



Official Newsletter of the Australian Learning Communities Network

Incorporated in NSW. No: 9883167

Welcome

Welcome to the last issue for the year of our newsletter.

Ideas from other members

One of the reasons for adopting the term Network as against, say, organisation, was to affirm the idea of sharing as a way of gaining new ideas or resolving problems. Thanks to those who contributed this case

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The Bhutanese Community Farm enterprise

In the back blocks of Gateway Island, an open cow paddock has been astonishingly transformed into a thriving organic community farm, thanks to the persistence of the Bhutanese community and the generous support of local businesses and local people.

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Costs and benefits of education and training for the economy, business and individuals

The aim of this paper is to summarise and provide analyses of the considerable body of research that investigates the costs and benefits of vocational education and training (VET). It does so from three different perspectives; the government, business and the individual.

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Diversity, complexity and change in children's households

Two in five Australian children live in households with more complex family relationships at some stage during their childhood. Here are some key findings

[Read more](#)

Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all

The 2016 Report, the first of a new 15-year series, shows that the world risks achieving its key global education commitments half a century late, having huge consequences for major development outcomes

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Enhancing resilience and utilising strengths in European unemployed youth

Partners from the UK, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Sweden are developing a new innovative method of training that will empower young unemployed individuals

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Giving Local Governments the Reboot

Written by staff of the University of Technology Sydney Centre for Local Government (UTS:CLG), the report delves deeply into the financial issues facing most local councils. The report finds that many local governments are suffering from expenditure problems due to demand from the community that has been rising steeply over two decades.

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Improving cities: one step at a time

It's well known that Australia is one of the most urbanised countries, with many state governments fast-tracking development and population growth, promising to change the face of our major cities in coming decades. So, against this backdrop, how 'walkable' will our cities be?

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"Inequality: The Facts and the Future"

The Inclusive Prosperity Commission is a major policy project of the [Chifley Research Centre](#), the think tank of the Australian Labor Party. Since its launch in 2014, the Commission has been exploring the threat to Australia's future economic growth presented by growing inequality – and new policies to respond.

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Jobs in a clean energy future

The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Council of Trade Unions have come together to show we can steer our economy to create a fair society in which all living things can thrive.

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Seniors as lifelong workers

This workshop was part of an Inclusion series within the Learning City Networks (LCN) of the PASCAL International Observatory, coordinated and facilitated by Peter Kearns, Director of the PASCAL LCN program.

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Shared ownership and the housing crisis

Owning your own home has become more unaffordable than ever. The NSW government has developed measures to assist those who would ordinarily be excluded from the housing market.

[Read more](#)

Smart cities plan

The Smart Cities Plan will position our cities to succeed in the 21st Century economy. It is a plan for supporting productive, accessible, liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create jobs and growth.

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Snapshot of poverty in Australia – in 2014

Some indicators of the poverty situation in Australia.

[Read more](#)

Sustainable Living Festival 2016

How will your actions today affect the future generation of your descendants?

[Read more](#)

The role of libraries in addressing literacy challenges in the 21st century

At the workshop on 'How Libraries Support National Literacy Efforts,' which concludes today, 6 April 2016 at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg, participants from all world regions discussed ways in which countries can harness the potential of libraries by integrating their literacy activities with national literacy efforts and strategies at local and national levels.

[Read more](#)

Unemployment regions around Australia

A new snapshot has mapped unemployment "hotspots" for those aged 15 to 24 across Australia –with some regions grappling with rates above 20 per cent.

[Read more](#)

What makes a city tick?

Great cities and neighbourhoods always have a particular kind of urban intensity - what we might call the "character", "buzz" or "atmosphere" that emerges over time. While unique in many ways, great cities also have certain things in common.

[Read more](#)

Why Local Government Matters

The research aims to better understand how and why the activities of local governments, and their roles in society are valued by communities.

[Read more](#)

Working with vulnerable families

Poverty, domestic violence, marginalisation, drug and alcohol dependence are just some of the issues faced by many families.

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Six Shared Ideas

Artists in Schools



Artists in Schools

Get your school involved in a creative project with the help of an Artists in Schools grant. Applications are currently open for the 2017 [Artists in School's program](#), which gives your school community the opportunity to work with professional artists on a creative project in any art form. With up to \$10,000 worth of funding available, don't delay your [application](#).

Be a citizen scientist at botanic gardens

30 August 2016

About 30 Albury Public School students helped open a ClimateWatch Trail at Albury Botanic Gardens in a joint project from AlburyCity and Murray Local Land Services.

Visitors on the Albury Botanic Gardens ClimateWatch trail will be able to use a free ClimateWatch smartphone app to find out about plants and animals that can be spotted in the gardens, such as the distinctive Eastern Spinebill or the crimson bells of the Illawarra Flame Tree. They may then record their sightings of flowering plants or swooping birds.

"This not only helps scientists gather vital information, but also trains your observational skills and teaches you about different species," the Director of Research Programs at Earthwatch Australia, Justin Foster, said. "Anyone can be a ClimateWatcher. All it takes is keeping your eyes open to the nature around you."

ClimateWatch is a national citizen science network that focuses on gathering meaningful environmental data by expanding public participation in research.

It was jointly developed by Earthwatch Australia, Bureau of Meteorology and the University of Melbourne. It has so far attracted more than 20,000 users who have made close to 100,000 sightings. Every Australian can be a citizen scientist by collecting and recording data through ClimateWatch.

AlburyCity Mayor Hank van de Van encouraged visitors to the gardens to use the ClimateWatch app because it aimed to recruit everyday Australians to help collect scientific information.

Trish Bowen, from Murray Local Land Services, said: "It is important to support initiatives that increase the understanding of the impacts of climate variability and long term climate change as well as increase the community understanding, appreciation and interaction with the natural environment."

The Albury Botanic Gardens ClimateWatch Trail is supported by AlburyCity and Murray Local Land Services with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme

Brimbank Libraries-Connect Learn Grow

• Published: 04 August 2016



Bilingualism Seminars at Sunshine Library

Bilingualism Seminars at Brimbank Libraries

Service Providers Seminar

Successfully raising children in more than one language

Brimbank is a bilingual and multilingual community.

Why is it important for parents to raise children in language rich households? What are the benefits and challenges? Get some ideas and tools to support children's language learning in bilingual environments.

With Professor John Hajek, University of Melbourne (Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication).

Thursday 18 August, 2.30-4.30pm

Sunshine Library - 301 Hampshire Road, Sunshine

No Charge. Afternoon tea provided.

Bookings RSVP: beststart@brimbank.vic.gov.au

For more information, contact Deb Chapman Tel: 0407 528 039

Parents, Grandparents and Carers Seminar

Successfully raising children in more than one language

Why is it important to raise our children bilingually and how does it help with their future learning? What are the benefits and challenges? Get some ideas and tools to support your child's language learning.

With Professor John Hajek, University of Melbourne (Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication).

Vietnamese interpreter, other language interpreters available on request.

Thursday 25 August, 1.30-3pm

Sunshine Library - 301 Hampshire Road, Sunshine

No Charge. Afternoon tea and children's activities provided.

Bookings RSVP: learning@brimbank.vic.gov.au

For more information, contact Deb Chapman Tel: 0407 528 039

eSmart Digital Licence

Did you know?

1 in 5

children witness or
experience cyber bullying

The eSmart Digital Licence is one of the most comprehensive online cyber safety resources available. It teaches school aged children critical digital skills and promotes discussion about online safety between young people and their parents, carers and teachers.

- AT A GLANCE
- WATCH HOW IT WORKS
- KEY FEATURES
- GET STARTED
- TESTIMONIALS

Knittin' Group

The Knittin' Group is comprised of committed community members who knit and crochet throughout the year for charity. They meet bimonthly on the 3rd Thursday. Contributions of wool for this group will be kindly accepted at the library. New members are welcome.

Where: Wagga Wagga City Library, Children's Area



Local Learning Stories



Sunshine West local and Western Chances scholarship recipient Danielle Farah dedicates much of her time to making a difference in her local community.

"I volunteer locally as part of the Brimbank Youth Ambassadors Program, as well as abroad. As an emerging leader, I want to be part of a global movement for positive change, and I believe in myself as a part of the solution to some of the greatest issues facing our world.

"I am passionate about giving and helping, but my socio-economic status at home wasn't helpful for me. So, I was nominated for a [Western Chances scholarship](#) by Brimbank Youth Services. I saw the scholarship as a door waiting to be opened. I saw it full of opportunities and possibilities. I didn't realise how much of a difference a Western Chances scholarship would make until I received one and changes started taking place almost instantly.

"It really helped me ease into my first year of VCE, and it made travelling to and from school, work, dance and volunteering locations a breeze. With this scholarship, financial barriers have been broken down, and I have Western Chances to thank for that."

See Danielle's full story and read more about the scholarship program on the [Western Chances website](#).

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The Bhutanese Community Farm Enterprise

In the back blocks of Gateway Island, an open cow paddock has been astonishingly transformed into a thriving organic community farm, thanks to the persistence of the Bhutanese community and the generous support of local businesses and local people.

Between 2010 and 2015, over 1,500 Bhutanese refugees settled in the Albury Wodonga region. Searching for avenues to thrive in their new home, representatives of this community approached Parklands Albury Wodonga for an area of land on which to create a community farm. Parklands drew on a network of supportive businesses and community groups to help them make that vision a reality.



Above: August 2015, Bhutanese community working bee setting up infrastructure

The initial focus of the farm was on supporting this newly arrived community. Tilak Chhetri and Rohit Khulal were employed as Market Garden Rangers for the Community Farm in August 2015, supported by a partnership between the Bhutanese community in Albury, the Besen Family Foundation, Eworks Employment Solutions and Parklands.

Throughout spring and summer, Tilak and Rohit worked with volunteers and community mentors to set up the infrastructure, construct garden beds, make compost, sow seed, plant seedlings, water the growing gardens, harvest and finally market the produce.

Project business partners generously donated funds, tools, equipment, materials and technical expertise. Local community groups were introduced to the Bhutanese community while assisting, advising and celebrating organic vegetable gardening on a commercial scale.



Above: Growing Community garden summer bean crop 2015

The abundant first harvest from the Community Farm was sold at the Albury Rotary Market, donated to refugee families and cooked up by the "Our Plate To Yours" program for Albury Wodonga Regional Foodshare distribution.

The success of the Bhutanese Community Farm inspired the current 'Open Ideas' talk series exploring ideas for inclusive social enterprise based in organic food production. The series of talks at the Albury LibraryMuseum is an initiative of the Bhutanese Association at Albury, Albury Wodonga Cultural Exchange and Parklands.



Above: Absolutely fresh veges - Cooking up a storm at the Growing Community Harvest Festival 2015

The series is all about bringing people who are passionate about the food and fibre economy together to share their skills, experiences and challenges and come up with new ways of doing things that are also for social good. It will culminate in a 'Think Tank' on 28th September. All are welcome.



Above: Ranger Tilak Chhetri discusses the garden's progress with NEC Permaculture teacher Sue Brunskill

Open Ideas Series - Think Tank: Wednesday 28th September, 6-8pm

Following on from the 4 part series of inspiring talks on localising the food system, social enterprise, agro-ecology and cooperatives, this session is all about bringing together our collective skills, expertise and aspirations and applying our learnings into collaborative Action Plans.

Where: Albury Library Museum

RSVP: awce@vrb.org.au or 0429 117 949

Further Information: info@parklands-alburywodonga.org.au



Above: Tilak Chhetri demonstrating zucchini seed production

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Costs and Benefits of Education and Training for the Economy, Business and Individuals

[Tabatha Griffin](#)

27 July 2016

Source:

[National Centre for Vocational Education Research](#)



The aim of this paper is to summarise and provide analyses of the considerable body of research that investigates the costs and benefits of vocational education and training (VET). It does so from three different perspectives; the government, business and the individual.

This paper considers a broad array of costs and benefits accruing to each of these perspectives, broadly dividing them into two categories: financial (market) or non-financial (non-market). It also describes some of the challenges encountered in investigating the costs and benefits and estimating the return on the investment in VET.

Understanding the costs and benefits associated with VET enables decisions about Investing in education and training. For government, analyses of the return on investment provide feedback on the performance of the system and programs and enable justification of, or changes to, existing funding levels. For business enterprises, understanding the costs and benefits of training allows for informed decisions about how to best utilise their training expenditure. Understanding the costs and benefits of training helps individuals make informed decisions about studying.

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Diversity, complexity and change in children's households

[Jennifer Baxter](#)

27 September 2016

Source:

[Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

Owning Institution:

[Government of Australia](#)

[Link to Resource](#)

[Download file](#)

Two in five Australian children live in households with more complex family relationships at some stage during their childhood.

Key Findings

“Complex” households are simply non-traditional households, where children may live with: a single parent; a non-biological parent; step or half-siblings (i.e., “blended” families); or a grandparent.

The term may seem to imply that there is something unusual about these environments. In fact, “complex” households are very much in the mainstream.

Over 40% of children—or two in five—had experienced some form of family complexity before they reach the age of 13. The most common form is families with a single parent or with a non-biological parent.

The nature of complex households

- Children are more likely to be exposed to household parental complexity as they grow because of new parental relationships or relationship breakdowns.
- Complex households can be more unstable, with children facing challenges from living with a single parent, non-biological parents or changes to parents' relationships or living arrangements.
- Indigenous children were the most likely to have experienced household complexity, with 7 in 10 Indigenous children experiencing some form of family complexity.
- Only 25% of children with well-educated parents experienced household complexity, compared to 74% of children with less-well educated parents.
- Parents who had experienced parental separation in childhood were around 15% more likely to form complex families themselves.
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Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all- new GEM report

The 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, [*Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*](#), UNESCO, is now available.

The GEM Report, which builds on the experience of the previous EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) series, received a new mandate to assess the progress of education under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2016 Report, the first of a new 15-year series, shows that the world risks achieving its key global education commitments half a century late, having huge consequences for major development outcomes. It warns that education needs to fundamentally change if we are to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The first half of the Report highlights the ways that education can serve as a catalyst for the overall sustainable development agenda. It presents compelling arguments and evidence for the types of education that are vital for achieving the goals of poverty reduction, hunger eradication, improved health, gender equality and empowerment, sustainable agriculture, resilient cities and more equal, inclusive and just societies.

The second half responds to the Report's official mandate, tackling the many challenges concerning ways of assessing progress towards the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), including concrete recommendations for policy change at the national, regional and global level. Each of the seven education targets and three means of implementation in SDG 4 are examined in turn. In addition, education finance and education systems are analysed, as is the extent to which education can be monitored in the other SDG goals.

Please share this report with your networks, and join in the discussions online with us via [@GEMReport](#) and [#sdg4all](#).

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Enhancing resilience and utilising strengths in European unemployed youth

Partners from the UK, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Sweden are developing a new innovative method of training that will empower young unemployed individuals and/or NEETs. They will prepare participants to not only adapt to potentially stressful events and successfully assimilate these, but also to use these potential stressors as opportunities for positive growth based on identification and utilisation of key Positive Psychology constructs and processes. This will be accomplished by the development of a training curriculum "Be Positive". The end result is that organisations will have a resource that will address the psychological issues that are relevant to this group in a positive way.

Visit our website: <http://www.bpositive.eu/>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BePositive-552017228233849/>

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Giving Local Governments the Reboot

15 September 2016

The McKell Institute has released a new report, *Giving Local Government the Reboot - Improving the Financial Sustainability of Local Governments*. Written by staff of the University of Technology Sydney Centre for Local Government (UTS:CLG), the report delves deeply into the financial issues facing most local councils. The report finds that many local governments are suffering from expenditure problems due to demand from the community that has been rising steeply over two decades.

In the two decades from 1995 to 2015, Australian local governments experienced a fourfold increase in expenditure. This represents 7.3 per cent per annum compound growth rate. Even more striking though, is that during this same period many local governments were stripped of their water and sewerage functions – so these figures actually underrepresent the real picture.

An increase in local government expenditure is not in and of itself problematic, but if the current level of spending continues then there needs to be a corresponding increase in council revenues. This is relatively unlikely as Australians would not be willing to substantially increase their local council rates each year, for twenty years. Even if state and federal governments provided funding, which seems unlikely in the current political environment, then the money would still be derived from higher levels of tax but just levied by other government sources.

The report was co-authored by UTS:CLG Director [Associate Professor Roberta Ryan](#) and Postdoctoral Fellow [Dr Joseph Drew](#).

Download the report

 [Giving Local Governments the Reboot](#) (pdf, 1,787 kb)

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Improving Cities: One step at a time

[Fran Kelly](#)

10 August 2016

Source:

[RN Breakfast](#)

Owning Institution:

[Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#)

It's well known that Australia is one of the most urbanised countries, with many state governments fast-tracking development and population growth, promising to change the face of our major cities in coming decades.

So against this backdrop, how 'walkable' will our cities be?

According to visiting American city planner and architectural designer Jeff Speck, a 'walkable city' is more healthy, wealthy and socially cohesive.

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“Inequality: The Facts and the Future” – A report by Chifley Research Centre

Posted August 30, 2016 - 13:40

The Inclusive Prosperity Commission is a major policy project of the [Chifley Research Centre](#), the think tank of the Australian Labor Party. Since its launch in 2014, the Commission has been exploring the threat to Australia’s future economic growth presented by growing inequality – and new policies to respond.

At the heart of the matter is a simple premise: economies grow faster when everyone shares in the growth. More and more evidence now shows that rising inequality is a threat to economic growth, while only broadly shared prosperity can be sustained in the long-term. Inclusive prosperity means embracing the economic opportunities of our time and finding ways to ensure they serve the vast majority of society.

The Commission’s task has been to develop a new economic policy framework to guide Australia beyond the global financial crisis and the peak of the mining boom.

Co-chaired by Wayne Swan MP and Michael Cooney (Executive Director of the Chifley Research Centre), the Commission’s membership includes Cameron Clyne, David Hetherington, Dave Oliver, Peter Whiteford, Rebecca Huntley, Stephen Koukoulas, Tony Nicholson and Verity Firth. Amanda Robbins of Equity Economics has led the Commission’s staff.

This report will sit alongside new analysis from the IMF, World Bank and influential publications such as Thomas Piketty’s ‘Capital in the Twenty-First Century’ which point to the need for action against rising inequality.

The Chifley Research Centre is grateful for the contribution of the Center for American Progress as a project partner.

Michael Cooney

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Jobs in a clean energy future

[Australian Conservation Foundation](#), [Australian Council of Trade Unions](#)

25 October 2016

Source:

[Australian Conservation Foundation](#)

Source:

[Australian Council of Trade Unions](#)

[Download file](#)

The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Council of Trade Unions have come together to show we can steer our economy to create a fair society in which all living things can thrive.

By committing to the Paris Agreement, the world recognised the need to work together to keep global warming well below 2 degrees. Around the world, other governments are embracing the opportunities of transitioning to a clean energy future. But at home, Australia's pollution continues to rise and Australia remains as one of the biggest per capita polluters in the world. There is still no coherent national plan to transition Australia to a net zero emissions economy.

Jobs in a clean energy future updates our 2010 collaboration *Creating Jobs – Cutting Pollution* and demonstrates, yet again, that creating a brighter future for the Australian community and our environment go hand in hand.

This report presents a clear choice. If Australia continues with *business as usual*, pollution will continue to rise and the health of the people and our natural world will continue to deteriorate. If the government acts now and implements policies under a *strong action* scenario we can create one million more jobs by 2040. People and nature will be better off and the places we love will thrive. If we increase public transport and clean energy Australia's cities, towns and regions will be more liveable, smarter and healthier places to live. By embracing these opportunities Australia can be a world leader and create jobs and industries that are at the forefront of the transition.

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Seniors as Life Long Workers

Introduction This workshop was part of an Inclusion series within the Learning City Networks (LCN) of the PASCAL International Observatory, coordinated and facilitated by Peter Kearns, Director of the PASCAL LCN program. Throughout 2015, there have been active responses organised on pertinent themes concerned with this strand of interest as follows:

- May Townsville (Queensland, Australia) Inclusion in Learning City Development: Local and Global
- September Glasgow (Scotland, UK) The Role of the Smart Campus in Inclusion
- November Bristol (England, UK) Learning for Everyone a) Supporting Young People Leaving Care into Education and Employment b) Improving Adult Mental Health through Community Learning
- November Melbourne (Victoria, Australia) Seniors as Lifelong Learners: Barriers, Strategies, Outcomes

Where to from here? Breakout facilitated group discussions explored the above question.

The reports out of these discussions sought to ensure there was a voice for seniors, how to engage meaningfully and to overcome barrier realities to achieve social inclusion. Partnerships and collaborations were noted as the process to share resources that build learning opportunities. Influencing policy to ensure lifelong learning is embedded and is relevant to the 'person on the street' helped revisit concept awareness and sharing. Placemaking was seen as important so that provision areas complemented where older Australians live and connect. Yet, overcoming disadvantage and isolation so that seniors continue to grow and learn to cope with our modern technology-based society was seen as an imperative.

Summing Up Rapporteur Professor Chris Duke (PIMA) provided a synthesised overview and reflection on the workshop.

Duke identified recurring themes across different sessions, as well as the issues needing clarity:

- Inclusion: for learning citizens and within communities, but we need to know 'where we are going'. There is subjectivity around age and where do we identify (perhaps) ten-year cohorts within what we refer to as: mature age, seniors, third and fourth age, pensioners, older adults, etc.
- Non-deliberate learning: so much of learning is non- or in-formal, so does the diversity of what learning is and what it is for diluted within the generic of lifelong learning?
- Place and space: perceptions about how these 'venues' are created, and the impact on people's identity requires acknowledgement and integration in thought, policy and action.
- Intergenerational learning: as various kinds of government supports are contracting, how do we value-add philosophical and personal strength in the "Big Society", or does it mean more volunteering?
- Tale of three learning cities: learning cities profiled were inspiring and indicated the evolving role of libraries that are playing a key role in developing learning cities/communities and offering support systems.
- Policy language: need to be clear on what is a learning community, race, proponents, participants etc. and distinguish from the silo approaches of the past.
- Working together: the central theme and of critical importance so the amalgam of common interests and cooperative initiatives are achieved.
- What is new: the Big Data project begs questions on what data is being used and by whom for what purposes.
- Avoiding the political: how can we meet the challenge and advocate in taking issues to government when in an environment where austerity is an excuse for removing support and services?
- Health and wealth: addressing these equity and related quality of life issues in the latter years is essential.

International Developments in Learning Cities Reports from Professor Michael Osborne (in his role as Director – PASCAL International Observatory, Europe) and Peter Blunden (Melton, participant in the 2015 2nd UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities, Mexico City)

Osborne provided a history of early projects through the PASCAL (Place and Social Capital and Learning Regions) International Observatory leading to the current future of learning cities initiatives influenced by its own Program of International Exchanges (online ideas exchanges between learning cities), Learning City Networks (LCN) themes, and the forthcoming Learning Cities 2040 International Conference advised in the introductory comments. In addition, practice is well informed through collaborative work with UNESCO on its International Platform on Learning Cities (IPLC), the advent of UNESCO's (2015) Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good, as well as the attention to "promoting lifelong learning" as a matter for inclusive, quality education for all and making cities "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to be implemented from January 2016. Integrating services through the PASCAL Learning Cities Networks is to support learning city start-ups in working with UNESCO, establish learning city studios to benchmark/appraise policy, and conduct learning city workshops.

Blunden described how Melton has adopted the strategic directions and courses of action in the UNESCO Mexico City Statement on Sustainable Learning Cities: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002349/234932E.pdf>. While one can extrapolate, he believes more emphasis is needed in the areas of ageing, youth and culture. However, joining PASCAL's LCN and the UNESCO IPLC network will provide a wealth of knowledge and experience to build 'glocalisation'.

Report compiled by Denise M Reghenzani-Kearns PhD, PASCAL Associate

Appendix 1

Principal authors, Michael Cuthill (USQ) and Laurie Buys (QUT), in consultation with Bruce Wilson (RMIT), Helen Kimberley (Brotherhood of St Lorraine), Denise Reghenzani (PASCAL), Peter Kearns (PASCAL), Sally Thompson (Adult Learning Australia), Barry Golding (Federation University), Jo Root (Council of the Ageing, Australia) and Rhonda Weston (University of the Third Age), have the following journal article in development: Conceptualising ageing and learning in Australia: Towards an evidence base for informed and equitable policy.

The purpose of the paper is to "explore" lifelong learning for senior Australians and "propose a set of factors" that will impact on their later years. Existing segments of when to typify someone as "senior", have been adapted to accept the following cohorts: "emerging seniors" (ages 45-60), "traditional retirees" (ages 61-80), and "elders" (ages 81+). The organisers of the Seniors as Lifelong Learners: barriers, strategies, outcomes workshop thought it useful to include the "Interrelated factors impacting on seniors' learning" figure below to complement this report as a resource document.

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Shared Ownership: How can it solve the housing crisis?

Owning your own home is something many Australians aspire to, and with interest rates at historic lows and indicators that apartment construction in some of our capital cities may soon peak, it should be easier to do. However, homes are more unaffordable than ever, with the median house price at \$1,021,968 in Sydney and \$740,995 in Melbourne.

Only 67% of people owned or were paying off their own home in 2011 – the lowest in fifty years. But soaring house prices are only one side of this housing crisis; rents are also proving unaffordable with low-income households now paying between 50 and 85 per cent of their household income on rent.

What this means is that people in the rental market not only find it difficult to repay a mortgage, they can struggle to save enough for a deposit in the first place, effectively locking them out of the housing market, or forcing them to move away from areas they work in to find an affordable option.

In NSW in an effort to ease some of the costs in buying a home, the government has abolished transfer duties, offers first homeowner grants and has developed the Transfer of Homes to Tenants Scheme for residents of social housing. These measures all go some way to assisting those who would typically be excluded from the housing market.

Community housing providers like St George Community Housing and community groups like NCOSS in NSW (both shareholders of Community Sector Banking), are working on long-term solutions to create an alternate, affordable housing market for low to moderate income groups. Both organisations have called for the development of a shared-ownership model for housing.

The model is straight forward:

- A tenant and community housing provider enter a 'tripartite agreement' with a bank to purchase a home at market rates
- The tenant buys a share of at least 25% of the property and shares this ownership with a registered community housing provider who may buy/own the remaining share
- The tenant arranges their home loan through a bank paying no less than 10% of their share as a deposit
- Over time, the tenant increases their share of ownership in the property until they own it outright

The model is a fantastic opportunity for banks to play a more active role in addressing this growing crisis. At Community Sector Banking, we have always argued that the housing crisis cannot be solved by one single entity, whether they be government, a not-for-profit or a bank. All of us must work together to ensure everyone can access their right to a roof over their head.

To date, we have helped finance over 1,500 social and affordable homes across Australia and we're looking forward to continuing our work with the not-for-profit sector on other innovative models to support expanded home ownership.

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Smart Cities Plan

[Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(Australia\)](#)

29 April 2016

Source:

[Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(Australia\)](#)

Owning Institution:

[Government of Australia](#)

[Download file](#)



The Smart Cities Plan will position our cities to succeed in the 21st Century economy. It is a plan for supporting productive, accessible, liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create jobs and growth.

It represents a new framework for cities policy at the federal level - and it is a framework that will guide action across various portfolios, to deliver better outcomes for our cities, the people who live in them and all Australians.

The Smart Cities Plan sets out the Australian Government's vision for our cities - metropolitan and regional - and its commitment to smart investment, smart policy and smart technology.

All Australians are encouraged to share their ideas to help shape the cities agenda.

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Snapshot of poverty in Australia- in 2014

- The poverty line (50% of median income) for a single adult was \$426.30 a week. For a couple with 2 children, it was \$895.22 a week.
- 2,990,300 million people (13.3% of the population), were living below the poverty line, after taking account of their housing costs.
- 731,300 children under the age of 15 (17.4% of all children) were living below the poverty line.
- Child poverty in Australia increased by 2 percentage points over the decade 2003-04 to 2013-14.
- 36.1% of people receiving social security payments were living below the poverty line, including 55% of those receiving Newstart Allowance, 51.5% receiving Parenting Payment, 36.2% of those receiving Disability Support Pension, 24.3% receiving Carer Payment, and 13.9% of those on the Age Pension.
- 57.3% of people below the poverty line relied upon social security as their main income and 32.1% relied upon wages as their main income.
- Between 2012 and 2014, poverty rates increased for: children in lone parent families (36.8 to 40.6%), those receiving Youth Allowance (50.6 to 51.8% and those receiving Parenting Payment (47.2 to 51.5%). They remained very high (61.4% to 59.9%) from 2007 to 2014 for unemployed households.
- The vast majority of people below the poverty line were in rental housing in 2014 (59.7%), with most in private rental housing (44.2%). Only 15.5% of people living below the poverty line were home-owners.

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Sustainable Living Festival 2016

How will your actions today affect the future generation of your descendants?

Join us to find out what positive actions you can take to accelerate the uptake of sustainable living for your home or business. There's a huge program including pop-up workshops, talks, demonstrations and exhibits to learn the tools to reduce, reuse and save money.

The Sustainable Living Festival aims to:

- Accelerate the uptake of sustainable living in Albury Wodonga
- Raise awareness and provide tools for change by offering real and simple solutions to ecological and social challenges for the entire community from households to commercial organisations
- Engage with businesses, community groups, schools and universities to collectively host and promote programs as part of the SLF 2016
- Highlight ecological and social sustainability via interactive workshops, talks, demonstrations, artworks, exhibits, films and live performances
- Engage with partners that 'walk the talk' in their sustainability practices.

As part of the new refreshed format, AlburyCity and the City of Wodonga have programmed the 2016 festival for one month (previously one week) from 1 to 30 November and they are excited to welcome major festival partners [Halve Waste](#) and [Powershop](#). Halve Waste is an initiative of Albury City Council, City of Wodonga and the Shires of Towong, Greater Hume, Corowa and Indigo. The goal is to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by 50% by 2020 and to achieve this Halve Waste engages all sectors of the community bringing businesses, schools, and residents together. Head over to the [Halve Waste Website](#) to find out more on ways we can help you take your steps towards halving your waste to landfill.

Check out the Sustainable Living Festival Program including pop-up workshops, talks, demonstrations and exhibits to learn the tools to reduce, reuse and save money.

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The role of libraries in addressing literacy challenges in the 21st century



© UIL

6 April 2016

At the workshop on 'How Libraries Support National Literacy Efforts,' which concludes today, 6 April 2016 at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg, participants from all world regions discussed ways in which countries can harness the potential of libraries by integrating their literacy activities with national literacy efforts and strategies at local and national levels. Good practice examples from around the world shared during the Workshop showed that often libraries have the long-standing trust of communities and are well positioned to provide a wide variety of literacy opportunities, including intergenerational and family literacy activities, that reach out to children, youth and adults.

In opening the International Workshop, UIL Director Arne Carlsen shared his vision in promoting literacy for all and pinpointed the importance of putting libraries higher up on the agenda of literacy programmes as they create favourable environments that are strategic for the promotion of literacy. Mr Carlsen further positioned the role of libraries in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 4 on 'Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.' He said in this regard, that libraries have a 'hybrid function as both digital service providers of access to information and as spaces for discoveries of publications, and meeting points for likeminded lovers of reading. Libraries are key in developing learning cities, towns and local communities and provide spaces for deep analyses and reflection. They are important parts of local literate environments and should get more attention in literacy policies.'

During this 2-day workshop, organized in partnership with IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board) /Beyond Access, participants developed eleven recommendations on how governments could empower libraries to serve as national literacy assets. These recommendations are grouped under five main interest topics: training of relevant staff, families and community engagement, impact measurement and evaluation, inclusion of marginalized groups with attention to multilingual and multicultural contexts, and finance. Participants emphasized that in order for libraries to fully meet their role as literacy resources, governments need to include them in the dialogue for the creation of national literacy plans, alongside other literacy stakeholders. Further, resources need to be catalysed to assess the existing situation of libraries in the region in order to tailor services to beneficiaries' literacy needs, provide staff with relevant training opportunities, and promote libraries as safe places for people to develop literacy skills to their fullest potential.

UIL will follow up on this initiative with a policy brief on libraries as a resource for literacy policies and engage libraries and other cultural institutions such as museums in a new focus on literacy.

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Youth unemployment “Hotspots” across the nation mapped

Rural and regional areas under most pressure

14 March 2016

A new snapshot has mapped unemployment 'hotspots' for those aged 15 to 24 across Australia – with some regions grappling with rates above 20 per cent.

A new snapshot has mapped unemployment 'hotspots' for those aged 15 to 24 across Australia – with some regions grappling with rates above 20 per cent.

The national youth unemployment rate at over 12 per cent remains double the rate of overall unemployment, according to analysis of ABS data by anti-poverty organisation the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The picture is worse in youth unemployment hotspots across the country, particularly in regional, rural and outer suburban areas.

Brotherhood Executive Director Tony Nicholson said: 'As a nation, we owe our young people a much better deal.'

The Australian Bureau of Statistics data analysed by the anti-poverty organisation lists the 20 worst performing areas nationally for youth unemployment over the year to January 2016. They are:

- 28.4 per cent in Outback Queensland, including Cape York, Aurukun, Weipa, Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville
- 21.8 per cent in the Hunter Valley region of NSW, excluding Newcastle
- 20.6 per cent in the Wide Bay region of Queensland, including Bundaberg, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Maryborough
- 20.5 per cent in the Cairns region of Queensland, also including Innisfail and Port Douglas
- 19.6 per cent in the South East region of Tasmania, including Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Bruny Island
- 19.5 per cent in the Mid North Coast region of NSW, including Kempsey, Port Macquarie, Taree
- 19.4 per cent in the Barossa-Yorke-Mid North region of SA, including Tanunda, Clare, Jamestown, Port Pirie
- 18.4 per cent in the Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven region of NSW, including Nowra, Mittagong, Ulladulla
- 18.1 per cent in the New England and North West region of NSW, including Armidale, Inverell, Moree, Tamworth
- 17.6 per cent in the Townsville region of Queensland, including Charters Towers, Ingham, Ayr
- 17.4 per cent in the Richmond-Tweed region of NSW, including Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Lismore, Mullumbimby
- 17.3 per cent in the Melbourne West region of Victoria, including Footscray, Laverton Werribee, Sunshine, Melton
- 16.9 per cent in the Geelong region of Victoria, including Winchelsea, Queenscliff, Lorne, Torquay
- 16.9 per cent in the Launceston and North East region of Tasmania, including Northern Midlands, Flinders Island
- 16.5 per cent in the Central Coast region of NSW, including Woy Woy, Wyong, Gosford
- 16.3 per cent in the Adelaide-North region of SA, including Gawler, Elizabeth, Salisbury
- 16.2 per cent in the Adelaide-Central and Hills region of SA, including Paradise, Woodside, Mount Barker, Hahndorf
- 16.0 per cent in the Far West and Orana region of NSW, including Bourke, Cobar, Broken Hill, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge
- 16.0 per cent in the Hume region of Victoria, including the Goulburn Valley, Wodonga, Wangaratta
- 16.0 per cent in the Mackay region of Queensland, including Bowen, Airlie Beach, Whitsunday Islands, Proserpine

Young people continue to be at higher risk of unemployment than other age groups. The 12.2 per cent unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds was more than 2½ times the rate among adults aged 25 and older (4.6 per cent).

While the national youth rate is down from a high of almost 14 per cent in December 2014, it still well up on the level before the global financial crisis in 2008, when it dipped below 9 per cent.

The Brotherhood's Mr Nicholson said: 'The recent improvement in the youth unemployment rate masks the reality that it is still more than the rate before the GFC. Rural and regional areas are doing it particularly tough.

'It's deeply concerning that some 258,000 young people in the labour market are unable to find work. In 'hot spots' the job search is much harder for them.

'Digging into the data, we find some regions bearing a much heavier burden than others. Our globalised economy makes it hard for young people to find entry level jobs, and this puts them at risk of being locked out of stable employment long term.

'This generational issue needs sustained attention on all fronts: schools, vocational training and universities as well as welfare assistance and employment programs.'

Read: [Australia's Youth Unemployment Hotspots](#) report

View: ['Working hard for her chance' video: despite many applications](#), Shanna, 21, has only secured two short-term jobs since finishing school in 2012

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What makes a city tick? “Designing the urban DMA”

November 2, 2016 6.06am AEDT

[Kim Dovey and Elek Pafka](#)

Great cities and neighbourhoods always have a particular kind of urban intensity - what we might call the “character”, “buzz” or “atmosphere” that emerges over time. While unique in many ways, great cities also have certain things in common. One way to understand these properties is to think about a city’s [“urban DMA”](#) - its density, mix and access.

We’re still in the early days of understanding how cities work. But we do know that creative, healthy, low-carbon and productive cities all depend on intensive synergies of density, mix and access.

When we talk about “urban DMA”, we’re talking about the density of a city’s buildings, the way people and activities are mixed together, and the access, or transport networks that we use to navigate through them.

Like biological DNA, urban DMA doesn’t determine outcomes, but establishes what is possible. A low density, largely mono-functional cul-de-sac (such as a shopping mall or a gated enclave) is an anti-urban form. Minimum levels of concentration, co-functioning and connectivity are necessary for any kind of urban life.

The concept of urban DMA can be traced to the work of the late Jane Jacobs, whose book [“The Death and Life of Great American Cities”](#) was written in the mid-20th century, when many great cities were being surrendered to cars and poor urban design.

Jacobs wrote of the need for “concentration”, “mixed primary uses”, “old buildings” and “short blocks”. We recognise this as urban DMA – “concentration” is density; “mixed use” and “old buildings” are the conditions for a formal, functional and social mix; and “short blocks” means “walkability” at a neighbourhood scale.

Jacobs’ key contribution was to focus on the city as a set of interconnections and synergies rather than things in themselves – a focus on the city as an assemblage, rather than a set of parts. While the language has evolved, our understanding of these vital synergies needs to be taken much further.

Access

Access is about how we get around in the city. How do we make connections between where we are and where we want or need to be? What are the access routes - are they organised in closed or open networks? How fast are they at different scales and for different modes of transport? How far can we get with a given time frame and with what mix of walking, cycling, car, bus, tram or train?

At a neighbourhood scale access is primarily about [“walkability”](#); at larger scales we depend on a mix of cars, cycling and [public transport](#). But access means nothing if there is nowhere to go – the synergy with density and mix is everything.

Mix

Mix is about the differences and juxtapositions between activities, attractions and people. It’s not about diversity as spectacle, but a means of enabling encounters and flows between different categories of people, buildings and functions. Mix is about the alliances and synergies between home, work and play; between production, exchange and consumption.

Like density, mix can be uncomfortable; it means proximity to different kinds of people and practices. It means a layering of old and new buildings, of large and small buildings, and of large and small organisations.

Mix is not an unmitigated benefit. Urban planning was largely invented to stop mixing - to prevent living with noise, smells and activities we don’t like. It means keeping where we live away from where we work and shop.

But that separation ceases to be helpful when the result is people living in suburbs with no shops, or working in suburbs with no transport. Great cities will have many different kinds of mix - a "[mix of mixes](#)" - each geared in turn to density and access.

Density

[Density](#) is not the same as intensity. When we don't have the synergies of the DMA, we often get [density without intensity](#).

There are dangers in an excess of some kinds of density, like the overcrowding of populations and the loss of light and air that comes with excessive building. There are [many different kinds of densities](#) - of residents, jobs, buildings, houses and street life. They interconnect, and they all matter.

The big question about density is: how much activity, how many people and how many buildings can be concentrated into one urban area? How close can we live to where we work or need to be? How many urban amenities, places and jobs can we walk or commute to?

Urbanity

What is at stake here is the future of this great cauldron of productivity and creativity we call urban life. The 19th century British economist Alfred Marshall famously suggested that there was "something in the air" of a city that made it more economically productive - a phrase that is suggestive of an "atmosphere" and a "buzz" of urban intensity.

Much more than a simple clustering of people and buildings, urbanity is a concentration of intensive encounters and interconnections. And its benefits are much more than economic - they're social, environmental and aesthetic.

If we want to build great cities, we shouldn't develop formulae or copies of "best practice" from other cities. We should turn to our existing cities and ask three simple questions:

- How dense can we get yet remain liveable?
- How mixed can we get while remaining safe and civil? And,
- How easily can we get around in a healthy and sustainable way?

Urban planning enables and constrains these dimensions of urban life. And unlike human DNA, urban DMA can be redesigned. If we want a healthy, creative, productive and low-carbon city - if we want "the buzz" - we need to reshape the urban DMA.

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Why Local Government Matters



Why Local Government Matters is a major piece of social research on community attitudes to local government by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), undertaken with substantial expertise from staff of the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS:CLG). The research aims to better understand how and why the activities of local governments, and their roles in society are valued by communities.

The research investigates:

- What does place mean to people?
- The role of government
- How do people want their services delivered?
- How do people want to be involved in government?
- What do people think about local government?
- How do people's personal characteristics and values impact on their responses?

Director of ACELG and UTS:CLG and project leader Associate Professor Roberta Ryan said of the landmark research:

"The view of local government as being confined to roads, rates and rubbish is long gone, in both practice and in terms of what communities expect. Australians want local government to be responsible for a diversity of activities in their local community, with planning for the future being among the most important.

"There is enormous support for government to deliver services for a healthier and fairer society, and for the proposition that decisions about services should not be made just on value for money. According to our research, Australians overwhelmingly (93%) want to be involved with government in making decisions about what services are delivered in their local area," said A/Prof Ryan.

The report will be important for Australian local government and other tiers of government, organisations and agencies that work closely with councils. The results will also be invaluable for broader debates about reform of the sector, the role of local government in the federation, and immediate local-level issues such as service delivery, community participation in council decision-making, financial sustainability, and the wellbeing of local government areas.

Specific resources about these and other important contemporary local government themes will be developed from the research and rolled-out across Australia in coming months.

Contact

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Downloads

[Why Local Government Matters: Summary Report 2015](#)

[Why Local Government Matters: Full Report 2015](#)

Project links

Article by Roberta Ryan '[Communities love local councils but not private service delivery](#)' in *The Conversation*

[Why Local Government Matters seminar video](#)

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Working with vulnerable families: a partnership approach (2nd edition)

[Fiona Arney](#), [Dorothy Scott](#)

13 September 2013

Source:

[University of Cambridge](#)

[Link to Resource](#)

Pay-per-view required



Cambridge

Poverty, domestic violence, marginalisation, drug and alcohol dependence are just some of the issues faced by many Australian families.

Now in its second edition, *Working with Vulnerable Families* provides a comprehensive and evidence-based introduction to family-centred practice in Australia. It explores the ways in which health, education and social welfare professionals can support and protect children and their families. Fully revised and updated, with 8 new chapters, the book examines recent research and programs on relationship-based family support, harnessing 'resilience' and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It encourages readers to 'think child, think family, think community' in order to promote the development, wellbeing and safety of young children and future generations.

Each chapter features learning goals, local case studies and reflective questions to help reinforce and extend the reader's understanding. Written by a diverse team of experts, this is an indispensable resource for students and practitioners alike.

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