
From: Jaime Parsons
Sent: Friday, 12 August 2011 12:44
To: Our Cities
Subject: Feedback on 'Creating Places for People and urban design protocol for Australian cities'
Attachments: UrbanDesignProtocol-AU_CommentsJP.pdf

To whom it may concern,

As my signature indicates I am the Urban Designer at Cardinia Shire Council. Cardinia Shire is the last of the southeast Melbourne metropolitan councils. It is a large council, over 1000 Km², that has many different human and natural environments. It is a Council where significant change and growth is occurring as part of it has been identified as a growth corridor, where as the rest of the townships in the Council remain rural in nature. In conclusion I am quite familiar in dealing with the impacts of larger scale change in a greenfield setting.

Firstly I would like to show my support for the initiative and believe that the goals and intentions are good, and I realise that achieving any level of consensus on such a general and overarching document is difficult.

The most important issue I have with the document overall is that if it is to be the base for an "agreement between each of the States and Territories to undertake reforms in our capital city strategic planning systems" (page 3) it should be a strong tool of advocacy that is directed in language, tone and scope to non designers, many of which are the actual decision makers. I believe the following quote from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol is very permit in this case:

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 New Zealand'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 central government, the development of resources to support its implementation, and raising awareness across New Zealand of the value of quality urban design. (source: Urban Design Protocol, 2005)

Despite the differences, and these are noticeable, between New Zealand and Australia the above paragraph should be always in the mind of those that attempt to create such a document. As it stands the Protocol is more of a diagrammatic clarification of urban design per se, goals and externalities that influence it and should be influenced by it.

I am aware that this document is just a starting point and that further work, on subsequent related documents, will occur but in my opinion it does not achieve one of its fundamental goals as it does not showcase the concrete, backed by evidence and research, benefits of urban design and what actions need to occur to increase the awareness, quality and integration of urban design in our cities and towns.

I have included, attached to this e-mail, more particular comments on specific parts of the document; feel free to capture these and use them if you so wish (if you can understand my hand writing). They are secondary to the arguments above and are critiques, comments and minor suggestions.

<<UrbanDesignProtocol-AU_CommentsJP.pdf>>

P.S., please note that my response is a personal response and not the response of the Council.

Sincerely yours,

Jaime Parsons | Urban Designer | Cardinia Shire Council

