



Welcome to 'Planning Matters'

'Planning Matters' is a brand new newsletter from URPS, marking our fifth year in operation. We have tried to include information and articles that you will find interesting, while keeping it short and easy to read. Also included are some highlights of the work we've been doing with many of you over recent months.

'Planning Matters' is produced twice a year. We would love to hear your comments on our first edition. If you wish to make any suggestions on what you would like to see in future issues please email us at mail@urps.com.au

New office, new look

...but familiar faces. We're settling in nicely at our new offices in Kent Town, which we moved into on 10 April. A reminder of our new contact details can be found on the back of this newsletter. Our new office has more space, better parking and is even closer to many of our clients. We hope you are able to visit us soon.



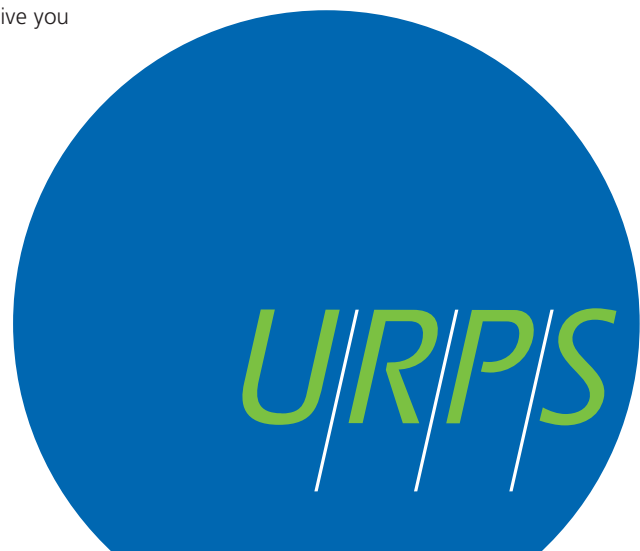
*Our new premises at
58 Rundle Street, Kent Town*

The other thing you may have noticed is our new branding. Following some independent market research (thank you to those clients who were involved by the way), we have decided to drop the full name of Urban and Regional Planning Solutions in lieu of URPS (pronounced "U - R - P - S"). We know that a lot of you already refer to us in this way so we thought it would be simpler to 'go with the flow' and shorten our name. Responding to the comments received in the market research about URPS being friendly to work with and professional, we have tried to encapsulate these characteristics in our branding. The use of the circle in our logo sets our planning work in the context of the world in which we live, as well as portraying the holistic way we work with our clients.

We were delighted to receive so many positive comments during the market research. More importantly, by understanding how you view URPS it allows us to give you the services that you want in the way that you want them.

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The challenges of assessing landmark development proposals



Newport Quays

At URPS we don't shy away from large or contentious projects. We love a challenge. A number of Councils have engaged us recently to assess a range of high profile, multi-million dollar Development Applications including:

- Stage 2B of Newport Quays at Port Adelaide;
- World Park 01 Office Development at Keswick;
- Victoria Park Grandstand in the east Park Lands; and
- The redevelopment of the LeCornu Site at North Adelaide.

It has been both exciting and hard work to analyse the performance of these landmark developments against not only the Development Plan, but also the Planning Strategy in some instances. It has also been fascinating to see to what degree contemporary planning policy influences the development of such significant projects and whether this reflects the various desires of the community across metropolitan Adelaide. Sustainable development initiatives are increasingly accepted practice, but whether these projects result in desirable public spaces and inspiring architecture is an area of ongoing debate.

Master planning

In simple terms, a master plan provides a planning and design framework that guides the development of a site. It is often an important precursor to the creation of successful Development Plan policy. It involves careful site analysis, consideration of opportunities and constraints and consultation with key stakeholders. It culminates in the arrangement of development in a way that takes advantage of the landscape's intrinsic attributes, while avoiding locations where obvious conflicts or incompatibilities are expected. This is done through the coordination of a diverse range of technical inputs and evaluation of the relative importance of different elements.

Our strengths in terms of strong communication, flexibility and accessibility, highlighted in our market research, have served us well in preparing master plans for the two largest health projects in the State: the Marjorie Jackson Nelson Hospital (MJNH) and the Glenside Campus.

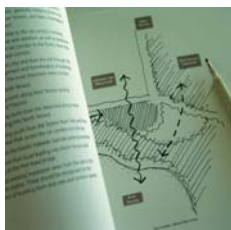
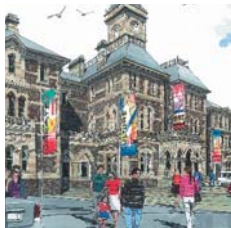
These projects will deliver a wide range of benefits to the community, particularly in terms of improved health facilities. Better environmental management is also a key positive outcome associated with both these projects. Currently contaminated land associated with the rail yards, the site of the MJNH, will be substantially remediated as part of its transformation. The redevelopment of the Glenside Campus also provides a significant opportunity to better manage storm water associated with Brownhill Creek, thereby alleviating downstream flooding in urban areas through the Cities of Unley and West Torrens. The adaptive re-use of a range of significant heritage listed buildings associated with the original asylum on the Glenside Campus also utilises the embodied energy in these buildings, while preserving the historic character of the Campus at the same time.

In-house services on the increase

There is an increasing trend for Councils to engage planning services 'in-house'. At times of peak demand, for example when staff move on, having your planning services on-site can really help. At URPS we enjoy the extra dimension that this brings to our work. We are even more accessible to you, speed and efficiency is improved, and we may be able to give your teams fresh ideas and a range of experience that can help to re-energise work environments.

Over the last six months, three members of our team have enjoyed being based in the offices of Kangaroo Island Council, reinforcing our commitment to planning in regional areas.

Glenside Campus
(Image courtesy of Swanbury Penglase)



Concept drawing – Marjorie Jackson Nelson Hospital site
(Image courtesy of Oxigen)

Other Councils we have provided in-house assistance for in recent years include:

- The City of Port Augusta
- The City of Port Adelaide Enfield
- The Coorong Council
- The Adelaide Hills Council
- The City of West Torrens
- The City of Burnside
- The City of Adelaide

As well as being ideally placed for development assessment work, we have also provided a range of in-house strategic planning and project management services to Local Government. We are currently assisting Walkerville Council with in-house planning services relating to the management of various DPAs, their Section 30 review and their development assessment function generally. We are also assisting the City of Salisbury in a similar role.

Pragmatic tourism responses

Regional tourism strategies

URPS has played a leading role in developing regional tourism strategies for the Barossa and Clare Valley regions, Kangaroo Island and the Fleurieu Peninsula. We are currently consulting tourism operators and communities in the Flinders Ranges and Outback South Australia regarding an integrated tourism strategy for this region. It's certainly not all hard work as we get to see some of the most awe inspiring landscapes in Australia and meet some wonderful people.

Successful tourism matches the interests and motivations of travellers with the products and experiences available in the region (Sustainable Tourism Guidelines). It is derived from that which is authentic about a place and its people. A good example of this is the proposed development of simple structures in natural settings along the Heysen Trail that provide serviced accommodation (hot meals and fire wood) for bushwalkers, to be known as the 'Huts on Heysen'. Key actions stemming from the tourism strategies we have prepared recently include:

- Strategies for marketing, positioning and branding to be undertaken by the SA Tourism Commission.
- Changes to planning policy in the Development Plan, capital works such as streetscape improvements and funding/support for visitor information services to be undertaken by local Councils.
- Facilitating collaboration between tourism operators to promote integrated tourism experiences and products.

Conserving mining heritage

The Kapunda Historic Mine is a good example of a tourist attraction that needs to be carefully matched to its market, while ensuring that its unique heritage is conserved and protected. The Draft Conservation Management Plan for the Mine, prepared in association with Peter Bell Historical Research on behalf of Light Regional Council, is an important step in achieving this outcome.

The Kapunda Historic Mine is one of the region's most iconic sites, yet there is limited opportunity for visitors to understand and interact with the mine's unique history. Realising that the landscape and historic features already provide the experience that visitors are looking for, the Draft Conservation Management Plan facilitates the 'heritage immersion' experience by identifying low-key enhancements. Interpretative signage, picnic sites, better walking paths and re-locating the entry to create a 'sense of arrival' are pragmatic ways of breathing life into the Mine for visitors.

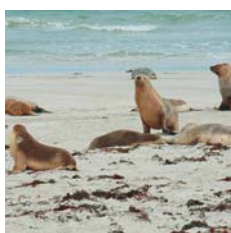
When is a holiday home not tourist accommodation?

As part of our work providing Development Assessment services to Kangaroo Island Council, we have been presented with a range of applications for tourist accommodation. It seems that there is an important difference between a "dwelling", "tourist accommodation" and "a self-contained building to be used for temporary accommodation" i.e. a holiday home.

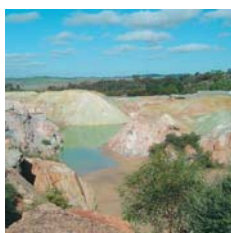
The Outback, sometimes harsh, at other times, inviting!



Mound springs on the Oodnadatta Track



Seal Bay, KI



Kapunda Historic Mine

The implications of these differences in the characterisation of development are significant. For example, it is likely that holiday homes would be subject to Category 3 notification in many zones, whereas dwellings may not. Alternatively, tourist accommodation will be Category 1 in some locations and holiday homes will be Category 3. We urge Councils, particularly in coastal locations and tourist destinations, to be careful when defining tourist accommodation as it can be interpreted in many different ways.

Major residential expansion

It has almost become a cliché that Victor Harbor is one of the fastest growing Council areas in Australia. But the reality of planning for such a dramatic increase in population presents a significant challenge for the City of Victor Harbor.



Row dwelling housing

While there is likely to be continued demand from retiring baby-boomers for housing in Victor Harbor in the short-to-medium term, families and younger people need to be encouraged into the area to ensure its social and economic sustainability. We have prepared a Development Plan Amendment (DPA) on behalf of the City of Victor Harbor for 160ha of land known as the Hindmarsh Valley to help achieve this objective. This area will accommodate 2,000 new dwellings and approximately 5,000 new residents.

The proposed planning policy departs from the tradition in Victor Harbor of almost entirely detached dwellings on large allotments, providing for semi-detached, row dwellings and residential flat buildings, bringing the largest number of residents closest to the best facilities. The benefits of housing being more affordable and lifestyle factors, such as better access to beaches and the natural environment, will aid in building a close-knit community. The DPA also provides for community facilities such as schools, a neighbourhood shopping centre and environmental enhancement along the Hindmarsh River.

Retail planning



Retail shopping

In association with Alistair Tutte Pty Ltd, URPS has been steadily growing its retail planning expertise. We have recently completed a number of retail studies and centre/bulky goods DPAs. For example, the City of Playford engaged our services recently to review eight neighbourhood activity centres and identify ways to improve their vitality and viability. One way we recommended that this could be achieved is through the encouragement of mixed use development. We have also prepared retail studies for the Cities of Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully.

Some clear themes emerging from our work in this area highlight that many local centres are becoming unviable given that the community has a preference for the variety of services and convenience offered by higher order centres. Floor space caps in Development Plans have also proven to be impractical with Councils approving larger floor areas in order to support a number of smaller, flagging shopping centres.

The location of zones that encourage bulky goods development is also important. Large parcels of land are necessary and exposure to high traffic volumes along arterial roads is critical. This type of knowledge is important in developing improved Development Plan policy that reinforces the centres' hierarchy and facilitates the development of centres that can respond to demand.



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