

## Healthy urban environments

## a balancing act

PIA NSW State Conference 2012



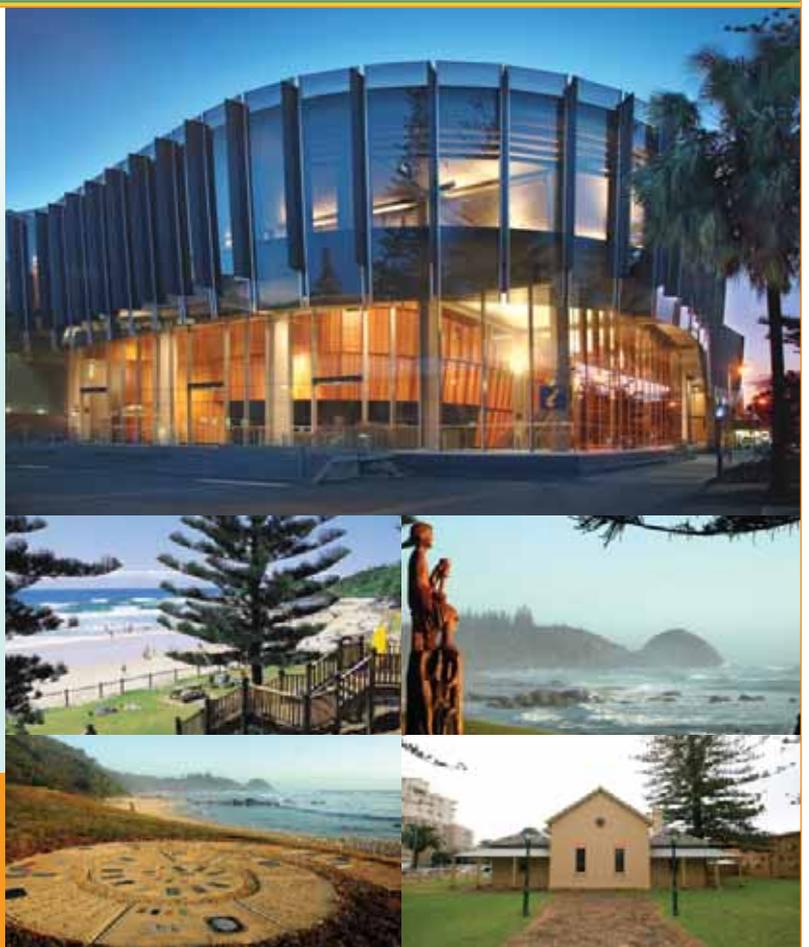
**Date:** Conference Thurs 18 & Fri 19 October  
Welcome Reception Wed 17th October  
Conference Dinner Thurs 18th October

**Place:** The Glasshouse Arts, Conference & Entertainment Centre, Port Macquarie

### Be involved:

- Visit the website to find out about submitting an expression of interest;
- Note the conference dates in your diary *NOW*;
- Northern Region planners are invited to contribute to conference organization;
- Become a conference supporter through one of the many sponsorship opportunities.

**More information:** There will be regular updates on our website [www.planning.org.au/nsw](http://www.planning.org.au/nsw) and in the fortnightly eNews or email [nswmanager@planning.org.au](mailto:nswmanager@planning.org.au)



# PIA NSW DIARY DATES

## PIA NSW: building planners' skills through professional development

### JUNE

18-19 Professional ethics Planning Practice Course\*  
26 **Planners' dinner, Doltone House Sydney**

### JULY

6 PD Workshop series-Sustaining heritage values through planning workshop  
25 Bartier Perry Toolbox Evening Series - The art of facilitation  
26-27 Climate change Planning Practice Course\*  
27 Illawarra South Coast Branch regional seminar  
tba PD Workshop Series - Hunter Planners Consolidated toolbox day seminar

### AUGUST

1-2 Economics of development Planning Practice Course\*  
15 PD Workshop series - Negotiation skills  
tba Norton Rose seminar series - EPBC strategic assessment  
31 Northern Branch regional seminar  
Mid-Aug YP Trivia night (to be confirmed)

### SEPTEMBER

1 Hunter Planners Race Day  
11 Bartier Perry Toolbox Evening Series - Social impact analysis  
13-14 Urban design Planning Practice Course\*

### OCTOBER

15-16 Legislation & governance Planning Practice Course\*  
17-19 **NSW State Conference, The Glasshouse, Port Macquarie**  
26 Illawarra South Coast Branch regional seminar

### NOVEMBER

5-6 Climate change Planning Practice Course\*  
14 Bartier Perry Toolbox Evening Series - Development economics  
Mid Nov **NSW Awards for Excellence**  
30 Northern Branch regional seminar

### DECEMBER

5 End of year colloquium hosted by Norton Rose  
tba YP Christmas drinks  
7 P@P Christmas event-2012 year in review

**MORE INFORMATION AND HOW TO REGISTER** Forthcoming programs and events are advertised through the PIA NSW fortnightly newsletter and on PIA website [www.planning.org.au/nsw](http://www.planning.org.au/nsw). Programs are subject to sufficient registration numbers. All programs are open to both PIA members and to non-members. \*Information on the Planning Practice Courses and the CPP scheme is available on our website. For information on membership please visit [www.planning.org.au](http://www.planning.org.au). Contact the NSW Division Office on 02 8904 1011 or email [nswevents@planning.org.au](mailto:nswevents@planning.org.au)

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**Planning  
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## Editorial

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The views expressed in New Planner are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Planning Institute of Australia.

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Each quarter New Planner invites a Guest Editor to comment on the theme of that issue.

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# Editorial

Susan Thompson & Patrick Harris, Guest Editors

Susan Thompson is Associate Professor of Planning and Director of the Healthy Built Environments Program, UNSW. Patrick Harris is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation, UNSW.



**Welcome to this special edition of 'New Planner' focusing on healthy urban environments and active living. As joint editors from backgrounds in urban planning (Susan) and health (Patrick), we both work in this interdisciplinary space. In the last few years we have witnessed an explosion of research, policy development and practice bringing the built environment and health closer together. This partly explains our motivation for proposing the special issue which showcases some of the ways that planning is embracing health issues in its policy and practice.**

We start at the Commonwealth level where there is an increasing focus on cities and how they influence human health, wellbeing and liveability. Considerations of the ways that urban planning and policy impact on health is also evident at the regional level and in NSW: a good example is WSROC – the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils. As well, the special issue is awash with resources and tools that are particularly appropriate for NSW planners. In addition, we consider how planning education is embracing healthy built environments – both for students and professionals.

An important motivator for this special issue is the current review of the NSW Planning

System. This provides the opportunity to reflect on how planning can be a much more positive force into the 21st Century by including human health and wellbeing as an objective of the planning legislation. This closely aligns to the planner's work in environmental sustainability – a long term driver of both policy and practice in the discipline. The pursuit of environments that support human health is without doubt, sustainable planning. If planners plan sustainably, for example by reducing the carbon footprint of a suburb, this will be beneficial for both the natural environment and for the health of those residing in that neighbourhood. This dual benefit might be achieved by improving the public infrastructure to support walking and cycling, increasing public transport, ensuring that the public realm is inviting and safe, and facilitating green open spaces, including community gardens. These initiatives will build community connection by encouraging people to get out of their houses and cars, to walk in the streets, parks and plazas, and to plant their own fruits and vegetables. In turn such behaviours are good for health – increased rates of physical activity and higher intake of fresh food mean improved cardiovascular functioning, reductions in depressive conditions and less risk of diabetes.

So why should health be part of the planning agenda? At the most basic level, health is an outcome of environmentally sustainable planning decisions as illustrated above. Klaus Gebel and Tony Capon continue this exploration at some length in their article. But is health essential to the basic logic of planning? Surely, the argument goes, if planners are providing infrastructure for active transport, by default they are enhancing health. Accordingly, why should they bother making health an explicit objective of their endeavours when they are already overloaded?

There are three very good reasons to do this. The first one concerns health as an outcome that can be directly measured, like cardiovascular disease and diabetes rates, to predict or evaluate the impact of a planning activity. Allow a development control plan to limit parking spaces in an urban centre, and you will see changes, hopefully improvements, in cardiovascular outcomes over a 20 year period.

The second reason relates to the concept of health as a resource which enables people to live full and meaningful lives. Reduce cardiovascular complications by incorporating health related considerations in DCPs and planners are positively influencing the lives of the populations for which they plan.

And finally, by bringing health as an explicit outcome of the planning process, and as a resource to be used, planning can show how it is a very positive and strong force. Different groups in society have different levels of health and wellbeing. For example, the evidence suggests that people who live in poorer communities are at higher risk of chronic disease than groups who are socio-economically better off. Moreover, these people are less likely to have access to affordable healthy food, schools or jobs compared to residents living in a well planned, well connected and environmentally aesthetic neighbourhood. This argument is perhaps the most compelling for how planners are uniquely positioned to make a positive difference to the health of all communities.

Thank you to all authors who contributed to the special issue and to Robyn Vincin for her support and advice.

The articles in this edition of 'New Planner' are, of course, only a small slice of what is currently happening in NSW. We hope you will be inspired to look further – both nationally and internationally – for more resources and initiatives ■

[nortonrose.com](http://nortonrose.com)

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The Lawyer Awards 2011



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# President's message

Sarah Hill, President PIA NSW Division



**Over the past few years PIA NSW has advocated for a new planning Act. We have achieved initial success in this regard with the government presently undertaking a comprehensive review of the existing Act.**

Our discussions with our members has identified however that a new Act is by no means a silver bullet to "fix" NSW planning overnight. Some processes may be changed with a new Act but the big kick will have to be a shift in attitudes.

I broadly refer to this kick or change in attitude as 'cultural change'. Whilst this term may be misconstrued as the warm and fluffy side of planning reform, I am convinced that it is a necessary foundation to achieving real and lasting change. I believe that a new Act in NSW can only be successful if it is founded on a fresh approach to thinking about development and planning by not just planners – but developers, community members, politicians, academics and anyone else who will listen!

The question is – how can we integrate cultural change into a new Act and associated legislation? In response Greg Woodhams (PIA NSW Vice President), in consultation with our broader policy and divisional committee, has identified 7 key ways.

I share with you these ideas and welcome your thoughts and ideas on the topic.

## 1. Strategic Planning Before Decisions

*Most people agree that ad hoc decision making is bad for investment, confidence, transparency and community support. Many Part 3A projects under the old system illustrated that.*

*The new Act should demand that governments prepare an integrated State Strategic Plan, regional plans and local plans. These plans should explain what, where and how the infrastructure, housing, employment, community facilities, centres, services and better neighbourhoods will be*

*delivered for regional and metro areas.*

*The property industry would then know where investment could occur with certainty and that if the rules were adhered to, then consent would follow in a reasonable time period. This was what was hoped from the current Act but a new Act would mean a fundamental shift away from just development assessment to large scale and local strategic planning so that the ground rules are set up front and faster delivery can rely on those ground rules working.*

## 2. Implementing Strategic Plans

*Greater emphasis would be placed on implementing Strategic Plans. All plans would include clear and measurable outcomes with associated funding mechanisms. Administrative responsibilities would be identified for delivery over the first 5 years of each plan. There would be regular reporting on progress in implementing the plans by all of those with an identified responsibility under the plan.*

## 3. Community Involved at the Right Time

*Good strategic planning engages with the affected communities before a project is designed. Residents, community groups and businesses need to have most input when the big ideas are floated for changing an area.*

*At the development assessment stage it is too late. When the community has agreed on the plan then any project that fits the plan should go ahead with minimal delay. The new system must have a better process for testing that something is in the "public interest".*

## 4. Approvals According to Complexity

*A permit for a new garage should not need the same process as a shopping centre. The process should fit the level of environmental risk.*

*High risk means more preparation with time and cost proportionate to potential risk and reward; low risk should mean a simple, fast, cheap approval.*

*The type of approvals should be simple:*

- *If it is prohibited then no approval is possible;*
- *No application is required if it only has a minimal or no impact and meets set criteria;*
- *Only a certificate is required if it meets all objective requirements; and*

- *An application is necessary if an assessment has to be made against the strategic plan (local, regional, State approval body depending on the scale and complexity).*

## 5. Community Infrastructure

*Smarter tools for funding and delivery, not just Council rates and development levies, are the key to good community infrastructure. These tools could include growth bonds, value capture for up-zoning, tax credits, GST allocation, inclusionary zoning, floor space incentives and regional property levies.*

## 6. Decision Making at the Right Level

*Decision making should occur at the right level, for example:*

- *If a project involves a State significant development then an independent State Planning Commission should determine it;*
- *If it's a project that could have regional impacts then an independent regional panel could determine it;*
- *If it's a project that is inconsistent with a Local Plan then the Council could deal with it or give authority to professional officers or a Panel to determine it; and*
- *If it complies with the local plan or if Council delegates the authority, then Council professionals could deal with it; if it complies with defined standards then a certifier (Council or private) could issue a certificate.*

## 7. Information On-Line

*A new repository of planning information needs to be accessible using new search tools and networks, to assist in the rollout of the new planning system.*

*This is the best time to develop consistent platforms, data bases, search engines and on-line property information systems so that everyone can have access to planning information for research, decision making, and investment, and to aid community understanding. This would help build the trust and confidence in NSW planning that the new Act would assist in delivering.*

*If you would like to find out more about PIA's position regarding the cultural reform of planning in NSW, please review the paper entitled 'Cultural Shifts in Planning' at <http://www.planning.org.au/nsw> ■*

# Executive Officer's report

Robyn Vincin, PIA NSW Executive Officer



**Welcome to the June Edition of New Planner and to our special feature on *Planning for healthy urban environments and active living*. I would particularly like to thank Susan Thompson and Patrick Harris who have put the theme together, and indeed, to all the contributors to this issue.**

The Planning Institute has had a long commitment to planning for healthy urban environments, evidenced both through our engagement with stakeholders and programs across the country and through the programs PIA runs together with key partners.

The **Healthy Spaces and Places** project is a national planning guide and accompanying materials, addressing the relationship between people's health and the built environment. The project also aims to raise awareness of this cross-disciplinary area and to contribute to national policy setting. It is a unique collaboration between the Australian Local Government Association, National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Planning Institute of Australia. Most recently, the program has developed a training module to build skills and knowledge in this important area. **Planning for health and wellbeing** is a program run from PIA Victoria in conjunction with VicHealth. PIA also works closely with industry partners such as the Heart Foundation both in the delivery of programs and in advocacy roles. More information on our programs is available on the PIA website.

## Celebrating Excellence

Congratulations to all of those students who have been recognised for their achievements in planning and related programs. The Institute recognises

outstanding student achievement through providing prizes in a number of planning programs in NSW Universities and this is an important component of our engagement with the next generation of planners and those institutions who develop them.

The *2012 NSW Awards for Excellence in Planning* will be launched with a call for nominations at the end of May, and closing 28th September. All details will be available on our website. The Awards are an opportunity to celebrate both significant projects, plans and programs across NSW and also to recognise members of our profession who have made significant contributions. We encourage you to take this opportunity to celebrate those people and those successes.

The Institute each year bestows recognition on a select number of Members who have made significant contributions, through our annual Fellowships – as Fellows, Life Fellows or Honorary Fellows of the Institute. Please contact me at our NSW Office if you would like further information.

## Forthcoming events

The *2012 Planners Dinner* will be held on Tuesday 26 June at Doltone House Pyrmont. We look forward to welcoming Members and Friends of PIA and their guests to what is proving to be a significant event on the planners' annual calendar.

We are looking forward to our *Annual Conference* in Port Macquarie from 17-19 October, with conference sessions to be held at The Glasshouse. The theme this year is *A Balancing Act*, recognising the importance and challenges in balancing preservation and growth; environment and development; strategic planning versus development control; work life balance; and the need for balance in a new planning system for NSW. For those of you who have not attended a PIA Conference in New South Wales before, it is a key professional development opportunity, as well as an opportunity to connect or reconnect with colleagues. The program is in preparation but we can tell you that it will include tours and mobile workshops on key planning issues. The Conference will provide planning

professionals in State and local government agencies and in private practice with an important opportunity to update their knowledge on the key changes which have been taking place, and those which will undoubtedly take place, before October.

## Policy and Advocacy

Policy and Advocacy are both important components of what we aim to deliver on behalf of our Members. In the year to date PIA NSW has made a significant number of formal submissions, represented the Membership and the wider planning community at a number of workshops, formal inquiries and stakeholder meetings. We continue to advocate on the NSW Planning Review and will be seeking active involvement in the development of a new Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney. We are also actively providing comment and input on both the second Sydney Airport issues and the NSW Long Term Transport Strategy, to name but some of our current activities. We also provide responses to a number of rural and regional issues, and in this regard we acknowledge the input through our Regional Branches. Copies of our submissions are referenced in our fortnightly newsletter and are available on our website.

## New Planner Editorial Team

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Editorial Team for New Planner. We are working to a revised format to assist in delivering timely and varied articles and items of interest, while acknowledging that our Members are busy people with a number of priorities. We will be inviting a Guest Editor to lead the theme of each quarterly issue and to provide the Editorial comment in that issue. To assist with the range of editorial tasks and regular features, we welcome Nicole Philps, Brigitte Buchholz and Andrew Wheeler. We also extend an invitation to each of our readers to provide feedback, suggestions and items for consideration; it is your magazine and we value your input.

I look forward to meeting you at a forthcoming PIA event or hearing from you via email ■



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# Planning Perspectives

## Strategic Regional Land Use Plans

Steve O'Connor, KDC and ERM Australia

**When the Coalition was elected to government last year it came to power with a platform of introducing Strategic Regional Land Use Plans across NSW. These plans are to be in place by 2014. The first two such plans have reached the stage of public exhibition and cover the Upper Hunter and the adjoining New England North West Regions.**

They may well provide an insight into what the new State Government is looking for in terms of strategic land use plans for other regions around the State. Although these plans are still drafts and the submissions received in response to their public exhibition are yet to be considered, I thought it worthwhile to examine the Draft Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (Draft Plan) to understand what (if anything) makes it different to the existing Regional Strategies covering the coastal regions of the State.

### Gateway Process

The most obvious difference is that the Upper Hunter Draft Plan introduces a Gateway Process. There is no similar provision in any of the coastal Regional Strategies. This is deemed necessary given the existing land use conflicts which exist between coal mining and coal seam gas proposals and important agricultural industries including the equine and viticulture industries.

The Gateway Process requires any mining or coal seam gas proposal over land identified as Strategic Agricultural Land (SAL), or within two kilometers of SAL, to be the subject of review by an independent Scientific Panel. If the Panel does not support the proposal and therefore declines to issue a Gateway Certificate, then the proposal cannot proceed to the development application stage.



*Wine production facilities like these create employment opportunities*



*Vines like these have been grown in the Hunter Valley for generations*

### Upper Hunter Region

The Draft Plan states that 18% of the region is considered to be SAL. This is comprised of 8.2% Biophysical land, 7.6% Equine Clusters and 2.2% Viticulture Clusters. The equine industry in the region produces 80% of stud horses exported from Australia and there has been over 2 billion invested in horse studs in the region in recent years. The viticulture industry includes not only the vines required to produce wine grapes (such as those shown in image above) but also the industrial (see image below) and tourism components that generate significant employment.

The Hunter Coalfields contain around 40% of NSW's currently identified coal resources while another 9% lies within the Bylong to Ulan Corridor. Coal reserves cover 39% of the region while coal seam gas reserves cover 44% of the region.

However geographically only 12% of the region's SAL is in conflict with coal mining resources and only 14% is in conflict with coal seam gas resources.

### Another Layer of Complexity

Introducing the Gateway Process proposed in the Draft Plan, which represents another complex layer into the planning assessment and approvals framework in NSW, is moving in the opposite direction to where Strategic Planning should be headed in this State.

What industries (whether they be mining, dairying, beef, viticulture or other rural industries) and communities are looking for is

greater certainty in the planning process. The Gateway Process will only serve to introduce greater uncertainty for all stakeholders. The mining industry will be faced with not one, but two independent panels to negotiate before knowing whether a mining proposal is likely to secure approval. It may then face a third Commonwealth Scientific Panel before all approvals are obtained.

The equine and viticulture industries will also continue to live with uncertainty if mining proposals can be entertained in the midst of industry clusters. This is likely to hamper investment decisions and drive billions of dollars of investment overseas.

### Conclusions

The Draft Plan states that it seeks to provide a framework to support growth, protect the environment and respond to competing land uses, whilst preserving key regional values over the next 25 years. The Gateway Process is seen as an integral component of the Draft Plan, yet it will introduce greater uncertainty and further complicate a development assessment process which is already acknowledged as in desperate need of simplification.

If this is the sign of things to come in terms of the remaining Strategic Regional Land Use Plans yet to be formulated around the State, then we are unlikely to see some of the goals set out in the State's 10 Year Plan being achieved, namely a 30% increase in the value of production of both primary industry and mining production by 2020 and an increase in the share of jobs in regional NSW ■

# Infrastructure Matters

Greg New, Director, Newplan



Urban Planning Solutions

## The infrastructure impacts of infill should not be ignored

The latest local area estimated resident population estimates were recently released by the ABS (Catalogue No. 3218.0).

One of the more interesting results was that recent population growth in many middle ring areas of Sydney has been comparable to, or has even exceeded, that experienced in Sydney's fringe 'growth areas'. For example, Auburn LGA's population increase between 2006 and 2011 was comparable to the growth for all of Camden and Campbelltown combined. Results for selected LGAs are shown in the following table.

The results aren't that surprising given that the majority of Sydney's new dwellings have been accommodated in the city's established suburbs for some time now. But the findings do show that the impacts caused by new housing development on local facilities such as sporting grounds, parks, libraries and roads in the established areas of Sydney are likely to have been significant.

One of the main virtues of 'urban consolidation' promoted by supporters of this

policy when it commenced in the 1980s was that higher populations in established areas would lead to better and more efficient use of existing facilities. Spare capacities in human infrastructure may have been a reality at a time when many most inner and middle ring municipalities declined in population from the 1960s to the 1980s, but the situation quickly turned around as urban consolidation gathered pace.

One certainty is that the 'densification' of Sydney's established suburbs will continue. Many of the areas in western Sydney are staging points for new migrants to Australia. While debate focuses on the high cost of supplying infrastructure to greenfield areas, these cosmopolitan infill areas are no less needy. Increasingly the suburbs are becoming vertical villages whose occupants need plenty of ground level of open space with safe and direct walking and cycling connections.

Expanding human infrastructure to match the impacts of development in these areas is expensive. Land costs in the middle ring can be ten times the cost of land on the urban fringe. The councils operate in an

environment where section 94 contributions are capped at \$20,000 per dwelling and funding for land acquisition and capital works is very limited. In a constrained funding environment, the acquisition of significant amounts of additional open space land in order to maintain current levels of provision is not a realistic option.

More and more, local councils in these areas will have to implement strategies that maximise the use of existing social infrastructure, or the sharing of use of community facilities by other providers such as schools and clubs. This is already happening albeit on a piecemeal basis (e.g. the Department of Education and Communities' Community Use of School Facilities Policy).

The ABS data show that the time is ripe for both a thorough analysis of the infrastructure impacts of the population boom in infill areas and the development of realistic and achievable strategies to address the infrastructure deficits.

### Did you know...?

Planning agreements are now commonplace in NSW. Some of the public accountability features of these agreements which may not be so well known include the following:

- All councils must keep a copy of a 'planning agreements register' (see clause 25F of the EP&A Regulation). Councils are also required to make the register; copies of any planning agreements that apply to the area of the council; and copies of the explanatory notes to those agreements relating to those agreements or amendments available to the public free of charge. These requirements relate to all planning agreements affecting land in the council's area, and not just agreements to which the council is a party.
- Similar requirements apply to the Director-General of Planning and Infrastructure. The Department's planning agreement register can be accessed at its website.
- All planning authorities that have entered into a planning agreement must, while the planning agreement(s) remain in force, report on the progress and compliance with the agreement(s) each year in its annual report (see section 93G of the EP&A Act). ■

	5 years 2006-2011		1 year 2010-11	
	Popn Growth (No.)	Growth Rate (% pa)	Popn Growth (No.)	Growth Rate (% pa)
<b>Sydney Region LGA</b>				
<b>Selected Middle Ring</b>				
Auburn	12,121	3.3	1,892	2.4
Bankstown	14,603	1.6	2,974	1.6
Holroyd	10,690	2.2	2,003	2.0
Parramatta	22,464	2.8	4,321	2.5
<b>Selected Outer Ring</b>				
Blacktown	32,445	2.2	5,777	1.9
Camden	7,366	2.7	1,596	2.8
Campbelltown	7,111	0.9	1,595	1.0
Liverpool	17,662	2.0	3,419	1.8
Penrith	10,930	1.2	2,184	1.2
The Hills Shire	16,864	2.0	2,603	1.5

Source: ABS Catalogue 3218.0, issued 30 March 2012

# Norton Rose Review

Minister proposes changes allowing councils to approve LEPs and new mechanism for review

Felicity Rourke, Partner, Rebecca Fleming and Nicole Woods



Jacinta Studdert



Peter Rigg



Felicity Rourke



## Introduction

**On 27 March 2012, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure (Minister) released a discussion paper entitled “More local, more accountable plan making” seeking council, industry and community feedback on proposed changes to Part 3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) (EP&A Act). The changes to the legislation will give local councils delegation to approve certain Local Environment Plans (LEPs) and provide an opportunity for independent review of certain council and department decisions. The aim of the changes is to increase transparency, provide greater certainty and increase council’s roles and responsibilities.**

The proposed changes follow the NSW Government’s announcement to reform the planning system as part of the Government’s 10 year State plan (NSW 2021) and address issues that have been identified as part of the planning legislation review currently being undertaken by Ron Dyer and Tim Moore.

If enacted, these proposed changes will provide for increased local engagement between councils and proponents in making certain types of LEPs, and have the potential to speed up the rezoning process. These reforms will also provide an opportunity for independent review of some plan-making decisions.

### What are the key changes proposed?

#### 1. Council delegation to approve certain LEPs

The discussion paper proposes to delegate the Minister’s functions in relation to making LEPs (under section 59(2), (3) and (4) of the EP&A Act) to councils where a Gateway Determination has been issued in respect of the following types of LEPs:

- spot rezoning;
- mapping alterations or corrections that do not alter strategy endorsed development standards;
- amending references to documents/agencies, minor errors and anomalies (section 73A of the EP&A Act);
- reclassifications of land consistent with a strategy/supported by an adopted Open Space study; and
- heritage LEPs supported by an Office of Environment and Heritage endorsed study.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure (the Department) will generally have no further role in the process once the LEP is delegated to a council, other than routine monitoring of the process to ensure that Gateway Determination timeframes continue to be met.

Councils will also have obligations to report quarterly to the Department on processing times for delegated LEPs to ensure on-going improvements to the system.

#### 2. Proponents can request a Pre-Gateway Review

The discussion paper proposes a new review mechanism which would allow a proponent of a planning proposal to seek a review of Council’s decision by the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) or Planning Assessment Commission (PAC). This will occur where the council has decided to not prepare a planning proposal or the council has not made a decision after 60 days of receiving the proponent’s request. In either case, the proponent will have 40 days to seek a review of the council’s decision.

There are strict requirements that must be satisfied before a proposal will be eligible for review. The proponent will need to be able to demonstrate that the proposal meets a number of criteria, including that the proposal:

- will utilise existing capacity in infrastructure networks or that capacity can be otherwise provided for;
- will be adequately integrated with existing public transport networks;

- is likely to be supported by key environmental agencies;
- will not detrimentally impact on the viability of identified centres; and
- is consistent with endorsed local or regional strategies.

For proposals which are eligible for review, the discussion paper suggests that the review process will effectively be managed by the Department which will prepare a report on the proposal for the JRPP. The JRPP will advise the Minister on whether the proposed instrument should be submitted for a Gateway Determination. The JRPP’s advice will be made publicly available.

In cases where there is no JRPP, the PAC will conduct the review.

#### 3. Proponents and councils can request a Gateway Review

A further proposed change is that a council or proponent may request the Minister (or delegate) to alter a Gateway Determination concerning a planning proposal, when a Gateway Determination is made by a delegate of the Minister that:

- a planning proposal should not proceed (40 days to seek a review);
- a planning proposal should be resubmitted for Gateway Determination (40 days to seek a review); or
- imposes requirements (other than consultation requirements) or makes variations to the planning proposal that the proponent or council thinks should be reconsidered (14 days to seek a review).

This type of review will not be available where the Gateway Determination is made by the Minister.

The Minister or Director-General may alter the Gateway Determination following receipt of advice from the PAC and decide whether the planning proposal should proceed. At this point the council and proponent will be notified of the altered determination and if appropriate commence post-Gateway consultation ■

# Healthy Planning in NSW:

## Key Resources for Effective Policy Making and Practice

**Peter McCue**, Executive Officer of the NSW Premier's Council for Active Living, and  
**Susan Thompson**, Associate Professor, Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW

**The history of planning is closely linked to improving health and wellbeing. The planning system emerged at the height of the industrial revolution from concerns for public health. Many of the reforms which emerged at this time underpin key elements of today's planning system, including the separation of incompatible land uses and siting of buildings to require adequate health safeguards. While such concerns have continued to motivate a range of planning policies, other issues have since been prioritised displacing public health as a principal planning objective. However, as readers will know through the 'Healthy Built Environments' column in 'New Planner', there is a growing movement to realign the professions of planning and health. In this article we consider the reasons why this is increasingly the case and provide a summary of key resources specifically focused on NSW issues for planners currently working in this space.**

In the 21st century, communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes are posing the greatest threat to our population's health. A compelling body of research evidence, increasingly supported by practice, indicates that planning can once again play a crucial role in public health. In particular the built environment can influence levels of physical activity across entire populations, help connect and strengthen communities, and provide healthier food options. By doing these things planning will be addressing three of the major risk factors for contemporary chronic disease – physical inactivity, social isolation and obesity.

The health benefits of physical activity are significant and yet little more than half of the NSW adult population meets the recommended level of at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. More than half of NSW adults are also either overweight or obese. Physical activity not only helps reduce the risk of obesity but has an independent protective role against illnesses including



cardiovascular disease, diabetes, colon and breast cancer and depression.

As a society we have engineered active choices out of everyday living and it's costing us more than our health. More than half a million vehicle driver trips of less than one kilometre are undertaken every weekday in the Sydney metropolitan area<sup>1</sup>. Recent estimates suggest that converting just 1% of Sydney vehicle these trips of less than one kilometre to walking annually would create savings of \$134 million and \$214 million over five and ten years respectively<sup>2</sup>.

Many different types of interventions are required to improve population levels of physical activity to in turn enhance public health. However the built environment provides immediate opportunities.

### **Links between active living and the built environment**

Infrastructure Australia in its State of Australian Cities Report<sup>3</sup> highlights that

'the design of urban environments can contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities by supporting active living, physical activity through walking, cycling and using public transport and opportunities for social interaction'.

Characteristics of urban environments that have demonstrated links to increased physical activity include: mixed land use and higher density; footpaths and cycleways and facilities for physical activity linking key destinations; street connectivity and design; transport infrastructure systems linking residential, commercial and business areas; and neighbourhood aesthetics including access to public open space<sup>4</sup>. Australian research<sup>5</sup> has also demonstrated a negative relationship between urban sprawl and physical activity. For example, people living in outer Sydney suburbs tend to be 30-50% more at risk of being overweight and 40-60% less likely to be adequately active than inner-city counterparts.

Many of the required design characteristics are examples of well established better practice urban design principles demonstrating that healthy planning does not require additional work of planners. Rather the research evidence highlights opportunities for health and planning professionals to work together to achieve common goals.

### Policy Context

There is widespread agreement across all levels of government that there are benefits in modifying the built environment to encourage healthy, active and more liveable communities. COAG's National Criteria for capital city strategic planning systems for example includes addressing health, liveability and community wellbeing<sup>6</sup>.

Within NSW, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure has issued a 'Position Statement on Planning for Active Living' that articulates active living principles as a priority of the NSW Planning System. The Position Statement importantly acknowledges the role of supportive physical and social environments in promoting active living. Read more on the Department's website about this and other related resources<sup>7</sup>.

The NSW Division of Local Government's long-term Integrated Strategic Planning Reform Manual<sup>8</sup> includes evidence based active living indicators (pp 52-54). The intention of the indicators is to provide local councils with a selection of evidence-based measures that will help demonstrate progress towards the development of more supportive environments for active living. An 'Active Living Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Resource'<sup>9</sup> has been prepared to help provide guidance to local councils on how to address active living principles and practices in their long-term strategic plans.

### Resources for Effective Policy Making and Practice

A number of national resources have been developed to assist further implementation of broad healthy planning principles. One such example is a web-based resource 'Healthy Spaces and Places' ([www.healthyplaces.org.au](http://www.healthyplaces.org.au)). This is a collaborative initiative of the Planning Institute of Australia, the Australian Local Government Association and the National Heart Foundation, with funding from the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing. The resource includes

practical tools, case studies and guidelines for planning and developing sustainable communities to encourage healthy ways of living. It is also an excellent demonstration of non-government cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Also at the national level, the National Heart Foundation (NHF) continues to produce useful resources to promote healthy built environments. Freely available from NHF's website ([www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)), these resources include:

- Increasing density in Australia: Maximising the health benefits and minimising harm
- Healthy by Design: A planners' guide to environments for active living
- Position Statement: The built environment and walking
- Neighbourhood Walkability Checklist: How walkable is your community?
- Food-Sensitive Planning and Urban Design
- Creating Healthy Neighbourhoods: Consumer preferences for healthy development

At the state level, there are some



significant government led initiatives that are bringing planning and health closer together. The Healthy Built Environments Program (HBEP) is now well established in the City Futures Research Centre in the Built Environment Faculty of the University of NSW. The Program receives its main funding from the NSW Health Ministry and has support from Local Health Districts. The HBEP's website has a range of research and educational resources that will be of interest to planners, as well as notices about conferences, training opportunities and a quarterly newsletter to which you can subscribe<sup>10</sup>.

The NSW Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) is a high level interagency collaboration between senior representatives from NSW Government, business and the non-government sector reporting to the Premier with a key focus on health promoting urban environments. To enhance the incorporation of active living principles within the NSW Planning System, PCAL has developed a suite of resources for state agencies, local council planners and developers all available on the PCAL website: [www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/local\\_government](http://www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/local_government). Below we outline those of particular relevance to planners. The PCAL monthly newsletter is also a great way to access the most up-to-date

resources – just go to the website and subscribe at no cost.

'Designing Places for Active Living' is a set of recently updated design guidelines for state and local council planners. The resource provides key design considerations, together with links to important NSW specific resources and guidelines, for seven priority environments. A series of urban and regional case studies have also been compiled to demonstrate the successful application of Active Living design considerations for each of the specific environments within the guidelines.

PCAL has also produced another significant resource to help planners. Called the 'Development and Active Living: A Development Assessment Resource and Navigational Tool', it is a NSW specific development assessment resource. It aims to assist local councils and the State Government incorporate active living within their plans and policies (such as development control plans). The resource also provides specific advice on matters for consideration in development assessment that will promote active living. Further, it contains a detailed guide to specific active living issues which arise within a wide range of land use types. Some developers have committed to include select components of the

resource within all future NSW applicable developments.

A 'Developer's Checklist', targeted at the private sector, is a companion document to the comprehensive 'Development Assessment Tool' described above. The Checklist is a best practice, voluntary resource for developers to self assess a proposed development. Not only does this provide a useful starting point for discussions with consent authorities, it is responsive to the policy directions outlined in the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's 'Position Statement on Planning for Active Living'. The Checklist is not a set of prescriptive requirements. Rather, it aims to provide a set of ideas which can be realistically incorporated into developments for maximum effect.

### Education and Training

As part of the development of resources for healthy built environments, the education and training for planners is critical – both for students and professionals already well established in the workplace. Below we outline a few NSW examples of education and training.

University of NSW students undertaking planning, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level, have the option of taking elective subjects in healthy



2012 New South Wales Planning Excellence Awards: **Call for Entries**

## Has your project created a great place?

### A great place...

- is enjoyable, safe, accessible and sustainable
- encourages social interaction and community involvement
- supports active living and access to healthy food
- displays exemplary urban design and architectural features
- is a place where people want to visit, to work and to live

The Heart Foundation is proud to sponsor the Great Place Award, recognising a great place, street or neighbourhood in NSW.

**For further information** call Robyn Vincin, PIA NSW Executive Officer, on 02 8904 1011 or email [nswmanager@planning.org.au](mailto:nswmanager@planning.org.au)

Images courtesy of Landcom (top, left) and the The Premier's Council for Active Living (all others).

Nominations from community members, local councils and built environment professionals are encouraged.

**Submissions close at 12pm on Friday 28 September 2012.**

Winners will be announced at the prestigious PIA Awards ceremony in November 2012.



[www.planning.org.au/nsw](http://www.planning.org.au/nsw)

[www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)



planning. These courses present the latest research, policy and practice about the role of the built environment in supporting health and wellbeing for contemporary communities. Learning outcomes focus on interdisciplinary knowledge and practice, emphasising the benefits of planning and health professionals working together, cooperatively and with mutual respect and understanding. As further testament to the growing interest in, and importance of healthy planning education, the latest edition of 'Planning Australia: An Overview of Urban and Regional Planning' (an award winning book which is widely used as a text in university courses across the country) has a full chapter devoted to the topic.

There is also significant and ongoing professional education in healthy planning in NSW. To assist local government planners, health professionals and elected officials implement active living design principles utilising the most appropriate resources, PCAL has provided several series of interagency healthy planning capacity building workshops throughout NSW. A focus on regional as well as metropolitan workshops has helped participants apply active living principles to a diverse range of local contexts. Staff and allied professionals from more than half of NSW's local councils have participated in a PCAL workshop over the last four years. The HBEP also provides ongoing professional development for planners and health professionals in different one-day forums,

field trips and expert lectures – the website and newsletter has details.

Finally, interagency capacity building workshops helped local council planners, identify barriers and solutions to the application of active living principles within specific local community contexts. The workshops also assisted local planners to establish professional relationships with allied health professionals. For example, as a direct outcome of one of the initial PCAL Healthy Planning workshops, a collaborative partnership between three agencies was established to embed healthy planning principles in a rural shire council on the northern coast of NSW. The results of this partnership were recognised with a Heart Foundation Healthy Community Award in 2011.

### Current Opportunities

The current review of the NSW Planning System provides a significant opportunity to implement the compelling body of evidence linking urban design characteristics to more supportive environments for health and wellbeing. The promotion of health and wellbeing should be a key objective of a new-look NSW Planning System.

Failure to act on the planning system's impact upon 21st century health matters will have dramatic longer term effects on the ability of our settlements to support active living, with consequent impacts on community wellbeing and an exponentially increasing financial burden over time.

NSW specific resources have been developed for government, developer and community stakeholders across all levels of the planning system to improve incorporation of health and wellbeing and in particular active living within the NSW Planning System. The tools and opportunities exist for interested health and planning professionals to collaborate with state agency, local council and developer partners to generate more supportive environments for active living.

### Conclusion

Healthy planning is an interdisciplinary response to a complex problem. Urban planning originated out of the need to create healthier cities. Today we have come full circle to once again take action to address the ill-health of urban populations. Planning alone cannot solve the problems. Nor can health interventions. We need to work together to address the issues. Healthy planning is an exciting and positive opportunity for planning. It is also a great way for the health and planning professions to demonstrate how we can work supporting one another in collaborative partnerships, and with multiple stakeholders, taking an over-arching comprehensive view of issues positively and proactively for the future wellbeing of our community and the environment ■

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6 Council of Australian Governments *Communiqué from meeting 7 December 2009*

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10 See the Healthy Built Environments Program website: <http://www.be.unsw.edu.au/programmes/healthy-built-environments-program/about>

# Health and sustainability: Co-benefits for health from action on climate change

Klaus Gebel and Anthony Capon

Klaus Gebel is Research Associate, City Futures Research Centre, Faculty of the Built Environment, UNSW, Anthony Capon is Foundation Professor of Public Health and Head, Discipline of Public Health in the Faculty of Health, University of Canberra.

**Climate change affects human health in many ways – thermal stress, floods, changes in distribution of infectious diseases, as well as social, demographic, and economic disruptions. Indeed, *The Lancet* (a leading international medical journal) recently described climate change as the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.**

Australia has the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions among all OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, and one of the highest in the world<sup>1</sup>. Internationally, the challenges of climate change have generated a large number of policy documents with wide-ranging recommendations, from technical solutions to lifestyle changes.

The conventional wisdom is that measures to combat climate change will be unpopular because they are inconvenient and a burden on the economy. However, recent evidence has shown that in the area of public health, action on climate change can bring multiple co-benefits.

alignment of policy responses to climate change with those to tackle epidemics of chronic disease. Moreover, recent special issues in the *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* and the *NSW Public Health Bulletin* have examined the co-benefits for health from action on climate change in an Australian context. These articles focused on the role of active transport, agriculture and food, household energy emissions and low carbon electricity emissions.

Here we summarise the key messages from this research and their relevance for planners in advocating for change that can help tackle climate change and improve health, at the same time.

## Urban transport

Motorised transport accounts for almost a quarter of all carbon dioxide emissions. Three quarters of these emissions are from road traffic. Reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases are needed because transport related emissions are predicted to rise substantially over the next few decades<sup>2</sup>. Lower-emission cars will have some impact, but that will not be sufficient.

Against the background of climate change, population growth, urbanisation, increasing

co-benefits, the most significant being an increase in levels of physical activity.

Regular mode-rate-intensity physical activity – such as walking – is beneficial in the prevention of more than 20 common health problems, including coronary heart disease, diabetes and some cancers<sup>4</sup>. Physical activity recommendations state that adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day on at least five days of the week, while children and adolescents should be active for at least 60 minutes every day<sup>5</sup>. However, studies have shown that about half of the Australian population is not sufficiently active.

As well, physical inactivity is an independent risk factor for obesity, which is associated with several diseases. In Australia, two out of three men, every second woman, and one in five children, are overweight or obese. The direct and indirect costs to the Australian economy of physical inactivity have been estimated at \$13.8 billion per annum. For overweight and obesity, it is \$21 billion<sup>3</sup>.

Habitual active transport is one practical way to increase physical activity at the population level. However, over the last few decades, rates of active transport in Australia have decreased significantly. In Australia cycling only accounts for 1% of all trips for utilitarian purposes. By contrast, in the Netherlands, Denmark or Germany – which in the 1970s, against the background of the oil crisis, invested heavily in infrastructure to support active transport – up to a third of all trips for transportation are done by cycling<sup>6</sup>.

Current patterns of urban development in Australia mean that many people rely on the private motor car for everyday transport. The costs of enhanced investment in urban mass transit infrastructure could be offset by physical activity-related savings in the health system. A study from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found that a 5% increase in bicycle trips of less than seven km would result in \$1.7 billion in savings in the health care system<sup>7</sup>.

If more people switched from using motor vehicles to active transport, this would also reduce air pollution. Air pollution contributes to the burden of disease from cardiovascular diseases and respiratory conditions such as asthma, for which Australia has one of the highest rates in the world.

The exposure to pollutants from cars varies by mode of transport. Research has shown that passengers in motor vehicles inhale significantly more pollutants than pedestrians or cyclists on the same streets.



Active transport can reduce carbon emissions from urban transport, bringing health benefits

## Contemporary health problems

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in Australia. Most common chronic diseases – cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancers – are related to our contemporary ways of living, which are often sedentary with unhealthy diets. Furthermore, our ways of living not only affect the health of the individual, they also influence the health of the planet.

In a recent series of articles in *The Lancet*, leading health researchers argued for the

traffic congestion and decreasing oil supplies, stakeholders from many sectors are now promoting active transport as an alternative to private motor vehicle use for urban transport<sup>3</sup>. Active transport refers to walking and cycling, and also includes public transport since its use usually includes walking trips to or from transit stops.

A switch from driving motor vehicles to active transport would not only reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants, but would be associated with multiple



Edible verge planting can contribute to a vegetable based diet for local communities

Other effects of a shift to more active transport would be less congestion, and enhanced safety from traffic for pedestrians and cyclists, with fewer cars on the road. As well, if more people walk and cycle, community safety could be improved by natural surveillance and the fostering of social capital.

In short, investment in infrastructure to support active transport can reduce carbon emissions from urban transport, and bring additional benefits for population health and the wider economy. Planners can play an essential role in making active transport more attractive because the transition from car travel to active travel will only happen when urban environments support walking, cycling and the use of public transport – making the healthier choice the easier choice.

### Agriculture and food systems

The food system is a major contributor to climate change. It has been estimated that 10-12% of all greenhouse gas emissions are due to agriculture and food production, and that livestock farming accounts for four-fifths of these emissions<sup>8</sup>. Livestock farming is associated with the production of methane (greenhouse gas from ruminant animals) which is more damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide.

The wealth of countries is associated with their level of meat consumption. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in meat consumption in developing countries, such as China and India, and a dramatic increase is predicted for the future.

Technological advances have been proposed that can make the agricultural sector more efficient. However, these advances will not compensate for the increasing demand for meat. Therefore, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture



Increased flooding from extreme weather events pose significant health risks

a per capita reduction in the consumption of animal source foods to more plant-based foods is needed.

Animal source foods – such as meat and dairy products – are high in saturated fat. A high intake of saturated fats (particularly high in red meat) contributes to heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. Research, using data from the UK, has found that a 30% reduction in the consumption of meat and dairy products will lead to a reduction in heart disease by 16%. There would be further health benefits through reductions in diabetes and diet-related cancers<sup>9</sup>. Again, a decline in the consumption of animal source foods would not only contribute to tackling climate change, but it would also have substantial health benefits.

### Low carbon electricity generation

Electricity generation accounts for a substantial proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, especially in Australia where coal is the fuel source for 80% of electricity<sup>10</sup>. As well as producing carbon dioxide emissions, the burning of fossil fuels also produces airborne particles and toxic gases that affect respiratory and cardiovascular health. These emissions are particularly harmful for people with pre-existing medical problems, such as asthma.

A switch to renewable energy sources, and cleaner methods of burning fossil fuels, are needed. While the transition to renewable energy will require investment in new infrastructure, these costs would be significantly offset by the reduced health economic burden achieved by improvements in air quality.

### Household energy emissions

In Australia, energy use by households for heating, cooling and cooking accounts for 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions<sup>11</sup>. This figure could be lowered by introducing measures for more energy efficiency, such as better insulation, ventilation and heat recovery. At the same time, improvements in indoor air quality can be achieved, thereby improving respiratory health. It is interesting to note that in developing countries, such as China and India, the use of solid-fuel cooking stoves in households is widespread. Because of the incomplete combustion such stoves produce airborne particles including black carbon which are linked to acute respiratory tract infections in children and

chronic respiratory and heart disease in adults. Therefore, in poor countries there is the potential through the introduction of low-emission cook stoves to significantly reduce rates of respiratory and heart disease and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### Conclusion

The take home message is a positive one – low-carbon ways of living are healthy ways of living. It is now well understood that “what is good for tackling climate change is good for health”<sup>12</sup>. However, the concept of co-benefits for public health of actions on climate change has received little public policy attention so far.

Certainly, there are multiple factors that cause climate change. And, multi-level, cross-sectoral approaches are needed to tackle the problem effectively. Urban planners are well placed to contribute by advocating for urban environments that support human health and wellbeing at the same time as they help reduce the ecological footprint of our contemporary ways of living.

For those who'd like to read more, please refer to the following special issues:

‘Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change’ in *The Lancet*, 2009 V374, <http://www.thelancet.com/climate-change>

‘Chronic Disease and Climate Change: Understanding co-benefits and their policy implications’ in the *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, 2010, V21 (5-6), <http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/227/issue/5430.htm>.

‘Climate Change and Health Promotion’ in the *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 2011 V22, <http://www.healthpromotion.org.au/journal/journal-downloads/article/1-hpja/443-health-promotion-journal-of-australia-special-issue-climate-changehealth-promotion> ■

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# Achieving a national approach to foster healthy cities

**Anne Hurni**, Policy Analyst, Major Cities Unit, Australian Government's Department of Infrastructure and Transport

**Since 2008 the Australian Government has been successfully forging a comprehensive national approach to improve the productivity, sustainability and liveability of our cities, all of which are well known to relate to health and well-being.**

There is now widespread recognition of the importance of cities to the national economy and the health and wellbeing of the Australian community. This was reiterated by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in the communiqué from the most recent meeting of the 13th April which states:

The effective organisation and planning of cities is vital for sustainable growth, increased productivity and wellbeing (COAG 2012, p. 8).

The continuing commitment of each sphere of government to improve the administration and planning for sustainable cities follows a number of landmark urban policy reforms led by the Australian Government, including:

- Achieving a COAG agreement in December 2009 to a national objective and a review of capital cities' strategic planning systems against nine criteria. Report of the review available online at [coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/cities.cfm](http://coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/cities.cfm)
- Publishing an annual State of Australian Cities report since March 2010
- Developing the Australian Government's first National Urban Policy, released on 18 May 2011. Available online at [www.majorcities.gov.au](http://www.majorcities.gov.au)
- Collaborating with states, territories, local governments, industry and professional associations to develop the Australian Urban Design Protocol, an online toolkit available at [www.urbandesign.gov.au](http://www.urbandesign.gov.au), launched in November 2011.

Each of these policy reforms identifies objectives and actions for planning for health and wellbeing of urban communities.

The Australian Government sought agreement from COAG to adopt a national approach to strategic urban planning. In December 2009, COAG agreed to a national objective for capital cities which aims 'to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth' (COAG Communiqué 7 December 2009, p. 20). In particular, the COAG cities agreement stipulated that all states and territories would have in place by 2012 strategic planning systems that meet nine

criteria, including addressing the nationally significant policy issues of health, liveability, and community wellbeing.

The COAG Reform Council recently released the Review of the capital cities strategic planning systems, which reported on the assessment of capital city planning systems against the COAG-agreed nine criteria. It was noted in the report that around Australia there are many good examples of state, territory and local government's striving to promote healthy, active living in our cities, however, much remains to be done to achieve integration of these issues into strategic planning processes and systems.

Three areas were identified in the report that could assist governments to improve strategic city planning: information on cities; sound policy evaluation and review and measuring progress.

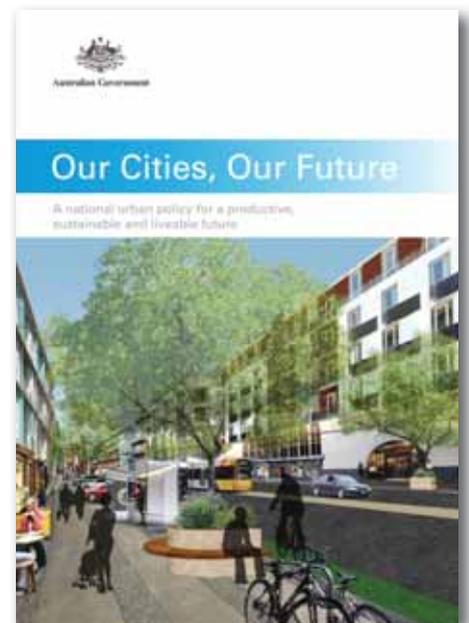
The Australian Government has taken steps in each of these three areas to help facilitate better outcomes in our major cities. In March 2010 the first State of Australian Cities report was published, which provided an overview of the key challenges facing major cities with populations over 100,000 people. The 2010 report formed the evidence base from which the national urban policy was developed. This report is now an annual publication and will be used to measure progress of how our cities are faring across a range of economic, environmental and social indicators.

In May 2011 the Australian Government released *Our Cities, Our Future* – a national urban policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future. The National Urban Policy articulates the role of the Australian Government in cities and an overall framework to guide national policy development and public and private investment in cities.

The National Urban Policy sets out three goals to guide future actions in Australia's major cities:

1. To harness the productivity of Australia's people and industry, by better managing our use of labour, creativity and knowledge, land and infrastructure
2. To advance the sustainability of Australia's natural and built environment, including through better resource and risk management
3. To enhance the liveability of our cities by promoting better urban design, planning and affordable access to recreational, cultural and community facilities.

These goals are underpinned by a set of principles, a number of objectives and a suite of actions to be implemented by



Australian Government agencies which contribute to city outcomes.

Enhancing liveability, as an urban policy goal, includes objectives to support health and community wellbeing, such as facilitating the supply of appropriate housing, improving accessibility to services and facilities, reducing car dependency and improving the quality of the public domain.

Importantly, the National Urban Policy is helping to support states and territories meet their agreed city planning systems criteria. For example, Criteria 8 of the COAG cities agreement aims 'to encourage world class urban design and architecture'. A key action of the National Urban Policy has been the production of an Australian Urban Design Protocol.

The document *Creating Places for People* and website ([www.urbandesign.gov.au](http://www.urbandesign.gov.au)), is a collaborative commitment to best practice urban design in Australia. The protocol is the result of two years of collaboration across governments and peak community and industry organisations. The protocol provides broad principles for urban design that take into account the unique characteristics of a location, people's enjoyment, experience and health, and encourages excellence and collaboration in the design and custodianship of urban places.

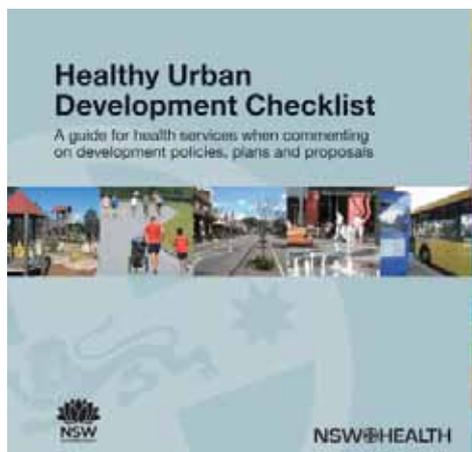
Other actions identified in the National Urban Policy have already been achieved, like the establishment of a stakeholder urban policy forum, a cross-agency Commonwealth Group on Cities and the Liveable Cities funding for planning and demonstration projects. Further work is underway to increase levels of walking, cycling and use of public transport and help achieve healthier cities. The urban policy reforms that the Australian Government has implemented will continue to promote and support planning for healthy urban environments and active living by informing public debate and influencing decision-making and investment. It is through sound evidence-based policy reform that enduring change can be achieved ■

# NSW Healthy Urban Development Checklist

**Peter Sainsbury**, Director, Population Health, South Western Sydney and Sydney Local Health Districts, NSW Health

During the twentieth century interactions between urban planners and health services mostly focused on issues relating to the risks posed to human health by environmental pollution arising from, for instance, industry and transport, and the siting and construction of health facilities - hospitals, community health centres, half-way houses, etc. Over the last decade, however, public health workers have become interested in the influence the built environment at large has on the health of the community, particularly the generation of chronic diseases (obesity, heart disease, cancer, depression, injuries, etc.), and have sought to become involved with the urban planning process.

In NSW health professionals have focused on increasing their understanding of the planning process, establishing relationships with urban planners, and providing comments and suggestions on development and redevelopment plans and proposals. To be fair, it must be noted that the disciplines of urban planning and public health were strongly connected in the mid and late nineteenth century and



that many social planners and architects of the late twentieth century 'rediscovered' the importance of these links before many latter-day public health workers.

To increase the capacity and willingness of health workers in NSW to be involved with urban planning, the NSW Healthy Urban Development Checklist was developed for NSW Health by Sydney South West Area Health Service and Elton Consulting. Specifically the Checklist aims to facilitate engagement between health workers and urban planners, increase the value of the comments and suggestions that public health workers make to, for instance,

local council planning departments and developers, and promote consistency in the responses provided. The heart of the Checklist is ten chapters, each of which focused on a feature of the built environment that is important for the health of individuals and communities (see box 1).

The core of each chapter is a small number of 'Key Questions' exploring the major aspects of the relationship between the feature of the built environment and health and a series of more detailed questions about each of the 'Key Questions'. The more detailed questions allow the user of the Checklist to 'interrogate' a development plan or proposal at a very practical level to examine whether specific features of it are likely to make a positive contribution to people's health or be a threat to health. The 'Key Questions' for the 'Transport and physical connectivity' chapter are provided in box 2. Each chapter also contains extensively referenced sections that describe the relationship between, say, transport and health and justify the choice of both the key and the detailed questions.

In 2011 an interactive online version of the Checklist was launched. This allows users to search all 240 detailed questions and select all that are relevant to any one or more of the ten main features. There is also the capacity to complete and save the Checklist online and generate reports. The online version is available at <http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/populationhealth/HUD/>.

Informal feedback over the last two years has indicated that the Checklist has been well received and is being used, not only by health workers but also by urban planners. A formal evaluation is currently underway. My own team has used the Checklist to guide the feedback we have provided on many draft plans and strategies, for instance regional strategies, Local Environmental Plans, development and redevelopment master plans, precinct and town centre plans, and transport plans. It is crucial to note, however, that although the Checklist assists health workers to make informed comments on urban planning issues, it also stresses the importance of health workers engaging and developing relationships with planners if they wish to contribute to the development of the built environment in the long term.

<sup>1</sup>NSW Department of Health. *NSW Healthy Urban Development Checklist*. Sydney: NSW Department of Health, 2009. (Copies can be obtained from the author at [sainsbury.p@email.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sainsbury.p@email.cs.nsw.gov.au)) ■

## BOX 1

### Ten aspects of the built environment that are important for health

1. Healthy food
2. Physical Activity
3. Housing
4. Transport and physical connectivity
5. Quality employment
6. Community safety and security
7. Public open space
8. Social infrastructure
9. Social cohesion and social connectivity
10. Environment and health

## BOX 2

### Key Questions for transport and physical connectivity how does the policy, plan or development proposal:

1. Improve public transport services?
2. Reduce car dependency and encourage active transport
3. Encourage infill development and/or integration of new development with existing development (including existing key destinations and active transport infrastructure)?
4. Encourage telephone and internet connectivity (in order to help reduce kilometres travelled by private car)?

# Planning for Good Health in Western Sydney

Alison McLaren, President, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)

**Chronic disease, much of which is preventable, is the leading cause of ill-health in Australia and takes the lion's share of health spending. An increased focus on prevention is not just the responsibility of medical professionals and educators, but must engage all involved in public policy, including planners.**

Clearly, planning alone cannot guarantee good health outcomes. No amount of planning can overcome genetic factors, poor personal choices, accidents or natural disasters. But urban design and planning can either ameliorate or exacerbate some of the contributing factors which affect public health outcomes.

With an extra one million people projected to be living in Western Sydney in the next 25 years, the role of planners will be significant and their impact potentially

profound. There are real opportunities to at least provide the framework that facilitates healthy lifestyle choices.

Urban design and planning both at a macro level (land release, zoning, transport corridors, green zones) and at a micro-level (local land-use zoning, building regulations and design) will potentially affect the health and well-being of Greater Western Sydney households through their impact on a number of key variables outlined below.

First, the location and type of industry, the location of residential developments and the type and structure of transport all affect air quality. The geographical structure of the Sydney basin means that Western Sydney generally has the poorest air quality in Sydney and this will potentially worsen, with adverse health effects of long term exposure to ambient air pollutants.

Second, the removal of vegetation, the increase in hard surfaces, the location and

density of buildings and the types of building materials used can create heat island effects and increase average temperatures with associated heat stress impacts, particularly on the elderly and fragile. This has direct implications for the debate over greenfield development versus infill urban renewal.

Third, planning affects access to employment and thereby either entrenches or reduces socio-economic disadvantage and the well-documented impact it has on health and well-being. This is particularly challenging for Greater Western Sydney which, according to SEIFA rankings, contains four of Sydney's five most disadvantaged LGAs.

Fourth, urban design and planning - through their impact on the "walkability" of suburbs, access to public transport, residential density, the construction of mixed developments with accessible destinations, actual and perceived safety - affect levels of exercise, both incidental

## Planning for Children and Young People Award

Responding to the needs and desires of children and young in the built environment is essential for them to enjoy the places they live and to develop as healthy and resourceful members of the community.

Entries will need to demonstrate how children and young people have participated in a project aimed at encouraging their active and creative use of the built environment.

Projects may come from the research, policy, planning or design fields.

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Office of  
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(commuting and shopping) and intentional (recreational exercise). They therefore potentially influence obesity levels and the related health outcomes.

Fifth, land use planning will affect the supply of agriculture land in the Sydney basin and influence the viability of Sydney's \$1 billion peri-urban agriculture industry and the availability of fresh food. Together with other planning issues such as the location of fast food outlets, grocers and supermarkets, and billboards advertising fast food, these factors will influence eating habits and the associated health outcomes.

Sixth, urban design also affects social connectedness and feelings of community. The urban sprawl of recent decades is much less conducive to connectedness than well designed medium density mixed developments. Other factors such as amenity of design, the incorporation of green-space in developments and safety issues also affect a community's sense of well-being and the emotional and physical health outcomes that flow from it. Western Sydney cannot afford the repeat of developments which have entrenched social exclusion and created concentrations of socially disadvantaged.

And finally, hard infrastructure such as transport and essential services affects health through a number of the variables outlined above. The provision of social infrastructure such as health services, childhood early intervention services, counselling services, community health centres and family support services impact even more directly on health and



Housing in Western Sydney – this example of a curvilinear subdivision is not a healthy design (Image by WSROC)

must be provided concurrently with new developments, not lag years behind as has happened too often.

To accommodate the extra one million people planned for Western Sydney by 2036, WSROC argues that the pattern of the past where development occurred in an ad hoc and uncoordinated way has to be replaced by well integrated development which responds to more than market forces or political imperatives. WSROC also argues that a development strategy which includes at least 70% mixed infill urban renewal is necessary, close to transport corridors and employment opportunities and social infrastructure. And finally, true sustainability, including health

impacts, must be a feature of proposed developments. All proposed developments over an agreed threshold should include not only environmental impact assessments, but also health impact assessments.

Planning and design factors alone will not address the alarming growth in rates of preventable chronic disease and improve community health levels. Cultural and family factors have a bigger impact on lifestyle, and education and other government policies such as taxation and welfare spending also play a part. However, getting planning right – improving the urban environment in which people live, travel, study, work and play – will remove some of the barriers to healthier living and is a necessary start ■

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# How are NSW young planners contributing to research into healthy built environments?

Andrew Wheeler, University of New South Wales

**The planning profession's growing interest in the relationship between built environments and human health is supported by a developing body of interdisciplinary research. This article summarises research being undertaken by NSW young planners. It canvasses student theses from across the State and provides insights into how our 'youngest' planners are contributing to the future health and wellbeing of communities, as well as the development of healthy planning.**

In recent years, NSW young planners have researched a wide variety of health-related topics in their theses – no doubt encouraged by new university courses in healthy planning, suggestions by lecturers and employers, and innovative planning practice in healthy built environments. Physical activity is one of the most prominent areas of investigation, with walking and cycling receiving particular attention. Theses have examined the impact of urban form and street-scale urban design on walking, especially the ways pedestrians use specific urban spaces such as laneways and public malls. Other studies, on walking as an intermodal form of transportation and community attitudes towards cycling in Sydney, have made further contributions to our understanding of how the built environment can promote active living.

Beyond walking and cycling, the topic of physical activity has been explored in relation to the planning and design of outdoor gyms and rural towns.

Another health-related topic that has been widely researched is open space. Theses have covered a diverse range of relevant planning issues, including open space provision in urban areas, 'active parks', greenways, the health benefits afforded by contact with nature in cities, and the role of open space in encouraging dog ownership and healthier communities.

Research has also concentrated on the interrelated topics of social health and community wellbeing. Specific studies have focused on children and the elderly, including the ways planners can facilitate children's free play and improve pedestrian environments around schools, as well as meeting the mobility needs of the elderly and people with a disability. Other studies have moved beyond individual population groups to explore the social implications of transport disadvantage, long commuting times, community gardens and art, inclusive



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housing design, affordable and public housing, climate change, natural disasters, noise, and partnerships between planners and community-based organisations.

Although limited in quantity, research on healthy eating environments and food has made a notable contribution to knowledge of healthy planning. The city of Sydney has typically served as the locus of investigation for student theses, which have examined community gardens as a source of local food production and food security in inner Sydney, alongside State and local planning policies on food, and initiatives such as the Hawkesbury Harvest Food Program and Penrith Food Project.

Other research by NSW young planners has provided valuable analysis of new developments underpinned by healthy planning principles, such as Renwick in the Southern Highlands, the attitudes of planners and developers towards healthy planning, and the inclusion of health provisions in metropolitan strategies.

Collectively, this work makes an important contribution to planning practice. Not only does it raise awareness of the synergies between health and planning, but it also offers timely guidance for planners working at all levels of government and in the private and not-for-profit sectors. As things stand currently, however, the majority of this research is not readily available to

industry professionals and other interested parties, either through university websites or libraries, or in the form of scholarly publications. In order to improve this situation, universities would do well to explore new ways to encourage students to publish and present their work, particularly in planning journals and at conferences. This could involve academics mentoring students through the publication process and financial assistance being offered to students willing to present their research at conferences.

In looking to the future, we can be confident that the current crop of young planners is well placed to bring health into their work, thus shaping healthier built environments for all. This is, in part, a testament to universities that have embraced health as a central tenet of planning education and introduced specific courses in healthy planning. PIA should also be commended for its involvement in collaborative initiatives, such as *Healthy Spaces & Places*, which have raised the profile of health within the profession and often provided inspiration for student theses. The challenge now is to translate this growing body of knowledge into policy and practice. Perhaps 'New Planner' is one such avenue.

Please contact the author (email: [a.wheeler@unsw.edu.au](mailto:a.wheeler@unsw.edu.au)) for details about thesis titles and authors ■

# Measuring Liveability

**Milly Licata**, Health Promotion Program Manager, Hunter New England Population Health **Karen Gillham**, Health Promotion Service Director, Hunter New England Population Health **Mia Bromley**, Liveable Communities team, Hunter New England Population Health **Rosemary Pollock**, Project Officer, Hunter New England Population Health and **Tracey Findlay**, Liveable Communities team, Hunter New England Population Health.

**Population growth and its distribution, along with the availability of social and other services, have the potential to impact significantly on health and wellbeing of existing and new communities (Srinivasan et al, 2003). The development of a set of indicators enables local governments and planning professionals to determine which indicators meet their strategic planning reporting requirements and to establish baseline data for measuring the impact of future development decisions.**

As such, Hunter New England Population Health (HNEPH) undertook a series of liveability assessments to measure liveability at selected sites, which have been earmarked for future development as part of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. The aim of the liveability assessments was to assess current liveability within such sites and to enable the development of more liveable communities by promoting health and wellbeing as key considerations throughout the planning process.

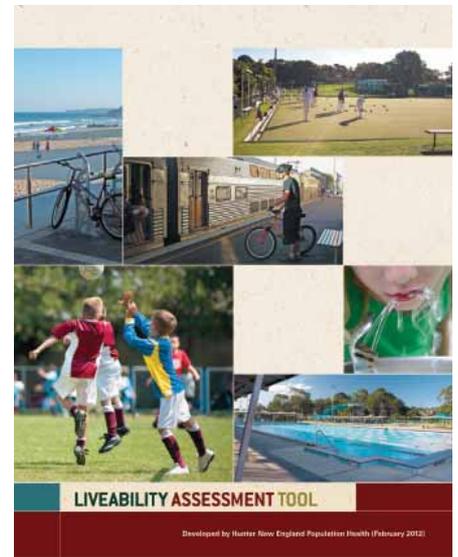
In order to conduct such liveability assessments, a Liveability Assessment Tool (HNEPH, 2012) was developed, based on the principles: Connectivity, Sustainability, Accessibility and Flexibility, as defined by research that sought to identify key principles for building liveable communities in the Lower Hunter region (Wells et al, 2007).

The Liveability Assessment Tool provides a series of indicators and measures of liveability, divided into 15 focus areas:

- Understanding the community
- Access to quality employment
- Access to fresh food
- Access to physical activity
- Access to flexible and affordable housing
- Access to public transport
- Access to early childhood services
- Access to education
- Access to health services
- Access to community facilities and public spaces
- Access to communication
- Community safety
- Social cohesion and participation
- Environmental sustainability
- Expectation and future development desires.

For example, in 'Focus Area: Access to Physical Activity', an indicator of liveability is 'the use of and satisfaction with footpaths and cycle ways'. One of the corresponding measures for this indicator is 'the proportion of people who are satisfied with the shading of footpaths in their neighbourhood'. The Liveability Assessment Tool provides example survey questions and lists possible data sources for obtaining such data.

The Tool provides an evidence based framework against which planning professionals can assess liveability within a particular geographical area. Based on the information collected by a liveability assessment, planners may formulate recommendations which will guide the development of more liveable communities through strategic planning of regional and local development.



Assessing liveability using a consistent set of indicators and measures allows for planning of future communities and the identification of communities that may be vulnerable to disadvantage caused by poor built environments. Using such a tool also enable comparisons of liveability to be made between different development types for the purpose of monitoring or benchmarking.

The Liveability Assessment Tool can be accessed at: [http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/hnep/hliveable\\_communities](http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/hnep/hliveable_communities) ■

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# Partnerships, Health and the Built Environment

David Lilley, Project Manager, Community Renewal, NSW Land and Housing Corporation, Department of Finance and Services

**After working in Housing NSW (and now the NSW Land & Housing Corporation) for 14 years, I have a keen interest in the relationship between the built environment and health. Drawing on this experience, I seek to do three things in this article. First, articulate the logic implied in 'healthy built environment' initiatives. Second, distinguish the capacity of the built environment to enable or facilitate healthy behaviour from the actual achievement of health outcomes. Third, suggest that health outcomes are best achieved by combining a healthy built environment with community engagement, organisational partnerships, and the delivery of health and social services.**



Residents participating in a charrette for the Airds Bradbury Renewal Project

It is readily accepted that there are relationships between the built environment and health outcomes. However, it is easy in Urban Planning to fall into the trap of physical determinism of one type or another. This need not be extreme; it may simply involve prioritising Planning above other disciplines, and/or a tendency to think of planning effects as more direct than they are. Consider the following diagram depicting the logic implied in most work on health and the built environment:

As a general rule this holds true. For example, footpaths encourage walking,



and walking is generally good for health. Similarly, particular urban forms encourage social interaction, and social interaction tends to reduce loneliness and increase trust and support, which is also good for health. However, there is much that is glossed over when this logic is followed uncritically, including the following:

1. The built environment is only one of a number of environmental influencers of behaviour. Others include (but are not limited to) family and social environments.
2. Attributes of the built environment can enable or constrain behaviour, but there is not a direct causal relationship between the two (for example, footpaths don't *make* people walk, and parks don't *make* people play sport).
3. The benefit of specific behaviours typically depends upon the quantum of the behaviour in question.
4. The impact of specific behaviours on health outcomes is mediated by the characteristics of individuals (including personality, genetic predisposition to various forms of illness, and so on).

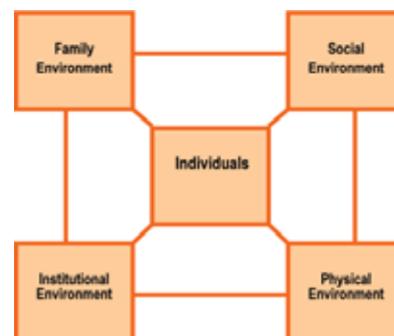
Why does this matter? Surely the creation of built environments that enable healthy behaviour is inherently worthwhile? This is where I think there is an important distinction to be made between enabling healthy behaviour and achieving health outcomes. The renewal of disadvantaged public housing estates presents a case in point. Traditionally it was thought that health and wellbeing could be improved simply by improving the urban environment and reducing the concentration of public housing residents to 30 percent. However, research has demonstrated that redevelopment alone is not sufficient to gain benefits for public housing residents. Outcomes also depend upon engaging the existing community in the planning process, and running social initiatives in parallel to redevelopment.

To address health issues in an integrated way, Housing NSW has formed a partnership with Population Health (South Western Sydney Local Health District) and the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE). This has led to a number of fruitful initiatives, including an integrated approach to planning the Airds Bradbury Renewal Project in South Western Sydney. This particular project involved:

1. Engaging residents early on, and involving them in the planning process (including the use of a charrette).
2. Procuring an Integrated Social Sustainability and Health Impact Assessment (ISSHIA), both to influence the master plan and to mitigate social risks associated with its implementation<sup>1</sup>.
3. Developing a model of intervention in social housing transition<sup>2</sup>.

The transition model is based on the need to intervene in a number of domains simultaneously to improve health and wellbeing during redevelopment. One expression of this appears below:

In this framework renewal comprises services directed to individuals, support for families, social interventions such as community activities and events, physical renewal (including principles relating to 'healthy built environments'), and substantial institutional arrangements



(including interagency planning, stakeholder engagement, and social service coordination). It is recognised that all five of these domains are interrelated, and that planning and implementation must therefore be continually monitored and adjusted, to take into account their cumulative impact over time.

Environments that enable healthy behaviour are clearly important. However, if one wants to maximise health outcomes, it is important to combine interventions in the built environment with a range of complementary interventions. This is most effectively achieved by working with stakeholders throughout the project, and by implementing health/social plans in parallel with master plans ■

<sup>1</sup>This also involved Landcom, Heather Nesbitt Planning, and Community Dimensions Pty Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> This document is available on the Land & Housing Corporation section of the NSW Department of Finance and Services website: [www.services.nsw.gov.au](http://www.services.nsw.gov.au)

# Health Impact Assessment for Policies, Plans and Projects

Fiona Haigh, Research Fellow, Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation, UNSW

**The close relationship between planning and health has been clearly described within this issue of 'New Planner' as well as in the broader international literature. In order for planners to incorporate the consideration of health into planning processes they need tools, methods and methodologies. Experience in Australia and overseas has shown that Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a useful tool for incorporating the consideration of health and health inequity into planning related decision making. HIA is a structured process that uses scientific data, professional expertise, and stakeholder input to identify and predict public-health consequences of proposals and suggests actions that could be taken to minimise adverse health impacts and optimise beneficial ones. The basic idea behind HIA is that it is better to think about the potential health impacts of a proposal during the planning stage so that, if necessary, amendments can be made before the proposal goes ahead. This structured stepwise process is flexible and can be applied at different levels - policies, programmes, plans and project.**

HIA is better known for its use at the project end of the land-use planning system; however, it is also a useful process to influence strategic planning and policy. Early HIA work in the planning context focussed heavily on projects. For example, HIAs have been carried out in relation to planning applications for large developments such as airports, retail and housing developments, sports stadiums and hospitals. Project level HIAs tend to have clear geographical boundaries, discrete populations and specific actions to consider. HIAs at project level are able to focus on context specific health impacts and in turn develop recommendations tailored to that specific development. In general, when learning about how to do HIA it is often easier to start out at project level.

However there has been a growing realisation that HIA is also a valuable tool for applying at a more strategic planning and policy level. Indeed, an evaluation currently being conducted of all the HIAs undertaken in Australia and New Zealand between 2005 and 2009 has shown that the majority of HIAs were on plans rather than projects. HIAs on policies such as local development plans or regional strategies can influence a broader range of activities and potentially influence the health of larger populations and areas. The consideration of health impacts can also then filter down to project level. HIAs at policy level will often have to address more abstract elements and generalised populations which can be challenging and recommendations will often be more generic than project level HIAs.

Examples of HIAs on plans can be found at [www.HIAconnect.edu.au](http://www.HIAconnect.edu.au). One local example of the role of HIA at planning policy level is the Greater Western Sydney Urban Development HIA (GWS) ([http://www.hiaconnect.edu.au/reports/Greater\\_Western\\_Sydney\\_HIA.pdf](http://www.hiaconnect.edu.au/reports/Greater_Western_Sydney_HIA.pdf)) which examined the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy focusing on the potential health impacts of growth in GWS through an analysis of dimensions of urban development (transport, urban form, economic development, social infrastructure, equity health and wellbeing) and their impact on known determinants of health (physical activity, social connectedness, access to healthy food, air quality and climate, accidents and injury, employment and access to services and mobility). One of the outcomes of the HIA was that

it went on to inform related project level HIAs. For example, the Oran Park and Turner Road HIA ([http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/PopulationHealth/content/pdf/Population\\_Health/Final-HIA-Rec-Report-120308.pdf](http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/PopulationHealth/content/pdf/Population_Health/Final-HIA-Rec-Report-120308.pdf)) focussed on draft plans to develop 12,000 new homes in Oran Park and Turner Road in Sydney's south-west. Oran Park and Turner Road were the first precincts to be developed in the South West Growth Centre which was detailed in the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy. The HIA was able to draw on the evidence base that had been developed for the policy level HIA. They could apply this evidence base to a specific action (housing development) in a defined geographic area and population and resulted in context specific recommendations targeted to that area.

In NSW planning legislation has two elements - local planning and strategic planning. HIA can and has usefully been applied at both levels. The planning system in NSW is currently undergoing major reforms of its land use planning legislation. Submissions have been made calling for the explicit consideration of health in planning related decision making. This may result in opportunities for a more systematic consideration of the health impacts. However regardless of the outcomes of planning legislation reform, Health Impact Assessment will continue to be an effective process to be used at multiple levels to enhance the consideration of health impacts of land use policies, plans and projects ■



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# Connecting the Regions

Illawarra & South Coast Branch - 2012

David Seymour, Illawarra & South Coast Branch Chair.

**The seminar program for 2012 kicked-off with an excellent first event at the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery. This was an exceptionally well constructed and justifiably well attended seminar, made even more pleasurable being surrounded by fine art. Certainly a credit to the Goulburn planning staff who pulled it all together. With special appreciation to Wesley Folitarik, Senior Strategic Planner who put in considerable work, planning and organising presentations.**



The program agenda was themed around regional transport issues including an update on the early planning for the Sydney-Canberra-Melbourne High Speed Rail corridor. The program also included work by the South East Australia Transport Strategy Inc, the development of the Southern Distribution Hub – Goulburn and an overview of the Highlands Source Project securing the future water supply for Goulburn. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure – Southern Regional Director, Bret Whitworth provided an update of the Regional Strategy review.

The event was exceptionally well supported by local and regional planners, and was a great introduction for Goulburn Region into the South Coast Group. These seminars are a vital connection and venue for regional planners to interact with local practitioners and network on planning issues affecting regional areas. The next seminar is planned for Nowra, hosted by Shoalhaven Council). This event scheduled for July 27 is definitely a must, with the Seminar venue planned within the new Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre. We encourage all South Coast members to watch the PIA website and the e-news bulletins for seminar details.



The South Coast Branch would like to thank the Goulburn City Council staff for their preparation and running the March seminar. We would particularly thank the local planning practices and local Authorities and presenters for their support of these seminars. Without their continued involvement and encouragement of staff to attend these seminars it would not be possible to provide a valued professional development program ■

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# International Snippets

David Winterbottom

## Outsourcing

Some remain sceptical about whether outsourcing leads to savings. If a private company can provide a service and make a 20% profit, then Councils ought to be able to provide the same service and do it a lot cheaper. Councils actually save money by retaining core full-time planning staff and buying in external help when faced with peaks in demand.

*Planning UK 23rd March 2012*

## Public Art

Environmentally sustainable art typically refers to either art that carries a message or symbolic involving environment or sustainability issues; or art that reuses or recycles unused or waste material. "Trash People" is the evocative of human overconsumption of manufactured goods. As such, it represents the quintessential idea of sustainable public art.

*Plan Canada Winter, 2011*



*Trash People*

## Quiet Areas

The Welsh government has launched a consultation on 29 candidates for the nation's first official "quiet areas", will enjoy enhanced planning protection to preserve their tranquillity. The sites proposed are mainly parks, with the exception of a cemetery and the Neath Abbey Ruins.

*Planning UK 24th February 2012*

## Quarries

As you look over your community and region you, too, may find that surprisingly undiscovered hole in the ground that could

be your next Gray's Lake, Exploration and Discovery Park, La Cantera, or Three Oaks. Or you might discover one of the 50 other successful quarry reuses to be found from coast to coast. Start planning now and it could be a gem for the next generation.

*Planning US February 2012*

## Strategic Effort

Our painful experience and painstaking strategic effort as planners has been marginalised in the face of an apparent inability to think more than five minutes ahead. We know quite a lot about the long term options for efficiently enabling this great nation to accommodate itself, but it seems to be constantly forgotten and relearned.

*Planning UK 27th January 2012*

## Los Angeles

What Los Angeles has now embarked upon is a journey into a new, hybrid sort of character – posturban if not fully urban. It follows that the planning and architectural responses will have to search out a middle ground, pushing for modest advances towards smart growth without losing sight of the fact the city in many ways remains tied by a politically powerful sort of nostalgia to its long history as a low-rise, car-friendly, and low-density metropolis.

*Planning US January 2012*

## Ethics

We enthuse our professional roles with our personal passions and all attributes of our unique selves. We draw on, and feed, our personal passions – to fuel, and sustain, our professionalism. Our professionalism is rooted in our sense of the role of soul in our practice, underpinning our interventions – our actions with vision – as positive change-makers, as ecological stewards, as part of the corps of place-makers.

*Plan Canada Winter, 2011*

## Protests

One of the more discreditable aspects of rural resistance to major development is an apparent readiness to switch the point of attack from environmental protection and quality of life matters to assertions that the money could be better spent on something else. This contention is all too often promulgated by the same activists who frequently declare that money is not the issue.

*Planning UK 27th January 2012*

## Resilience

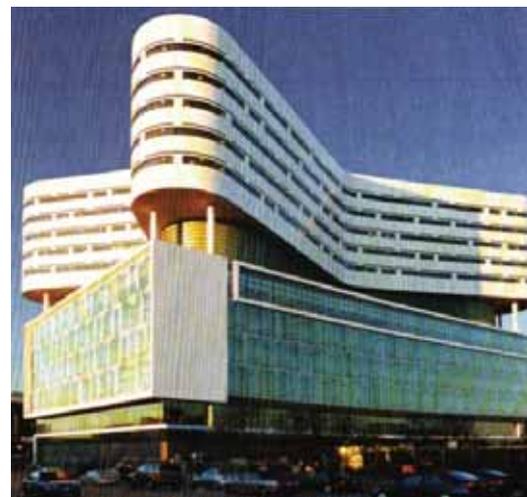
Regulating for resilience may not be easy, but as planners focussed on long-term futures we cannot ignore the necessity to help our communities ready themselves for all possibilities. We should be cautious about simply assuming that contemporary preferred strategies that planner readily label 'smart' or 'sustainable' will prove suitable regardless of future circumstances. Regulating for resilience could bring about a major transformation in planning practice.

*Plan Canada Winter, 2011*

## Hospitals

Can local hospitals heal ailing local economies? Some pretty impressive numbers suggest that they can. The American Hospital Association reports that U.S. hospitals employ more than 5.4 million people and generate over \$2.2 trillion in economic activity each year. This part of the health care sector is not only huge; it is growing, adding an average of 24,000 jobs per month last year.

*Planning US February 2012*



*Tower Hospital, Chicago*

## Shared Space

One of west London's most famous streets has been officially reopened as a "shared space" that includes a kerb-free single surface with no barriers or street clutter. It includes visual and tactile lines that are intended to distinguish pedestrian areas from those used by vehicles. Cars are slowed by a 20mph speed limit.

*Planning UK 10th February 2012* ■

# Opinion – Sailing Blind

Alex Martin

**Before me is a small collection of early 18th-century maps. One is of particular interest. It shows the coastline of “Hollandia Nova”, and “Terra Australis”, that is, an early delineation of the great Australian continent. Only the coastline along the Great Australian Bight, and the Indian Ocean, extending up to the Timor Sea are shown. The entire eastern seaboard is missing.**

What is remarkable about the map is that it was published in 1744, almost 30 years before Capt James Cooks’ arrival here! Even more remarkable, the coastline was drafted without the knowledge of longitude, which, along with latitude were the keys to safe ocean navigation. The discovery of longitude occurred some 20 years later; so the ones who drafted the map achieved much despite them sailing blind!

In looking at the map, knowing that it was published as early as it was, it’s impossible not to think of the bravery and determination that was needed to achieve such a significant advance in the

understanding of what was out there. The challenges would have been enormous.

The challenges for the planning of Sydney are similarly enormous. The NSW Planning Department has forecast that Sydney’s population will soar to 6,000,000 in 2036 resulting in a 40% gain from 4.3 million in 2006. To navigate the problems that this growth will inevitably cause for the creation of an effective transport system there will be a desperate need for a plan that is clearly articulated and well supported. One that can be implemented without sailing blind!

Over the past 20 years Sydney has produced a multiplicity of transport plans. Of many proposals, few have been implemented. For public transport, one of Sydney’s leading transport researchers, Dr Gary Glazebrook reported in 2011 that this failure to invest sufficiently has seen Sydney fall behind other Australian and world cities in its public transport performance. In the last decade public transport patronage in Sydney has grown by only 5% while in Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth it has grown by 30–40%.

This staggering difference is said by

Glazebrook to have resulted from not having a robust long-term public transport plan. While there are plans aplenty there continues to be confusion with how these are integrated to form part of a long-term strategy. What’s more, this predicament is being exacerbated further by a continuing debate on the future of the wider issues surrounding land use in general. It is clearly not effectively addressing the challenges that it is now faced with.

In drawing a comparison between the experiences of the navigators over 300 years ago and the failure of Sydney effectively address the challenges of meeting the demands arising from the forecast growth in population, one thing is immediately obvious, the map is evidence of just how much can be achieved in less than 30 years, especially when there are enormous risks. In planning for public transport in Sydney over roughly the same period of time, rather unfortunately we seem to be stumbling along with the same old process of disjointed incrementalism. Seemingly, the question can still be asked – what’s happened, where are we going? We seem to be sailing blind!

Alex welcomes comments and responses – email to [nswmanager@planning.org.au](mailto:nswmanager@planning.org.au) ■



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LFPIA, CPP, FAPI, FAIM,



Gary A Shiels  
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**George Karavanas**  
BTP, M Eng Sc, MPIA, CPP, MAITPM



George Karavanas  
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# NSW Consulting Planners

Clare Swan, Convenor, NSW Consultant Planners' Network



**Thank you this month for some exciting projects from Consulting Planners in Regional NSW.**

**OLD POLLOCK'S STORE NERRIGUNDAH (urPlan and Trevor King Conservation Planning and Design)**



*Store & residence circa 1868*

In 2010 urPlan Consulting was approached by the now owner of the original Pollock's Store Building, Nerrigundah, to assist in the process to restore and re-instate the structure to replicate its original use and design features. The proposed use will also include a visitor's centre and tea rooms. Although the buildings have in recent years been solely used as a residence, the store building and its adjoining residence had fallen into distinct disrepair.

As a fundamental stage to ensure that the structure and its intended use would be faithful to its origins, a Conservation Management Plan was prepared. This added a significant time burden to the documentation preparation and involved the engagement of a specialist conservation designer. Ensuring accuracy and authenticity in local history values, Trevor King Conservation Planning and Design was engaged.

It was evident that the plan would need to be cognisant of the broader town history in fully appreciating the contribution the store represented within the early development of the area. The store and its included adjunct activities, were the focalisation of town life, as the building housed the essential provisioning for activity during the period 1861 through to 1955.

The start of the gold rush throughout the hinterland mountains of southern coastal NSW witnessed a significant influx of European settlers. At the height of activity in the 1860's, Nerrigundah town boasted three stores, a boarding house, a hotel and a carpenter's shop to cater for the many hundreds of miners and settlers now



*Store & townsfolk circa 1910*

within the area. The many mountain streams yielded considerable quantities of alluvial gold to a large population of miners. The rush soon passed, but the Government laid out a town site in 1868 and Nerrigundah continued as a small community based on mining and timber. The store building itself which housed general provisioning, butchery, post office and gold exchange was built between 1861 and 1867. A residence was also built adjoining the store around the same era. Many of the original fixtures are still intact and the layout and footprint, of the buildings, outbuildings, and gardens, remains true to the period.

The purpose of preparing the Conservation Management Plan for the future development and use of the site was principally to ensure that any work carried out in the buildings and changes required to facilitate contemporary use would not subvert nor destroy the unique historical fabric. The buildings and their relationship to town life of the period is the very quality that is



*Store & residence renovation - street view*

desirable to retain. It was the owners wish that the proposed use of the buildings would be a living museum of a period in the local history that until now has been almost forgotten. It may have been easier to effect a transition of the structure to a contemporary general store, but the commitment to an honest preservation will provide not just the town, but the region with a valuable heritage asset that embraces historic knowledge. For any enquiries about this project please contact David Seymour on 02 4472 3545



**Tweed Coastal Hazards DCP (GHD, Ballina and Coffs Harbour)**

With the threat of coastal erosion and inundation on public and private property being realised and compounded through sea level rise, how should government equitably manage the impact of this on coastal landowners, without unfairly penalising the general community?

Tweed Shire Council, in the far north coast of NSW has, in accordance with the NSW Government's Coastal Management Program, developed and adopted a Coastal Zone Management Plan (2005) which included the Tweed Coastline Hazard Definition Study. With the introduction of the Sea Level Rise benchmarks by the NSW Government in 2010, an increased number of properties were impacted, and by greater percentages, with the landward translation of the 2050 and 2100 Hazard Lines.

Council has resolved to limit the types and intensity of development within hazard zones through adoption of a Development Control Plan (DCP). For most properties identified by the Hazard Definition Study as being within the 50 Year Hazard Zone, the DCP recommended investigating long-term planned retreat with redevelopment set back behind the 50 Year Hazard Line.

GHD were engaged to develop the DCP to draft stage and conduct effective community consultation. The intention was to ensure affected landholders and the general community were aware of the draft document and had sufficient opportunity to understand and comment on the implications of the proposed development controls.

Submissions to the draft DCP were wide ranging and often (as would be expected) property specific. More than 90% came from landowners within the coastal zone and most of these were the landowners affected by the 2050 hazard controls rather than the less restrictive 2100 hazard controls. No private landowners are affected by the immediate impact hazard controls.

Recent dramatic coastal erosion at Kingscliff has directly affected the Crown land Holiday Park and adjacent surf club. The reality of coastal erosion is plain to see. There is no doubt that planning controls for development in the coastal zone will continue to generate debate for many NSW councils in the next few decades as climate change takes effect and big decisions have to be made on whether to protect or retreat. For any enquiries about this project please contact Mike Sviki on 02 6620 6516 ■



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# BasePlan

Marta Bach, BasePlan editor



**Welcome to our second edition of BasePlan for 2012. It has been a busy few months as the YP Committee has been visiting Universities throughout Sydney, welcoming the new planning students to the profession.**

YP Connect was held in Adelaide in April and an overview of the event is included in this edition. YP Connect allows young planners to have a voice on a national scale and to participate in professional development. We have had an opportunity to exchange beers and ideas, network and socialise with other likeminded young professionals.

In this edition, Ben Cebuliak, YP Committee member, takes the interview hot-seat. Find out about Ben's interesting planning work in the Australian Government within the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

In the next edition we will be able to update you on the NSW Young Planners Forum, 'Designing our Future', held at the University of Western Sydney's Parramatta Campus in late May/early June.

## 2012 NSW University Engagement led by the Young Planners

By Harry Quartermain

In March the NSW Young Planner Committee visited the Sydney based universities. The sessions were planned to coincide with the first lecture of the semester for the new planning undergraduates and postgraduates. The YP Committee members were able to take some time to talk to the new planners, discuss the hopes and fears of the planners of tomorrow and promote membership of PIA as the peak professional body for planners in Australia.



The Committee visited: Sydney University; Macquarie University; University of New South Wales; and University of Technology Sydney. All the sessions were well attended by future young planners who enjoyed the chance to talk to recent graduates about the job market and about career possibilities after graduation. The YP Committee is made up of a spread of Private Sector, State and Federal Government employees; this allows us to provide inspiration on a range of possible future careers.

A big THANK YOU goes out to all the institutions for hosting us during our brief Student Welcomes; we're already looking forward to coming back next year!

## YPConnect in Adelaide 28-29 April 2012

By Michael Dixon  
NSW National Young Planners Group

SPARC! Smart Planning: Advancing & Reinventing Cities - this was the theme for the much anticipated National Young

Planners Conference, YP Connect, held over the weekend of Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 April in Adelaide. Young Planners from across the country (and beyond!) converged on this accessible and vibrant city to network, learn about the latest technology and tools to help overcome the latest planning challenges, get career insights from planners at different stages of their careers, and catch up with planning friends from interstate.

The weekend's activities started on Saturday afternoon with an Amazing Race around the CBD, beginning at North Adelaide. Teams of 6-7 Young Planners worked together to find landmarks such as Beehive Corner, Adelaide Central Market and St Francis Xavier Cathedral, solve clues, pose for hilarious team photos, and make it back to the Dog and Duck Hotel before the other teams!

The Dog and Duck Hotel was a great opportunity for Young Planners to rest their weary feet, order a pint and receive a schooner, or a schooner and receive a middy (not the Hotel's fault, just State differences!), and get to know each other. In the evening the socialising continued at the official welcome reception held at The Griffins Head Hotel, also in the CBD. Afterwards those with reserves of energy continued on whilst the others retired to their accommodation to rest up for the day ahead.

The SPARC Conference was held on Sunday at the very impressive Grand Hotel in Glenelg, a 35 minute tram ride from the city. There were a wide range of speakers and topics fitting nicely into the overall theme of the conference. Topics included planning for healthy cities, planning for a changing world and the future of cities, the realities of planning in an economic climate, urban ecology, innovation in public participation, GIS systems in the planning process, the realities of working overseas, and disaster recovery following the Christchurch earthquakes. There was a site visit to the Glenelg

The advertisement banner features a dark blue background with a faint, light-colored map or technical drawing overlay. On the left side, the BBC Consulting Planners logo is displayed, consisting of the letters 'B', 'B', and 'C' in white, each inside a vertical white bar, with a white curved line below them and the words 'CONSULTING PLANNERS' underneath. To the right of the logo, the text 'Expert Planning Advice &amp; Solutions.' is written in a large, white, serif font. Below this, in a smaller white font, is the contact information: 'For more information please call (02) 9211 4099 or visit www.bbcplanners.com.au'. At the bottom of the banner, a list of services is provided: 'Property Investigations | Planning Approvals &amp; Submissions | Infrastructure Planning &amp; Policy Strategic Planning | Social &amp; Community Planning'.



waterfront and workshop to explore the idea of reinventing place, and a session providing career perspectives from planners of different generations. The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Mr Stephen Yarwood, himself a planner, explored his experiences in planning the CBD for enjoyment by all generations.

The South Australian Museum played host to the official closing function, which was also the welcome function for the PIA Main Congress. The advantages of a shared event were evident early, all one had to do was glance around the room at other delegates of all ages meeting, networking and generally conversing and enjoying the night. A lion with a wagging tail at the entry to the Eurasian exhibit added an element of surprise to the museum experience.

All in all, YP Connect was a great opportunity to re-ignite one's passion for planning, stay abreast of the latest tools to solve enduring and emerging planning issues, meet other planning professionals from across the country, and catch up with old friends. The topics were highly relevant to today's urban planning issues and the speakers were certainly engaging. This YP Connect was my third consecutive one and I was able to catch up with friends who had also come back for another great event!

Thanks to the sponsors The Heart Foundation, Edge Land Planning, Urbis, Lanser Communities and Bond University who made the event possible.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Canberra will play host to YP Connect 2013 to be held 23 – 24 March!**

**Interview with Benjamin Cebuliak**

**Here is a snapshot into Ben's role in the Major Cities Unit of the Australian Government. Ben is also part of the NSW YP Committee.**



*What made you choose planning as a career and what are you favourite things about planning?*

I've been a planner for as long as I remember – long before I learnt it was a profession. One of my earliest memories is sitting on the driveway of my childhood home in Central Queensland with a packet of chalk drawing street networks. I have always thought that there are ways we can improve our lives by improving the way we think about, plan, design and build the places we live in. The great thing about planning is being able to see the benefits it gives to millions of people around the world, with just a bit of careful thinking and follow through.



*Where do you work and what are some of the projects you get involved in?*

I work at the Major Cities Unit – a small urban policy unit of the Australian Government within the Department of Infrastructure and Transport. I have been very lucky to be involved in some exciting and interesting projects. It is a pleasure to have the time and scope to look at things strategically through a national lens.

My work at the Major Cities Unit started with the development of the National Urban Policy. This began with a basic 'Planning 101' exercise of thinking about where we were, where we wanted to get to and then how we thought we could contribute to getting there.

What we first released in 2010 was an information report to establish where we were called The State of Australian Cities. This report formed the start of a national discussion on urban issues in Australia, and continues to outline these issues with annual updates.

The resulting Australian Government policy, Our Cities, Our Future – a National Urban Policy for a productive, sustainable and liveable future, sets in place the Australian Government's objectives and directions for our cities as we prepare for the decades ahead. It recognises the critical roles that State, Territory and Local Governments, the private sector and individuals play in planning, managing and investing in cities.

We continue our work recognising that we can achieve greater things by working together. The idea for an Urban Design Protocol for Australia came from organisations like PIA and the State and Territory Planning Officials Group. The protocol is an action under the National Urban Policy and helps to define criterion 8 of the COAG capital city planning objective of 'encouraging world class urban design'. It is truly collaboration with an editorial board of about 50 people representing governments of all spheres, peak private sector bodies and professional organisations (including PIA).

Check it out at [www.urbandesign.gov.au](http://www.urbandesign.gov.au)

*What made you become a member of the Young Planners Committee?*

I moved to NSW after working and studying in Queensland, Canada and Canberra. I knew how planning in NSW works in theory, but knew very little about who the players are and how the system works in practice.

The YP Committee has been a great way to get to know some great, highly motivated people with an amazing depth of jobs and experiences. The committee has young planners working for State and Local government, as well as small and large planning and engineering consultancies and firms throughout NSW.

*What can the YP Committee offer to the young planners in NSW?*

Young planners are the future of the profession. There are some things

happening now in NSW that will shape our work for many years to come. The last time NSW had a serious look at its planning legislation, my current Executive Director was beginning her planning career. As young planners we have the most to benefit from these changes if they are done right. The YP Committee provides a conduit for young planners in NSW to be heard on such important issues.

Perhaps, more important for planners at the start of their career is developing skills and networks. The YP committee brings together activities for young planners in NSW. The upcoming YP Forum, Designing our Future, at UWS Parramatta campus is one example. As young planners we learn lots of great theory at Uni, but when we enter the workforce full time, we realise how much we don't know. Young planner workshops like this help us to bridge this gap and give us a chance to develop our skills and experiences beyond university.

The YP committee is also involved in organising fringe events for young planners at other PIA conferences like YP Connect – the young planner's fringe fest to the PIA National Congress in Adelaide this year.

Young Planners show the more established planners out there how networking is done. The YP Committee organises a few social events and activities throughout the year. Our annual trivia nights and end of year social events are always a hit with planners of all experience.

Check us out on Facebook as well!

**Upcoming Young Planners events (mark these dates in your diary!):**

We hope to see you at:

2012 NSW Young Planners Forum  
**Designing our Future 31 May – 1 June 2012**

**Watch this space for information on the 2012 NSW PIA Mentoring Programme starting up soon again**

**Young Planners Trivia Night - TBC**

**The NSW Young Planner Committee is currently comprised of the following members:**

- Harry Quartermain** - URS
- Michael Dixon** – Roads and Maritime Services
- Marta Bach** – Transport for NSW
- Timothy Sneesby** – SGS Economic and Planning
- Benjamin Cebuliak** - Department of Infrastructure and Transport
- Red Tandog** – Aurecon Group
- Justine Yates** – Auburn Council
- Wil Nino** – P&P Projects
- Christina Livers** – Hill PDA
- Sebastian Tauni** – Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- Lachlan Abercrombie** – Cox Architecture
- Rebecca Lockart** – Marrickville Council
- Pat Quinlan** – Newcastle City Council
- Gary Cheung**
- Mathew Quattroville**
- Mark Thompson**

# Inbox

Nicole Philps



Chris Lalor, Acting Manager Strategic Planning, has advised that Council's Section 94 Planner **Roger Rankin** resigned in January to take up a strategic planning position at Leichhardt Council. **Vanessa Morschel**, who was previously the Section 94 support officer, has now been appointed the Section 94 Planner. **Christina Heather** has left Council to travel throughout Europe and will be based in Paris. **Tanya Uppal**, who was previously with Blacktown Council was subsequently appointed to Christina's position. In February **Bruce Dunlop** was

appointed Council's first Infrastructure Coordinator. He was previously with Campbelltown Council. **Kylie Powell** returns from maternity leave on 18 June.

**Christopher Aston**, formerly of NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure has recently returned to Brisbane to join Queensland's Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning as a Senior Planner. **Heather Gunton** also joined Chris in moving to Queensland pastures by accepting a planning role with Brisbane City Council. Congratulations to both, particularly on their recent engagement.

**Cameron Steuart**, formerly of NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure has recently joined Transport for New South Wales, and **Daniel Cavallo**, also formerly of NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure has moved to take up a position as Principal Manager at Transport for NSW.

Hill PDA is pleased to welcome **David Parsell** as the new Planning Associate. Prior to joining Hill PDA, David led Leichhardt Council's strategic planning team and was responsible for the preparation of policies addressing economic development, employment lands, residential development, affordable housing and heritage conservation.

Hill PDA also welcomes **Simon Joseph** as a Consultant. Simon has recently completed a Masters degree in Accounting and Finance at UNSW and has previously worked in the construction industry as a contracts administrator on both residential and commercial new build projects.

**Christina Livers** has joined Hill PDA as a Planning Consultant. Christina recently graduated from the Bachelor of Planning degree at the University of New South Wales. She previously worked as a planning contractor where she provided advice on a range of projects including infrastructure, urban renewal and tourism. Christina is a member of the PIA Young Planners Committee.

Congratulations to **Bob Meyer** who has been awarded the 2012 Heritage Medal by Campbelltown City Council for his role in shaping our modern city and preserving its heritage.

In more domestic news, **Sarah Hill**, our new NSW President, and her husband Michael welcomed baby Hudson into the world on 26th March ■

*If you have any staff updates, announcements or other interesting news you would like to share, I would love to hear from you at [nikphilps@gmail.com](mailto:nikphilps@gmail.com) – Nicole*

## GTA's Expanded Sydney Team

We warmly welcome our new key senior appointments:



### Top row, from left to right:

Chris Wilson, Director  
Bruce Masson, Executive Consultant  
Jason Rudd, Associate Director

### Bottom row, from left to right:

Ken Hollyoak, Associate Director  
Penny Dalton, Associate  
Wayne Johnson, Senior Project Manager



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# In the Courts:

## Mind the cap – development contribution limitations

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**In recent years the State Government has issued directions to local councils capping the amount of monetary contributions that may be imposed as a condition of development consent. The purpose of these directions was to “increase housing supply by lowering development charges for infrastructure and to stimulate housing construction.” A Ministerial Direction issued to Penrith City Council in March 2011 capped the amount of any monetary contribution under s 94 of the EP&A Act for residential subdivision to \$30,000 per lot.**

In *North Western Surveys Pty Limited v Penrith City Council* [2012] NSWLEC 1017 the applicant appealed against several conditions imposed on a development consent for a residential subdivision. The challenged conditions involved the imposition of several obligations on the applicant. The first obligation was to construct (at its own cost) a detention basin and roads, with the statutory basis for this requirement being s 80A of the Act. The second obligation was to dedicate to the council free of cost the land on which the detention basin was to be built, with s 94 the statutory basis for this requirement. In addition, a further condition required the applicant to pay a monetary contribution under s 94 of \$2m, based on a levy of \$30,000 per lot. The applicant appealed these conditions, contending that the combined effect was to levy s 94 contributions in cash, land and works in kind in the order of \$51,000 per lot, in excess of the \$30,000 cap set by the Direction.

The central issues the Court had to determine were whether the conditions in dispute could be imposed under ss 80A and 94, and whether in the circumstances of the case these conditions were reasonable. The Court was not able to support the imposition of the challenged conditions.

Conditions imposing the \$2m monetary contribution were, significantly, based on a draft contribution plan, and so were not

calculated in accordance with the adopted s 94 plan which was subject to the Minister's Direction. Instead, the council had 'cherry picked' items and imposed rates from the adopted plan as modified by the draft plan that would bring the calculated amount within the Ministerial cap. As such, the disputed condition was not authorized by the Act, as it was not of a kind allowed by, and was determined in accordance with, a contributions plan (vide s 94B(1)). Further, the Court held that the conditions imposed a monetary contribution under s 94 for non-essential works based on a draft plan, and then purported to require the applicant to pay for the essential works identified in the adopted plan by other means: namely s 80A conditions. This approach frustrated the intention of the cap and the purpose of the Direction.

In relation to the imposition of the contested conditions under s 80A of the Act, the council contended that because it did not impose a requirement under s 94 for payment of monetary contributions for drainage, water management and roads, these could be required by a condition under s 80A. This was because the conditions relating to works and the dedication of land were not controlled by the Ministerial Direction which, council submitted, did no more than place a cap on monetary contributions. Conversely, the applicant submitted that where a developer paid money, provided the land or undertook works in kind the intention of the Direction remained the same: that the total cost burden imposed upon the developer directly or indirectly was \$30,000 per lot. The council's approach sought to avoid the intent of the cap: the conditions imposed a requirement (by a condition imposed under s 94) that the applicant pay cash for non-essential works, and then argue that as it had no funding for essential works it had to get the developer to construct them instead as a

condition under s 80A(1)(f) of the Act.

In order to resolve this issue, the Court had to determine whether the works conditions imposed under s80A were applicable or sufficiently connected to the development to justify imposition under this section, or instead could be primarily characterized as the provision of a public amenity, in which case only s 94 could be used. The Court held that the case law was clear that only conditions requiring works related to a development could be imposed under s 80A. Specifically, s 80A(1)(f) allowed the imposition of a condition if it required the carrying out of works relating to any matter referred to in s 79C(1) of the Act applicable to the development the subject of the consent. The Court held that the works the subject of the challenged conditions under s 80A were works that could be 'characterised primarily as the provision of a public amenity.' The evidence supported that the works were applicable to the greater community and not just the needs of the development. Thus they could not be imposed under s 80A and were really s 94 conditions.

Similarly, s 94 was the only statutory basis for the dedication to council, at no cost, of the land on which the detention basin was to be constructed. Further, such a dedication could only be required as a reasonable response to the need for public services and amenities generated by the development. As the detention basin served a far greater catchment than just the subject development, the dedication of the basin land was held to be unreasonable and s 94 did not authorize the imposition of this condition.

Accordingly, the Court held that the applicant's draft conditions be imposed in place of the council's conditions. These had "been prepared in accordance with the Act, the council's planning controls, and the contributions plans adopted by council and subject to the Ministerial Direction" ■

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# IN THE NEWS

## Up north

The ABC has reported that **Old Bar** residents at risk of losing their homes to coastal erosion will not be compensated if they are ordered to leave under a planned retreat regime, which is still to be approved by the state government. Greater Taree City Council's Senior Leader of Strategic Planning says the voluntary acquisition of affected private property, or compensation to owners, is not a part of the council's policy. He says it will be up to affected residents to lobby state and federal governments for a compensation package.

Further south, waterfront property owners have protested in **Gosford** against Council's sea level policy, which will attach sea level warnings to their planning certificates according to ABC News. Protestors state the policy will affect their home insurance costs and house prices, and whilst they are not denying there is climate change, they feel that the claims of the amount of rise are over exaggerated and that insurance companies have in some cases increased premiums by up to 1000 percent.

Brad Hazard has said it will be some time before the north coast is identified in a new state land use plan according to the ABC. A draft plan for the **Upper Hunter and New England** was recently released and has generated significant attention. Strategic land mapping will move progressively across regions of the state, but it is acknowledged that due to the enormous amount of work required, priorities have had to be made. However, he has stated that decisions about coal seam gas exploration and licences will be governed by other state wide safeguards, such as the interim measures of the aquifer interference regulations and the agricultural impact statement.

## Down south and the Illawarra

The Planning Assessment Commission has refused \$3 billion urban development at **Albion Park**, south of Wollongong, reports the ABC. The concept plans for the **Calderwood** development were approved by the former Labor Government under Part 3A. It has been deemed that the Calderwood development was not in the public interest, it was inconsistent with the Illawarra Regional Strategy, and that it adversely impacted on the orderly development of land in the Illawarra. The developer Lend Lease says the project would have generated the equivalent of nearly 8,000 full time jobs and injected nearly \$3 billion dollars into the local economy. It's not yet known whether Lend Lease will appeal the decision.

The legality of future development at **Sandon Point** near Thirroul has been called into question by the New South Wales Greens reports the ABC. Greens MP David Shoebridge wants a revision of plans for the Anglican Retirement Village site, the last remaining undeveloped site at Sandon Point. It comes after the Minister for the Illawarra Greg Pearce told parliament the previous Labor government failed to properly gazette the site for three years, resulting in lawless development. The ABC is seeking comment from both the **Planning Minister Brad Hazzard** and the Anglican Retirement Village.

A press release from the Federal Member for Eden-Monaro and the NSW Roads Minister has announced that Macmahon Contractors P/L has been selected to build the new, fully-Federally funded **Bega Bypass**, clearing the way for work to begin onsite next month some 30 years after the first line was drawn on a map. The project will involve building a new 3.5 kilometre two-lane road to the west of the existing Princes Highway between the existing

Bega River Bridge and Finucane Lane and is projected to be completed in 2014.

## Inland

**Bernard Salt** from KPMG has stated that twice as many people could move to **Dubbo** in the next 25 years than the Department of Planning estimates, growing by up to 10,000 people by 2036, according ABC News. Mr Salt says the planning department's projection is based on figures taken during the drought and doesn't make allowances for boom times during the next two decades, or consequences of a policy shift where state government departments are decentralised to Dubbo, for example. The council will use the population study to help it lobby for funding for building projects in the city.

## Central Coast and Hunter

The Government has approved the rezoning of Coal and Allied land at **Nords Wharf, Gwandalan and Middle Camp** to the north of **Catherine Hill Bay**, reports the ABC. More than 900 new homes will be built, with 850 hectares of high conservation land transferred to the Government. However work will not start immediately as the Department of Planning and Infrastructure is currently considering some concept plan proposals which provide more detail on the built form desired for sites.

In March the SMH reported that experts have warned that a flood in the **Hawkesbury-Nepean** valley, comparable to the one that devastated parts of Brisbane in January last year, is inevitable, with catastrophic consequences for some of Sydney's fastest-growing residential areas. Residents fear that current planning is too focussed on evacuations rather than what can be done to mitigate severe flooding. Options include investigating the use of **Warragamba Dam** for flood mitigation as well as water storage. The government says that it will establish a review into flood planning.

## Sydney's transport

Motorists and pedestrians around **Wynyard Station** in the city will face disruption from next month when work will begin on a 110-metre underground pedestrian tunnel and a 100-metre bridge crossing Sussex Street in October. The entire project would cost about \$300 million. The new infrastructure is designed to let people walk from Wynyard Station to **Barangaroo** in six minutes. Between 6000 and 8000 people use the Kent Street tunnel every hour. The new Wynyard walkway is designed to carry up to 20,000 people an hour. A new entrance to Wynyard Station, called the "Clarence Street portal", will provide direct access to the station.

## Infrastructure

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister **Anthony Albanese** has announced that the upgrade and reconfiguration of the rail yard at **Port Botany** has now been completed, part of a wider project which will transform the movement of freight across the Sydney Basin and take up to 300,000 trucks a year off the City's road network. Work has now commenced on the next stage of the \$172 million Port Botany Rail Upgrade project, with Downer Australia selected for the job of expanding the Enfield rail yard so it can accommodate more trains at any one time. The upgraded Port Botany Rail Line, and the associated works at Enfield, will connect with the new Southern Sydney Freight Line, which is expected to commence operations in early 2013, and from there onto the Main North South Line between Melbourne and Brisbane.

However the SMH has reported that a dispute is brewing between the federal

government and a joint-venture alliance between Qube Logistics, Stockland and Queensland Rail known as the **Sydney Intermodal Terminal Alliance** over competing plans to build freight terminals on adjoining sites at **Moorebank** in Sydney's west. The government has spent \$70 million on plans to move the Defence Department's School of Military Engineering and on a business case for a freight terminal on one site. Cabinet must now decide whether to fund the project, understood to cost about \$1.6 billion, in the budget. But the Alliance is proposing to build and operate its own terminal on an adjacent smaller site (about 83 hectares), which it owns, and is now occupied by Defence's National Storage and Distribution Centre. The project's environmental impact statement will go on display this week. However the two proposals are increasingly at odds and there is an expectation something will have to give.

The Government has announced that the exhibition and convention centre at **Sydney's Darling Harbour Centre** will be closed from the end of 2013 for three years while the new precinct's construction is completed. The new development will likely contain new apartments and shops in addition to an enlarged convention centre. The ABC has reported that the Opposition has expressed concern that the size and scope of the plans have been increased to take in the adjoining **Tumbalong Park**. The **Planning Minister Brad Hazzard** says there may be opportunities to generate revenue through residential development, but not at the expense of public spaces. "The intent of the Government is to keep all of the public space in its total, although it may be varied in its actual configuration," he said.

The SMH has reported that six years after signing a \$1.6 billion agreement to rebuild the heart of the city, **Parramatta City Council** and the developer **Grocon** have abandoned plans for one of Sydney's biggest urban-redevelopment projects, **Civic Place**. The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Lorraine Wearne, blamed the project's demise on the global financial crisis and its aftermath.

The SHM has reported that a plan is underway to develop **Collaroy Beach**, the surf life saving club, ocean pools, services club and playground to become accessible to people of all abilities as will the commercial strip on Pittwater Road. There is a proposal to include the Long Reef Golf Club and establish bed-and-breakfast accommodation for people with disabilities. The plan, which will cost \$3 million to \$4 million, has potential for expansion. Behind the beach, a block land, known as Sargood, will be developed as a residential facility for people with spinal cord injuries to help them become fully independent. The \$15 million building will be finished next year.

**Canberra Airport** is urging the NSW Premier to reject a housing developer's plans for thousands of new homes under its flight path which would block an expansion of the airport's capacity according to the SMH. The federal government wants a second airport within the Sydney basin to bolster the national economy and take pressure off the existing airport at **Mascot** and favours a site at **Wilton**, southwest of the city. The NSW Premier however wants Canberra Airport expanded and to include a high-speed rail link between Sydney and the nation's capital. Building a high-speed rail link would cost the same amount as an airport. The NSW government is currently examining a development proposal from **Village Building Company** for 1850 homes at **South Tralee** near Queanbeyan, with a long-term plan for

5500 homes, which would be right under the flight path of an expanded Canberra airport.

## Environment

The SMH has reported that the **Sydney Water Catchment Management Amendment (Board Members) Bill 2012** introduced to Parliament in April removes the existing requirement for nominees from the NSW Farmers Association, the Nature Conservation Council and a local councillor, with the proposed changes moving from board appointments based on stakeholder representation to one based on merit. The Greens have argued that it is an unnecessary move.

The **Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment** at the University of Western Sydney's Hawkesbury campus in Richmond will provide world-class facilities with the capacity to undertake cutting-edge research on a scale that will help place Australia at the forefront of the response to climate change.

## From the Minister's office

**Minister for Planning and Infrastructure's** office announced in March that a draft regional land-use policy and newly-mapped regional land-use plans for the **Upper Hunter and New England North West** regions has been released, the first time in the State's history that "strategic agricultural has been mapped, made available and given greater protection from mining proposals". The NSW Government also announced a raft of other measures, including a draft aquifer interference policy, to improve protection for groundwater and a new draft code of practice for the coal seam gas exploration industry.

## Macquarie Street

**Local Government Minister Don Page** announced the establishment of an independent expert panel to examine structural arrangements in the context of the financial sustainability of councils across NSW. Mr Page said the **Local Government Review Panel** is the first initiative to be announced out of the Destination 2036 Action Plan, which is nearing completion.

The SMH has also reported that the State Government has opened the door to voluntary council amalgamations, as part of the Local Government Review Panel.

## State and National

The **Regional Australia Institute (RAI)** was launched at the end of February as an independent think tank, born out of the Federal Government's 2010 commitments to Independent MPs from regional Australia.

The Federal Government has released a public consultation paper to generate discussion and input into the development of the **Australian Heritage Strategy**. The strategy is intended to provide the chance to reenergise our interest in heritage and set the long term direction for the identification, management and celebration of Indigenous, historic and natural heritage. Information can be found on the SEWPac website.

The **Reform Council**, set up by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has delivered a scathing report into national infrastructure, finding none of Australia's cities fully meet the targets set by federal and state leaders.

The NSW government has bought the company that owns **Sydney's monorail network** for \$19.8 million with the intention of pulling it down.

The biggest overhaul of the **Adelaide's** planning laws in decades has been signed off with an historic agreement reached between the State Government and the **Adelaide City Council**.

# PIA NSW DIRECTORY 2012



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Information on forthcoming advocacy, events, sponsorship and partnering opportunities can be found on our website [www.planning.org.au/nsw](http://www.planning.org.au/nsw)

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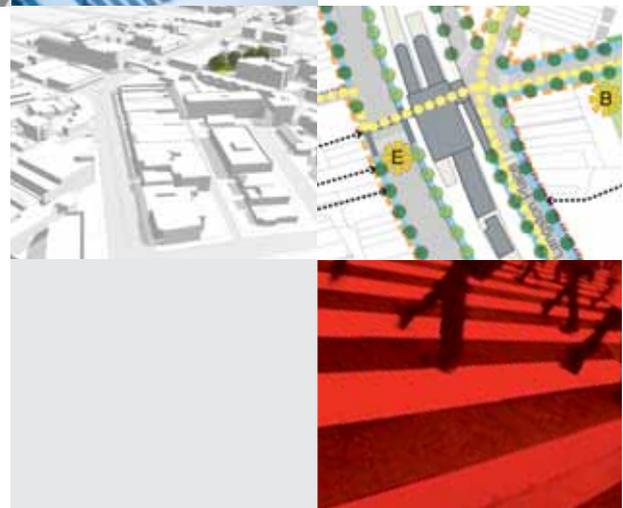
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■ Wentworthville Urban Renewal Project ■ Prospect Urban Renewal Project ■ Parramatta Road Enterprise Corridor DCP ■ Epping Town Centre Study



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