

## Research Officer (part-time) Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG)

- **0.6 FTE**
- **Close to Central Station & public transport**
- **Diverse role in contributing to research in local government**

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) is a national and independent research centre based at UTS which has a diverse role in supporting the advancement of local government in Australia and internationally.

ACELG produces applied research which responds to key issues relevant to the local government sector and aims to inform policy development by local government decision makers. The Research Officer will undertake a variety of short and long-term projects, individually or in collaboration with other Centre staff and associates.

This position is fixed-term part-time (3 days a week) for 1 year, with the possibility of renewal for a further year.

**Salary Range:** \$56,138 - \$65,121 per annum depending on experience, (pro-rata) plus superannuation

### **Key aspects of the role:**

The Research Officer will bring high quality research and writing skills to the ACELG Research and Policy Foresight Program. The successful candidate will have a degree qualification with substantial experience as a researcher, ideally within the local government sector, or with other government agencies.

The Research Officer will draw on knowledge of Australian local government and its broader governmental context and help identify opportunities for research into Australian local government and allied fields, including opportunities for collaboration with other research organisations. Strong written communication and interpersonal skills, experience in planning, managing and delivering projects, and sound computer and administrative skills are required for the role.

### **Application procedure:**

Candidates should email their CV with details of two referees, a covering letter, and a statement outlining how their skills and experience meet the requirements stated in the selection criteria. Completed applications should be forwarded to [acelg@acelg.org.au](mailto:acelg@acelg.org.au).

For more information on the position, please contact [acelg@acelg.org.au](mailto:acelg@acelg.org.au). Applications close at 5pm on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and it is expected the appointee will commence work by mid April 2012.

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	<b>Research Officer (3 days a week)</b>
<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>Support Level 5-6 (depending on experience)</b>

## **POSITION PURPOSE**

The Research Officer is primarily accountable for supporting research projects, and providing research and program management support to the Program Manager – Research. The Centre’s research is predominantly practice-oriented, aimed at fostering evidence-based policies and programs that support the Centre’s goal of bringing about enduring improvements in Australian local government’s capacity and performance.

## **DIMENSIONS**

The Centre was established in 2009 with a federal government grant of \$8m, and has an annual budget of approximately \$2.5m, a core staff of 5 based at UTS, and additional contract staff in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. UTS is the lead partner in a 5-member consortium of universities and professional institutes. Within UTS the Centre reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), but its activities are overseen by an external Board representing the consortium partners and other key stakeholders, with an independent chair. It operates under a funding agreement with the federal government and an ancillary Project Plan.

A Research Advisory Committee, comprising academics and practitioners, meets bi-annually to oversee current research projects and advise on future research activity.

The Research Officer will undertake a variety of short and long-term projects, with a mix of internally and externally funded research, information and training activities. S/he may be expected to take the lead in managing small-medium projects.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Collaboration and Communication**

The Research Officer will work as part of a team with Centre staff, representatives of consortium partners, other areas of UTS (notably the UTS Centre for Local Government and Institute for Sustainable Futures), and a wide range of other organisations and stakeholders.

### **Supervision**

The position reports to the Program Manager - Research.

## **MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Assist the Program Manager with the administration and implementation of the Research and Policy Foresight program
- Support, undertake and/or manage research and policy development projects individually or in collaboration with other Centre staff or associates, ensuring that work progresses on time and within budget and that the work is of a satisfactory depth and quality
- Assist in reviewing research papers prepared on behalf of ACELG
- Develop, present and explain project outcomes at internal and external workshops, seminars, conferences and meetings
- Write projects reports, refereed papers and/or articles relating to the Centre's activities.
- Keep abreast of technical developments, legislative and regulatory changes and current best practice relevant to local government research and policy priorities
- Maintain liaison with other researchers in the Centre's network or partner institutions
- Act as an important point of contact between the Centre, its stakeholders and partners, and assist in developing ACELG's network of contacts with local councils, governments, universities and other relevant organisations Australia-wide and internationally.
- Apply policies and principles of EEO and EH&S.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND POSITION CHALLENGES**

The Centre operates in a complex institutional and policy setting, involving various areas of UTS, its consortium members, other partners, local, state and federal governments, and a range of other stakeholders.

The Research Officer will need to manage sometimes sensitive relationships to bring about desired outcomes, and to this end will need to develop and maintain a broad and productive network of colleagues, and closely monitor developments in key areas of Centre activity. S/he must also be able to identify and promote the latest thinking and best practice in relevant aspects of local government.

The Research Officer is to be self directed, but must also be able to work in a team environment. S/he will need sound judgement, an ability to prioritise tasks, attention to detail, as well as flexibility and creativity to meet the requirements of both the Centre and its constituency.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **Essential**

#### *Educational Qualifications*

Degree with a substantial component in a field related to local government.

#### *Knowledge*

- Demonstrated knowledge of research processes and methodologies.
- Knowledge of government systems in Australia and/or elsewhere.

#### *Experience*

- Experience in undertaking research and/or as a government practitioner, in areas relevant to the activities of the Centre.
- Involvement in conducting research or similar projects.
- Writing research papers and project reports.
- Developing and delivering oral presentations that are appropriate for the audience.

#### *Personal abilities/skills*

- Capacity to conduct and critically evaluate research and policy development
- Strong written and oral communication skills, including the ability to write for academic or policy audiences and practitioners.
- Ability to work with limited supervision, as well as cooperatively and flexibly in a small team, and to meet deadlines.
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to establish and maintain cooperative networks of colleagues.
- Organising ability, flexibility and problem-solving skills.
- Sound computer and administrative skills.

### **Desirable**

#### *Educational qualifications*

A higher degree.

#### *Knowledge*

- Knowledge of Australian local government
- Understanding of the university research environment, including collaboration with commercial or other partners
- Understanding of the use of social media by government.

### *Experience*

- Employment as a researcher or in the local government sector
- Completion of research or policy development projects into specific aspects of local governance
- Preparation of research funding applications
- Writing papers for academic and technical conferences and journals, and/or popular articles
- Editing and proofreading reports.

### *Personal abilities/skills*

Willingness to undertake further education as appropriate.

Project management skills.

## ACELG ORGANISATION CHART



