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Friday May 27th, 2011

Welcome to Excellence in Brief



Welcome to the third edition of *Excellence in Brief*.

The Centre of Excellence has been operating now for about 18 months. After an initial period of establishment and program planning, we are producing a number of important tools, guidelines, and strategies that will lead to the achievement of the Centre's vision of: *world-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21st century Australia*.

Specifically, the Centre has recently released, or will soon release, the following:

- A major research paper titled Options for Consolidation in Local Government: A Fresh Look
- Asset Management for Small, Rural and Remote Communities Practice Note, which will be distributed free of charge to all councils with a population under 5,000
- Papers from a Roundtable on Climate Change convened in early May
- A Capacity Building Strategy for Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- A discussion draft of the proposed National Assessment Framework for Local Government Asset Management and Financial Planning.

Except for the practice note, these documents will be available to download from the Centre's website.

ACELG staff, consortium members and program partners are keen to engage more widely with the local government sector generally, and individual council practitioners in particular. We have just taken part in the LGMA National Congress, and over coming months, we plan to make contact with as many participants as possible at the ALGA National General Assembly in June (ALGA has generously provided a separate exhibition space for ACELG), and the

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Australian Centre of
Excellence for Local
Government

IPWEA National Conference in August. Please drop by to say hello. Tell us about your key challenges and learn about the Centre's programs and opportunities to get involved.

Please forward this newsletter to your colleagues, and remember, we welcome your feedback or suggestions on any of the items discussed.

Graham Sansom
Director

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Annual Report 2010



ACELG reports on its activities each year to its local government stakeholders, and to the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. The report for the year ended December 2010 is now available to download from ACELG's website [here](#) (3.5 mb).

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Options for Consolidation in Local Government: A Fresh Look



ACELG has released the results of a major collaborative research venture between the Centre, Local Government Association of South Australia and Local Government New Zealand.

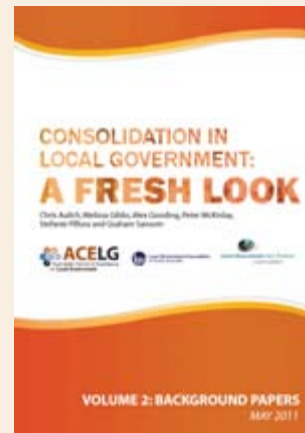
The research project takes a fresh look at the issue of consolidation in local government. The research examines a wide range of options that may deliver economies of scale or scope, or other benefits directed towards more effective local government. Options investigated included a range of approaches to shared services delivery, various models of regional collaboration, boundary adjustment, and voluntary, forced and failed amalgamations of councils.

In producing the report, the Centre used a number of research methods, including:

- Reviewing the available local and international literature
- Conducting a series of 'on ground' case studies in areas which have recent experience with consolidation, in both Australia and New Zealand
- Interviewing key opinion-makers who have recent experience in consolidation.

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The cover of volume 2 of the 'Consolidation in Local Government: A Fresh Look' report.



Cover of the 'Asset Management for Small, Rural and Remote Communities' Practice Note

The report is available for download [here](#) from the Centre's website. For further information, please contact [Melissa Gibbs](#).

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Release of Asset Management for Small, Rural and Remote Communities Practice Note

ACELG proudly released the Asset Management for Small, Rural and Remote Communities practice note at its recent Board meeting. Pictured below, left to right, are John Truman (President, IPWEA), Graham Sansom (Director, ACELG), Margaret Reynolds (Chair, ACELG) and Chris Champion (CEO, IPWEA).



In coming weeks the practice note will be distributed to all councils across the country with a population less than 5,000.

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Local Government Climate Change Roundtable



ACELG, with the support of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, hosted a climate change roundtable on the 4th May, to review the current status of climate change research, policy and practice at the local level. The Roundtable was attended by a broad cross section of local government organisations.

The Director of the ACELG, Professor Graham Sansom said "It's important for local government to consider whether new structures are needed to ensure an effective national local government voice on climate change, particularly in light of the loss of the former Cities for Climate Protection Program."

Key actions agreed to by the roundtable were to seek to ensure that nationally consistent frameworks are developed for use by local government, that platforms for sharing innovation and new ideas around climate change action are established, and that local government takes more of the



A working group at the Local Government Climate Change Roundtable.



Prof. Stuart White, Director of the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures, presenting at the Local Government Climate Change Roundtable.

lead role in setting the research agenda.

The roundtable communiqué, background papers and the updated ACELG research paper 'Australian Local Government and Climate Change' are available [here](#) from the Centre's website.

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Launch of the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN)



A key function of ACELG is to act as a clearing house for innovation and foster the adoption of best or better practice. This will be achieved through an on-line, interactive forum known as IKEN – the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network.

IKEN will provide an interactive forum for practitioners and other professionals associated with local government to exchange information and ideas, showcase innovation and provide useful links to resources, research opportunities, collaboration and support.

IKEN will go live at the ALGA National General Assembly. Be sure to drop by ACELG's exhibition space at the Assembly, or visit www.iken.org.au from 20 June 2011.

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Workforce Development News:



Workforce Projects Roundtable
On 6 April ACELG convened the National Local Government Workforce Projects Roundtable at the Australian National University

in Canberra. Its goal was to coordinate, align and leverage local government workforce initiatives in relation to the establishment of a National Local Government Workforce Data Set, and the completion of a draft National Local Government Workforce Strategy as part of the National



A screenshot of the upcoming Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network ([IKEN](#))

Local Government Data Project of the Local Government Reform Fund.

National Local Government Workforce Development Forum

On 7-8 April, ACELG and Government Skills Australia co-hosted the 4th National Local Government Workforce Development Forum.

The key objectives were to facilitate collaboration and information sharing on workforce development within the sector (and across all levels of government), and to explore contemporary local government workforce development activities, workforce issues, opportunities and challenges.

Further information about both events and ACELG's Workforce Development Program can be found [here](#).

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Women in Local Government



Councillor Janet Davidson, Deputy President of ALGWA addressed the Women in Local Government breakfast at the LGMA National Conference in Cairns this

week. Cllr Davidson informed the breakfast that over 100 councils were registered for the program and that the first councils were soon to receive their Silver Accreditations. In the same week, Program Coordinator Karen Purser addressed a national conference on Government Recruitment and Retention. Karen detailed the business case for gender equity, and drew attention to the changing nature of leadership required if councils are to become agile organisations, able to respond quickly to the changing needs of their communities.

Many councils have provided positive feedback on their participation in the program. While some councils have found that participation has supported their current gender equity practices, others have found that it has provided the framework under which those practices can be developed. Several have found that their ability to attract top female candidates for positions has been enhanced through the program.

Councils are reminded that registration for the program is still open, and more information can be found at:

<http://5050vision.com.au/>

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Local Government Researchers Network

Another important resource for local government - the Local



Government Researchers Network website - will be launched in June. This site will assist councils to learn about, identify and collaborate with researchers in addressing needs within their council area, region or state.

ACELG has already received a number of expressions of interest to join the network, and further information on how to participate can be found [here](#).

The Local Government Researchers Network website will be accessible from the new IKEN site (www.iken.org.au) after 22 June. For further information, please contact [Stefanie Pillora](#).

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Research Underway

The following ACELG research projects are currently underway:

- Metropolitan Planning in South East Queensland, 1996 to 2010
- Implications of the Henry Review of Taxation for Local Government
- Roles and Relationships between Mayors and Chief Executives
- Approaches to Community Engagement
- Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works.

Completed papers will be promoted in future editions of the newsletter and other forums, and we invite readers to provide feedback, raise issues and make suggestions for further research.

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Events, Presentations and Addresses

ACELG staff have made recent presentations to the following events:

- Director Graham Sansom presented to the LGMA (SA) conference in March, and gave a keynote address at the LGMA National Congress in May.
- Assistant Director Melissa Gibbs presented to the CEOs forum of the Local Government Association of Northern Territory in March, and conducted a session on Rural-Remote Local Government at the LGMA National Congress.

- Director Graham Sansom gave the keynote address to the annual Local Government Association of South Australia conference in April.
- Director Graham Sansom presented to the Southern Tasmania Councils Authority (on consolidation research) in April.
- Karen Purser presented to the Government Recruitment and Retention Conference (24-25 May).

Recent events include:

- National Workforce Development Forum, Canberra, 6-8 April
- National Climate Change Roundtable (with ALGA, ICLEI, NCCARF), Sydney, 4 May
- National Assessment Framework Workshop (Asset and Financial Management), Melbourne, 18-19 May.

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Upcoming Events

- ACELG will be on stand #39 at the [ALGA National General Assembly of Local Government](#), 19-22 June.
- [National Local Government Management Challenge](#) (23-24 June).
- [Municipal Association of Victoria - Future of Local Government Summit](#) (29-30 June).
- [Benchmarking Best Practice in Local Government](#) (3-4 August).

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- [Papers from the Climate Change Roundtable](#)

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For more information on ACELG programs and activities, please visit our website:

www.acelg.org.au

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An Australian Government Initiative

