April 2008

Urbecon

A global city is more than a CBD

The economies of the world's great cities are more than a collection of office towers in so-called 'central business districts'. Think of London's financial district in the City, new office precinct at Canary Wharf, theatres in the West End, government activities at Westminster and arts venues and museums at South Bank. Think of New York's Wall Street, Lower East Side, Greenwich Village and Times Square. Global cities contain diverse precincts and neighbourhoods connected by high quality and dense public transport. Their economies are underpinned by the creativity and constant innovation that occurs where skilled people mix in social, business and cultural activities.

The City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney 2030 strategic plan recognises these pre-requisites for a successful city. Importantly, *it also anticipates that Sydney's competitive advantage in the 21st century will derive from its world renowned liveability, and increasingly from the extent to which it is environmentally sustainable.* Sustainable Sydney 2030 identifies Five Big Moves to Transform the City that are underpinned by this understanding.

1. A revitalised City Centre at the heart of global Sydney.

The old 'CBD', north of Central Station, is re-cast as the 'City Centre', to recognise that a thriving economy needs a diversity of activities alongside pure business uses. Sufficient floorspace for business activities will be provided, but ground level cafes and shops to activate street life will be required in new developments. Distinctive retail, civic and entertainment districts will be promoted. Laneways and under-utilised areas will be activated with bars and cultural activities. The great physical asset of the City Centre is its harbour. Bold proposals to removal the Cahill Expressway and bring the Western Distributor to ground, would enable the City Centre to be re-connected to the waterfront, thereby re-establishing Sydney's credentials as the Harbour City.

2. An integrated Inner Sydney transport network

The centres of other global cities are crisscrossed by fixed rail public transport (typically light rail or metro lines, like the London Underground). In central areas the same size as the City of Sydney, Berlin has 220 kilometres of track, London 200 kilometres, Barcelona 140 kilometres, Toronto 50 kilometres and Singapore 35 kilometres. Notwithstanding its generally lower density, the Sydney figure of 23.5 kilometres of track appears far from world class in comparison. Inner Sydney desperately needs a comprehensive and integrated light rail or metro rail network, which Sustainable Sydney 2030 proposes, to connect the City Centre with the surrounding villages, but also to connect the villages with each other. Key corridors for early action are those connecting George Street through Redfern, to Green Square and Botany, along Regent Street and Botany Road, and between Surry Hills and Rosebery.

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SGS Economics & Planning

The other key transport proposals are those which seek to 'protect the heart' from the noise, congestion and disruptive impact of vehicular traffic. With a world class light rail loop, efficient and iconic interchange facilities for moving between rail modes and complementary road and car parking management initiatives, travel by car to and through the City Centre can be minimised.

3. A liveable green network for walking and cycling

Around 48 per cent of trips by City residents are by walking and cycling, compared to an average of around 18 percent across the metropolitan region. The City's compact urban environment supports these already sustainable travel patterns, and these will be further strengthened by the liveable green network proposed in Sustainable Sydney 2030. Green corridors linking parks and reserves would be integrated with liveable streets, providing a separate, safe and pleasant way for pedestrians and cyclists to move across the City.

4. Activity Hubs as a focus for the City's village communities and transport

In Sydney the City's economic, creative, entertainment and cultural activities are spread throughout its 'villages'. Education and health facilities are at the core of employment concentrations in Darlinghurst (around St Vincents Hospital) and Camperdown (around the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and University of Sydney). Surry Hills and Chippendale are buzzing with small, creative businesses in converted warehouses, galleries, and shops, amidst great residential diversity. Kings Cross, Oxford Street, Newtown and Glebe have their own distinctive, small business cultures.

The ten Activity Hubs proposed in Sustainable Sydney 2030 are about fostering these local economies, as well as providing a focus for the residential oriented community, cultural facilities and local retailing. Each of the identified Hubs will be strengthened through local planning and business development initiatives.

5. Transformative development and sustainable renewal

Significant change and development has occurred in the last 20 years or so with, for example, Darling Harbour, Walsh Bay, Woolloomooloo, Pyrmont, and the old Showgrounds at Moore Park all transformed in this period. Sustainable Sydney 2030 lifts the sustainability bar for the next 20 years of renewal and redevelopment.

Frasers Broadway, on the CUB site, is proposing ambitious sustainability initiatives. Development at Green Square will make a significant contribution to affordable housing, and provide a shopping, business and cultural focus for communities south of Redfern. Barangaroo, adjacent to the City Centre, is expected to be a world class district of economic activity, with a variety of large and small businesses, combined with cultural and leisure activities. The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority has responsibility for this area.

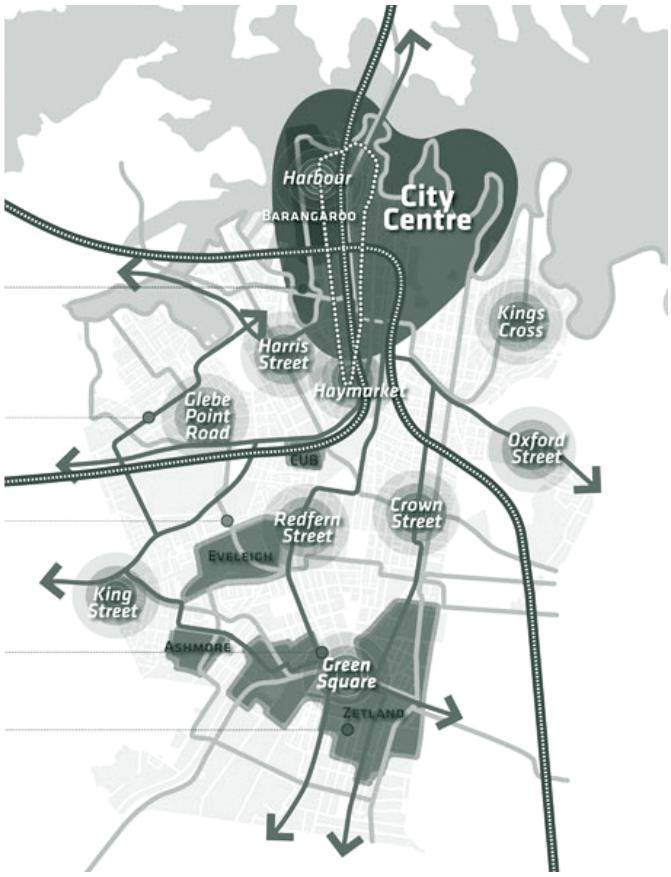
Sustainable Sydney 2030 proposes that all these and other new developments should host 'green transformers'. These are gas-fired, low emissions electricity plants which could also provide local area heating, cooling, water recycling and waste to energy capacity. Ultimately, a network of green transformers would service most of the City's buildings. This is intended to not only significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also make the City energy self sufficient by 2030. The City's density should make this a viable proposition.

A key imperative is to integrate these renewal areas into the fabric of the City, so they contribute to overall liveability and sustainability. New streets with pedestrian and cycle ways should connect to existing streets, high quality public spaces should be a focus for activity, and a mix of premises should provide for a range of business types.

In the future Sydney's globally oriented economy will be sustained by a strong City Centre and diverse precincts elsewhere hosting high quality, innovative businesses. Liveability and sustainability will be fundamental to the City's competitive advantage. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is an integrated plan for the City that recognises and plans for this future. ■

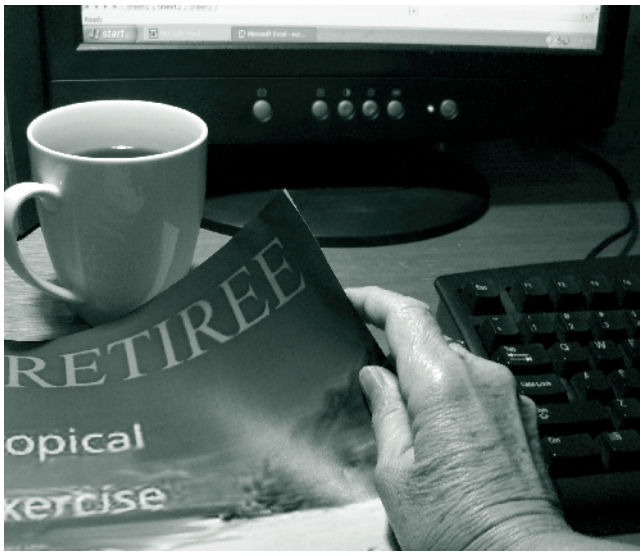
SGS led the consultant team preparing the Sydney 2030 strategy. More information on the strategy can be found at http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/2030/

Sydney 2030 Strategy Summary Map



source: http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/2030/theplan/Default.asp

When will the echo of the Baby Boom arrive?



People born between 1946 and 1965 (known as 'baby boomers') account for around a third of the adult population in Australia. Over the next 25 years this sizable segment of the population will retire from the labour force. There are many different reasons why people retire. Those with access to the aged pension, superannuation or other sources of income (savings and investments) may retire because they no longer want to undertake paid work. Others may retire involuntarily due to poor health, caring responsibilities, or because they can't find paid work which suits their skills or circumstances.

The retirement of the baby boomers has a wide range of implications including:

- changes to housing needs and social services;
- changes to the cost of providing age pensions, health and aged care;
- reduced supply of labour, affecting economic growth; and
- challenge to the baby boomers' ability to support their standard of living during retirement.

A number of steps have been taken in an attempt to address these issues. For example, the Future Fund has been established, superannuation has been made more attractive and policies such as the Baby Bonus have been introduced to encourage higher fertility. Skilled migration intakes have been increased to reduce skill shortages caused by the ageing population.

Housing, services and population effects

Ageing will change the demand for housing, not just in terms of the number of dwelling units but also in terms of the type of dwelling. 'Down Sizing' (moving to a smaller dwelling) may also impact on the type of dwellings which older people choose to live in. A change in preference from a larger house in the suburbs to a smaller unit close to the city is often identified amongst retiring baby boomers. However, 'the jury is still out' as to whether this is a more widespread trend.

The reducing proportion of the population working in certain areas may affect the need for public transport and other public infrastructure. For instance, the need for primary schools might be replaced with the need for residential aged care facilities. The needs for services of older people will evolve as they age. Some of the services required by a 75 year old are greatly different to those required by a 65 year old. For example, 75 year olds are more reliant on in-home help with daily activities.

There may also be shifts in the distribution of the population. The 'Sea Change' (moving out of the city to a costal area) and 'Tree Change' (the shift to inland or rural areas) which older people may undertake can shift the burden of service provision from the city to regional areas.

The tide can move both ways in this case. People aged in their late 50's and early 60's can move with ease from metropolitan to regional areas. However, as they age and require increased support or lose a partner, they may need to return to the city or regional centres to be closer to health services and family support. Another trend long established is the 'Sponge City' phenomena whereby regional centres draw in populations from the rural hinterland and small towns.

Estimating the age of retirement

It is around the age of retirement when many of the transitions in an older person's life will start to take place. However, there is surprisingly little data about the age of retirement. Without this sort of information it is difficult to know when the full impact of the baby boomers' retirement will be felt.

Sophisticated analysis can show how labour force participation rates of specific cohorts decrease with increasing age. However, distilling information on the age of retirement in this way can be problematic as there are many cohorts, all at different stages of their working life.

Using a life-table approach can produce an expected age of retirement. This is the expected age at which a person aged 50 years in the period will withdraw from the labour force. This measure assumes that the age-specific withdrawal rates observed in the reference period will persist throughout the person's working life. It is calculated in the same way as for life expectancy.

However, there are a number of problems with this type of estimate. They are often highly sensitive to changing trends in participation rates. Estimation problems arise when participation rates increases with age. That is, people return to the labour force. This is a problem which people calculating life expectancy never have to worry about.

Perhaps most importantly, the expected age of retirement is not technically a measure of retirement today but rather a hypothetical construction of future retirement for a particular age cohort. The ages at which the pension can currently be accessed, 65 for men and 63 (which is progressively being increased) for women, are often used as proxies for retirement.

A new approach

Research by SGS Economic & Planning has shown that these ages are not very representative of people's actual behaviour. There also appears to be some interesting variation between sexes and different parts of Australia. By tracking the changing number of people participating in a particular 5 year age cohort using Census data from 1996, 2001 and 2006 an average retirement age can be estimated.

We define retirement as starting at 50. For five-year age groups, on average retirement occurs at ages 50, 55 etc. For example, for a cohort aged 45-49 years in 1996, all withdrawal between ages 45-49 and 50-54, over the next 5 years will on average occur at age 50. For the age group 55-59, all withdrawal over the next 5 years will occur on average at age 60.

Given the different labour force participation profiles of men and women aged over 50, separate average retirement ages have been calculated for Australia and the five major capital cities (producing estimates for the smaller capital raises a number of data related issues).

In Australia, the average age of men who retired between 2001 and 2006 was 60.9, up from an average age of 59.8 in the previous five year period. (See Figure 1)

All major capital cities have experienced an increase in the age of retirement between 2001 and 2006. In 2001 Perth and Brisbane have higher average retirement ages than the other major cities. Brisbane experienced a large increase of 1.2 years between 2001 and 2006. Melbourne also experienced an increase which saw it move ahead of Sydney in terms of the average age of retirement of men.

This increased average age of retirement reflects improved labour market conditions. In boom times, older workers stay in the labour force for longer and some are even tempted back into paid employment.

The average age of Australian women retiring between 2001 and 2006 was 59.6, a 1.8 year increase from the previous period. (see Figure 2). Overall, women retire at a younger age than men. This is due to a number of factors, for example, earlier access age to the pension than and other social factors which impact on women's participation in the labour force.

There has been a narrowing of the gap between men and women between 2001 and 2006. This reflects improved labour market conditions (which generally have a greater effect on women than men in terms of labour force participation) and the changing labour force participation of women (a cohort effect). The overall pattern of women's age of retirement is similar to the retirement age of men.

One factor which is affecting both sexes is the increasing participation among older people in part time employment. That is, it is now more common for people to have a transition from full time employment to retirement via part time employment. There are a number of reasons why people use part time work as a bridge between full-time work and retirement:

- Part time work can supplement their retirement income;
- People may enjoy the stimulation and social contact which part time employment can provide;
- Their partner may still be employed in a full time capacity;
- They may be assisting their former employer or friends by proving labour during peak periods; or
- Poor health may make full time work impracticable.

This type of flexibility in the labour market means that there is a lack of finality in the work to retirement transition. People may retire temporarily, then return to work or continue to work part time before finally retiring.

It is clear the retirement of the baby boomers will impact on numerous aspects of the Australian economy and society. The age at which the baby boomers are retiring is an important part of the equation, one which better statistical methods are bringing into sharper focus. ■

Figure 1 Average Retirement Age for Men

Figure 2 Average Retirement Age for Women

A hard Act to follow: Aboriginal Corporations and the transition to CATSI

Two thousand and eight promises to be an eventful year for Aboriginal Corporations in Australia. By June 30th 2009, all federally incorporated entities must make the transition from the now rescinded Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act (1976) to the new Corporations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act (2007); bringing Aboriginal Corporations into line with existing mainstream corporate legislation.

Indigenous Australians were first granted a unique legal framework for incorporation in 1976, when the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act was passed by the then Fraser government. The Act enabled groups of Indigenous persons to formally cooperate around a common purpose, and for the first time in their history, to independently receive grants and other income in pursuit of their objectives. By the mid-1990s approximately 2500 Aboriginal Corporations were registered nationally, with as many more registered under similar State or Territory legislation.

The purposes for which these organisations are established vary widely: from sole function corporations incorporated to operate a family-run tourism business; to multi-purpose regional bodies taking on a host of community development functions, including essential and municipal services delivery, and in some cases even, complex challenges such as healthcare, education and economic development. It is these corporations, with a suite of functions similar to the most ambitious of local governments, which have most to lose or gain by the forthcoming transition to the Corporations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act (CATSI).

Local government is frequently criticised in Australia, often by higher order levels of government, for lacking the capacity to undertake the tasks it is mandated to perform: planning and reporting processes can be weak; strategies can change according to the disposition of the Council; funding is limited and uncertain from year to year; and - according to some commentators [1] - the legal powers and regulatory capabilities needed to perform the job are simply not in place. And these are mainstream organisations, the third tier of government, in existence in Australia for over 160 years. So what chance for those Aboriginal Corporations with local government-like functions?

Let's first take governance and decision-making. Making the right decisions for the long-term good of the community relies on timely and accurate information, sound technical advice, and informed and legitimate decision-makers. The process is a challenge for any organisation, but it must be pretty difficult for those Aboriginal Corporations where technical advice is unaffordable, where decision-makers speak little English, and where the concepts of 'informed consent' and 'democratic governance' are but illegible characters on a page.

Councillors in Australia are ostensibly volunteers, but on Indigenous communities they are generally there because they have to. If they did not take on the role, their community wouldn't be funded. They - private citizens - are there to take responsibility for the planning and delivery of those everyday local government-type services the rest of us take for granted. The principle of separating roles between service planning and service delivery is compromised from the outset: council members on Indigenous communities need a job, and the only employer is the Aboriginal Corporation.

And so to management and service delivery; how do Aboriginal Corporations fare compared to mainstream local government? Attracting committed and competent staff is an Australia wide problem, but for Aboriginal Corporations, particularly in remote locations, the quality of corporation staff can make or break a community. Often non-Indigenous, these individuals play a prominent gate-keeping role, and through their influence on the council can further blur the boundary between planning and service delivery roles. Excellent people exist, but they are frequently overworked and lamentably risk replacement by one of the *"misfits, mercenaries or missionaries"*[2] in common circulation.

Neither the CATSI Act nor the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act it replaces prescribe a comprehensive planning framework to facilitate service delivery. Poor quality staff tend not to conduct comprehensive needs assessments of their own volition, nor do they systematically monitor and evaluate performance. Service delivery outcomes are left to chance and at worst a poor manager can drive a corporation into administration, without council members being remotely aware of the situation.

The way Aboriginal Corporations are funded compounds the problem of poor governance and poor management. As with local government, the funding cycle for Aboriginal Corporations is predominantly annual, which may constrain longer term planning aspirations. Unlike local government however, Aboriginal Corporations have no funds other than those provided by higher order levels of government. They have no rates base or economic activity from which to levy taxes, while every cent of money they receive is tied to specific program or project activities. Not only are they financially dependent, they have no means of saving or investing cash in pursuit of corporation objectives. At best they can only respond to the vicissitudes of the funding streams available; a fragmented lucky-dip of uncoordinated projects and programs.

Ultimately Aboriginal Corporations own nothing, in the sense of possessing an asset that can be modified or exchanged by its owner at will. All Aboriginal Corporation assets have at some point been granted by government and caveats remain in place to control what can and can't be done and therefore what constitutes the community interest. Unlike mainstream corporations, assets such as buildings and equipment cannot be used as collateral to raise finance, or be sold for reinvestment in more productive activities, as the market would wish them to respond.

Let us hope that recent local government reforms in Australia will improve the way in which local governments govern, are financed, and manage the delivery of essential and municipal services. But we must question whether the CATSI Act provides the basis for Aboriginal Corporations to do the same.

The Act's intention is to remedy many of these known issues: to overcome failures in governance by more clearly separating the powers of decision-makers and managers; by increasing the powers of members to review corporation decisions; by clarifying the rights and responsibilities of directors and senior staff; and by more clearly defining annual reporting requirements. Yet for the majority of larger Aboriginal Corporations, at the same time that the pressures around compliance have increased, the effects of more than 32 years of non-investment remain. Governance capacity will be weak so long as leaders lack support to improve capacity; management will remain poor so long as quality staff cannot be attracted; and planning frameworks will remain meaningless unless Aboriginal Corporations have more control over the resources needed for plan implementation. ■

Footnotes

1.See section 4 of the Local Government Reform Report, QLD Government, Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport & Recreation.

2. borrowing from a common expression used in the field to describe the category of individuals that work on Indigenous communities. http://www.newmatilda.com/2008/02/28/madmen,-missionaries-and-maniacs (accessed at 9.5.2008)

Converting need to provision - principles for planning and providing community facilities

A wide range of factors should be considered when converting 'need' for community infrastructure into 'on the ground' facilities. The following set of guiding principles can help planning agencies convert the 'needs' of the community into defined infrastructure requirements.

Maximise usage of existing facilities

In providing new community infrastructure it is important to understand the capacities and performance of existing community facilities. Some facilities may be underutilised for a range of reasons that include poor awareness (promotion), restricted access by a controlling organisation, or poor facilities management. However, the best facility management practices cannot substitute for optimum facility location and access. A well promoted facility is unlikely to attain maximum usage if it is poorly located in the first instance.

Optimise location of facilities

Facility location is one of the primary determinants of function and usage. Maximum patronage will often be promoted by integrating facilities within broader activity centres with compatible uses. An active, high-profile location may increase real and perceived safety for potential facility users. The location should also maximise accessibility to the facility's target market through good access to public transport (multi-nodal where possible), foot and cycle paths. For some facilities, locational criteria are paramount (e.g. response time from a fire station or pedestrian access to a community centre for users who do not drive). Facilities should be located where people can access them conveniently, including access by public transport, and ideally as part of their daily travel routine (i.e. near activity centres).

Develop flexible, multi-purpose facilities where appropriate

In many cases, it is not feasible or appropriate to provide stand-alone facilities for the exclusive use of specific community or socio-demographic groups. In addition to being costly and limiting the 'life' of a facility, the 'stand alone' model can exclude access to certain funding mechanisms, such as infrastructure charges. The exception may be facilities for young people, where separate facilities for their activities may be required. In some cases it might be possible and appropriate to incorporate commercial functions -such as office space which can be leased to community organisations, government agencies or the private sector - to help offset the capital and operating costs of a facility.

Four models of service delivery can be conceptualised:

- Stand alone facilities;
- Co-located facilities;
- Integrated service centres or nodes; and
- Hubs.

Co-located facilities provide for the joint location of service providers within a facility, usually without integration of services, but involving shared premises and possibly some administrative or other services. Co-location should involve compatible uses. Where it is in the community's best interest, community facilities should be co-located to strengthen the development of community focal points, or hubs. However, there will be some uses that are not compatible with this concept.

The following issues should be considered prior to embarking on co-location:

- What are the potential mutual benefits of co-location?
- Are there similarities in purpose and shared values with the potential facilities that are considering co-locating?
- Are the facilities of a similar or complementary scale?
- Is the land available for the range of uses?
- What needs to occur to ensure that agencies cooperate? For example, is there a 'broker' to facilitate co-location? Are the parties willing to co-locate? .What are the legal and insurance implications of co-location?

Integrated service centres or nodes involve the joint location of service providers within a facility (as for co-location) but with integration of services to provide a coordinated, one-stop-shop approach to case management and service delivery.

Hubs. A Hub is a collection of facilities clustered together on the same or adjoining sites. There may or may not be interaction between these facilities. Together, they create a focal point for community activity. A hub is often also a base for outreach services to other smaller facilities or surrounding communities. This arrangement is particularly appropriate in transit-oriented and inner-city communities, where social spaces in the public domain are limited. In this environment, the hubbed facilities can help bring people together and help create a sense of local community identity.

Create facilities appropriate to the level of service demanded

Generally, local facilities should have a 'neighbourhood' feel, provide relatively informal spaces, have safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian access, and, ideally, be managed by the local community, with local government support or involvement as appropriate. District-level facilities should be located in higher level activity centres, be accessible by public transport and provide a broader range of structured and semi-structured spaces for community use. District facilities may require more formal management and tenancy arrangements.

Engage in partnerships with the private and public sector to deliver affordable and accessible facilities and services

Innovation in the delivery of community facilities is needed to deliver affordable and accessible facilities. Opportunities for a range of public, and public/ private partnership should be considered. For example, development incentives and/ or agreements should be considered to encourage private sector investment in community facilities on government-owned land; and relationships should be developed with the owners of significant facilities (such as tertiary education institutions) to allow general public access to underutilised facilities at certain times of the day/week.

Wherever possible, the development application process should be utilised to realise community infrastructure requirements (e.g. setbacks to buildings to ensure a public realm is provided/ protected, requirements for community facilities and/or space to host community facilities in high-density developments, etc).

Test and monitor standards of service

Infrastructure requirements identified by applying locally appropriate Desired Standards of Service should be tested through community consultation to validate the needs assessment. Similarly, future forecast needs may shift with time as the result of changing demographics, community expectations or societal standards. Determining effective community infrastructure provision is an iterative process and community needs should be monitored for changes in the level or type of demand over time. ■

This article is based on section 6.8 of the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026 Implementation Guideline No 5. Social Infrastructure Planning, June 2005, prepared for the Queensland Office of Urban Management, Department of Infrastructure, by SGS, Briggs & Mortar Pty Ltd, Andrea Young Planning Consultants and Elliott Whiteing Pty Ltd.

SGS News

Sustainable Sydney 2030 launched

Sydney Mayor Clover Moore launched the public exhibition of the Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan on 16 April at Sydney's Customs House. She was surrounded by 'Sydney's leading urban designers, planners and architects'. Among the invitees were Sydney Directors Pat Fensham and Rob Lee, Associate Director Alison Holloway and Senior Consultant Imogen Halstead, from the SGS Sydney team (pictured). Later, Pat Fensham explained the fundamentals of the plan at the first of a series of public 'CityTalks2008'.

More information on SGS's role as leader of the consultant team developing the Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan can be found on the SGS website. Pat Fensham's presentation can be viewed as a podcast on City of Sydney's website at http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/podcasts/video/SustainableSydney2030.asp

Social Infrastructure Guideline wins National Planning Institute Award

SEQ Regional Plan 2005 - 2026 Implementation Guideline No 5: Social Infrastructure Planning won the Planning Institute of Australia's National Award for Planning Excellence in Social and Community Based Planning 2007. SGS collaborated with Briggs & Mortar Pty Ltd, Andrea Young Planning Consultants and Elliott Whiteing Pty Ltd, to produce the guideline for Queensland's Office of Urban Management.

The groundbreaking Guideline assists the planning of new communities and existing urban areas undergoing change within South East Queensland by providing a comprehensive framework for social infrastructure planning. It recommends processes to assist with the early identification and acquisition of appropriate sites for key social infrastructure including: schools; TAFEs; health hubs; hospitals; libraries; police, ambulance and fire stations; court houses and community centres. The Queensland government has published the guidelines and they are available online at http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/resources/guideline/ImplementationGuideline5.pdf

Staff news

SGS welcomes **Andrew McDougall**'s return to SGS as an Associate Director, in the Melbourne office. Andrew specialises in cost benefit and economic impact analysis, financial and economic feasibility assessment, business and corporate planning, and facilities planning. Andrew also has substantial experience leading consultant teams on property economics projects within Australia and overseas.

Mark Donaldson has joined the Brisbane team. Mark is an economist with strong quantitative skills and a background in modelling and data analysis techniques. He specialises in benefit-cost analysis, linear programming, and econometric, socio-economic and demographic analysis.

Liesl Codrington and Peter Jones have joined the Canberra team.

Liesl Codrington is a strategic and environmental planner with experience in the private and public sector, in areas including strategic land use planning, social impact assessment, environmental planning, and community consultation.

Peter Jones is an economist and political scientist specialising in socio-economic profiling and small scale demand analysis. He is able to conduct sophisticated quantitative analysis, place the findings in a policy context and communicate them to a wider audience.

Sydney team has been joined by two new consultants.

Sarah Blackwell is an economist with experience in policy analysis and development of public policy in relation to infrastructure, housing and state finances.

Torin Allen is an engineering graduate specialising in spatial information systems with particular skills in application of GIS mapping to social and environmental impact analysis.

Interstate staff moves

Several SGS staff have recently taken the opportunity to relocate interstate, between SGS's national network of offices. Alison Holloway (Associate Director) previously Sydney based, has joined the Melbourne team, as has Vigneshwar Maharaj, formerly in Brisbane. Madeleine Verdich has relocated from Sydney to Brisbane.

Urbecon

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