



INAUGURAL BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of Meeting held in Sydney on Thursday 1 October 2009

Present

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Prof Attila Brungs, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) UTS
- Prof John H Howard, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Development) UC
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG
- John Truman, President, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA)
- Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary, DITRDLG
- Cr Geoff Lake, President, Australian Local Government Association

In Attendance

- A/Prof Graham Sansom, Interim Director ACELG and Director, UTS Centre for Local Government
- Melissa Gibbs, Acting Assistant Director, ACELG
- A/Prof Michael Paddon, Research Director, UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures
- Jeff Francis, Director, UTS Research and Innovation Office
- Prof Ian Thynne, Charles Darwin University
- Michelle Noble, Edith Cowan University
- Dr Chris Aulich, Adjunct Professor to UC and ANZSOG, former Director of Australian Centre of Local Government Studies at UC (now defunct)
- John Ravlic, national CEO, Local Government Managers Australia
- Chris Champion, national CEO, IPWEA (and President, International Federation of Municipal Engineering)
- Brendan McRandle, General Manager – Local Government, DITRDLG
- Prof Sue Rowley, former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) UTS
- Robert Mellor, Program Manager, UTS Centre for Local Government
- Sarah Artist, Program Manager, UTS Centre for Local Government

Item 1: Welcome by Professor Attila Brungs, UTS Deputy Vice Chancellor

Prof Brungs recognised the traditional owners of the area and welcomed delegates on behalf of UTS. He acknowledged the presence of Hon Maxine McKew, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and introduced Hon Margaret Reynolds, former senator and federal Minister for Local Government, who had accepted the position of Chairperson of the Board.

Item 2: Introductions and Apologies

Board members and other delegates introduced themselves, and the role played by Prof Sue Rowley, former UTS Deputy Vice Chancellor, in establishing the Centre was acknowledged.

Apologies were received from: Penny Holloway (Board member nominated by Local Government Managers Australia – LGMA); Prof Mark Evans, Director of ANZSOG Institute for Governance, University of Canberra; Dr Chris Aulich, Adjunct Professor, University of Canberra; Prof Roy Green, UTS Dean of Business; Dr Linda Botterill, ANU.

Item 3: Address by Hon Maxine McKew, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Ms McKew gave a short address outlining the federal government's views on the role of the Centre and some of the key issues facing Australian local government. She highlighted the need to reinvigorate local government leadership and aspire to higher standards through the pursuit of creativity and innovation.

Following her address, Ms McKew sought the views of Board members and others present on priorities for action and how the challenges she had identified could best be met, including through the government's new Reform Fund.

The Chairperson thank Ms McKew's for attending the inaugural meeting and for her valuable contribution.

Item 4: Confirmation of Appointments to Board

The following appointments were confirmed:

- Hon Margaret Reynolds, Chairperson
- Prof Attila Brungs, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) UTS (alternate: Jeffrey Francis, Director, Research and Innovation Office)
- Prof John H Howard, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Development) UC (alternate: Prof Carole Kayrooz, Deputy Vice Chancellor)
- Peter Allen, Deputy Dean, ANZSOG (alternate: tba)
- John Truman, President, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (alternate: Chris Champion, CEO)
- Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary, DITRDLG (alternate: Michael Pahlow, Executive Director)
- Cr Geoff Lake, President, Australian Local Government Association (alternate: Adrian Beresford-Wylie, CEO)
- Penny Holloway, Local Government Managers Australia (alternate: Ray Burton)

Resolved:

That the proposed appointments to the Board be confirmed.

Item 5: Appointment of Director and Staff

Prof Brungs advised that UTS proposed to appoint Associate Professor Graham Sansom as Director of ACELG, with the title of Professor. It is envisaged that the ACELG Director's principal responsibilities will be to promote the Centre's work and role, manage the core

secretariat group at UTS, coordinate program activities in accordance with the approved Project Plan, and exercise financial control. He will also undertake research and other projects as time permits.

A/Prof Sansom indicated that other core staffing is planned to include:

- Assistant Director
- Research Officer (part-time)
- Programs and Communications Officer
- Administrative Officer (part-time)

He proposed that the position of Assistant Director be advertised at the level of Associate Professor (or equivalent) within the next two months, with a view to making an appointment at the beginning of 2010. A contract appointment (Ms Melissa Gibbs – an Associate of the UTS Centre) would be made in the interim to provide essential support. Research and communications support can be provided in the short term by the UTS Centre, and a part-time Administrative Officer will be engaged from late October.

In response to a question, A/Prof Sansom advised that the role of the core secretariat would focus on coordinating the ACELG network and facilitating program implementation by partners; external liaison and communications; administration and financial management; plus research and other project work as resources permit.

Resolved:

That the Board endorse the appointment of A/Prof Sansom as Professor and Director, and approve the secretariat arrangements as proposed.

Item 6 Proposed Governance Arrangements

The Board considered implementation issues related to the governance framework set out in the consortium's bid document, plus the establishment of a Programs Committee to plan and monitor activities, and possible incorporation of the consortium at some future stage.

The Director proposed that, given his role in the bid and in framing the operations of the Centre since its inception, and now as a Board member, Prof John H Howard chair the Programs Committee.

He also indicated that advice on the appointment and role of the Research Advisory Committee will be presented to the Board once the design of the Research and Policy Foresight program is further advanced. Similarly, proposals for technical panels, reference groups etc will be forthcoming as part of program development, as will a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Centre's activities.

The Director further advised that UTS would prepare a draft 'collaboration agreement' to formalise the governance framework and financial arrangements, and deal with matters such as intellectual property and dispute resolution. It could be finalised at the Board's next meeting. Establishment of a company limited by guarantee or other corporate entity could be considered for the longer term.

Board members pointed to:

- The need to consider in more detail precisely what role the Board should play under the current arrangement of an unincorporated partnership – in particular how it can add value through setting strategic direction and networking, whilst avoiding micro-managing or becoming simply a rubber stamp
- The need for caution in any moves towards formal incorporation as this could have significant implications in terms of both the interests of partners and the exercise of effective control over ACELG’s role and operations.

Resolved:

- **That the Board approve the establishment of a Programs Committee under the chairmanship of Prof John Howard, to consist of appropriate representatives of partner organisations and others working on specific program activities**
- **That a further report on the Board’s role and terms of reference be prepared for the next meeting**
- **That a discussion paper be prepared on options for ongoing development and possible incorporation of the consortium in the longer term.**

Item 7 Board Procedures

The Director advised that the funding agreement with the Commonwealth is silent on how the Board should operate, other than that it should meet at least quarterly. The Board is therefore free to set its own meeting procedures. Meetings could be held by teleconference. Provision needs to be made for out-of-session decisions on specific matters to be determined with some urgency. It is assumed that the Board will make decisions by consensus, but when that is not possible, a two-thirds majority may be appropriate to ensure at least broad agreement.

He further advised that no allowance has been made in the budget for meeting fees, nor (except for the chairperson) for travel and accommodation costs. It is assumed that the organisations being represented will cover the costs of their delegates.

Board members identified a need for further consideration of the issue of majority decision-making, as well as matters such as a quorum, notice of meetings, and rotating meetings between states and territories. The view was expressed that requiring a two-thirds majority may be excessive.

Resolved:

- **That the proposed arrangements for fees and travel and accommodation be approved**
- **That a further paper be prepared on meeting procedures to cover the issues identified by Board members.**

Item 8 Draft Project Plan

The Director tabled the latest draft Project Plan and budget, as required under para 1.10 of the Schedule to the funding agreement. He advised that further work is needed to finalise the Project Plan due to overseas travel of consortium staff over the past two months; uncertainty as to whether ACELG may receive some supplementary funding from the federal Reform

Fund; and the desirability of using upcoming ACLG/LGPMC meetings in Darwin to hold detailed discussions with senior representatives of the sector and other key stakeholders.

He proposed that a finalised version of the draft Project plan be circulated for approval by Board members out-of-session no later than the end of October. It could then be forwarded to the Department for its endorsement.

Following completion of the Project Plan, more detailed Program Action Plans would be prepared and appended to it, subject to the Board's approval.

Board members pointed to:

- The need for ACELG to identify and pursue new opportunities for programs in line with local government's priorities, rather than simply building on established activities
- The importance of having a set of agreed deliverables for Year 1 whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to the outcomes of the proposed consultation program in subsequent years
- Similarly, the importance of building sufficiently detailed information on programs into the Program Action Plans
- The need to avoid unnecessary duplication of existing federal government programs and/or consultation processes eg in the area of Indigenous local governance
- The need for further consideration of possible approaches to the long-term sustainability of ACELG, and building the agreed approach into the Project Plan as soon as possible.

Board members also proposed a number of specific amendments to the draft Project Plan.

Resolved:

- **That the Board note the proposed arrangements for finalising the Project Plan and preparation of Program Action Plans**
- **That Board members provide further comments on the current draft to the Director within the next 3 weeks**
- **That the draft Project Plan be forwarded to local government associations for comment.**

Item 9 Consultation and Communications

The Director indicated that a key area of activity across all ACELG programs in Year 1 will be consultation with the local government sector and key stakeholders. He noted that there have already been some preliminary discussions with ALGA and the LGPMC officials committee, and a roundtable with ACLG is planned for Darwin on 9 October. He also tabled a draft consultation strategy to be implemented over the next 6 months, and advised that work is under way to establish the 'central' ACELG website, and to formulate a strategy for a linked network of websites covering the various programs and partner organisations.

Board members pointed to:

- The need to explain carefully the role and nature of the Centre, and to manage expectations
- The need and scope for ongoing consultations once the broad outline of programs has been established.

It was also noted that there is only one ‘formal’ local government association in Victoria, not two as inferred in the draft consultation strategy.

Resolved:

That a consultation and communications program be implemented along the lines set out in the draft strategy.

Item 10 Forum of Federations Roundtable

The Director reported on a proposal for ACELG to work with the Forum of Federations and the federal government’s Major Cities Unit to convene a roundtable in Sydney in December on the governance of fragmented metropolitan regions. This would lead into next year’s World Urban Forum in Brazil. The Forum of Federations would fund the participation of several international delegates/speakers.

The proposed date for the roundtable is 15 December. The second meeting of the ACELG Board could be held the day before, and the Minister invited to both events. This would provide an opportunity for the delayed formal launch of ACELG and official opening of its Sydney office.

Resolved:

That ACELG participate in the roundtable as proposed.

Item 11 Other Business

No matters were raised.

Item 12 Next Meeting

Resolved:

That subject to advice from the Minister’s office regarding the proposed roundtable on metropolitan governance, the next Board meeting be held in Sydney on Monday 14 December.