

# Research and Policy Foresight Program



## An introduction to ACELG research

Research is a priority for ACELG because without sound evidence local government is vulnerable to poor public policy making. The contribution by local government to national research and development has been considered minimal to date. In addressing this

situation ACELG is producing applied research that responds to issues of relevance to the local government sector, while aiming to inform policy development. It also seeks to provide a platform for other local government related research to be disseminated to the sector.

### Completed Papers

Research activities include a working paper series commissioned by ACELG to review the current state of play in particular local government policy areas, provide background on that policy issue and identify examples of effective responses to those issues. It also includes papers developed in partnership with other local government bodies and with academic institutions. Topics are linked to key themes for local government such as governance, financial sustainability, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

- **Australian Local Government and Climate Change**

Provides a snapshot of what is happening in local government in relation to climate change, and provides a resource for local government elected representatives and managers to assist in developing climate change policies and programs.

Papers from the Local Government Climate Change Roundtable held in May 2011 are also available on the ACELG website.

- **Options for Consolidation in Local Government: A Fresh Look**

Takes a fresh look at the various approaches to structural reform. Options investigated include shared service delivery, various models of regional collaboration, boundary adjustment, and voluntary, forced and failed amalgamations of councils.

- **The 'Review of Australia's Future Tax System: Implications for Local Government'**

Examines the implications of recommendations from the report to the Commonwealth Treasurer on Australia's Future Tax System (the 'Henry Review') for local government. In particular it highlights areas where local government needs to develop sound policy positions.

- **Unfinished Business? A Decade of Inquires into Australian Local Government**

Looks at the findings, recommendations and outcomes of nine major national and state inquiries into local government over the period 2001-08. It explores three key questions: First, what have been the major themes and ideas to emerge? Second, to what extent have the principal findings and recommendations been implemented? Third, how much unfinished business remains to be transacted in order to place Australian local government on a sounder footing?

- **Local Government and Community Engagement in Australia**

Reviews current approaches to community engagement by Australian councils, including those through emerging technologies, and highlights trends and issues for further discussion and research. The paper is also accompanied by an annotated bibliography of key community engagement references.

- **Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works**  
Provides an overview of emerging trends in community governance through reviewing local and international literature as well as interviews with Australian local government leaders and Bendigo Bank representatives. The paper suggests directions for further research and possible application.
- **Comparative analysis of Regional Organisations of Councils in NSW and WA**  
Undertakes an 'audit' of ROCs in NSW and WA in order to gain a better understanding of their roles and operations in the development of regionalism, reform and modernisation of local government activities.
- **Options for a Local Government Framework for Measuring Liveability**  
Explores appropriate benchmarks to help measure progress in improving the quality of life for communities in metropolitan areas and that enhance the consistency and credibility of reporting. The paper includes an overview of twenty six sustainability indicator frameworks and a detailed analysis of six of those frameworks that may be applied by Australian local governments.
- **Metropolitan Planning in South East Queensland (SEQ) 1996 to 2010**  
Provides a brief history of metropolitan planning in SEQ from 1996 to 2010, focusing on the factors behind the move from a voluntary to a statutory planning model and drawing out the lessons for other states and multi-level planning regions from the analysis.

## Research in Progress

- **Legal and Governance Models for Shared Services in Local Government**  
Sets out a number of frameworks and models for shared services, provides case studies that illustrate the different organisational models used for carrying out shared services and includes a summary of relevant state and territory legislation.
- **Local Action for a Clean Energy Future – Discussion Paper**  
Positions Australian Local Government as an integral player in delivering a low carbon and clean energy future for Australia and provides case studies from across Australia that illustrate the key strengths of the local government sector.
- **Strengthening Local Government Revenues**  
Provides a synthesis of existing research and presents a range of viable options for increasing own-source revenues amongst larger urban councils and sustaining smaller rural and remote councils through increased external support.
- **ACELG support for practitioner research**  
Scopes out possible resources and activities that could be developed by ACELG to assist local government practitioners undertake and publish their own research, including the development of guidance materials and the piloting of a mentoring program.

## Local Government Researchers Network – <http://lgresearch.net.au>

This network has been created to assist the Australian local government sector locate the latest papers and articles on local government related subjects of interest. It is also designed to build knowledge about the range of research being carried out in different areas of local government and to build networks between researchers and practitioners. Visit <http://lgresearch.net.au/> for more information.

## Further information

Further information about these research projects, the Research Advisory Committee, and copies of the papers presented at the Local Government Researchers Forum held in December 2011, can be found on the ACELG website. To provide feedback on completed papers or to provide research suggestions, contact:

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