

THIRTEENTH BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held at Edith Cowan University, Perth
on Friday 13 July 2012

Present

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Prof Attila Brungs, UTS (by teleconference)
- Penny Holloway, Local Government Managers Australia
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG
- Stephanie Foster, DRALGAS (by teleconference)
- Paul Di Iulio, President, IPWEA
- Adrian Beresford-Wylie, ALGA (representing Cllr Genia McCaffery)

In Attendance

- Prof Atique Islam, ECU
- Dr Mattie McConchie, DRALGAS (by teleconference)
- Prof Graham Sansom, Director ACELG
- Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director ACELG
- Chris Champion, IPWEA
- Stefanie Pillora, Research Program Manager, ACELG

Item 1: Welcome and Apologies

The Chairperson welcomed all those present. Apologies were received from Cllr Genia McCaffery, ALGA; Prof Frances Shannon, UC; Prof Ian Thynne, CDU; Professor Mark Evans, ANZSIG Institute, UC; and John Ravlic, LGMA.

Item 2: Minutes of Special Meeting held on 30 April 2012

Resolved:

That the draft minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2011 be adopted as a correct record, but remain confidential at this stage due to the sensitive nature of the matters discussed.

Item 3: Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

Item 4: Chairperson's Update

The Chairperson provided an update on her recent activities and related items of interest. She noted in particular her attendance at the ALGA National General Assembly in June, and meetings at the same time with senior officers of DRALGAS and Minister Crean's office. She also advised that she had

been appointed by the NT Local Government Minister to a nine-member taskforce to oversee the implementation of the 32 recommendations outlined in a Shire Sustainability Review commissioned by the NT government.

In addition, the Chairperson foreshadowed possible developments in relation to a role for local government as part of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme. It was agreed that this issue would be followed up at the next meeting.

Resolved

- **That the information be noted**
- **That ALGA be congratulated on the success of the 2012 General Assembly and again thanked for providing ACELG with an exhibition stand.**

Item 5: Secretariat Update

The Assistant Director reported on extensions to the contracts of Mervyn Carter and Karen Purser, noting that in both cases these contract extensions have been made possible by project savings and there is no impact on the approved ACELG budget. She also reported in some detail on the meeting with DRALGAS and Minister Crean's adviser mentioned in the Chairperson's update, as well as a meeting with the new CEO of the Regional Australia Institute.

The Director reported on the first meeting of the South Australian Local Excellence Expert Panel in Adelaide, and his final two visits to Wellington under the Don Trow Fellowship at Victoria University, including an address to the INGENIUM (local government engineering) conference in Rotorua (also attended by Paul Di Iulio and Chris Champion). He advised that there was significant interest in the possibility that ACELG could evolve into a trans-Tasman centre.

Resolved:

- **That the information be noted**
- **That the secretariat seek to maintain close liaison with the new Regional Australia Institute and arrangements be made for a meeting between the two chairpersons.**

Item 6: Recruitment of New Director

Professor Brungs reported satisfactory progress in advertising the position of Director and establishing the selection panel. He advised that in addition to ACELG Board representatives, the panel would include Prof Mark Evans from UC as the external academic member. He anticipated shortlisting and interviews in September.

Resolved:

- **That the information be noted**
- **That the ACELG Board advisers on the selection panel be the Chairperson and representatives of DRALGAS, LGMA and IPWEA**
- **That Board members assist UTS in identifying potential candidates.**

Item 7: Report of Programs Committee

The Director advised that the Programs Committee met on Tuesday 3 July and had submitted the following items to the Board for consideration.

7.1 Outstanding 2011 Projects

The Committee reported on all incomplete 2011 projects. Board members expressed some concern at ongoing delays with several projects and indicated that the Innovation and Best Practice program appeared to need a stronger sense of direction, including in particular strengthening of IKEN.

Resolved

That likely completion of both 2011 and 2012 projects be reviewed at the October meeting.

7.2 2012 Program Plans and Budgets

The Committee provided an overview of progress with all 2012 ACELG program plans and budgets. In addition, the Director tabled a proposed template for more detailed reporting by exception on projects experiencing significant difficulties or delays.

Resolved

- **That the information be noted**
- **That the reporting template provided by the Director be adopted for future use.**

7.3 ACELG Local Government Reform Fund Projects

The Committee advised that the four major LGRF projects undertaken by ACELG on behalf of DRALGAS had reached full or 'practical' completion by 30 June. These included the practice note on long term financial planning, the national workforce strategy, the national assessment framework for asset and financial management, and the national minimum data sets on workforce, women in local government and financial sustainability.

Board members noted the scope to link ACELG's work to recommendations in recent reports by Infrastructure Australia (supporting better asset management) and Ernst and Young (report to Minister Crean on opportunities to improve infrastructure financing in local government).

Resolved

- **That the information be noted**
- **That discussions be held with DRALGAS on potential collaboration in following up the Ernst and Young report and convening one or more national roundtables to review outcomes of LGRF projects.**

7.4 Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program

Peter Allen presented an update on progress in planning and marketing the 2012 Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program, scheduled for delivery in 2 week- long blocs: 24-28 September and 26-30 November. He advised that marketing would continue until early-mid August, and that the NT, WA and Victoria had renewed scholarship support. He sought Board approval to use unspent program development funds to offer further scholarships.

Board members expressed concerns about the failure of several states to provide scholarships, and also noted that over time the program would have to become largely or completely self-funding. It was agreed that efforts to convince further states and the federal government to provide scholarships should continue.

Resolved

That subject to advice from ANZSOG that the program would definitely proceed, the Board approve the release of unspent program development funds to provide approximately 16 further scholarships.

7.5 Local Government Business Excellence Manual – Relationship with SAI Global

The Committee reported that considerable difficulty had been experienced in moving ahead with ACELG's agreement with SAI Global to develop and promote the Australian Business Excellence Framework. The situation had now reached a point where SAI Global is seen to be in breach of the agreement, and consideration will have to be given to working with selected councils and local government organisations to pursue the theme of business excellence via other channels eg the South Australian 'Local Excellence' program.

Resolved

That the Board note the action taken and agree to terminate the agreement with SAI Global.

7.6 Policy Foresight

The Committee reported that ACELG has now produced a large amount of research material and there is now a need for a progressive shift in emphasis to dissemination of findings and formulation of policy advice. ACELG is already moving in this direction with a number of its research and policy projects, notably in the fields of low carbon futures and local government revenues. However, there is clearly scope to develop projects that are first and foremost about policy debate and development. Establishing ACELG as a major source of policy advice would strengthen its case for ongoing funding support beyond 2014, and should be a matter for consideration in the mid-term review.

Resolved

That the information be noted.

7.7 Proposed Work Program for the Gender Equity Program Co-ordinator

The Committee advised that following the completion of ACELG's involvement with the ALGWA '50:50 Vision' project, Karen Purser will work on a suite of projects aimed at increasing the representation of women in executive leadership positions in local government.

Resolved

That subject to available funding the approved work program comprise: further work on the national minimum data sets, especially women in local government; a fact sheet on gender inclusive job evaluation and grading; a guide to CEO recruitment and performance measurement that addresses gender and rural-remote issues; and a national roundtable on gender equity in senior management.

7.8 Innovation and Best Practice Program Strategy

The Committee tabled a report by the Program Co-ordinator on proposed revised goals or objectives for the Innovation and Best Practice Program (IBP). These had been adopted by the Program Reference Group at its meeting on 2 July 2012 and comprised:

- Undertake stronger communication through facts sheets, newsletters, online channels (e.g. social media, websites and IKEN) and published materials to build greater understanding and awareness about the opportunities for local government innovation
- Evolve IKEN to become highly interactive for practitioners
- Undertake niche innovation research and document further case studies to inform the sector
- Facilitate development of resources, pilot modules and support focused on growing the culture of innovation, in partnership with ACELG consortium members and other local government bodies.

The Program Co-ordinator also proposed that the \$30K budget item approved by the ACELG Board in 2012 for 'Other Strategic Research' be focused on the design, research and development of the two innovation guides for practitioners and elected representatives.

Board members reiterated concerns about the need for a sharper focus to the program, especially enhancing the content of IKEN. They noted the scope for making IKEN a central point of reference for information on national awards programs.

Resolved

- **That there be further discussions between the Program Reference Group and the University of Canberra regarding the direction and scope of the Innovation and Best Practice program, in particular the need for swift action to strengthen the content and usage of IKEN to showcase 'best practice'**
- **That the Program Reference Group provide further advice to the October meeting on the best use of the \$30,000 originally allocated to 'Other Strategic Research'.**

Item 8: Research and Policy Foresight Program report

The Research Program Manager reported on progress with new research projects, including the research partnerships scheme; strategy for dissemination of ACELG research findings; the Perth research forum held the day before the Board meeting; and the possibility of a further research event to be held in conjunction with the next RAC meeting in Brisbane in mid-October. She advised that over \$100,000 in matching funds had already been secured under the partnerships scheme, and that consideration was being given to another national research forum in April 2013.

Board members commented very favourably on the Perth forum and the strong, positive response of those present. They noted the excellent work of ACELG staff, forum contributors and partner organisations, plus the support and hospitality provided by ECU.

Resolved

- **That the information be noted**
- **That a letter be forwarded from the Chairperson to the Vice Chancellor of ECU thanking the university for its support.**

Item 9: Mid-Term Review

The Assistant Director reported on steps needed to progress the Mid-Term Review, including establishment of a Board working group as agreed at the April special meeting. She noted that the working group could also assist in providing strategic direction and advice to the process to measure impact and awareness (see item 10) and the longer-term strategy options.

Stephanie Foster proposed that DRALGAS circulate draft terms of reference for the review to the working group for discussion and approval by the Board out-of-session. She again advised that resources for the review would be limited and that the most likely approach would be for most of the

work to be undertaken by departmental staff, with independent comment and review by a small group of experts in the field. She sought the Board's assistance in identifying suitable people for that expert group.

Board members highlighted the importance of progressing this matter as quickly as possible with a view to completion by the end of the year.

Resolved

- **That the Board establish a working group comprising the Chairperson and representatives of DRALGAS, LGMA, IPWEA and ALGA to facilitate ACELG's input to the mid-term review and also provide strategic direction and advice to the process being established to measure impact and awareness**
- **That a meeting be arranged with DRALGAS as quickly as possible to finalise terms of reference and other arrangements for the review.**

Item 10: Awareness and impact

The Assistant Director reported on progress in developing a framework for measuring impact and awareness of ACELG. She advised that the Research Advisory Committee has discussed establishing a similar framework to measure the impact of ACELG's research, and it is proposed to link the two processes.

Board members discussed possible methodologies and sources of advice, and highlighted the importance of policy impact.

Resolved

That the Board refer the matters canvassed in this report to the working group established under Item 9.

Item 11: Other Business

Adrian Beresford-Wylie advised that Cr Genia McCaffery would shortly resign from the position of President of ALGA and that a new President would be appointed before the next meeting.

Resolved

That a letter of appreciation be sent to Cr McCaffery

Item 12: Next Meeting

The Assistant Director proposed that the next meeting in Brisbane in October, in conjunction with a meeting of the Research Advisory Committee and a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders. She indicated that this idea has been canvassed with the LGAQ, and the association is keen to be involved in arranging the roundtable.

Resolved

That the next set of ACELG meetings be held in Brisbane on 11-12 October, including a policy roundtable, a meeting of the RAC and possibly a research forum.