



# ACELG ADVANCING LEADERSHIP

*"The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government is a unique collaboration of universities and professional bodies committed to the advancement of local government. The Centre's vision is: World-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21st century Australia"*

**The Advancing Leadership Program** is aimed at broadening leadership capacity for professionals working within Australian Local Government.

## **The purpose of the program is to:**

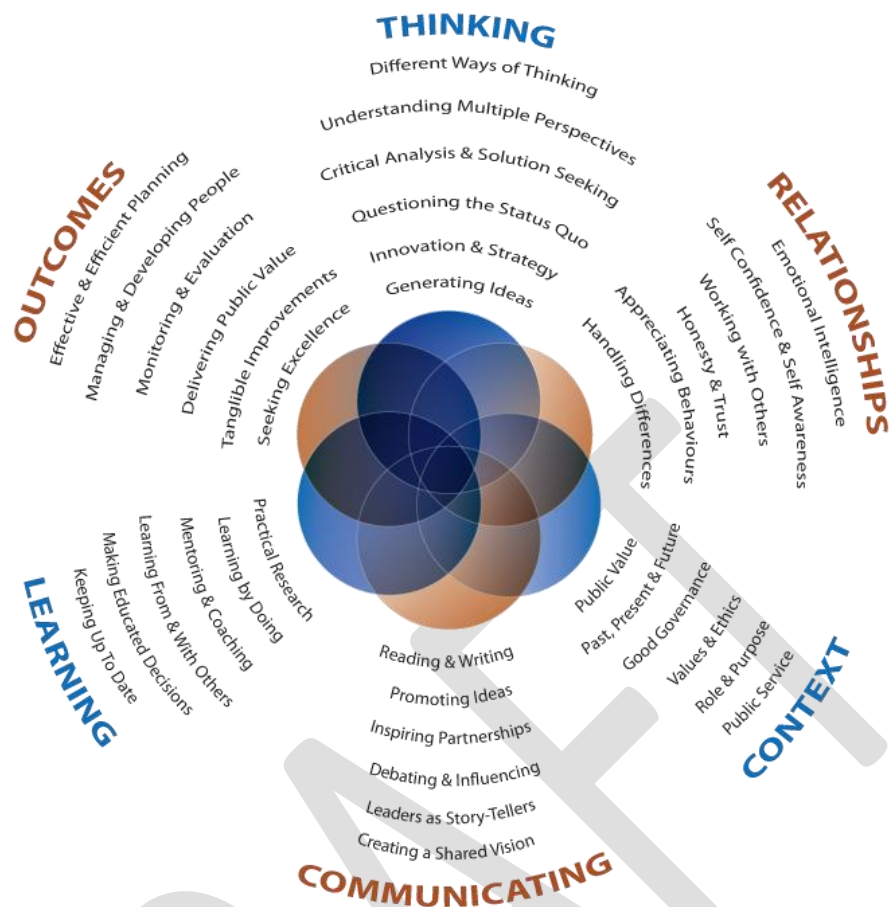
- Cultivate leaders who are best equipped to deal with themes, issues and relationships unique to the sector of local government
- Retain and upskill committed and aspirational staff
- Make local government a desirable place to work ; building pride across current staff and attracting new staff
- Raise the profile of local government on a national and international scale
- Bridge gaps in the current training and development market for middle management leaders

**The Advancing Leadership Framework** is a conceptual competency framework tailored to Local Government in Australia that has been researched and developed over many years at the University of Technology in Sydney (UTS - see diagram). It is an evolving framework that is open to modification.

- The Framework comprises of 6 core capabilities: Thinking, Relationships, Context, Communicating, Learning and Outcomes, each associated with fundamental competencies.
- These competencies form a suggested structure that can be utilized to underpin effective local government leadership learning initiatives.

## **The purpose of the framework is to:**

- Provide guidance on key elements of local government leadership development
- Foster a national approach to local government leadership capabilities
- Offer a high standard framework that is academically endorsed and rigorously researched
- Allow for a variety of delivery options that are best suited to different locations and contexts
- Be a reliable developmental tool for use by academic and practitioner led training and learning programs targeted at local government aspiring leaders
- Encourage initiatives that provide pathways to graduate programs across the country.



**The Advancing Leadership Partnership** is a national network comprised of academic institutions, local government bodies and learning practitioners.

**The purpose of the partnership is to:**

- Create a ‘meeting place’ for those with a genuine (and not simply commercial) interest in local government training and development, and a commitment to the advancement of leadership capability within the sector
- Identify gaps in current programs, materials and availability, and collaborate to develop responses to address those gaps
- Provide a focus for the collective attempt to address some of the discrepancies in leadership training availability for local government around the country – especially in rural, remote and indigenous communities
- Recognize the Advancing Leadership Framework as an inclusive and reliable common-purpose tool
- Improve program viability by cross-promoting related initiatives
- Maintain an ongoing forum of discussion around learning needs with collective responsibility for evolving the framework according to changes in context, experiential practice, and core competency requirements

- Share and discuss feedback and experience of people participating in local government development programs
- Mutually recognize best practice in leadership development offers across the sector and create opportunities to showcase these
- Offer a platform for the co-operative development of programs, resources and materials for distribution and use by all Framework partners
- Create a suite of recognized electives from within the framework creating opportunities and pathways for individuals to embark on associated graduate programs
- Signal to Federal and State governments that there is a cohesive understanding of the training needs for this group of participants, creating opportunity for a far- better targeted allocation of scarce training and education funds
- Establish a comprehensive suite of various programs offered – by a variety of partnership providers, and through a variety of modalities – around the country, providing a balance between national consistency and the flexibility to meet local circumstances.

## Background to the Advancing Leadership Program

The Australian Government has contributed \$8 million in funding for the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government. The Centre's mandate is to enhance professionalism and skills in local government, showcase innovation and best practice, and facilitate a better-informed policy debate.

An 'Aspiring' Leaders Program was initiated in response to the urgent need to nurture those working in local government with aspirations to be better leaders and create improved outcomes. A discussion paper was circulated in September 2010 to get feedback from the sector on how best to move ahead. In light of feedback received, and to avoid confusion with existing activities, the program has since been renamed 'Advancing' Leadership and ideas about how it should operate have been developed.

Further information on ACELG, the Advancing Leadership Program and the background discussion document can be found at [www.acelg.com.au](http://www.acelg.com.au).

## The Model Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership

A key element of the Program is a 'model' *Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership* which applies the Advancing Leadership Framework. This is a *university-level postgraduate qualification* and has been developed on ACELG's behalf by the UTS Centre for Local Government, Sydney. The first especially created subject of the Graduate Certificate, *New Perspectives in Local Government Leadership* was delivered by UTS in May 2011 for NSW local government professionals.

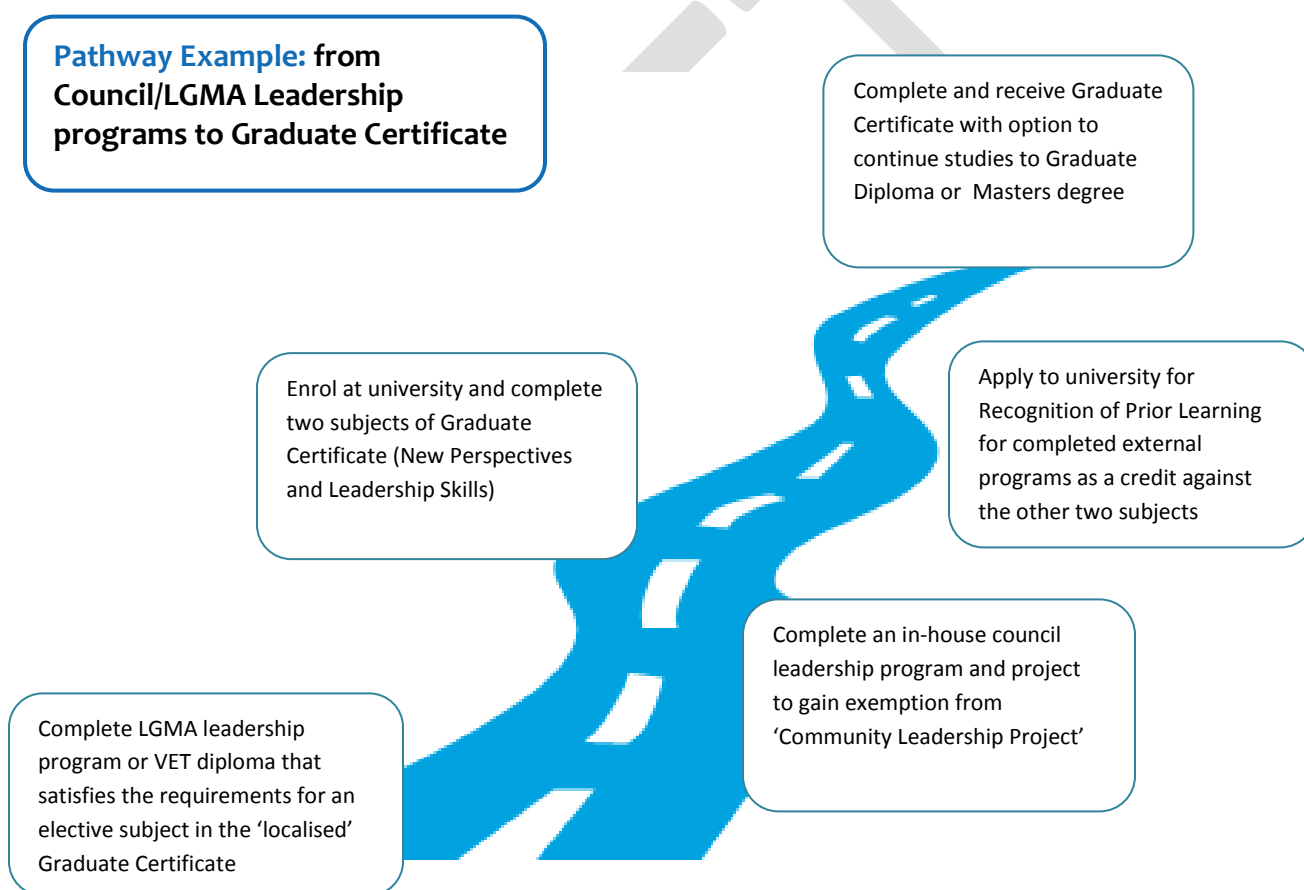
The 'model' Graduate Certificate consists of 4 subjects:

- New Perspectives on Local Government Leadership
- Personal and Professional Leadership Skills
- Community Leadership Project
- Building and Leading Your Team (or another elective subject).

As a general rule, it is expected that at least two subjects will have to be undertaken as an enrolled university student, but various forms of Recognition of Prior Learning ('exemptions') will be available for the other two subjects. All participants are expected to undertake 'New Perspectives' as a core subject.

The model Graduate Certificate can be 'localised' by any university willing to offer the essential curriculum involved. Provided that intellectual property is duly acknowledged and respected, program materials will be made available to members of the Advancing Leaders Partnership by ACELG at no charge, and ACELG will assist in adapting materials to local needs and initial delivery of subjects.

The model Graduate Certificate is designed to offer flexible entry pathways from existing programs, especially LGMA Emerging Leaders programs or their equivalent, leadership development programs offered by individual councils, and vocational educational (VET or TAFE) diplomas. The diagram below gives an example of how this might work.



This approach has the advantage not only of incorporating existing programs and providers, but also of greatly reducing the total university fees that have to be paid by practitioners to receive a post-graduate qualification.

Note: because this is a *university graduate program*, supplementary assignments might be required before Recognition of Prior Learning can be granted, depending on how rigorously external programs are taught or mentored and assessed.

## Implementation of the Program

An introductory short course was piloted in Western Australia in 2010, in partnership with Edith Cowan University and LGMAWA. Work is continuing on further implementation, including an ongoing partnership between ECU and LGMAWA, and ECU's own version of a Graduate Certificate in Local Government Leadership.

Plans to launch the Graduate Certificate in the Northern Territory are in advanced stages with Charles Darwin University, which include UTS running two of the subjects in the latter half of 2011, and CDU offering the remaining subjects in 2012 in cooperation with LGMANT and LGANT.

UTS is working with LGMANSW to agree credit transfers from LGMANSW development subjects that support the Advancing Leadership Framework across to the Graduate Certificate and other UTS programs.

Discussions have begun with some other LGMA Divisions to explain the Program and identify potential university partners.

Discussions have also commenced with some larger individual councils who offer 'best practice' in-house leadership programs to create pathways into post-graduate study for staff who complete those programs and would like to complete a recognized university qualification.

ACELG wishes to expedite further implementation through discussions with LGMA Divisions, local government associations and individual councils or regional organizations. The aim in each case will be to identify university partners that can deliver the Graduate Certificate, establish partnership arrangements, and incorporate suitable existing programs and activities. Once a local or state agreement that meets the Advancing Leaders Program, Framework and Partnership objectives has been finalised, ongoing development and implementation will be a matter for the partners concerned. ACELG will convene periodic national meetings for exchanges of information and experience.

## Interested in joining the Advancing Leadership Partnership?

The partnership is open to local government organizations that are willing to be active participants in a national network of best practice innovators in local government leadership development, focused on aspiring leaders and emerging talent.

The intention of the partnership is not to duplicate or cut across existing programs or frameworks but to strengthen common purposes. Partners are committed to evolving the Advancing Leadership Framework as a consistent national developmental tool *specifically for local government*, are flexible with sharing ideas and resources (subject to reasonable intellectual property constraints), are innovative in the creation of linkages across different programs and providers, and are open to creating pathways to graduate programs across Australia.

**For further information, please go to [www.acelg.com.au](http://www.acelg.com.au) or email [Sophi.Bruce@uts.edu.au](mailto:Sophi.Bruce@uts.edu.au) or phone 02 9514 7867.**