

# Research and Policy Foresight Program



## An introduction to ACELG research

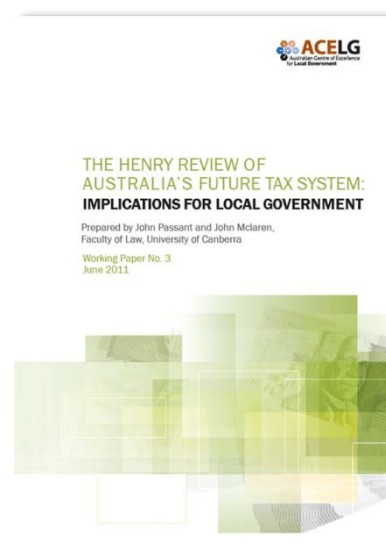
Research is a priority for ACELG because we believe that without sound evidence local government is vulnerable to poor public policy making. The contribution by local government to the national research and development effort is currently considered

to be minimal<sup>1</sup> and ACELG believes this situation should be challenged. 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.

## Completed Working Papers

Research activities include a working paper series which reviews the current state of play in particular policy areas, provides background on that policy issue and identifies examples of effective responses to those issues. Topics are linked to key themes for local government, - governance, financial sustainability, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. The following papers are available on the ACELG website, [www.ancelg.org.au](http://www.ancelg.org.au).

- **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. 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 the recommendations for local government arising from the report to the Commonwealth Treasurer on *Australia's Future Tax System* (the 'Henry Review'). It highlights areas where local government needs to develop soundly-based policy positions, focusing in the first instance on the Tax Forum planned for October 2011.
- **Unfinished Business? A decade of inquiries into Australian Local Government** This paper looks at the finding, 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?

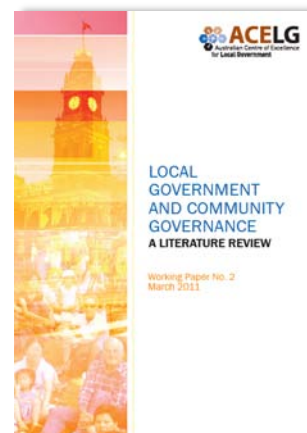


## Research in progress

ACELG has commissioned a range of research papers in partnership with academic institutions and local government organisations. Papers due for completion in 2011 include:

<sup>1</sup> ABS Data (2008) 8109.0 Research and Experimental Development, Government and Private Non-Profit Organisations, Australia

- **Local Government and Community Engagement in Australia** Reviews current approaches to community engagement by Australian councils, including emerging technologies, and highlights trends and issues for further discussion and research. [The associated bibliography of useful resources is available on the ACELG website.](#)
- **Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works** Provides an overview of emerging trends in community governance through reviewing local and international literature and interviews with Australian local government leaders and Bendigo Bank representatives; suggests directions for further research and possible application. [The literature review is available on the ACELG website.](#)
- **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.
- **Roles and Relationships between Mayors and Chief Executives** Examines the complexities and challenges in the Mayor/ CEO relationship, identifies different models that are operating in Australia and give insights into how the relationship might be enhanced.
- **Comparative analysis of Regional Organisations of Councils in NSW and WA** Undertakes an 'audit' of ROC's in NSW and WA in order to gain a better understanding of the roles and operations of ROCs in the development of regionalism, reform and modernisation of local government activities.



Complements related ACELG research which is reviewing legal models of shared services between councils.

- **Options for a Local Government Framework for Measuring Liveability** Explores appropriate benchmarks to help improve the quality of life for communities in metropolitan areas and enhance the consistency and credibility of reporting; includes an overview of the main sustainability indicator frameworks and initiatives by Australian governments.
- **Social Enterprise as a New Way of Engaging with Communities** Analyses the strengths and limitations of social enterprise as a new way for local government to engage with communities, and reviews how social enterprise is being implemented in specific places in the local government context,- in particular in Tasmania.

### Research through other ACELG programs

In addition to the dedicated research program outlined above, ACELG is supporting research being undertaken through the three other Program areas: Innovation and Best Practice, Governance and Strategic Leadership, and the Rural Remote and Indigenous Program.

### Further information

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

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An Australian Government Initiative



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