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Welcome to edition No.7 of 'Planning Matters', the newsletter of URPS produced twice a year. We hope you enjoy some highlights of the work we've been doing with many of you over recent months. You can also access electronic copies of this and all our past newsletters on our website at www.urps.com.au

Making High Density Housing Work



URPS is a strong supporter of the 30 Year Plan's target of 70% of new development occurring within the existing urban footprint, together with the co-location of medium-high density housing, major retail and services outlets, and employment around public transport access points.

We believe that Adelaide has many characteristics that support a successful shift to higher density development, including:

- A legible grid-street system creating an efficient movement network, combined with relatively flat topography and a dry climate that encourage walking and cycling
- Underutilised parklands that ring the CBD, providing open space that is especially important when living in a high density environment
- A manageable rate of population growth and a robust governance system that facilitates planning and design excellence.

Despite some great success in high-density development, including Garden East, the Air Apartments and the Kent Town Brewery Apartments, Adelaide does not have a strong tradition of high-density living. This means that many people will take some convincing of the need for, and value of, change.

This is why we support the recent work of Dr Wendy Sarkissian, through the University of British Columbia, examining what does and doesn't work in high-density housing in central Vancouver. We were pleased to host a recent breakfast seminar at the National Wine Centre with Dr Sarkissian as the key note speaker and Wayne Gibbings, CEO of the Land Management Corporation, providing local reflections on high density housing.

Vancouver, being consistently ranked highly amongst the world's most liveable cities, demonstrates that higher density housing doesn't necessarily come at a cost to liveability. At a detailed design level, residents are generally satisfied with their apartments, but acknowledge that they could be improved with additional lifts, visitor parking and storage space. They value the sense of safety provided by many 'eyes on the street', but have also found that the configuration of basement parking and lift access means that many residents do not use the street level access to their homes and the public realm has not been activated as desired.

The demand to attend the breakfast seminar was overwhelming – apologies to those whom we were unable to fit in. This provides evidence of the planning and development industry's desire to respond to the challenges posed by the 30 Year Plan in terms of high-density living in Adelaide.



Some faces at our recent Breakfast seminar with Dr Wendy Sarkissian and Wayne Gibbings

A basin-wide approach to planning for a drier future

Historically, the management of water in the Murray Darling Basin has occurred in a somewhat ad-hoc manner. Different users have accessed water in ways that have impacted negatively on other water users, not to mention water dependent ecosystems.



Planning for a drier future has different implications across the SA Murray-Darling Basin Region



In response, the Federally funded Strengthening Basin Communities program is supporting Councils and the NRM Board in the SA Murray-Darling Basin Region in planning for a future with less water.

Key SBC funded projects URPS is undertaking at the moment include:

- **Horticulture Lands Review** (as part of the Climate Change Adaptation Project)
- **Integrated Water Management Plans** for Mount Barker, Murray Bridge, Alexandrina and Mid Murray Councils (led by SKM and KBR)
- **Integrated Water Management Better Development Plan Module** (being managed by RC Murray Bridge on behalf of eleven Councils in the region)
- Alexandrina Council **Rural Areas DPA**
- Mid Murray Council **River Murray Zone DPA**
- Coorong Council **Tourism and Economic Development Strategy** (partnering with SGS).

Each of these projects provide an important piece to a regional jigsaw. The resultant 'picture' will be a stronger region that is more resourceful and resilient in a modified environmental and economic climate. For example, the Coorong Tourism and Economic Development Strategy is investigating ways to support local communities facing a warmer and dryer future through, among other things, modelling the potential benefits of new tourism initiatives. The Integrated Water Management Plans, on the other hand, are supporting some larger townships through better matching available water with demands. We look forward to the implementation of the projects and the strengthening of communities across the region.

Making Best Use of Unformed Roads



There is a vast array of 'unformed' roads scattered throughout many Local Government areas. These unformed roads are often under the care and control of adjoining land owners, either formally or informally, and are not easily distinguished from private land. Some are used for fire access and/or recreational activities such as horse riding, bush walking and mountain biking. Their condition varies greatly and some are difficult to access due to steep terrain – unlikely to ever be appropriate for use as a public road. Some unformed roads also have high biodiversity value and provide important corridors of flora and fauna.

In the absence of a clear and agreed management framework, it can be difficult for Councils to determine management priorities and preferred uses for unformed roads.

In this context, and with support funding from the LGA's Local Government Research and Development Scheme, the Adelaide Hills Council has recently engaged URPS to undertake an "Unformed Public Roads Strategic Directions and Use Project". We think that this project will be of value to many Councils, particularly in peri-urban and regional locations – we will keep you posted.

Play is Children's Work

It is often said that "play is children's work", essential to their social, physical and cognitive development. This makes the redesign of the "Belair Nature Discovery Precinct" at the Belair National Park all the more important.

The Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) wants to provide a space where nature-based activities are related to play. To better understand how best to achieve this, URPS worked with DENR to engage the key play space users – children and young people – together with their parents and carers, Kaurua representatives and the wider community.

Over several months, we worked with classes from six schools and a kindergarten using creative techniques such as mind mapping, site visits, visioning exercises, 'a week with a camera' and collage making.

Importantly, the focus was placed on the experiences they were seeking, rather than simply what play equipment they wanted. For example, some children expressed a desire for a climbing wall. When asked what it is about a climbing wall they like, answers included, "I like to be up high", "I like the challenge", "I can see for a really long way", "I can call down to my friends below", and "I like feeling scared when I am up high". A variety of structures/equipment, not limited to a climbing wall, can provide these experiences.

Introductory session at Greyward Children's Centre



Ethan says "I like to play on the slide because I can go really fast"



Lily and Paula say "Our playspace has no metal. It is natural with animals and trees to climb. A grass field to run through and hide in. There is a river or pond that you can swim in if it is hot. If it is cold it is a challenge to climb around it and not fall in and get wet! There are reeds and plants with different textures."

Mind map by Paula, Lily and Grace.

In this way, the community engagement process has enhanced the design process, providing an invaluable set of guiding principles to inform concept plans for the new play space.

What's in a name?

Developing a brand is a bit like writing the label for a well loved wine. A wine label, of course, provides a promise of a great drinking experience, or an ever better one if it's improved with age. Linking your name with a predictable set of experiences is an essential part of organisational success.

URPS and WAX Design have been working with DENR to define and articulate the brand that underpins the Innes and Mount Remarkable National Parks. Innes is a place of coastal recreation – iconic surfing and fishing, spectacular cliffs and stunning beaches. Mount Remarkable is the accessible Flinders Ranges – an ancient landscape with spectacular gorges and majestic red gums.

The branding for the Parks has been linked to the experiences sought by their existing and future target markets. Moreover, the branding will guide future investment and park management operations.

This branding process has relevance for all organisations – public and private sector – as well as for tourism destinations and products. If you are struggling with the wording for your 'wine label', give us a call and we'll help you clarify what's in your name.



Branding will guide future investment and management at these National Parks

More SANFL Games Under Lights



The SANFL intends to play more matches at night as a way to boost the popularity of the competition. Glenelg Football Club approached the City of Holdfast Bay to upgrade the lights at Glenelg Oval in order to facilitate up to five night games per season at this ground.

Following some community opposition to the concept, the City of Holdfast Bay engaged URPS to independently examine the issues associated with the proposed lighting upgrade.

We found that the proposed lighting upgrade will have an acceptable level of impact on nearby residents for a number of reasons, including:

- The minimisation of parking in neighbouring streets due to the availability of public transport (buses and trams)
- The management of nuisance behaviour in the surrounding neighbourhood will be assisted by existing liquor licensing which controls “coming and going” at nearby hotels and clubs
- There will be relatively few SANFL night games and there will be a commensurate reduction in the number of day games at Glenelg Oval. The night games are also expected to finish shortly after 10:00pm, at which time the lights can be ‘turned down’ to limit impact on surrounding residents.

The City of Holdfast Bay’s recent decision to grant Development Plan Consent to these lights is subject to an appeal by a third party in the ERD Court. The Council’s decision as land owner to agree to the lights being upgraded has also been challenged by a nearby resident under Section 270 of the Local Government Act. We will follow progress on these appeals with interest.

Marcus presents Lyndon with his award



Congratulations Michael

Celebrating Excellence in Planning Studies

URPS is committed to celebrating excellence among students in planning and related fields at our local universities. It is for this reason that we have partnered with the University of Adelaide to provide the URPS Regional Planning Award. The purpose of the Award is to promote the advancement of creative and rigorous regional planning practice in the best interests of a prosperous community and sustainable environment, complementary to the core purpose of URPS. We recently had the pleasure of awarding this prize to Lyndon Slavin, who is a Masters student in the School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design, and achieved the top mark in the Planning & Landscape Ecology course.

We were also delighted to recently celebrate with our own Michael Arman, who was awarded the Planning Institute of Australia Prize for achieving the best performance in the final year of UniSA’s Urban and Regional Planning program. Michael was also awarded the UniSA School of Natural and Built Environments Prizes for the ‘best undergraduate planning student’ over the four year program and the best ‘social and community planning thesis’. These achievements reflect Michael’s diligence, enthusiasm and refined research and analysis skills, something that is valued by many of our clients. Well done Michael!

More Information Copies of this and our previous newsletters are available on our website at www.urps.com.au. If you would like to discuss the information contained in any of our newsletters in further detail please don’t hesitate to contact us on 8333 7999 or drop into our offices at Suite 12/154 Fullarton Road, Rose Park.



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