



Governance and Performance

Research Theme

SCOPING PAPER

DECEMBER 2013



**MELBOURNE
SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT**

Research at the Melbourne School of Government

RESEARCH@MSoG AIMS TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT SCHOLARSHIP WHICH HAS AN IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY.

This research underpins our ability to improve the capacity of policy makers to make sound decisions, design and deliver effective policies and programs, and build robust institutions in Australia, the region and beyond.

MSoG's research agenda is informed by global and regional developments, in particular those associated with the 'Asian Century', and how country specific and regional public policy will need to adapt and change. Within this overarching focus, there are four research themes:

- Governance and Performance (designing better governing institutions and improving policy-making and policy performance)
- Knowledge and expertise in public policy (using different types of evidence and new approaches, and managing competing perspectives)
- Security and political engagement (responding to the effects of war, natural disasters, and dispossession, and improving political engagement)
- Governing markets (improving the instruments that structure relationships between governments, governing institutions, and private actors).

This scoping paper is the result of an initial examination of recent research related to the theme of Governance and Performance, which has been published in high quality journals. It includes:

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Governance and Performance Research Theme Overview

This theme addresses four key questions:

- How do we design appropriate governing institutions?
- How do we improve policy and service effectiveness?
- How do we develop effective regulation?

Governing institutions at all levels face challenges of legitimacy, accountability and consent. Within nation-states governments are challenged to match public expectations with preparedness to fund public policies and services. Institutions at multiple levels face questions of their fitness for purpose in a context of shifting power relations and rising expectations for strong connectedness to citizens and communities.

Our research draws on political, legal, and economic frameworks to overcome these challenges by improving institutional design, mechanism design, performance and regulation. Issues currently under investigation in this theme include:

- The design of institutions that are appropriate to contemporary governing conditions and are able to deal with emerging governance problems (e.g. renewing structures of federalism, and building new multi-sector partnerships);
- Improving governance and policy performance in complex policy areas with multiple and conflicting objectives and numerous actors (e.g. climate change, financial reform, indigenous policy);
- Creating better mechanisms for measuring performance in contested policy environments (e.g. health, education);
- Building the innovation capacity of governments and public services in public policy and public service design (e.g. social care, work, housing);
- The fitness for purpose of key national, regional, and international institutions
- The legal, political and economic issues associated with multiple and overlapping regulatory arrangements, including the interactions between public and private regulatory regimes.



Assistant Director Research Jenny Lewis

Professor Jenny M Lewis is the Research Director for the Melbourne School of Government. She is Professor of Public Policy and currently holds a prestigious Australian Research Council Future Fellowship. Jenny is an expert in public policy and governance, and has published widely in international journals on governance, policy influence, and the policy process. She is the author of four books, and her research has been internationally recognized with American, European and Australian research prizes.

Background to the Governance and Performance research theme

Governance is the act of governing. Its purpose is both to make policy and steer society, and this signals that it is a more dynamic term than government: Governance is what a governing body does and how rules are decided upon and implemented. However, people began to use the term 'governance' in preference to 'government' more widely in academia in the late 1980s. This was related to substantial shifts in governing conditions, including the changing boundaries between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, and the increasing interdependence between these, and growing recognition of the complexity of many governance issues. Governance was, in some circles, taken as meaning the new methods being used to govern society, and the term 'network governance' was coined to highlight that states are only able to indirectly steer society in this new set of conditions.

The journal *Governance* (subtitled "An international journal of policy, administration and institutions") was launched in 1988, and *Global Governance* (A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations) began in 1994. Related to this shift, at least within the political science and public administration literature, was the rise of authors grappling with 'modern governance' (Jan Kooiman in 1993), 'new governance' (Rod Rhodes in 1996), or governance without government (Guy Peters in 1998). The most widely-cited text on governance is Rod Rhodes' book of 1997 *Understanding Governance: Policy networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*.

Governance is intimately linked to instruments such as legislation and to institutions such as parliaments and government departments, but it is also about the range of non-institutional strategies that are used to steer society, many of which can only be used 'at a distance'. The need to demonstrate 'good governance' provides the link to performance: As governing conditions have become more fragmented and complex, it has become more difficult to determine whether governing institutions are fit for purpose, and more challenging to decide how such an assessment can be made.

Performance refers to an event where an individual or group of individuals carries out a set of actions. Performance measurement is related to accountability, because it assesses the activities carried out in relation to the execution of a set of responsibilities, but it goes one step further and transforms responsibilities into a pre-specified set of goals. The measurement of performance, then, is an evaluation of how well what was produced is related to what was intended. Strongly linked to performance measurement is performance management. This is a large literature, which is more specifically interested in whether and how measures are used to manage performance.

Performance measurement has been specifically focused on in this scoping paper to keep the topic manageable. It is by no means a new field of concern for governance and for public policy, but its importance has grown with the rise of concerns about the costs of public services, and the need to demonstrate the wise use of public funds. The literature on how it can be used to improve public services and increase accountability is growing, as is the list of difficulties with implementing it under changing governing conditions.

Key Topics in Governance and Performance Measurement Research

Governance

Not surprisingly given the breadth of the term, 'governance-related' research takes on many hues and covers a broad array of sub-themes.

With almost 500 articles on 'governance' published in the 20 most highly cited political science and public administration journals over the past five years, distilling the essence of research in the area is no simple task. Nevertheless, a review of the leading research published on governance does reveal a number of key research themes within the field. These include:

- The notion of a shift from government to governance (the emergence of new institutional forms, and the implications of this for democracy);
- Network Governance (what it is, how it is different from the traditional hierarchical and more recent, market-based modes of governance, and what it means for civic engagement and democratic participation);
- Regional and global governance (the development of new transnational governance institutions and processes, a growing focus on the idea of multi-level governance through the increase of these governing structures, and the implications for representation);
- New governance frameworks and the challenges they create for accountability (the meaning of accountability, changes in its purpose and application, and shifts in regard to who is accountable and for what);
- The need for governance structures that are fit for purpose in responding to complicated policy problems that span national boundaries (such as climate change and global security) and policy sectors (such as health and wellbeing);
- The emergence of new forms of governance such as E-Governance.

Performance measurement

Performance measurement can be considered as a component of the much broader notion of accountability. While accountability covers political, judicial and bureaucratic concerns, performance measurement is generally concentrated on the last of these. It is the regular generation, collection, analysis, reporting and utilisation of data on organisations and programs.

Such measures have informed the processes of government and the conduct of public administration for hundreds of years. Interest in the concept and in performance management more generally has been driven by the adoption of private sector-inspired new public management (NPM) reforms from the 1980s onwards, in the face of expanding service demands and declining budgetary positions. In an era of shrinking government budgets and renewed focus on the importance of value for money in service provision performance measurement has taken on renewed importance.

New modes of delivering government services such as networks and partnerships have created challenges for performance measurement, as the lines of accountability become blurred. Interest in this topic is likely to continue to grow in light of the global financial crisis and the introduction of austerity measures across much of the industrialised world.

The general direction of recent performance measurement research largely reflects the widespread changes related to the introduction of NPM-type reforms, and the focus on networks and joined-up work that followed on from it. A review of recent publications in the area points to three overarching research themes or directions:

- Performance measurement as a driver of public sector reform (largely evaluation-based case studies where specific services or programs or modes of delivery are tested using a range of performance measures);
- Performance measurement and government accountability (where the emphasis is on the potential of performance measures to hold governments to account for the services and programs they provide and oversee);
- Performance measurement criticism (where the value and effectiveness of performance measurement is questioned, and its undesirable consequences are examined).

Key Publications and Journal Publishing Trends

Key journals publishing governance and performance measurement related material are primarily located in the 'Public Administration' and 'Political Science' disciplines. The top ranked journal in the Public Administration field is the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART). JPART is the official journal of the Public Management Research Association and seeks to serve as a bridge between public administration and public management scholarship on the one hand and public policy studies on the other. The top-ranked journal in Political Science is the American Political Science Review published by the American Political Science Association. Other key international journals covering the field include: Public Administration, Policy Sciences, Governance, Annual Review of Political Science, American Journal of Political Science, and Political Analysis.

Important regional journals in each field are the Australian Journal of Public Administration published by the Institute of Public Administration Australia; Public Administration and Development; the Australian Journal of Political Science, the official journal of the Australian Political Studies Association; and the Asian Journal of Political Science. Each of these regularly publishes articles on governance and performance measurement from Australian, regional and international scholars.

A meta-analysis of recent publishing trends across the top 20 journals covering both fields as well as the key regional publications shows continuing strong scholarly interest in governance-related issues and in performance measurement. MSoG researchers are frequent contributors to these high quality journals.

Governance

In total, 422 peer reviewed articles dealing with the governance theme were published between 2008-2012 in the 20 leading international (English-language) public administration and political science journals. Table 1 shows the number of governance-related articles published per year from 2008 to 2012 with the figures suggesting a relatively stable publication pattern from 2009 onwards.

Table 1: Governance-related articles published

Year	Articles Published
2008	64
2009	92
2010	82
2011	96
2012	88

Table 2 ranks the five journals most frequently publishing governance-related articles between 2008-2012. Interestingly, the two most prominent journals Public Administration and Journal of European Public Policy are both based in Europe, reflecting the strong focus on governance-related matters across the continent since the later 1990s. Governance-related articles have also regularly appeared in the Australian Journal of Public Administration throughout this period

Table 2: Governance-related articles published per journal 2008-2012

Source title	Articles
Public Administration	75
Journal of European Public Policy	70
Public Administration Review	59
Public Management Review	51
Governance	38
Australian Journal of Public Administration	7
Public Administration and Development	44
Australian Journal of Political Science	8
Asian Journal of Political Science	8

The most heavily cited governance-related articles (citations per year in the leading 20 political science/public administration journals) over the same period are listed below. Provan and Kenis' (2008) seminal work on network governance is the stand-out article in the field with just under 40 citations per year (see Table 3).

Ansell and Gash's work on collaborative governance and Loorbach's work on complexity-based governance and sustainable development are also very prominent.

Table 3: Most Cited Articles per Year in Governance Field 2008-2012

Article	Citations per year
Provan K.G., Kenis P. (2008) 'Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness', <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> , 18[2]: p. 229-252	39.6
Ansell C., Gash A. (2008) 'Collaborative governance in theory and practice', <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> , 18[4]: pp. 543-571	32
Loorbach D. (2010) 'Transition management for sustainable development: A prescriptive, complexity-based governance framework', <i>Governance</i> , 23[1]:p.161-183	19.67
Emerson K., Nabatchi T., Balogh S. (2012) 'An integrative framework for collaborative governance', <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> , 22[1]: p.1-29	18
Hall P.A., Gingerich D.W. (2009) 'Varieties of capitalism and institutional complementarities in the political economy: An empirical analysis', <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> , 39[3]: pp. 449-482.	17.75

Performance Measurement

Though still substantial, the public sector performance measurement literature is more limited than that devoted to governance-related matters, particularly when the literature that is specifically about managing performance is excluded. A meta-analysis of the key social science journals covering the topic still identified 105 peer reviewed articles relating to the topic. Annual publishing rates between 2008-2012, were again relatively stable ranging from a high of 24 articles in 2008 to 19 in 2012 (see Table 4), suggesting that academic interest in the topic remains strong.

Table 4: Performance Measurement Articles published

Year	Articles Published
2008	24
2009	14
2010	21
2011	15
2012	19

As Table 5 shows, Public Administration Review was clearly the publication of choice for those publishing work in the area with 33 articles followed by JPART with 18. Locally, the Australian Journal of Public Administration published seven articles on performance measurement.

Table 5: Performance measurement-related articles published per journal 2008-2012

Source title	Articles
Public Administration Review	33
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	18
Public Administration	14
Public Management Review	12
American Review of Public Administration	10
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management	6
Australian Journal of Public Administration	7
Public Administration and Development	10
Australian Journal of Political Science	0
Asian Journal of Political Science	1

The five most heavily cited performance measurement-related articles (citations per year) based on the meta-analysis are listed in Table 6. While the governance-related literature is spread between American and European scholars, the performance measurement literature is dominated by scholars based in the US.

Table 6: Most Cited Articles per Year in Performance Measurement Field 2008-2012

Article	Citations
Kelman S., Friedman J.N. (2009) 'Performance improvement and performance dysfunction: An empirical examination of distortionary impacts of the emergency room wait-time target in the English National Health Service', <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> , 19[4]: pp.917-946.	6.75
Moynihan D.P., Fernandez S., Kim S., Leroux K.M., Piotrowski S.J., Wright B.E., Yang K. (2011) 'Performance regimes amidst governance complexity', <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> , 21[Supp.1]: i141-i155.	6.5
Sanger M.B.(2008) From measurement to management: Breaking through the barriers to state and local performance, <i>Public Administration Review</i> 68[Supp:1]:pp. S70-S85	6
Heinrich C.J. (2012) 'How credible is the evidence, and does it matter? An analysis of the program assessment rating tool', <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 72[1]: p. 123-134	6
Moynihan D.P., Lavertu S. (2012) 'Does Involvement in Performance Management Routines Encourage Performance Information Use? Evaluating GPRA and PART', <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 72[4]: p. 592-602	6

Governance and Performance Measurement Research at the University of Melbourne

Current Australian Research Council-funded Projects

DISCOVERY GRANTS AND FUTURE FELLOWSHIPS

A/Prof Sarah Biddulph (Law) Ongoing conflicts between citizens and government officials in China pose a serious threat to the country's social stability. Dealing fairly and efficiently with citizens' complaints of administrative misconduct is a core component of China's commitment to good governance and the rule of law. This legal project undertakes the first systematic examination of the three mechanisms underpinning administrative justice in China and their interaction: administrative litigation, administrative review, and letters and visits. It will assess China's capacity to use law to address chronic abuse of power. It will provide a practical understanding of the changing nature of China's commitment to the rule of law and the implications for Australia.

Prof Jenny M. Lewis (School of Social and Political Sciences) **What Counts is What is Counted: Performance Measurement and its Consequences.** Measuring public sector performance is important as it potentially improves services and saves money, but it has become increasingly time and resource consuming. This project will analyse performance measurement and its consequences, and generate information on how governments can contain its growth and reduce its undesirable consequences.

Prof Jenny M. Lewis, Prof Mark Conside and Dr Damon Alexander (School of Social and Political Sciences) **How governments innovate: networks, normative frames and leadership styles.** Innovation is the engine of the knowledge economy. The Cutler Review has placed it on the top of the governmental agenda. However, most research and public policy ignores how government itself innovates. This study will explain how government innovates, by analysing innovation dispositions, comprised of people, events and technologies. It combines an examination of policy leaders' individual attributes, the norms that shape what they do, and their networks, to develop a new theory of governmental innovation. Outcomes include a new model of the drivers of innovation uptake by policy leaders, and methods for improving governmental systems of innovation.

Prof Andrew Mitchell (Law) International trade and investment treaties contain overlapping provisions that have been subject to divergent interpretations by tribunals settling associated disputes. Proliferation of such treaties has created conflicting obligations, significant uncertainty for states and businesses, and an increasing potential for government liability. Through a comparative study of targeted countries, legal concepts and sectors, this project reconceptualises the fields of international trade and investment law in order to maximise their coherence. By providing a framework for reform of existing treaties and negotiation of future treaties, the project offers concrete benefits for government and industry through increased consistency and predictability.

Prof Anne Orford (Law). From Famine to Food Security: The Role of International Law. This project addresses the pressing question of how the international governance framework might be reformed to avoid future food crises. It will make a major contribution to debates about the role that international law and international institutions can play in addressing current threats to food security.

Kate S. Shaw (Resource Management and Geography). This project compares legislative, regulatory and financing approaches to large scale urban renewal projects in Germany, Canada and Australia. It assesses their varying capacities to enable socially diverse uses of inner cities, and will advise on ways of reducing the place-based social divisions that are increasing as Australian cities expand.

Prof Anthony Scott (Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research) Incentives and Performance in the Health Care System. Changes in financial incentives for health care providers will have direct effects on their behaviour, which in turn influences patients' health outcomes, quality of care, and access to health care for the population. The research will provide a richer understanding of the effects of incentives, and will influence policy on the design of incentives for health care providers in Australia.

Prof Tania Voon and Prof Andrew Mitchell (Law) Revisiting Australia's Preferential Trade Agreements and Bilateral Investment Treaties to Safeguard Regulatory Autonomy. This project critically evaluates Australia's free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties in the light of recent national and international experience. Its recommendations for systematically revising existing agreements and refining approaches to negotiating new agreements will assist in protecting Australian policy space.

LINKAGE GRANTS

Prof Mark Considine and Dr Siobhan B O'Sullivan. (School of Social and Political Sciences) Increasing Innovation and Flexibility in Social Service Delivery. This project will investigate how contracted social services require careful regulation to ensure service effectiveness and improved organisational capacity.

Partner/Collaborating Organisation(s): Jobs Australia Ltd, National Employment Services Association, Westgate Community Initiatives Group (WCIG)

Dr Kate Macdonald, A/Prof Fiona S Haines (School of Social and Political Sciences), Ms Shelley D Marshall (Monash University), Dr Tim Connor (University of Newcastle), Prof Sheldon Leader (University of Essex). Evaluating Redress Mechanisms Governing the Human Rights Practices of Transnational Business: Lessons for Institutional Design And Operation. Australian and United Kingdom researchers will collaborate with leading development and human rights organisations to design regulatory systems that promote sustained business compliance with human rights norms, and enable workers and communities to defend their human rights when these are infringed by businesses from Australia and other OECD countries.

Partner/Collaborating Organisation(s): ActionAid UK, Federation of Homeworkers Worldwide, Oxfam Australia, The Corporate Responsibility Coalition

Melbourne Scholars on 'Governance and Performance Measurement': Selected Works

Governance

- Considine, Mark and Lewis, Jenny M. (2012) 'Networks and Interactivity: Ten years of Street-level Governance in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia', *Public Management Review*, 14(1): 1-22 (DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2011.589613).
- Considine Mark. (2013) 'Governance networks and the question of transformation', *Public Administration* 91[2]: p. 438-447.
- Haines, Fiona (2013) Networked regulation as a solution to human rights abuse in global supply chains? The case of trade union rights violations by Indonesian sports shoe manufacturers. *Theoretical Criminology*. 197-214.
- Langmore, John and Fitzgerald, Shaun (2010) 'Global Economic Governance: Addressing the democratic deficit'. *Development*. 53[3]: p. 390-393.
- Lewis, Jenny M. (2011) 'The future of network governance research: Strength in diversity and synthesis', *Public Administration* 89(4): 1221-1234.
- Macdonald, Kate (2013) 'Accountability-by-Proxy in Transnational Non-State Governance', *Governance - An International Journal of Policy and Administration*. 26[3]: pp. 499-522.
- Mitchell, Andrew (2009) 'Global governance: The World Trade Organization's contribution', *Alberta Law Review*. 46:1061-1080.
- Peel, Jacqueline (2012) 'Climate change law in an era of multi-level governance', *Transnational Environmental Law*. 1:245-280.
- Skelcher, Chris. Sullivan, Helen, and Jeffares, Stephen (2013) *Hybrid Governance in European Cities: Neighbourhood, Migration and Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Sheargold, Elizabeth (2009) 'Global governance: The World Trade Organization's contribution', *Alberta Law Review*. 46:1061-1080.

Performance Measurement

- Brown M. and Heywood J S. (2005) "Performance Appraisal Systems Determinants and Change" *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 43 (4) : pp.659 - 679.
- Dickinson, Helen and Sullivan, Helen (2013) 'Towards a General Theory of Collaborative Performance: The Importance of Efficacy and Agency', *Public Administration*, doi: 10.1111/padm.12048
- Jeffares, Stephen., Sullivan Helen., and Bovaird, Tony (2012) 'Beyond the Contract - The Challenge of Evaluating the Performance(s) of Public-Private Partnerships' in Hodge, G and Greve, C eds *Rethinking Public-Private Partnerships: Strategies for Turbulent Times*, London, Routledge
- Lewis, Jenny M. and Triantafillou, Peter (2012) 'From performance measurement to learning: A new source of government overload?' *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 78(4): 597-614.
- O'Flynn, Janine., Vardon, Sue., Yeatman, Anna., Carson, Lyn. (2011) 'Perspectives on the Capacity of the Australian Public Service and Effective Policy Development and Implementation', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 70(3), pp.309-317.
- Paladino Angela. (2006) "Understanding the Drivers of Corporate Performance and Customer Value", *Performance Measurement and Management Control: Improving Organizations and Society*, pp.131-158.

Research Funding @Melbourne School of Government

The Melbourne School of Government aims to fund bold, innovative and rigorous research projects that contribute to the leading edge of public policy and governance debates, nationally, regionally, and internationally. The School currently funds original research through two programs: Cluster Grants (designed to build large, multi-year cross-disciplinary, collaborative research partnerships with external partners); and Incubator Grants (designed to fund highly innovative small to medium -scale interdisciplinary research projects that show significant potential for future funding by granting bodies). Summaries of the funded projects related to Governance and Performance are provided below.

Incubator Grant

The policy aftermaths of financial crises: how much space for politics?

RESEARCHTEAM

Professor **Andrew Walter**

Dr **Mike Pottenger**

Professor **Jeffery Chwioroth**, London School of Economics

This project examines what space is left for politics to shape policy responses to systemic financial crises and which political factors have been more important in shaping these responses over time. The increasing incidence and depth of financial crises since the 1970s have underlined their powerful implications for politics and public policy in both developing and developed countries. It examines two main questions: how do political factors affect the relationship between financial crises and public policy responses, and how do they shape the effectiveness of the policy response? The project investigates these questions in three key areas of public policy: financial regulation, fiscal policy and monetary policy.

Cluster Grants

Renewing Australian Federalism

RESEARCHTEAM

Professor **Miranda Stewart**

Professor **Brian Galligan**

Dr **Scott Brenton**

Professor **John Freebairn**

Dr **Hielke Buddelmeyer**

Professor **Cheryl Saunders**

Professor **Michael Crommelin**

Associate Professor **Anne Tiernan**, CGPP, Griffith University

Associate Professor **Jenny Menzies**, CGPP, Griffith University

Associate Professor **Robyn Hollander**, CGPP, Griffith University;

Mr **Justin Hanney**, Federalism Branch, DPC (Vic)

Mr **Philip O'Meara**, Federalism Branch, DPC (Vic)

Mr **David Burns**, Federalism Branch, DPC (Vic)

This research program takes up the challenge and opportunity to improve fiscal sustainability, democracy and innovation in Australia's federation in particular by strengthening the States. In Australia's federation the Commonwealth and States share major policy areas. The Commonwealth, through monopolising income taxation and using 'tied grants' has become a major player in State policy areas such as health and education. Australia's significant Vertical Fiscal Imbalance (VFI) has enabled strong national development but has produced a lop-sided system in which the Commonwealth is inclined to over-reach and centralise in ways that may be dysfunctional.

The project has a clear objective to effect real change by generating new research on the interconnected policy, fiscal and public administration challenges in Australian federalism, so as to contribute in the short term to a more sophisticated public debate on the following four issues:

- Tax reform for fiscal sustainability in a productive federal system;
- Effectiveness and accountability of intergovernmental decision-making;
- Embedding the value of State innovation within the national public interest;
- Federalism and democracy.

The program adopts a comparative approach that draws on international expertise, especially from institutional laws and practice of the high-performing democratic federations of Canada and Germany, which both have strong provincial governments responsible for core governmental fields.

Indigenous Nation Building: Theory; Practice and its emergence in Australia's public policy discourse

RESEARCHTEAM:

Dr **Mark McMillan**

Dr **Raymond Orr**

Professor **Stephen Cornell**, University of Arizona

Professor **Larissa Behrendt**, University of Technology Sydney

Associate Professor **Daryle Rigney**, Flinders University

Associate Professor **Steve Hemming**, Flinders University

Dr **Miriam Jorgensen**, University of Arizona, Harvard University & Washington University in St Louis

Dr **Yoko Akama**, RMIT University

Ms **Alison Vivian**, University of Technology Sydney

Mr **Peter West**, RMIT University

Ms **Debbie Evans**, Charles Sturt University

Today a growing number of Indigenous peoples are engaged in the process of 'nation building': they are expressing greater desires for self-governance and creating legitimate and effective governing institutions. Depending upon community and location, nation building is at different stages; some Indigenous nations already possess decision-making institutions, whereas others are just starting conversations about self-governing. These differences provide the opportunity for university-led scholarship concerning this critical legal, social, economic and political development.

The 'Indigenous Nation Building Project' uses case analysis among other methods to examine Indigenous nation building by attending to its logic, organization, limits and opportunities. The cluster is designed to engage emerging theory about Indigenous nation building, provide the 'raw material' for hypothesis testing, and inform communities and policy-makers. Within these broad objectives, our project has three specific aims:

- 1.** To examine the Indigenous 'movement' for self-governance in Australia;
- 2.** Compare the Australian movement to those in other English settler states and embed Australian Indigenous nation building in a broader international context;
- 3.** Contribute to international dialogues about Indigenous nationhood within a nation-state, especially by observing choices made in a context (Australia) notable for the absence of *formal* recognition by colonial governments.

The emergence of Indigenous nationhood and institutions provides an opportunity to add to a nascent theory of Indigenous nation building.

Melbourne School of Government

Research collaboration

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