Welcome to Excellence in Brief

As the end of 2015 is fast approaching, it is timely to reflect on some of our activities and achievements over the past twelve months. The Centre has continued to produce a range of important outputs, which we know from feedback from the sector have been of value. Below are just some of the highlights.

While the list of publications, tools and guides produced throughout the year is extensive, a few require special mention. Our landmark Why Local Government Matters research has sparked a lot of interest in the sector, and we were pleased to have made numerous presentations throughout the year to conferences, seminars and other events. The Building Social Cohesion in our Communities online toolkit prepared with the Australian Human Rights Commission has also been well received by local governments wanting to build strong, socially cohesive communities. Our research with Regional Capitals Australia titled Local Government Growing Regional Australia has also provided some good guidance for local governments wanting to improve leadership and governance to drive regional development.

Our international profile continues to grow, with Centre staff active this year in Pakistan, Nepal and Thailand; and our partnerships with the Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR) and the Korean Local Government Centre continue to thrive. Our various events conducted throughout the year, particularly the Government to Governance series and Research Forum continue to draw crowds, and we are keen to continue such forums into 2016.

As 2015 draws to a close, I would like to wish our readers all the very best for a safe and peaceful festive season.

Associate Professor Roberta Ryan
Director

Sister cities research report

ACELG has released new research about Australian local government and international engagements, often termed 'Sister City' relationships. The research aims to guide the sector and individual councils about the strategic value of such linkages and how they might be enhanced for the benefit of all organisations involved and the communities they represent. The resource includes an international literature review and best practice case studies. Read more »

Mature age workforce resource

Local Government Professionals Australia (formerly LGMA National) has released a guide for the engagement, support and retention of older workers in Australian council organisations. Funded by ACELG the Mature Age Workforce Resource aims to reflect global best practices in managing an age-diverse
workforce with recommendations for implementation within corporate frameworks and policy, and in regard to national initiatives and guides about mature age workers. The Resource is also accompanied by a report about mature age issues in Australian local government. Read more »

New resources for infrastructure management

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) CEO Robert Fuller recently launched the 2015 editions of the *International Infrastructure Management Manual* (IIMM) and the Australian Financial Infrastructure Management Manual (AIFMM). The IIMM and AIFMM provide clarity on a range of recent changes to help public works professionals manage and report on their public assets, and their revision was supported by ACELG at the University of Technology Sydney. For more information, go to the [IPWEA website](#) or visit the [IPWEA bookshop](#).

Why Local Government Matters - Phase 2

ACELG, in conjunction with the UTS Centre for Local Government, has begun Phase 2 of the *Why Local Government Matters* research. Building on the ground-breaking Phase 1 research, Phase 2 will conduct 20 focus groups with communities across Australia to evaluate community perceptions of local government and the import attached to the work that it does. A report outlining the outcomes of Phase 2 of this project will be available in early 2016. Read more »

Local government and refugees

The UTS Centre for Local Government has released a new report titled *Local Government Services for Refugees Focusing on African Muslim Refugees*. The report examines initiatives that seven Australian local governments are taking to support refugee and CALD communities in settling, employment, education and housing, and was completed in partnership with the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding at the University of South Australia. Read more »

Local government workforce and Indigenous employment forum

The 2015 National Local Government Workforce and Indigenous Employment Forum was held at Old Parliament House, Canberra on Wednesday 2 December. The Forum was hosted by ACELG consortium partner Local Government Professionals Australia and supported by ACELG. Presentations and the Forum Communique will be available from the LG Professionals website shortly. For more information contact Alex Kats on 03 9682 9222 or via [projects@lgprofessionalsaustralia.org.au](mailto:projects@lgprofessionalsaustralia.org.au).

New National Workforce Data

The Centre is ramping up Phase 2 of the National Profile of the Local Government Workforce. Phase 1 established and presented the first ever comprehensive picture of the composition and structure of the local government workforce. It established the importance of the workforce to communities and economies across Australia, particularly regional and rural areas, and shone a light on the workforce opportunities and challenges facing the sector. Phase 2 examines the dynamics of the local government workforce including hot topics such as gender pay gap, workforce implications of structural reform, place-based employment, and exposure of the sector to national skills gaps and shortages. Be on the lookout for the Phase 2 report early 2016. For more information on tailored profiles of how your workforce compares to the rest of the
Deputy Director attends 3rd Pakistan Urban Forum

Centre Deputy Director, Melissa Gibbs, attended and participated in the 3rd Pakistan Urban Forum in Lahore earlier this month. The theme of the forum was "Reimagining Pakistan's Cities for the 21st Century" and brought together participants from Pakistan and abroad. Melissa participated in four sessions at the forum, and provided the keynote address at the closing ceremony. Melissa outlined how the declaration from the conference might be realised, and proposed a framework for improved institutional governance. Further information from the [Forum website](#)

Regional science conference hosted by UTS:CLG

UTS:CLG proudly hosted the Annual Conference of the Australia and New Zealand Regional Science Association International (ANZRSAI) 'Global Cities and Global Regions: Sustainable Futures?' on 1-4 December at UTS. Keynote speakers included Dr Richard Hu (University of Canberra); Professor Lee Pugalis (UTS:CLG); Professor Bob Stimson (RSAI Fellow); Professor Stephen Hill (Sohar University); Dr Rob Greenwood (Memorial University of Newfoundland); and Professor Michael Hefferan (University of the Sunshine Coast). The program also included UTS:CLG research, such as 'Resilience and the Role of Local Government in Regional Australia' (Centre Director, Roberta Ryan) and 'Local Government Growing Regional Australia: Characteristics and Contributions of Regional Capitals'.

Research partnerships proposed for 2016

A number of important ACELG research partnerships will commence in 2016. The partnerships will be of great interest to the sector, and we welcome potential partners to join us in shaping the research. One such partnership will provide an independent assessment of the impacts of rates capping; and another will see further development of the Centre's service delivery review manual to augment unit costing, calculation of net costs, and evaluation of fixed and variable costs. Contact Melissa Gibbs for further details: melissa.gibbs@acelg.org.au

Women in local government seminar

UTS:CLG hosted an evening seminar on September 24 to formally launch the "Empowering Women in Local Government" program developed by the NSW Branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association and UTS:CLG. The Program aims to support women considering standing for election in the 2016 NSW Local Government elections; existing women councillors; and women working within the local government sector. The first program was successfully held at Strathfield Council in October. [Read more](#)

Save the date...

The next CLAIR (Japan Local Government Centre) and ACELG forum will be held on 24 February 2016. The theme of the 2016 forum is "Local Government Environment and Sustainability". The forum will be held at UTS, and further details will be available on the CLAIR and ACELG websites.

The next Empowering Women in Local Government program will be held at Penrith Council (NSW) on 5, 6 and 20 February & 5 March 2016. Contact Nicole Campbell for more information:
nicole.campbell@uts.edu.au or 02 9514 1061.

View the 'Empowering Women in Local Government' seminar via ACELG's YouTube Channel plus other UTS:CLG seminars from 2015 such as 'Building genuine partnerships for major urban transformation' featuring: Simon Pagett, Head of Urban Transformation Division at UrbanGrowth NSW; Dr Tim Williams, CEO of the Committee for Sydney; and Marjorie Ferguson, Manager Strategic Planning at City of Canada Bay.

Sustainable cities seminar

The most recent UTS:CLG Government to Governance seminar on December 1 at UTS featured the urban affairs scholar Assoc. Professor Richard Hu discussing 'The Sustainable Global City'. Affiliated with the ANZRSAI 'Global Cities and Global Regions: Sustainable Futures?' conference, the seminar was hosted by Professor Paul Dalziel (Professor of Economics, Lincoln University New Zealand) and Dr Paul Collits (Adjunct Professor at School of Business, University of the Sunshine Coast), with a Q&A panel discussion chaired by UTS:CLG's Dr Bligh Grant. A video of the session is available on ACELG's YouTube Channel »

Community plan workshops

UTS:CLG recently worked with the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council (SA) on its community plan review, as reported in The Northern Argus, 30 Sept 2015: "The Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council developed a community plan, finalised in 2012, which provides an overview of key drivers, challenges and opportunities for our district. The plan is spread over 10 years, and now that it is getting close to the halfway point it is time to take another look to see how the plan is tracking and what needs to be reviewed and updated..." Read more »

Service Delivery Training in Victoria

Program Manager Nicole Campbell recently led two bespoke teaching programs for staff of Victorian rural councils. The program, Enhancing Local Government Service Delivery, was successfully delivered in Warragul (17-19 Nov) and Wedderburn (25-27 Nov). The Programs were supported by the Victorian Government, which provided scholarships for a number of attendees. Part of the Program was based on the ACELG resource Service Delivery Review: A How to Manual for Local Government.

View the Training and Development section of the UTS:CLG website to see the range of courses on offer and those that can be delivered in-house or within a region.

ACELG Town Crier Highlights

- Rockingham Arts Centre: From Ambulance Depot to Community Arts Centre - Transformed
- NSW Local Government Reforms: The IPART Assessment of Council 'Fit for the Future' Proposals

We have moved

ACELG's new street address is Level 3, UTS Building 05C, 1-59 Quay St, Haymarket, NSW, 2000.
Forward on!

Please send this newsletter to your colleagues! If you have received this newsletter from a colleague, you are invited to join our mailing list in one step here: http://www.acelg.org.au/newsletters

Also, if you are current subscriber, update your email details here http://www.acelg.org.au/contact-us if you are about to change your email address.