
A quarterly newsletter from the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government.
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7 OCTOBER 2016

Welcome to Excellence in Brief



Welcome to the October 2016 edition of Excellence In Brief. The sector is going through a period of significant change this year, driven by funding constraints and structural changes, rate and grant capping, reform of financing arrangements and pressures to deliver more with less. These are certainly challenging times; however it is good to keep in mind the long term opportunities change can present.

We have continued work on a number of projects aimed at supporting the sector - especially those related to strategic and workforce planning, organisation reviews and service delivery. One of our recently completed projects, the 'Workforce Planning Guidelines for Local Government in Tasmania' resource, has been received with great enthusiasm and it is providing a robust resource for councils in Tasmania. We have also continued supporting rural council sustainability through our research and a series of service delivery review training programs in Victoria and Western Australia.

2016 has also brought some changes to our operations here at UTS. On 1 January 2016 UTS launched its new UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance (UTS:IPPG). IPPG brings together expertise across social research, governance, evaluation, public policy and leadership. The Institute works across the government and non-government sectors, including but not exclusive to local government. UTS:CLG is part of IPPG and continues to be a leader in the local government sector.

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While there are a small number of projects that are being completed throughout 2016, the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) program formally concluded at the end of 2015. In its six and a half years of operation, ACELG has informed national local government policy debate, and created a legacy of research and resources that will remain accessible on the UTS website. I am grateful to all our ACELG partners for their support and participation.

The recently published UTS:CLG and ACELG 2015 Annual Report highlights some exciting and sector defining research projects, reflecting the diversity of the work we undertake and our commitment to sector development and capacity building. The report is available [here](#).

With these changes we will be transitioning to a new UTS:IPPG newsletter from the next edition of InBrief. The new-look newsletter will continue bringing you updates from diverse areas of the sector. As always, I welcome your feedback and invite you to collaborate with us.

Associate Professor Roberta Ryan

Director

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

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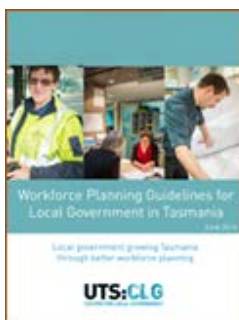
Giving Local Governments the Reboot



A new report completed by UTS:CLG for the Mckell Institute, the Giving Local Governments the Reboot - Improving the Financial Sustainability of Local Governments, proposes a range of suggestions to address the financial sustainability of local councils. The report delves deeply into the financial issues facing most local councils and finds that in fact, many local governments are suffering from expenditure problems due to demand from the community that has been rising steeply over two decades. Read more and access the report [here](#).

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Workforce Planning Guidelines for Local Government in Tasmania



UTS:CLG published a new resource in June that provides local government in Tasmania with a practical approach to developing strategic workforce plans. The Workforce Planning Guidelines for Local Government in Tasmania resource was developed to improve Tasmanian councils' understanding of the benefits of workforce planning and build capacity to better plan for a changing workforce. Access the resource [here](#).

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New Framework for Performance Measurement and Improvement

As one of the final ACELG projects, we are currently working on a project to develop a performance measurement and improvement framework for councils which are not part of the current round of mergers in NSW. This work complements the ACELG's published work on [why local government matters](#) (Ryan et al 2015)



and upcoming work on what success looks like in local government.

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People Matters Survey

Another one of our final ACELG projects, the *People Matters Survey* aims to understand better local government employee perceptions of working in their council organisations, piloting councils in NSW. The project will be undertaken by adapting the People Matter survey instrument that is currently used by Public Service Commissions in Australia. It is hoped that the research will provide councils with data to inform management practices and activities in areas such as strategic planning, leadership and culture change initiatives, workforce planning, training and development needs, attraction and retention of staff, and equity and diversity in the sector. We will keep you updated on the outcomes of this exciting project as work progresses.

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Enhancing service delivery in local government



UTS:CLG has been working with the Governments of Western Australia and Victoria to deliver service delivery training workshops. In Western Australia we have worked with the Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC) to deliver a series of service delivery review training workshops for country local governments in both country and metropolitan locations across Western Australia

between August and October. Read more [here](#).

In Victoria we have been working with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to deliver Enhancing Local Government Service Delivery training program in four locations in Victoria in 2015 and 2016. As part of the Local Government Climate Change Mentor pilot project, around 60 senior staff of councils from across Victoria received scholarships offered by the Victorian Government to attend the training program. [Watch DELWP's video of the course here](#).

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National Disability Insurance Agency Projects

UTS:IPPG has been working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on two projects this year. Working alongside the UTS Business School and UTS's disability services industry partner Northcott, we are conducting a study for NDIA to scope options and test the feasibility for establishing an Assistive Technology (AT) Innovation Hub(s) in Australia. The study has the potential to make a real difference to the daily lives of people with a disability and the Australian economy. Our other project with NDIA considers how local governments across Australia support the social and economic participation of people with disabilities, their families and carers. The project will describe the regulatory and legislative activities of local government and the activities that local governments across Australia currently undertake to enable social inclusion of people with disability in their localities.

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Changing Landscape for Local Government Project

UTS:IPPG has been engaged by Civica to undertake research on how councils in Australia and New Zealand are reviewing and adapting the services they provide to the community. The research for the *Changing Landscape for Local Government* project focuses on councils' perspectives about involving the community in the review and planning of services, and on ideas on where digital technologies might be utilised in the way services are planned or delivered. Themes arising from the research will be included as part of a Civica

report, a UTS:IPPG research paper and Director Roberta Ryan's Keynote presentation at the Civica Expo in October. Expo details [here](#).

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New Performance Measurement and Improvement Framework for Councils

UTS:CLG is working with a number of councils to develop an improved Performance Measurement and Improvement Framework. The goal of this project is to contribute to the development of a sector-endorsed Local Government Performance Measurement System that supports councils' performance improvement, allows communities to better understand their council's performance, and provides an effective mechanism to monitor local government performance in Australia.

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Strategic Planning Manual for Local Governments to be Launched

As one of the final ACELG projects we are working on a new manual *Strategic Planning for Local Government - A How to Guide for Good Practice*. The manual is primarily aimed at local governments who are preparing, reviewing or amending their short to long-term strategic planning documents, and are looking to build internal capacity around strategic planning processes. Based on national and international good practice strategic planning for the local government sector, the manual will provide a practical step-by-step guide for councils.

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Shared Services and Working Regionally

UTS:CLG been working with councils around Australia exploring shared services opportunities and ways of working regionally. For example in Tasmania the councils of Kentish, Latrobe, Waratah-Wynyard, and Circular Head appointed UTS:CLG to review current resource sharing arrangements. The review considered governance and decision-making arrangements, the current State Government reform agenda, strategic capacity of the councils and a financial analysis of savings from resource sharing arrangements. The project resulted in common agreement and development of a framework on the most appropriate scale for councils to work together and a set of commonly agreed objectives to measure success.

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Knowledge Sharing with Vietnamese Colleagues



In August UTS:IPPG hosted a group of representatives from the Vietnamese Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) as part of their international study tour to learn from Australia's experiences with continuing levels of excellence in its public administration and public service. The delegation's visit focused on capacity building for public managers, leadership program design and contemporary teaching and training methods. Read more [here](#).

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New Postgraduate Course in Applied Policy to Launch in 2017

UTS:IPPG is launching a new postgraduate course, Master of Applied Policy, in 2017. This exciting new course builds on our position as Australia's premier local government education provider and broadens our teaching offering to applied policy. Graduates of the program will be equipped with knowledge and skills in policy research and methodologies; the making and evaluation of policy; development and implementation of

policy in practice; and program implementation and management. The course is planned for launch in spring 2017.

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Master of Local Government applications now open for 2017



UTS:CLG is the only university unit in Australia, and one of a few worldwide, that designs and presents courses that are tailor-made to the needs of local government. Our postgraduate local government courses provide an evidence-based learning approach to build a high level of influence and leadership for participants in their workplace. Applications are now open for 2017 entry. Read more [here](#).

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Short Courses and Professional Development Opportunities

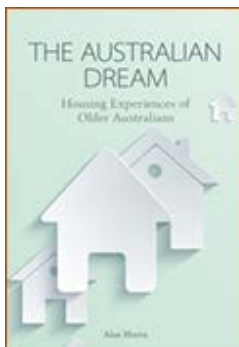
UTS:CLG Short courses spring 2016 program offers a wide selection of courses throughout the semester. A range of new short courses are offered this semester in areas such as urban policy and finance, economics and performance. Upcoming short courses include 'Program Evaluation', 'Igniting an Innovation Mindset', and 'Diversity and Inclusion in Local Communities'. Read more [here](#).

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UPCOMING BOOKS

The Australian Dream - Housing Experiences of Older Australians

By Professor Alan Morris

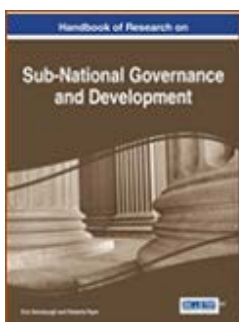


The Australian Dream examines the impacts of housing tenure on older Australians who are solely or primarily dependent on the age pension for their income of subsidised rents and legally guaranteed security of tenure for older social housing tenants. The book was published on 3 October 2016 and can be ordered online from the publisher, [CSIRO](#).

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Handbook of Research on Sub-National Governance and Development

Edited by Associate Professor Roberta Ryan and Dr Eris D. Schoburgh (The University of the West Indies)



Effective governance is a crucial aspect of all modern nations. Through various collaborative efforts and processes, nations can enhance their current governance systems. The Handbook of Research on Sub-National Governance and Development is a pivotal reference source for the latest scholarly material on the intersection between local and national politics, analysing how this relationship affects nations' economy and administration. The book is due for publication in December 2016 and can be pre-ordered online from the publisher, [IGI Global](#).

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Local Government in Australia: History, Theory and Public Policy

By Senior Lecturer Dr Bligh Grant and Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Joseph Drew

This book is a general introduction to and analysis of the history, theory and public policy of Australian local government systems. It is conceived in an international comparative context and primarily from within the discipline of political studies, while also incorporating elements of economics and public administration. The book is currently under review and due for publication in 2017.

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SAVE THE DATE

The next seminar in our Government to Governance series, ***'Political Discontinuity? The Impasse in Australian Politics'*** will be held on **Tuesday 25th October 2016** from 6:00 to 7:30pm. RSVP [here](#).

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Registrations now open for the 2017 LG Professionals Australia National Congress



Each year hundreds of representatives across Councils across Australia gather at the LG Professionals Australia National Congress & Business Expo to engage in a meeting of minds. The Congress provides a platform to discuss the policy and professional development needed to advance local government practitioners in Australia and internationally. It's the annual meeting place for CEOs and senior level representatives, researchers, service providers, grassroots advocates, community based organisations, and academics, with working, studying, or with an interest in local government Congress & the Challenge Finals to be held together for the first time! The Congress will be held in Hobart, Tasmania on 22-24 May 2017. Read more [here](#).

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The 7th International Conference on Local Government Issues in Intergovernmental Relations

Yangon, Myanmar 28th-29th November 2016



UTS:CLG is proud to host the 7th International Conference on Local Government Issues in Intergovernmental Relations in Yangon, Myanmar on 28th-29th November 2016. Papers are invited from diverse disciplinary and practitioner perspectives. A limited number of papers will be accepted. Deadline for Abstracts is 30th October 2016. Two AU\$1,000 scholarships are available for early career scholars and practitioners to assist attendance. Read more [here](#).

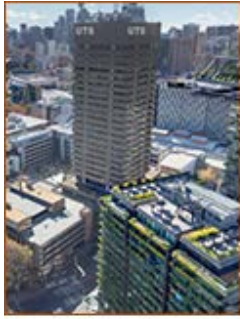
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OTHER UPDATES

UTS:IPPG and UTS:CLG have relocated

Our offices have moved to newly renovated premises in the UTS Tower Building.

Our new visiting address:



UTS:IPPG and UTS:CLG
University of Technology Sydney
Tower Building, Level 21
15 Broadway
Ultimo NSW 2007
ippg.uts.edu.au

[Directions to UTS](#)
[UTS Campus Map](#)

Our postal address and other contact details remain unchanged.

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RECENT ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

Australasian Journal of Regional Studies Special Edition

UTS:CLG hosted the 39th Annual Conference Australia-New Zealand Regional Science Association 7-8 December 2015. As part of the outcomes of the Conference, a Special Edition of the Association's flagship publication, [Australasian Journal of Regional Studies](#), dedicated to the theme "*Regional Governance and Development*", co-edited by Senior Lecturer Bligh Grant, Associate Professor Roberta Ryan and Professor John Martin has been produced. The 'call for papers' produced considerable interest, with fourteen submissions being received. The resultant Special Edition features papers co-authored by a broad array of UTS:CLG staff and associates. The team would like to thank UTS Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Glenn Wightwick for his generous support.

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Recent articles from UTS staff include:

Ryan, R., Hastings, C., Grant, B., Lawrie, A., O'Shea, E. and Wortley, L. (2016). 'The Australian experience of municipal amalgamation: Asking the citizenry and exploring the implications'. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*

Drew, J., Grant, B., and Campbell, N. (2016). 'Progressive and reactionary rhetoric in the municipal reform debate in New South Wales, Australia'. *Australian Journal of Political Science*

Drew, J., Grant, B., and Fisher, J. (2016). 'Re-evaluating municipal amalgamations: Utility maximisation meets the Principle of Double Effect (PDE)'. *Policy and Politics*

Grant, B., Ryan, R. and Kelly, A. (2016). 'The Australian Government's "White Paper on Reform of the Federation" and the future of Australian local government'. *International Journal of Public Administration*

Hanckel, B.J. (2016), 'Mitigating risk and facilitating access to capabilities: The role of affect in the design of an ICT-tool for queer youth in Asia', *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 18, pp. 35-43. [View description>>](#)

Hanckel, B.J. (2016), 'Representations of LGBT youth: A review of Queer Youth and Media Cultures', *Journal of LGBT Youth: an international quarterly devoted to research, policy, theory, and practice*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 410-413. [View description>>](#)

Morris, A. (2016), A Qualitative Examination of Jim Kemeny's Arguments on High Home Ownership, the Retirement Pension and the Dualist Rental System Focusing on Australia, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 33(4): 445-468.

Morris, A. (2016), 'Why moving out public housing tenants is a tragedy for Millers Point and for Sydney' *The Conversation*. [Available here](#)

Morris, A. (2016), 'A contemporary forced urban removal: The displacement of public housing residents from

Millers Point, Dawes Point and the Sirius Building by the New South Wales Government'. *Shelter NSW*. [Available here](#).

Pugalis, L. (2015), 'Austere State Strategies: Regenerating for Recovery and the Resignification of Regeneration', *Local Government Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 52-74. View/Download from: [UTS OPUS](#) or [Publisher's site](#)

Pugalis, L., Gray, N. (2016), 'Leadership and systems of governance: the constraints on the scope for leadership of place-based development in sub-national territories' *Regional Studies Journal*, [Available here](#).

Bentley, G., [Pugalis, L.](#), Shutt, J.. (2016), 'New regional development paradigms: An exposition of place-based modalities' in *The Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*, Volume 22 Issue 1.

[Ryan, R.](#) (2016), Why Local Government Matters. Government News. [Available here](#)

All UTS:IPPG publications are available [here](#)

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