

2018 Future of Local Government National Summit

The Game Has Changed

10 most important 2 letter words

➤ **If it is to be, it is up to me!**

➤ **Be a person of influence:**

➤ **At your Council**

➤ **Motions at your State Association**

➤ **Motions at National General Assembly**

Great FOLG moments

- **Vision for LG:** independent self-governing communities (UKLGA)
- **The wisdom of the community exceeds the knowledge of the experts** (Peter Kenyon, Learning Sites, Rocherlea, Tas)
- **‘Councils need to learn to be community-led’,**
(Noelene Duff, CEO, Whitehorse Council, the Neighbourhood Project)
- **New Zealand Community Boards:** power and money devolved to the people: it delivers
- Digital Councils: transition from silos to **citizen-driven workflows**. Single view of government = joined up govt.
- **Transition Streets Banyule:** sign people up one street at a time

Moments in 2017/18

- **2017 FOLG:** 2040: 1 million people in UK 100 years of age or more
- **Loneliness:** major contributor to mental health problems
- Need to create a **'yes' culture** in LG: we're here to make great places
 - step 1: ask community for ideas (they choose)
 - step 2: say 'yes'
 - step 3: support if required

Moments in 2017/18

Today's children are expected to be the first generation in Australian history not to live as long as their parents: due to the reduction in physical activity and the explosion of *obesity*.

What to do?

- **Walking needs to be prioritised to improve quality of life**
- **Strong local leadership**
- **plan neighbourhoods without cars**
- **low speed limits for cars**
- **encourage children to walk to school**

Moments in 2017/18

- **LG needs to stop looking to the Federal Government for answers**
- **LG: think about democratic functions (governance) separately to service delivery functions**
- **LG needs to give more attention to democratic renewal through increased opportunities for civic engagement:**
 - **Devolution to neighbourhoods (eg. N/hood Project)**
 - **Councils: do we need to do all the things we do?**
 - **LG needs to forge partnerships at the neighbourhood and regional levels**
 - **LG's critical point of leverage is its unique capacity for place management**

I'd like to see that!

- An organisation that looks after you from cradle to grave
- An organisation that maintains every street in the nation

LG Does Many Amazing Things!

- Councils manage the most complex service business on earth on a shoestring
- Councils are the elephant in the community: the 'glue' that makes the system work at the local level
- Every global/national issue demands a local response (not one glove fits all):
 - Eg. World Mayors vote to tackle climate change at the city level (Global Covenant of Mayors: 7,000 members)
 - Homelessness, loneliness, housing affordability

On the other hand.....

- Very few people understand what Councils do
- Image is always going to be a problem if there are not more checks and balances
- LG: the urgent often crowds out the important
- The sector still has no vision or game plan and is reactive



But the good news is.....

We now have the opportunity of a lifetime!

- Future shock is upon us
 - Institutions are crumbling
 - BAU is not an option: LG is ripe for disruption
 - LG: Austerity or Transformation? Transition to a low carbon knowledge economy with the rise of the commons: sharing and mutual collaboration:
- > does LG lead change or become another victim of change?

The New Way

- We need to **devolve power back to communities**: put **people, place and planet** at the centre, not government
- The true objective of LG is to enable communities to determine their own preferred futures and how they are best realised. More attention needs to be given to LG's role in the context of local governance, with Councillors as the stewards of empowered communities.

Strengthen communities

- Most local Councils are flying on one wing: **servicing needy citizens**. But what about the other wing: building stronger communities? **Servicing community is not the same as strengthening community. We need to devise ways to create more space for community action.**
- *In the future, local government will no longer be able to occupy the position of director, but must become a conductor and facilitator.*

So, 2018: where to from here? What is the game plan?

- **Bring the Declaration alive:** find and trial solutions
- The game has changed:
 - community-led/driven: facilitate co-design > co-production
 - Shared services for Councils: does it have to be so hard?
 - devolve power to protect the Commons: Ghent, Barcelona, Bologna, Seoul

How to do it?

- **Ultimate power resides with the community**
- **Key LG need: knowing what is important to the community**
 - **Documented Community Plans**
- **Role of LG?**

From

- **The expert**
- **The regulator**
- **Doing everything for the community**

To

- **Making space for community action**
- **Facilitating the building of stronger communities**
- **Supporting the community to achieve its aspirations**

LG derives its 'power' from

- The LG Act (regulator)
- The community

- The more LG partners with the community the more successful it will be (and the more resources it will attract)
- Conversely, the more LG does everything for the community, and creates a dependency.....

Democracy

- **Deliberative democracy is growing in popularity** while problems with representative democracy continue
- **The traditional model of centralised governance makes it almost impossible to harness the capacity and energy of citizens**, to tap into the rich networks within communities, and to build services around the people that use them. Other than during elections, **citizens have a largely passive role to play**. The result has been mutual disinterest and mistrust between politicians and citizens, between society and the state. 52% of Australians said politicians are 'out of touch'.

Need to grow community

- **Governance, on every scale, is not set up to create great places.**
- Shifting power and responsibility for governance to communities allows for more efficient and dynamic models to emerge. **No more are places and place making something that government, solely, delivers for communities. It is those communities developed by everyone, not those that are developed by government, that will most thrive in the future.**

Sorry to say

- State and National Governments are hopeless at place-making:
 - hand out dollars
 - one glove fits all programs
 - Spend your life reporting
 - Not meeting local needs

UK Commission on the Future of Localism

- Sources of community power:
 - seeking people's ideas
 - Economic power: devolved budgets
- Barriers to community power:
 - Top down decision-making
 - Risk aversion & lack of trust by public authorities
 - Narrow participation
 - Lack of access to information
 - Lack of control over resources

Constitutional Localism

- **how to preserve liberal democracy where we have an unprecedented array of groups and beliefs?**

Constitutional Localism: shift the greatest number of public decisions possible to the local level: need to rebuild public confidence in democracy, not by insisting on a singular national answer to each problem but by celebrating the ability of the various communities to find solutions that work best for them. **Each major social problem has a local solution: direct involvement at the community level is the most effective way to change things at the global level.** Need to establish government to government networks: share knowledge and innovations.

Summary

- **To move the paradigm for community members and residents from consumers, customers and clients of other's services and programs to becoming citizens, co-owners and co-producers of what happens in their streets, suburbs, towns and cities. This is the greatest social change needed today.**

The cards are falling the way of LG

- **Democratic Digital Devolution!**
- Digital will see the death of silos (can you believe our luck).
- If you really love your communities, empower them: **people powered public services**
- **The Revolution has started: is your Council involved?**
 - **Some Councils are identifying community pain points: Wow!**

Progressing the agenda

- Reaffirming LG's democratic legitimacy, relevance to society and institutional competence
- Defining and implementing a new localist agenda
- Working at a regional scale (what's best done?)
 - Examine regional governance
- Understanding the business of LG and coping with disruptive change

Thought starters: we need to get out of this mess (let's grow community)

Come up with a **Better Way**: a call to action

1. **Reshape governance**: 'Federal & State Governments are hopeless at places and communities'
2. Bring **subsidiarity** to life: **identify** what is best done at the local, regional, statewide and national levels?
3. Introduce **localism** and **participatory democracy** into the Federation (eg. NZ Community Boards, community plans, citizens juries). **Devolve power to the community**.
4. **Learn to be community-led** (abolish the red tape): citizens as partners, co-designers: ask the community first
5. **Build social capital**: attack the '**age of loneliness**': map community assets (including people), expand the sharing economy

Thought starters: we need to get out of this mess

6. Focus more on facilitating **community strengthening** rather than trying to provide every service: facilitate localist responses to key issues
7. Embrace **digital** connectivity via **collaboration**: it's smarter and cheaper than doing it 560 ways: simplify, standardise, share and save! Get ready.
8. Explore **new revenue** opportunities (including crowdsourcing)
9. Seek more strategic, assertive **national leadership**
10. Create a **national movement** to take this forward: spread from pockets of excellence: sign up!
11. **Is any of this in your Council Plan???**