Welcome to Excellence in Brief

With ACELG's six programs having a full agenda for 2014, I am looking forward this year to further promoting the significant value ACELG makes to the sector as a nationally focussed local government centre of excellence.

ACELG contributes to national debates about local government in many ways: through its validated research and initiatives and through the diversity of seminars, roundtables and forums we hold each year - in most cases, in partnership with local government organisations.

ACELG welcomes contributions from stakeholders and practitioners.

An important opportunity to join the discussion is the next ACELG local government research forum in April, kindly supported this year by consortium partner LGMA National as a part of its 2014 National Congress and Business Expo. Do come along and share your ideas. More ACELG events are planned for 2014 including a forum in the Northern Territory in the latter part of the year – so stay in touch with us.

In this edition of Excellence in Brief you will find news of key research on local government debt, food safety, news about our international focus, new opportunities for professional development with consortium partners, plus a new way to share your ideas and links about local government.

Finally, a number of generous scholarships are available for the next ACELG-ANZSOG Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program to be held in Canberra in July. I strongly recommend this unique and immersive learning opportunity, tailored to local government leaders who want to make a difference in and for their communities.

I welcome your input to our work through the year.

Associate Professor Roberta Ryan
Director
Applications are still open for the next *Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program* on 21-25th July 2014 in Canberra. The Program is a joint initiative between ACELG and the Australia New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG). A number of generous scholarships are available to support the participation women in local government (including elected women), local governments in regional and remote areas, and local governments with limited resources to participate in training. Read more »

**Debt: Not a dirty word**

ACELG recently released a new research paper called *Debt is Not a Dirty Word: The Role and Use of Debt in Local Government*. Of its findings, the research suggests the sensible use of debt by local councils can address infrastructure backlogs and positively support sustainable local communities and organisation performance. The paper was written by John Comrie with input from the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) and a national reference group. Read more »

**Latest local government research forum**

Registrations for the next ACELG Research Forum are now open, to be held on Wednesday 30 April in Melbourne as part of Local Government Managers Australia’s (LGMA) National Congress & Business Expo. Join with key thinkers to discuss the latest research on civic participation, organisational excellence, research practice, reform and innovation, creative communities, regional economics, council and community interaction, regulation and planning, and others. Attendee places are limited, so register now. Read more »

**New local government online community**

ACELG has developed a dynamic online site for sharing local government resources and stories called *ACELG Community*. The site features a blog called *The Town Crier* and a resource area called Knowledge Exchange. Posts have focussed on a variety of topics such as *tourism, asset management, environmental policy, youth engagement, mobile apps, rural-remote local government, social media, waste regulation, remote-Indigenous community engagement and innovation*. Find out more here »

**Food safety and local government**

As a co-regulator in food safety, local government plays a significant role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of the community. As part of its Research Partnership Scheme ACELG funded a research partnership to explore current attitudes and beliefs concerning food safety within a diverse set of food business contexts. The research includes a customisable food safety strategy template and guidelines to assist local governments implement a holistic approach to food safety. Project research partners were Queensland University of Technology, Logan City Council, Redland City Council, Sunshine Coast Council, Ipswich City Council and Environmental Health Australia (Queensland). The research will be launched on Wednesday 12 March, and is available here »
Research Partnership Scheme

ACELG is in the process of finalising research partnership projects on Climate Adaptation, and Leadership in Local Government, have started three further projects in the last few months and received a number of strong applications for our 2014 Research Partnership Scheme which will begin in the next month. This is evidence of the demand from the sector for high quality research to be undertaken into a breadth of issues facing local government. More about ACELG’s current and completed partnership projects is available on the ACELG website here »

Influence local government policy

Applications for the UTS Master of Local Government program are now invited. ACELG has supported the development of this unique post-graduate course run by the UTS Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney. The program offers graduates the necessary managerial skills and knowledge relevant to changing needs and priorities of the sector, with flexible modes for completing the degree. Applications close 30 June. Read more »

International ideas for local government

ACELG Director Associate Professor Roberta Ryan recently headed a delegation of Australian and New Zealand government representatives to Aomori Prefecture, Japan to participate in the Local Government International Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. The delegation was organised by The Japan Local Government Centre (CLAIR Sydney). A/Prof Ryan is also a keynote presenter at "Consolidating Democratic Devolution and Strengthening Stability in Pakistan" in Karachi, March 11-18, and organised by the Forum of Federations. Staff will also present ACELG research to conferences in South Africa and Canada in April.

The outcomes of these engagements will inform ACELG research underway with ALGA about enhancing local government international alliances. Read more »

L-R: Ikuo Sasaki (Vice Governor of Aomori Prefecture), A/Prof Roberta Ryan (ACELG), Shingo Mimura (Governor of Aomori Prefecture), Annie Riordan (Director, Corporate & Community Services, Shire of Augusta-Margaret River), Nicola Burgess (Promotions Officer, Whakatane District Council, NZ), James Walker (Alderman, Clarence City Council), Sim Hayward (Chair, Cairns Sister Cities Advisory Committee), Neil Selmon (Director Planning Coordination & Support, NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure).

NSW local leaders convene and learn

The next Executive Certificate for Elected Members course will be held in June and July in Sydney. This five-day program was co-developed by UTS Centre for Local Government, TAFE NSW and Local Government NSW (LGNSW) with support from ACELG. The program is one of the first to be based on the new National Local Government Training Package Skills Set for Elected Members. Places filled quickly for the pilot programs in 2013 and Coffs Harbour in March, so register here for the June offer. Course
resources can be viewed here »

**ACELG workforce data for women**

ALGA President and ACELG board member Felicity-ann Lewis is taking part in celebrations which aim to recognise the contributions of women and acknowledge areas requiring further action to ensure women's equality. "International Women's Day is especially important for local government, a sector which is under-represented by women, both as council members and within senior staffing positions," Mayor Lewis said in a story on the [ALGA website](https://sendstudio.itd.uts.edu.au/sendstudionx/display.php?M=4054055&C=55012335ea816ef3e772e3d42c0ce3cd&L=4929&N=8617). Data produced by ACELG as part of its workforce program has identified where agencies and governments can influence the future shape of the local government workforce so it might be more adaptable for women. Mayor Lewis will deliver the opening keynote address at the 2014 Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) NSW Annual Conference in Broken Hill from 21-22 March. ACELG research data on the local government workforce will be released soon. Contact Melissa Gibbs.

Workforce Development Session at LGMA Congress

Delegates to the LGMA National Congress and Business Expo will receive a briefing from ACELG Chairperson the Hon Margaret Reynolds and LGMA National CEO John Ravlic about [Future-Proofing Local Government: National Workforce Strategy 2013-2020](https://sendstudio.itd.uts.edu.au/sendstudionx/display.php?M=4054055&C=55012335ea816ef3e772e3d42c0ce3cd&L=4929&N=8617), released late last year. This important session will be facilitated by Professor John Martin and will outline the Strategy's intent and the challenges that lie ahead in terms of retention, development and attraction. Read the strategy here and more information about the upcoming LGMA Congress here »

2014 Australasian Management Challenge

ACELG is again supporting the LGMA Australasian Management Challenge. Teams are currently undertaking the pre-challenge task, with regional challenge days (Australia) to run 17-28 March The Australasian Finals are Melbourne, 19-20 June. ACELG research has informed the challenge, and participants can use their experience to gain entry into university postgraduate programs such as that offered by ACELG partner UTS:CLG. Read more »

ACELG joins sustainability in public works discussion

Program Manager of Research, Stefanie Pillora recently participated in a roundtable organised by IPWEA about sustainability in public works. Topics discussed were sustainable infrastructure, sustainable communities, and responding to climate change. The outcomes of the discussion will inform IPWEA's inaugural [Sustainability in Public Works Conference](https://sendstudio.itd.uts.edu.au/sendstudionx/display.php?M=4054055&C=55012335ea816ef3e772e3d42c0ce3cd&L=4929&N=8617) to be held 27–29 July. ACELG is currently finalising a comprehensive manual about embedding climate change adaptation in local council business developed with a number of councils. Contact Stefanie Pillora.

Sector Engagement

Join ACELG staff and authors at the following key events:

- **ACELG Research Forum**: Wednesday 30 April - Melbourne. Read more »
- **LGMA National Congress and Business Expo**: 30 April -2 May, Melbourne. Read more »
- **LGMA Australasian Management Challenge**: Australia (various) 17 - 28 March; finals Melbourne 19 - 20 June. Read more »
Recent ACELG research

The following research can be found at the Recent Publications section of the ACELG website:

- *Public Participation in an Era of Governance: Lessons From Europe for Australian Local Government*
- *Local Representation in Australia: A Review of the Legislation and Literature*
- *Australian Local Government Financial Reform - A Federal Perspective*
- *The Role and Future of Citizen Committees in Australian Local Government*
- *Strategic Planning in Australian Local Government: A Comparative Analysis of State Frameworks*
- *Looking Ahead: A Guide for Local Government Practitioners' Use of Demographic Data*
- *Debt is Not a Dirty Word: The Role and Use of Debt in Local Government*
- *Food Safety: Maximising Impact by Understanding the Food Business Context, and accompanying resources.*

View the full list of ACELG publications [here](#) »

Popular posts from the ACELG Community

- **Enhancing organisational capacity through mobile apps**
  Prepared by Adam Mowlam
- **Community engagement through IT and social media**
  Prepared by Chris Lewis
- **Rural-remote and Indigenous community engagement resources**
  Prepared by Michael Limerick, Robyn Morris and Melissa Sutton

View more posts at the [ACELG Community](#)

Submit your own written blogs [here](#) »

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