Old wine in new bottles? New wine in old bottles? Convergence/divergence in Australian metropolitan planning

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outline: are Australian metropolitan plans ubiquitous?

Â Policy transfer and convergence
   ï Research approach
Â Review of plans
   ï Urban visions
   ï Urban form
Â Implications
theories about policy transfer / convergence

Å transfer / convergence of policy objectives, institutions, ideas, regulations between & within nations

- systematic ‘harmonisation’ (voluntary / coercive)
- versus unco-ordinated diffusion (amongst many actors)

Australian urban policy trends 2002 -2013

- Decade of metropolitan planning
- Constant system reform
- Harmonisation processes - national urban policy interest & COAG reform agenda
- Early diffusion (from Melbourne 2030?) (professional &/or political)
- Later, convergence?
Research questions & approach

- Convergence in Australian metropolitan plans?
  - Are city planning visions ubiquitous or distinct?
  - What are the central themes & concerns?
  - Is there a dominant urban form?
  - What explains convergence / divergence?

- Content analysis of metro strategies & companion documents
  - Thematic (meanings in context) and quantitative (terms and phrases)
The strategies

Å Melbourne 2030 (2002), Melbourne @5million (2008)
Å SEQ Regional Strategy (2008)
Å Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 (2010)
Å Perth: Directions 2031 (2010)
Å 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2010)
Å Hobart Capital City Plan (draft) (2011)
Å Greater Darwin Plan (draft) (2012)
Å ACT Planning Strategy (2012)
what is a metropolitan strategy?

• “strategic plan for managing change in urban regions” (Gleeson et al. 2004)
• framework for local planning (Bunker & Searle 2009)
• “A so-called metropolitan strategy is first and foremost a political, rather than a planning, document ... It sets out a new government’s long term vision, intentions and proposals for action”. (Sandercock and Friedmann 2000, p. 530)
metropolitan strategies in Australia

A common characteristics (Bunker 2011)

- multiplicity of planning documents (beyond strategy itself)
- centralisation (state domination / authority)
- Sustainability, economic growth, competitiveness as normative goals
- infrastructure (structuring element, concern, promise)
1. content analysis: urban visions

Â In the next 30 years, **Melbourne** will grow by up to one million people and will consolidate its reputation as one of the most **liveable, attractive and prosperous** areas in the world for residents, business and visitors (p. ii)

Â By 2036, **Sydney** will be a more **compact, networked** city with improved accessibility, capable of supporting more **jobs, homes and lifestyle** opportunities within the existing urban footprint.

Â By 2031, **Perth and Peel** people will have created a **world class liveable city: green, vibrant, more compact and accessible** with a unique sense of place.
Hobart will be a vibrant, dynamic and attractive city, a globally connected place that fosters cultural expression, innovation and growth, and which provides a liveable, sustainable and prosperous lifestyle. (p. 25)

The vision for its future is a place that is affordable, liveable, prosperous and sustainable (Greater Darwin Plan, 2012 p. 7).
“Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable, socially inclusive and well placed to meet future challenges and growth” (p. 3) (COAG Reform Council aspiration for capital cities, guides National Urban Policy)
2. content analysis: urban form

- compact / contained urban form international policy ideal (Randolph 2006)
- critiques:
  - density not inherently sustainable
  - strong constituency for greenfield development (industry, NIMBYs)
  - political economy of redevelopment (unlocking high value sites, lower infrastructure spend)
content analysis: urban form

- Promoting development in centres / nodes (all plans)
- Linked by corridors (implication of public transport)
- Specific techniques / delivery approaches
  - Compact + consolidated + Infill + Transit Oriented development (most in Adelaide, Darwin, QEQ, Perth)
  - Renewal + Regeneration + Redevelopment (especially Sydney, Adelaide)
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Centres

Network of activity centres
### Urban Corridors and Residential Development, Greater Hobart Region, 2011

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regeneration, renewal, redevelopment

Sydney metro – reference to renewal / redevelopment once per page
sprawl, fringe, greenfield
summary

 Ubiquitous urban vision / form concerns / policy ideas & tactics emerging

 Due to:
  - diffusion / cross fertilisation / emulation (professional / political)
  - “harmonisation” forces – voluntary (COAG) / coercive (Infrastructure Australia funds)?
questions & implications

Å Both influences may be positive if:
  ï each city is facing similar problems
  ï the original, now dominant ideas and approaches have been / are likely to be successful
  ï larger policy contexts - historical, social, economic, environmental settings - align
  ï AND – ideas and approaches appropriately ‘translated’ to particular setting and implementation tools – controls & infrastructure funding? (Hambleton & Taylor 1994)
questions & implications

Otherwise a risk of

- recirculation & ideological group think?
- matching plans, matching places?
- ineffective / irrelevant strategies / statements?
Our vision: a strong global city, a liveable local city
references