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Wednesday March 2nd, 2011

Welcome to Excellence in Brief



Welcome to the second edition of Excellence in Brief.

As our local government colleagues across the nation deal with the aftermath of floods, cyclones and bushfires, we are reminded of the important leadership role local government plays in rebuilding shattered communities. In the midst of the devastation of this summer, our local government leaders have well and truly proven their mettle, winning praise for their handling of the situation and recognition of the importance of their role.

The need for councils and their leaders to be ready to cope with disasters underlines the importance of building local government's capacity and skills. Unexpected shocks can come from many quarters – economic and financial issues, environmental problems, shifts in government policy and others – and local government must have the ability to deal with them. This was one of the key messages of the 2007 report of the Queensland Reform Commission.

ACELG is now into its second full year of operation, and expanding its programs on a number of fronts to support advances in local government across Australia. 'Excellence in Brief' keeps you up-to-date with our key initiatives.

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

Professor Graham Sansom
Director of ACELG

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Asset Management for Small Rural or Remote Communities (AM4SRRC)



As part of its Organisation and Capacity Building Program, The

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Centre has commissioned the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) to develop a practice note for asset management for small, rural and remote communities. IPWEA is a member of the ACELG consortium.

The practice note has been successfully piloted with a group of seven small, rural councils in Western Australia in October 2010, with a further pilot conducted with eight rural councils in South Australia. The practice note will enable small rural councils to develop asset management plans, and will ensure the achievement of a nationally consistent approach to asset management.

The practice note will be launched in March and will be provided free of charge to councils with a population less than 5,000.

Further information on the Organisation and Capacity Building Program is available [here](#).

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Minister Crean Approves Funding for National Local Government Data Project



Federal Local Government Minister, the Hon Simon Crean, has approved an allocation of \$700,000 from the Local Government Reform Fund for ACELG to implement the National Local Government Data Project – a key component of the Local

Government Reform Fund and a major national priority endorsed by the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council (LGPMC).

The funding allocation will enable ACELG to compile and maintain a series of data sets linked to the National Local Government Workforce Strategy, an assessment framework for asset and financial management, and guidelines for long term financial planning.

In carrying out the projects, ACELG will work closely with State and Territory governments, and with a broad range of local government associations and stakeholders. The projects will begin in late February 2011. Stay tuned for further updates.

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Research Partnership Proposals Invited



ACELG is keen to build research capacity in the sector and to support applied research which meets an identified local government need. Expressions of interest are now being invited from researchers in local

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government or in tertiary institutions who need assistance to conduct such research. ACELG will offer up to \$15k to an applicant who is able to commit at least \$10k to the research project.

To learn more visit the Research Partnership Guidelines on the [Research and Policy Foresight page](#) of the ACELG website.

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National Strategy to Build Capacity in Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government



At its December 2010 meeting, the ACELG board endorsed a National Strategy to Build Capacity in Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government. The strategy is the culmination of an extensive research and consultation process undertaken by the Centre and its program partners, including a National Roundtable held in July 2010 to set the priority areas for attention. The strategy aims to identify key steps to build the capacity of small-remote and Indigenous councils across Australia – and especially in northern Australia – to deliver local government services to their communities.

ACELG has established a National Reference Group to oversee strategy activities, assist in determining national priorities and more formally engage the jurisdictions, state associations, professional associations and ACELG partners.

Click [here](#) to visit the website and download a copy, or contact [Melissa Gibbs](#), the centre's assistant director, for further information.

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Aspiring Leaders Partnership Piloted in WA



In December, 22 aspiring local government leaders from Western Australia were the first to take part in a new local government leadership course commissioned by ACELG. The course was developed by the UTS Centre for Local Government, in partnership with the WA branch of LGMA and Edith Cowan University (ECU). The partnership between the three parties was a key to the success of the program.

The course was tailored to meet the needs of aspiring leaders in WA. During the five-day program, participants

studied theoretical and practical aspects of the challenges of leadership in local government. Highlights included breakfast with the Minister for Local Government, the Hon John Castrilli, presentations from leading council CEOs and site visits.

See the [ACELG website](#) for further information.

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22 Councils Win Inaugural Gender Equity Awards, Leading the Way in Local Government in Australia



Councils from as far away as the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory were awarded Bronze Awards in the ALGWA 50:50 Vision Councils for Gender Equity Program at the Women

Going Places Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) national conference Gala Dinner on November 26th.

The awards were presented by Glenys Beauchamp, Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government who congratulated the councils and emphasised the department's commitment to gender equity in local government as a responsible approach to workforce planning. For more information, visit <http://5050vision.com.au/>.

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Research Projects Underway

ACELG has commissioned the following research projects:

- Options for Consolidation in Local Government: A Fresh Look (in collaboration with LGASA and LGNZ)
- Unfinished Business - a review of recent local government inquiries
- 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

These research papers will be successively published on the ACELG website throughout 2011, and we invite readers to

provide feedback, raise issues and make suggestions for further research. Completed papers will be promoted in future editions of the newsletter and other local government publications, and through roundtables and conference presentations.

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Local Government Researchers Network to be Established



ACELG is establishing a web-based network of local government researchers to assist councils:

- Learn about the institutions and individual researchers across the country specialising in different areas of local government research
- Identify subject experts or researchers from a particular state or territory
- Collaborate with researchers in addressing needs within their council area, region or state

Hosted on the Centre's soon to be launched Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN) website, the primary themes will be linked to the core program areas of ACELG:

- Governance and strategic leadership
- Organisational capacity building
- Rural - remote and Indigenous Local Government and Workforce Development.

ACELG will shortly be inviting membership. Your suggestions of individuals or organisations who should be invited are welcome! For further information, please contact [Stefanie Pillora](#).

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Stay tuned for the launch of the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network



A key component of ACELG's work program is the development of an Innovation and Knowledge

Exchange Network – an on-line forum to exchange ideas, showcase and disseminate innovation and better practice in local government.

The on-line network will enable local government

practitioners and stakeholder to interact through a practitioners forum, review better practice case studies commissioned by the Centre from time to time and gain quick and easy access to award winning projects.

A special edition of Excellence in Brief will be distributed to provide further details when the network is ready to launch.

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ACELG in the News

Click [here](#) to find out what others have been saying about ACELG.

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Upcoming Events

- *Climate Change Roundtable* with theme 'What are the policy gaps and research priorities for local government in dealing with climate change?' – ACELG's Research and Policy Foresight Program will convene this event with local government partners on Wednesday 4th May, UTS Sydney. By invitation.
- *Fourth National Local Government Workforce Development Forum* – ACELG's Local Government Practice Unit and Government Skills Australia will co-convene the fourth National Local Government Workforce Development Forum in Canberra on 7-8 April 2011. By invitation.
- *Fifth ACELG Board Meeting* – ACELG will hold its fifth Board Meeting in Canberra on 29 April 2010. Click [here](#) to obtain copies of previous Board meeting minutes

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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