Tract Consultants

SUPPORTS GREEN STAR - COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Tract is actively involved in the development of the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star - Communities Rating Tool and has become one of the first organisations in Australia to sign up to the Green Star - Communities Project Supporter initiative.

We look forward to our ongoing role assisting the GBCA in the production of this exciting planning and design initiative.
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Last year’s federal election helped confirm regions and resources as two of the biggest stories of the new decade. After all, a handful of independent MPs from regional electorates decided the new government, at the same time boosting the fortunes of Australia outside the capital cities. A few months earlier, argument over the ‘Resource Super Profits Tax’ (neither subtly named nor subtly presented) probably helped bring down the prime minister. In any case, attention remained firmly on a resources boom the nation continues to enjoy.

The flavour of the issues may have changed since then, but regions and resources remain policy and political concerns. The Queensland Government, for example, recently began consultation on two of its own regional plays: a ‘regionalisation’ strategy, and a state-wide infrastructure plan. The development of new resources, including vast coalfields and a brand new coal seam gas industry, brings opportunity and controversy in equal measure.

It is fitting that 2011’s PIA state planning conference – titled Planning with altitude: regions, resources, revolution – debate these issues. It is fitting too that the conference be held in the fine regional city of Toowoomba. This city is situated on the eastern fringe of one emerging resource area, the Surat Basin. Toowoomba may itself experience the rapid changes, challenges and hopes that a resource-rush brings.

Conference delegates will no doubt reflect as well on the deadly flash flooding that rushed through Toowoomba’s city centre on 10th January 2011. By that time floods had been spreading across Queensland for many weeks. But the scenes from Toowoomba were for me, and I’m sure for many others, the moment when the floods disaster suddenly seemed more real and much more frightening.

Queensland Planner’s focus this issue on regions and resources will cover but a fraction of the topics discussed at the conference. QP’s contribution includes two refereed papers from the proceedings: Stakeholder perceptions of the impact of the declaration of an Urban Development Area in Moranbah – how sustainable will the outcomes be? by Scott Riley and Marita Basson, and Regional plans and remote settlements: the implications of statutory planning upon resource dependent economies by Sharon Harwood.

Resource communities are also the subject of an article by Ceit Wilson on page 24. Stephen Keliher considers the challenges of natural resource management planning in the south east.

And Geoff Mullins takes in some of the competing views surrounding mining expansion in Queensland.

The role of planning in regions and resources is certainly a matter for reflection, as it will be in Toowoomba from the 21st to 23rd of September.

Mike McKeown MPIA Editor

PIA Queensland events calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-23 September</td>
<td>2011 PIA Queensland State conference</td>
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<td>Toowoomba</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 October</td>
<td>How to... prepare a section preliminary approval 242 development application</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 November</td>
<td>How to... prepare a structure plan/master plan under SPA</td>
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<td>11 November</td>
<td>2011 PIA QLD Awards Celebration Dinner</td>
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<td>South Brisbane</td>
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<td>More events to be listed visit <a href="http://www.planning.org.au/events/category/all-qld-events-by-date">http://www.planning.org.au/events/category/all-qld-events-by-date</a></td>
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You will be reading this at the Queensland state conference (or very soon after), where many planners will be high up on a mountain range, breathing the cool fresh spring air. This opportunity for a fresh calm look at planning is a wonderful opportunity to reflect and dream. Such freshness provides a reminder of the achievements we have made in PIA over the past 12 months, such as 33 professional development events. Our media presence has appeared in the main metropolitan newspapers, the national papers and over half a dozen regional papers. We have covered topics from flooding to land use zoning to housing. The task carried out by the current Queensland division committee is resoundingly successful, on the back of the Sustainable Planning Act implementation and the introduction of Green Door, Major Projects Office, Queensland Reconstruction Authority, new planning schemes, our successful submission on enhancing the QPP provisions, regional plans, state policy and of course the very popular educational work of CPP courses and the How To… series, presented by PIA. Young planners have particularly led the charge with QYPG volunteering at the career expo promoting planners, concurrent sessions at the conference and a great range of experience building events.

Other quiet achievements have been the “lobbying” to change the lobbyists requirements – although it is ridiculous to say PIA lobbied, but more-so led the charge - with the Institute of Architects, Spatial Industries, UDIA and PCA collectively with us on this crusade. This was a very quiet achievement, and will continue, in eliminating additional red-tape procedures, but more importantly collaboration voids between applicant and authority. PIA has also been effective in bringing to a head the need for collaboration and openness, including the opportunities to plan further ahead (50+ years) and plan more thoroughly our cities and towns through policy and guidelines.

In areas of advocacy PIA has made a difference, little would the average planner know. It is unacceptable the constant stoush between sectors over development preferences when plans have not guided or provided certainty. Equally there is no point creating a problem which can be reasonably solved using innovation. We need good plans, ones that state objectives. These plans create certainty. Where a plan does fail, acknowledgement and alternatives can be honestly replaced for definition, and this – unbelievably – will provide the same certainty.

Recently I have been in a position of debate over many planning topics: greenfield, or high-rise, jobs and growth, sustainability over economic prosperity. I believe there is not one single size, not one size at all, which fits all. I further believe anyone who forces the issue of a solution is not being fair to their fellow Queenslanders – the general community. This is why I encourage our community consultation to take on community research into preferences, wants and needs. Asking a community member “Would you like a high rise in your back yard?” is a completely different (and impossible question) to “What type of housing options do you need now and in the future?” Both questions will yield a different answer and this must be understood.

I will continue to work for PIA and dream… what do I dream of, you can ask me anytime through the PIA Presidents email – president@qldplanning.org.au - with parts of my response being: plans that plan a lifetime into the future (50+ years). I also dream of planning that is collaborative, because the plan is well made. I dream of planning that provides options, options which are accepted and not debated without necessity.

While I am up in the mountain air, and most times of a week, what I dream, I hope I can make come true through my role as President and your leader.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss anything PIA can do for you as a planner in Queensland.

Enjoy your planning; please enjoy this edition of QP.
The Maroochydore Principal Activity Centre Plan as now amended allows 12 storey buildings to 40m from Beach Road through the Big Top then along First Avenue to Maud Canal and one block across the canal. This latter block is allowed two extra high buildings, one 16 stories to 64m and the other 18 storeys to 72m. The Sunshine Plaza and adjoining land to Plaza Parade together with lands along Maroochy Boulevard almost down to Dalton Drive is allowed six storeys to 25m while Aerodrome Road can be lined with four storeys to 16m. Two high buildings may not be as exciting as three. The silhouettes of great cities seem to be enlivened more often by three not two elements. London has the three spires of St Pauls; Florence has the three silhouettes of the dome and towers of its cathedral and so forth. Previously multi storey residential use got a mention as best use in tourist accommodation to six stories not more than 25m high with a podium level of two stories to 10m, and restricted to Duporth Avenue as infill between existing higher buildings. Aerodrome Road contained mixed housing and could support a diverse range of low rise housing forms intended for mixed density residential development with a building height of two stories and not more than 8.5m high.

While this new attitude to higher buildings in downtown Maroochydore clears the way for new entrepreneurial interests, more may be needed to improve the awful stagnation of the local economy.

With an aging population it is important that housing be provided with easy pedestrian access within 400m to downtown facilities and that vertical access is by lifts. Lifts are not affordable if they serve less than six stories and are more affordable serving 10 or more floors. Surely at least the northern side of Aerodrome Road could be included in the six storey zone that abuts it rather than the four storey limit now shown. Shadows of higher buildings there would be cast onto the road rather than onto private land.

There could be a strong demand for serviced multiple units managed by hotel groups similar to the Rendezvous Hotel in Anzac Square Building, Ann St, Brisbane. These allow body corporate ownership for each housing unit, room service, and security with some function rooms, bar, offices and dining at ground level. Two or three buildings of this kind in Aerodrome Road could change this street from a blighted area of predominately old single storied commercial buildings exhibiting disparate signage.

Overcrowding by bulky buildings such as the Sebel in Aerodrome Road should be avoided otherwise Maroochydore may rapidly develop a continuous great wall effect as has happened at Mooloolaba. This would require site coverage above podium level of 20%. Podiums should be colonnaded and arcaded with about 10% of their sites retained for deep open planting. The greatest horizontal plan dimensions along any wall of a building could be established to avoid bulkiness. This has been established successfully in San Francisco. Perhaps 45m, two-thirds the frontage of the Sebel could be a starting point.

Recently without much notice an 11 storied office building for state government occupation has been completed in First Avenue opposite the Maroochydore RSL Club. This 11 storied office block and the RSL with its adjoining multi storied car park cover 100% of their sites without any provision for pedestrian comfort, no colonnades or arcades and no landscaping.

James Birrell LFPIA, Maroochydore
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(Maroochydore’s new plan was profiled in Queensland Planner, Autumn 2011)

Urban design and planning – grounds for divorce?

‘It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.’ William Whyte - The social life of small urban spaces, 1980.

Design is a vexed issue and is very subjective, coloured by culture, age, education, sex and a thousand other factors. One mans Seidler is another mans slum.

Designing good streetscapes and indeed good buildings is a challenge not just for the architect or building designer but also for the overworked council planner who is just trying to pump out the next DA approval before the phone rings with another complaining applicant. We have all done it.

Councils are typically under resourced and overworked in the area of development assessment planning. The work isn’t sexy and it receives a lot of flack and a lot of scrutiny from politicians, the administration, consultants and the public themselves all of whom have very easy access to the DA planner in the hot seat.

Urban design for the average planner is not an easy issue to access. It’s an out-there concept on the margins of planning, vaguely familiar in its terminology, ethereal in its applicability to the DA that’s in front of him.

My own experience of planning education gave me little formal training at university through planning courses of design issues. What does design have to do with planning after all? Not much it would seem according to our educational institutions or indeed PIA.

Is design then divorced from planning?

It begs the question: do planners see themselves as urban designers or indeed part of the urban design process? And when did urban design and planning become estranged?

If town planning, that is the act of planning towns, is not a design exercise then what is?

We have planning schemes to help us design good places. But planning schemes tend to be confused about what urban design is, usually treating urban design like something that comes in a bottle which is sprinkled over the top of plans and development schemes that instantly adds flavour and respectability. Planning schemes talk about issues of
character, scale, height, building articulation, frontage treatment, passive surveillance and legibility and then add that urban design principles should also be considered as part of any development proposal.

Is there a difference? Of course not.

Urban design is a team sport – it’s a game all built environment professions can play and we all contribute in our own way. Our DA planner not the least.

Planning in Queensland is dominated by ‘performance-based planning’ where interpretation of performance based statements can lead to a wide variety of outcomes both good and bad.

One performance criteria in a planning scheme says ‘the buildings must present a continuous pedestrian friendly facade at a human scale’.

A laudable aim with the intention of creating strong pedestrian movement corridors that are activated and comfortable. But what does this mean as a physical outcome? Does the facade face the street, should this connection be here in the first place? What is human scale? How friendly to be pedestrians does it need to be, should one feel hugged and loved by the facade of every building?

I realise I’m taking just one statement out of a whole code and it is a little disingenuous to do so. But the point is there are many statements of this nature in many planning schemes that directly impact upon the urban design outcomes being sought in a development proposal. The interpretation of which may vary wildly based upon the designer, their ideas about urban outcomes and their perception of creating quality places. The client too will have a big hand this outcome as we all know. Does good design come at a cost? We might leave that for another day.

How does the average or even the above average DA planner look past, through and beyond the design hyperbole and determine what is genuinely a good development outcomes that provides an outcome appropriate to its context and the community who will use it? How do we achieve good places through the planning system and planning schemes?

Architects and planners will argue their development proposal adherers to good urban design principles – it therefore must be good, who could argue with that?

How does the DA planner arm themselves in the face of the design dialogue? Has the professional as a whole forgotten how to do planning?

One very experienced planner noted the following to me: that the DA planner works in an atmosphere of Council ‘silos’ where their role is separated via an abstract organisational chart. In many instances the DA planner is not expected to balance these competing interests but just take on an administrative function to collate all comments / suggestions and impose the same on the applicant. This is counter-intuitive to the integrated process required for good urban design.

Another noted the nature of the business and said he knows more about the referral triggers in the SPA legislation than he does about the how the development he’s working on actually relates to the site. The overly legalistic SPA doesn’t help and again it could be argued is contrary to the achievement of good outcomes.

When did it become more important to understand the legislation rather than the context, meaning and setting of the site? Is this grounds for divorce?

We have made a rod for our own backs and turned a design profession into a paralegal fee fest that may be deeply passionate about achieving good urban outcomes but does not fundamentally understand what the difference is between good and bad development.

Wait, I have a code somewhere here that can tell me that. Don’t I?

And just to prove your planner knows all about the planning system they can now be a certified practicing planner. A planner to whom one can turn to and can trust to know and understand all the pitfalls the legislation holds for your development application. Good for them.

But does that guarantee they know what is good development? Isn’t that something worth certifying?

Planning legislation has changed and evolved over the years. Our DA planner will wrestle with and tame one legislative curmudgeon only to have it usurped by an even more slippery elusive demon in its stead. SPA being the latest progeny that could be argued does nothing for planning except provide a unwieldy legislative framework that ensures planing and urban design are very distant and remote cousins. Should it matter what legislation we have in front of us? Do the fundamentals of planning change with legislation or do good planning principles remain constant? And if they do how did we get in this tangle?

Planning schemes for the most part say a lot of very similar things. Take these Desired Environmental Outcomes:

**Gold Coast**

The protection of natural drainage catchments, river systems and other waterbodies to maintain the ecological values and functions of the ecosystems and health of the human communities that they support, and to enhance their value for maintenance of flora and fauna, recreation and other uses.

**Brisbane**

Enhance the aquatic ecology and quality of ground and surface water, including wetlands, the Brisbane River, and other waterways and water bodies…

They have fairly consistent language and intention for outcomes. Rightly so, too. Which tends to suggest that the fundamentals for good planning are also pretty consistent from place to place. Why then do we concentrate our planning efforts conveying to planners the correct way to refer an application or how to change an application and not how the outcome needs to relate to development around it and what public benefit it brings to the local community.

Aren’t these the essentials of planning? Aren’t places filled with people enjoying the life and activity around them the goal of good planning? Isn’t therefore good planning also good urban design? Isn’t it time we became obsessive of design rather than process?

Stephen Smith MPIA, Brisbane
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(Urban design was the focus topic for the Winter 2011 issue of QP)
This PIA symposium was held on 3 June 2011. The Symposium was born out of desire to gather the relevant local government planners, state government planners and planning consultants to discuss and share knowledge about drafting planning schemes in a new era. This latest round of planning schemes will be the first under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA) and the Queensland Planning Provisions, and as such brings about a new range of opportunities and challenges.

The symposium drew an audience from across Queensland and provided the opportunity for the presenters and audience to focus on strategic planning. The day was divided into four themed sessions, namely:

1. A new era of strategic planning in Queensland planning schemes;
2. A new era of community engagement;
3. A new era of streamlined plans and development assessment; and
4. A new era of planning issues in planning schemes.

Greg Vann chaired the day and made sure the audience stuck with the context of being positive, interactive and fun.

The symposium also provided a variety of ways for the audience to get involved in the day including the ability to text in questions and comments, tweet about the day, join the Facebook page, as well as the old-fashioned methods of completing question cards and asking questions with the roving microphone.

Some of the highlights from the day included:

- Gary White’s message for a line of sight to be maintained and for strategic frameworks to tell the story of a place, rather than being a generic framework;
- Dyan Currie’s system to celebrate milestones in their planning scheme project, i.e. freddo frogs – the larger the milestone, the larger the frogs;
- Councillor Melva Hobson’s sharing of the different methods used by Redland City Council to engage with their community, including the use of artwork and the local press to cover ‘hot’ topics which are of interest to the public;
- David Hood’s Homer Simpson test for the Gold Coast planning scheme: would Homer be able to understand this? and the adapting of the lifestyle transect as a way to better explain planning concepts to the public;
- Brendan Nelson challenging the audience to embrace the opportunities of e-planning;
- Greg Tupicoff’s practical example of how market research is helpful in determining what your audience wants; and
- Mike McKeown introducing the Next Generation Handbook and how it can be applied; and
- Speed mentoring between the young and not-so-young.

The symposium was well received as a useful day to share knowledge and spread the positive messages emerging from the planning scheme process for all of the involved parties.

The symposium will be followed up by a half-day “How to draft a SPA planning scheme” in December. Details of this seminar will be made available shortly.
We may have all been exposed to the different planning processes and subsequent development delivery opportunities for Master Planned communities.

At a recent seminar held on the Sunshine Coast, Mr Bruce Harper, the General Manager (Queensland) of Investa presented on a range of case studies comparing the challenges, opportunities and ultimate outcomes of Master Planned communities across Australia in which he has been involved in throughout his career. The two main projects that formed the basis of his provocative discussion were Mawson Lakes (SA) and Palmview (Qld).

Some interesting take outs from his discussion included:
- A ‘less is more’ approach in planning codes;
- ‘Collaborative relationships are the key’ to a successful master planned community. Particularly between private industry, local governments and state agencies;
- ‘Innovation is evolutionary, not revolutionary’ – bringing new ideas to the community rather than ‘dragging communities along’.

There had been efforts in the early 2000s to develop a light rail network in inner Brisbane following a Commonwealth Federation grant. For several reasons, mostly around an inability to obtain stakeholder support on an alignment, the project did not proceed. In May 2011, the successful bidder to build and operate a light rail on the Gold Coast was announced. The Transport Chapter organised a seminar on the 18 May 2011 on the topic “Light Rail in Brisbane?”

The three speakers were Mike Gillan, Warren Rowe and Assoc Professor Neil Sipe. Mike spoke on the possibility of light rail in inner Brisbane and the benefits such a project would bring. Warren gave his reflections on the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project and what lessons might be valuable for Brisbane, such as leadership and persistence. Neil presented a number of funding possibilities a project could consider, including the public private partnerships.

The information provided was valuable for old and new members of PIA on the land use transport integration of a project such as the Gold Coast scheme, including the quantification and inclusion of the land use benefits within the decision making. There was ground broken in this approach for transport infrastructure in Queensland.

Queensland’s Chief Scientist, Dr Geoff Garrett, has launched a new publication: Understanding Floods: Questions and Answers. In support of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, the report was authored by a panel of leading Australian and international scientists and engineers. It seeks to provide a concise and authoritative summary on the science and engineering aspects behind the cause, forecasting and management of floods.

The report can be accessed at: www.chiefscientist.qld.gov.au

Light rail in Brisbane?

Brisbane, 18 May 2011
Bruce James MPIA

There had been efforts in the early 2000s to develop a light rail network in inner Brisbane following a Commonwealth Federation grant. For several reasons, mostly around an inability to obtain stakeholder support on an alignment, the project did not proceed. In May 2011, the successful bidder to build and operate a light rail on the Gold Coast was announced. The Transport Chapter organised a seminar on the 18 May 2011 on the topic “Light Rail in Brisbane?”

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The new Queensland Coastal Plan was released on 7 April 2011, and is expected to take effect in late August 2011. It will be supported by changes to the coastal legislation and regulation.

John Lane, Director Environment Planning at the Department of Environment and Resource Management presented an overview of the new coastal regime comprising a State Policy about Coastal Management (directed to coastal land managers) and a new State Planning Policy which deals with matters such as urban settlement patterns, coastal hazards, nature conservation, scenic amenity, public access, coastal-dependent land uses and canals and artificial waterways. John also introduced the audience to the new definition of the coastal zone and the various new maps identifying coastal hazard areas and areas of ecological significance.

Greg Fisk, National Practice Leader (Environment) from BMT WBM Pty Ltd identified the continuing challenges of integrated coastal zone management. Greg identified the objectives as being cross-disciplinary integration, geographic/spatial integration, intra-governmental integration and inter-governmental integration, and sought to identify how the new Queensland Coastal Plan contributed to achieving these integration objectives. Greg identified areas of improvement and areas requiring improvement in the new regime and with respect to the latter made some suggestions regarding effective implementation (including training and capacity building, a regular updating process for mapping products and funding for local governments in the preparation of various documents under the new regime).

Matthew Schneider, Senior Planner, Humphreys Reynolds Perkins dealt with the practical implications of the new Queensland Coastal Plan for planners. Matthew covered the topics of assessable development, referral triggers and identifying the key requirements of the new regime for development. In his concluding comments, Matthew said that the Queensland Coastal Plan will have broad and significant implications for planning, and that there will be substantial cost, resourcing and capacity implications for local governments.

How to...navigate the referrals maze - Part 2

Brisbane, 14 June 2011
Rosanne Meurling MPIA (Hon Fellow)

The second How to... referrals seminar dealt with heritage referrals, Water Act referrals and fisheries/coastal referrals.

Rod Litster SC, Barrister, dealt comprehensively with referrals for Queensland heritage places making the following important points:

- before undertaking development or lodging a development application, it is good practice to check whether the development site is included on a State, local or planning scheme heritage register;
- if the development site is included on a heritage register, identify the constraints and requirements for development with assistance from a heritage consultant;
- consider whether it would be appropriate to obtain an exemption certificate or enter into a heritage agreement to seek to confine the risks of unexpected conditions that may delay or preclude development.

John Ware, Partner at Freehills, warned that Water Act referrals are a complex combination of the SPA and Water Act, with each of these pieces of legislation having its own dangerous undercurrent of legislative complexity, and in combination being treacherous for any professional engaged in development application work. In addition to identifying the relevant triggers, the multiplicity of forms and additional requirements under the Water Act, John provided the following tips:

- be aware of the distinction between Water Act development and the referral trigger which states that a development application must be referred by virtue of “involving” Water Act development;
- be aware of the evolving case law on the concept of ‘involving’ Water Act development as there is the possibility that a development application will “involve” one of the Water Act referral triggers even though the development application does not seek approval for the development referred to in the trigger;
- be aware that expert opinion may be required to determine whether Water Act referrals are triggered.

Michael Forwood, Town Planner with the RPS Group, dealt with the vast topic of referrals for coastal and fisheries matters. Michael dealt with the most common of the 19 referral triggers relating to coastal areas. Michael pointed out that, given the complexity of the triggers, the required mandatory information and the policy requirements, a detailed assessment of triggers should be made for each application. This may require the services of a town planner, environmental scientist and RPEQ to fully determine the impact of the development proposed on coastal vegetation and processes and to provide required mandatory information. Michael pointed out that development within coastal areas can be very difficult if the development seeks the removal of marine plants or vegetation from areas of high ecological significance, proposes to fill areas below HAT or the proposed development is located within a high risk areas. An added complication in the case of the removal of vegetation within coastal areas may be the need to provide an offset.
Queensland Young Planners Group report
Shannon Batch MPlA

It’s been an incredibly busy few months for the Queensland Young Planners Group. We’ve had our first event held on the Gold Coast, organised the PIA booth at the Brisbane Tertiary Studies Expo, kicked off the re-launched Rural and Regional Work Experience Program and held our major annual professional development event, Building Your Career.

Gold Coast Event “Being a Young Planner”

• 29 young planners
• 1 very interesting topic
• 4 speakers
• 1 amazing organiser

Heather our Gold Coast regional representative took on the task of organising our first Gold Coast event with gusto. With four fantastic speakers lined up the topic was set... “Being a Young Planner: What they don’t teach you at university”. The speakers provided some insight into the challenges planning practitioners face on a day to day basis that you may not necessarily hear about at uni. With the support of our sponsors Gold Coast City Council and Humphreys Reynolds Perkins we were able to run the event with free registrations which was fantastic. It was a great opportunity for planning students and recent graduates to hear from experienced planners such as David Corkill, Tamara Wiseman, Finn Jones and Hayley Gardner on a range of topics. There was also time for attendees to catch up with other young planners based on the Gold Coast and discuss some great ideas for future young planner events on the Coast.

Brisbane Tertiary Studies Expo

• 1 Planning Institute of Australia booth
• 800 ‘What is a planner?” flyers
• 9 volunteers
• 2 days
• 4 boxes of awards booklets
• 2 bags of lollies to entice people to our booth

On the weekend of the 15th and 16th of July 9 enthusiastic volunteers armed with flyers, graduate statistics and planner profiles manned the Planning Institute of Australia were ready to take on the hundreds of visitors to the Brisbane Tertiary Studies Expo (TS Expo). We were fully prepped and ready to answer the big questions put to us by high school students...what is a planner, what do planners do, why should I be a planner, what do you like about your job? The TS Expo is an important part of the advocacy role the QYPG undertakes on behalf of the PIA and I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone that was involved.

Building Your Career 2011

• 96 young planners
• 3 cameras
• 14 speakers
• 3 back up computers
• 24 PIA Fellows
• 3 trips to the Buckley Vann lolly bowl
• 2 days
• 96 young planners

Building Your Career 2011 (BYC2011) was held on Friday 12th August at Riverside Receptions, New Farm. BYC2011 started off with bang with Julie Bindon delivering the keynote address about ADAPT-ability in a changing world. This set the tone for the rest of the day’s fantastic presentations. We had Chris Buckley draw on his many years of experience to give the delegates 10 tips for their planning career. The Young Planner Showcase was a great opportunity for Josh Walker, Kylie Rolley, Hayley Phillips and Charles Druckmann to share their experiences in indigenous planning schemes, next generation planning and natural hazards. Elizabeth Rowe provided some guidance on managing our professional profile and Dy Currie and John Gaskell gloved up for the ultimate debate between the public and private sectors. We were also joined by Barry Gyte who took us through the ins and outs of the Cairns Transit Network Project while Tim Connolly and Guy Gibson rounded out the day with an interactive session on delivering the concept of liveability.

Throughout the day delegates and speakers enjoyed the sunshine and views of the river mixing and mingling during the breaks. The Trade and Career Displays were held at the conclusion of the forum and gave delegates the opportunity to speak with representatives from a range of planning businesses about their projects and career opportunities.

For BYC2011 we were also honoured to be joined by a number of Fellows, Life Fellows and Honorary Fellows of the Institute for our Meet the Fellows dinner and social function. Experiences and memories were shared over a number of drinks and dinner. It was a truly great experience and as it turned out a fantastic opportunity for the Fellows to catch up with one another. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Wendy Chadwick Memorial Trust for supporting Meet the Fellows.

A lot of work goes into organising an event like BYC and I would like to thank our Gold Sponsor the Department of Transport and Main Roads for their support. I would also like to thank the QYPG Committee for their support in organising the event and Mel and Kaye for their help in pulling the event together.

Shannon Batch is the Convenor, Queensland Young Planners Group.
Planners

Q&A: Bill Gannon FPIA

Geoff Mullins

Bill Gannon has more than 30 years experience as a town planner, researcher, designer and consultation facilitator. He came to Queensland in 1991 and since July 1993 he has operated as a consultant, providing a range of services to Central Queensland. He is familiar with regional Queensland and has good working relationships with State agencies, elected members, and communities in the central region. He has been involved in the practical implementation of new schemes including successful defence of challenges to the Planning and Environment Court. Bill emphasises the importance of “putting all the cards on the table” and working with all stakeholders for a balanced and constructive plan.

Bill’s artwork has appeared in national media – television, newspapers, and specialist journals.

Where have you worked?

During and post university years in Sydney, I worked with the Bathurst Orange Development Corporation – a decentralization project. I then worked with the NSW Planning & Environment Commission at Botany Bay, then in the NSW South Coast, including work on the first Kosciusko Regional Plan. This was followed by six years with the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra working on public housing, social impacts and policy formulation. In 1991 I moved into local government in Queensland as Shire Planner at the then Livingstone Shire Council. I remember calling southern friends and explaining the demands and high stresses of crossing blue calm waters for another day’s adventure while working on a DCP for the Keppel Islands! In 1993 my wife Vicki and I started a small town planning and design practice in Yeppoon – Gannon & Gannon Town Planning and Design. The term ‘design’ in our business covers all sorts of creative ventures – cartoons, book layouts, film, and art work.

What’s been the highlight of your career?

When my daughter, Grace, joined our practice as a town planner. She qualified about three years ago and is great to work with.

What’s the solution to the mining, agriculture and environment conflicts in Queensland?

Such conflicts involve mixed and strongly held values, histories, and ambitions and such conflicts rarely have fixed solutions. We might arrive at a strategy balancing the conflicts; yet these are usually temporary and new insights and pressures lead to new strategies. Perhaps the ‘solution’ is about finding processes for exchange, decision, and review.

Has planning failed to get a balance here?

Broadly speaking, the conflicts are not properly identified and balanced. Planners are not the only ‘players’ in this balancing process; indeed planners are often well removed. In my view it’s time to find a fresh and more useful process to strike that balance. There has been further State Government policy work on protecting best quality agricultural land. Increased environmental research work has resulted in clearer constraints mapping. Mining proposals and assessments have greater appreciation of social, economic, and ecological impacts. Yet the decision making process, I especially for coal and gas projects, is rarely sufficiently integrated and rarely has an even and thorough approach to cumulative impacts, such as for long term water security. Regional and Shire Councils have a lot at stake with these issues and I know of some good town planners seeking better assessment and decision forums. Planners are often not part of the ‘overall balancing act’ and are left to fight issues like: ‘fly in fly out workforces’ verses workforces live-in towns; or urban encroachment issues into valuable mining, agricultural, or environment areas. These are important issues; yet we need to consider the pressures behind those specific issues. I support those planners working on those regional plans facing up to the big resource conflict issues and attempting long-term, orderly paths.

You have a growing reputation as a cartoonist and painter. Is this part of retirement planning?

Retirement? What’s that? Sure I am moving towards being a half-time planner, half-time artist. I am fortunate that there is plenty of planning work and art commissions have increased. It is hard to put aside good town planning challenges (and fees!), and it is increasingly hard to leave the painting studio. I sense that if a few large portrait or landscape commissions come in, there will be less of this Gannon and more of planner Grace Gannon. Whatever, I’m set for a busy future!

What’s been the most important change in planning since you arrived in Queensland in 1991?

The way local government and consultant planners interact with state planners in regional Queensland. In 1991 I felt bold and adventurous when I contacted various State agencies and sought their involvement at the start of a larger planning project or assessment. Inviting State agency practitioners to our Central Queensland RAPI functions was novel. Today we have IDAS and mandated concurrence agency involvement, and the interaction of local, state, and consultant planners is commonplace. Obviously, other changes such as new legislation (and there have been many changes), the growth of the planning profession, the computer revolution, have all been important.

What’s next?

My town planning focus is now mostly in and around the growth port and gas industries of Gladstone, and Central Queensland.

John Abbott recently completed over 20 years with the Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) and its predecessors. He was Project Coordinator of the SEQ 2001 and SEQ 2021 regional planning projects and was a Principal Planner with the Office of Urban Management. He has worked on every regional plan for South East Queensland (SEQ) since 1990. In 2010, he completed a PhD at the University of Queensland on the topic of ‘Understanding and Managing Uncertainty in Metropolitan Planning’. This involved case studies of metropolitan plan-making in SEQ and in Greater Vancouver.

**What was the first major project you worked on when you started with the Queensland Government?**

I had worked on regional planning projects in rural Victoria for over 12 years before returning to Queensland in 1989. When the SEQ 2001 growth management project commenced in 1990, I was very pleased to become involved and to work on it full-time from early 1992. SEQ 2001 was the main game in town. It was a whole new collaborative and consultative approach to planning where State agencies, local government politicians and officers, and community group representatives sat around the table and worked out regional policies by consensus. It was an exciting roller coaster ride and led to the Regional Framework for Growth Management in 1995. This was the first endorsed regional plan in Queensland. It was a non-statutory, policy plan but was formally endorsed by the Commonwealth, State and Local governments. It provided the model for regional planning to spread throughout Queensland.

**What was the catalyst for the decision to prepare a statutory SEQ Regional Plan in 2004?**

A lot of things were achieved under the non-statutory SEQ regional plans of 1995, 1998 and 2000, including: agreed regional policies on environmental, social, land use and infrastructure issues; new institutional arrangements, such as the Regional Coordination Committee; and linked sectoral plans for regional transport (IRTP), air quality, coastal areas, etc. While the regional policies were good, by the early 2000s, there was a broad view that implementation of the plan needed to be improved and strengthened and given a statutory basis. In particular, governments were looking for stronger links between infrastructure provision and urban growth areas.

I am currently doing a research project on this with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) in Sydney and aimed at better understanding the factors that led the State and SEQ local governments to support preparation of a statutory regional plan. ACELG considers this will provide lessons and implications for other States and metropolitan areas.

**Looking ahead 20 years can be a bit tricky. How soon might we need another review?**

Looking ahead 20 years is difficult, so the SEQ Regional Plan provides for a full review every five years to accord with the census cycle. Because of very rapid growth in SEQ and other issues, such as traffic congestion, the review of the 2005 plan was brought forward by a year and a new SEQ Regional Plan was launched in 2009. On this basis, the next SEQ Regional Plan is expected to be finalised in 2014.

**Some years ago you wrote an article on the paradoxical nature of planning and the uncertainty involved. Do you still have the same opinions?**

Yes – in my view, planning is best considered as a process of managing uncertainty about the future. Uncertainty arises from a number of sources, such as lack of information about future trends, organisational intentions and community values, as well unknown external and chance events. But planning is not just about reducing uncertainties and this is where the paradox comes in. When a planning process starts to consider alternative and ‘better’ futures, and how to get to these futures, it raises new uncertainties for the people and organizations involved, that have to be addressed. To be effective and change the future, planners need to push the bounds of possibilities, but this will raise uncertainties and the risks of disagreement and failure. This is the challenge of managing uncertainty in planning.

**How well can the SEQ Regional Plan manage the future?**

Metropolitan regional planning is complex because of the range of land use, transport, environmental, economic and social issues covered by these plans and the overlapping powers and responsibilities of organizations in metropolitan areas. No regional plan can control and manage all of these factors. The strength of the SEQ Regional Plan is that it is a collaboration between the State and Local governments and it is a statutory land use plan as well as a strategic policy plan. The State and Local governments together have broad powers and responsibilities and are generally working in partnership to deliver the agreed ‘desired regional outcomes’ of the plan. The plan’s Urban Footprint has proved to be a very effective tool for controlling the sprawl of the SEQ urban area and for protecting rural and natural areas.

A plan is an agreement at a point in time about how to manage the future. The SEQ Regional Plan will need to be updated and renegotiated as the region changes, external and chance events occur, and community ideas and values about a desired future for the SEQ region evolve.

**What do you believe has been your greatest contribution to planning?**

I have been very fortunate to be involved in regional planning for SEQ, and to some extent for all of Queensland, for the past 20 years and to have had a hand in each of the SEQ regional plans prepared over this period. My contribution has been to try to improve the quality of the professional planning and of the engagement processes with stakeholders and the community and to push the bounds of possible futures. In particular, I have coordinated the professional and secretariat services for the SEQ Regional Planning Committee and its predecessors, the Regional Coordination Committee and the Regional Planning Advisory Group. This high-level political committee is the lynchpin of the collaborative regional planning process in SEQ.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I have lots of plans and I am trying to better integrate them. I intend to keep working, and doing some travel, and the general aim is to have more control over the things I choose to work on. These will include writing more articles about planning as managing uncertainty, continuing to teach part time at the University of Queensland, doing planning research and consultancies, and planting some trees. If you want to contact me, you can do so at abbott.planning@optusnet.com.au
Regional plans and remote settlements: the implications of statutory planning upon resource dependent economies

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to outline the implications of statutory regional planning that applies urban growth boundaries (footprints) to all settlements within a region's spatial territory including remote and resource dependent settlements. Remote in this sense is located beyond the peripheral rural areas. This paper uses the example of Chillagoe, a remote node located within the FNQ Regional Plan to illustrate the need to consider the underlying concepts and inherent contradictions that permeate regional planning. The FNQ Regional Plan sets parameters for development generally, the limited amount of research into the characteristics of remote area planning heightens the need to identify the underlying concepts and inherent contradictions of planning remote areas. A range of terms have been used to describe those areas that lie outside of the main urbanised nodes, among these are peri urban, urban fringe, rural fringe, ex-rural, ex-urban, rural fringe, and rural. However, the most commonly used term in the literature is that of the peripheries or the peripheral region. More recently in Queensland a region can be described as an intermediate level between national and local that addresses particular problems of growing urban regions and depressed industrial and rural regions (Glasson and Dixon 1999). The Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities report (State of Queensland 2011) or even an identity formal political boundary, an economic catchment can be described as a spatial territory associated with a range of terms that can and invariably are used interchangeably. The Remote Areas Research Group (1998) describes the publicly guided transformation of space. This results in the periphery becoming dominated by regulations, land use practices and specifications developed by the urban core (Smith and Steed 1995).

The core periphery model is predicated upon the notion that there is a predictable economic relationship between the industrialised urban core and its resource rich peripheries, and fails to consider the settlements that are beyond or not integrated in the established core periphery economic relationship. Research in health (Dixon and Welch 2001), social and economic inequities via Regional Plans to address problems associated with backward regions (i.e. too much development) while the growth driven urban core in the form of the FNQ Regional Plan, and the impacts of urban planning theory, specifically urban growth boundaries (Lang and Hornburg 1997) upon addressing social and economic disadvantage in the remote locale of Chillagoe.

Introduction

In Australia the term Region is used in a variety of contexts. More recently in Queensland a region can be described as a spatial territory associated with a formal political boundary, an economic catchment (State of Queensland 2011) or even an identity that involves boundaries and governance such as a Regional Council (Collins et al 2004). The Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities report (Commonwealth of Australia 2011) defines a region as: a group of people and places that are connected by a shared interest such as those that fall within the jurisdiction of the Townsville Regional Council (Rae and Shaw Planning Scheme 2005), and the Far North Queensland Regional Plan to argue that the planning profession must rethink its approach to non urban places to facilitate opportunities for remote communities to secure economic development and sustain themselves in the future. This paper is concerned with how regional planning distributes the opportunities for growth across a region via the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, and the impacts of urban planning theory, specifically urban growth boundaries (Lang and Hornburg 1997) upon addressing social and economic disadvantage in the remote locale of Chillagoe.

Background

The term planning is used in this paper to refer to the decision and plan making processes that underpin change, or as Yiftachel (2003) suggests, describes the publicly guided transformation of space. Planning is an intervention to alter the existing course of events (Campbell and Fainstein 2003), and has become the role of the government under the auspices of development planning (Dredge 1999). Moreover, Rawls (1973) maintains that social and economic inequalities are only just if they result in compensating benefits for everyone and in particular for the least advantaged members of society. Regional planning has been described as an intermediate level between national and local that addresses particular problems of growing urban regions and depressed industrial and rural regions (Glasson and Dixon 1999). The Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Communities report (State of Queensland 2011) or even an identity formal political boundary, an economic catchment can be described as a spatial territory associated with a range of terms that can and invariably are used interchangeably. The Remote Areas Research Group (1998) describes the publicly guided transformation of space. This results in the periphery becoming dominated by regulations, land use practices and specifications developed by the urban core (Smith and Steed 1995).

The core periphery model is predicated upon the notion that there is a predictable economic relationship between the industrialised urban core and its resource rich peripheries, and fails to consider the settlements that are beyond or not integrated in the established core periphery economic relationship. Research in health (Dixon and Welch 2001), social and economic inequities via Regional Plans to address problems associated with backward regions (i.e. too much development) while the growth driven urban core in the form of the FNQ Regional Plan, and the impacts of urban planning theory, specifically urban growth boundaries (Lang and Hornburg 1997) upon addressing social and economic disadvantage in the remote locale of Chillagoe.

Typically a remote settlement is beyond an established core periphery relationship due to a range of circumstances. The FNQ remote towns (Haworth 2010): accessibility (transport, human capacity and technology) to the urban core from the isolated remote areas, highly specialised resource dependent economies, socio-economic peripheries possessing low socio economic status (particularly Indigenous people), and socio-economic peripheries possessing low socio economic status (particularly Indigenous people) are examined from a ‘post productivist’ perspective, and urban areas continue to develop in isolation to the development needs of rural and remote area populations.

Remote resource regions

The remote areas of Australia are either seen as ‘resource regions’ with substantial growth prospects or as places where the periphery is seen as a conduit for supporting the economic advancement of the centre (Selman 1995), and is perceived to be unable to make rapid adjustments to constant socio economic change (Friedmann 1966). Knowledge tends to concentrate in the centre of the core and the resources are located at the periphery. This results in the periphery becoming dominated by regulations, land use practices and specifications developed by the urban core (Smith and Steed 1995).

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Queensland and Torres Strait area was reviewed for how the planning process incorporated the views of the remote and indigenous communities in developing action strategies (Harwood et al 2011). The review concluded that the consultation process focused on the urban issues, and failed to consider the views of the remote. As a consequence the action strategies from the plan failed to address the intra regional social and economic inequities.

The Federal government is taking a market led approach to regional development, whereby economic and lifestyle drivers will be key determinants of the locations that attract population growth (Commonwealth of Australia 2011). The role of governments will be to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support these growth communities. One of the key economic drivers in locations outside of South East Queensland has been evidenced in the resources boom. The large scale and resource development led growth coupled with the remote location of the mineral and gas deposits has meant that a skilled workforce is brought in to the site. These remote locations often lack local infrastructure to accommodate the large workforce so there has been little choice but to use fly in fly out (FIFO) roster arrangements to meet development schedules.

Essentially the FIFO work is organised around a roster system in which employees spend a certain number of days working on site and then return home for a specified rest period (Markey et al 2011). FIFO originated in the offshore oil industry in the Gulf of Mexico in the 1950s (Storey 2010). The drill platforms at this time were designed to accommodate staff to address the issue of increasing distances of the oil rigs from the shore, which made daily commuting impractical (Storey 2010). The on shore use of FIFO gathered momentum in Canada and Australia to support the expansion of mining activity into increasingly remote areas. However this practice has evolved as a necessity, as in many remote locations there are no nearby settlements to permanently house the workforce and families. In the past company mine towns were created such as Leinster and Laverton in Western Australia, and hybrid towns such as Weipa in Queensland. However, this practice has ceased for a number of reasons including (Markey et al 2011): government policy that favours FIFO camps; the structure of the mineral industry (favouring high value, short life span deposits); and a high demand and low supply of skilled labour that predominantly reside in metropolitan areas.

Current workforce servicing for resource developments are therefore largely deregionalised (Pritchard 2003) whereby the workforce are permanent residents in larger metropolitan areas and therefore temporary residents in the remote work location. These FIFO trends have had serious implications for the sustainability of remote resource communities. This is more evident in Queensland where many of the resource deposits are within close proximity to rural and remote settlements as opposed to Western Australia or the Northern Territory where there are fewer settlements outside the metropolitan areas. These implications include (after Storey 2010):

1. **Fly over effects upon remote communities** where the benefits of resource developments accrue to larger metropolitan urban centres. Local businesses are unable to access the population or procurement process associated with these camps and as a consequence remote settlements are unable to attract or establish industry support services such as retail or heavy industry.

2. **High social costs of development** as a result of increases in crime, drug use, prostitution, gambling and alcohol related violent behaviour (Carrington et al 2010). Conflicts between local and non local populations are exacerbated due to rivalry over women, territory and status (less financially well off locals), with locals feeling invaded and threatened by the number of men living in camps in close proximity to their town (Carrington et al 2010).

3. **Inability to raise revenue beyond property taxes** (i.e. rates). Mining activities are not controlled by local governments and the resource is owned by the state. Therefore all royalties that are generated are paid to the central government with no return of investment to the remote source of extraction (pers comm. Graham King). The local population are not able to influence the decision making and the benefits of the state overrides the losses to the local community (referred to as a Utilitarian perspective of social equity by Wadley and Smith 1998).

4. **Pressure upon transport infrastructure**. The economies of remote settlements are characterised by their vulnerability to quality transport infrastructure that provides linkages for the export of raw produce. The resource developments exacerbate maintenance issues as they are typically associated with large, heavy and dangerous loads.

5. **Cumulative effects of multiple developments upon the local remote community and associated limited infrastructure**. The current Environmental Impact Study process undertaken in Queensland does not consider the cumulative impact of exploration activities and mining development where they occur concurrently. Moreover, the exemptions contained within the relevant resource legislation (for example the Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum and Gas Act 2004, and Geothermal Energy Act 2010) do not trigger the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, and as such work camps are exempt from assessment where they occur on the respective mining or exploration tenement.

The case study of Chillagoe a remote settlement in North Queensland illustrates how a population that possesses low socio economic characteristics is unable to access the benefits associated with the surrounding resource industry due to the urban boundary limitations associated with land tenure. Chillagoe is located within the North East Minerals
Province which is reputed to be highly prospective (Welters et al 2010), with several mines and quarries (Solomon Mines, Chillagoe Perlite, Mungana Goldand Kagara Ltd) in operation within close proximity to Chillagoe. In 2007 Kagara Ltd gained a Development Permit from the Tablelands Regional Council for the construction of a temporary mine workers accommodation camp located on Leasehold land 1km from Chillagoe. (see Map 1)

Case study: Chillagoe and resource development

Chillagoe is located 140km west of Mareeba and approximately 210km west of Cairns in Far North Queensland. The township was developed subsequent to the discovery of copper in the late 1880s. Chillagoe has a small residential population of 226 people (ABS Chillagoe Community Profile 2006). Of the 89 male employees residing permanently in Chillagoe, 60% earned less than $800 per week, and of the 80 female employees more than 74% earned less than $600 per week. The main industries of employment for local residents (ABS Chillagoe Community Profile 2006) were: Accommodation 15.2%, School Education 8.7%, Metal Ore Mining 5.4%, Motor Vehicle Parts and Tyre Retailing 4.3% and Building Completion Services 4.3%. Of the total population in Chillagoe 24.2% were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

According to the ABS (ABS Report 6306, 2006) the average weekly wage of all Australian employees in the mining industry in 2006 was $1738 and the lowest was in accommodation ($485.00 per week) and Retail Trade ($485.00 per week). According to the 2006 census data only four permanent residents in Chillagoe earned more than $1600 per week (ABS Chillagoe Community Profile 2006). The mining sector employees are not permanent residents in Chillagoe and they receive a much higher wage than the permanent residents employed in service sectors. This wage is spent outside of the town and the economic leakages are very high. The mining sector employees are also not counted as residents in the Census and are therefore not included in the planning of government provided infrastructure and services, despite the fact that they account for more than double the estimated resident population.

All development is regulated via the FNQ Regional Plan and the Mareeba Shire Planning Scheme (2005). The town is surrounded by leasehold land (state owned). Tenure is the single greatest limitation to incorporating growth within Chillagoe and has not been adequately addressed in either local or regional planning initiatives.

Kagara purchased the Red Dome mine on the outskirts of Chillagoe and commenced mining in 2003. The labour associated with the mine at the time was initially housed in the township and commuted to their usual place of residence at the completion of their roster. Exploration activities increased in the area in about 2003, this saw drilling contractors utilizing low cost tourism accommodation facilities and Kagara Ltd purchasing a Motel to house staff. According to Elliott Whiteing and Associates (2007), Chillagoe’s housing stock was at capacity with exploration and surveying crews with no houses available for purchase or rent. The caravan park was also booked for the coming 18 months which in turn led to a reduction in tourist accommodation to service the tourism industry that employs local residents.

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However in 2007 Kagara ramped up its development activity and constructed a 300 person workers camp on the outer boundary of the Chillagoe township. The leasehold tenure surrounding the township has been the main limitation to further growth in Chillagoe, despite attempts by the then Mareeba Shire Council (Elliott and Whiteing and Associates 2006) to have the state tenure converted. Any expansion of the township boundary would require consideration of tenure or alternative lease arrangements with the Queensland government to address growth.

In 2009 Mungana Open Pit Development (MGOPD) a wholly owned subsidiary of Kagara Ltd undertook a Voluntary EIS (pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act 1994) to develop an open cut gold mine above an already existing underground polymetallic mine. This new development would also utilise the existing camp accommodation. Public consultation associated with the Social Impact Assessment of the EIS (Cummings Economics 2010) confirmed the five aforementioned implications of resource development in close proximity to remote settlements. These are discussed in turn.

Flyover effects: The township has a limited range of retail outlets. As a consequence the fuel outlet and hotels receive the bulk of the benefits from the resource development and workforce. All other supplies and services are externally sourced and transported through the township to the camp and mine site.

High social cost of development: The township has limited social infrastructure and what is available is
Discussion

One of the major limitations to quantifying the population impacts of temporary or FIFO populations is in the collection of ABS data. This data collection does not recognize the impost that ongoing temporary residents have upon community infrastructure and is not used to investigate or support the need to accommodate growth through residential development. Planners and policy makers utilise estimated or enumerated population figures to project population and plan for infrastructure. In this instance it is the cities or the areas that the temporary residents come from that receive the infrastructure benefits and not where they work. Remote settlements are typically characterised as being highly disadvantaged because of their location due to their ability to access goods and services and opportunities for social interaction (ABS 2001). The disadvantage is further exacerbated by the increased pressure placed upon the limited range of social and physical infrastructure by the workforce associated with resource developments and an inability to capture the benefits associated with an established residential population.

The state government through the various pieces of legislation associated with exploration and mining foster industry development and concentrate on mitigating environmental impacts. The resource sector is highly vulnerable to metal and commodity market fluctuations and require flexible regulations. Similarly remote resource settlements require flexibility in planning mechanisms to capture benefits from the resource sector.

The regionalisation strategies proposed by the Queensland and Australian governments does not address how these resource regions will be planned to take advantage of development opportunities. The FNQ Regional Plan and the Mareeba Shire Planning Scheme (2009) preclude the expansion and contraction of the spatial boundaries associated with the remote settlement of Chillagoe. The current approach undertaken in planning and through the EIS process reinforces the ‘deregionalisation’ of resource regions and the growth of urban areas. This application of urban theory reinforces the growth of the urban based industrial resource economy and further exacerbates the dependency of remote communities on external capital transfers (welfare) and business development.

Opportunities for creating self sustaining and resilient remote communities are impeded through conflicting policy approaches to regional development. Remote settlements become increasingly dependent upon capital transfers from governments to address escalating pressures upon limited social infrastructure from the impacts of resource developments. These are rarely addressed as the ABS census data is unable to capture the population dynamics of the resource workforce upon remote settlements. The resident population numbers are applied to determine budgets

provided on the basis of the 226 resident population. This results in one police officer, one nurse at the community health facility, and volunteer ambulance bearers and emergency workers. In 2008 (July to November) construction activities were intensified in relation to processing infrastructure associated with existing approvals. A range of social disturbances were experienced at the height of this construction phase whereby the pre construction calls per month upon the police station increased significantly. These calls were related to alcohol and drug related disturbances, drink drivers, assault and willful and property damage. This necessitated an additional police officer to be called in to assist in keeping law and order in the township. The results of the consultation in relation to the MGOPD EIS expressed concern that these would be repeated. The behavior of the contractors (not to be confused with mine employees) confirms Carrington et al’s (2010) assertions regarding behavior of non local populations. The community’s proposed mitigation strategy to address this problem included greater opportunities for the community and employees to socialize such as through sporting fixtures.

Inability to raise revenue: The resource developments occur on leasehold land and any rates are paid to the Local Government, with royalties paid to the state. The LGA pay for the upkeep of the airport used for FIFO staff and all other local infrastructure such as water, parks and rubbish.

Transport Infrastructure: The road out of Chillagoe is not fully sealed despite the presence of Kagara and trucks that carry ore from Kagara to Mt Garnet on a daily basis in the dry season months. Results from consultation indicated that the community felt that with the addition of the MGOPD that the MGOPD should upgrade the road. This request was specifically made to ensure road safety of foreign and caravanning tourists to the Chillagoe caves was not compromised and that improved accessibility would in turn increase tourism visitation to the area and sustain the local economy subsequent to mine activity. However, the MGOPD proposed to use the airport to transport employees and gold bullions, and as a consequence there would be minimal impact on the road infrastructure.

Cumulative Effects: Chillagoe is within the highly prospective North East Minerals Province (Welters 2010). Resource developments that are subject to either the Voluntary EIS (Environmental Protection Act) and Significant Project status under the State Development Public Works Organisation Act 1971 are required to address cumulative impacts. The social and economic impacts associated with exploration activities are not regulated or mitigated, nor are the opportunities to supply services to this industry able to be realised due to limited available land and associated infrastructure. There are literally hundreds of exploration permits within a 100km radius of Chillagoe.
for limited government revenue expenditure in remote areas and the community suffers as a consequence which further reinforces perceptions of marginality and helplessness.

An integrated government policy approach is required to address how the opportunities associated with resource developments can be accessed by remote communities to reverse their economic decline. These policies should as a matter of priority address:

- Policy approach to location that recognises different needs of remote, rural and urban areas.
- Creation of tenure and policy approach to incorporate mine workers accommodation within settlements consistent with community aspirations.
- Flexibility with land use planning approaches to permit the expansion and contraction of townships and the inclusion of industrial and commercial designations to reduce economic leakages from remote resource regions.
- Integrated policy approach to regional planning – particularly regionalisation strategies.
- Local planning scheme review should inform the regional plan and address the local limitations to growth.

**Conclusion**

Regional planning and regionalisation policy initiatives undertaken by the state have failed to consider the dynamics of the relationship between resource industry and the remote regions in which they operate. This paper has argued that this failure is in part attributed to limited theoretical and policy analysis of the characteristics of remote communities, the settlements they inhabit and the regional economic system that they sustain themselves within. The attention of policy is focused upon gaining efficient use of natural resources and helplessness.


Stakeholder perceptions of the impact of the declaration of an Urban Development Area in Moranbah – how sustainable will the outcomes be?

Abstract
Moranbah is a rural mining town experiencing severe housing stress. In an effort to expedite the delivery of affordable housing, the Queensland State Government declared 1218 hectares of Moranbah, Queensland as an Urban Development Area in July 2010. Urban Development Areas declared elsewhere have not been met with enthusiasm by all, with accusations of a creep towards state dominance in planning. The nature of power and politics in modern day society needs to be considered to understand these accusations. Governance has replaced government and dictates community participation, but community consultation does not always produce sustainable planning outcomes. Concrete outcomes need to be identified to evaluate the success of community participation programs. This paper addresses the apparent gap in town planning literature as to whether or not State intervention in rural resource towns, such as Moranbah, would lead to sustainable planning outcomes. It provides not only evidence from the literature, but also stakeholder data to argue the case against indiscernimate State intervention.

Introduction
’… it’s a funny place, it really is a bit of an oasis in the middle of nowhere and you don’t realise it till you come here and have a look at the place. I mean, everyone says they are before they come here they think it’s just going to be this tiny mining town with nothing.’ (Andy).

Moranbah is a modern rural mining town, one of the three Urannah Development Company coal towns established in north Queensland alongside Blackwater and Dysart in 1973 (Feeston, 2010). It has been experiencing housing problems such as high costs, limited supplies, variable standards and a mismatch between housing types and needs (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2009). Isaac Regional Council (IRC) approached the State Government for assistance (Urban Land Development Authority, 2010a) and as a result 1218 hectares of land in Moranbah was declared an Urban Development Area (UDA) in July 2010 (Urban Land Development Authority, 2010b). There are no legislative criteria for the nomination of a site to be declared a UDA, although sites are typically in high growth areas experiencing housing pressures (Urban Land Development Authority, 2008).

The problems in Moranbah are typical of those in several other rural resource towns in Queensland where Local Governments are battling to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing (Urban Land Development Authority, 2010c), and dealing with the resultant employment and social problems. The establishment of the Urban Development Authority (UDA), under the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 was a Queensland State Government effort to address these problems. The UUDA was set up to expedite the delivery of affordable housing through the process of declaration of Urban Development Areas (UDAs) in identified problem areas. The UDDA effectively takes over the role of the assessment authority (McGrath, Armstrong, & Marovina, 2004). This current viewpoint has led to the burgeoning of stakeholder groups and a focus on planning of citizen participation (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003) where the emergent policy structures are open to much higher levels of scrutiny by stakeholders and citizens (McGrath, Armstrong & Marovina, 2004).

In spite of these changes in societal views, the authors argue there are remnants of bureaucratic paternalism evident in planning policy and systems in Queensland, paternalism being defined as an action that is taken with the intention of benefiting the individual or group, but without their informed consent (Carlson & Nilholm, 2006). It is clear that planning systems and outcomes reflect the dynamics between planning, power and politics (Healy, 2010). In the 1970s it was argued that planning systems and outcomes are a tool of the state, and decision-making power was thus in the hands of the economic elite (Healy, 2010). Currently, a new and transformational role for planning has emerged in response to calls made by the United Nations, the World Bank, scholars and the World Planners Congress (Young, 2008). This new rights-based approach (Murray, Tshabangu, & Erlank, 2010) to participation in the planning process holds that citizens are entitled to be active participants in the quest for finding solutions to problems that affect them. It is acknowledged that the specific form of community involvement is context specific and time and place specific, local social, economic and environmental context is a critical factor (Beder, 1996; Pini & McKenzie, 2006). The local context in small towns differs substantially from those in big cities and unique challenges and opportunities are presented to the authorities involved in planning in small towns (Sanoff, 2000).

In situations where external policies and regulations (as is the case here) determine the management of resources in rural towns, it is important that these areas not be undermined, as there are clear links between the quality of food, water, the environment and rural sustainability (Rogers & Jones, 2006). Especially in the case of external intervention, the role of Local Governments in rural towns should be acknowledged, since generalised bodies of authority (such as the UDDA) without state intervention can be a second role in the management of resources in rural towns (Sanoff, 2000). Local Governments play an important role in the sustainability of small towns due to their geographical and relationship proximity to the community (Martin, 2006) and they are crucial members of any development partnerships (Griffith & Curtin, 2007).

The question can then be asked what do legitimate town planning outcomes mean at the Local Government level, where all these policies, programs and initiatives ‘come together and get enacted’ (Verma, 2010, p. 399). Local Governments play an important role in the sustainability of small towns due to their geographical and relationship proximity to the community (Martin, 2006) and they are crucial members of any development partnerships (Griffith & Curtin, 2007). In addition, they are more likely to effectively and efficiently involve communities in sustainable practices and approaches (Whelan, 2007). The term ‘community’ is ‘synonymous with the very essence of planning’ (Campbell, 2005, p. 517). Rooting society towards sustainable planning outcomes (as is the case here) requires Local Governments to need to transfer to communities.
Theoretical frameworks

Theoretical concepts that were relevant to this research included ‘Self-determination theory’, ‘Causal agency Theory’, and more briefly ‘Social Production of Space Theory’ and ‘Communicative Planning Theory’. Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework.

Democracy is underpinned by the assumption that typical citizens have a right, and are qualified, to govern themselves and their communities (Karlsson & Nilholm, 2006). Main stream sociology has strong influences on planning theory, also in the area of stakeholder participation (Watson, 2008). The right to determine group and personal outcomes is described by ‘Self-determination Theory’ which emerged from the philosophical doctrine of determinism. Determinism posits ‘that events, in this context human behaviour and actions, are effects of preceding causes’ (Wehmeyer, 2004, p.260). Clements (2004, p. 60) defines the term self-determination as ‘The ability of people to name, create and control their own history….(here) the “self” of self-determination refers to groups of people’.

The authors argue here that this theoretical framework can be applied to stakeholder participation and involvement in town planning but the question should be asked whether it holds true if there are still strong paternalistic overtones in the approaches of state, local government and other governmental bodies. Research on self-determination has highlighted the significance of environments and situations that provide decision-makers the opportunity to support community autonomy, which leads to high levels of self-determination and more adaptive cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes (Vallerand & Pelletier, 2008). The prevailing culture and characteristics of the context in which individuals or communities find themselves play an important part in motivation (Vallerand & Pelletier, 2008) and can be seen in the image that the group ascribes to themselves. This image can be an obstacle to community development, especially if the community or parts thereof deem themselves to be victimised or oppressed (Clements, 2004). Added to that is the fact that group motivation can change over time, which has an important impact on how people achieve more adaptive outcomes and a more meaningful life situation during different stages of a process (Vallerand & Pelletier, 2008). Decisions need to be made by the people most affected by the outcome, and communities need to retain and maintain the maximum possible control over what happens in their communities (Clements, 2004).

‘Causal Agency Theory’ expands on self-determination theory by explaining how people and groups can become more self-determined (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 351). ‘Causal’ refers to the interaction of cause and effect; ‘causal action/behaviour’ to ‘action or behaviour that is purposeful, planned and intentional’ (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 353). ‘Capability’ refers to the capacity of the different stakeholder groups and ‘challenge’ refers to
the specific event or conditions that require a group to address a problem or threat (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 353). To this a third dimension is added, that of Causal Affect which refers to the emotions that regulate human behaviour (Wehmeyer, 2004).

An additional theoretical dimension relevant in this research project pertains to sustainable planning outcomes can be determined or measured. Lefebvre’s (2009) theory of the Social Production of Space emphasises that decisive, concrete or material outcomes are necessary to measure the effectiveness of stakeholder consultation processes. Outcomes need to be defined in terms of the following: place specificity, face-to-face relationship between planners and stakeholders, period of time, mutual responsibility and social learning, relationship between knowledge and action, and prevalence in all stages of planning, from pre-project to post-project (Carp, 2004).

Communicative Planning Theory is an emerging post-modern paradigm aimed at social justice and environmental sustainability (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). It is argued that the problems arising from democracy can be solved through argument (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002), resulting in a case for transformative argument rather than the dominance based on numbers found in democracy. It is relevant in this situation where planning decisions are made by democratically elected members of government at two levels, namely the state and local government level. Communicative planning theory ‘aims to replace scientific and technical information as the source of planners’ decisions with public deliberation, democratic debate and local knowledge’ in effect resisting dominance and creep by the formal economy and government (Watson, 2008, p. 227).

Methodology

This paper is the synthesis of a largely qualitative research project that included a comprehensive review of current literature on stakeholder consultation, sustainable planning outcomes and governance; and the data collected during twenty face-to-face interviews supplemented by data collected through the use of questionnaires completed by the twenty interviewees.

The population or the target group about whom we wanted to develop knowledge (Punch, 2006) was Councillors, Council Officials, business owners and representatives from community organisations. Purposive sampling was used to sample deliberately (Punch, 2006) according to the logic of the research. Primary data was collected on site through elite interviews and self-administered questionnaires from key stakeholders representing several major stakeholder groups.

The aim with the data collection was to achieve depth of richness of the data. Validity and reliability were addressed during the design and execution of the research: the richness of the data, different question types in the questionnaires, quasi-statistics, investigation of discrepant evidence and the use of Nvivo9 to confirm the initial themes or categories observed.

Major findings

There is clear evidence in the literature of a link between successful stakeholder consultation processes and sustainable planning outcomes. The major findings of this research project are based on weighing the results of the data analysis against the criteria for effective stakeholder consultation and sustainable planning outcomes revealed in current literature. These criteria include place specificity of planning strategies, the relationship between the major stakeholders, the duration of the government intervention, the timing of stakeholder participation and the decision-making power.

The major finding is that the State intervention through the declaration of a UDA will not lead to sustainable planning outcomes in Moranbah. The lack of frontloading of stakeholder participation during the stage leading up to the declaration of the UDA, coupled with the shortened time frames for submissions will negatively impact on stakeholder participation. This conclusion was strengthened by the observation of a significant lack of trust in the motives and competency of all levels of government, to which is added significant distrust in the motives and competency of all levels of government in the motives of the mining companies, making the stakeholders less likely to accept or abide by this State intervention. The remnants of paternalism in the Local Government compound this problem, leading to distorted stakeholder participation patterns and poor decision-making by decision-makers, which in turn lead to non-sustainable planning outcomes. Other interpretations were ruled out through the involvement of a variety of stakeholder groups and the collection of rich data to ensure that valid conclusions could be drawn.

State Government and politicians elicit low levels of trust from all participant groups, ranging from total distrust in politicians in general, to doubt as to whether the State Government actually cared about the well-being of the non-mining sectors in Moranbah (Figure 3). Much of the distrust in the State
Government stemmed from the perceived corruptness of the relationship between the Government and the mining industry, and the view that the mining industry dictates to Government. The FIFO-issue was of particular concern, with predictions that it will impact greatly on the composition of the Moranbah population. The perception was that the more the mines implement FIFO, the less they will be committed to the local communities. This contrasts with the perception of the residents that the town is starting to ‘mature’, with people wanting to retire there and a desire for improved facilities, such as a tertiary education institution. This long-term vision for the town is currently marred by an atmosphere of fear brought about by issues such as the application by one of the mines to have a 100 percent Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workforce and the mining operations moving closer to town. Moranbah is perceived by participants as the dominant town in the IRC area due to the quality of services provided, and the relatively long history of the town which has resulted in several three-generation families living in town.

Only 16 percent of the participants were of the opinion that the State Government (through the ULDA) would do a better job than IRC steering development in Moranbah and only 10 percent of the participants was of the opinion that the State Government/ULDA would heed their wishes in future development decisions.

Lack of confidence in Council was reported with 86 percent of participants only rating Council in the ‘Some competence’ category (Figure 3). Lack of communication between the different stakeholder groups was reported to exacerbate the problem and people feared the outcome of the direction that the development of the town is taking.

Stakeholder consultation is deemed to be ‘Quite important’ or ‘extremely important’ in principle but 90 percent of the participants rated the current necessity ‘Extremely high’ (Figure 4). Participants identified obstacles preventing effective and efficient stakeholder consultation in general and in Moranbah specifically. The passivity of the community was ascribed to lack of confidence, self-interest, ineffective processes and the need for leadership.

**Recommendations**

Future research could include a longitudinal study of community involvement in planning in Moranbah and the determination of concrete planning outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of such community involvement. It could also be expanded to include similar towns such as Roma and Blackwater, that were subject to UDA declarations at the same time as Moranbah, to lend greater validity to findings.

The following brief recommendations may be considered:

- Training in current governance models for senior staff and councillors in order to move beyond paternalistic, bureaucratic approaches in planning. It is important that the limitations of democracy be realised and managed. This could be augmented by greater exposure to current planning practice for all parties involved in planning and decision-making.

- Following on from the previous point, the establishment of permanent stakeholder consultation strategies and processes in Moranbah, preferably including all sectors of stakeholders, including the mines, unions and State Government. The nature of the stakeholder consultation program should be considered, with the possibility of a layered system that would enable people to participate at a level, to an extent and in a format that they feel comfortable with.

- The disconcerting fact that worldwide very few mining towns remain sustainable after the closure of mines (Tuck, et al., 2005) should be addressed at a strategic level, taking the whole of IRC into consideration.

**Conclusion**

The answer to the question whether the declaration of the UDA was thus ‘a rare occasion’ where paternalistic decision-making was acceptable is ‘No’. The ULDA may well be the ‘top-down, decide-announce-defend government arrangement’ (Whelan, 2007) it was labelled by other communities where UDAs had been declared prior to the declaration of the Moranbah UDA. It seems to provide one more example of plans and policies ‘done for rural Australia but not
by it” (Rogers & Jones, 2006, p. 12). Secondly, the answer to the question if decision-making in the UDA process was based on a self-determination model (Karlson & Nilhøm, 2006) that would lead to sustainable planning outcomes, is also ‘No’. Indications are that indiscriminate application of State intervention procedures does not produce sustainable planning outcomes, especially in unique rural areas such as Moranbah. These early warning signs should be heeded in the application of similar interventions in other rural towns.

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Mining companies and their role in resource community development: implications and challenges for planning practice and housing policy

Cat Wilson

The Bowen Basin has been the source of a sustained resources boom in Queensland since early 2004. Increased housing demand as a result of an intensification of mining activity within the region has driven up house prices and rents. Housing availability and affordability are highly topical contemporary policy concerns within Australian planning literature, however seldom does this work explore these issues in the context of resource towns (Haslam McKenzie et al. 2010). Similarly, there is a broad consensus within industry that mining companies have an active role in facilitating local development through corporate-community investment, however there remains uncertainty as to how much they should invest in resource communities without taking on responsibilities that are traditionally within the realm of the state. These apparent silences demand greater understanding about how mining company involvement in housing provision is manifest, along with the implications and challenges for planning and regional development policy that are raised by this involvement.

Background

This article is based on an eight-month honours research project undertaken by the author, which sought to examine the contemporary role of mining companies in resource community development. This research was explored through a case study of the delivery of housing infrastructure by mining companies within the Australian coal mining region of the Bowen Basin, Queensland. Primary data was collected through 14 semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel from the local mining industry, state and local government, and key community stakeholders. Document review and participant observation was used as a means to cross check the implication of primary interviewee data (Hay 2005).

The role of mining companies in housing provision

Most mining companies assist their workforce and the broader community in attaining housing and accommodation through a range of formal and informal housing policies. These include:
- Private workforce accommodation provision and subsidisation policies (e.g. on-site accommodation (FIFO-DIDO), local rental or purchasing subsidies);
- Internal company employment policies and plans (e.g. preferring local resident labour first);
- Public-private land and housing development partnerships (e.g. with local governments and commercial housing providers); and
- Public-private community services partnerships and plans (e.g. provision of home and employment to community workers e.g. doctors).

The range of these housing strategies demonstrates that mining companies have considerable interest in - and control over - the provision of housing infrastructure to resource communities in the Bowen Basin. The mix reflects several factors, including a change in tax and regulatory environment in Queensland, which has led mining companies to employ accommodation models with a greater focus on operational costs rather than a capital focus. It also caters for the increasing lifestyle-related preferences of employees who may choose to live locally or prefer to live in coastal localities or even interstate. The provision of housing by mining companies also attempts to address the displacement of broader community members who, without the ‘mine salary’ or employer support, are more vulnerable in a housing pressure environment. This role is typically always undertaken through public-private partnerships (e.g. with local governments, commercial organisations or local community housing providers) and may be viewed as a positive example of industry partnerships driven by corporate social responsibility (CSR) considerations.

However, from a planning perspective, the housing strategies adopted by mining companies are ad-hoc, isolated and reactive. In most cases, broader community provision is driven pragmatically by individual mining companies out of recognition for the need to secure miners, and key service workers (e.g. doctors, teachers) for their local workforce. This involvement is thus not without impact, whereby the housing strategies adopted by mining companies present a number of significant challenges for planning and regional development policy.

Community sustainability

Investment in temporary accommodation strategies by most mining companies has been used as a ‘quick fix’ solution to the prevailing shortage of housing availability in the Bowen Basin. This strategy has been accompanied by an increased reliance on Fly-in Fly-out (FIFO) and Drive-in Drive-out (DIDO) practices to support mine activities. Village accommodation is viewed by industry as more economically viable than investment in permanent housing, as it is able to be relocated depending upon the resource cycle and commodity prices. The use of cyclical and temporary initiatives however, contributes to a lack of confidence in the long-term future of most mining towns within the Basin. There is concern about the increasing preference of mining companies for village accommodation in place of permanent accommodation. In Blackwater for example, the reverse of village accommodation by mining companies is attributed to creating a perception that Blackwater is a ‘temporary place’, where the long-term implication of such provision is likely to see the permanent population become a minority group to transient workers. These initiatives have also had broader regional effects whereby issues of intra-regional labour market shortages and housing affordability occur not only in mining towns, but also the coastal or regional towns with significant FIFO and DIDO populations.

Resource allocation - planning for transient populations

The involvement of mining companies in housing delivery also presents challenges to infrastructure planning due to the technical difficulties in reporting the ‘real’ population of mining communities. This originates from the scale of FIFO workforce use and the provision of temporary village accommodation by mining companies to cater for their workers. For example, although FIFO workers may spend half of their time within the mining town community, such as Moranbah, these people are not counted in the Census population numbers for the community. Rather, transient workers report that their ‘usual’ place of residence is their primary home ‘coastal’ address, despite their place of actual residence for six months or more to be in the Bowen Basin. This trend is important from a planning perspective in Queensland, since the provision of future services and infrastructure is set by resident population statistics. This has serious implications for local government, in that local councils with high transient worker activity must draw on a resource allocation for service provision which is not proportionate to the resident population. There is thus a need to report the ‘real’ population of mining communities by analysing cross-sectional datasets and developing temporal data on intra- and inter-regional workforce migration which covers the start-up, operational, wind down and closure phases of mineral development (Wilson and Morrison, 2011). Since 2006, the Queensland Government has sought to address the problem of estimating the demand for services in the Basin through the reporting of full-time equivalent (FTE) population estimates for localities within the Bowen Basin. FTE population estimates account for the non-resident population, taking into account the non-resident workers living in the area while rostered.
on. While refinement of the measure is still needed, the use of FTE population datasets undoubtedly provides planners with an improved understanding of the spatial and temporal dimensions of movement, and their effects on services, infrastructure and community futures (Bell 2001).

Implications for governance

In light of continued housing market failure within the Bowen Basin, the Queensland Government, through the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), declared the establishment of Urban Development Areas (UDA) in both Moranbah and Blackwater. The ULDA is a statutory authority under the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007 and is tasked to ‘plan, carry out, promote or co-ordinate the development of land in declared urban development areas’ (ULDA 2010, p.1). The ULDA emerges in the absence of an existing planning and governance mechanism in the region that could effectively address housing affordability and land development. While previously only focusing on the development of urban land in Brisbane and Mackay, the establishment of the ULDA in Moranbah and Blackwater is expected to assist in meeting the housing pressures from growth in the resources sector by bringing land to the market more quickly and delivering an increased diversity of housing. The declaration of the involvement of the ULDA in both Moranbah and Blackwater highlights the limitation of mining companies to address wider housing problems in regional areas, instead requiring a ‘network governance’ approach involving inter-sectoral collaboration and the contribution of multiple actors (Phillips 2010, p.3).

Strategic planning

Despite evidence of a more co-ordinated approach to housing issues, as seen through the establishment of the ULDA, there has been no overarching strategic regional plan that identifies the future infrastructure priorities specific to the Bowen Basin. Rather, the Bowen Basin had fallen under the regional land use plans of the statutory Central Queensland Regional Growth Management Framework 2002 and the non-statutory Whitsunday hinterland and Mackay Regional Plan. The Bowen Basin is thus characterised by a pluralised, fragmented and non-statutory planning landscape, whereby social infrastructure planning has previously been undertaken by individual mining companies, with a profit motive considered first, the need to maintain a social license to operate, second. This highlights the need for greater commitment by both government and mining companies to plan for the long-term strategic future of resource communities. This plan needs to establish a framework within which social and economic infrastructure development, specific to the needs of mine-affected resource towns in the region, can be considered and assessed. This will then set the enabling framework according to which specific policy instruments and other mechanisms to address the social infrastructure needs of mining communities can be designed.

Conclusions

Housing affordability and availability are not just an urban phenomenon. Within the Bowen Basin, these issues operate within the context of a sustained resources boom. This paper has highlighted that mining companies have considerable interest in – and control over-the provision of housing infrastructure to the rural communities in which they operate. As a result, regional planning and development is occurring through pragmatic commercial decisions, with only occasional consideration to planning policy where it exists.

The involvement of mining companies in housing provision has raised challenges for planners and government as never before. How can we strengthen regional planning framework and define a role for government and the corporate sector? What more, our understanding of mining company impact on planning and regional development policy in this paper has been framed through one small part of their involvement in rural and community development. Mining companies make significant contributions to other areas of local development including health and education and, in some cases, the direct provision of community infrastructure such as police stations and sporting facilities. Only through transparent and open dialogue between government, mining companies and community can we begin to clarify the level of responsibility of these corporate actors for planning and service delivery in these areas.

Cait Wilson is a graduate planner with Parsons Brinckerhoff. She won a Minister’s Town Planning Prize in 2011 for her thesis, which forms the basis for this article.

References


Food, fresh air, and money: finding balance in a mining boom

Geoff Mullins

The global issues of economic stability, food security and the environment are in constant conflict and there are few places the conflict is more in focus right now than across Queensland. The individual objectives of mining, agriculture and environmental protection, are clearly not working well together and there are calls for immediate action.

The so called ‘mining boom two’ is underway and it promises economic growth, jobs and good times for communities across the state, but the upbeat news is slowly fading behind a cloud of concern. Concern for the environment, concern for the future of our food producing farms and concern that the promised economic prosperity is backfiring amid claims local businesses are suffering with social dysfunction setting in. Not a day goes by without another headline about another problem centred on the coal rush.

Coal and coal seam gas mines are now starting up in areas they’ve never been before, and it’s in those areas where people have invested heavily in their lifestyles and livelihoods over many decades that the stress is being felt most severely. In other areas where locals have lived near

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mines for decades, new issues are presenting significant challenges as the extent of mining increases.

The facts on current coal mines in Queensland are already staggering and in the next ten years we can expect more mind numbing statistics. The Bowen Basin alone comprises a major part of the state’s coal resources with 8.7 billion tonnes of premium hard coking coal of which 4 billion tonnes is suitable for open cut mining - the type of operation that impacts arable landscape.

The price of this type of coal has jumped nearly $US100 a tonne to $US330 in just the past year leading to big profits which are predicted to continue along with some big spending. BHP alone announced earlier this year they were committing to $US80 billion in expenditure through to 2015 to expand existing coal operations and develop new ones.

The next decade promises to be a very busy time in the Bowen Basin, and that’s even before the Galilee Basin mines to the west resolve how to get their coal to port - despite the first Galilee coal having left the area already.

A temporary solution to transport from Galilee was recently found by Hancock Coal who obtained approval
The Isaac Regional Council area west of Mackay takes
with the complications the mining influx is bringing.

At a local level, communities are struggling to deal
stop a mine you've lost from day one."

completely corrupt and if you're depending on that to
system. The whole EIS system in fact is corrupt,
all good agricultural land," Mr Hutton said.

"Firstly we need strategic planning legislation that
exempts certain areas from mining. We need to protect
sustain 26 mines. The predictions are that it will soon
be Australia's largest energy province covering an area
of 27,000 square kilometres with a proposed capital
expenditure of $140 billion. All of these operations
will mean billions of dollars for the Queensland
Government.

Although much of the chatter on the explosion in
mining is positive economic news, the underlying
mumble about the socio-economic and environmental
impact the mines are having on some communities is
making alarm bells start to - well at least, tinkle.

Senate committee hearings recently heard the coal seam
gas industry would take away $2 billion in value from
farmland in southern Queensland and in the midst
of the Carbon Tax debate Greens leader Bob Brown
declared that the coal industry's demise "has to be the
outcome" (in the fight against carbon) and called for a
stop to all coal mining in Australia.

A less drastic pronouncement came from veteran
Queensland environmentalist and president of the
Lock the Gate Alliance, Drew Hutton, who has called
for new policies from both Labor and the LNP, and
new legislation from the government, to ensure
Queenslanders and their environment are not pillaged
for short-term gain.

"Firstly we need strategic planning legislation that
exempts certain areas from mining. We need to protect
all good agricultural land," Mr Hutton said.

"What is not properly legislated is the current EIS
system. The whole EIS system in fact is corrupt,
completely corrupt and if you're depending on that to
stop a mine you've lost from day one."

At a local level, communities are struggling to deal
with the complications the mining influx is bringing.
The Isaac Regional Council area west of Mackay takes
in many of the mining towns in the Bowen Basin
including Moranbah where mining has been operating
for forty years.

Isaac's Executive Director, Planning and Environment,
Scott Riley insists the council has a handle on what's
happening but simply doesn't have the resources to be of
any influence.

"We make representations but we are the small gold fish
in the big pond, and the barracudas of international
global business sometimes ignore us - and sometimes eat
us alive," Mr Riley said.

"Resources are the key and we don't have a tremendous
support from industry or government. We have 49,000
square kilometres in our patch and effectively two
people dealing with every mining operation in the area."

While Scott Riley insists his council is doing what it can
for the local communities he says the complications are
significant.

"There are environmental ones, socio-economic ones.
To give you an example in Dysart tonight 55% of the
community is non-resident workers. So you have a
minority group of locals in their own town. We have
local businesses under significant duress because the
local spend is actually contracting but the community is
physically growing."

Mr Riley's environmental concerns for the region centre
on the methodology the big miners are allowed to
employ to extract what he says is the best coking coal in
the world. He says with open cut mining, there is a long
term environmental degradation challenge.

"Peak Downs mine has been operating for thirty years
now and on their rehabilitation sites a gecko still can't get
a cut lunch. At the Eagle Downs pit, my 11 year old son
will not live long enough to see the water tables return
to normal. Their modelling shows it'll be 120 years.

"There's a bit of inequity going on with environmental
management. They're jamming the cane farmers on the
coast for environmental compliance yet when you stand
back and say holy cow how many mines are operating
within the basin that are draining into the Fitzroy.

"Look what happened when the pit at the Ensham mine
filled with water, they were allowed to discharge it and it
killed every fish from here to the reef off Rockhampton.

"We are very concerned that it's the fast buck - we are
not actually thinking about tomorrow. A good example
is the recent 'call in' of the Buffel Park accommodation
for BMA. 2,500 rooms - council went through the full
blown extensive third party consultation process with
the community, and then the Coordinator General's
department got involved. The Minister called it in and
is likely to approve exactly what the company wants
because it's the economics that override everything else.
We all know when we are broke we have very little
influence.

"We have a mining-agriculture-environment dilemma. The
question is: Can the planning system cope? According to
Environmental and Landscape Planning expert Professor
Darryl Low Choy from Griffith University it's not coping
because the processes are broken.
“Past planning processes have been incapable of delivering the desired outcomes of existing residents and interests in the rural and peri-urban areas. Worse still, when there is no enduring planning process in place conflicts remain unresolved,” Professor Low Choy said.

“The planning process should attempt to resolve future conflicts, provide certainty and safeguard people’s interests in a transparent and equitable manner.”

Professor Low Choy says measures such as environmental impact assessments and conflict resolution procedures are external to planning processes and are only designed to address single points of contention, single developments and their adversarial style only leads to “winners” and “losers”. They cannot deliver the positive planning outcomes that the community is seeking.

“We need to rethink the planning process for these areas – we have the means but do we have the will?”

With dozens of new mines opening up across Queensland in coming years, it’s no surprise consultants have a long list of mining companies as clients. Helen D’Arcy has been busy preparing Environmental Impact Statements. As Senior Environmental Engineer at Parsons Brinckerhoff she says dealing with the processes currently in place can be challenging.

“Each government department has certain legislation it is responsible for and sometimes two pieces of interrelated legislation may be held by two separate departments. At times the integration of requirements and priorities of the legislation and departments can be an issue because they won’t always be consistent with each other,” Ms D’Arcy said.

“Sometimes it’s just the people who are involved, sometimes it’s the politics, sometimes it’s the legislation. If the government’s internal processes were better aligned with consistent management frameworks in place, the development process would be smoother for all parties.

“There are still too many inconsistencies between legislative Acts and how these Acts are managed across Queensland. The departments are not all coming together in a coordinated or consistent fashion and that results from a mixture of politics, personalities, and history.”

Difficulties at the coalface in the development of new mines can be overlayed with a whole series of other issues not the least of which is the amount of agricultural land going to mines. When it comes to food security, it’s not just a matter of farmland being mined, it’s foreign investment in agriculture that could compromise national food security.

In an opinion piece for The Australian newspaper, Mr Laurie said there is potential for foreign state-owned enterprises to undercut Australian farmers by using their land acquisitions to ship produce back to feed their home populations.

“This raises the question of transparency in the supply chain, potentially jeopardising competition at the farm gate and depressing the local market. At an extreme level, this could also lead to Australia’s own food security goals being compromised,” he wrote.

Mr Laurie’s sentiments were backed by food security expert, fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and author of The Coming Famine, Julian Cribb. Mr Cribb told Queensland Planner the tendency for Australia to place mining and energy interests over the nation’s long term food security is disturbing.

“There is a general ignorance about food security issues on the part of government, society and the mineral industry. To sacrifice good farming land, groundwater and regional hydrology permanently – as often happens with large-scale mineral developments – is both ill-advised and risky,” Mr Cribb said.

“This is not to decry the importance of mining and energy, but it is to say that whenever a mining or extractive development is planned for an important agricultural or horticultural area, there should be a full and independent food security impact investigation to determine what will be lost by doing so. This should be based on the Brundtland principles of ensuring no harm is caused to future generations by today’s activities.”

The mining push is happening quickly and it would appear planning doesn’t yet have much influence on what’s happening with the mining-agriculture-environment mix. There is evidence immediate economic needs are taking priority over a more balanced longer term vision for Queensland. Action is needed and that action should start with a planning strategy built on a philosophy of cooperation and collaboration. We are reminded of the final comments from Professor Darryl Low Choy. “We need to rethink the planning process for these areas – we have the means but do we have the will?”
Planning to reach SEQ natural resource management plan targets

Stephen Kelhier

In 2009, the State Government released the South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan 2009-2031 (SEQ NRM Plan) in pursuit of Desired Regional Outcome 4 in the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 (SEQRP). This outcome sought that:

Regional natural resources and rural production areas are protected, managed, enhanced and used sustainably.

The SEQ NRM Plan “articulates measurable targets for the condition and extent of environment and natural resources” in the SEQ region. All well and good but what’s it talking about? What’s a natural resource? Surprisingly, the SEQ NRM Plan doesn’t say. As it flows from the SEQRP, it is reasonable to presume that it takes a similar view of natural resources as in that plan, where it is stated:

Natural resources include land, fresh and marine water, air, forests, minerals, native animals and plants.

This is rather different from the view of natural resources in the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (SPA), which defines the term as follows:

natural resources includes biological, energy, extractive, land and water resources that are important to economic development because of their contribution to employment generation and wealth creation.

Basically, SPA is only concerned with those parts of the natural world around us that someone can make a dollar from, while the SEQ NRM Plan takes a much wider view and essentially deals with everything in nature.

Although the SEQ NRM Plan sets targets for various things, it states up front that it “does not commit, or pertain to commit, government agencies to implement, fund or otherwise resource specific activities or programs”. The Plan sets out non-statutory targets for environmental and natural resource management issues under the following categories:

• Air and atmosphere;
• Coastal and marine;
• Community;
• Land;
• Nature conservation;
• Regional landscape areas;
• Traditional owners;
• Water.

The purpose of this article is not to provide a full summary and analysis of the SEQ NRM Plan but to take just one of its 41 targets as an example – that of vegetation cover – and see how planning schemes may be used to achieve that target.

Although planning schemes must reflect the SEQRP, it is not compulsory that they reflect the SEQ NRM Plan – rather, it is hoped there will be a collaborative effort from all levels of government and industry to achieve these targets, and that information flowing from the SEQ NRM Plan will “inform preparation of local government planning schemes”.

The target I have chosen as an example from the SEQ NRM Plan is “NC1 – Remnant and woody vegetation”, which states:

By 2031, the 2001 extent of regional vegetation cover – including both remnant vegetation (35%) and additional non-remnant woody vegetation (22%) – will be maintained or increased.

There are a few interesting things to note about this target. Firstly, it speaks of the “extent of regional vegetation cover” – i.e. it focuses simply on the number of hectares of vegetation, as opposed to biodiversity (in contrast to the soon-to-be-introduced shift in focus from vegetation to biodiversity when providing offsets). Secondly, it covers not just remnant vegetation but also non-remnant woody vegetation – therefore it deals with all areas of woody vegetation in SEQ, regardless of their rarity or biodiversity value. Thirdly, and most importantly, it targets the 2001 extent of this vegetation. Today, in 2011, there is less regional vegetation cover than there was in 2001, therefore to even maintain the 2001 extent of vegetation, the achievement of this target requires an increase in vegetation compared to that which is present now.

The question is how are planning schemes able to effect an increase in vegetation cover from what we see today (remembering, of course, that this is but one of 41 desired targets in the SEQ NRM Plan)?

Sampling some of the current SEQ planning schemes, it is not unexpected that they each deal with vegetation increase (as opposed to vegetation protection) in different ways:

• The Brisbane City Council’s planning scheme, like most, contains many references to retaining vegetation but few to increasing it. A number of Local Plans identify particular areas where revegetation is desired, principally along waterways to provide habitat areas and ecological corridors. Further, two codes specifically refer to a desire to revegetate significant habitat areas and ecological corridors.
• The desire to revegetate previously degraded areas is mentioned in the explanation to a Desired Environmental Outcome in Gold Coast City Council’s planning scheme, and in the Planning Objectives supporting its Nature Conservation Strategy. Revegetation of habitat linkages is one of the intents of the Public Open Space Domain, and is a desire in a number of Structure Plans in the Emerging Communities Domain. Similar aspirations are mentioned in a number of Local Plans and two codes.

• Ipswich City Council’s planning scheme, in numerous places, expresses a desire to revegetate waterway corridors and areas degraded by past mining activities.

• The Noosa Plan (current for the Sunshine Coast Regional Council) contains a Biodiversity Overlay which expresses a desire to not only rehabilitate wildlife corridors, vegetation links and riparian corridors, but to also replant and rehabilitate degraded ecosystems and habitat, and this is actioned by outcomes sought in the Landscaping Code.

Although planning schemes are, naturally, forward planning instruments, they cannot, by themselves, cause any change at all. They are reactive tools in the sense that they only have life if development occurs. Any achievement of the SEQ NRM Plan’s targets through planning schemes can therefore only occur if a developer accepts particular constraints upon its development. If those constraints are too severe, there will be a significant impact upon the viability of the project, and if the project does not proceed, there will be no progression at all towards any of the SEQ NRM Plan’s targets.

Any changes to planning schemes caused by attempting to achieve the SEQ NRM Plan’s targets may reduce the development potential of some properties, thus Council’s may expose themselves to compensation if they refuse a certain development after also refusing to assess that proposal under a superseded planning scheme.

Obviously though, planning schemes are but one tool by which the SEQ NRM Plan’s targets may be achieved, and it would be improper to attempt to move too rapidly towards these targets by planning schemes alone. Any property may have existing use rights and a certain development potential. It would be improper to severely curtail such development potential by changing planning schemes to attempt to achieve non-statutory targets.

It’s interesting to note that never before in the history of European settlement in Australia has a population increase also resulted in a vegetation increase, yet that is the goal of the State Government in SEQ between now and 2031!

Stephen Keliher, Special Counsel at McInnes Wilson Lawyers. Stephen holds a Master of Science degree in Natural Resource Management.
Distance may not only lend enchantment but also distort perceptions through wishful thinking. Because of this, the increased reach of modern technology has not supplanted the local scale at which we all live and experience our daily pleasures and frustrations. It has instead produced a magic carpet of Internet and air transport which moves us effortlessly between localities, cities, regions and nations. But must still alight in some welcoming or ugly place. And when we step off the carpet into such places, we find the many activities of modern life - housing, health, habitat, work, movement, learning, culture and community life – still nestling or jostling each other in often abrasive contact to create places which are not always healthy, interesting or sustainable.

Added to this challenge for planning, the fierce pace of change in the physical, social and economic worlds of the 21st century makes overall views of settlements, regions and societies, difficult to achieve solely from ground level. We live in both local and global communities.

Perspective and experience are therefore both needed and “mixed scanning” is required to focus attention on the needs of the locality while bearing in mind the poten-tialities and needs of the region, nation and world. Fortunately, this flexing of focus is an everyday human activity and a reflex reaction of community planning, which can work through the three fields of inclusion, collaboration, and integrated governance.

Inclusive communication and consultation among stakeholders and communities can identify, negotiate and trade objectives in ways which cannot be done with technical information. Consultation with practitioners in health, housing, economy, education and environment can later produce technically sound and phased programs of integrated and agreed change on the ground. Technical specialization and knowledge can thus be put into the service of recognized and shared social objectives. Queensland’s newly introduced statutory community plans can be one vehicle for this consultation and collaboration.

**Collaborative methods** can use a shared vocabulary and help recognise and solve key problems. The four simple phases of awareness, information, options and actions will allow each specialist to understand the needs and opportunities of others within annual and quinquenni-al budget and corporate plan programs.

**Integrated governance.** Twenty years ago we had too few plans: now we have too many. Integrated community plans can bring together the concerns, land uses and infrastructure needs of many different activities. Capacities for coherent planning are being developed within many activities. Current Commonwealth Government’s Medicare Locals should, for instance, provide for the first time an effective basis for local and regional health planning, bringing together community representatives, patients, practitioners, providers and funders to control the linked activities of general practice; home, aged and community care; mental health and addiction; and district hospitals. They could input health concerns and objectives into coherent community plans. Similar networks based on local, neighbourhood, district, city and regional levels could work with planners to integrate housing, work, transport and education as well as health planning with parks, play spaces, community services and shopping centres. Despite the current challenges of change, such coherent community planning can turn heart and mind into places that matter more than ever before.

*Phil Heywood is an Associate Professor at the School of Urban Development, Queensland University of Technology. Further details can be found in his new book Community Planning: integrating social and physical environments, brought out by John Wiley in Australia in June of this year.*
What drives outrage in the community?

Gerard Reilly

Whether planning a multi-billion dollar piece of infrastructure, a small residential subdivision or new planning policy – the way you engage and communicate with the local community is increasingly becoming a central factor in the successful delivery of the project.

So what drives outrage in the community? What is the most important factor for a successful engagement program? How does the community prefer to be engaged? Which does engagement better – the public or private sector?

One of Australia’s leading community engagement consultancies - BBS – sought to find the answers to these questions and more as part of its 2011 Community Engagement Survey.

BBS surveyed more than 40 community, environmental and interest groups throughout Queensland to identify the key drivers and preferences from a community perspective in an engagement process. The survey results provide a good insight into what motivates the community in an engagement context.

The survey focused on the elements that drive outrage in the community, together with their preferred feedback mechanisms.

The results showed there is still a lot of room for improvement for public and private sector organisations to meet the community’s expectations for best-practice engagement.

The survey revealed that a ‘tokenistic’ approach to engagement was more likely to drive outrage in the community than the potential impacts of the project itself. Outrage levels spike when engagement processes are seen to be not authentic or they perceive that the decision has already been made.

Another key finding was the realisation that organisations are very poor at providing a clear scope of what is on the table for discussion. They fail to clearly state which aspects of the project are negotiable and which are non-negotiable.

A key frustration for planners is that they struggle with unrealistic community expectations, but a lot of the time this is caused by not taking the time to properly outline which specific aspects can be influenced by the community.

Key findings of BBS’ Community Engagement Survey included:

**Substandard intent to engage creates most outrage**

The way in which community groups perceive the intent of projects when engaging is more likely to cause outrage than the way in which groups are engaged, or the impact of the engagement on the final decision.

One in four groups said the factor most likely to cause outrage was the intent of the community engagement, with 25% outraged when they believed the engagement was a token effort and 17% outraged when they believed the decision had already been made.

**Poor transparency about what’s non-negotiable**

Despite one in four saying that knowing the negotiables and non-negotiables were the most important factor for a successful engagement program, only 8% said they were often or always advised of the project non-negotiables.

**Hard copy feedback preferred to online**

Open-ended feedback forms in printed version were preferred over all other feedback methods, rating almost seven times more popular than website feedback forms.

**Keep it simple**

Community groups said they prefer more traditional, simple techniques such as face-to-face briefings, public meetings and telephone hotlines for engagement over more cutting edge or deliberative techniques such as citizen juries. These more popular techniques enabled community groups to ask questions from staff, which they found effective.

**Government vastly outperforms the private sector**

For the first time in the history of BBS’ community engagement survey, the government has been a clear winner over the private sector. Traditionally, the gap between the public and private sector has been small, with the winner changing from survey to survey.

**Online popularity increases but not for all**

Preference for online communication channels is growing by community groups for engagement, but not for all age groups and definitely not as a means for providing feedback from the community to project teams.

While 38% liked to receive information via online channels, only 9% prefer to provide feedback via websites.

Although those in their 30s preferred to receive information via online channels, respondents in their 40s were more likely to prefer face-to-face, while those in their 60s preferred print-based channels.

**We are not ‘closing the loop’**

Closing the feedback loop remains a challenge, with 84% of the respondents saying that organisations are either poor or average in informing the community about the feedback received and how it impacted on a decision.

BBS is closely affiliated with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) – the world’s leading community engagement organisation. Through this association BBS delivers a number of engagement training programs including the IAP2 Certificate Program and the recently launched Emotion, Outrage and Public Participation (EOP2) Program.

BBS Director Matthew Hart delivers the new EOP2 Program with the training drawing on expert Dr Peter Sandman’s strategies for managing outrage in engagement situations.

The training provides clear step-by-step processes on how to interact with outraged people so you can manage their emotions and move them to a space where you can actually have a real conversation about the issue.

The IAP2 training programs provide a best-practice framework to assist organisations engage with stakeholders and the wider community.

BBS also develops and implements engagement programs, having worked with organisations including the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA), the Department of Local Government and Planning, TransLink Transit Authority, the Council of Mayors SEQ and City North Infrastructure.

To download a complete copy of the survey results, visit the BBS website at www.bbscommunications.com.au or 07 3221 6711.

Gerard Reilly can be contacted at greilly@bbscommunications.com.au or 07 3221 6711.
Since its launch in July last year, Virtual Brisbane, Brisbane City Council’s 3D planning model, has proven to be an effective and invaluable planning resource. With the city set to experience a sustained period of growth over the next twenty years, Virtual Brisbane will become an even more important and powerful tool. With this in mind, Council is using Virtual Brisbane in its assessment of Major Built Form Projects (major projects involving significant built form or scale) within the model coverage area.

As the number of major developments increase over the coming two decades in line with projected growth across the city, Virtual Brisbane’s role in the development assessment (DA) process will, in particular, become much more prominent. Through Virtual Brisbane, Council can use applicant supplied digital three dimensional (3D) models as part of it’s assessment of development applications for Major Built Form Projects. The applicant supplied 3D models can be inserted into the Virtual Brisbane model, producing a realistic representation of a proposed building within the existing cityscape.

This allows Council to more thoroughly interpret plans and understand in greater detail, the impacts of proposed development. The integration of Virtual Brisbane with the DA process provides a robust visual analysis tool and is the latest example of Council’s commitment to ensuring new major development meets the highest possible standards and criteria. This use of Virtual Brisbane also allows the DA process to be further streamlined and more transparent.

Developed internally at Council, Virtual Brisbane is an accurate, geo-referenced, three-dimensional, textured model of all urban areas within a 5km radius of the Brisbane CBD. This coverage includes the areas of Brisbane experiencing the most prolific and frequent development change. It has also since been expanded to include the neighbouring planning areas of Indooroopilly, Chermside, Mt Gravatt and Racecourse Road. As the largest digital 3D urban model in the southern hemisphere, it encompasses approximately 100km², including 46 suburbs either wholly or partially, and contains approximately 40,000 independent built structures.

The 3D model is designed to provide urban planners with a tool integrated with GIS datasets, capable of real-time viewing, rendering and analysis. It allows the user to view, navigate and manipulate the 3D data within the program in a real-time virtual environment.

While Virtual Brisbane has been effective in Council’s neighbourhood planning, the use of the program in the DA process is enabling Council to ensure consistency in the comprehension of proposal plans and foster a better visual understanding of development.

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Postcard from Scotland

Mike McKeown MPIA

Here is a list of a few transport infrastructure projects from the past five years: Northern Busway, Gateway bridge number two, airport roundabout (twice), Clem7, railways to Varsity Lakes and Richlands, rebuilding the Ipswich motorway. There may have been some catching up to do, but there’s no doubt that a lot of infrastructure has been built (in the south east, at least). Decisions on these massive projects, whether you agree with them or not, have been rapid. By and large the infrastructure has been built quickly and without fuss. You could be forgiven for thinking this approach is normal everywhere.

Not so, of course. A return visit to Scotland this northern summer made that clear to me. The trip coincided with two transport infrastructure stories that I think are worth telling: the opening of an extension of the M74 motorway in Glasgow, and a storm around the Edinburgh Trams project.

The M74 extension comprises five miles of motorway through the deprived and polluted south east of Glasgow. It was considered the ‘missing link’ in the motorway network, and justified on the basis of bringing 20,000 jobs to the city and region. The road is also said to be crucial to plans for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The M74 extension was opened in June, ahead of time and budget according to the Scottish government. This is true…at least if you start counting from three years ago, when the construction contract was awarded.

The fuller explanation begins somewhat earlier, perhaps as long ago as 1945 when the road was first mooted. It was part of an extensive motorway system envisaged for the city. Such grand schemes were in vogue in Britain in those days (as they continue to be, in other places). Motorways extending east and west of Glasgow, via the city centre, were open by the early 1970s. But the experience of bulldozing existing neighbourhoods put a bad taste in the mouths of citizens. The south east link was dropped.

The proposal re-emerged in the 1980s and 90s, justified on economic development grounds as well as congestion-busting predictions. The M74 extension subsequently received planning permission in 1995. But opposition to the motorway was also strong. Environmental, community and public transport advocates joined to oppose the development, and a public inquiry recommended the scheme be cancelled. Arguments about whether it would be more polluting or less polluting to build the road, and whether the investment would be more effective in public transport, are often alien to Queensland’s infrastructure debates. In any case the government disagreed with the decision of the public inquiry, and construction finally began in 2008.

Over on the east coast, Edinburgh’s new tram system has been on the cards for some time. I witnessed construction in the streets three years ago. Tracks have been laid in Princes Street. It will be some time before trams run along them.

Incredibly, despite construction commencing in 2008, late June saw the city council vote on whether to scale back or even completely abandon the project. Abandon the trams for a total spend of £750m that is, or finish building it at a cost of £770m. And by finish it, I mean completing a hugely scaled down tram system. One line, from the airport to the city centre. This is about half the intended length of the line, and only one of three routes originally contemplated.

The vote was a serious one, and comes after years of problems. Contractual and management disputes have dogged the implementation of the trams. Locals have been scathing about the impacts of construction on businesses lining the route. All this has led to serious questions about whether to continue with the vision, or cut the city’s losses. In the end decision was to proceed. All the council has to do now is find an unbudgeted £200m to finish the job.

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- contribution to urban design outcomes at street and podium level
- CBD skyline analysis
- cumulative impacts of proposed built form changes.

Applicants can submit a 3D model at the following stages of the DA process and project implementation:

- at lodgement of the development application
- during the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) process, if significant external design changes are made, either by the applicant or in response to an information request. The Assessment Manager will confirm or decide when an updated model is required
- at the ‘as constructed’ stage.

In addition, 3D models provided at the ‘as constructed’ stage of a project will be inserted into the Virtual Brisbane model to maintain an up to date representation of the city, within the model coverage area, as it changes over time.

For industry, the use of Virtual Brisbane allows for better visualisation and thorough analysis of Major Built Form Projects, using state-of-the-art 3D technology. It gives applicants the opportunity to see the potential impact their development may have on its surrounds and further enhance their involvement in the DA process. Applicants also benefit from consistent, informed decision making.

With significant growth on the horizon, Brisbane is set for change. Council has been planning and preparing for this growth through neighbourhood planning and its enhanced DA process. It is also through improvements in new technologies such as Virtual Brisbane, that Council is able to develop planning strategies and make visual assessments of future development with involvement from industry. This planning will prove to be even more important in the coming two decades, with the city required to accommodate 156,000 new dwellings for Brisbane by 2031 under the Queensland Government’s South East Queensland Regional Plan.

This can only be achieved however by Council and industry continuing to work in partnership. Virtual Brisbane, an exciting technology that represents the future of planning, gives Council and industry another chance to strengthen this relationship.

For more information on Virtual Brisbane and the DA process, visit www.brisbane.qld.gov.au or phone Council on (07) 3403 8888.
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Finally dear readers I feel it is necessary to inform you of some future things planning that might come your way.

For planners, I think a good incentive for brevity would be a tax on words used in planning schemes. This would really make planners “say what they mean and mean what they say” (Thank you Dr Suess!) in as few words as possible, which as we know, is often a difficult task. Some planners often seem to have achieved a high distinction in “Introduction to Verbosity – 101” at their alma mater. Clearly there would need to be exemptions on planning related diatribe otherwise the value adding words of the people’s planner would go the way of the dodo.

Finally dear readers I feel it is necessary to inform you of some future things planning that might come your way.

It appears that the mother country (England) is toying with the idea of its Decentralism and Localism Bill which is all about making local decisions locally (see www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/decentralisationguide). Apparently the Bill will radically reform the planning system to give local people new rights to shape the development of the communities in which they live.

Last time I checked, involving the community in the development of planning schemes was a staple part of our planning diet, but anything that is good enough for the mother country is good enough for us. I say we should go one step further and reform the Australian planning system such that each individual is given the right to plan for their own piece of Australia. The result, I predict, would be nothing short of a utopian Shangri-la. I can just see individuals carefully considering the greater good and making sure that they do not maximise their own utility at the expense of others.

I can also see individuals ensuring the optimal location of services and facilities without disbenefits to others............... this will give planners a much needed break. I for one can’t wait to put down my Winsor & Newton coloured pencils and have time on my hands to pursue my related interests in tattling and Morris dancing....As one Robert Zimmerman once sang “the times they are a changin”.

Well dear readers as I sit here tapping away this message in Morse Code over the short wave radio I can sense the authorities closing in on me. Time to shut down transmission and assume deep cover. Until next time .............

The Peoples Planner !!!!

![Image of a person drawing with coloured pencils]

**Queensland Planner**

**Editorial**

Queensland Planner is published quarterly. It is supplied free to members of the Planning Institute of Australia (Queensland Division).

Contributions and letters should be sent to the editor, Mike McKeown qldplanner@qldplanning.org.au

0415 766814

The theme for the Summer 2011 edition is ‘Indigenous planning’.

- Contributions to be received by 31 October 2011.
- Other contributions that relate to current planning issues are also welcomed.
- Contributions should be between 1000 and 2000 words.
- Student contributions are to be sponsored by either a University Lecturer or a senior member of the profession.
- Illustrations, graphs and photographs are encouraged.
- Language should be direct, concise and targeted at a wide audience.

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I don't know why we do it, there is something burning and compelling in the words of the people's planner that some feel need to be let loose into print. Some say he does not have both oars in the water, others that he was never really interested in things nautical in any case. All we know is that last time we threatened to stop printing his missives some of the QP staff woke up with a horse's head in their beds. Clearly the people's planner is skilled in the art of subtle persuasion. It also seems that once again the people’s planner is trying to evade the authorities - this one came via Morse code over a short wave radio.

Tis that time again dear reader when I venture forth from my cloak of anonymity to proffer words of the wise to you. This edition dear reader I am informed that the planning profession needs my advice on resources and regions……………

What better way to describe a region or a town than through the way in which it expresses itself through a traditional harvest festival. One region in rural NSW for instance, identified in “World Hog News” as a place to be for the pork and smallgoods festival and the related beauty pageant which crowns a “Pork Princess”. Likewise another is on the map for its “Beef Week” harvest festival (mercifully I don't believe they have a resultant beauty pageant named after this one). The far northern rivers region of NSW is known for a Banana festival (with a Banana Queen), a Fish and Chip Festival and the Nimbin MardiGrass (not certain what resource they celebrate here or if there is a resulting beauty queen – there is a suggestion of a munchies Queen?). Queensland similarly has a Pumpkin Festival with its pumpkin pageant and the list goes on.

That's what puts a place on the map, good planners. A safari suited Prince Charles and many other celebrities will attest to having been drawn to a harvest festival on visits to our fair colony...........I think you may have already taken the next logical step and I don’t need to lead you the obvious synergies we must look for in the planning of regions. Planning for regions should draw from the strengths of the resources offered in that region. The real challenge will be writing planning schemes which reinforce the themes of regions and their subsequent natural or man-made resources and one has to make sure that the theme taken cannot be the subject of mirth – as you can see the regions above chose well.

And on resources…….quite a timely topic as Australia launches itself into the fray to debate the pros and cons of things such as the carbon tax which is closely related to the consumption of resources. Why stop at taxing carbon I say! What about a silica tax on those people who walk away from the beach with a covering of sand (silica) thereby depleting our beaches. Quite quickly I think we might start to see “budgie smugglers” turned into “silica smugglers” for those who tend to get a bit of sand in their trunks in the surf.

A tax on air may also put new meaning to the term “oxygen thief” although this would be a misnomer given the

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Fixed Fees = Value + Peace of Mind

As one of Queensland’s leading planning law teams, IPA LAW advocates fixed fee legal services, rather than the traditional time-based billing.

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