LGNSW Research and Innovation Fund
Collaboration opportunities with UTS Centre for Local Government
October 2018

UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance
ippg.uts.edu.au
Local Government NSW has recently launched a Research and Innovation Fund to support new areas of research, policy development and innovation for the advancement of local government in New South Wales. The initiative is providing seed funding for projects that aims to fill gaps in evidence base, explore emerging issues, promote informed debate and discussion, and encourage the development of research partnerships between councils, industry and university.

What are the challenges and opportunities for your council?

Local government organisations are invited to submit proposals for potential research projects that will benefit local councils and communities, and advance local government practice. Projects can apply to any areas of council activities and interests.

Have an innovative idea or proposal?

The UTS Centre for Local Government invites you to discuss potential research projects and ideas, research approaches, and opportunities for collaboration with us as to help shape your council’s LGNSW Research and Innovation Fund proposal.
UTS Centre for Local Government

The UTS Centre for Local Government is Australia’s leading centre for local government research, teaching and specialist consulting services, located within the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney.

We are focused on applied social, behavioural and academic research, policy advisory, graduate education and professional development training, with a strong applied focus in our research and capacity building activities across local government.

In operation since 1991, and recently building on five years’ consortium work as the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), the Centre is now the largest of its kind in Australia, working with councils across Australia, and internationally.

We have a strong strategic commitment to information exchange, collaboration and building international local governance capacity, with a mandate centred on:

- Enhancing professionalism and skills in local government
- Showcasing innovation and best practice
- Facilitating better informed policy debate

Our researchers and practitioners are committed to enabling world-class local government to meet the emerging challenges of 21st century Australia, with research strengths in:

- Local Government Finance
- Service Delivery Reviews
- Workforce Planning
- Leadership and capacity building
- Local and Regional Economic Development
- Social & Community Engagement
- Strategic Planning
Local Government Finance

The UTS Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on all aspects of local government finance. Research topics could include:

- Financial sustainability reviews
- Performance monitoring
- Sector-wide taxation practices
- Pricing
- Design, assessment and efficiency outcomes of shared services arrangements
- International research on boundary reform, examining optimal size and efficiency of local government areas, including amalgamations and de-amalgamations
- Developing performance monitoring framework
- Reviewing rate-capping methodologies

CASE STUDIES

**Giving Local Governments the Reboot: Improving the Financial Sustainability of Local Governments**

UTS CLG, McKell Institute

This report explores the challenges for local councils facing significantly increasing demands on services and community expectations.

**Rate Capping in South Australia: Implications, Desirable Amendments and Preparedness**

UTS CLG, Local Government Association of South Australia

This project provided a review of objectives and outcomes of rate capping, assessed the fiscal implications of rate caps for local governments in South Australia and associated implications for ratepayers, as explored actions for councils in anticipation of rate capping.
Service Delivery Reviews

The UTS Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on all aspects of **local government service delivery reviews**. Research topics could include:

- Reviewing current service provision and planning for future service levels and arrangements
- Incorporation of community feedback and priorities and future service needs, for example the impacts of ageing populations and changing demographics
- Alternative service delivery models
- Aspirational targets (such as the construction of new community infrastructure, or expansion of a community service)
- Understanding elected member expectations
- Exploring how revenue constraints and existing resources and can be best leveraged

**CASE STUDIES**

**Service Delivery Review: A How to Manual for Local Government**
ACELG, UTS CLG
This manual provides advice, toolkits and templates to assist councils in assessing services provided to local communities.

**Co-Designing Services**
Civica, UTS CLG
The research explores how councils are involving citizens in service design and delivery, and in particular whether co-design approaches are being used. The role of digital technologies to enable and support community involvement in service design and delivery was also a research focus.
Workforce Planning

The UTS Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on all aspects of local government workforce planning. Research topics could include:

• Capacity building tools and toolkits for best practice workforce planning
• Profiling the workforce of councils to improve current and future capability and performance
• Risk matrixes for to identify skills gaps due to changes in technology or a shortage of applicants for certain jobs, for example, planners, engineers and environmental health officers
• Understand employee perceptions of workplace experiences to integrate into staff development, employee engagement, talent attraction and retention strategies
• Strengthen organisational capacity to deliver strategic and operational plans and develop succession planning from middle to senior management positions
• Prepare and respond to either planned or unplanned change
• Creates the ‘right mix’ (right skills, right time, right place) which creates better efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.
• Model and provide for more flexible working conditions in the future
• Understand the impact of ageing workforces

CASE STUDIES

People Matter for Local Government
UTS CLG
People Matter is an employee perception survey that is regularly conducted across state government public sectors and provides important information and insights for departments, organisations and sector stakeholders on workplace experiences and employee engagement.

Workforce Planning Guidelines
UTS:CLG, Skills Tasmania, LGA Tasmania, Burnie, Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard Councils.

Workforce planning in the local government sector is essential to meet the needs of communities and deliver prosperity. These guidelines were developed to improve Tasmanian councils understanding of the benefits of workforce planning and build capacity to better plan for a changing workforce. The project was funded by a grant from Skills Tasmania (Tasmanian Department of State Growth) and developed in partnership with the Local Government Association of Tasmania and several councils.

Institute for Public Policy and Governance
Centre for Local Government
Leadership and Capacity Building

The UTS Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on all areas of organisational development, across organisational structure, capacity building and leadership development, and change initiatives. Research topics could include:

- Advocating for the value and role of local government in public value creation for communities
- Building leadership capability across senior and aspiring local government professionals and elected members
- Shaping places through community leadership initiatives
- Utilising capability frameworks as development and performance conversation tools
- Designing and embedding culture change initiatives
- Collaborating across organisations and stakeholders

CASE STUDIES

Why Local Government Matters
UTS CLG, ACELG
A national study on Australia community attitudes to local government, including preferences on how services are delivered at the local level, local government's role in meeting citizen’s needs and attachment to ‘place’, citizen involvement in government.

Council Approaches to Leadership
UTS CLG, ACELG
This report explores the elements of successful council-based leadership programs, highlighting key themes for contemporary local government leaders to consider. Three aspects of a ‘good practice approach’ to an in-house leadership initiative are highlighted in the research: a leadership ethos, robust support structures, and measuring the progress.
Local and Regional Economic Development

The Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on all areas of local government economic development strategies. Research topics could include:

- Assessing industry and employment strengths and opportunities
- Economic strategy development and brokerage
- Economic policy and data reviews
- Regional and rural transition strategies
- Population and housing growth
- Income generation and asset utilisation
- Place promotion, tourism and inward investment

CASE STUDIES

Inclusive Tourism: Economic Opportunities
UTS CLG, Local Government NSW.
This report explores potential economic opportunities for local councils, working with local tourism providers and businesses, from the Inclusive Tourism market, by providing better access to recreation, leisure and hospitality facilities for all people.

Local Government and Housing in the 21st Century: The City of Sydney's approach to the supply of affordable housing
UTS CLG
This paper investigates the strategies used by the City of Sydney to increase affordable housing and whether they can be replicated in other council area.

The Role of Local Government in Local and Regional Economic Development
UTS CLG
This report explores the role of local government involvement in local and regional economic development strategies. The report highlights the varying roles and levels of engagement that councils play in regards to leadership, organisation and delivery of local and regional economic development in Australia.
Social and Community Engagement

The Centre for Local Government has a specialised focus on social research and community engagement. Research topics could include:

- Meaningful engagement with communities using different techniques and methodologies
- Building collaborative partnerships across stakeholder groups
- Using community and wellbeing indicators to assist strategy design
- Co-designing local initiatives with citizen and community groups
- Understanding and positioning digital technologies for regions and areas
- Place-based approaches
- Community program evaluation

CASE STUDIES

- **Walking with Communities: A Collective Impact Approach to Neighbourhood Renewal**
  UTS CLG, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, Penrith City Council
  This report helps local governments work with communities to address place-focused renewal by providing conceptual framing and case studies of collective impact approaches to help inform and shape community collaboration initiatives.

- **The Wellbeing of International Students**
  UTS CLG, City of Sydney
  This research provides an evidence-based understanding of the wellbeing of international students in the City of Sydney through a review of key literature and analysis of engagement methods including interviews, an online survey that reached over 600 international students, and focus groups with stakeholders and international students.

- **Building Social Cohesion in our Communities: An online resource for Local Government**
  UTS CLG, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, Human Rights Commission
  The online resource is structured around five elements for social cohesion. It features case studies from local governments around Australia, tips for implementing good practice at the local level and links to further resources.

- **The Future of Gwydir**
  UTS CLG, City of Sydney
  The research engaged with the community and key stakeholders of the Gwydir local government area to shape the council’s decisions on long term financial planning, service delivery, asset management, and own source revenue and rates.
Strategic Planning

The Centre has a specialised focus on strategic and corporate planning within local government. Research topics could include:

- Corporate and organisational planning and reporting
- Community and strategic planning
- Social planning
- Land use planning
- Program evaluation: methodologies and reviews
- Smart government planning for smart cities and places
- Leveraging state and federal funding
- Partnership formation and collaborative models

CASE STUDIES

Waverley Community Strategic Plan
UTS CLG, Waverley Council
Waverley Council commissioned the Centre for Local Government with its community and obtain feedback to inform its Community Strategic Plan. This report summarises the inputs from the community, non-government organisations, local businesses and councillors.

Regional Library Manager Models
UTS CLG, State Library of NSW
This report was commissioned by the State Library of New South Wales to undertake research to explore and recommend regional management models for NSW public libraries, and included a literature review, stakeholder interviews, case studies and the development of a guide to regional library management models.

Evaluations of post-disaster recovery: A program logic approach
UTS CLG, Attorney General's Department
This research was conducted to inform the future development of a national outcomes evaluation methodology for assessing Post-Disaster Recovery Programs, reviewing existing practices and examining three case studies: the Christchurch earthquake, Victorian bushfires and Queensland floods.

Evaluation of Land Development Approval Process
UTS CLG, Port Macquarie Council
The review evaluated Council's development engineering approval processes examining all stages of the approval process from fee quoting through detailed assessment and internal referrals to defects and asset acceptance. The aim of the review was to identify areas where the process could be made more efficient, effective and solution focused.
Our Experts

Renowned for its research, industry engagement and sector-leading expertise, the Centre for Local Government at UTS has the highest concentration of local government experts in Australia.
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**Professor Lee Pugalis**

UTS Institute for PublicPolicy and Governance and Centre for Local Government

- **Research interests:** Local and regional economic development, urban regeneration, strategic planning, metropolitan governance and urban entrepreneurship.
- Leading urban development academic and experienced practitioner, including sub-regional economic partnership director, regeneration specialist advisor to a Regional Development Agency and various roles in local, regional and national government in the UK including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Editor of the journals *Regional Studies, Regional Science and Local Economy,* and is also a member of 15 international editorial boards.

**Professor Alan Morris**

UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Centre for Local Government

- **Research interests:** Urban and housing studies, including housing and ageing, housing affordability, social policy, human rights and marginality.
- Lead Chief Investigator on Australian Research Council Discovery grant to explore the circumstances of long-term private renters, and also a Chief Investigator on Australian Research Council Linkage grant titled 'Local government and housing in the 21st century'.
- Published extensively in highly rated peer reviewed journals in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa.
- Author of *The Australian Dream: Housing Experiences of Older Australians* and *Gentrification and Displacement: The Forced Relocation of Public Housing Tenants in Inner Sydney.*

**Alex Lawrie**

Research Officer, UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Centre for Local Government

- **Research interests:** Urban and regional governance, multi-level governance and inter-governmental relations, land use and infrastructure planning, funding and finance, strategic and statutory planning, affordable housing, social planning and impact assessment, environmental policy, evidence-based policy, policy evaluation, demographics, community and stakeholder engagement.
- Recipient of the Australian Government Research Scholarship & UTS Medal for Research Impact
- Principal author of the National Best Practice Guideline for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities, which informed the Productivity Commission’s national inquiry into child care access.

**Alexandra Ellinon**

UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance and Centre for Local Government

- **Research interests:** Policy, evaluation and research, including evaluating program and policy responses relating to the housing and homelessness sector, family and domestic violence, child protection, youth development, and education.
- Experience in a range of policy areas across government and non-government clients and communities, with a key interest in multi-agency and whole-of-government responses to complex social issues.

Our Experts
We invite you to contact Sophi Bruce at the Centre for Local Government to discuss potential research projects and ideas, research approaches, and opportunities for collaboration with us as to help shape your council’s LGNSW Research and Innovation Fund proposal.

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Thank you