

## EDITORIAL

This issue of Cityscape is being finalised at a time when the future of the Metro Strategy is in doubt. The abandonment of the green belt and the resignation of Ms Westacott from DIPNR (or whatever the state government calls it now) signal that something is seriously amiss. While the official line from Planning Minister Sartor's office is that the Metro Strategy is not being entirely abandoned, it is inevitable that, at the least, a comprehensive review of the strategy is in contemplation. Many in the profession would frankly welcome such a review.

Ingo Kumic's take on how central Sydney is being restyled at the behest of government officialdom also gives cause to reflect. And it is easy to underestimate the degree to which this has already happened.

An original text and copper-plate engravings by Joseph Fowles show City streets in 1848 containing elegant 2-3 storey Georgian style commercial buildings long since gone. As recently as the 1960s, the only curtain wall building in the central business district was the AMP building now dwarfed by a Manhattan style of urban form. In the period between 1980 and 1996, at least 200 buildings in the CBD, many of which were listed by the National Trust were redeveloped. (SMH 6/1/96).

While it is pointless to lament the passing of Sydney's early heritage, it is indeed timely to question whether the branding that Sydney will experience in the future (like our entertainment industry) ultimately reflects nothing more than the anonymous and inhuman face of globalism.

### On other pages.

*"What the Aussies saw"—Part 2 of Ed Blakely's insightful presentation of new urbanism, to a group of Australian developers, in a variety of towns across the United States.*



## METRO STRATEGY AND LAND AUDIT

Robert Senior

In any Metropolitan Strategy a primary concern and fundamental prerequisite to any physical planning strategy is land availability. That is its location, its size, its surroundings and its natural and man-made constraints, within, between and without. Given the topographical limits of expansion for Sydney's metropolitan area, special emphasis is required to seek optimum land utilisation.

The reason for the absence of this fundamental prerequisite and its discussion lies in the current approach adopted in the various information gathering forums sponsored by Government. The typical extant practice relies on a list of related planning sub functions as recently experienced with the Metro Strategy Forum processes. The optimum approach that would ensure a sustainable strategy outcome of the required scale would need to embrace a sequenced 'first principles' region wide top

down approach based on:

- needs,
- resources,
- limitations, and
- timing,

These steps are amplified in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Sustainable Land Availability Strategies**

STEP	EVENT	REMARKS
1	Define Requirements	Forecast growth pressures and quantified by land use categories
2	Establish Availabilities	Mapping physical space: lateral and vertical and based on verification (audit) process including space constraints.
3	Assess Limitations	Specified environmental protection measures and urban design parameters.
4	Set Priorities	Based on agreed criteria from above outcomes and deemed policy changes or new policy formulations or both.

The necessary approaches relevant to achieving Steps 1 and 2 above are covered below under Land Availability

Audit. Steps 3 and 4 will be considered for follow up in the next edition of Cityscape.

### Land Availability Audit

Land availability is the cornerstone of any metropolitan strategy but has not been addressed in a comprehensive manner in either addressing the issues raised or in the key messages offered.

The objective is how best to meet and match coming metropolitan demands for sustainability within an agreed

long term horizon and within the greater metro region. The required approach is

*Continued page 3*

## East Darling Harbour and the Aestheticisation of Decision Making

Ingo Kumic

I recently visited the maligned and underutilized MCA to survey the 'damage' resulting from the East Darling Harbour 'International' Design Competition.

Amongst the crowd was a curious mixture of students ready to borrow seductive images for the next assignment

and bemused tourists who divided their time between the schemes and the temptation to eaves-drop on the comments of some disgruntled designers whose submissions hadn't made it on to the showroom floor.

This visit, I took my time and employed a purposeful

approach to the displays. The immediate thing that jumped out was the enormous effort involved. A little over thirty schemes were on display and another 107 entries whose visions were doubtless far too complex, daring or obscure for public consumption or the judges' adjudication were left out of public view.

Once my senses had adjusted and absorbed the fact that the

*Continued page 4*

# What the Aussies Saw

## *An Aussie View of US Master Planned Community Development—Part 2*

Edward J. Blakely Chair Greater Sydney Metropolitan Planning Reference Panel Sydney University, former ULI New York and Los Angeles

**Day 1. Los Angeles Market Vision.** - LA kingdom of free-ways and the developers are pursuing smart growth principles. They offer products which meet the needs of a new more diverse and changing population, and lead the market - not just meet it. Newhall Ranch and Playa Vista developments are forward looking in terms of housing, commercial and retail needs. We are told that “*developers should not impose a view on the future or merely respond to current fads and trends—they must inform and be informed by real*

phy guides the entire development process from ownership and controls on the land via community associations to the roles of new residents, design and financing mechanisms. Philosophy allows flexibility while enabling developers to maintain a consistent direction for product associated with their firms.

**Day 3. Riverside and environs - Strategy is key.** Art Danelian, a highly regarded ULI member, lectures our group on the need for a strategy in place with a good team as the first step in the develop-



Mizner Center, FL

market data that can forecast new products”. We get the message - market analysis for the future is not just based on past sales records.

**Day 2. Orange County - Development Philosophy.** Philosophy is not a word much used by Aussie developers, but in Orange County, we repeatedly heard the term “philosophy of development”. At Ladera Ranch psychographic analysis has been used to orientate consumers to product choices. At Irvine the underlying philosophy drives not only the development form but is part of the marketing package to the home buyers and commercial tenants. Philoso-

ment program. It starts with what can be done with the land, and the relationship to the region and surrounding communities. The team has to have the same strategic view of how all pieces of work fit together and how they will interface with the community. At Dos Lagos in Riverside, Ali Sahabi, a young team leader has been responsible for a program including 120 public hearings with not one objection to the development in the 8 years it has taken to build out the project.

**Day 4. Las Vegas - Build Community and not just houses.** Summerlin is not merely a bunch of houses. It rose out of the desert and be-



Walkable Streetscape, Celebration, FL

came an instant community. Summerlin is future proofed by its community system. Like all master planned communities, it needs a range of amenities from schools to shopping centres. Apart from the basic necessities there are also the extra discretionary features like YMCAs, clubs and youth centres. The community facilities at Summerlin

Anthem and Varrado we saw suburban development for a cross section of families without government or other subsidies. Subsidies may help affordability in the beginning, but in the long run, it is the mix of housing types and jobs that makes affordability work. Affordable housing is seen as a marketing advantage and a developer responsibility.

### Day 6 Dallas -Magnet Infra-



High Density with high amenity, Valencia, California—photo Art Danelian

give the neighbourhood precincts a distinctive character and include facilities such as libraries or business and professional centres that bring people together to form a socially cohesive community. This is key to achieving long term sustainable development that will remain workable in all market conditions. The developers remain as part of the community rather than abandoning the community to external market forces.

**Day 5. Phoenix - Achievable housing development over market rigged affordable housing.** Developers need to be mindful of providing housing for a broad range of people at various price points and various income levels that will remain good products in good communities for the future. At

**structure.** Every community has to have some form of signature project, that is highly visible, acting as a major selling point for residents and jobs. Plano’s Legacy Development is designed to be an attractive place both to live and work. In inner city Dallas older neighbourhoods are being rejuvenated by arts and

*Continued page 3*



Plano, TX-- Light Rail Stop with new Transit Oriented Development in the background

## What the Aussies Saw

*Continued from page 2*

sports complexes that are new magnets for the downtown. One development we visited in Abacoa, Florida uses minor league baseball as its magnet.

### Day 7. Plano, Texas Accessibility and transportability.

Dallas-Plano is putting a big bet on regional rail transportation. This option is workable and exceeding expectations because it is built into the fabric of the community, augmented with new development. Plano and Las Colonias are showing that the key to a good community is connectivity - walking or cycling to regional transport nodes that move people to and from major destinations and recognise the car as part of the mix.

### Day 8. Orlando. Town Centres have to be real markets.

Town Centres are the core of master planned communities. We saw some that work because they perform real market functions but others that are only decorative. Several developers admit that their centres are too small or poorly designed to ever be commercially viable. Town Centres need grocery stores and anchored shopping plazas with theatres and other attractors as entertainment experiences. But even the shopping centre has to have a very strongly integrated housing component,

### QUATTRO JAZZ ARE TAKING BOOKINGS

Quattro Jazz has been playing to discerning audiences around Sydney for some 14 years. The band's four architect members, several Conservatorium trained, play seven instruments and command an extensive jazz repertoire with a *soupcou* of rock. They have played in many of Sydney's first class venues including: five star hotels, at Tusculum for RAIA, Sydney University, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney Opera House, and Fox Studios. Book now for Christmas functions and other special occasions at rates to suit your budget. Call Pem Gerner on 9882 1048.

and not just nearby homes.

### Day 9. Celebration, FL. Architecture is King.

Celebration and every master planned community visited has strong architectural elements. Well designed places sell themselves. Attention to every aspect of design including alleys and streetscapes must be the central feature of every development. Unique architectural aspects help sustain communities over a 50 year life span, ensuring that people will continue to return, and a long term after sales market.

### Day 10. Miami - Innovation over imitation.

Senator Graham of Florida at his family development in Miami Lakes imparted to us the most important lesson of the tour. Learn from and be stimulated by projects from around the world. Take the best and adapt it to the local environment. Be smart, innovative and creative and the world will come to you. If your development is not a tourist attraction it has not done well.

### Final thoughts

It didn't take us 10 days to learn that development practices in Australia and the US are similar. But the biggest difference is the active engagement of local US governments, community groups and businesses as partners in the development process. Another aspect of similarity is the age profile and interests of the housing market. Affordability, while a more recent concern in Australia, is becoming increasingly difficult to solve. No doubt, many younger home purchasers in Australia will not make Australia their final residential choice. We have to be ready to meet housing and community needs of a global work force and retirees who will be travelling the world. Thus, all planners and developers need to work together to make the communities of tomorrow globally good places to live and work, economically viable, liveable, safe and sustainable places.

## Metro Strategy and Land Audit

*Continued from page 1.*

summarised as follows.

**Confirm Demand:** *The basis of forecast growth.*

Inputs include trends in birth and mortality rates, immigration, household formations etc. Agreed levels will be used as basis of determining the necessary land use requirements for:

- a. housing, including affordable housing (with possible government mandated targets);
- b. employment: commercial / industrial;
- c. education / knowledge / skills;
- d. retail: both new and expanded;
- e. community frontline services, including health and education;
- f. public transport: both passenger and freight;
- g. open space both active and passive; and
- h. fringe agricultural.

**Confirm Supply:** *The basis of land availability.*

Audit methodology addressing:

- a. increased environmentally sensitive areas eg bush fire prone zones;
- b. policy changes including density targets (dwellings / ha), vehicle kilometers traveled (vkt), clean air targets, higher remediation standards, etc
- c. transit oriented development focus (integration), including potential for air space development over rail corridors;
- d. urban design: mixed use zone applications etc
- e. areas/precincts satisfying urban renewal criteria such as middle ring suburbs;
- f. schedule of publicly owned lands (Fed, State and local) identified as existing or future surplus for divestment or change of uses.

**Compare Supply with Demand:** *Identified shortfalls would trigger the need to either:*

- a. review policies such as densities with appropriate integration of transport + effects on higher infrastructure capital but with commensurate increase in

- patronage, or
- b. expand the strategy to address decentralization including measures to overcome previous unsuccessful attempts such as for Bathurst/Orange or Albury/Wodonga.

### Spatial Allocations within Greater Metro Region

Brownfield and Greenfield land for all the required land uses demands and staged by sub regions to reflect forecast growth.

## CONCLUSIONS

Underutilisation of available land assets results in foregone opportunities and therefore waste. Waste minimisation is an essential pre-condition to quality practice. It is only quality practice that will underpin the 'vision for a sustainable city' and the pathway to sustainability as characterized by vibrant urban areas which are environmentally responsible, economically productive and socially inclusive. The fundamental basis for sustainability remains with the land (over which planning is effected). The land asset needs to be skillfully assessed, utilised and managed.

Fundamental to assessment is a comprehensive audit of the asset. To do otherwise is but a dereliction of duty and we should not allow the errors of the past to become the precedent for the future. Unsustainability - whether environmentally, socially or economically, exacts a high cost. The longer that Sydney delays the move to adopt a 'first principles' region wide top down approach' to sustainable practice, the greater those long term costs will be.

*Robert Senior is a consultant planner and land economist.*

### TAS/Archizine:

### The Architecture Show Magazine

Published by Projects & Systems Pty Ltd

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E. Darling Harbour cont. from page 1  
 State Government had solicited approximately five million dollars worth of free advice, one was immediately arrested by the 'eye-candy' on parade! Seductive imagery graced every panel in row after row of piercing images of the future, inducing desires and

to be 'relevant' in the political/global economy. But to what extent does the aestheticisation of politics restrict a true 'cosmopolitan' condition emerging? More importantly, to what extent does it negate the possibility of that 'image' being 'of Sydney' rather than of the Government's idea of Sydney?



Aerial of site (EDH brief)

aspirations which ultimately will never be realized. Arising from this are some intriguing questions. Firstly, 'whose future' are we witnessing and secondly, and more importantly, 'in whose image?' Sydney, it appears, was being re-branded - a brand originating from a vacuous political schema (some might claim a highly cosmopolitan theme) that seemed to permeate every illustration regardless of the medium. These design entries did not reflect Sydney so much as the political aesthetic of a polity (ie the judges) uncertain of the City's 'place' in an economically globalizing world. Each and every 'image', in particular those bearing the signature of notable designers appeared to mutate the City through the deployment of global brands. One could argue that Sydney, a city of modernity, has always employed 'cosmopolitanism' as an aspirational justification

In his seminal work "The Condition of Postmodernity", David Harvey notes that the increasingly manipulated aestheticisation of politics is a result of a highly mediated environment. The East Darling Harbour Design Competition, reflects a crude understanding of 'branding' and the importance of 'brands' in the struggle for global capital. The real issue then is not the aestheticisation of politics *per se* but rather the quality of the media within which this takes place. Only time will tell if a competency in constructing 'brands' emerges, one which requires a profoundly more

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sophisticated political approach and a cultural context for critical urban design to emerge. Only in this way can we ensure that the 'brands' on display serve to promote Sydney rather than its politicians.

**STAND UP FOR THE ABC'S FUTURE—EMAIL**

mail@alliance.org.au or go to www.alliance.org.au/OurABC

The Federal Government review into the adequacy of funding for the ABC needs to hear from people who want the ABC to play a vital role in the future of Australian media.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- A recent Macquarie Bank report suggested that additional government funding of the \$200 to \$700 million a year is required to increase ABC funding to a level comparable with its international peers.
- The ABC is broadcasting around 50% less Australian content than is required of Networks 7, 9 and 10.
- Only reliable long term funding will allow the ABC to fulfil its responsibilities to the Australian public of the future.

**Pem Gerner Reviews**

**In Praise of Slow**

Tired of this frantic way of life? Is your daily round one of stupefying seemingly endless processes, with ever increasing hurdles to leap and with ever diminishing creative returns? Do you feel you will die before you find time to reflect on Proust's words of comfort in his epic novel *Remembrance of Things Past*? Well, *In Praise of Slow* will set you on your way to slowing down and being a calmer more effective person, or in our case, practitioner. Even the New Urbanists - God rest their souls - get a mention as to their possible contribution in this book. So the message is clear, slow down in your cities, your food preparation, your work, your leisure and, in a section definitely not to be missed, your sex life. **Films of Jacques Tati** Those 'mature' practitioners who can recall the delight that Jacques Tati's films brought to their student years will be over-

joyed to learn that very recently four of the master's only five feature films have been released in a DVD boxed set. They are *Mon Oncle*, *Playtime*, *M. Hulot's Holiday* and *Jour De Fete*. Jacques Tati, alias Monsieur Hulot, was the master of mime, and the films, and especially *Mon Oncle* and *Playtime* present the endearingly clumsy Monsieur Hulot as he attempts to comprehend and reconcile the confrontation of technological modernity as he stumbles into residential and city architecture. The films have traveled the decades remarkably well. Your intrepid reviewer was amazed to learn recently that the high-rise glass buildings in *Playtime* were not the real thing but incredibly, sets made just for the film. It is no wonder their cost precipitated the master's financial decline.

**Eats Shoots and Leaves:**

**Lynne Truss**

Whilst on the bookshop shelves now for a year or so this deliciously witty, at times hilarious, but astoundingly authoritative work on contemporary punctuation, will make you the envy of all report writers and centre of attention on the cocktail circuit. Dazzle your clients, your Minister, your Departmental Head with your *sang-froid* confidence in the use of the apostrophe; your daring with the dash and your total command of those irritating squiggly bits, the commas. This is an absolutely essential reference work for aspiring, but at present unsung Miltons of report writing. Leave your Gowers *Plain Words* and Fowlers *Modern English Usage* to gather even more dust and moths on your shelves. *Eats Shoots and Leaves* is cool (maybe hot?) and now!

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