

FOURTH BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of Meeting held in Canberra on Thursday 29 July 2010

Present

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Jeff Francis, Director-Research and Innovation Office, UTS
- Penny Holloway, Local Government Managers Australia
- Prof John H Howard, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Development) UC
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG
- John Truman, President, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA)
- Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary, DITRDLG

In Attendance

- Prof Graham Sansom, Director ACELG
- Melissa Gibbs, Acting Assistant Director ACELG
- Prof Attique Islam, Edith Cowan University
- Prof Ian Thynne, Charles Darwin University
- Chris Champion, CEO, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia
- John Ravlic, national CEO, Local Government Managers Australia
- Elizabeth Wilde, DITRDLG
- Paul Slape, National Secretary, Australian Services Union
- Greg McLean, Assistant National Secretary, Australian Services Union

Item 1: Welcome and Apologies

The Chairperson welcomed all those present, in particular Messrs Slape and McLean.

Apologies were received from Prof Attila Brungs, DVC (Research), UTS; and Prof Mark Evans, ANZSOG Institute, University of Canberra.

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting held on 30 April 2010

Board members sought amendments to the minutes:

- To record the attendance of Mr John Pritchard, representing ALGA
- To add the words “subject to meeting the requirements of jurisdictions providing scholarships” to the final dot point under Item 10 – *Linkages between Excellence in Local Government Leadership and Emerging Leaders Programs*

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2010 be adopted, subject to the above amendments.

Item 3 Matters Arising

The Director and Stephanie Foster reported that the Deed of Agreement for funding supplementary ACELG projects through the Local Government Reform Fund had been finalised, and that work orders had been drafted for two projects – data collection on women in local government, and scholarships for women to attend the upcoming ANZSOG Excellence in Leadership course.

The Director advised that preparation of a communications strategy was still pending.

Item 4: Liaison with Australian Services Union

The National Secretary (Paul Slape) and Assistant National Secretary – Local Government (Greg McLean) of the Australian Services Union (ASU) addressed the meeting. They emphasised that ASU represents a broad cross-section of local government personnel and has a longstanding interest in policy as well as industrial issues. The National Secretary of ASU is a member of the Australian Council of Local Government.

There was a lengthy exchange of views. Key points to emerge were that:

- ASU has particular interests in ACELG activities in the areas of workforce data and development, education and training, women in local government, and some aspects of ACELG’s research program (eg financial sustainability and governance)
- ASU is keen for ACELG to convene regular national stakeholder meetings, and in particular to establish a small strategy group for workforce development and related training programs
- ASU would be happy to collaborate with ACELG in taking policy issues forward to government
- ASU would welcome a formal cooperation agreement with ACELG and preferably a seat (perhaps as an observer) on the board.

Board members were supportive of maintaining close collaboration with ASU. It was explained, however, that the board acts purely as an internal governance body for ACELG and is not a policy-making or local government representative forum.

Resolved:

That the Chairperson write to the National Secretary of ASU confirming ACELG’s recognition of the key role played by the union and ACELG’s wish to maintain a close working relationship, including regular dialogue on matters of mutual interest, ASU involvement wherever appropriate in ACELG activities, website linkages and joint approaches to government on policy issues.

Item 5: Finance and Secretariat Update

The Director tabled a summary of income and expenditure to 30 June 2010. He advised that on current indications there would be a modest surplus at the end of the year, reducing the drawdown on ACELG’s capital. On current indications, all activities are proceeding within budget; interest earnings for 2010 will be higher than budgeted; and there will be significant carry-over funds in some program areas (see table below).

The Director further advised that

- There are some concerns with the design and functionality of the central website that need to be addressed over the next few months, but the cost should be relatively minor and funds are available within the secretariat budget.

- Ms Stefanie Pillora has been appointed to the position of Senior Research Officer. She was previously with the UTS Centre for Local Government and had already carried out projects for ACELG.
- Following completion of major building works, UTS-CLG has moved to separate offices and minor refurbishment of the ACELG offices is now under way.

ACELG 2010 Budget Progress

Item	Approved Budget	Result to 30/6/10	Projected Outcome	Notes
Income \$000s				
Principal c/f	7570	7634	7634	<i>2009 extra interest + underspend</i>
Interest	340	175	350	
UTS	300	300	300	
UC	100	100	100	
ANZSOG	20	20	20	
IPWEA	20	20	20	
LGMA	20	20	20	
Other Income	50	50	380	<i>WILG \$300K; LGASA/LGNZ \$80K</i>
Total	8420	8319	8824	
Expenditure \$000s				
Core Staff	550	232	545	<i>All staff now in place</i>
Secretariat Expenses	75	51	95	<i>Website costs c/f from 2009</i>
Research and Policy	200	28	230	<i>Approx \$150K committed</i>
Innovation & Best Practice	200	-	200	<i>Fully committed; UC to invoice</i>
Governance & Leadership				
• ANZSOG	225	113	225	<i>Fully committed</i>
• Emerging Leaders	75	-	50	<i>\$50K committed</i>
• Other	50	-	50	<i>Fully committed</i>
Orgn Capacity Building				
• Financial/Asset Mgt	250	125	250	<i>Fully committed</i>
• Other	100	-	-	
Rural, Remote, Indigenous	150	15	120	<i>Approx \$90K committed</i>
Workforce Development				
• Practice Unit	200	100	200	<i>Fully committed</i>
• Course Development	100	-	100	<i>Fully committed</i>
Women in Local Govt		19	300	<i>Approx \$280 committed</i>
Total	2175	683	2365	
Drawdown of Principal	1325		1175	
Balance to c/f	6245		6459	<i>c/f \$155K underspend to 2011; \$59K discretionary</i>

Prof Howard advised that Mr Robert van Aalst will not be renewing his contract with the University of Canberra, and that a new appointment will need to be made to support ACELG's Innovation and Best Practice program. Also, moves are under way to co-locate the program officer with the ANZSOG Institute for Governance.

Resolved:

That the Board note the information

Item 6: Report of the Programs Committee

The Director advised that a further program coordination workshop was held in Canberra on Friday 16 July. The workshop reviewed progress across all areas of ACELG activity and an updated progress report was tabled (see below). After the workshop the Programs Committee met by teleconference to discuss several key issues: in the absence overseas of Prof John Howard, the meeting was convened by the Director.

Peter Allen provided a supplementary update on the ANZSOG Excellence in Leadership program, including availability of scholarships, and tabled copies of the program brochure.

6.1 Progress against Key 2010 Deliverables

Key Deliverable 2010	Progress to July
Research and Policy Foresight	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new national research and policy development program, including initial projects on strengthening local democracy and new options for more effective service delivery 	<p>Research coordinator and senior research officer appointed; national forum held in Canberra in March; Research Advisory Committee met in June; Round 1 projects under way; partnerships established with LGASA and LGNZ; 'digest' on LG and climate change completed; roundtable #2 on metro governance scheduled for Brisbane 19-21 August</p>
Innovation and Best Practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network and website to highlight best practice 	<p>Preliminary investigations completed; website under testing; case studies being identified and other content sourced</p>
Governance and Strategic Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first ANZSOG Excellence in Local Government Leadership program 	<p>Draft program and brochure prepared; consultations almost complete; program scheduled for 22/11 to 10/12 (3 week residential); \$100K federally-funded scholarships for women; over 30 further scholarships funded by states and other partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new national Emerging Leaders program for middle managers, including a Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership 	<p>Graduate Certificate accredited by UTS for offer in 2011; detailed subject design under way; discussions planned re parallel offer in WA, other states to follow; framework for broader Emerging Leaders program (building on existing LGMA programs where available) now being developed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An upgraded Business Excellence Framework for local government 	<p>Councils using ABEF surveyed; research into alternative frameworks completed; discussions well advanced with LGBEN and SAI Global on possible upgrading</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A special LGMA Management Challenge to develop strategies for increased women's participation in over 100 councils across Australia 	<p>Challenge held in March (regional) and July (Australasian final); 129 teams; all completed pre-Challenge task on increasing women's participation – summary report nearing completion; \$40K OfW funding to promote outcomes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance for the Australian Local Government Women's Association to implement its gender equity accreditation and awards program 	<p>ACELG contracted to manage \$250K grant; project coordinator appointed and program launched at ACLG Dinner in June; recruitment of councils now under way</p>
Organisation Capacity Building	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines on Asset Management for Small Communities 	<p>Consultant engaged and work almost completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national assessment framework to measure progress in improving asset management and long-term financial planning 	<p>IPWEA has engaged project manager; collaboration with MAV to develop principles for framework; likely LGRF funding for framework, linked to asset management roll-out</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for long-term financial planning 	<p>Consultations and scoping largely complete; options paper being prepared; awaiting LGRF funding</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National minimum data sets for key programs: asset and financial management, workforce development, women in local government. 	<p>Discussions well advanced with DITRD LG re LGRF funding for main data sets; \$100K separate funding approved for data on women in local government</p>
Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national strategy to address the special capacity-building needs of small rural-remote and Indigenous local governments 	<p>Scoping studies under way in WA, NT, Qld; national roundtable to be held 30/7 at ANU to initiate national strategy; discussions with FaHCSIA, DITRD LG re follow-up</p>
Workforce Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third national Local Government Skills Forum 	<p>Held in Canberra 23-24 March</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Local Government Workforce Development Blueprint 	<p>Steering Committee established; Blueprint in final draft stage, discussed at Canberra forum; launch awaiting agreement on integration with LGPMC Workforce Strategy (ACELG may be commissioned to complete)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 'Green Paper' on Indigenous employment in local government 	To be released 29 July; working links established with DEEWR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of current local government education and development programs to identify gaps and opportunities for national networking 	First stage inventory complete and information published on ACELG website; 'demand-side' survey in preparation

6.2 Confidential Item

6.3 Possible Partnership with SAI Global

The Committee reported that ACELG had been liaising with the Local Government Business Excellence Network (LGBEN) to undertake a major piece of work to review the effectiveness of the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) and other tools for continuous improvement in local government. The ABEF is owned and promoted by SAI Global, who would like to partner with ACELG in improving the Framework and the company's work with the local government sector in general.

The Committee advised that research and discussions to date suggest that collaboration with SAI Global offers a worthwhile opportunity to advance ACELG's excellence agenda. It appears neither practical nor desirable for ACELG to develop and promote its own excellence framework, and that an upgraded ABEF currently offers the most broadly applicable platform.

Resolved:

- **That the Programs Committee be authorised to negotiate satisfactory arrangements for ACELG to enter into a partnership with SAI Global on the basis outlined above.**
- **That ACELG formulate some basic standards for business excellence and continuous improvement tools that could be applied to both ABEF and other products.**

6.4 Cross-Program Reference Groups

The Committee reported that some program areas require strengthened cross-program linkages. This applies particularly to Innovation and Best Practice and Workforce Development. It therefore proposes to establish cross-program reference groups in these two areas, and for meetings of those groups to be held in lieu of a third quarter program coordination workshop. The fourth quarter workshop would be held as normal before the final Board meeting of the year.

Resolved:

That the Board note the information

Item 7: Report of the Research Advisory Committee

The Assistant Director reported that the Research Advisory Committee held its inaugural meeting on 4 June. At the meeting, the Committee agreed that the following principles should underpin support for research projects:

- Research projects should meet the following criteria:
 - Action and evidence-based
 - Applied, being relevant and relating to demonstrated local government need
 - Comparative
 - Multi-disciplinary
- Funding would be conditional on projects including:
 - Practitioner involvement
 - Mechanisms for translating policy implications to the local government sector

- Strategies for engagement and dissemination
- Wherever possible, projects should include mechanisms to leverage additional research funds for the program (i.e. an 'investment' strategy).

The Research Advisory Committee recommended for funding the following projects:

Research digests and information

- Climate change and local government working paper – completion imminent
- Local government reviews and inquiries – completion expected November 2010
- Rating and valuation (to be advanced)
- Implications of the Henry Review of Taxation for local government (to be advanced)
- Community engagement and consultation (to be advanced)

Innovation and best practice research

- Local government's role in housing (possible partnership with FaHCSIA)
- Local government as an employer of choice (to be linked with Workforce Development program)
- Metropolitan governance (upcoming Brisbane Roundtable)

National based research projects

- Local government consolidation (collaboration with LGA of South Australia and Local Government New Zealand)

A number of other projects and activities are in early stages of planning. The Committee will meet again later in the year.

Resolved:

- **That the Board note the information.**
- **That consideration be given to including an additional local government practitioner on the Research Advisory Committee.**

Item 8: Women in Local Government

The Assistant Director presented a progress report. As reported to the April meeting, ACELG has entered into an agreement to manage the the Australian Local Government Women's Association's (ALGWA) *50:50 Vision - Councils for Gender Equity Program* for the first two years. A budget of \$210,000 has been provided. This will be combined with the \$100,000 to be paid directly to ACELG under the LGRF to assemble a data base on women in local government.

The program was officially launched on 17 June at the Australian Council of Local Government Dinner, in the presence of the current and then Prime Ministers, members of cabinet and around 400 Mayors. In addition to the launch, the Program Coordinator (Karen Purser) has made the following progress:

- The National Steering Committee for the 50:50 Vision program has been reconvened and meets monthly by teleconference.
- A business plan has been developed and approved by both the Steering Committee and the funding bodies.
- A website has been established, sponsored by Bang the Table, an online consultation company.
- Training materials are being developed and a promotional presentation has been prepared for dissemination by ALGWA.
- The first Bronze Awards will be awarded at the ALGWA National conference at Ryde in November. Councils are currently being recruited to pilot the final design for the Silver Award, which will open in September.

John Ravlic emphasised the need for the *Councils for Gender Equity* program to be closely linked to other *Year of Women in Local Government* activities.

Resolved:

That the Board note the information

Item 9: Roundtable on Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government

The Assistant Director reported on the National Roundtable on Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government to be held on 29-30 July 2010. Around 35 people are expected to attend. Scoping studies into key capacity building issues have been completed in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. The Queensland scoping study complements earlier work commissioned by the Local Government Association of Queensland into the capacity building needs of non-amalgamated rural councils.

The Roundtable will:

- Examine the themes emerging from the scoping studies
- Comment on the relevance of the findings to other jurisdictions
- Identify how ACELG and other key stakeholders can most usefully assist rural-remote and Indigenous councils
- Contribute to the formulation by ACELG of a national strategy for consideration by governments.

It needs to be made clear, however, that ACELG's 'charter' is principally that of a catalyst and adviser, and that ACELG does not see itself becoming engaged in program delivery except as a short-term measure to fill gaps and only when substantial additional resources are made available.

The Roundtable will also include the release of ACELG's *Local Government Indigenous Employment Program Green Paper – Closing the Gap through Place-based Employment*.

Prof Thynne highlighted the value of the scoping studies as research papers, and the desirability of academic publication of them, perhaps leading to applications for research grants.

Resolved:

That the Board note the information

Item 10: Second Roundtable on Metropolitan Governance

The Director reported that following ACELG's successful partnership with the Forum of Federations and Major Cities Unit to convene an International Roundtable on Metropolitan Governance in Sydney in December 2009, the Forum has requested ACELG's assistance in convening a second event, to be held in Brisbane on 19-20 August. The Forum is now looking to publish a book of comparative studies in metropolitan governance covering ten countries, and the Brisbane Roundtable will bring together most of the intended authors. It will also provide input to new processes for better planning of Australia's capital city regions, in light of last year's COAG agreement on strategic planning and planned formulation of a sustainable population policy.

The Roundtable is being hosted by Brisbane City Council, the Local Government Association of Queensland, and the South East Queensland Council of Mayors. It has been endorsed by the Major Cities Unit and by the Queensland Government. The cost to ACELG will be minimal, and the Roundtable and follow-up work will make a substantial contribution to ACELG's ongoing research into metropolitan governance issues.

Resolved:

That the Board note the information

Item 11: Other Business

11.1 Collaboration Agreement and Intellectual Property

The Director advised that in finalising the Collaboration Agreement as agreed at the April 2010 meeting, some further issues have arisen regarding Intellectual Property ownership. These required a minor amendment to the wording, which has been incorporated in the agreement sent to consortium partners for signature.

Legal advice to UTS is that the current wording is sufficient to cover the various matters raised by partners. However, to ensure that the intent and application of the Agreement is completely clear, the Board should consider adopting a complementary IP policy that deals in more detail with matters such as sharing of Background IP amongst the parties, and how to deal with situations where material developed in accordance with a Program Action Plan is a mix of Project Results and Background IP, and could reasonably be expected to be available to all consortium partners.

Some Board members indicated they may need to seek further advice before signing the amended Agreement.

Resolved:

- **That the amended draft Agreement be considered by all parties for signing.**
- **That an Intellectual Property Policy be prepared for consideration and adoption by the Board at its next meeting.**

11.2 Meeting with Federal Departments

The Assistant Director reported on a briefing session for a number of federal departments held before the Board meeting. The session had been a very positive one, and had highlighted several opportunities for follow-up and possible future collaboration.

Resolved:

That a formal letter of appreciation be sent to those departments that attended the briefing session, highlighting opportunities for ongoing involvement in the work of ACELG.

11.3 Update for LGPMC

Stephanie Foster suggested it would be timely for ACELG to provide a further update on its activities to the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council, through the Joint Committee of federal and state/territory officials.

Resolved:

That the Director provide a suitable update to LGPMC.

Item 12: Future Meetings

Resolved:

- **That the next meeting be held by teleconference at 3pm on Friday 8 October 2010**
- **That the final meeting for 2010 be held in Melbourne on Thursday 9 December, in conjunction with the ANZSOG Excellence in Leadership course and the proposed inaugural ACELG local government lecture.**