



A warm welcome...

Welcome to the spring/summer edition of 'Planning Matters', the newsletter of URPS, which contains some highlights of the work we've been doing with many of you over recent months.

'Planning Matters' is produced twice a year. We welcome feedback or suggestions on what you would like to see in future issues – please email us at mail@urps.com.au

State Government Planning Reforms

The State Government's proposed reforms to the planning system have been the subject of much discussion and debate in recent months. At URPS, we have actively participated in this debate. In particular, we prepared a submission on behalf of the Eastern Region Alliance – a group of Councils covering the eastern metropolitan area with a combined population of more than 280,000 people or 18.5% of the State's population.

The submission prepared for the Eastern Region Alliance congratulated the Government for its renewed emphasis on strategic planning – including the creation of a Regional Plan for Adelaide and the establishment of mixed-use, high density developments around public transport hubs. However, the submission was critical of the Residential Development Code which, if adopted in its current form, would greatly reduce each Council's ability to control some types of undesirable residential development.

Mawson Lakes – public transport hubs established adjacent to mixed-use, high density developments



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At URPS, while we acknowledge and support the Government's desire to 'streamline' the development assessment process, we do not believe that this should occur at the expense of streetscape character or environmental objectives. We urge the Government to adopt a cautious approach when drafting the next version of the Residential Code and will continue to monitor the roll-out of the State Government's planning reforms with interest.

URPS also assisted the Local Government Association of SA by facilitating seven workshops with Councils across Adelaide to help them engage effectively with Planning SA and the consortium appointed to prepare the Regional Plan for metropolitan Adelaide. The Councils generally welcomed the more proactive approach by the State Government to involving Local Government in strategic planning at the regional level. Most of these Councils also identified a desire to work collaboratively with nearby Councils, not just those within their 'assigned sub-region'. However, concern was expressed about available resources in the tight timeframe set for delivery of the Regional Plan – a final draft is due in March 2009. We understand the pressure this places on Councils to contribute in a meaningful way to this significant strategic planning document, and would be happy to lend assistance.

Achieving the successful transformation of Port Adelaide



Port Adelaide (the Historic Hart's Mill Complex which will be a focal point for the Newport Quays redevelopment)

Together with a number of high-profile interstate urban designers, URPS was engaged by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield to lead an Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) for Stage 2B of Newport Quays. Following protracted negotiations with the development consortium, the UDRP and Council found that the proposal was "seriously at variance" with the Development Plan for a number of reasons. It was considered that the proposal had little regard for the existing land form and heritage character of the locality. In addition, the location/ height/ length/style of the proposed buildings created a 'wall of tall buildings' that acted as a barrier to the waterfront, and it would result in a public domain that will be uninviting to visitors and residents. A large number of units also had poor access to both direct and indirect sunlight.

The Port Waterfront Redevelopment Committee of DAC, the relevant authority in this instance, agreed with Council and resolved to refuse the Application. In our view, this is an important decision on a multi-million dollar development, encouraging the consortium to rethink the design approach so that it better reflects the largely tangible, and perhaps sometimes less tangible, qualities of the Port Adelaide waterfront area.

In news just to hand we understand that the Newport Quays consortium has appealed to the ERD Court against DAC's decision. We will keep you posted of progress in the matter.

URPS' Continuing Support of PIA



Angela Hazebroek (new President of PIA SA from January 2009)

We are pleased to support Angela Hazebroek as the new President of PIA SA from January 2009. Angela has always had a significant involvement in PIA, as well as the Planning Education Foundation back in the early 1990's. A strong advocate of planning with respect for people and places, and of listening to all voices in the planning process (especially the quiet ones), Angela is looking forward to harnessing the enthusiasm of all planners to continue the SA Division's excellent recent work in raising the profile and credibility of the profession.

Success at the PIA Awards

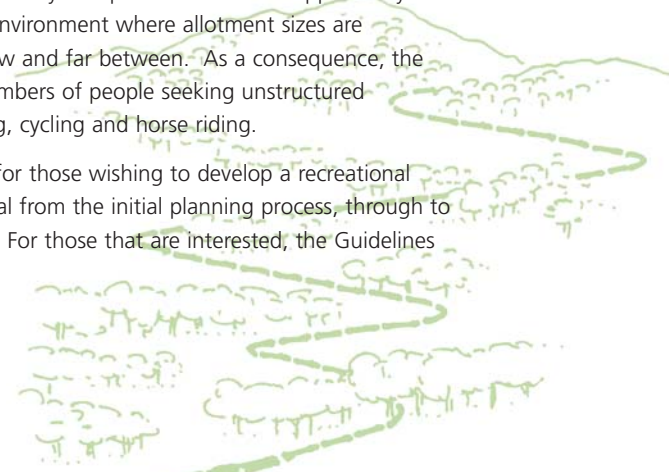
Congratulations to all those organizations and individuals who received awards at the recent 2008 Planning Institute of Australia (SA Division) Awards for Planning Excellence in a year that saw a record breaking number of entries. Congratulations also to those who achieved Fellowship and Life Fellowship recognition.

Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines

We were delighted that one of our projects – Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines – received a PIA SA Award. The Sustainable Recreational Trails Guidelines establishes a framework within which new trails can be developed in harmony with the local environment, while also satisfying the requirements of Federal, State and Local regulations.

The environmental, economic and social benefits of recreational trails have been well documented. They provide an important resource to address growing levels of obesity and falling levels of fitness amongst the community. They also provide a valuable opportunity for people to 'escape' from an increasingly urban environment where allotment sizes are decreasing and where parks and reserves are few and far between. As a consequence, the demand for trails is growing with increasing numbers of people seeking unstructured recreational experiences associated with walking, cycling and horse riding.

The Guidelines represent a 'one-stop' resource for those wishing to develop a recreational trail, steering the development of a trail proposal from the initial planning process, through to actual construction and ongoing management. For those that are interested, the Guidelines are available at: www.southernaustraliantrails.com



Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Plan

The completion of the PIA award winning NRM Plan by the Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board warrants special mention. Based on the Board's sound background research, as well as extensive community and stakeholder consultation, this is the first NRM Plan adopted in South Australia. URPS was pleased to assist the Board in aspects of the Plan including the review of key State strategies and Development Plans, undertaking social, demographic and economic research, clarifying the relationship between water affecting activities/permits and the development assessment system, and 'on-call' project facilitation.



Little Para Outfall Wetland at the end of the Little Para River before discharging into the Barker Inlet



Perhaps not surprisingly, our work with the NRM Board revealed that some Development Plans need to be updated to provide greater guidance in relation to natural resource management issues, including addressing the impacts of climate change. Amendments to the Development Regulations are also necessary to facilitate more stream-lined and clearer referral processes. The success of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Plan bodes well for the soon to be released Draft Eyre Peninsula Plan, which we also helped prepare.

Charles Sturt Industrial Land Study

We were also pleased to be part of the team of consultants led by Colliers International Consulting Services awarded a commendation for the City of Charles Sturt Industrial Land Study. The study found that industry provides both jobs for the local community and export income for the region, and therefore should remain a vital part of the City's economic make-up. At the same time, there are other strategic development drivers at work, including population policy and the shortage of residential land in metropolitan Adelaide over the next decade. This will result in ongoing pressure for different land use activities on existing industrial land.

The study raised a number of planning policy issues of interest including the inappropriateness of existing bulky goods retailing in the Council's industry zones, the failure of the Home Industry Policy Areas to produce worthwhile development of economic outcomes and their tendency to inhibit broader industrial land uses, and the lack of alignment between current zoning and the situation 'on the ground', especially along arterial roads where non-industrial uses tend to predominate.

Conserving heritage and streamlining assessment

The Heritage Branch of the Department for Environment and Heritage has been focusing on systems improvement over the past 18 months. We have enjoyed working with the Branch on two key projects aimed at stream-lining the Development Application process, while also delivering the best possible development outcomes for our State's heritage.

The report on the "Reform of Heritage Related Statutory Provisions" revealed that the existing planning system in SA is underutilised when it comes to the development assessment process relating to State Heritage Places, and substantial legislative change is unwarranted. For example, there is opportunity to create expanded lists of complying development relating to



Sympathetic addition to a heritage building

State Heritage Places and State Heritage Areas (where certain standards are met), in the Development Regulations and Council Development Plans. Indeed, the recent planning reforms announced by the State Government support this approach. This emphasises the need to ensure that the listing of State Heritage Places focuses on those elements which are significant and those which are not, providing clearer direction for the creation of complying development lists.

The second project URPS was involved in was a review of the Heritage Advisory Service (HAS). Overall, applicants and councils place a high value on the HAS and it is considered to be a key contributor to the active care and management of heritage places. At the same time, the review identified a number of areas for improvement such as alternative funding models for regional councils, increased Ministerial delegation for Heritage Advisors and regular heritage seminars providing case study examples of what is happening in the field and in the courts.

New team members



We were pleased to welcome Julie Lewis to URPS in July this year. Over the past 2 years, Julie has been working with Mid Murray Council primarily involved in development assessment and planning policy matters. She also draws from 15 years experience in private consultancy advising various local councils and private sector clients, as well as appearing before the ERD Court. With excellent problem solving skills, a wide range of experience in planning and a great sense of humour, we think that Julie is a terrific addition to our team.



We are also pleased to welcome Michael Arman as a student planner and Beata Maglai in Administrative Support, both working with us while they complete their degrees. This reinforces our commitment to the professional development of students so that they are well equipped to enter the workforce at the end of their study. Michael and Beata also strengthen the versatility of the URPS team.

*New team members
(top) Julie Lewis, Michael Arman
and (below) Beata Maglai*

More Information

A copy of our previous newsletter is 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 8363 0444 or drop into our offices at 58 Rundle Street, Kent Town.



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