



Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

FOURTEENTH BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at the Local Government Association of Queensland, Brisbane, on Friday 12 October 2012

PRESENT

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Penny Holloway, LGMA
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG (by teleconference)
- Prof Frances Shannon, UC
- Chris Champion, IPWEA (representing Paul Di Iulio)
- Adrian Beresford-Wylie, ALGA (representing Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis)
- Mark Berlage, UTS (representing Prof Attila Brungs)
- Dr Matty McConochie, DRALGAS (representing Dan O'Brien)

IN ATTENDANCE

- Prof Atique Islam, ECU
- John Ravlic, LGMA
- Graham Sansom, Director ACELG
- Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director ACELG

ITEM 1: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Prof Attila Brungs, UTS
- Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, ALGA
- Paul Di Iulio, IPWEA
- Prof Mark Evans, ANZSIG Institute
- Prof Ian Thynne, CDU
- Mr Dan O'Brien, DRALGAS

Board membership

The Chairperson inquired about the status of DRALGAS's representation on the Board. Dr McConchie advised that Mr Dan O'Brien is officially the DRALGAS representative, but he will be

leaving the Department on 17 October. Details of Mr O'Brien's replacement will be advised to the Board as soon as they are finalised. The Chairperson asked Dr McConchie to arrange for official correspondence from the Department about the changes so the Board can formally thank and acknowledge the contribution of the Department's previous member, Stephanie Foster.

Adrian Beresford-Wylie advised that Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis is currently the President of ALGA, and as such, is ALGA's representative on the ACELG Board. He noted that ALGA will hold its Annual General Meeting on 14 November to elect executive members for the coming year, and he will advise if there is any change following that meeting.

ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2012

The Board resolved:

To amend the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2012 to record the apology of John Ravlic; and to adopt as a correct record the draft minutes with that change.

ITEM 3: MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

ITEM 4: CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE

Recruitment of director

The Chairperson reported that the recruitment process for a new director was well advanced. The Chairperson undertook to advise Board members as soon as a selection had been made. She canvassed the selection panel's proposal to bring in one or more visiting academics or scholars to provide further academic rigour to the Centre's activities. This concept will be further developed over the coming months.

NT Shires Financial Sustainability Review Taskforce

The Chairperson advised that she has written to the new Minister for local government in the Northern Territory offering support and assistance, particularly related to ACELG's rural-remote and Indigenous local government activities. She proposed holding a Board meeting in Darwin next year and to keep alive the links with the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory and the new government.

Meeting with Regional Australia Institute (RAI)

The Chairperson advised that she will meet with Mal Peters, the Chairperson of RAI, on 29 October in Sydney. The Director informed the Board that he met separately with Mr Peters during consultations with the NSW Independent Panel.

Other matters

The Chairperson noted that she has been invited to speak about gender equity in local government at the ALGWA conference in November. She also foreshadowed discussions with the ALGA on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and its potential impact on local government.

The Board resolved:

To note the Chairperson's report.

ITEM 5: SECRETARIAT UPDATE

The Director and Assistant Director reported on various secretariat activities and issues, including release of a monthly 'headlines' newsletter and a further delay in relocation of the Centre's offices within UTS. Board members commented favourably on the newsletter.

The Director advised that he met with senior officers of the Local Government Association (LGA) of the UK during his recent visit to the UK and Europe, and discussed the role of the LGA in sector-led improvement. He highlighted the ongoing commitment and support of the local government sector in the UK to the continued funding of the improvement program from a top-slice of financial assistance grants, even in a time of extreme fiscal constraint.

The Board resolved:

To note report from the secretariat.

ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Item 6.1 Outstanding 2011 projects

The Programs Committee reported on all incomplete 2011 projects. The Board noted the advice given to the Committee that all outstanding projects are currently on track for completion by the end of 2012.

The Board resolved:

To note the report of outstanding 2011 projects.

Item 6.2 Program plans and budgets

The Committee provided an overview of progress with all 2012 ACELG program plans and budgets. Members noted:

- The review of business excellence frameworks will not proceed in 2012, but will be considered in the 2013 work program. It should be categorised as a project experiencing significant delays.
- Budget figures will be updated and a projection for the end of year result will be submitted to the next meeting.

- The first phase of the ATSI employment strategy will be presented in December to the Alice Springs roundtable and a number of projects under the Local Government Practice Unit may be deferred to 2013.

Adrian Beresford-Wylie inquired about access to data collected through the National Assessment Framework portal. Chris Champion advised that access protocols are covered in the business rules which have been circulated to associations and jurisdictions for comment.

The Board resolved:

To note the report on project plans and budgets.

Item 6.3 Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program

Peter Allen reported that, following the decision not to proceed with the program in 2012, there has been a high level of collaboration between ACELG and ANZSOG in re-designing the 2013 program. He noted the reduction in the length of the program responds to sector feedback about the commitment of time required to participate in the program, along with travel time and travel costs. Feedback to date indicates the new offering will be more attractive to participants without compromising program outputs. It was noted that participation in the program could articulate to a credit of learning with partner universities.

The Board resolved:

To note the report on the Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program.

Item 6.4 Promoting case studies and comparison of legislation

The Committee noted that ACELG could do more to maximise the exposure of case studies and comparisons of legislative frameworks, both of which feature prominently in recent ACELG publications.

The Board resolved:

To commission a small scoping study to further promote ACELG-commissioned case studies; and note the intention to extract legislative comparisons from existing publications as a separate resource.

Item 6.5 Review of the Innovation and Best Practice Program

The Assistant Director tabled the terms of reference for the review of the Innovation and Best Practice Program. The Director provided further background and advised that in his view significant changes needed to be made to the operation of the IKEN component. Members agreed that the review should focus on the effectiveness of IKEN as a priority.

The Board resolved:

To note the terms of reference for the review of the Innovation and Best Practice Program; and request that the review focus on the effectiveness of IKEN as an immediate priority.

Item 6.6 Re-direction of funds under Program 4.1: Asset and Financial Management

Members considered a proposal from IPWEA proposing the re-direction of funds under the asset and financial management program to enable preparation of a working paper on the use and management of debt by local governments; and support a pilot application of an infrastructure sustainability rating tool to local council roads maintenance program. Members were very supportive of both projects.

The Director inquired about the state of the local roads asset project being undertaken by ALGA with ACELG support. Adrian Beresford-Wylie confirmed that ACELG funds will not be required until 2013 and undertook to provide a report to the next meeting on progress.

The Board resolved:

To agree to the re-allocation of funds under Program 4.1 as outlined in the report, with the remainder \$10,000 to be carried over into the 2013 Asset and Financial Management program.

Item 6.7 Master of Local Government

The Director advised that the Masters program will be offered from the second semester of 2013. Partner universities will be offered use of the IP and opportunities for co-delivery.

The Board resolved:

To note the report on the Master of Local Government.

Item 6.8 Workforce planning workshops in Western Australia

The Committee reported that as a result of a MOU between ACELG, UTS-CLG and the WA Department of Local Government, a series of workforce planning workshops has been delivered on ACELG's behalf across WA. The Director commented that this has further strengthened the very good links between ACELG and the local government sector in that state.

The Board resolved:

To note the report on workforce planning workshops in Western Australia.

Item 6.9 Enhancing Local Government Service Delivery

The Committee advised that a short course developed by UTS-CLG as part of the ACELG Capacity Building program had been for the second time in September 2012 with participants from the NT, South Australia, Western Australia and NSW.

The Board resolved:

To note the report on the enhancing local government service delivery short course.

ITEM 7: RESEARCH AND POLICY FORESIGHT PROGRAM REPORT

The Research Program Manager provided a detailed update. Dr McConchie advised that DRALGAS is interested in the research project examining the relationship between local government and Regional Development Australia Committees.

The Director spoke about the very successful research showcase held at QUT on 11 October. He expressed the view that the formula of an annual, national research forum supplemented by smaller state-based events appears to be working well: it is resulting in dissemination of ACELG research and increased impact, an expansion of the research network, getting practitioners more involved in setting the research agenda and increasing the skills of local government researchers via programs at partner universities.

The Board resolved:

To note the report of the Research and Policy Foresight Program; and to record its appreciation for the momentum being developed under the program.

ITEM 8: MID-TERM REVIEW

Dr McConchie advised that terms of reference have been drafted, and are currently with the Minister for consideration. The Chairperson advised she has requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss recent developments and the mid-term review.

The Assistant Director noted that the Board established a working group at the last meeting to facilitate ACELG's input to the review. Dr McConchie noted the potential for a perceived conflict of interest if the Department were to be a member of the working group.

The Board resolved:

- **To note the information on the progress of the mid-term review**
- **To advise DRALGAS and Minister Crean that ACELG has established a working group to facilitate ACELG's input to the mid-term review that is keen to assist as soon as appropriate**
- **To accept the withdrawal of DRALGAS as a member of the working group .**

ITEM 9: GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 9.1 Constitutional recognition of local government

Dr McConchie advised that Minister Crean gave notice in Parliament on 11 October to establish a Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government. The Committee would inquire and report on the findings of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government and assess the likelihood of success of a referendum on financial recognition.

ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING

Members agreed to schedule the next meeting for Monday 17 December 2012 at UTS, Sydney.