

Looking forward to Nathalia?

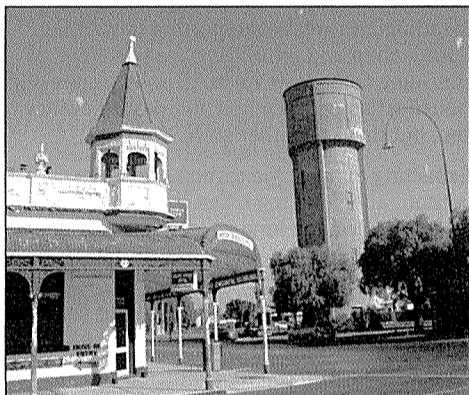
National Urban Design Forum 2008

Friday 24 – Sunday 26 October 2008
Nathalia and Shepparton, Victoria
BOOK NOW

Planning for this year's National Urban Design Forum is well advanced, with the theme of "Design for Vitality in Rural Communities". It will be held in Nathalia and Shepparton in rural Victoria. If you don't know where Nathalia is yet (shame!), try Google StreetView.

Large shires, after having catered for their larger towns, are engaging firms to do planning and landscape designs for many of their smaller rural towns - with varying degrees of success. Part of the reason for this may be the lack of local knowledge, and the differences between larger urban and regional centres and smaller communities. Nathalia provides the quintessential environment in which to hold this discussion.

In the spirit of NUDFs, there will be some excellent presenters to start us thinking, but everyone attending will have the chance to make a contribution – and enjoy the friendly networking, food and wine.



▲ Pub and Water Tower

The program

Friday 24 October

- 8.30am bus Central Melbourne (9.00am Tullamarine airport for Interstaters)
- 12noon Nathalia - Welcome and lunch at Bernie's.
- Session 1: 'It's a question of scale'
- Session 2: 'So ya reckon you're small!'
- Walk the town and then Bonfire Barbeque at the Footy Ground

Saturday 25 October

- Session 3: 'Community initiatives'
- Session 4: 'Art into landscape'
- Session 5: 'Is the economy stupid?'
- Session 6: 'Getting it all together'
- The Famous Forum Dinner will be at Brereton's Bakery, hosted by renowned yarn spinner, Tammy Muir.

Sunday 26 October

- 9.00am bus Nathalia to Shepparton
- Session 7: 'Shepp Town Centre'
- Session 8: 'Future Shepparton'
- Walk the town and lunch
- Session 9: Panel discussion
- 3.15pm bus to Tullamarine (5.30pm) and Central Melbourne

The questions

Some of the questions we will address include:

- what will be the effects to design in rural communities with climate change taking hold?
- what will be the effects of "peak oil" reducing travel to larger rural centres for people and materials?
- how do you change the only town centre streetscape (often only one or two blocks long) in a rural town and contribute to its economic strength, its amenity and its social cohesion?
- how can planners, landscape architects and artists acknowledge existing assets and create built form solutions that compliment these?

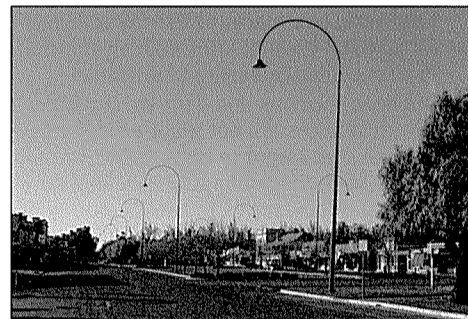
URBAN DESIGN FORUM

ISSUE No. 83

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But that is just for starters. What questions do you want addressed? What successes do you want to showcase? What do you want to contribute to the opportunity and challenge of revitalising the towns of Regional Australia?

See www.udf.org.au for full details, registration form and program updates.

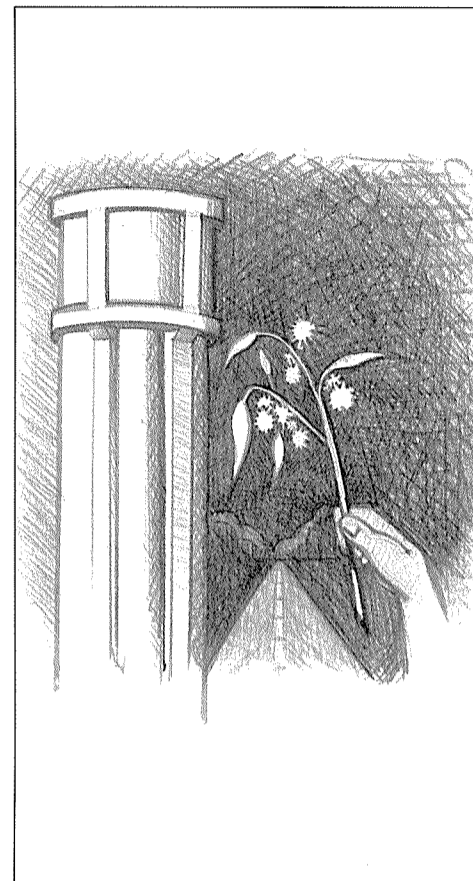


▲ Nathalia main street

Space limited! Book a place now!

Registrations are now open, and it is necessary to book ASAP because places are limited. Registration for the three days (including transport from Melbourne, all meals and events) costs just \$490.00. Accommodation of your choice needs to be booked separately. Contacts and options in and around Nathalia will be provided with the registration information.

Single day registrations will also be available for locals for some sessions on an at-cost basis depending on events and meals required.



▲ Symbols of Nathalia (Sketch by William Kelly)

State Governments commit to better design

Three State governments have recently demonstrated a strengthening commitment to improve the quality of urban design and architecture in Australia through the appointment of State Architects. It heralds a very positive new era for our cities, towns and regions.

Queensland

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh appointed leading architect Philip Follent to the role of Queensland Government Architect. Philip is currently Gold Coast City architect and is well known for his commitment to environmentally sustainable development. Bligh said she was excited that Philip will bring his unique blend of architectural advocacy and environmental awareness to the role. He will provide expert advice to the Queensland Government on built environment, urban design and heritage issues.

The position was previously held by Professor Michael Keniger, Queensland's first Government Architect, who steps down after six years to concentrate on his role as Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Queensland.



▲ Philip Follent, Queensland Government Architect

Victoria

Premier John Brumby announced the appointment of Professor Geoffrey London as Victoria's new Government Architect. Professor London was the Professor of Architecture at The University of Western Australia Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts. Brumby expressed his confidence that it will boost Victoria's reputation for architectural and design excellence through providing strategic advice to Government about architecture and urban design and offers a critical understanding of building design, to Government Ministers and Departments.

The Office also promotes awareness of the importance of good design including the process of making great places and sustainable urban environments, and Brumby thanked John Denton, the State's first Government Architect, for his insight, advice and passion since his appointment in 2005.

Tasmania

Tasmania's built heritage and the challenges of urban renewal get major attention with the establishment of a \$25 million Heritage and Urban Renewal fund and the appointment of a State Architect. Premier, David Bartlett, said that Tasmania faces unique development challenges as it seeks to marry the richness of its built heritage with the demands of development. He is delighted with the decision to create the position of State Architect as a demonstration of the Government's real commitment to ensuring that Tasmania's built environment remains unique, providing leadership in ensuring and encouraging good planning, design and architecture.

The Tasmanian State Architect, yet to be appointed, will provide strategic and independent advice to the Government, and an advisory role in the Government's building and infrastructure projects.

(ED: The December edition of Urban Design Forum will include interviews with the three new State Architects)

CPTED is hardly a new idea...

John Byrne

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and its concepts and experiences are important elements in thinking about social sustainability and the relationship with the design of cities to the extent that it permeates, almost without fanfare, many contemporary developments in urban design thinking.

Publishing about CPTED is hardly a new venture in Australasia, but there is a new effort in Queensland to explain it and to make that explanation accessible and interesting to the design and development industry as key players in the making of our built environment. In particular, the Queensland Government's newly published CPTED Guidelines reaches out to the urban design profession and, it hopes, to students, decision-makers and the community at large.

Fundamental Principles

Naturally enough it outlines the fundamental principles and guiding ideas under the headings of Surveillance, Legibility, Territoriality, Ownership of Outcomes, Management and Vulnerability.

But it also touches on the history of the idea (including mandatory references to Jane Jacobs, Oscar Newman and some Australian connections) and it has an essay on broad issues raised by CPTED (including the need for balance, the existence of a variety of solutions, the involvement of many professions, and designing at different scales). Another essay unusually seeks to reflect on changes in the nature of Australian society and the way they might impact on CPTED.

Importantly it offers an illustrated essay on how CPTED might relate to evolving urban design ideas - such as mixed housing and mixed use, connectivity, cars and people, public realm, public transport, mainstreet versus box, grid versus 'tree' neighbourhoods and more. Radburn, cul-de-sac walkways, canal and golf course estates, hammerhead lots, esplanades, rear lanes, granny flats and more all get a run.

And, against that framework, the more formal explanation of CPTED principles and related actions is turned to the design of

neighbourhoods, buildings, the public realm, centres, pedestrian and cyclist systems and a range of other domains.

The good and the bad

The photos of both good and bad Queensland examples (rich and famous are not spared) are joined by gutsy diagrams and some lovely Peter Edgley drawings, creating quite a rich visual dialogue to go with the text. The material is serious but the presentation is at times unusual, quirky and even humorous. It sets out to be accessible, engaging and informative. Time will tell how effective it is as part of an evolving program, aimed at further embedding CPTED approaches in mainstream urban design and development.

The document can be obtained in hard copy (phone 07 3234 2111) and on the web at <http://www.police.qld.gov.au>

This biased report has been brought to you by John Byrne, Adjunct Professor in Urban Design, Queensland University of Technology, and he can be contacted at byrne.urbandesign@gmail.com

UDF Consultant Register renewals due

The UDF consultant register on www.udf.org.au is available for anyone interested in and practicing urban design in Australia and New Zealand. The yearly fee covers cost for UDF to run the site. New members are welcome, and it is now time for those already on the register to renew their subscriptions. Please go to the site to see what needs to be done.

The UDF website has been upgraded and is now easier to use, and is being further developed to be used by anyone interested in urban design.

Missing ingredient in Garnaut prescription

Juris Greste

In June, the media reported that Australians are fearful and apprehensive about a range of climate change and energy issues. On 4 July, the much awaited Interim Garnaut Climate Change Review document was released. Professor Garnaut described the challenges ahead as diabolical, equivalent to a 'tails I win, heads you lose' situation.

As over 80% of our population lives in urbanised centres, we better start factoring into the Garnaut prescription the role and arrangement of our cities and towns – so far highly carbon energy profligate and inefficient. After all, it is in our houses, our streets, neighbourhoods, shopping places, employment areas and play grounds – our 'stage of life' - where this 'new' low carbon future will be acted out and paid for. We have two strategy options:

Retrofit our cities and towns on a broad scale

Even by 2050, the bigger proportion of our cities and towns will have already been laid out and built. What we in Australia do to newly-built parts after 2008 will make relatively little difference to how our cities and towns perform in the low carbon era. Retrofitting means adopting a very different mindset from the practices of the past. The tools and methods of the last 50 years will not yield the results we need in the post carbon future. Retrofitting means making neighbourhood centres and local areas less dependent on goods, services, amenities and opportunities a long distance away.

In the longer term (20-30 years) we have to wean ourselves off the high level of reliance on energy just for urban transport. This change can only be brought about by rearranging the way we live in cities and towns, not leaving it until tomorrow but starting today. And the cost savings will be billions – in dollars, tonnes of CO₂ and time.

Make appropriate personal choices and decisions

If I were buying my residence now, what would my main criteria be? My overarching considerations would be: can my everyday life continue without undue hardship and not be entirely dependent on personal transport. It does not mean that I may not have some form of motorised vehicle. The kind of tests I would apply are:

- Public transport - can I reach many of my necessary destinations with public transport? I would prefer the fixed infrastructure kind – train, dedicated bus ways, or light rail.
- Every day amenities - can I reach the basic necessary shops – food, some clothing, hardware, pharmaceuticals – by walking? I might still drive but the walking criterion is a conceptual measure of distance.
- Services - doctors and dentists and other health services are not required every day or week, but I want to be sure that I would not be spending half a day travelling for a new set of spectacles to see the doctor of my choice.



▲ Sydney's Lilyfield – a viable corner store with a child centre on opposite corner without acres of grounds.



▲ Lilyfield – light industrial uses on opposite side (and even next door) of very desirable residential buildings.

- Educational and leisure amenities - If I had school children I would want to make sure that they can get to their respective schools either by walking, cycling or public transport. As to leisure amenities, I would want to be able to reach my local cinema and DVD store on foot or bike.
- Recreational amenities - I would certainly want to be able to get to a local park or sports venue without having to drive. Check that there is one.
- Work - if I were a building trades person or a travelling salesman, my mobility choices would be rather limited to either my own car (or perhaps a battery powered scooter) or bike. However, within the period of living memory, there have been times when builder's labourers did get to their work sites without each one having their own car.
- Flood and inundation prone areas - steer very clear of sites that could be affected by rising water levels such as water tables. Do not rely on flood maps of the past.

- Trees and greenery - as temperatures rise, the comfort and temperature effect of greenery will increase. Vegetation cools. Paving is a heat sink.

This kind of location specification is not impossible. In a single word – localise. There are large parts of our cities and many towns that can meet it now. As we, the Market, demand less carbon and energy intensive locations, we will be supporting retrofitting. Localisation and retrofitting are two sides of the same coin. How we build and arrange our housing has great carbon and cost relevance too, but that is another story.

Expecting to meet the carbon challenge without adjusting our cities is like telling your doctor you want a lung cancer cure without giving up smoking!

Juris Greste is an urban designer with over 50 years experience and is Secretary of Australian Institute of Urban Studies Queensland, and can be contacted at jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au

Melbourne City continues to lead

The City of Melbourne continues to be a leader in sustainability, urban design and liveability. Transcending the traditional rivalry, even Sydneysiders recognise that they can learn a lot from their southern cousins!

The most recent initiative is the publication of *Future Melbourne*, a plan to grow Melbourne as a global city as one of the top ten most liveable and sustainable cities in the world. And if the past performance is anything to go by, it is not a hollow boast.

Future Melbourne is the community of Melbourne's long-term plan for the future direction of all aspects of city life. It sets out what the community wants for the city.

The next step is to determine how this plan will be achieved and who will lead the actions to achieve the goals. *Future Melbourne* will provide a framework for the institutions and individuals with an interest in the future of the city to coordinate their collective actions toward common goals. For its part, in 2009 the City of Melbourne will be using it to develop its four year Council Plan.

With the theme of 'A bold, inspirational and sustainable city', the measure of success will

be achieving six goals for making Melbourne: a city for people; a prosperous city; an eco-city; a knowledge city; a creative city; and a connected city. Melbourne is dynamic; and thrives on diversity and innovation, but needs a solid plan for the future because what is done now will determine how well future generations will live. Although the plan may not be fully realised until after 2020, it is focused on laying solid foundations.

Targets

Ten headline targets have been selected as highlights from the many *Future Melbourne* targets set to help us measure progress towards these goals for the municipality by 2020:

- all visitors and residents feel welcome and safe in the city
- all residents, businesses and visitors have easy to access electronic information
- the municipality is home to at least 140,000 people
- at least 20 per cent of new housing is affordable or social housing
- city employment exceeds 400,000



▲ Sandridge Bridge – celebrating migration to Melbourne

- per capita greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 have reduced by 35 per cent per resident and 59 per cent per worker from 2006 levels
- per capita drinking water use by 2020 has reduced by 40 per cent per resident and 50 per cent per worker compared to 2000 levels
- Melbourne will be one of the world's top five university cities
- Melbourne will be in the top 10 most innovative global cities
- at least 90 per cent of people walk, cycle or take public transport to work in the municipality.

Future Melbourne began in early 2007. It is a community plan sponsored by the City of Melbourne and developed collaboratively through ongoing open public conversations. It replaces *City Plan 2010*. A Community Reference Group was invited by the City of Melbourne to champion and guide the development of *Future Melbourne* and various project partners were invited to participate.

The Future Melbourne plan can be viewed at www.futuremelbourne.com

Draft Australian Urban Design Protocol

The Planning Officials Group (POG), which includes heads of planning from State and Territory Governments as well as representatives from the Australian Government, New Zealand Government and the Australian Local Government Association has been developing an Australian Urban Design Protocol. It has been agreed that the draft Protocol would benefit from wider consultation in the community to ensure broad input to this important national document.

As described in the draft Protocol, "Urban design concerns the physical arrangement, appearance and functioning of towns and cities, and their relationship to the natural environment. Good urban design supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of communities that live in cities and towns, or that are affected by them. Urban design is as

concerned with the process of change as it is with the actual product of development." Urban design can play a critical role in achieving more sustainable cities in the context of pressures from climate change.

The Draft Australian Urban Design Protocol in its current form is modelled largely on the highly successful New Zealand Urban Design Protocol launched in 2004. Since that time the New Zealand Protocol has garnered significant stakeholder support with over 150 signatories to the document.

POG envisages that the Australian Urban Design Protocol could serve as a useful framework for the development of individual State/Territory Urban Design Charters where they do not yet exist or where a review of an existing Charter might be timely.

The Protocol could also serve as a contribution to the emerging national agenda on major cities and sustainable development.

The Australian Urban Design Protocol includes sections on: what is urban design? and why is urban design important? It sets out the social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits, and addresses climate change. It also includes a mission statement on what is acknowledged and agreed.

The New Zealand Principles

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities (the Seven Cs) that create quality urban design. These have been adopted for the draft Australian Urban Design Protocol: context; character; choice; connections; creativity; custodianship; and collaboration.

The Urban Design Protocol is more than just a statement of the importance of quality urban design. It seeks to make a real difference to the quality of Australia's towns and cities through concerted action by all stakeholders. Making it happen requires action by the signatories to the Urban Design Protocol, leadership from the Federal Government, adoption of the framework and development of specific State/Territory Urban Design Charters, identification of resources to support its implementation, monitoring and reporting, and raising awareness across Australia of the value of quality urban design.

For more information about the draft, and the opportunity to comment, phone Cathy Parsons on 02 6207 5454 or email cathy.parsons@act.gov.au

Footscray's new Mall

Elena Kalnin

Nicholson Street Mall was originally built in 1975 and is Australia's oldest pedestrian mall. The Mall is the civic centre for Footscray, representing the identity and aspirations of both Footscray and the entire municipality.

The space needs to facilitate a strong sense of community and cater for a diverse range of cultural activities. The existing condition of the Mall did not reflect its importance and, in 2006, Council committed to revamping this important place. This project received \$4.5 million in matched funding from State Government and Council. Hassell led the consultant team.

The aims of the project were to;

- encourage activity and vibrancy within Footscray principle activity centre
- provide high quality, low maintenance urban design and landscape solution for the public realm
- improve links and accessibility to local services, businesses and public transport
- significantly upgrade pedestrian amenity in Nicholson Street and neighbouring streets and laneways
- promote walkability and reduce reliance on short trip car travel within the Footscray centre
- increase perceptions of safety and security both day and night
- engage with the full diversity of local communities, stakeholders and relevant authorities
- integrate art into the public realm

Infrastructure was upgraded and made accessible to cater for growth and avoid unnecessarily reworking the area. Assets consolidated included: water mains, stormwater drains, electricity supply access, conduit to bundle power underground, bus and tram detectors, tram catenary wiring, fire hydrants, and public phones.

Innovative stormwater management

An innovation in stormwater management was the introduction of rain gardens in a hard surfaced area.

This was designed in partnership with Melbourne Water. The stormwater is directed to the trees and filtered from pollutants. This resulted in a change to the street profile from a road style 'W' to a 'V', increasing overland flow carrying capacity and reducing the likelihood of shops being flooded. This WSUD technique reduced the requirement for grated pits from 20 to 3.

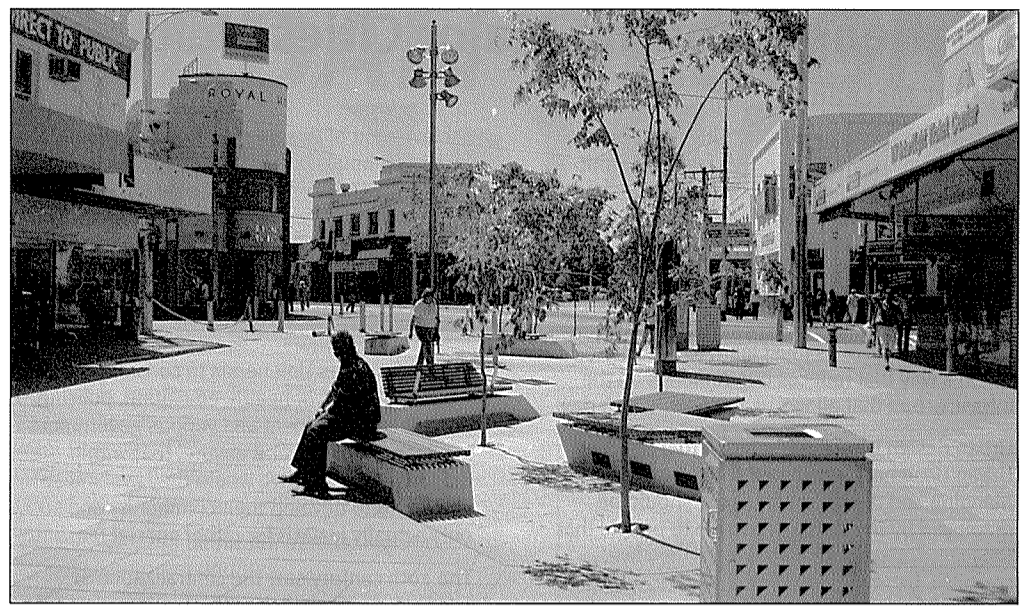
Furniture and fittings were grouped within the organisational device of a yellow rubber surface, described as the 'line of intensity'. This theme is continued with clear sight lines augmented with increased lighting through the space with façade lighting at the intersection. Two colours of pavers, light and dark, delineate the larger open spaces. The redesign also brings the mall in line with current access and mobility requirements, increases the footpath area and introduces a 'Barnes' style pedestrian crossing.

The redevelopment of Nicholson Street Mall creates a dynamic civic space that is safer and more accessible, with improved lighting, paving, more seating, more trees, and more shade. It incorporates larger and more comfortable bus and tram interchanges with improved pedestrian amenity.

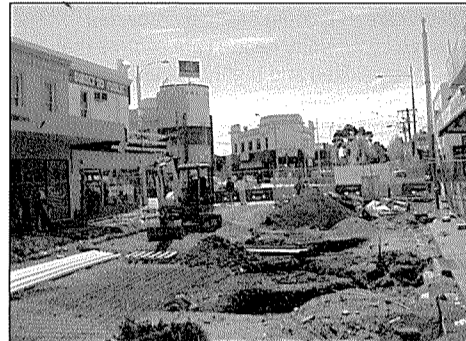
The flexible design incorporates intimate seating clusters to retain the Mall as a meeting space, whilst providing larger open spaces that can accommodate larger community activities, such as cultural events, markets and gatherings.

Construction is due to be completed in August 2008 on time and on budget. Please drop by and enjoy our new public space.

Elena Kalnin, B.Arch (Hons) M.Social Admin, works with the City Design and Place Making Unit at Maribyrnong City Council.



▲ After reconstruction



▲ During reconstruction



▲ Before reconstruction

StreetFilms initiative

Melbourne and Wodonga are just two of the places to be part of the StreetFilms series. The mission of StreetFilms is to document liveable streets best practice throughout the world and enlighten the general public that their streets can be safer for pedestrians and bicycles. The ultimate goal is to encourage more human-friendly cities and rethink the way our streets are allocated.

StreetFilms does this by making sometimes complex traffic and transportation concepts

simpler by using video, animations, and language that the public can understand. They can also be frequently humorous. The productions are used as Creative Commons tools the world over by communities and advocacy organizations to fight for better conditions in their neighbourhoods. StreetFilms is part of the Livable Streets Network which includes sister sites Streetsblog and StreetsWiki. It is well worth a browse: www.streetfilms.org

The economic value of urban shade - the Dubai Creek Case Study

Andrew McDougall

The economic value of urban shade can be significant, especially in extreme climates. Past studies have shown that shade has an economic value through:

- savings in cooling costs and, in turn, energy consumption and environmental emissions;
- reduced pavement fatigue cracking and other distress, and therefore public asset maintenance costs;
- to the extent that shade supports physical activity, it has the potential to lead to improved health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases;
- to the extent that shade makes public spaces more attractive and useable, it makes urban areas more liveable and, therefore, more productive in the knowledge economy.

This paper adds to this list by exploring how shade can increase the effective capacity of tourism assets. It does this by highlighting the stress that Dubai's key tourist area, the Dubai Creek, is currently under and how this is expected to increase dramatically in future given Dubai's targeted tourist yields. It then furthers the argument by:

1. demonstrating the marked seasonality of Dubai's tourism market;
2. linking this seasonality with extreme temperature conditions (refer Figures 1 and 2);
3. examining existing shade patterns surrounding the Dubai Creek, specifically surrounding the known tourism routes between key visitor attractions;
4. highlighting the level of shade protection afforded along these routes in different seasons of the year.

The paper then takes a speculative approach to quantifying the value to the Dubai economy if the shade conferred could be lengthened and, in doing so, making it more enjoyable for tourists to navigate their way around the Dubai Creek attractions.

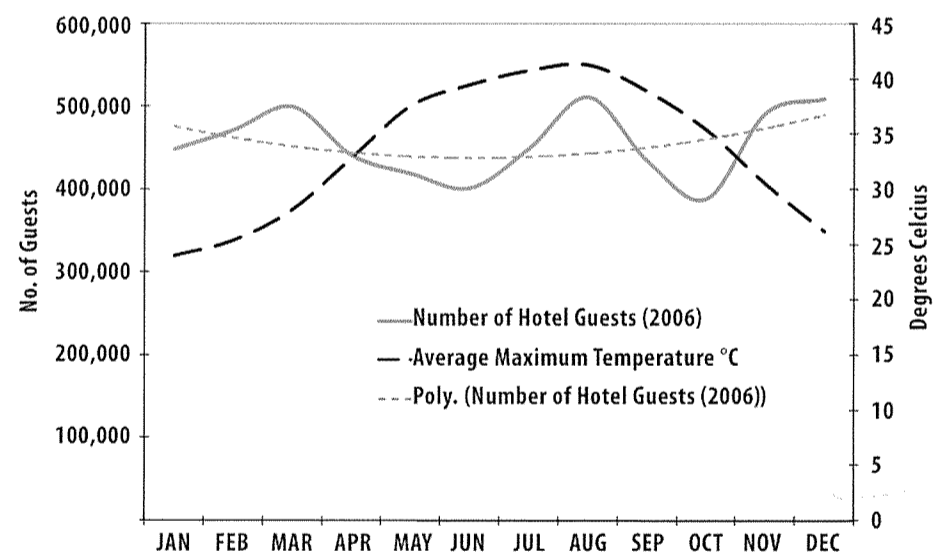
Tourist comfort zones

Modelling by the WSP Group, undertaken in Abu Dhabi, was briefly explored to see how different built forms/interventions could be applied to bring temperatures into tourist 'comfort zones', without compromising the amenity of the environment that constitutes the very offer that makes it appealing. The paper concludes that it is likely that improved shading, through shade structures, vegetation and/or arcading, may well be able to overcome the climatic challenges in the autumn and spring months. Explicit here is the recognition that increased shading is insufficient to render the Dubai Creek attractive to tourists in the peak of summer.

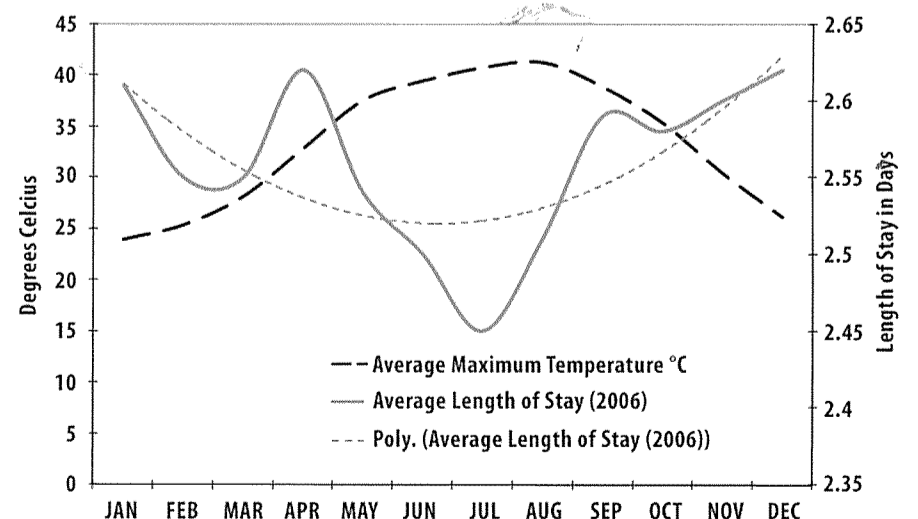
Placing a value on these benefits was also speculative but was well informed by known tourist visitation and expenditure patterns. Certainly the role of Dubai as an international aviation hub was key here in that there is real potential to attract tourists for short stays, as they connect to other destinations. After examining all the data, it was assumed that 20% of the current tourists in May and October would extend their stays in Dubai for half a day. This would lead to a commensurate lift in their expenditure which would eventually flow through to GDP enhancements.

The estimates that resulted were around US\$20 million for each and every year, certainly making it worthwhile to further exploring the built forms/interventions. And of course these quantified benefits exclude any additional benefits that might be associated with the dot points in the first paragraph.

Andrew McDougall is Associate Director at SGS Economics & Planning, and can be contacted at andrew.mcdougall@sgsep.com.au



▲ Figure 1 – No. of Hotel Guests in Dubai (2006) and Monthly Temperature Maximums



▲ Figure 2 – Average Guest Length of Stay in Dubai (2006) and Monthly Temperature Maximums

Source: Department of Economic Development/Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (2008) and the Dubai Meteorological Office (2008).

Challenges for the Major Cities Unit

Robert McLean

The success of the new Major Cities Unit hinges on communication. Challenges facing the unit are many, but the first it must rise to is that of helping people understand that tomorrow, a tomorrow that is in every sense attractive and desirable, will be decidedly different from what it is that we enjoy today. The Unit must first help people understand, and in doing so convince them, that each of us must learn to live where we live in a way that reduces our demands on the infrastructure that allows us to flourish each day.

Urban design is a key element in that task and Urban Designers, combined with all the other planning and design professions, should be employed by the Unit to illustrate to people that they can find work close to where they live, socialize, be entertained, pursue their sporting interests and find their community to be their greatest resource. In fact it is that final element - the community - that the Unit needs to emphasize as a great city is little more than a great collection of strong and resourceful communities.

Addicted to the car

Most people are addicted to a lifestyle that revolves around the motor car and the

achievement of the great Australian dream, an individual house on a quarter acre block of land, and so the Unit needs to hone its communication strategies that help us all understand how our cities continue their sprawl through the maintenance of those addictions.

Living locally

The Major Cities Unit needs to consider the decentralization of health, education, policing, art and entertainment and various government services to enable, and ensure, that within reason people can live where they live and so work hard to develop their community and so only actually leave it for rather special reasons.

The 20th century saw the centralization of services, particularly health, that forced people to leave their communities, even for rudimentary health care that could easily be provided through community health care centres that are staffed by skilled and highly trained nurses (male and female), electronic connection to health care specialists and so fewer doctors.

Policing is similar. The Unit needs to consider decentralizing our police force creating small community located police stations with after

hours emergency calls all going to a central base. I see something similar with retail - our national retailers would have one major central store-house in each city that would supply smaller stores in each community, ensuring the convenience and price offered by the big stores. The truly enjoyable and free street life encouraged by strip shopping far exceeds that of a private experience that comes with the big box stores - the real social benefits of strip shopping as opposed to emaciated social experience of the big box stores needs to be communicated to the population.

Public transport is among the top priorities for the Major Cities Unit - it needs to be so good that people will willingly and happily leave the cars in the garage. People should be able to move quickly and easily around their communities and throughout their cities should the need arise.

The Unit needs to think deeply about housing density and people should be encouraged to live in their community, rather than retreating to private sanctuaries. Subsequently, determined effort need to be put into creating interesting, desirable, relaxing and attractive public spaces built in such a way that people want seek

relaxation in the public park/space, rather than those private domains.

Communication is critical

Again, communication is critical as it is important that people are helped to understand that their lives will be richer and more dynamic when they mix and blend with their community rather than live an isolationist life. In 1846 Gustave Flaubert said: "To be stupid, selfish and have good health are the three requirements for happiness. Tough if stupidity is lacking, all it lost."

We were somewhat stupid in the 20th century, we were definitely selfish and most considered us happy, but that selfishness brought on by stupidity has left us with cities that have not brought us happiness and they never will until we understand and create community - the overwhelming responsibility of the Major Cities Unit.

Rob McLean is a journalist with a keen interest in urban design. He can be contacted at robed@mcmedia.com.au

The Good City Forum

Getting it together - place-based delivery of quality urban centres

Bendigo 24-25 September 2008

Urban hubs with a diversity of activities and good public transport access are the key element in achieving urban sustainability. Quality multi-functional centres also support enhanced prosperity, enriched community identity and social inclusion. This has stimulated growth of cross-disciplinary techniques such as 'place management' for the enhanced and accelerated delivery of integrated urban change.

The 2008 Good City Forum focuses on mechanisms for the integrated delivery of visions to strengthen multi-functional activity hubs. The forum is aimed at practitioners charged with delivery of enhanced centres and those considering 'joined-up' and 'place-based' approaches.

The one-day forum and pre-forum dinner will focus on sharing experiences and exploring emerging practice and techniques. It will be conducted within Bendigo's lively city centre, a leader in adoption of innovative 'place-based' techniques and responses.

Registration (by 12 September) via the PIA (Vic) website: www.planning.org.au/vic

Enquiries to r.duncan@bendigo.vic.gov.au



Launch of d_city

Davina Jackson

An emerging global network of multi-disciplinary researchers (mainly academic) using dynamic data technologies to accelerate ecologically intelligent solutions for planning, designing and managing cities is about to be launched.

We are aligning with the Metropolis organisation of governments of more than 100 cities of more than a million people. Our founding research partner is NICTA, Australia's national ICT research organisation, and the project has been welcomed by research leaders at prestigious universities and institutions, government research agencies and global corporations in the property, finance and digital sectors.

To celebrate our affiliation with Metropolis - which we aim to extend to an international research program to help solve critical challenges facing city governments - we are creating an interactive and immersive lounge exhibiting new data cities movies to inform delegates attending its ninth 'Connecting Cities' Congress in Sydney. The Congress dates are 22-25 October 2008 and the lounge will go on public display in Sydney 27-31 October.

Entries close 15 September 2008. To check the Call for Entries and enrol for our newsletters visit www.dcityresearch.net

Conferences

Cities, Towns and Communities conference

Olympic Park, Sydney 7-10 October, 2008

Hear keynote presentations from:- Karsten Gerken, Director, Office of Regeneration & Residential Development, Leipzig City Council, Germany on "Turning a Shrinking City into a Growing City"; Kate Joncas, President of the Downtown Seattle Association, Seattle, USA on "Revitalising Downtown Seattle - Lessons Learned"; Phil Wood, Partner, Comedia, United Kingdom on "Building a Creative Community"

For information regarding the program and speakers log on to <http://www.ictcsociety.org/?D=10>

To register for the conference log on to <http://www.ictcsociety.org/?D=51>

Delivering activity in activity centres

3-5 October 2008
Federation Square, Melbourne

Urban Screens Melbourne 08 (USMo8), hosted by Fed Square Pty Ltd, is the first international urban screens conference and exhibition to be staged in the Asia Pacific region, following successful events in Amsterdam in 2005 and Manchester in 2007. USMo8 will present an integrated conference program of keynote lectures and panel sessions in the BMW Edge Theatre and an outdoor multimedia program of experimental poster sessions, curated screenings, workshops and screen-based projects.

Registrations are now open for the Mobile Publics conference, which will explore the impact of digital technology and new media on the public space of contemporary cities.

A range of panels will be presented on themes such as 'Art, Technology and Public Space', 'Strategies for Urban Regeneration' and 'Cross-Cultural Public Networks', with guest speakers from Australia, Japan, Korea, Germany, Netherlands, Taiwan, UK, and USA. *Full conference programme and registration information is available at: www.urbanscreens08.net*

9th International Conference for Walking

8-10 October 2008, Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona Walk21, 2008, 'Walk with Barcelona - a moving city', is convened by Catalunya Camina, Pedestrian's Rights Association and the Barcelona Municipality. It is supported by the Ministry of Environment, Generalitat de Catalunya, Diputació de Barcelona, FEMP, City of Barcelona and a range of other sponsors and contributors across a diversity of sectors involved in the promotion of walking and liveable communities.

The conference seeks to provide guidance and inspiration to support the development of walkable environments and to establish walking as a dynamic part of modern living. *For further information see www.barcelonawalk21.com Past papers and other information about previous Walk21 Conferences can be found at www.walk21.com*

47th International Making Cities Livable Conference

Portland, OR, USA, 10-14 May, 2009

An international conference for city officials, practitioners and scholars in architecture, urban design, planning, landscape architecture, transportation planning, health policy and social sciences from many parts of the world to share ideas, and establish working relationships. The theme is True Urbanism: Cities for Health and Well-Being, and is the conference is co-sponsored by the City of Portland and Portland Metro Planning Council. Proposals should be prepared for blind peer review. And sent to Suzanne.Lennard@LivableCities.org Deadline for submission is 15 October, 2008. For more information see www.LivableCities.org

Invitation to join Urban Design Email Forum

The UK Urban Design Group has established an email forum via JISC. It is free to join and will provide a facility where people can exchange information, ask questions, or pose opinions about urban design, and generally support one another through the tribulations of modern urban design life! You can join through this website at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=urbandesign&A=1>

Shortage of urban design skills

Australia has a serious shortage of highly skilled urban designers, so if you are having trouble finding staff you may be interested in this UK recruitment site: [website <http://www.urbandesignjobs.com/>](http://www.urbandesignjobs.com/) They say they have a number of people interested in working in Australia and New Zealand.

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Web: A new consultant register and an increasing range of related information is available at www.udf.org.au

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