



## Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government

### FIFTEENTH BOARD MEETING

#### Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at the University of Technology, Sydney, on Monday 17 December 2012

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##### PRESENT

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Penny Holloway, LGMA
- Paul Di Iulio, IPWEA
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG (by teleconference)
- Prof Frances Shannon, UC
- Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, ALGA
- Prof Attila Brungs, UTS
- Dr Matty McConchie, DRALGAS (representing Richard Eccles)

##### IN ATTENDANCE

- Prof Atique Islam, ECU
- Prof Ian Thynne, CDU
- John Ravlic, LGMA
- Chris Champion, IPWEA (from Item 6.1)
- Adrian Beresford-Wylie, ALGA
- Prof Mark Evans, ANZSIG
- Prof Graham Sansom, Director ACELG
- Roberta Ryan, Incoming Director ACELG
- Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director ACELG
- Karen Purser, Program Co-ordinator ACELG (until Item 6.2)

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##### ITEM 1: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Richard Eccles, DRALGAS

The Chairperson extended a special welcome to Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, the incoming President of ALGA who has joined the Board. The Chairperson also welcomed Roberta Ryan, incoming Director

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of ACELG, who will commence full-time in the role from 21 January 2013. The Chairperson noted that Richard Eccles, Deputy Secretary of DRALGAS, has been appointed to the Board as the Department's representative, and welcomed Matty McConchie who represented Richard at the meeting.

## **ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2012**

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**The Board resolved:**

**To adopt as a correct record the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2012, as circulated.**

## **ITEM 3: MATTERS ARISING**

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No matters were raised.

## **ITEM 4: CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE**

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The Chairperson advised that she addressed the ALGWA conference in Ipswich in November. She noted there has been a change in leadership at ALGWA, and the incoming project co-ordinator of the 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity Program praised ACELG and the work undertaken by Karen Purser to get the program to the stage it is today. Mayor Lewis expressed the view that it is time to embed gender equity into the workforce program and other mainstream local government activities. The Chairperson noted that ACELG strongly endorsed this view, hence the decision to focus future work through the national workforce strategy.

### **4.1 Board membership**

The Chairperson drew the Board's attention to the letter from Stephanie Foster, DRALGAS's outgoing representative on the Board.

### **4.2 Recruitment of director**

The Board again welcomed Roberta Ryan to ACELG.

### **4.3 Meeting with Chair of the Regional Australian Institute**

The Chairperson noted that the RAI and ACELG have proposed to convene a forum in 2013 on regional governance. The Director advised that the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel would be interested in participating, and Prof Evans highlighted a strong link with ANZSIG's work with the Murray Darling Basin Authority. Adrian Beresford-Wylie advised there was a meeting of regional development senior officials recently, and there is a strong interest in examining regional structures and how they fit into the broader regional development framework. He suggested the regional governance forum might be linked to the ALGA National General Assembly.

#### **4.4 Meeting with Minister Crean**

The Chairperson advised that the meeting was primarily sought to brief the Minister on key developments, and to advise the Minister that ACELG is considering extending its reach into the Asia-Pacific region.

#### **4.5 Indigenous Employment Roundtable**

The Chairperson congratulated John Ravlic and the LGMA team on the successful staging of the roundtable. She said it was an inspirational event, bringing together a broad range of people with an interest in the area. John Ravlic said it was good to have a large number of Commonwealth agencies representatives in attendance, as they were able to clear up misunderstandings about funding programs. The Chairperson suggested ACELG write to Minister Macklin to provide a report on the roundtable and ask for written clarification on funding programs available to enable ACELG to circulate the response to local government.

##### **The Board resolved:**

- **To note the Chairperson's report**
- **To send a letter of appreciation to Stephanie Foster to thank her for her service to ACELG**
- **To work with ALGA, ANZSIG and the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel in the development of the proposed forum on regional governance**
- **To write to Minister Macklin with a report on the Indigenous Employment Roundtable, and seek clarification on the range of local government funding programs supporting Indigenous employment.**

#### **ITEM 5: SECRETARIAT UPDATE**

The Director advised that ACELG's part-time administrative assistant, Jessie Lynn, has resigned for personal reasons; and Mervyn Carter will leave ACELG on 21 December. The Director also reported that he has been appointed by UTS to an honorary position of Adjunct Professor.

##### **The Board resolved:**

- **To note the report from the secretariat**
- **To express its appreciation to Mervyn Carter for his contribution to ACELG.**

#### **ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

##### **Item 6.1 Data Sets Project**

Karen Purser made a presentation on the Australian Local Government Workforce and Employment Census (ALGWE Census). The Board noted that a number of jurisdictions are no longer actively supporting the data collection exercise, despite having signed off on the workforce data sets. Adrian Beresford-Wylie suggested the ALGWE Census, National Assessment Framework and National

Workforce Strategy should be placed on the agenda of the next Ministerial Forum, pointing out the history, purpose and benefits of the outputs.

The Director reminded the Board that these projects were not initiated by ACELG, but by the former Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council, and the demise of the Council has resulted in the absence of a forum in which to discuss and progress the agreed national sustainability frameworks. He suggested that ACELG had now taken the projects as far as it could without renewed support from jurisdictions, and to do so had committed considerable resources in addition to those provided by the Commonwealth: the current position now needs to be presented to the jurisdictions and agreement reached to determine how they would like to proceed.

**The Board resolved:**

**To ask DRALGAS to provide ACELG with the opportunity to present a report to the next Ministerial forum and senior officials meeting on progress with the Australian Local Government Workforce and Employment Census, the National Assessment Framework, and the National Workforce Strategy, with a view to seeking jurisdictions' support for ongoing implementation.**

**Item 6.2            National Assessment Framework**

Chris Champion noted that jurisdictional commitment to the National Assessment Framework also appears to be waning. He advised that the portal will be made available in February, following receipt of comments on the proposed business rules from jurisdictions and local government associations.

**The Board resolved:**

**To note the report on the National Assessment Framework.**

**Item 6.3            National Workforce Strategy**

John Ravlic advised that the strategy will be ready for release early in the new year. He also advised he will be proposing a funding package to implement the actions outlined in the strategy, noting that only some of this will be "new" money, while most would be linked to existing programs.

**The Board resolved:**

**To note the report on the National Workforce Strategy.**

**Item 6.4            Innovation and Best Practice Program**

Prof Evans spoke to the report and pointed out the three headline findings from the recent review of the program:

1. IKEN is best placed within the central secretariat, as it provides a service for the whole sector, and should be integrated into the information systems of ACELG
2. Applied research is best delivered through the services of a research fellow to provide the research output and build in-house capacity
3. Better integration is needed between the research undertaken through the Innovation and Best Practice Program and the dedicated Research and Policy and Foresight Program.

Board members highlighted the need for IKEN to have a strong practice focus.

**The Board resolved to endorse the conclusions of the review and agreed to:**

- Relocate management of the IKEN website to the ACELG secretariat, with an allocation of \$110,000 to the secretariat from the Innovation and Best Practice Program to manage the network
- Support the creation of a research post at ANZSIG for one year in the first instance
- Review IKEN in the context of ACELG's overall activities and strengthen links with other ACELG programs.

**Item 6.5            Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program**

Peter Allen advised that the program will run from 18 – 23 March 2013. ANZSOG has received 31 applications, with at least six to follow. Scholarships are available to fund or partly fund around 90% of applicants.

**The Board resolved:**

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

**Item 6.6            Future of the Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government Program**

The Assistant Director advised that in accordance with the ACELG Project Plan, 'new' funding for the RRI program had ceased, but carry-over funds are sufficient for a limited range of activities in 2013-14. The Chairperson suggested that ACELG should keep Minister Macklin informed of program progress.

**The Board resolved:**

- To establish a small working group comprising the Chairperson and John Ravlic to work with the Assistant Director to consider the long term future of the Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government Program.

#### **Item 6.7            Delayed and Deferred Projects**

The Board considered a report on the projects that have either been delayed, deferred or abandoned.

**The Board resolved:**

**To note the report on the delayed and deferred projects.**

#### **Item 6.8            Trans-Tasman Opportunities**

The Director tabled a report on recent discussions with potential partners in New Zealand and the possibility of ACELG becoming an 'Australasian' centre. He noted in particular the establishment of a new Centre for Government and Governance at Massey University, and a strengthened focus on governance at Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies.

Chris Champion advised the NZ association for local government engineers, INGENIUM, was taking steps to become a special division of IPWEA.

**The Board resolved:**

**To authorise the Chairperson and Director to initiate high-level discussions with Massey and Victoria Universities and other potential New Zealand partners with a view to the possibility of ACELG evolving as an Australasian entity.**

#### **Item 6.9            Strategic Priorities and Program Co-ordination**

The Director tabled a report summarising discussions at the Programs Committee on setting a number of cross-program strategic priorities for 2013 and beyond, as well as opportunities to strengthen ACELG's presence and impact. He highlighted the need to take steps to fill the vacuum at national level created by the demise of the former Local Government and Planning Ministers Council and the Australian Council of Local Government, both of which featured prominently in ACELG's original plans.

**The Board resolved:**

**To task the Programs Committee with promoting closer coordination of ACELG activities around key strategic themes, and with presenting further advice to the next Board meeting as to how the approach proposed in this report can best be addressed in 2013 work programs.**

### **ITEM 7:            RESEARCH AND POLICY FORESIGHT PROGRAM REPORT**

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The Assistant Director spoke to the report. She advised that the projects under the 2012 ACELG Research Partnership Scheme are progressing well, and a number of strong expressions of interest have been received for the 2013 program. The Director reminded members about the Research

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Forum planned for June 2013, and Penny Holloway suggested the Board might want to schedule its second meeting of the year to coincide with the forum.

**The Board resolved:**

**To note the report of the Research and Policy Foresight Program.**

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**ITEM 8: FORWARD ESTIMATES AND STRATEGIC OUTLOOK**

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The Director spoke to the report. He advised that, as income from interest has dropped significantly, the Board might want to reassess the decision made at the April meeting to prepare budgets in accordance with the current Project Plan, which provides for \$2m retention at the end of 2014. The Director pointed out the negative consequences of retaining the full \$2m for ACELG's ability to position itself for the longer term. He noted that it was not a requirement of the funding agreement with the Commonwealth to retain the \$2m, but it does require approval of DRALGAS to vary the Project Plan.

Board members noted that if there is a diminution of effort due to lack of funding, ACELG will not be able to effectively demonstrate its value to the sector, potentially jeopardising the investment made in the first three years of operations. There was general support for the course of action proposed by the Director in the draft forward estimates.

Prof Brungs and Prof Evans also highlighted the desirability of funding regular visits by a senior international academic, as discussed at the October meeting.

**The Board resolved:**

- **To agree in principle to reduce the current target of retaining \$2m at the end of 2014, and to seek the agreement of DRALGAS for an amendment to the Project Plan**
- **Subject to the department's agreement, to allocate an additional \$50,000 for IKEN development and operations in 2013**
- **To establish working groups to finalise the revised budget for 2014, further develop the proposal for a visiting academic, including examining funding opportunities, and explore strategic opportunities for ACELG's long term funding position.**

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**ITEM 9: PROGRAM PLANS AND BUDGETS**

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The Director tabled projected financial results for 2012 and the proposed budget for 2013, including draft program plans and budgets. He noted that it is ACELG's practice to adopt draft program plans and budgets for the coming year at the December Board meeting, with final programs to be submitted to the first meeting of the year.

**The Board resolved:**

- To adopt the proposed programs and budgets for 2013, subject to any adjustments required once accurate final figures from 2012 are available
- To consider the proposed final programs and budgets as an early agenda item at the next meeting.

**ITEM 10: MID-TERM REVIEW**

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The Assistant Director advised that the Board working group has provided comments on the draft Terms of Reference for the mid-term review, most of which have been accepted by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport. Prof Brungs pointed out that the review needs to assess ACELG's performance in meeting the current point in the project plan, rather than the end point, and this needs to be included in the Terms of Reference.

Matty McConchie advised that DRALGAS is very happy with the collaborative nature of the review so far, and grateful for the offer of assistance from ALGA, LGMA and ACELG in disseminating survey questions and the like.

**The Board resolved:**

- To note the report on the mid-term review
- To ensure the Terms of Reference provide for the review to assesses ACELG's performance in meeting the current point in the project plan, rather than the end point.

**ITEM 11: GENERAL BUSINESS**

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The Chairperson noted that this is Graham Sansom's final meeting of ACELG. She moved the following motion, seconded by Adrian Beresford-Wylie:

*That the Board express its appreciation of the pivotal leadership role of Graham Sansom as inaugural Director of ACELG. Members congratulate Graham on his outstanding contribution in bringing to reality the vision of a centre of excellence for local government; a vision shared by local governments, academic institutions, Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions, professional associations, including parliamentarians, ministers and prime ministers. Members congratulate Graham Sansom on his recent appointment as Adjunct Professor of UTS and welcome his continuing engagement with local government issues and opportunities for ACELG to work with him in the future.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

**ITEM 12:      NEXT MEETING**

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The Board agreed to hold the next meeting on Friday 22 March in Canberra, to coincide with the final day of the Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program.