

# IKEN a new tool for innovation and 21<sup>st</sup> century practitioners



[www.iken.net.au](http://www.iken.net.au)

## Introduction

One of the key activities of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) is the Innovation and Best Practice Program. This program includes the showcasing of successful models and examples of innovation and better practice within the Australian context. An important and exciting way to share this information is through an Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network and interactive website known as IKEN, which is being launched in June 2011.

## Why is IKEN an important on-line space for local government practitioners?

The provision of such an interactive network is important to bring together practitioners and other professionals associated with local government by providing opportunities to exchange information and ideas, showcase and encourage innovation and better practice, and provide useful links to resources, research opportunities, collaboration and support.

## What are the main features of IKEN?

One of the main features of IKEN includes “Communities of Practice” with practitioners’ forums, case studies for innovation and better practice commissioned by ACELG and others, with easy access to full stories of leading edge and award winning projects and programs. There is relevance across the many different fields of local government and for Councils right across the spectrum of capacity, from rural-remote communities right through to larger urban centres.

### Communities of Practice

“Communities of Practice” (COP) are opportunities for practitioners and other professionals working closely with local government to openly exchange and collaborate on ideas and knowledge. They are a way of facilitating processes of collective learning in a shared interactive space based upon the goal of doing things better. Apart from the broader concept of innovation in a distinct section, there are eight (8) overarching themes for the COP, covering:

- \* Governance, Leadership and Community Engagement
- \* Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change
- \* Corporate Management and Organisational Development
- \* Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- \* Workforce Development
- \* Regional Collaboration and Consolidation
- \* Gender Equity
- \* Infrastructure and Asset Management

### **Case studies**

Within the Innovation section and each COP, there are case studies and profiles that share stories about good examples of innovation and better practice across the local government sector in Australia. Where possible this documentation has been peer reviewed to help ensure relevance for local government audiences.

### **Practitioners Forums**

A forum for registered participants to initiate topics for discussion, engage in problem solving that can generate innovative, strategic and practical solutions, and post examples of innovation and better practice relevant to practitioners and the roles of local government.

### **Researchers network portal**

A researchers' network portal is also hosted by IKEN, to build closer links, co-operation and partnerships between practitioners and researchers.

### **Innovation**

A section dedicated to broader innovation, and including important web-links, select publications, resources (for example "apps" and online tools), and news and events.

### **IKEN Community**

Open sharing of professional profiles with other registered members of IKEN. A Blogs section featuring regular contributors covering a wide range of cutting edge themes, challenges and opportunities, as well as section enabling practitioners to generate their own blogs (subject to editorial approval).

### **Social Media**

Links to application and integration of social media tools, including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

## **How can I get involved and participate in IKEN?**

Access to the "Communities of Practice" that includes case studies, is by registering as a member with no charge or fee. To enable the primary stakeholder group to feel comfortable in openly sharing ideas, feedback and problem solving, this access is restricted to local government practitioners, along with those from other spheres of government working closely with councils and allied or related researchers. By becoming part of the IKEN community you will also be able to link up with fellow professionals to collaboratively progress innovation and better practice in your area(s) of responsibility and interest.

## **How can councils get involved?**

Through their employees registered as individual members, Councils will be able to access the same features mentioned above. Councils or groups of Councils will be able to be proactive through submitting policy, program or project initiatives for peer review and an on-line feedback mechanism to assist with further improvements or adoption/adaptation by other organisations across the local government sector.

For further information on ACELG, go to the Centre's website: [www.acelg.org.au](http://www.acelg.org.au)  
The IKEN website is: [www.iken.net.au](http://www.iken.net.au)

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### **Further information**

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