

Councils in Cooperation

Shared Services and Australian Local Government

Brian Dollery, Bligh Grant and Michael Kortt

Australian local government operates under conditions of acute financial austerity, manifested in a burgeoning infrastructure backlog. Various policy measures have been adopted to relieve this financial distress, most notably structural reform programs centred on forced council amalgamation. However, this compulsory consolidation has been highly problematic. Shared services is an alternative method of reaping the benefits of scale, scope, specialisation and size in local government service provision that offers significant promise for local government.

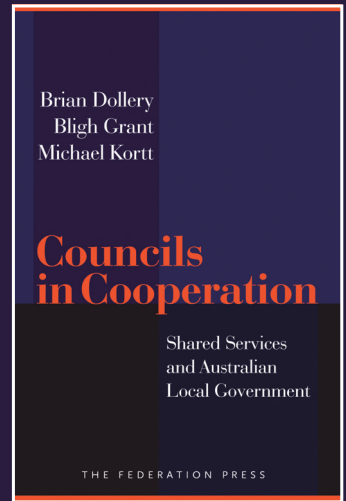
Drawing on international and Australian literature, Brian Dollery, Bligh Grant and Michael Kortt evaluate shared services theory and advance a new conceptual framework for explaining comparative performance of shared service programs in practice. The book considers alternative models of shared service provision and investigates their relative merits. It also systematically assesses the global empirical evidence on shared services; explores successful and unsuccessful attempts at shared services in the Australian context; using areas as varied as Greater Western Sydney, NSW Central Tablelands, the Riverina and outback Queensland the book provides case studies of Regional Organisations of Councils, and Strategic Alliances, as well as vertical and horizontal shared service arrangements.

Councils in Cooperation comprehensively explores and assesses shared services and the potential of resource sharing, shared services and other forms of inter-council cooperation in the Australian local government sector.

ISBN 978 1 86287 847 1 • PB • 288pp • rrp \$49.95 • DIRECT PRICE \$45.00
*plus postage and handling

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