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Friday October 22nd, 2010

## Welcome to Excellence in Brief



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Centre's newsletter, Excellence in Brief.

ACELG was established in mid 2009 to promote innovation and better practice across local government, inform policy debates, and support a coordinated approach to training and workforce

development. Following extensive consultations with local government associations, professional associations and state and territory governments, a diverse range of activities are now underway. We are now involving the broader local government sector, beginning with this quarterly newsletter to key stakeholders to communicate the Centre's program activity.

This edition includes just a selection of our current activity. To find out more about the Centre's program, click [here](#) to download a list of key deliverables for 2010.

Please forward this newsletter to your colleagues. We welcome any feedback or suggestions on any of the items discussed.

Of course, if you don't want to continue receiving this quarterly newsletter, simply send a return email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

I hope you enjoy this first edition of the newsletter.

Prof. Graham Sansom  
Director of ACELG

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## Focus on... Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government



The objective of ACELG's Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government Program is to identify and address specific governance and capacity building issues facing rural, remote and Indigenous

councils. To assist in the development of the program, ACELG convened a [National Roundtable on Rural-remote](#)

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and [Indigenous Local Government](#) at the Australian National University, Canberra in late July.

Not long after its establishment, the Centre initiated three scoping studies. The aims were to fully identify the issues impacting on remote and Indigenous councils and to develop a range of initiatives that could better equip these councils to provide sustainable local governance for their communities. The Local Government Association of Queensland had already completed a study into the capacity building needs of non-amalgamated councils. The findings of all four studies were presented and discussed at the Roundtable.

ACELG has taken the findings of the scoping studies and the outcomes of the Roundtable to develop a national strategy for building capacity in rural-remote and Indigenous local government. Eight priority areas have been identified for attention in the national strategy:

- Role and Expectations of Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- Appropriateness of Local Government to Deliver Services to Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- Compliance
- Governance Training
- Senior Management Capacity and Support
- Workforce Development
- Regional Collaboration and Resource Sharing
- Designing Appropriate Operational Systems

The draft national strategy will be circulated for comment and feedback in November 2010.

Click [here](#) for additional information on the program and to download the four scoping studies, the communiqué, and presentations from the Roundtable. Or contact [Melissa Gibbs](#), Assistant Director.

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## Australian Local Government and Climate Change Working Paper



ACELG has produced a working paper to provide a snapshot of what is happening in local government in Australia in relation to climate change. It explores the resources available to councils on the science and potential impacts at the local government level; current national, state and local initiatives that local government decision makers should know about; actions that the local government sector are taking in response to climate change; and, the gaps,

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needs and challenges related to these actions. Click [here](#) to download the working paper.

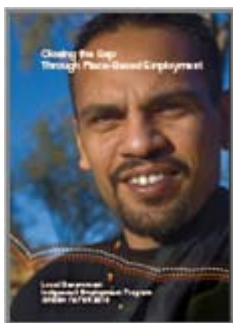
The working paper is part of ACELG's broader Research and Policy Foresight Program, which is now well underway following the appointment of a Program Co-ordinator and Senior Research Officer. ACELG has prepared a short information paper on the objectives, purpose and priorities for the Research and Policy Foresight Program, and an overview of the principles underpinning the Centre's approach to funding, supporting and undertaking research for the local government sector. This document, and research activities currently underway can be viewed [here](#).

For further information or to make suggestions for future working papers contact [Stefanie Pillora](#), Senior Research Officer.

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## LG Indigenous Employment Green Paper



ACELG recently released a Local Government Employment Program Green Paper to explore untapped labour pools and invest in the recruitment and development of Australian Indigenous workers. The Green Paper can be downloaded [here](#).

The local government sector urgently needs to grow its workforce. The proposed program is a response to an urgent need to increase the pool of available talent for local government. The green paper was also developed in response to the Australian government's commitment to halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

One of the program's key objectives will be to advocate and promote the employment of Indigenous people by local government at a rate that reflects the local Indigenous population. The local government sector is uniquely positioned to play a greater role in Indigenous employment, as it is a place-based employer with national reach that offers secure and diverse occupational opportunities.

For more information, please contact [Angela Zivkovic](#), Project Manager, Local Government Practice Unit.

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## 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity



ACELG is working with the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) to deliver the 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity Program. This program is the first national accreditation and awards program designed to encourage

councils across Australia to address gender equity issues within the organisation and among their elected representatives.

The program is accessible by all councils, regardless of their size, location and progress on gender equity. Councils can apply for accreditation at three levels - starting with Bronze and working up to the prestigious, peer reviewed Gold Award. The accreditation of your council as a 50:50 Vision employer will make it easier for you to attract and keep good women candidates and officers.

Click [here](#) for further information or contact [Karen Purser](#).

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## Second Roundtable on Metropolitan Governance



ACELG's second international roundtable on metropolitan governance was held in Brisbane on 19-21 August. It was again organised in conjunction with the Forum of Federations, which

brought international experts to Australia from Canada, USA, India, South Africa, Switzerland and New Zealand. Our hosts in Brisbane were the City Council, South East Queensland Council of Mayors, and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

The roundtable was opened by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Campbell Newman, and the Minister for Planning, Hon Stirling Hinchcliffe. It was attended by over 30 senior representatives of local, state and federal governments, community leaders and academics. The focus of discussion was how the experience of South East Queensland compared to that of similar metropolitan regions around the world, and what lessons could be learned from that comparison. A report will be issued shortly.

Following the roundtable, the international guests met with ACELG and the Forum of Federations to discuss preparation of a book of comparative case studies from about ten countries. This is expected to be published in late 2011.

For further information contact [Graham Sansom](#). The report of ACELG's first roundtable on metropolitan governance, held in Sydney in December 2009, can be found [here](#).

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## Options for Consolidation – A Fresh Look



ACELG is undertaking a collaborative research project with the Local Government Association of South Australia and Local Government New Zealand. The project is called "Options for Consolidation – A Fresh Look". The

research is looking into the various dimensions of reform

including:

- Efficiency – consolidation, amalgamations, shared services etc.
- Local democracy – the quality of local representation, community councils or boards, precinct/ward committees etc.
- Strategic capacity – strengthening local government's strategic capacity to plan an expanded and more prominent role.
- Alternative forms of consolidation – voluntary regional co-operation, shared service delivery, federated regional councils, joint enterprises and the like.

The project will be completed by the end of 2010. For further information, contact [Melissa Gibbs](#), Assistant Director.

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## Aspiring Leaders Partnership



ACELG has just released a discussion paper proposing the establishment of a National Local Government Aspiring Leaders Partnership. The partnership aims to showcase and network the best available leadership programs from Australia targeted at aspiring leaders.

The goal is to develop a national framework that incorporates agreed general content, but also allows for a variety of delivery options that are best suited to different locations and contexts. The discussion paper is designed to promote ongoing dialogue and development of the Framework. The paper can be downloaded [here](#).

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## Learning in Local Government – A National Survey



Local government elected members and professionals are invited to take a ten-minute on-line survey, which aims to canvass their previous experiences and future preferences with education and professional development in local government. A discussion paper has also been prepared to provide a platform for scoping issues, promoting discussion, debate and participation across the sector.

Feedback from the surveys and discussion paper will lead to the development of education and professional development programs that ACELG could develop in collaboration with the sector. [Take survey](#).

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## Presentations and Addresses

ACELG staff and program partners have been out and about addressing a number of local government forums across the country. A sample of recent engagements include:

- An address to the Grants Commission national conference in Melbourne in late October
- Presentation to the National Local Government Financial Management Forum in Brisbane in August
- Meetings with the Executive of the NSW branch of Economic Development Australia in August
- ACELG convened a forum for Commonwealth Government agencies with an interest in local government in July
- An address to a governance forum convened by the LGA of South Australia in July
- An address to the annual conferences of the Local Government Associations of Tasmania and WA in June
- A presentation to the Workforce Development Forum of the Municipal Association of Victoria in June

For further information, contact [Melissa Gibbs](#), Assistant Director.

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

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