

Editorial

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This second issue for 2010 contains a rich variety of material, reflecting in part a considerable increase in the number of papers submitted to the journal. Processing the large volume of submissions has stretched available editorial resources resulting in both a few weeks delay in publication and deferral of consideration of several papers until next year. We regret those delays.

There are five research papers in this issue. Desmond Amosa reflects on the important question of whether non-elected traditional local governance – in this case village governance in Samoa – meets acceptable standards of accountability and transparency normally associated with ‘democratic’ local government. He concludes that Samoa’s village councils, consisting of matai (chiefs) do indeed meet those standards and that any attempt to build the capacity of local government in Samoa should therefore involve embracing and enhancing, rather than supplanting, its long established cultural practices.

Bruno Brosnan and Christine Cheyne from New Zealand, and Jason Prior and Jade Herriman from Australia, write about the systems of community strategic planning operating in both countries – focusing in Australia on the state of New South Wales. Brosnan and Cheyne trace recent experiences of this form of local government led, but community based, planning since its emergence in New Zealand around the turn of the century. They express serious concerns that the policies of the new national government elected in 2008 could undermine both community engagement and local government’s capacity to be an effective community leader.

Prior and Herriman discuss the emergence of community strategic planning in NSW local government, including a recently legislated system of ‘integrated planning and reporting’ that has drawn heavily on the New Zealand experience. They identify both the influences at work and some of the common challenges and opportunities faced by councils in developing the new style of strategic plans.

Eric Yeobah and Franklin Obeng-Odoom also review the progress of local planning, but in the narrower sense of land use planning and development control, and in the very different context of Ghana. However, they identify a number of issues and constraints to effective planning that resonate with Australian and New Zealand experience, such as the adequacy and appropriateness of legislative framework, inter-government relations, the need for adequate human and financial resources at the local level, and managing the political dimension of local government. They also highlight the fundamental importance of land management in developing countries.

The final research paper, by Zachary Spicer, addresses the related issue of the respective roles and relationships of federal and provincial (state) governments in urban planning within federations. He considers two episodes of federal engagement with cities in Canada, specifically the differing approaches and relative success of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs established by the Trudeau government in 1971, and the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities created nearly 30 years later. His paper tracks their efforts to work with provinces and with other federal agencies, and draws lessons about inter-governmental relations and multi-level policy formation in federal systems. These are important issues for local government, which is often controlled by provinces but needs access to the resources of ‘cashed-up’ federal governments.

Urban planning is also the topic of Noman Ahmed’s commentary on the Karachi metropolitan region of Pakistan. He echoes Yeobah’s concerns about land management and the adequacy of both political and legislative frameworks, as well as human resources. He draws attention to the need for effective and informed community engagement, and for universities and research institutions to play a stronger role.

Two other commentaries come from southern Africa. Keshav Sharma reviews the status of local government in Botswana. He concludes that the prospects are encouraging: in particular Botswana enjoys an enabling environment of democracy, peace and the rule of

law that is essential for decentralization to succeed. However, he again highlights the importance of an informed and engaged populace.

Frances Kintu focuses on the urgent and complex question of how local government can play a stronger role in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa by ‘mainstreaming’ action into its core responsibilities. He highlights in particular the importance of addressing HIV/AIDS within the context of councils’ Integrated Development Plans – roughly the equivalent of the community strategic plans in New Zealand and Australia.

Ray Plibersek and Alexandra Mills consider the similarly pressing issue of preventing corruption in local government, looking at examples of repeated corrupt conduct in New South Wales, Australia. They examine in detail a case of ‘low level non-compliance’ in a municipal waste collection service, and argue that a major factor in repeated workplace corruption was the failure to rigorously apply both existing anti-corruption measures and reforms recommended by previous investigations.

Melissa Nursey-Bray discusses the implications of climate change for Australian local governments, suggesting that they “perhaps face the most daunting challenge in relation to climate change as they are the arbiters of day-to-day policy implementation.” She presents the findings of a case study from the northern coastal region of the state of Tasmania and outlines a model of ‘adaptive climate change governance.’

This issue also contains several practice notes. Three of these describe activities being carried out under the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Australia-Papua New Guinea Good Practice Scheme. This involves a wide range of technical partnerships between local governments in the two countries. Cases covered in the practice notes include Sunshine Coast (Queensland) and Alotau; Townsville (Queensland) and Port Moresby; and Orange (NSW) and Mount Hagen.

Other practice notes cover diverse topics. Karen Purser and Helen Diggerson discuss Australia’s 2010 Year of Women in Local Government and ‘50:50 Vision’ program to promote increased women’s participation in local government – a theme of broad international concern that has been raised in previous contributions to this journal. Averil Price looks at the similarly prominent issue of community safety, and outlines a World Health Organisation initiative that local communities may find beneficial.

The issue concludes with two book reviews. Claudia Scott reviews *Local Government in a Global World: Australia and Canada in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and John F. Martin. She notes that: “The magnitude and influence of globalizing trends on local governments in both countries has been less than anticipated by the editors, though the result reflects of the dominance of national and regional policy settings on local government practices.”

Keshav Sharma reviews *Local Government and Decentralization in Ghana* by Kwamena Ahwoi, a former minister of local government in that country for over 12 years. He highlights Ahwoi’s view that: “decentralisation is a political process which seeks to promote more realistic programmes, better coordination and participatory democracy” but (perhaps more controversially): “local resource utilization in unitary states works best when there is a strong centre to coordinate the local governments.”

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The May 2011 issue of this journal will include a number of the papers to be presented at the third Commonwealth Local Government Forum Research Colloquium, to be held in Cardiff, Wales, in mid-March – immediately prior to the Commonwealth Local Government Conference. The Colloquium will be hosted by the University of Cardiff, and the May issue will have as guest editors Professor Steve Martin and Alison Brown. We are most grateful for their support.

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Once again, I have to thank my Assistant Editor, Daniel Grafton, and the other members of our production team at the University of Technology, Sydney, notably Chris Watterson and Su Fei Tan. We would also like to acknowledge the very significant contributions made by our reviewers. This year papers have been reviewed by:

- Dr Matthew Allen, (Australian National University)
- Professor Chris Aulich (University of Canberra, Australia)
- Dr Nicola Brackertz (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia)
- Crispin Buttriss (Bang the Table, Australia)
- Jeremy Dawkins (UTS Centre for Local Government, Sydney, Australia)
- Professor Brian Dollery (University of New England, Australia)

- Emeritus Professor Ron Duncan (Australian National University)
- David Hegarty (Australian National University)
- Dr Roslyn Irwin (Southern Cross University, Australia)
- Ross Kingsley (TechnologyOne, Australia)
- Dr Robert Mellor (UTS Centre for Local Government, Sydney, Australia)
- Dr Robyn Morris (Edith Cowan University, Australia)
- Dr Tim Robinson (Fairfield City Council, Sydney, Australia)
- Professor Ian Thynne (Charles Darwin University, Australia)
- Emeritus Professor Roger Wettenhall (ANZSOG Institute for Governance, Canberra, Australia)

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- Dr Rupak Chattopadhyay (Forum of Federations, Canada)
- Professor James Lightbody (University of Alberta, Canada)
- Mark Redwood (International Development Research Centre, Canada)
- Melanie Robertson (International Development Research Centre, Canada)
- Dr Enid Slack (University of Toronto, Canada)
- Jill Symonds (Ministry of Community and Rural Development, BC., Canada)
- Brian Walisser (Ministry of Community and Rural Development, BC., Canada)

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- Dr Ronald McGill (Ethiopia)
- Professor Rudith King (Kwame Nkrumah University, Ghana)

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- Assoc. Professor Bhaskar Chakrabarti (Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta)
- Professor Om Prakash Mathur (National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India)
- Emeritus Professor Dinesh Mehta (CEPT University, India)

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- Assoc. Professor Christine Cheyne (Massey University, New Zealand)
- Assoc. Professor Graham Hassall (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)
- Peter McKinlay (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)
- Mike Reid (Local Government New Zealand)
- Professor Claudia Scott (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

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- Dr Alphonse Gelu (National Research Institute, Papua New Guinea)
- Dr Penelope Schoeffel-Meleisea (Samoa)
- Afamasaga Toleafoa (Samoa)

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- Dr Bornwell Chikulo (North West University, South Africa)
- Professor Jaap de Visser (University of Western Cape, South Africa)
- Kobus Pienaar (Legal Resources Centre, Cape Town, South Africa)
- Professor PS Reddy (University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa)
- David Schmidt (Strategies for Change, Cape Town, South Africa)
- Douglas Singiza (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)

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- Per Tiedman (Dege Consult, Tanzania)
- Dr Narathius Asingwire (Makerere University, Uganda)
- Dr Shuaib Lwasa (Makerere University, Uganda)

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- Dr Munawwar Alam (Commonwealth Secretariat, London, UK)
- Alison Brown (Cardiff University, UK)
- Professor Richard Crook (University of Sussex, UK)
- Professor Paul Jackson (University of Birmingham, UK)
- Professor James Manor (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, UK)
- Professor John Raine (University of Birmingham, UK)
- Dr Randal Smith (London Borough of Hackney, UK)