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Tuesday May 1st, 2012

## Welcome to Excellence in Brief



ACELG's 2012 program is now well under way. Both the Board and the Research Advisory Committee met in March. The Committee met in Melbourne and adopted a research strategy for 2012 that includes several major new projects, notably in the area of local government finance, as well as another round of funding under ACELG's research partnerships scheme. We look forward to collaborating with a range of local government partners to expand the research agenda and support evidence-based policy and debate.

As reported below the Board met in Hobart and approved the overall 2012 work program. Details are now available on the ACELG website under each program area. Our meeting in Hobart, together with a roundtable discussion with representatives of Tasmanian local government, was generously hosted at Parliament House by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, Hon Bryan Green. The roundtable was also attended by Mayor Barry Easter, President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

A similar roundtable was held in Melbourne, supported by the Municipal Association of Victoria, which also hosted the Research Advisory Committee. We greatly value our positive working relationships with local government associations and departments in all states and the Northern Territory. An important decision at the Board meeting was to establish a partnership with ALGA to jointly fund an annual report on the state of local government road assets over the next 3 years.

ACELG will be spending some \$3.25m in 2012 on a wide range of activities aimed at advancing the interests and performance of Australian local government. The five consortium partners will contribute \$460,000 of that amount from their own resources. This represents a very considerable ongoing commitment, and we are confident the positive results of our efforts will be seen by councils and communities throughout Australia.

Graham Sansom  
Director

### Revised ACELG Governance and Program Framework



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## Welcome to new staff

The ACELG Secretariat welcomes two new staff members: John Lavarack, a research officer with extensive experience in local government policy, and Jessie Lymn who joins our administrative and project support team.

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## ACELG stakeholder consultations

As part of its ongoing engagement with the local government sector, ACELG convened two ‘roundtable’ discussions with key stakeholders in Victoria and Tasmania during March. The events were initiated by ACELG to identify the challenges and issues facing each sector. Outputs of the discussions will inform the future priorities of ACELG’s program development.

We were pleased that a diverse range of government representatives, practitioners and policy officers could attend both events and openly exchange ideas and points of view. The roundtable concept is something ACELG intends to continue with in 2012 where logistics and schedules allow.

ACELG is particularly grateful to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government in Tasmania, Hon Bryan Green, for hosting the event in Hobart; and to the Municipal Association of Victoria for its assistance with the Melbourne roundtable.

View the full news item [here](#).



Melbourne



Hobart



Hobart: (l-r) Hon Margaret Reynolds, ACELG Chairperson; Hon Bryan Green, Deputy Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Local Government; Hon Sue Smith, President of the Tasmanian Legislative Council; and Cr Barry Easter, President, Local Government Association of Tasmania and Mayor, West Tamar Council.

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## March 2012 Board meeting

The ACELG Board convened in March in Hobart for its first 2012 meeting. The venue was the historic 'Long Room' within Parliament House.

Key issues discussed were:

- Details of the proposed 2012 budget and work programs
- Strategies to conclude 2011 projects, and the management of the anticipated release of several significant reports in the first half of 2012
- An agreement between ACELG, ALGA and IPWEA to develop an annual report on the state of local government road assets
- Welcome to new Board members: Prof Frances Shannon, Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research at the University of Canberra who replaces Prof John Howard as the University of Canberra nominee to the Board; Mr Paul Di Iulio, the new President of IPWEA and IPWEA's Board nominee replacing Mr John Truman. Mr Di Iulio is the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Campbelltown, South Australia.



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## 2011 Annual Report and revised ACELG Project Plan



ACLEG has released its annual report on activities for the year ended December 2011. A copy of the report is available on the About ACELG page [here](#).

An updated version of the ACELG Project Plan 2009-14 is now also available. The Project Plan is reviewed annually by the Centre Board to address changing circumstances, needs and priorities. This 2012 Update reflects commitments made by the consortium in its proposal for Commonwealth funding, feedback from ongoing consultations, and the experience of the Centre's first two years of operations. View the document [here](#).

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## New Local Government Research website



ACELG's new and improved website for local government researchers is now live. We encourage practitioners, researchers and anyone with an interest in local government research to use the site to interact with their peers and to promote and discuss their work. We hope users might also recommend the site to others.

With the recent appointment of a new part-time Research Officer within the ACELG Secretariat, we are well placed to support this network, assist members upload papers and other research resource material relevant to local government, and to manage and contribute to the on-line Forum. Visit the site here: <http://lgresearch.net.au>

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## IKEN website upgrade



Following a detailed review, the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN) website has been improved to better assist local government practitioners and others working with the sector. This includes easier-to-navigate features, new case studies, social media feeds and enhanced multimedia capability. IKEN has been operational since June 2011. View IKEN here: [www.iken.net.au](http://www.iken.net.au)

Contact: Paul Bateson, Co-ordinator - Innovation and Best Practice Program: [paul.bateson@acelg.org.au](mailto:paul.bateson@acelg.org.au) or 02 6206 3968.

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## National Workforce Forum

The 5th National Workforce Development Forum convened recently in Canberra. The Forum explored local government workforce issues, challenges and capacity building strategies; reviewed sector priorities; and facilitated a more co-ordinated and nationally networked approach to local government workforce development and planning. In particular, broad agreement was reached on the structure and content of the proposed National Workforce Strategy for local government, which ACELG is preparing on behalf of federal, state and territory ministers.

All Forum presentations will be available soon from ACELG's Local Government Practice Unit through the [Forum link](#). Last year's Forum resources can be found here also.

Contact: Angela Zivkovic, Project Manager - LG Practice Unit, Workforce Development: [angela.zivkovic@acelg.org.au](mailto:angela.zivkovic@acelg.org.au) or 03 9682 9222.

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## Financial planning



In February, ACELG released *Practice Note 6: Long Term Financial Planning*, prepared by consortium partner the [Institute for Public Works Engineering Australia \(IPWEA\)](#), with funding from the Commonwealth Government's Local Government Reform Fund.

The Practice Note has been prepared to assist local governments prepare a long-term financial plan, particularly those practitioners with responsibility for service delivery that involves management of assets with long yet finite lives.

View more information about this project and the Practice Note [here](#).

Workshops based on the Practice Note are currently being organised and run by IPWEA. To find the nearest one to you click [here](#).

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## Local Government Research Partnership Scheme – call for expressions of interest

ACELG is now calling for expressions of interest for its 2012 Research Partnership Scheme.

The scheme aims to, among other things, provide opportunities for local government organisations to work in partnership with ACELG as a national local government research centre (and other institutions undertaking research), and build research capacity within the local government sector.

Expressions of interest are now open, and close Friday 11th May. Interested individuals or organisations are encouraged to contact Stefanie Pillora, ACELG Research Program Manager, to discuss their ideas for research before submitting a proposal. View the 2012 Guidelines [here](#).

Contact: [Stefanie Pillora](#).

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## Collaborative metropolitan governance

*Collaborative Governance and Metropolitan Planning in South East Queensland - 1990 to 2010: From a Voluntary to a Statutory Model.*

This report was prepared as part of the 2011 Research Partnership Scheme. It provides a brief history of metropolitan planning in SEQ from 1996 to 2010, focusing on the factors behind the move from a voluntary to a statutory planning model and drawing out the lessons for other states and multi-level planning regions.

It was prepared by Dr John Abbott for ACELG in collaboration with the Council of Mayors SEQ and the Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning (Growth Management Queensland).

Dr Abbott will be conducting presentations about the work over the next few months. View the report and contacts for discussion [here](#).

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## Framework for measuring liveability



The concept of 'liveability' has been comprehensively explored in the project, *Options for a Local Government Framework for Measuring Liveability*. Another research partnership project from 2011, the report details current research and thinking on the state of community liveability indicator development across Australia. The project was a partnership between ACELG and Penrith City Council.

Further detail about the project and contacts for feedback can be found [here](#).

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## Rural-remote and Indigenous local government



### **New research: Role and expectations**

ACELG has released a new research report prepared by Alan Morton entitled *Role and expectations of rural-remote and Indigenous Local Government*. The report examines what is needed to achieve a sustainable model of rural-remote and Indigenous local government. It includes a profile of rural-remote councils; documents federal, state and local government expectations; and identifies further actions and research. The findings and recommendations have been incorporated in the program of activities under ACELG's rural-remote and Indigenous local government program for 2012. Download the paper [here](#).

### **CEOs survey**

ACELG has completed a survey of CEOs in rural-remote and Indigenous local government to explore the issues surrounding capacity building in these councils. The survey findings will be discussed at a search conference of CEOs from rural-remote and Indigenous councils in July, and will be used to inform the ACELG strategy aimed at addressing the capacity needs of small rural-remote and indigenous local governments. The survey report will be released in the coming weeks, and will be available to download from the ACELG website.

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## Learning in Local Government Issue Papers

ACELG partner, the [UTS Centre for Local Government](#), has published a number of papers in its 'Learning in Local Government' series. Taken together, they review sector priorities and seek to promote a more co-ordinated and nationally networked approach to local government education and professional development. The papers are:

- Issues Paper 3 - eLearning in Local Government
- Issues Paper 4 - Workforce Planning and Development: Capacity Building Opportunities
- Issues Paper 5 - A National Review of Training and Development for Local Government Councillors.

This is a significant body of work and all papers can be accessed from ACELG's Workforce Development program: <http://www.acelg.org.au/program-details.php?pid=6>

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## Feedback from the 2011 Researchers Forum



Thanks again to those who attended and provided feedback following the Researchers Forum at UTS in December. The feedback has been reviewed by the Research and Advisory Committee, and summarised in the final report. This will help inform program planning in the coming months. View the final report [here](#).

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## Community governance



This project is now complete with both papers published and two launch events planned (see below – Events). Volume one, *Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works* provides an overview of emerging trends in community governance, and Volume 2 is a literature review. View the work and contacts for discussion [here](#).



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## Upcoming research

- *From explanation to engagement: Application and use of social media to enhance local government performance.* Research contact: [paul.bateson@acelg.org.au](mailto:paul.bateson@acelg.org.au) or 02 6206 3968
- *Metropolitan governance.* Research contact: [graham.sansom@uts.edu.au](mailto:graham.sansom@uts.edu.au)
- *Local Action for a Low Carbon Future.* Research contact: [stefanie.pillora@acelg.org.au](mailto:stefanie.pillora@acelg.org.au)
- *Scoping study on Fly-in, Fly-out Work Practices on Local Government.* Research Contact: [melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au](mailto:melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au)
- *Local government service delivery to remote Indigenous communities – Review of service delivery models and approaches in various jurisdictions.* Research contact: [melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au](mailto:melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au).

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## Upcoming events

### Community Governance Launch Events

The reports from the Community Governance project will be launched in Melbourne and Sydney on the 4th and 10th of May respectively. View the news item [here](#).

### Innovation Roundtable

On 8 May 2012, a one-day national roundtable on 'Strategic Innovation and Local Government' will be held at the University of Canberra. The focus will be to facilitate a 'think tank' of invited leaders to examine innovation and 'next practice' in the local government sector. Limited places are still available. Contact: Paul Bateson, Co-ordinator - Innovation and Best Practice Program: [paul.bateson@acelg.org.au](mailto:paul.bateson@acelg.org.au) or 02 6206 3968.

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## Conference and Seminar Participation

- International Property Tax Institute, Sydney, March (paper presented by Graham Sansom, Director)
- 2012 National LGMA Finance Professionals Conference, Fremantle, February (presentation by Melissa Gibbs, Assistant Director)
- 2012 National Local Government Financial Management Forum, Perth, February (meeting of jurisdictions, participation by Assistant Director)
- Australian Political Exchange Council, meeting with a delegation of local government leaders from the Philippines, February, Sydney (ACELG secretariat and Leon Patterson, IPWEA).



ACELG meeting with the delegation from the Philippines.

In addition, ACELG Director Graham Sansom made a further visit to NZ as part of his fellowship at Victoria University, Wellington. Future work is expected to focus on metropolitan governance issues, drawing on ACELG's research into consolidation in local government.

Assistant Director Melissa Gibbs will make a presentation to the LGMA National Congress (20 - 23 May).

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Further news about ACELG's work can be found at the ACELG website and at each program page.

[www.acelg.org.au](http://www.acelg.org.au)

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