

## Australia Award for Urban Design 2011 winners

The Australia Award for Urban Design, Australia's premier award for urban design achievement, acknowledges the critical role of good urban design in the social, economic and environmental development of our cities and towns. This year, there were 46 entries from across the country - from local councils, government agencies, consultants and others interested in urban design. The award is hosted by the Planning Institute of Australia, and this year was assessed by a jury nominated by the Australian Institute of Architects, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Consult Australia, and Urban Design Forum. There were three Special Commendations - and one Award winner. The jury citations were as follows:

### Award winner

The Australian Award for Urban Design 2011 was given to the Brisbane Southbank Corporation for the SW1 Precinct at South Bank. This work is the result of a progression of stages, involving a range of organisation and professional companies in a complex urban renewal challenge - much of which has now been implemented. The derelict land in the area has been transformed to provide a very enjoyable and attractive urban environment for those who inhabit the area - to live there, to work there, to play there is an experience of intrigue and delight.

The precinct brings together human scale and built form massing. It has an integrated context, it is spatially connected for people, public transport and cars, it has legibility, and a sense of community. The quality of the spaces encourages and supports activation by the people who are there. It links the climate and the landscape - and has the mix of uses which ensures a vital urban environment. In summary, the precinct has been very well conceived, is very well designed, and it has been implemented: it is built and it works well.

### Special Commendations

**Brisbane City Council for Urban Renewal Brisbane.** This 20 year process has provided a long-term vision not just for the CBD but for the whole central region - including specific community precincts. The vision has successfully given guidance over a relatively long period and has been the catalyst for a substantial degree of implementation. The robustness of the process has enabled it to continue through political, economic, demographic and community changes. It has had both a longevity and clarity such that it continues to guide and facilitate a diversity of scales of place-making and place identity.

**The City of Sydney City Council, for its Part 3A Submission to the Barangaroo Concept Plan Modification 4.** The award entry sets out Council's involvement in the urban design process in the form of an alternative to the modified development proposal. This Special Commendation is given because of the analytical and rigorous manner in which the Council has sought to achieve excellent urban design outcomes for its constituents through active engagement in the decision-making process. The Council has emphasized the importance of this key site in central Sydney, and has addressed its context and massing to maintain a human scale and interface with the waterfront.

**The City of Canada Bay for the Rhodes West Masterplan.** The challenge of transforming this industrial wasteland into a dynamic community was creatively and practically tackled, proposing visual complexity, active recreation spaces, and a strong local identity. It is an innovative intervention which addresses both the development control and the funding needed to liberate the land value, and sets out to effectively and efficiently link and share the community assets of a school and a railway station.

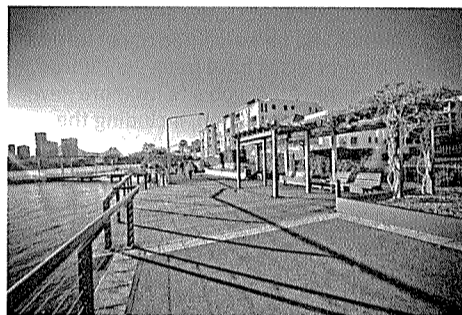
# URBAN DESIGN FORUM

ISSUE No. 95

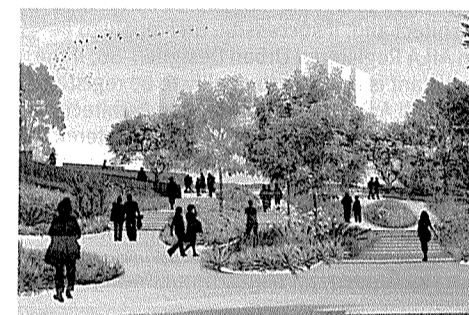
September 2011



▲ Brisbane Southbank Corporation, the SW1 Precinct at South Bank



▲ Brisbane riverside urban renewal



▲ Rhodes West Masterplan image

## Churchill Fellowship for play yards

NSW urban designer Tanya Vincent has been awarded a 2011 Churchill Fellowship to investigate how Copenhagen's play yards address the higher densities and parental fears that limit the outdoor, independent play of children in Australian cities.

Tanya is a Sydney urban designer and was the principal author of Landcom's recently published *Residential Design Guide*. Her Fellowship study aims to inform policy makers and urban designers of play yards as a potential model for urban renewal projects such as Sydney's Green Square. It is a timely topic for high-density developments looking to broaden their appeal beyond childless households and for planning agencies seeking wider community acceptance of transit-oriented densification strategies.

Planning and design professionals will not be surprised to learn that the traditional venue for children's outdoor play - the backyard - is shrinking into a courtyard or being substituted by a balcony. The 2006 Census found 11% of Sydney children living in flats.

### Risk averse parenting

Planners and designers not in the parenting phase of life, however, may be surprised by the latest research on where and how Australian children are spending their leisure time.

Home based, sedentary activities or structured extra-curricular classes are replacing outdoor, casual play with friends. Two thirds of children are exceeding the recommended time of two hours per day of small screen recreation, according to the Productivity Commission report on childhood obesity. Qualitative studies from Deakin University show that parents are constraining their children's independent outdoor play due to 'stranger danger' and road safety fears. How can urban planning and design respond to these social trends?

### Rethinking places for children

Copenhagen's 24 'play yards' are free, enclosed, and robust play spaces for families in high-density neighbourhoods. On her

Fellowship study in 2012, Tanya will be documenting the play yards' physical features and distilling these into replicable principles, as well as the operational practices.

Key to understanding the play yards will be the role of the concierge, a person who does not supervise or organize children, but maintains a safe environment including lots of 'loose fit' equipment like tricycles, racquets, balls and sand toys.

Other research questions will include:

- What residential densities support the feasibility and popularity of play yards? Is it density and/or design that adds the social dimension of games to a playground?
- Do the play yards operate differently in different socio-economic neighbourhoods?
- How does the design attract younger children and their parents, making the play yard feel popular and safe enough that 7-12 year old children can play without their parents?
- How can the play yard model be adapted, given our legal framework, so that Australian

children can once again enjoy that most enriching and healthy play - having fun outside with other children?

In preparation for the study, Tanya would welcome comments or suggestions from Urban Design Forum readers. She can be contacted on [tanya.vincent@bigpond.com](mailto:tanya.vincent@bigpond.com)

And if you have an interesting research topic applicable to the Australian community, applications for 2012 Churchill Fellowships open on 1 November 2011.



▲ Tanya Vincent

## Mapping critical territory: SA's Integrated Design Commission

### Tim Horton

At a recent Property Council lunch, Premier Mike Rann observed that 'one of the most important initiatives to emerge since the launch of the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide is the establishment, last July, of the Integrated Design Commission. In its first year of operation, the Commission has already played an influential role in decisions relating to long-term city planning and development proposals.' Nice recognition.

The origins of the Commission may be known to many, but have their genesis in the Adelaide 'Thinkers-in-Residence' program. In 2009, Architect and educator Professor Laura Lee worked with 15 partners on what has become a foundational document for next generation thinking in design, planning and development. Refer <http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/Thinkers/Lee/finalreport.aspx>.

We've translated nine recommendations comprising Professor Laura Lee's final report into five essential founding principles. These include:

- Design in all stages; recognizing the impact

design can have when considered upfront, not last minute

- Collaborative Culture; acknowledging that exemplary outcomes emerge from the successful collaboration across sectors.
- Environmental Leadership; building on the essential strengths of a state with solid credentials in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, water, and exceptional environmental science
- Evidence through Research; promoting relevant research to enable evidence-based policy advice across design, planning and development
- Inform, Engage, Educate; advocating the role of design as an essential tool for successful engagement of communities in negotiating change.

In our first year we've initiated a number of 'firsts' for SA, including:

- driving Australia's most ambitious urban redesign project, the Integrated Design Strategy ([www.5000plus.net.au](http://www.5000plus.net.au)). 5000+ will deliver an urban design vision across eight

inner metro council areas, backed by local, state and federal agencies. But it will also deliver a new 'model' for how others can do this, based on Adelaide's experience.

- initiating a design-led collaboration with the construction sector to deliver what we hope will be SA's first Carbon Zero house at Lochiel Park in 2012 (in conjunction with the Land Management Corporation)
- initiating a masterplan for Adelaide's Riverbank to identify new opportunities for public space alongside a \$1bn upgrade to the Adelaide Oval and Convention Centre
- review of Adelaide's unique Torrens corridor - site of Australia's first Linear Park - to provide a vision for the next 30 years (in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources)
- analysis of the design sector in South Australia; to understand the health and trends in the sector over time
- establishment of a formal process of multi disciplinary Design Review to shepherd projects through the first few vital months of design; to assist early to avoid intervening

later on when attitudes are fixed and the stakes are higher.

We know that there is strength in networks. The Commission is already looking to build international collaborations with like-minded design agencies around the world, including the UK Design Council CABE, Design Singapore and Finland's SITRA.

Aside from an independent Commissioner, a Government Architect, a Director, the ambitious range and remit of this new Commission is supported by a multi-disciplinary staff, and by an Advisory Board of eminent minds that reflect our broad focus. Chaired by the Commissioner, the Advisory Board includes: Professor Catherin Bull AM; Professor Graeme Hugo; Professor Janis Birkeland; Assoc Professor Joanne Cys; John Denton; Dr Elizabeth Farrelly; Jim Hallion (Chief Executive of SA Department of Premier and Cabinet); and Dan Hill.

Tim Horton is SA Commissioner for Integrated Design, and can be contacted at [Horton.Tim@dpc.sa.gov.au](mailto:Horton.Tim@dpc.sa.gov.au) Check out the Commission at: [www.integrateddesign.sa.gov.au](http://www.integrateddesign.sa.gov.au)

# Urban designers – to register or not to register?

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) website recently included an intention of registration for urban designers. The announcement has elicited a range of responses, a selection of which is included on this page.

## Paul Costigan

In May 2011, the National Council of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects agreed that the AILA Registration Scheme is to be expanded to cover other areas of practice. In the first instance AILA is to offer the option to AILA Registered Landscape Architects to be also registered as an AILA Registered Urban Designer.

The criteria for assessment will require the applicant to provide evidence of practising in Urban Design. So, if an AILA Registered Landscape Architect is not working in Urban Design, and therefore lacks the evidence to include in their application, this pathway may not be possible. Once registered as an Urban Designer, there will be the requirement to report Urban Design continuing professional development annually.

The most important criterion is that registration as an AILA Registered Urban Designer will be available to AILA Registered Landscape Architects. If not already registered, the applicant will first have to apply to be registered as an AILA Registered Landscape Architect and, if successful, then apply to be an AILA Registered Urban Designer. So, if the applicant is not able to qualify to be registered as an AILA Registered Landscape Architect, then the option of being an AILA Registered Urban Designer is not open to the applicant.

Landscape architects or those who have been working in Landscape Architecture, but not previously registered, should look at the various paths to AILA registration listed on the membership pages online.

## Juris Greste

To accredit or not to accredit is an all or nothing issue. So far throughout the nation we have left the picking of urban designers to the 'buyer beware' notion. I have never been a proponent of accreditation in the first instance. Instead, for 25 years I have advocated for the value and importance of urban design/urbanism education. Checking educational credentials is always a great help. Has your legal adviser actually been to law school?

Regrettably, the professional as well as the lay community is unwilling to accede that there is knowledge and understanding about the nature and heritage of urban settlements which is not generally taught in courses other than urban design programs. Thus, formal urban design education in Australia has been very poorly supported. Most courses are only marginally viable. Strange! – in the most highly urbanised nation in the world.

Perhaps this is because we have inherited the British suburban tradition. The rural, city fringe setting is more desirable than the more intense settlement. Continental colonisers, the Spanish, Portuguese, French, exported an urban culture where proximity to business, urban amenities and power is more highly valued.

If we are going to accredit or recognise urban designers/urbanists as specialists, let us make sure we do it for two good reasons:

- to strengthen interest and demand for urban design education
- to help us to build an urban tradition.

Since settlement, we have been largely doing development and not valuing urbanity for its own sake.

When we talk of accreditation of urban

## Philip Follent

Whilst I have the greatest respect for the AILA, I do not believe that, at this point in time, it is appropriate for the AILA to become the sole accreditation body, if indeed, accreditation is a necessity just yet.

## Upwave – city dynamics and the coming capitalist revival

John Montgomery, Urban Cultures Ltd, UK and Australia (Ashgate ISBN: 978-1-4094-2226-6)

Countering the many claims that the best days of capitalism are over following the economic meltdown of 2008 onwards, this

If you have already gained a post graduate degree in Urban Design, in addition to your original Landscape Architecture degree and you are already a Registered Landscape Architect, your assessment should be much easier. But you will still have to apply.

If you have an undergraduate or post graduate degree in Urban Design, but no accredited Landscape Architecture degree, you will first need to satisfy the criteria of being recognised as an AILA Registered Landscape Architect. There will be other variations to this process and many will not quite fit the pathways as set out above.

The assessment will require evidence of the skills, experience and expertise across aspects of Urban Design. The process will not be revisiting those areas already assessed when the applicant became an AILA Registered Landscape Architect. As such the assessment will be based on the fact that the applicant is already a registered 'design' professional – an AILA Registered Landscape Architect.

The AILA Registered Urban Designer application process is still being finalised and should be implemented towards the end of 2011. Queries will be welcomed once the new application processes have been announced. Please watch the AILA web site for more news on when the documentation, including the application forms, are to be available. [www.aila.org.au](http://www.aila.org.au)

Paul Costigan is CEO of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture and can be contacted at [ceo@aila.org.au](mailto:ceo@aila.org.au)

designers, we are also talking of a matter of great public interest – the quality of our urban settlements. Accreditation must be grounded in the vast body of knowledge, research and urban heritage, be accountable, transparent, supported by a diversity of interest groups and open to periodic review.

Google search indicates that only three countries have a formal accreditation of urban designers – Britain, India and Hong Kong. Interestingly, the last two also share many British traditions, especially professional structures. In Britain, the Urban Design Group administers a 'Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design' roll. The Indians have an Institute of Urban Designers and Hong Kong has an Institute of Urban Design. While accreditation standards and requirements of the three cases cannot be directly compared, there are distinct and important similarities:

- proof of education, competence and experience is very rigorous
- there is one set of standards (one accreditation 'board') for the territory/country concerned
- the accrediting institution is outside any of the other recognised professional bodies
- the accrediting 'agency' is entirely dedicated to achieving excellence in urban design.

Urban design is not the province of any one professional group. It is the centre of the wheel which links us all into the common cause of creating human habitats. So too any scheme of accreditation must be outside the present professional silos. Let us all join to build higher standards for ourselves, the public and start nurturing an urban culture.

Juris Greste OAM can be contacted at [jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au)

The cross discipline nature of urban design requires, to my mind, a much more collegiate arrangement for any accreditation or monitoring role of courses geared to producing urban designers and indeed over practitioners undertaking urban design work.

book provocatively argues that a new golden age of capitalism - or upwave - began around 2002, and despite the unstable markets in the western world of the past few years, this upwave will produce previously unseen levels of wealth creation during the next twenty years. This highly original book will interest those concerned with national economies, nation states and urban policy.

## Recognise urban design

### Gordon Holden

It comes as no surprise to me that both the Institute of Landscape Architects and the Planning Institute have initiated forms of professional recognition for urban designers. There has been a trend in thinking toward independent recognition over the past nearly twenty years and I conclude that this is a reflection of the success of urban design advocacy, education and practice over that period.

Many UDF readers will be aware through participation in the three surveys of urban design practitioners that I conducted commencing in 1992, gathering data across several topics including gender, age, educational background, key activities, and methods and underpinning theories. There were about 30 respondents for each survey which was sent to every individual who could be identified through professional and public media as offering urban design services in Australia. In response to the question 'should Urban Design stand as a separate profession' it is clear that there has been ever growing support for the idea: 30% -1992; 50% - 2002; 65% - 2007,

The profile of respondents for the 2007 survey, by initial discipline, was approximately 57% architecture, 20% landscape architecture, 15% planning and the remainder from arts or sciences backgrounds. The earlier survey profiles had a similar percentage for landscape architecture, but there were fewer from architecture (45%) and more from planning (30%).

### Donnell Davis

United Nations Habitat has been following professionalism closely since one of its four themes is Urban Design. Lessons can be learned from Netherlands, UK, Sweden, and New Zealand. The 2010 report to the UN General Assembly articulates conclusions. UNH Country Evaluations make special mention of city design techniques, effectiveness, accelerated learning for better practices, and internationally recognised professionalism. This is fundamental to the Habitat Professionals Forum. For more information see [www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=594&cid=6886](http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=594&cid=6886)

Much of the benefit of professional approaches lies in consultation with trans-disciplinary practitioners concerned with sustainable urban

## Design...who needs it?

Is design a luxury? There is an idea that it is. This is the idea of design as material, details, gimmicks and gizmos. In many cases, these elements can be a luxury, not a necessity. If we think about the word 'necessary', we may think about words like health, housing education and jobs. How necessary then is design? In a changing landscape of economics and public sector resources this is an important question.

At the root of design is a very simple principle - to provide for people. To produce places that work for people and enable people to make choices about the life they want to lead, their way. This raises an interesting dilemma – how do you create something physical that is fixed, sturdy and long lasting, but which is flexible at the same time? This is a problem of design.

The simplest building that enables people to make choices is the house. Personalisation transforms a house into a home. This environment of confidence enables people to make some choices; when the house is connected to the community and the system of the neighbourhood, additional choices open up. When the neighbourhood is connected to the town as a whole, even more choices are available. It's the 'Russian doll' principle. Everything is connected, and the more connection there is, the more choice there is. These connections, physical, social and cultural, happen either by accident or by design. If it is by design, it's about decision-making working with the right ingredients at the right time to allow lots of possibilities to emerge. Fundamentally, it is about joining things up, making sense of a complex environment to enable confident choices.

Too often, instead of joined-up thinking, we think only about the individual bits and pieces that make places; housing, schools, health, all individually. Too often better design

What I find surprising about the current situation is that the two professions with the lesser percentages of urban designers, sampled by the survey are the ones that are elevating urban design through a category of recognition: 'Registration' in the case of Landscape Architecture and 'Chapter Membership' for Planning. The architecture profession, with probably more than half of the urban designers in Australia, appears to be unmoved- or is architecture comfortable with urban design being seen as cross-disciplinary and doesn't feel the need to corral it?

### A 'broad church' approach

I subscribe to the 'broad-church' of urban design approach, essentially that the knowledge and skills needed are both broad and specialised and they span across several disciplines. Urban design is a team sport that does not fit narrowly with any one discipline or professional body. If we continue down recently constructed territorial paths, then I predict confusion in the marketplace that is likely to undermine the field of urban design.

My advocacy is that for urban design to prosper and gain coherence and a stronger voice we do need a form of recognition, but one that is at hands-length from the existing professional bodies. This should derive from a unified approach to educational standards and practice experience criteria across the professions.

Professor Gordon Holden is Head, Architecture, Griffith University, and can be contacted at [g.holden@griffith.edu.au](mailto:g.holden@griffith.edu.au)

development. I understand that AILA has had limited or no consultation within Australia with the various bodies actively involved in urban design practice and teaching.

My doctorate study 'Sustainable Cities and Surrounds: Creating Responsive Institutions' is concerned with accelerated learning. I have profiled many systems, institutions and countries, and this proposal by AILA appears on 'face value' to be heading in the wrong direction.

I seek the opportunity to facilitate some discussion, workshop and possible ways forward so that Australia can be an urban professional leader, not a laggard.

Donnell Davis can be contacted at [donnell@envirobusiness.org](mailto:donnell@envirobusiness.org)

in this context means expensive materials, complex details, gadgets and gizmos. This is the idea that suggests an ordinary house with a windmill is sustainable. It's not. It's an ordinary house with a windmill. To think sustainably we need to think about what happens when you open your door in the morning. Where are the health facilities, the schools, and the amenities and how do you get there? What are your choices, your ordinary every day, necessary choices and how does your physical environment help?

In a changed economic landscape, we need to think more about joining up the parts, linking individual investments in health, schools and housing. We need to be more creative about how to achieve a sense of place with basic ingredients which are well combined and which meet the challenges of climate change. Design as a process of well informed decision-making is crucial. In this context, less is not more. More and better design is more value. It is necessary. It is a challenge. Let's meet it.

Peter Robinson, Director of Sustainable Urbanism, Sydney, found this piece from the Scottish Architecture and Design Centre.



▲ Walter Burley Griffin - Capital Theatre, Melbourne

# Where Queensland connects...with the world

Cathryn Chatburn

In May this year the Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) launched a national design competition to seek creative responses for a Property Master Plan that respects the framework of the existing Brisbane Airport 2009 Master Plan and helps to set the framework for the new 2014 Master Plan that BAC will begin in 2012. The focus for the competition recognised the significance of the asset Brisbane Airport holds, in terms of its unique position within the real estate offer of South East Queensland. The BAC land holding is one of the largest in Brisbane (1,000 hectares of developable land) and unique in that its leasehold tenure means that BAC will remain in ownership of the common areas of the site for the duration of the lease term (up to 2096). Its ability, therefore, to contribute to the state and regional economies goes well beyond the traditional aviation, tourism and logistics spheres.

## The opportunity and ideas

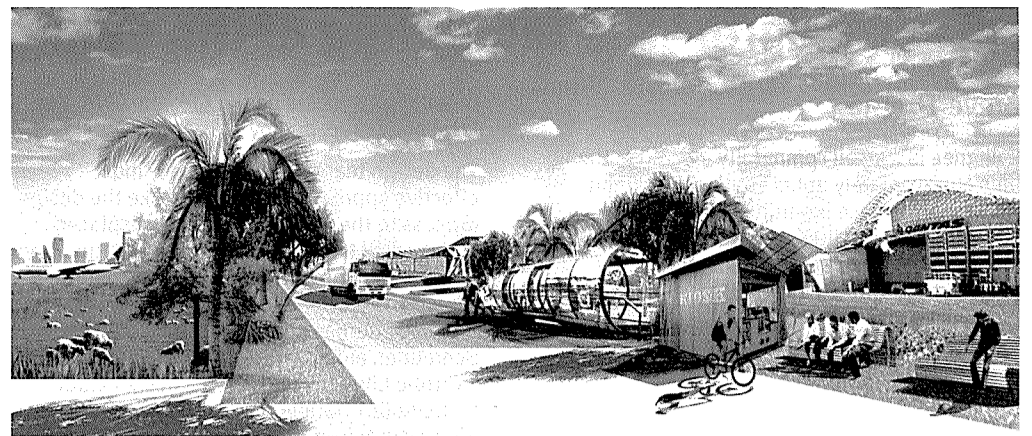
A proposal developed by a design team led by AECOM/Grimshaw/Price Waterhouse Coopers/Tract was selected as the winning entry. BAC CEO and Managing Director, Julieanne Alroe, said the competition attracted a tremendous breadth of talent and expertise from across the country. 'We were extremely pleased with the quality of submissions and energy projected

throughout the competition, in particular with the proposals put forth by the final three shortlisted candidates. There was extensive review, discussion and debate undertaken to arrive at the selection of the winning team that was extremely close in the final assessment scores.'

'The AECOM/Grimshaw consortia submission however delivered the most promise, in its concentration of development in a number of subtly reconfigured zones, including a proposed Airport Spine between the terminals and Airport Village. The jury was particularly impressed with the proposal's creative approach to natural systems, rethinking the connections between energy consumption, production and waste management, Ms Alroe said.

Other strengths in the winning submission included:

- consolidation of development around key nodes
- high level of connectivity to neighbourhoods, community and regions
- inclusion of both ideals and ideas concerning the interim usage of the wider landscape – exploring the idea of 'productive landscapes' comprehensively
- a 'catalyst' project scheme with an intent to establish a lively precinct to elevate the profile of the airport while responding to market demands



▲ Artists impression of ideas for the character of precincts in the airport

- involvement with younger professionals who espouse inspirational and innovative approaches to 'future proofing' property development opportunities that transcend generations
- an ethos of adaptability, flexibility and strong environmental sustainability to ensure robust outcomes that pro-actively respond to current market demands and global initiatives including the 'carbon debate'.

## Next steps

Over the next five months, working collaboratively with the client, BAC Property, and a broader platform of key stakeholders, the team will develop a detailed Property

Master Plan. The collective team and client will explore ways to provide a platform for development of the airport land-side, in a way that allows immediate, flexible and innovative responses to market demands, climate change, carbon cost, lifestyle changes, technology advances and new development paradigms in a way that no comparable development can. The essential point of difference is a large, strategic and uniquely positioned landholding, on the cusp of ground-breaking change that celebrates where Brisbane connects with the world.

Cathryn Chatburn is Practice Director, Masterplanning, Design and Planning at AECOM, and can be contacted at [Cathryn.Chatburn@aecom.com](mailto:Cathryn.Chatburn@aecom.com)

# Shaping the Gold Coast – our evolving coastal metropolis

Toby Lodge

A delivery and operating consortium for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit (GCRT) project has now been appointed. To harness one of the most significant committed public transport projects in the country, the Gold Coast City Council commissioned the GCRT Corridor Study to help maximise city wide economic, lifestyle and sustainability benefits.

The study aims to establish a shared vision and growth framework for this linear 2,000 hectares of the city's most intensively populated and developed areas, including the iconic coastal strip and Surfers Paradise. The evolving shape of this area will define the image of the Gold Coast into the future and provide significant opportunities for sustainable infill development, underpinned by a world class public transport system.

Working closely with the Gold Coast City Council, the Hassell led team went beyond the traditional land use and urban design framework approach now typical to transport corridor planning. Critical questions were raised about the future urban structure, building form, planning controls and underpinning economic base of the city.

## Polycentric form and network city structure

The polycentric form of the Gold Coast was seen as one of its greatest assets. Combined with a strong linear concentration of activities along the coast line, the city's form offers particular opportunities for a highly effective public transport system linking centres and widespread opportunities for Transit Orientated Development. A latent 'network city' structure was contemplated to provide opportunities for compact urban living areas to

be linked by rapid public transport to clusters of specialist economic activity, adding depth and diversity to the regional economy and enhancing accessibility across the city.

The study raises questions about the popular image of the Gold Coast as a high rise city, and explores opportunities to encourage more compact and affordable buildings. With typical building forms polarised at the high-rise and low-rise end of the spectrum, the team felt compelled to explore new building typologies that could promote greater diversity and accommodate growth without increasing heights. A speculative demonstration project was completed to explore the potential of the missing typology – the 'subtropical mid-rise tower'.

## 'Built form' futures

Several corridor-wide 'built form futures' were modelled to stimulate discussion in stakeholder sessions. The team was challenged to explore ways to adjust planning and market settings to reduce the risk of excessive 'tower crowding' and its impact on views, micro climate, shadowing and liveability. Opportunities were explored to boost plot ratios while reviewing allowable heights – a combination of measures that could see medium-rise typologies increase in popularity through reduced construction costs, lower price points and a wider target market.

The study wrestles with the considerable challenge of integrating a transit system into the living urban environment and, as you would expect, contemplates radically different responses in each location as dictated by local context and circumstance.

While the project brief and methodology placed design at the heart of the process, a wider team of collaborators provided strategic

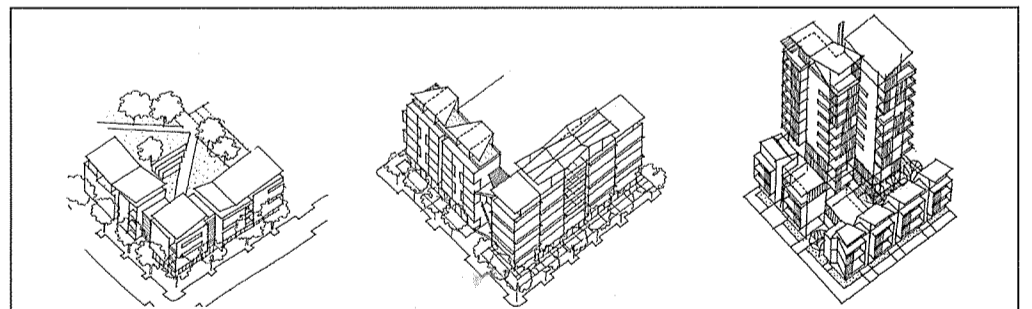


▲ Sub-tropical tower

economic and market advice (MacroPlan) and planning scheme implementation advice (John Gaskell Planning Consultants). The latest corridor access and mobility planning tools were imported from Europe by Aurecon and adapted to the Australian context to inform

public realm priority action plans to support access to the rapid transit system.

Toby Lodge MPiA CPP is Senior Associate at Hassell, and can be contacted at [tlodge@hassellstudio.com](mailto:tlodge@hassellstudio.com)



▲ Tower forms

# Good design case studies inspire at Melbourne Open House

Amanda Millis

Celebrating its fourth year, Melbourne Open House provided the public with a free and rare opportunity to explore some of Melbourne's cherished buildings and landmarks. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) co-hosted the popular Melbourne Open House Speaker Series with an evening of informative and stimulating discussion about Melbourne's built environment.

The Speaker Series provides architects with the opportunity to discuss the design process that has led to the built form we experience today. It also gives the public a valuable insight into the design process and a greater

ability to critique buildings and the city within an architectural context.

Held in the iconic Capitol Theatre in Melbourne, DPCD presented 'Good Design Case Studies', which provided attendees with the chance to hear from some of our greatest architects and designers about their ideas and inspirations. The 'Good Design Case Studies' are examples of residential developments that illustrate quality design solutions in established areas.

DPCD's Urban Design Unit, with Heritage Victoria and the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, identified 12 case studies as examples of promoting good building design of inner-city residential regeneration. The focus is on buildings

addressing their context, rather than award-winning architecture.

This event proved hugely successful attracting a crowd of 577 residents, visitors, design buffs, architecture fans – absolutely anyone who loves Melbourne!

Melbourne Open House's Associate Director Tim Leslie introduced the session, which was moderated by Larry Parsons, Acting Director of DPCD's Urban Design Unit. We acknowledge the expert participation of Kerstin Thompson (Kerstin Thompson Architects), Clare McAllister and Karen Alcock (MA Architects formerly Neometro), George Metaxas (Metaxas Architects), Karl Fender (Fender Katsalidis Architects), Eli Giannini (McGauran Giannini

Soon Architects), Luke Middleton (EME Design) and Robert Stent (Hayball Architects).

You can view the Good Design Case Studies at: [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/urbandesign/gooddesign](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/urbandesign/gooddesign).

Further case studies will continue to be added, including case studies in regional Victoria. Melbourne Open House is an initiative of the Committee for Melbourne and was part of the 2011 State of Design Festival, in July. [www.moh.org.au](http://www.moh.org.au) [www.openhouseworldwide.org](http://www.openhouseworldwide.org)

Amanda Millis is in the Urban Design Unit, Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development and can be contacted at [amanda.millis@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:amanda.millis@dpcd.vic.gov.au)

# After the Fire – the rebuilding of the Callignee Community Hub

Steve Thorne

Callignee is a small community located in the hills approximately 20km south of Traralgon, Victoria. This once beautiful village was devastated by the fires which swept through Victoria on 'Black Saturday', the 9 February 2009. 80% of the buildings were lost with 11 lives on that terrible Saturday. The Callignee Community Hall, the former primary school and the CFA shed were amongst the buildings destroyed.

Soon after the fire, the former Premier of Victoria, the Hon. John Brumby, visited Callignee and promised support to rebuild these community facilities. The La Trobe Council was tasked with delivering that promise, and called for designers to respond. After a short tender process, a combined team of architects and urban designers from Design Urban and Blomquist and Wark were appointed by the Council to begin the design of a new community hub.

The Hall had been located on Crown land on the Old Callignee Road, near the Callignee oval which was used by the Callignee and Traralgon South (CATS) cricket club. (This small oval boasts a record 525 runs scored in a 40 over innings) The hall had been well utilised by



▲ Former Victorian Premier, Hon John Brumby inspects the destroyed Callignee Hall

other groups including the CFA, the CWA, the local playgroup, and by the general public.

The design team decided that the most effective approach would be to take the design process to the community. Many displaced members of the community were in temporary accommodation in Traralgon and surrounding villages, while some remained in their fire-damaged homes. Steve Thorne and Peter Schreuder, along with Damian Blackford from La Trobe City Council, set up a design studio in the South Traralgon community hall and, after an initial community meeting, the studio was thrown open for groups and individuals to engage directly with the designers.

The brief from the Council could not have been simpler. Designers were asked to 'listen to the community and give them what they ask for'. A list of requirements was drawn up through consultation. These related to the future location of the hall, the character of the hall and any "amazing feature" people could dream about having in a future community hall.

The design team was keen to relocate the busy logging truck road which cut the oval off from the old hall location. The safety of children using the hall and running across to the oval prompted this avenue of discussion. This proved a popular suggestion and several on-site visits to find a new road alignment were undertaken and finalised. This was not without controversy as different groups had differing views on the eventual alignment.

## Building composition and design

The composition of the buildings into a campus layout rather than one large building proved to be less contentious. The designers felt that designing buildings with modest spans would enable more local contractors to take on the work. This approach was supported by the community. The vexed issue of the building's appearance was debated long and hard. The Council and the designers favoured a more contemporary building, while the community



▲ Sketch of the final Community Hub layout adjacent to the Callignee Oval

members were set on a more traditional building appearance. The compromise was to design simple prismatic traditional forms and detail these in a contemporary manner. The buildings were then arranged around courtyards and the oval in order to create external spaces which had a clear relationship with the interior volumes and spaces. The buildings were located to ensure that open spaces under surviving oak trees formed outside "rooms" which could be used for community festivals, markets, etc.

After a week with the community, a final meeting was held to 'sign off' on the design. This proved to be optimistic as some community members expressed anger that the community building was going ahead before proper assistance had been delivered for those without homes. A disrupted meeting was finally abandoned as a minority group of two were unable to accept the proposed building

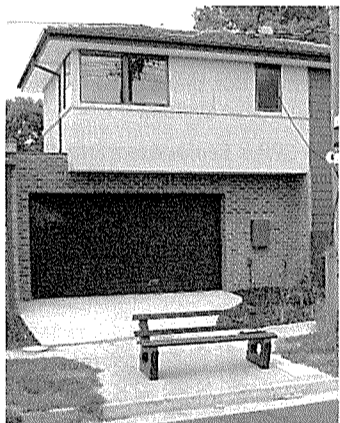
program. Later meetings resolved these issues and the design was finalised. The building is now complete.

The final design became a set of drawings which were 'owned' by all parties. The process of relocating the design process to Traralgon South, and carefully listening to people who had come through a traumatic experience proved to be successful in the sense that the local community now feel a sense of ownership of the design. Much debate and discussion was involved, however in the end the user groups and community members were able to agree through a process of interaction with the designers. Design became the vehicle for discussion, testing and finally of agreement.

Steve Thorne is Director of Design Urban Pty Ltd and can be contacted at [designurban@i.net.au](mailto:designurban@i.net.au)

## Integrated planning and urban design?

'So what's happened here? Has the unit been built with the driveway on a bus stop, or has the Bayside Council put a bus stop in somebody's driveway? Well, as we understand it, the driveway was built to this house in Park Road, Cheltenham, but that didn't impress the council because it interfered with a bus stop, so to make a point, they plonked this



seat right where it now sits.' (Item by Steve Perkin, Herald Sun, spotted by Steve Ingruille. Photo: courtesy Herald Sun)

## Climate change, peak oil, or putting a price on carbon?

Sometimes the messages are very confusing. (Photo spotted by Anthony.Overmars@moi-p.com, Lighter Footprints group, Melbourne.)

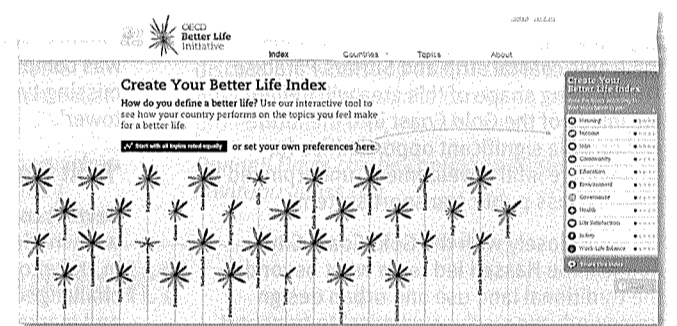


## Create your better life index

For decades, economists have measured performance of nations and economies through GDP, GDP growth or GDP per capita - and for decades as well, economists have called for measurements that go beyond GDP!

With support of national statistical offices, economists and its own reputable research resources, the OECD has created an index integrating 11 dimensions: housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety and work life balance.

It is an interactive tool to make rankings unique. The OECD has not assigned weights to any of those dimensions (and that's where the fun comes!). The user can set their own preferences. Then, you can display countries by alphabetical order or by rank. The index currently covers all 34 OECD countries and emerging countries may be added as soon



as national statistics allow. They also plan to include sustainability measurements in the index, as statistical gaps will be filled in locally.

You can discover this "beyond GDP" approach by yourself, and have fun playing with the OECD interactive web tool at [www.oecd.org/document/63/0,3746,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_47912639\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/63/0,3746,en_2649_201185_47912639_1_1_1_1_00.html) (it apparently works better with Mozilla than MS Internet Explorer).

## Conferences, etc

### 4th International Urban Design Conference

22-23 September 2011 Surfers Paradise, Queensland

The conference will be held at Surfers Paradise Marriot Resort and Spa. To register visit the conference website [www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au/registration.html](http://www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au/registration.html)

### New Urbanism and Smart Transport 2011

26-27 September 2011 Perth WA

This NUST 2011 International Conference is one of the leading International Conferences and organised with the strong support of the Western Australia government. This is a practitioner level conference and delegates will gain information that they can implement immediately. For more information see [www.newurbanism-smarttransport.com/registration](http://www.newurbanism-smarttransport.com/registration)

### Walk21

3-5 October 2011 Vancouver, Canada

The Walk21 Metro Vancouver partnership of community groups, health authorities, universities and governments is proud to present an international conference to discuss how car dependent communities around the world can take the next steps beyond the automobile city. Participants are invited to follow their heads, their hearts and their hands, and vote with their feet by contributing, and you need to take action ASAP. For updates and details about the conference visit [www.walk21.com/vancouver](http://www.walk21.com/vancouver), or contact [vancouver2011@walk21.com](mailto:vancouver2011@walk21.com)

### State of Australian Cities Conference

29 November – 2 December, 2011

This conference will seek ways of bridging the divides created by a focus on disciplinary-based approaches to research, towards better cities in a better country. The Conference Committee invites you to submit an abstract

ASAP in the following themes: Governance, Environment, Economy, Social, and Infrastructure. For more information and to submit an extract see [www.soac2011.com.au](http://www.soac2011.com.au)

### 49th International Making Cities Livable Conference

Portland, Oregon, USA, 20-24 May, 2012.

This conference, Planning healthy communities for all, will examine the evidence, look at the best strategies, planning and design solutions, and focus on ways we can reshape the built environment to increase physical and social health and well-being for all. [www.livablecities.org](http://www.livablecities.org)

### Green6 International Conference

Cambridge, UK, 3-6 July 2012

Papers are invited in a range of themes in the field of Sustainability Issues in the Built Environment and Construction Materials Technology. The deadline for abstract submissions is 30 September 2011. For more information see [www.anglia.ac.uk/GREEN6](http://www.anglia.ac.uk/GREEN6)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Urban Design Forum* is published for information and interest by Urban Design Forum Incorporated. The views are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of organisations with which they are associated.

**Sponsorship:** Thanks to the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development and Melbourne City Council for their continuing support.  
**Word processing, layout and printing:** New Litho, Surrey Hills, Victoria

**Distribution:** This edition is distributed by the Planning Institute of Australia, by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, and to various other interested people in Australia, New Zealand and across the World.

**Web:** A new consultant register and an increasing range of related information is available at [www.udf.org.au](http://www.udf.org.au)

**Co-ordinating Editor:** Bill Chandler

**Contributions for UDF 95 DEADLINE:** 10 November 2011  
Send to: Bill Chandler Email: [wchandler@bigpond.com](mailto:wchandler@bigpond.com)

ISSN 1030-990X

