

# 'Putting Power back in the regions'

## A toolkit for Local Government and Communities

### October 12th – Arts Lecture Theatre 2 – UNE

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|--------------------|--|
| 11am – 11.15am:    | Open by Regional Development Australia-Northern Inland Chair, Mal Peters   |
| 11.15am – 11.45am: | <b>Lessons from the past: A new regional governance model for all levels of government</b><br>Dr Helen Swan (Senior Consultant – Courage Partners) |
| 11.45am – 12.15pm: | <b>Why is an effective model so difficult to implement?</b><br>Professor AJ Brown (Griffith University)  |
| 12.15pm – 12.45pm: | <b>The importance of change – What's in it for Local Government and Communities?</b><br>Bligh Grant (UNE)  |
| 12.45pm – 1.15pm:  | Lunch  |
| 1.15pm – 1.45pm:   | <b>Problems in developing public policy for rural regions</b><br>Tony Sorensen (UNE)   |
| 1.45pm – 2.15pm:   | <b>How do we achieve change and what next? NRM and a wider context</b><br>Paul Martin (UNE)  |
| 2.15pm – 2.45pm:   | <b>How to Put the Power Back – A Decentralised Model</b><br>Paul Collits (USQ)   |
| 2.45pm – 3.00pm:   | Afternoon Tea  |
| 3.00pm – 4.00pm:   | Plenary session with presenters and Tony Windsor MP.<br>Facilitated by Lou Conway - Lecturer, Faculty of The Professions, UNE Business School      |
| 4.00pm:            | Close  |

## UNE Governance Forum – Speaker Bios

### Mal Peters



Mal and his wife Anne run a beef, sheep & cropping property 80 kilometres north of Inverell. Mal is a passionate advocate for regional Australia; trying to increase the population while making sure we have city equivalent services and those less fortunate get a decent opportunity to better their lot in life.

Mal is currently Chairman of the Regional Australia Institute, Regional Development Australian Northern Inland and the Northern Basin committee of the Murray Darling Basin Authority.

He is a member of Ministerial advisory committees for both the NSW government and the Federal Minister for Regional development. Mal is a life member of the Australian Farm Institute and NSW Farmers' Association of which he is a former President.

He writes a column in the land newspaper and is a Councillor of Inverell Shire Council.

### Dr Helen Swan



Helen has accumulated over 20 years of public sector and consultancy experience at all levels of government.

Prior to joining Courage, Helen held executive level positions for ten years in the Australian Government Departments of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Helen has also held management positions in the NSW and ACT Governments and in the NSW local government sector at a senior management level. She has a particular interest in regional and local governance and joined-up government to deliver sustainable outcomes for communities.

Helen's most recent assignments with Courage include evaluations of the Closing the Gap Youth in Communities Program, the Community Mental Health Remote Service Delivery Model, the Compliance Visa Status Resolution Program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program.

Helen holds Bachelor and Master Degrees in Social Planning and Policy from Charles Sturt University-Riverina and a PhD (Government) from the University of Canberra.

### Professor A.J. Brown



*BA (Political Science) (UNSW), LLB (UNSW), Grad Dip Lega Prac (ANU), PhD (Griffith)*

- John F Kearney Professor of Public Law

As a leading Australian public intellectual, A.J. is established at the forefront of inter-disciplinary political and legal governance research. As a constitutional scholar and expert in public integrity and accountability, he has rare insight into the relations between law, institutions, administration and politics. A.J. has deep experience in public administration, having served or consulted in all branches and at all levels of government, he has been involved in the leadership of large organisations and worked at the coalface of intergovernmental relations as a ministerial policy adviser.

Professor Brown has played a leading role in reviving and reshaping the study of federalism and intergovernmental relations in Australia. His doctoral history of Australian territorial politics was described by Professor Geoffrey Blainey AO as 'one of the most impressive theses' he had ever examined. Since 2006 he has been Director of the Federalism Project, Griffith University – responsible for ... > [next page](#)

development of Australia's first and second national Constitutional Values Surveys. His inquiries into Australian regionalism have exposed many of the key challenges for collaborative policy-making and delivery in complex multi-levelled systems.

A.J. has served as director of the "Integrity & Corruption Research Program" for the Key Centre for Ethics Law Justice and Governance. He lead an interdisciplinary national team of researchers from four universities to complete Australia's first national integrity system assessment. A.J. was also the project leader on the "Whistling While They Work" project where he designed and lead the world's largest multidisciplinary whistleblowing research project which had immediate impacts in Australia and internationally.

#### Research expertise

- Government accountability and responsiveness
- Federalism, regionalism and the development of public institutions
- Public integrity systems, including public interest whistleblowing
- Judicial accountability and methods

#### Current teaching areas

- Constitutional Law
- Interdisciplinary Research Projects

### Bligh Grant



*Research Lecturer, Faculty of the Professions, UNE Business School*

Bligh Grant is Research Lecturer in Local Government Studies and Deputy Director of the UNE Centre for Local Government. He is also a PhD candidate in the Centre and the UNE Business School and recently completed his dissertation in journal article format. The title of his thesis is Local Governments as 'Place-shapers': Exposition, Critique and Investigations in Australian Politics. It has been accepted and is due to be conferred by UNE.

#### Areas of Teaching

Mr Grant was Course Coordinator for MM322 Business Ethics, Globalisation and Sustainability in Trimester 1 2012. He has coordinated and assisted teaching in various units in the UNE Business School. Mr Grant recently returned to UNE after a period as Associate Lecturer in Political Economy at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. Prior to this he taught in the areas of Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, Asian Studies and International Relations, all at UNE.

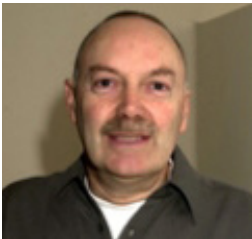
#### Research interests

Current research interests are largely determined by the UNE Centre for Local Government Centre Director, Professor Brian Dollery. Recent work has included:

- Responses to structural reform programs across Australian local government jurisdictions;
- Shared services as a means of achieving efficiencies in both local and state government bureaucracies;
- Contemporary models of local government, in particular the 'place-shaping' approach developed in the United Kingdom by the Lyons Inquiry, and its applicability to Australian local government;
- Theories of democracy and leadership as they pertain to local government reform,
- Constitutional reform and local government, and
- Community engagement and local government. ... > next page

As a contract researcher, Mr Grant has researched and co-published on a broad range of topics, including business ethics, professional ethics, the economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on the South African economy, thermodynamics and economic efficiency and development studies.

#### A/Professor Tony Sorensen



*Adjunct Professor, School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences*

Like many a geographer, Tony is something of a disciplinary nomad floating in his case somewhere between Geography, Economics, Urban Planning and Public Policy.

#### Affiliations

Having been Convenor of the Institute of Australian Geographer's Rural Studies group for several years, he has joined an international task force on sustainable rural business operated by the International Geographical Union Commission on Sustainable Rural Systems. Tony is also Past President of the Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association which is the premier academic and practitioner organisation concerning regional conditions, processes and policy. He established and edited for 7 years one of the Association's journals: Regional Policy and Practice.

#### Research interests

His geographer side acknowledges that place is a crucial determinant of people's economic and social well-being. This has been one of Tony's major research themes over the years, especially in respect of rural and regional Australia. Another related focus of Tony's research concerns the largely economic processes that drive rural and regional development and appropriate public policy responses. He has recently conducted, with Roger Epps, research into the links between community leadership and economic development in Central Queensland and is also interested in projecting rural economic and social futures. Other recent studies have focused on the political issues of regional advocacy and One Nation electoral support.

#### Professor Paul Martin



*Deputy Head of School, School of Law  
Director, Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law*

#### Qualifications

Professor Paul Martin joined UNE as the Director of the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law in 2005. Professor Martin has many years of business experience, including as a director and substantial shareholder in high technology enterprises, as a director of a successful venture capital firm, and as a member of the NSW Innovation Council and the Australian government Pooled Development Funds Registration Board. He was also a senior Visiting Fellow at the Australian Graduate School of Management for 20 years, responsible for a range of programs in both law and entrepreneurship.

Prior to joining the University, Professor Martin was Chairman of the (NSW) Southern Catchment Management Board. He has authored books and studies on taxation, natural resources, and negotiation; and has advised local and international corporations and governments on strategy in a range of areas including taxation leveraged investment, harvesting and shearing robotics, chemicals, healthcare and high technology.

In early 2006 Paul published a book 'Sustainability Strategy' with Miriam Verbeek. This book is designed to give a comprehensive understanding of achieving sustainability goals in the public sector, natural resource management and business. ... > next page

#### Research interests

Natural resource management and business, taxation leveraged investment, harvesting and shearing robotics, chemicals, healthcare and high technology

#### Current Research

ARC Linkage - "The next generation rural landscape governance: the Australian dimension"

RIRDC - Innovations in institutions to improve weed funding, strategy and outcomes

NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (DTIRIS). - Regional innovation; strategic development community based innovation in the northern inland region of NSW

#### Paul Collits



Paul Collits has worked in regional development for 20 years.

He is currently an Associate Professor and Director of Research for the Economic Development and Enterprise Collaboration at the University of Southern Queensland's Fraser Coast campus. This is a partnership among a number of regional stakeholders and the University developed to undertake leading edge research in regional economics, policy and strategy.

Prior to joining USQ (in March 2011), he was a Senior Research Fellow in Regional Development at RMIT University's Hamilton (Victoria) campus, having joined RMIT in 2007.

For most of the previous 12 years he was a regional policy adviser to the New South Wales Government, working mostly in the Department of State and Regional Development.

He completed BA (Hons) and MA degrees in political science at ANU in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Following a brief academic career in the 1980s, he worked in politics, government and industry till the early 1990s.

In 2002 he completed a PhD at the University of New England in geography and planning. His thesis examined regional policy change in Australia since the 1960s and the decline of decentralisation as a policy objective.

Paul has presented and written extensively on such topics as the role of government in regional development, small town decline and survival, community economic development, regional governance, economic development practice, the creative class and rural youth out-migration.

Paul has also been involved extensively in university teaching, having taught courses for eight years on economic development and spatial policy in the planning program at the University of New South Wales. He was an adjunct Senior Lecturer there from 1999 to 2003. He contributed a chapter on regional planning in the Planning Australia text book edited by Susan Thompson (Cambridge University Press), which won an excellence award from the Planning Institute of Australia for planning scholarship, research or teaching.

He has ongoing research interests related to the effectiveness of local economic development efforts, the drivers of regional economic performance, the connections between theory, policy and practice in regional development, rural out-migration, people attraction strategies and innovation and networks.

He has a particular interest in international approaches to regional development and has developed an international collaborative research and community learning project examining rural community decline and survival in "heartland" regions in Australia and the United States.

Paul has been a President of the Australian and New Zealand section of the Regional Science Association International, and is currently a member of Council.