PLANNING PERSPECTIVES

FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A READER IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Published in 2010 by
Fremantle Press
in association with
The School of Built Environment
Curtin University, Western Australia

PO Box158 North Fremantle, Western Australia 6150
www.fremantlepress.com.au

Editor Janet Blagg
Designer Ally Crimp
Printed by South Wind Productions, Singapore

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Title: Planning perspectives from Western Australia : a reader in theory and practice / editors, Ian Alexander, Shane Greive, David Hedgcock.
ISBN: 9781921361821 (pbk.)
Notes: Bibliography.
Subjects: City planning--Western Australia.
Regional planning--Western Australia.
Other Authors/Contributors:
Alexander, Ian.
Greive, Shane.
Hedgcock, David.

Dewey Number: 307.1209941

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11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING FOR PERTH: A CATCHWEIGHT CONTEST OR A PRIZE FIGHT?

ROY JONES

In 1969 the Redcliffe-Maud Royal Commission (Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1969) recommended sweeping changes to the local government system that the British government subsequently carried out. Counties (shires) that had existed since the Anglo-Saxon period were abolished, combined or restructured; overarching regional councils were established for the country's major metropolitan regions, such as Merseyside (Liverpool) and West Yorkshire (Leeds/Bradford); and large, relatively uniform local authorities were established, centred on the more important sub-regional centres within these metropolitan regions. Overall, 'a clumsy, outdated system which could only have been produced by a long historical process and by a people who prefer patching old machines to devising new models' (Mackintosh 1968: 29) was turned upside down. In the midst of this ferment, I moved from Tyneside in England to Perth in Western Australia.

Since I was moving from an old and, at that time, declining industrial metropolis to a young, rapidly growing city that was going through an economic and demographic boom fuelled by Japan's growing demand for iron ore, I had expected Perth's planning and administrative structures to be anything but clumsy, outdated and tied to the historical conditions of long ago. In terms of Perth's metropolitan planning processes, this was certainly the case. After only 15 years, the Stephenson-Hepburn metropolitan plan of 1955 (Stephenson and Hepburn 1955) was being replaced by the Corridor Plan (Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority 1970) which was strongly focused on addressing the challenges of Perth's (then, as now) explosive growth. However, I found to my surprise that the local government pattern of the metropolitan region had changed little since 1900 and was clearly not 'related to the areas over which people live their lives' (Lloyd Jones 1972: 30). In Jones (1979) I attempted to describe how this pattern of local government had come about and why it had changed so little over three-quarters of a century even though Perth's population had grown almost tenfold from 73,000 in 1900 to over 700,000 in 1971.

I revisit this issue here and reflect on why the few local government boundary changes enacted since the 1970s have, if anything, produced a move back towards the 1900 situation rather than towards the 21st century. But my main aim in this chapter is to consider the political and social tensions that result from the need for (and periodic lack of) cooperation between Perth's diverse and spatially anachronistic local authorities and the inevitably forward looking, state government based regional planning authorities in devising and, more importantly, in implementing metropolitan planning strategies for the maximum benefit of the more than one and half million people who now

inhabit the Perth metropolitan area. An underlying theme of the chapter is therefore intergovernmental relations. More specifically, it considers how (or even whether), in the context of this large, dynamic and diverse city, planning can contribute to the utilitarian ideal of the 'the greatest good for the greatest number' (Mill 1962). This is an intergovernmental relations issue because the local interests of some sections of the population will often clash with wider metropolitan priorities. In more concrete terms, someone will inevitably end up living next to the airport, the freeway or the football ground. In such circumstances the quality of life of the local few is compromised to suit the needs of the metropolitan many.

In the case of metropolitan Perth, it is possible to consider these intergovernmental and planning relations on a number of levels. The Western Australian state government devises and, on a broad scale, implements the metropolitan plans for Perth — or, as is the case with the current Network City strategy (Western Australian Planning Commission 2004), for both metropolitan Perth and the adjoining Peel region. But the state serves a Western Australia wide constituency and there is no democratically elected tier of government for the Perth metropolitan region as is the case in (for example) greater Brisbane or greater London. The state government and its planners can therefore be portrayed as remote from and even uncaring of the people of Perth and its suburbs. On the other hand, detailed and local formulation and implementation of the plans for the Perth metropolitan area are the responsibility of some thirty local government authorities (shires, town and cities). These vary in size from Peppermint Grove with less than 2000 inhabitants to Stirling with closer to 200,000. The larger local authorities, like the state government, may well be more responsive to wider regional and sub-regional concerns than to the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the many individual localities and neighbourhoods within their boundaries and, even within the smallest authorities, disagreements over planning initiatives can surface between inhabitants of the same suburb and even the same street. The interests of the state and the local authorities may therefore clash on various planning issues and, in some cases, neither will appear to represent specific local communities or interest groups.

The inhabitants of Perth are therefore represented by two levels of government, the state and their local authority, both of which have (overlapping) planning responsibilities. But the boundaries of neither of these entities are likely to coincide with areas that people perceive as their activity space (the parts of the metropolitan area where they live, work, shop and access educational, health, recreational and other services — Lloyd Jones's 'areas over which people live their lives') or with what they perceive to be their neighbourhood or home area, that is, with the two scales at which metropolitan and local plans, respectively, should be devised. This situation is further complicated by the fact that, in order to satisfy their aspirations in an equally ideal world,

these same inhabitants are likely to seek the conflicting ends of superior access to superior employment and services (i.e. change) at the metropolitan level and the preservation of their existing quality of life (i.e. stability) at the local level, thus setting up an inherent conflict between the aims of metropolitan and local planning.

This chapter cannot solve this dilemma or resolve these paradoxes. Instead it will describe how and why Perth's local government mosaic has evolved – or stagnated – in the way that it has, as it traces the development of Perth's metropolitan planning system, concentrating on the influences of local governments on the development and implementation of the various metropolitan planning strategies and considers some current and recent examples of conflict and disputation between metropolitan plans and planners on the one hand and local authorities and communities on the other.

The Development of Perth's Local Government Pattern

The 1838 *Towns Improvement Act* authorised the establishment of town and country trusts, which were meant to undertake local public works and particularly the construction of local roads and bridges. But, for much of the colonial period, Western Australia's population was far too small, scattered and poverty stricken to sustain a tier of government below that of the colony. Even the Perth Town Trust, at its first meeting in 1842, had a bank balance of little more than £20. The country road trusts were even less viable and all responsibility for roadworks outside the towns reverted to the Colonial Governor in 1849. In terms of the contemporary metropolitan region, this covered all the land outside the immediate town sites of Perth, Fremantle and Guildford.

Perth was granted city status in 1856, but there was no further development of local government until the Municipalities and Road Districts Acts were passed by the colonial parliament in 1871. The town trusts became municipalities and were required to provide cultural and recreational facilities (parks, libraries etc.) as well as roads, and to levy rates to pay for these services. The country trust areas had very small populations. Their responsibilities were still limited to the maintenance of roads, bridges and drainage works and their finance came largely from (colonial) government grants. The three isolated town sites of Perth (a city), Fremantle and Guildford had municipal status, with the bush and farmland surrounding them being allocated to the road districts of Perth, Swan, Canning and Fremantle.

This relatively simple local government pattern remained largely in place until the gold rush of the 1890s (Berry 1992). At that point the Perth region's population exploded, growing from 20,000 in 1890 to 73,000 in 1900. As new suburbs were established in the various road districts, and particularly

along the new railway lines from Perth to Fremantle, Midland and Armadale (Selwood 1979), there was 'every incentive to agitate for a separate board for each little centre of development that grew up' (White 1954: 7). The main incentive was money. Any little centre of development that became a separate road board or municipality became a lobby group that could then seek colonial funds. In 1898 the Municipality of Victoria Park was receiving over £3 from the colony for every pound that it raised in rates (*Government Gazette* 18 November 1898: 3386). Around the turn of the 20th century, therefore, twenty or so small local authorities were established, mainly in what are now the inner suburbs of the metropolitan region. This entirely atypical period of administrative dynamism provided the basis for a local government pattern that, as Tables 1 and 2 indicate, has essentially survived to the present day.

City	**Perth**	**27,553**
Municipalities	Claremont	2,014
	Fremantle	14,708
	Fremantle, East	2,494
	Fremantle, North	3,246
	Guildford	1,459
	Helena Vale	1,568
	Leederville	2,546
	Subiaco	3,004
	Victoria Park	1,267
Road Districts	Bayswater	900
	Belmont	600
	Buckland Hill (1902)	1,500
	Canning	850
	Cottesloe	1,274
	Claremont	500
	Darling Range	1,400
	Jandakot	170
	Kelmscott (1903)	530
	Peppermint Grove	532
	Perth (1903)	410
	Perth, South (1903)	947
	Perth, North	1,000
	Rockingham	250
	Swan	5,000

Table 1 Population of Perth Metropolitan Local Government Areas 1900 (Statistical Register of Western Australia 1900 ff)

Cities	Armadale	53,445
	Bayswater	59,100
	Belmont	32,542
	Canning	83,006
	Cockburn	80,921
	Fremantle	26,777
	Gosnells	97,408
	Joondalup	157,203
	Melville	99,713
	Nedlands	21,852
	Perth	13,486
	Rockingham	91,702
	South Perth	41,572
	Stirling	189,083
	Subiaco	17,835
	Swan	100,593
	Wanneroo	124,887
Towns	Bassendean	14,218
	Cambridge	25,400
	Claremont	9,535
	Cottesloe	7,888
	East Fremantle	7,079
	Kwinana	25,109
	Mosman Park	8,894
	Victoria Park	30,149
	Vincent	30,117
Shires	Kalamunda	52,360
	Mundaring	37,039
	Peppermint Grove	1,662
	Serpentine-Jarrahdale	14,194

Table 2 Population of Perth Metropolitan Local Government Areas 2007
(ABS 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia 2006–07. Accessed 27/08/2008)

The reasons why the local government map of metropolitan Perth has largely remained fossilised in its turn of the century configuration – even though the population of the area has increased by more than 2000 per cent and the nature of the city has been completely transformed – are as mercenary and pragmatic as were those which produced that early and brief burst of

change. Over the course of the 20th century, a series of legislative changes removed the differentials between municipalities and road districts, increased the powers and responsibilities of local authorities (to include public health, local planning, social welfare and many other services) and required them to depend on their own resources – notably rates – for much of their revenue. In these circumstances, new suburbs would lose, rather than gain, by attaining local autonomy during their expensive early years of development.

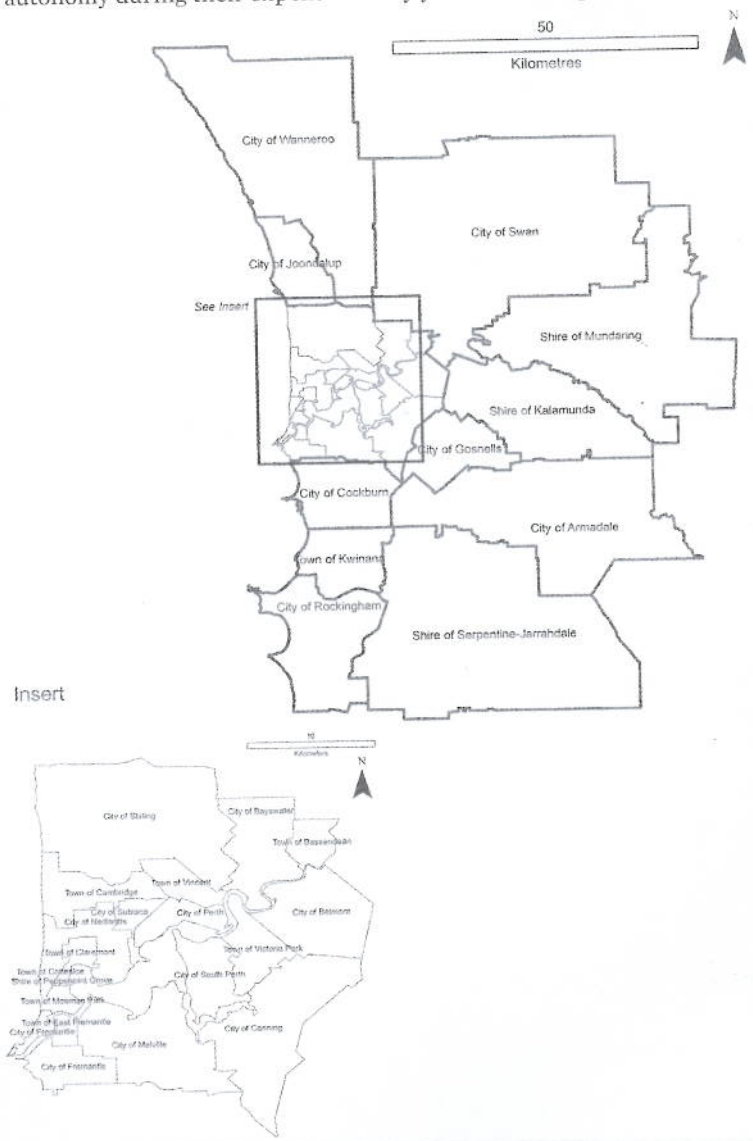

Figure 1 Local Government areas 2008

As Figure 1 and Table 1 indicate, this has produced a somewhat schizophrenic pattern of small (in area and population) local authorities in the older, inner suburbs and increasingly larger (certainly in area and frequently in population) local authorities in the newer, outer suburbs. These anomalies have long been apparent and concerns were soon expressed that some of the smallest councils lacked the resources and the skills to carry out their growing responsibilities. As early as 1910, Greater Perth and Greater Fremantle movements sought to

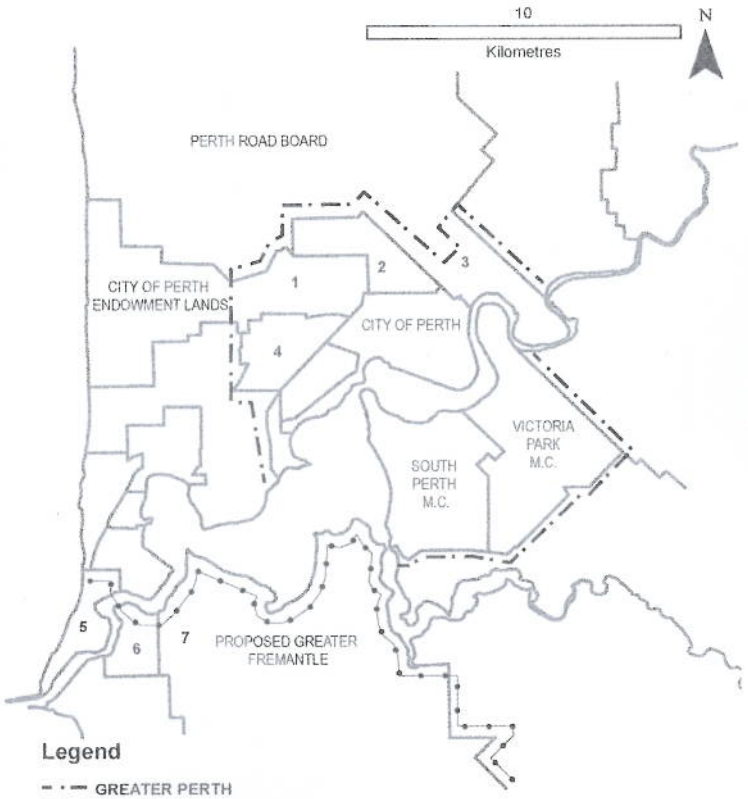

Figure 2 Greater Perth and Greater Fremantle proposals 1910 (after Johns 1950)

incorporate some of the smallest suburban authorities with these major centres (Johns 1950). These initiatives met with partial success. The largely working class municipalities of North Fremantle, North Perth, Leederville and Victoria Park merged with their larger neighbours, while relatively more affluent East Fremantle, Subiaco and South Perth remained independent (see Figure 2).

Partial though they were, these early moves towards reform and rationalisation were far more successful than have been many more recent attempts. The 1930 Town Planning Commission Report noted that a consolidation of the smaller metropolitan authorities might 'ultimately' become necessary. But it was not until Perth's growth began to accelerate and the first metropolitan plan (Stephenson and Hepburn 1955) was being formulated that proposals for rationalisation began to appear. White's (1954) report to the Minister of Local Government was followed by the Local Government Assessment Committee's 1968 report, the Local Government Boundaries Commission's 1972 report, the 1974 Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan District Boundaries, the 2006 Local Government Advisory Board's report and the consultative amalgamation process instigated by the state government in February 2009. The 2009 process is ongoing at the time of writing (May 2009) but the recommendations of all of the earlier reports were relatively conservative, certainly in comparison with the actual restructurings of local government areas that have occurred recently in other state capitals such as Melbourne and Adelaide.

Today, therefore, the boundaries of its cities, towns and shires frequently cut across Perth's patterns of formal (neighbourhood) and functional (activity) regions and this lessens their effectiveness as planning units. The western suburbs triangle from Subiaco to City Beach to Mosman Park constitutes a formal region insofar as it is a primarily residential, predominantly wealthy area. But it is currently divided into seven very small council areas and all these councils vigorously opposed the 2006 amalgamation proposals. Much of the functional region of the north-west corridor was contained within the Wanneroo local authority, but this region was so large and fast growing that it was seen as being beyond the capacity of a single council to deal with and the area was divided into two by the creation of the City of Joondalup. But it is perhaps the history of the City of Perth that provides the most insight into the challenges of drawing up widely acceptable local government boundaries.

In the early 20th century, the amalgamation of Perth, North Perth, Leederville and Victoria Park was seen as the partially successful creation of both a formal region (in that it was meant to encompass Perth and virtually all the adjoining built up areas) and a functional region (since the population of this area depended on central Perth for much of its employment and at least for higher order services). It was to provide a basis for integrated planning across what

was then a small city (if not metropolitan) region, physically separate from such centres as Fremantle and Midland. By the late 20th century, however, tensions were developing on the Perth council between the commercial interests of those in the city centre and the predominantly residential and suburban interests of the surrounding areas. In 1994 the state government decided to resolve these problems by once again separating the city centre (now predominantly a commercial area) and re-establishing separate councils (the towns of Cambridge, Vincent and Victoria Park) in the surrounding suburbs.

In these circumstances, it was perhaps unsurprising that the modest suggestions to amalgamate the small western suburbs councils (Subiaco, Nedlands, Claremont, Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove, Mosman Park and Cambridge), or to bring about two-council mergers (e.g. Bayswater and Bassendean, Fremantle and East Fremantle) have been vehemently and consistently opposed both by the smaller councils which saw themselves as being swallowed by their larger neighbours and by many of their local residents. Indeed, following the release of the most recent report, Parker (2006: 10) predicted that 'the state government will require an exceptional amount of political will to take on the vested interests in local government and turn the report's recommendations into reality.' Both the Kennett government in Victoria and the Beattie government in Queensland reformed and modernised the local government maps of their states, but no Western Australian government has yet demonstrated such will and the government therefore still has to implement its metropolitan strategies in concert with thirty local authorities, most, if not all, of which will have very different planning agendas from the state and from each other.

Catchweight Contests over Metropolitan Strategies

The Metropolitan Town Planning Commission was established in 1928 and produced a report in 1930 setting out guidelines and principles for the development of the Perth metropolitan area over the next half century (Stokes & Hill 1992). However, the onset of first the Depression and then World War Two ensured that state and local governments continued to deal with planning and development issues in an ad hoc manner for much of the succeeding two decades. It was not until conditions stabilised and economic and population growth resumed that, in 1952, the state government invited Professor Gordon Stephenson from Liverpool University to devise a metropolitan plan for the Perth and Fremantle region. Stephenson and Town Planning Commissioner Alistair Hepburn presented their plan to state parliament in 1955 and this became the basis for the 1963 Metropolitan Regional Scheme which set out broad land use and transport infrastructure guidelines for whole of the metropolitan area.

The Stephenson-Hepburn Plan was extremely accurate in its population growth forecasts of one million by 1984 and 1.4 million by 2000 (Satterley 2008).

It was relatively conservative in its proposals for incremental and peripheral suburban growth, though it did recommend major industrial expansion in and around Kwinana to the south-west. It was therefore not surprising that, although 'following considerable consultation, many modifications in detail were made to the scheme' (Stokes & Hill 1992: 117), it did not appear to precipitate any major disputes between local and state governments with regard to the implementation of the plan or, more specifically, of the scheme.

The same could not be said for its successor, the 1970 Corridor Plan. As the 1960s progressed and the impact of the Japanese-fuelled iron ore boom increased, so did the speed of Perth's population growth. The Corridor Plan's projections brought forward the date for Perth's population to reach 1.4 million from 2000 to 1989 and adopted more radical prescriptions to deal with this growth. It proposed four transport-related growth corridors extending north-west, south-west, east and south-east, with the development of major outer suburban centres at Joondalup, Rockingham, Midland and Armadale to serve what it expected to be the corridors' growing populations. These proposals for spatially selective urban expansion inevitably produced a pattern of potential local government winners (along the corridors, and particularly where the corridor centres were to be located) and losers (elsewhere in the metropolitan region). A further problem for the Corridor Plan was that its growth forecasts proved overly optimistic. Only half of the 700,000 population growth projected for Perth over the period 1970–1989 actually eventuated.

This growth slowdown meant that suburbanisation did not extend outwards along the corridors as rapidly as the Corridor Plan had envisaged. Population build up in the corridors was therefore insufficient to support the rapid expansion of the four designated corridor centres. In these circumstances a number of local authorities in the middle ring of suburbia allowed massive expansion of some local or subregional shopping centres, notably at Innaloo-Osborne Park, Morley, Cannington (Carousel) and Booragoon (Garden City) (Yiftachel & Kenworthy 1992), an expansion which provided increased rate income to the local authorities in which these centres were located, but which brought increased competition for (and drained investment from) the state government-designated corridor centres further out.

These shortcomings and conflicts were acknowledged in the 1987 Report of the Review Group of the State Planning Commission (State Planning Commission 1987) and its 'preferred strategy' for the future took a very different form. This report took account of several factors, including lowered growth forecasts, declines in average household size and increased environmental concerns over urban sprawl and car dependency, and advocated an emphasis on the middle ring of suburbs that had been largely overlooked in the Corridor Plan. It reduced the emphasis on outward corridor-based growth and advocated

an increase in medium density housing in the inner and middle suburbs. The contemporary retailing reality was partially acknowledged with the designation of Innaloo-Osborne Park and Cannington-Carousel as 'major regional centres' and the further addition of Morley to this category when the report's preferred strategy was formally adopted as Metroplan (Department of Planning and Urban Development, 1990). The entire middle ring of suburbs was designated as an 'employment growth area' and 'priority regional road proposals' were put forward to develop Reid, Tonkin and Roe Highways into a ring road system.

This renewed state government interest in the middle and inner suburbs was not entirely welcomed by the local authorities, or by many of the inhabitants of these areas. In a number of cases, local councils and local interest groups resisted proposals to raise residential densities in hitherto quarter-acre block suburbs. Furthermore, some of the major road proposals, notably the Fremantle eastern bypass and the westernmost extension of the Roe Highway were strongly and successfully opposed both by Fremantle City Council and by several local and environmental interest groups.

With the experience of this history, the most recent metropolitan strategy, Network City (Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) 2004), changed direction in two ways. First, in terms of its proposals, it offers a more general 'spatial framework' rather than a definite land use and transport plan, and a set of eight 'fundamental principles against which all regional policies are to be tested' (WAPC 2005: 2) rather than 'a detailed master plan, which simply needs to be implemented' (WAPC 2005: 1). Second, in terms of process, the strategy is claimed to be a 'community plan' which emerged from a 'ground-breaking Dialogue with the City' (see Hopkins, Chapter 10). It is therefore an attempt to involve or, in more cynical terms, to coopt local authorities and interest groups in the development and ownership of the strategy in an effort to preclude some of the problems and conflicts that have characterised the state government's attempts to implement previous metropolitan strategies. Whether the government will succeed on this occasion remains to be seen. In its statement on the responses to its call for public comments on the Network City document (WAPC 2005), it notes that over 75 per cent of the 2350 comments received were supportive. However local authorities in both the inner/middle and the outer areas of the metropolitan region have given Network City only 'moderate support'. It would seem there is still the potential for more fights around the prizes — and the penalties — that can accrue to local governments and local communities from Perth's continued urban development.

Prize Planning Fights

I can only include a few brief examples to illustrate the nature of these fights, but the inaugural Stephenson-Hepburn Oration, given by Eric Lumsden,

the Director-General of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure on 19 March 2008 at the University of Western Australia provides an excellent starting point. On the day of the oration, the *West Australian* newspaper published an editorial contending that 'Councils need to accept higher density'. Protesters from the local suburb of Dalkeith gathered at the entrance to the University Club and distributed copies of what they called a letter to the editor to the oration attendees. This flyer is reproduced below.

Letter to the Editor of the West Australian

A response to Wednesday's editorial
'Councils Need to Accept Higher Density'

It seems 'Higher Density by Infill' is the latest politically correct taboo. We are effectively told 'Accept it, don't question it.' The State Govt. as a significant property developer is cashing in on Infill. Local Govt. councils are lambasted if they don't immediately jump on the wagon — they are expected to enable the Govt's property development ideology while also representing the ratepayers!

People pay a lot of money for a home in a particular suburb because they like it the way it is. Then planners who live somewhere else tell them they have to accept more small blocks, battleaxes, traffic, tar & cement and less greenery. The residents are fully entitled to be upset. The slogan 'Local Democracy, not Planner Autocracy' will be heard.

An example of planner ignorance and insensitivity is the current attempt to impose five storey development on Dalkeith, a residential suburb of single dwellings, mostly on one level. Some residents have profited at the expense of their community by sub-dividing and bulldozing gracious character bungalows and trees. We need to protect and preserve specialist suburbs such as Peppermint Grove, Cottesloe, Dalkeith and Nedlands. There will always be people who are prepared to pay for a garden and a quarter acre.

Conversion of industrial land will achieve higher population density, but rezoning established suburbs won't. Infill is difficult and expensive because existing infrastructure is inadequate and in the way. In practice, one house accommodates just as many people as two or three townhouses.

We can develop satellite towns on green fields sites and around transport links like the Mandurah rail line. Here the land is cheap and infrastructure can be done properly. We can move towards Sydney and Melbourne levels of apartment living closer to the CBD. Our regions

> *can be supported by directing new settlement to NW towns nearer employment opportunities. We do have options. There is no need to destroy character suburbs by uncaring infill.*
>
> Flyer distributed outside the University (of Western Australia) Club on the occasion of the inaugural Stephenson-Hepburn Oration, 19 March 2008

I quote it in full because it illustrates many of the issues raised in this chapter. Its authors demand stability and preservation in their local neighbourhood ('they like it the way it is') even though they accept that this will necessitate more change elsewhere in the metropolitan region (e.g. more suburban development on green field sites along the Mandurah rail line). They hope that their local council will act as their representative and support them rather than 'jump on the (state government) wagon'. They acknowledge that, even within a single locality, residents will hold conflicting views on planning and urban development issues, with some supporting higher residential densities, perhaps for personal profit, and others opposing them. They perceive the state government planners as autocrats and outsiders, intruding on the democratic rights of 'locals'. Their concerns are reflected in many parts of the metropolitan region where local residents oppose the intensification of urban development in their neighbourhoods and seek the support of their local councils against such state government planning initiatives.

Some prize fights, however, are not between local and wider metropolitan interests. They can occur between different local authorities as they seek to ensure that any negative impacts of state government planning initiatives affect the residents of council areas other than their own. An example of this beggar-my-neighbour attitude is provided by one of the metropolitan area's longest-running planning controversies, the fate of the Fremantle eastern bypass. Its proposed route, as recorded on the Metropolitan Regional Scheme from the 1960s, passed through the Town of East Fremantle and the City of Fremantle. The bypass was intended to carry road traffic from Fremantle port to the remainder of the regional road network. The northern part of the bypass was constructed, largely through East Fremantle, in the 1970s. All major roads have negative environmental impacts on the areas through which they pass, but sections of this one were seen, perhaps because of the nature of their design, as being particularly damaging in social, environmental and aesthetic terms.

An opposition movement to the construction of the southern section of the bypass through the City of Fremantle developed during the 1980s. This movement was supported by residents of the land along the proposed route, by Fremantle City Council and by environmental groups with more general

objections to major road developments. By the 1990s this local dispute had become a party political issue at state level, with the Liberals supporting and Labor opposing bypass construction. Following a Labor victory and a change of government at the 2001 election, the southern part of the bypass was deleted from the Metropolitan Regional Scheme. The corollary of this has been that much of the traffic that the bypass was intended to carry still uses the existing road network. Much of this route, part of which the state government now proposes to upgrade and widen, is in the adjoining City of Melville. Therefore some residents of the City of Melville now experience the disadvantages of ongoing and increasing heavy traffic movements while the City of Fremantle has not only avoided this problem, but it is also able to benefit from the increased rate revenue which it will now be able to obtain from the development of hitherto frozen land along the bypass route.

I do not seek to discuss the merits of these road proposals as such. Rather, I wish to demonstrate how historic quirks of the local government map can influence metropolitan planning disputes. It is only to be expected that local authorities will argue for the welfare of those within their boundaries rather than for those beyond them. Yet, beginning with the Greater Fremantle proposals of a century ago and continuing through the recommendations of many of the more recent local government boundary reviews, the parts of Melville where the port access roads are now being upgraded were frequently recommended for inclusion in an enlarged City of Fremantle. It is merely hypothetical to wonder whether the bypass issue would have been resolved on its planning merits, rather than by more political means, had it not involved a win to one local council and a loss to another. But the more that the metropolitan area is fragmented into separate administrative units the greater is the potential for such inter-council disputes.

To complicate the picture further, it should be noted that Perth, like any other metropolitan region, contains areas of land that are not under the control of the local councils in which they are located. The planning implications of this can be relatively minor, such as the parking problems faced in summer by the City of Nedlands because large numbers of patrons seek to use the adjacent North Swanbourne nude bathing beach. (Because this is on army, and thus Commonwealth, land, state and local government regulations concerning clothing do not apply there.) However, when the state or Commonwealth governments do control land use, there is indeed a catchweight contest between them and the surrounding local authorities, who are essentially powerless to prevent what they might see as inappropriate developments taking place on their doorsteps. Recent controversies have included proposed major office developments on (state government controlled) Fremantle Port Authority land (Jones 2007) and a brickworks and other industrial proposals at (Commonwealth government controlled) Perth Airport. Such developments

are likely to have a significant impact on adjacent local government areas, aesthetically, environmentally or through the movement of people, traffic and goods. In these circumstances, local governments have little recourse and can but hope that the state or Commonwealth instrumentality will wish to be their good neighbour. Regrettably, this has seldom been the case in recent years. Even if the state and federal instrumentalities have not been corporatised, they are likely, under the (until recently) fashionable economic rationalist ideology, to be expected to extract the maximum economic returns from their landholdings. Such financial considerations are therefore likely to prevail over any negative externalities that might impact on surrounding communities and councils.

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Large metropolitan regions are inherently difficult to plan for and to administer. In large part this is because they are mosaics of formal, functional and administrative regions, all occurring at a range of scales. Formal (or uniform) regions are areas sharing one or more characteristics. The entire metropolitan area is a formal region that differs from the rest of the state in that it is more built up and has a higher population density. This area can then be further divided up into formal sub-regions on the basis of land use — residential, industrial, commercial/retailing, and so on. The residential sub-regions can then be subdivided on the basis of the socioeconomic characteristics of their population into individual neighbourhoods that may be predominantly old or young, rich or poor, characterised by concentrations of people sharing certain nationalities or ethnicities, and so on. Such neighbourhoods can develop collective senses of identity if most of the residents perceive their neighbours to be people 'like us' and thus they can become resistant to change since, as the distributors of the Dalkeith flyer observed, they like their neighbourhood as it is — a desire which has prompted some residents of this suburb to demand secession in the latest (2009) review of local government boundaries.

But cities are also divided into functional regions — into patterns of service centres, or what Network City calls 'activity centres', and their catchment areas. Again these occur at a range of scales. Perth itself is the main service and employment centre and many people commute from all parts of the metropolitan area, and even from the Peel region or Avon Valley to work in the city centre. But there are also a range of old (e.g. Midland) and new (e.g. Joondalup) sub-regional centres drawing workers, shoppers, hospital patients, students and recreationists from their surrounding areas and, beneath these again, more local service centres largely drawing their custom from their immediately surrounding suburbs. The interaction patterns thus created are neither neat nor simple. People may well live in one locality, work in another, shop in a third, recreate in a fourth and so on. Furthermore, the areas of the

city in which people live their lives may differ widely even between members of the same household. But, however complex these interaction patterns may become, it is the role of metropolitan strategies to facilitate them. Indeed, much metropolitan planning was traditionally seen as a planning exercise in land use and transportation. In spite of this, the planning strategies for Perth have also (and increasingly) sought to mitigate the environmental and social costs of excessive urban sprawl and private car travel. Both by facilitating travel and interaction (e.g. through the construction of roads and railways) and by attempting to limit travel's adverse effects (notably through encouraging increased housing densities), these metropolitan strategies have tended to change the character of many local neighbourhoods and this can frequently incur the resistance of local communities who perceive this as state government interference in their back yards.

Disagreements of this type between people and planners can be resolved (or not) in a variety of ways ranging from consultation exercises to legal contests and even violent protests but, in any democratic system, it is reasonable to expect that those levels of government with designated planning responsibilities would have a role to play in the process. It is the contention of this chapter that the complex and inconsistent nature of the current local government map of metropolitan Perth has the potential to work against both effective metropolitan planning and the effective resolution of disputes between local communities and the metropolitan planning authorities.

In intergovernmental terms, the peculiar history of general inertia and occasional change that has created Perth's local government map has contributed to a number of problems for Perth's metropolitan planners. First, the failure of successive state governments to act on the various proposals for local government rationalisation means that the metropolitan planners have to deal with and seek agreement and support from a large number of frequently small local councils. In population terms, these are smaller on average than those in any other mainland capital city. The smaller the size of the local authority, the more localised and thus the more distanced are its concerns from those of the metropolitan planners.

Second, the metropolitan planning authorities and therefore the metropolitan planners cannot claim to speak for or represent the people of metropolitan Perth with any degree of democratic entitlement. They are appointed and employed by the state government to plan for a dominant capital city which contains most of the state's population. In Western Australia, the state is unlikely to establish a metropolitan tier of government with a population almost as large as its own. Only in Queensland, where most of the state's population is located outside of metropolitan Brisbane, has a state government set up a single local authority to control its metropolitan area. Community

groups in Perth can therefore easily characterise the metropolitan planners as outsiders whose proposals for their local communities have scant democratic legitimacy.

Third, although this correlation is admittedly imperfect, in metropolitan Perth there is an increasingly close relationship between council population size and socioeconomic status. It is the inner zone of the metropolitan area which contains the smaller council units and, increasingly, this is becoming the city's high socioeconomic status zone. In the early 20th century, it was the working class councils such as Leederville, Victoria Park and North Fremantle that were merged with their larger neighbours, while more middle class areas such as East Fremantle and South Perth retained their local autonomy (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). In the late 20th century, as former working class areas in the inner suburbs went through a process of gentrification, some of these suburbs regained their local councils. This correlation is relevant because it is the more educated, affluent and articulate members of society who are best able to organise and to lobby for their sectional interests, in planning contexts as in other political spheres. The state government has recognised that well-organised middle class lobby groups with their greater financial, networking and administrative resources and skills wield increasing influence over planning decisions, particularly as planning processes have become more consultative. If the more affluent and educated members of Perth's population become increasingly concentrated in those parts of the metropolitan area with small local authorities where they have more councils and more councillors per head, this is likely to increase their disproportionate influence over planning decisions still further.

The state government has recognised these problems and, in the consultative processes that led up to the adoption of Network City, it set out, through Dialogue with the City, to increase the involvement of 'ordinary' citizens and of groups, such as the ethnic communities and youth, that have hitherto been underrepresented in planning processes. But the very fact that the state government deemed it necessary to organise an event on the scale of the Dialogue is an indication that Perth's current administrative and democratic systems are inherently unsuited to the successful development and implementation of metropolitan plans.