

LOCAL GOVERNMENT “GETS SMART”

The “cone of silence” around the power and potential of local democracy will be broken by a new local government network.

The Future Network, which will be comprised of 12-13 Councils across Australia, is a joint initiative of the LGCSAA and the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney. The establishment of the network will shift the Councils’ focus from internal business practices and managing for community well-being to addressing how good governance, organizational practices and active citizenship can empower communities and promote their well-being.

The Network follows on from the LGCSAA’s publication of *Just, Vibrant and Sustainable Communities, A Framework for Progressing and Measuring Community Wellbeing* and the national workshop programme undertaken for the Association by Jenny Wills and Kate Nash.

The most recent workshop, hosted by Whitehorse Council, on July 29 was attended by Council representatives from across Victoria including mayors, councillors, managers, and community development and project staff. The workshop explored the concepts of local democracy and human rights and applied a community empowerment checklist to whole of Council practices. These ideas will be further considered by the Network in developing a model local citizen rights charter and a community well-being index for Australian Councils.

The Network will also be informed by overseas developments in local democracy assisted by a UK study tour by this year’s winner of the Jenny Slade Scholarship. The Network will be launched at the national Just Communities conference in Melbourne.

For further information on the Network proposal contact Jenny Wills
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