provide support in specialist areas and extend the Centre's national reach. These include Charles Darwin University and Edith Cowan University.

Program Delivery

ACELG's activities are grouped into six program areas:

- Research and Policy Foresight
- Innovation and Best Practice
- Governance and Strategic Leadership
- Organisation Capacity Building
- Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- Workforce Development

Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

PO BOX 123 Broadway NSW 2007

T: +61 2 9514 3855 F: +61 9514 4705

E: acelg@acelg.org.au W: www.acelg.org.au



An Australian Government Initiative