

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.

Research in Progress

- **Legal and Governance Models for Shared Services in Local Government**
Sets out a number of frameworks and models for shared services and provides five examples of existing local government groups, in Australia and New Zealand, which have each used different organisational models to carry out shared services and other collaborative arrangements.
- **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.

This information will be updated as soon as the details on new research papers to be commissioned by ACELG are finalised.

Local Government Researchers Forum Papers

Papers presented at the Local Government Researchers Forum held in December 2011 are now available on the ACELG website. The Forum provided a platform for a wide range of researchers to present and seek feedback on their work. While most of the papers are not ACELG endorsed publications, ACELG encourages discussion and feedback on the issues addressed by the authors.

Research through other ACELG Programs

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

Further information

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

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An Australian Government Initiative



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