

Partnerships for community building and governance in master planned communities: A study of Varsity Lakes at Gold Coast

Bhishna Bajracharya

Bond University, Australia

George Earl

Bond University, Australia

Shahed Khan

Curtin University of Technology, Australia

Introduction

A number of master planned communities have grown on the outskirts of the cities as a response to increasing demand for housing in large metropolitan regions. Unlike conventional subdivisions, master planned communities are large scale integrated housing developments with a mix of housing types, shopping and services, open spaces and recreation facilities, and employment opportunities (Ewing, 1991; Ewing, 1996; Mouldon, 1990; Schmitz and Bookout, 1998). They are often initiated by the private developers on 'greenfield' sites on the outskirts of the cities. Due to large scale nature of the development, MPCs often have a longer development period and requires long term partnerships of number of stakeholders including developer, local council, state governments and community groups (Minnery and Bajracharya, 1997).

There is a growing debate about the nature of master planned communities in Australia (Lance and Woolcock, 2003; Gwyther, 2005; Gleeson 2004; McGuirk and Dowling 2007; Costley, 2006; Bajracharya and Allison, 2008). Lance and Woolcock (2003) highlight the importance of strengthening the social networks as part of the development of master planned communities. However, Gleeson (2004) argues that current master planned communities lack genuine participation by communities and advocates the need for a participatory model of master planning. Likewise, Gwyther (2005) points out that the modern master planned estates with focus on developer-led urban design and social programs have not provided genuine ideal of community in terms of connectivity, social support and social identity. Some master planned communities have privatized governance with communal areas under community title thus excluding unfettered public access. (McGuirk and Dowling, 2007). Consistent throughout these debates is the underlying argument that the development of an active and interactive community requires effective community governance in the master planned communities (Bajracharya, Donehue and Baker, 2007).

With the declining role of local government in provision of services, developers are increasingly playing a greater role in provision of community services and community building. In the context of Australia, the developer plays an active role in private governance of master planned communities during the stage of development of master planned communities. A gap in the management of the master planned communities occurs, however, with the handing over of the management of community facilities and parks to local government and community groups once the developer exits. One of the

key questions in master planned communities in Australia is to understand how to develop effective mechanisms to transfer from private governance to local and community governance. The paper attempts to address this question by doing a case study of a master planned community in Queensland where a developer is developing a proactive model of governance which can transfer from private to community and local governance.

The paper begins with a brief review of literature on governance and master planned communities in order to provide the context to the problem. It then discusses the historic development of master planned communities in Australia with particular focus in South East Queensland. It presents a case study of Varsity Lakes, a master planned community in Gold Coast, investigating the nature of partnerships and governance in master planned communities. The paper attempts to understand the types of partnership initiatives undertaken for community building by identifying the roles of key stakeholders in the partnerships for community building and governance. The paper then discusses the model of community governance initiated by the developer and identify the key issues relating to the collaborations for community building and their implications for community governance.

As part of research methodology, the study relies on a review of relevant policy documents, a content analysis of the Varsity Lakes community website and interviews with key informant including representatives of the developer, a town planner and a community development worker from within the area.

Review of literature: community building and governance in MPCs

This section will first introduce the concept of community governance and community building to establish the context of governance in master planned communities. It will then review community building and community governance systems found in the master planned communities of USA and Queensland, Australia.

Community Building and Governance in Master planned Communities

Governance can be seen as a process employed to bring together all key stakeholders to contribute toward shared community objectives. Governance covers the spheres of partnerships, interactions debate and conflict between local citizens, organisations and local government (Evans, Joas, Sundback and Theobald, 2005). Community governance implies the power to engage in the process at grass roots level by citizens and local communities. Some of the key principles of governance are *participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence* (European Union White paper 2001 cited in Evans, Joas, Sundback and Theobald, 2005). Community building is considered the soul work of governance and is crucial for creating social networks and connections (Vivian Hutchinson cited in Richardson, 1999). Related to the idea of community building is the concept of *social capital* advocated by Putnam (1993; 2000) who emphasised the importance of social networks for facilitating education, coordination and cooperation of the community for their mutual benefit.

Community building and governance are closely related concepts which are crucial for development of master planned communities.. Many master planned communities provide a range of community facilities and organise community events as part of the community building exercise. In many master planned communities, there is an emphasis on the provision of both hard infrastructure as well as soft programming to attract residents and develop a sense of community (Schmitz and Bookout, 1998). Some of the hard infrastructure includes parks, walking trails, exercise fitness centres, churches, town centres and established schools. Some of the soft programming elements include opportunities of interaction for parents of young children, organised programs for young children, community organiser to start up clubs and community events. The soft programming features can add value to the communities.

Governance of master planned communities in US

Master planned communities in the USA have a long history of resident community associations taking over the management of the community after the developer completes the development. Community association is a mandatory entity with membership of all property owners in the new development (Hyatt, 1998). Community association is a nonprofit corporation with its own by-laws for procedures and organization. Stabile (2000) provides a history of the development of community associations and considers it an innovation in terms of management for housing, providing communal services to residents to supplant public services from local government.

Referring to the master planned communities constructed during 1980s and 1990s, Halter (1998) reports that these community associations have, over time, evolved into service providers, providing a range of services such as those related to technology, cultural activities and liaison between businesses, councils and residents. Community website software is often developed and maintained to foster links between residents, schools and local businesses and provide a number of other functions such as setting up information points for babysitters, tutors, and support staff for local businesses.

Such community associations need to be dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of the community while protecting the rights of individual property owners (Hyatt, 1998). The need for balance between community needs and individual property rights also raises concerns about the regulation of maintenance, particularly with respect to infrastructure and community based assets, and the somewhat vexed issue of use restrictions. Some of the governance issues identified are the need for providing services that currently lie 'between' or outside of the ambit of more established governance structures, such as child care, security, affordable housing, and the care of an aging population. There are some questions regarding whether community governance should be accompanied by more professional management and volunteering programs to effectively address these issues.

There are growing criticisms of many aspects of master planned communities in the US. Blakely and Snyder (1997) criticize the rise of gated master planned communities questioning the need for and social value of gates and walls being created thus preventing the outsiders from having access to the privately governed communities. They also point out the growing opposition to these phenomena. Likewise, Mackenzie (1994) argues that the rise of homeowners association and rise of residential private government has major implication on civil liberties. Gated communities and community associations can lead to enclaves of affluence without much concern for surrounding communities. Recently Fogelson (2003) similarly critiques the use of restrictive covenants in the American cities arguing the fear of difference motivated the use of restrictive covenants by the developers. Homeowners associations were used as mechanisms for use of restrictive covenants for protection of property values but they should not micromanage the lives of residents.

Governance of master planned communities in Queensland, Australia

Unlike the US where community associations take over the management responsibilities of master planned communities after the developer has moved on, there is no established system for transferring management or governance responsibilities following the exit of the developer from master planned communities in Queensland, Australia. The overall responsibility for management of parks, open spaces transfers to the relevant local council which is often financially constrained to maintain the community infrastructure to the same levels as the developer has maintained. This often leads to a decline in standards of the community spaces such as parks in the master planned community following the developer's exit. These problems have been highlighted in some of the earlier master planned communities built in South East Queensland.

Delfin Lend Lease, one of the biggest land developers in Australia has encouraged community building in their earlier master planned communities such as Forest Lake through organisation of community events and provision of community facilities. It is primarily the responsibility of the local government, however, to manage public and community infrastructure now that the developer has completed the project.

In one of its latest MPC ventures called Varsity Lakes, the same developer is currently engaged in a serious attempt to strengthen community building by establishing a community governance entity called Varsity Lakes Community Limited (VLCL). This entity provides a community governance model whereby the community, through VLCL, will play an active role in management of the master planned community after the developer moves on. This is an interesting model with the potential for wide scale adoption among MPCs in the context of Queensland as it represents a proactive approach that seeks to move from private governance to community governance. As we will discuss later, the model being developed represents *developer-led community governance* which is a significant improvement over the earlier *developer-led private governance*. The challenge then is to convert this *developer-led community governance* into *community-led community governance* whereby local community

groups within the master planned community could take over its leadership after the developer exits the scene (Figure 1)

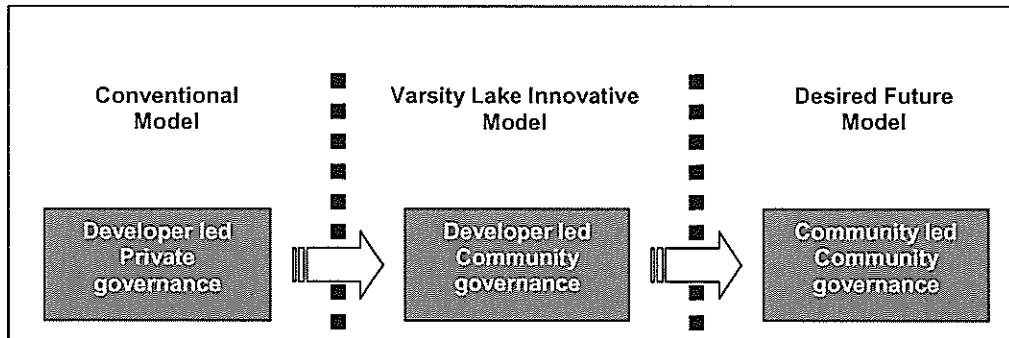


Figure 1: Evolution of the Community Governance Model

Following a brief discussion on the historic evolution of master planned communities in Australia and description of case study area of Varsity Lakes in the following section, the paper focuses on the crucial elements of a community governance model for MPCs, identifying key issues that emerge in public-private partnerships involved in community building and community governance.

Historic evolution of master planned communities in Australia

Although Freestone's book *Designing Australian Cities* (2007) provides an excellent account of the Australian planning history, there is little write-up on the historical development of master-planned communities in Australia. As Freestone has pointed out, there has been revival in *city beautiful* concept with growing interest in urban design in Australia since 1980s. New master planned communities in Australia are part of this trend with focus on green open spaces, community building and place-making. Some of the earlier master-planned communities in Australia seem to have been influenced by new town development in the UK and master-planned communities in the US. Delfin (now Delfin Lend Lease) has played an important role in the historical development of private sector driven master planned communities in Australia. Delfin is Australia's leading developer with about 20 major master planned community projects in different parts of the country. It is a land development company with its roots in South Australia, which developed one of its first master planned community of West Lakes (current population of about 6000 people) in South Australia in the 1970s (It was followed by two other master planned communities of Golden Grove and more recent Mawson Lakes in South Australia). One of the key characteristics of the West Lakes development is that the developer worked closely with the State government to build housing and other community development infrastructure within the new housing estate. In South East Queensland region, Forest Lake was one of the first developments of Delfin followed by more recent developments of Varsity Lakes in Gold Coast, Woodlands in Logan and Springfield Lakes in Ipswich. Another Delfin development called Yarrabilba (land area

of 2,000 hectares and planned population of 52,000) is being proposed near Gold Coast.

There are two distinct models of MPCs being developed by Delfin. The first type is where land is owned by another company but Delfin has the development rights for the land. Second type is where the developer owns both the land as well as the development rights. The majority of the development of Delfin is the first type (eg, Varsity Lakes, Springfield Lakes), while a few developments such as Forest Lakes is the type where the land is also owned by Delfin. There is another new type of development emerging in recent years. The proposed Ripley Valley master planned community in Ipswich has multiple land developers with the council acting as the coordinating body for the development of the master plan. It has set up a Ripley Valley Master Planning Task Force with representation from the council, development industry and community groups for this purpose.

The type of master planned communities and nature of collaboration between the developer and council have changed over time. While many of the earlier master planned communities were primarily bed room communities, some of the new ones have a greater focus on creating employment within the development as well. In terms of relationship between council and developers, the nature of collaboration has also evolved. While one of the earlier master planned communities in South east Queensland developed with informal agreements between the council and developer, some of the later MPCs have been developed under more formal infrastructure agreements and legislations. For example, in the case of Centenary development, one of the earlier MPCs which started in the 1960s in Brisbane, there was an 'informal' contract between the Brisbane city council and developer Hookers Corporation that the council will fund the infrastructure including sewerage and connecting bridge while the private developer provided the local infrastructure (this development was later bought up by a larger developer Australand in later stage). In the case of Robina, another development in the Gold Coast which started in the 1980s, the council and developer had negotiated a 'structure plan' and development agreement covering infrastructure provision. This was a contractual agreement between the two in stead of the Development Control Plan which was considered too rigid and lacking flexibility to adapt to market changes (Minnery and Bajracharya, 1998). Varsity Lakes was also initially developed according to a structure plan agreed to between the developer and Gold Coast city council. Many of the newer development such as Springfield, North Lakes were based on the Development Control Plan (DCP) and infrastructure agreements. Some MPCs have been created with special legislation as well since the size and scale of development precluded conventional approval of development. (Such as Robina Central Planning Agreement Act and Local Government (Springfield) Act)

Besides Delfin, the other major developers of master planned communities in South East Queensland are Stockland, Springfield Land Corporation, Robina Land Corporation and Investa. Stockland is developing North Lakes (for 25,000 population) in Pine Rivers north of Brisbane (this development was initially developed by Lend Lease but it later changed hands), Springfield Land Corporation is developing a 80,000

population master planned community in Ipswich (Delfin Lend Lease is responsible for development of part of residential areas called Springfield Lakes), Robina Land Corporation has developed master planned community of Robina (25,000) in Gold Coast. The proposed Ripley Valley master planned community will be the largest master planned community in Australia with a project population of about 100,000 people. Four major development companies Investa, Amex, Wingate, JMKelly Group are collaborating in this project.

The above discussion on history of master planned communities in Australia with particular focus on South East Queensland provides a useful context for discussion of the case study area of Varsity Lakes in Gold coast.

Varsity Lakes case study

Varsity Lakes is a recent master planned community, popular with empty nesters, professional couples and mature families because of its high quality built form and access to facilities and employment (Bajracharya, Morris and Cook, 2006). Development of Varsity Lakes began in 1999 and is expected to be fully developed by 2010. The master plan for Varsity Lakes encompasses total area of 343 hectares, containing a range of residential, mixed use, community and business land use It includes a defined town centre and residential precincts, focused along the foreshore of a lake and other open space.

The town centre is planned to become a cosmopolitan business hub with about 150,000m² of commercial space, generating an employment base for approximately 4,500 people. The town centre contains two precincts, namely Varsity Central and Market Square The Varsity Central precinct immediately adjoins a university (Bond University) and contains an office park, mix use development and education facilities. The Market Square precinct backs on to the lake and contains a range of local shopping, dining and entertainment facilities. There are also specific allotments adjacent to the town centre designated for SOHO (Small Office/Home Office) dwellings which can accommodate office or retail space on the lower floor for work-from-home professionals and small business.

Varsity Lakes contains 12 residential villages which are expected to yield a total of about 3,000 allotments and a resident population of 7,800 people. Each precinct is planned to have a special focus, based on either their proximity to the lake, town centre and golf course or alternatively based on vistas to nearby hinterland and coastal areas. The two residential villages immediately adjoining the town centre and overlooking the lake, contain medium density residential complexes and well as some mixed use development. The residential areas in other localities are planned to support more traditional low density residential development

Open space within Varsity Lakes is focused around an 80 hectares feature lake and 56 hectares of public parks and outdoor recreation areas. The network of public parks and

outdoor recreation areas includes residential neighbourhood parks, lake foreshore areas and nature reserves that are linked by 20 kilometres of pedestrian paths and bikeways.

Role of key stakeholders in partnerships for community building in MPCs

The Developer

The private developer, Delfin Lend Lease, is the single most important stakeholder driving the development of Varsity Lakes. It has an arrangement for development rights with the owner of land University of Queensland to plan and develop the land. It has developed the vision for the development and implemented much of the land development, economic and community development activities within Varsity Lakes. It has negotiated agreements with a number of stakeholders including local government (Gold Coast City Council).for the town planning approvals of development, with business groups to attract existing local and new businesses, and various building and construction companies. It has undertaken a number of community building activities such as community events, supporting a range of community groups within the master planned community. It has also initiated a community sporting facility for use by the residents and business community in the area.

Local Council

Gold Coast City Council is another important stakeholder in community building in Varsity lakes. The local councillor is actively involved in community development activities of Varsity Lakes including commitment of financial support for a Sports House within the community. The Economic Development Unit within the local council works closely with the developer to ensure Varsity Lakes can establish businesses within its area in line with the strategic economic goals of the council for the area. Local council also plays an important role in the approval of overall master plan and development applications for new buildings within the Varsity Lakes.

Resident groups:

Varsity Lakes is rapidly developing into a community of about 5500 people at this stage. There is a resident association called Varsity Lakes Progress Association which has been formed as a representative group of the local residents. Some of the objectives of the association are to identify the future needs of the community and enhancing lifestyle and safety while providing a forum for residents to raise issues and concerns. It is expected to seek to ensure maintenance of the existing quality of the development and act as a lobby group to increase the area's attractiveness to local businesses and securing the required services.

Business Groups

There are two major groups which represent business interests in Varsity Lakes. The first is the Varsity Lakes Management Association comprising of local businesses within

Varsity Lakes. It promotes local employment generation by marketing the area. It organises events and activities to raise the profile of local businesses and help generate community interest within Varsity Lakes. The other business group is the Robina Varsity Chamber of Commerce which is a wider business association representing the interests of the Robina and Varsity businesses. It aims to play a leading role in the economic development of the region by acting as a conduit to all levels of government.

State government

A number of projects have been conceived by the developer in partnership with the State government. Varsity College has been established within Varsity Lakes in partnership with the State government's education department, Education Queensland. The college houses both elementary and secondary schools. A special school for deaf children has also been planned within the community. Meanwhile, in collaboration with a leading private sector pre-primary school service provider, Varsity Lakes has established a preschool.

There is also work underway towards establishing a new transit village with new railway station, retail and housing facilities within the Varsity Lakes.

Public-private-community partnership initiatives

Sports House

The developer, in association with a private sporting company, has been organising corporate sports and recreation programs within Varsity Lakes including individual as well as team based activities. In collaboration with the local council and local community, the developer is working towards developing a community sport facility for various community and sports events in the area. A Sports House@ Varsity Lakes committee has been set up, enlisting support from the local councillor with some financial commitment from the council. . The developer also encourages the local business and sporting bodies to make capital contributions to the project. This is an example of the community, businesses and the local council coming together for community building. The planned facility is to include boat launching, community meeting spaces, and watercraft storage and fitness and recreation program. This facility is to be run by the Varsity Lakes Limited (to be discussed in further detail later).

Varsity Lakes Online

In collaboration with the local businesses and community groups, the developer has set up a community internet portal called Varsity Lakes Online, featuring information/ resources on local community and businesses. It facilitates the booking of community/ sporting facilities and keeps residents up-to-date with latest developments.

Work towards Establishment of Community Bank

The developer has undertaken the initiative to set up a community bank for the master planned community based on the Bendigo Bank model. It has managed to secure the support of the local council members, a Federal member, local residents and business owners within the area. A twenty-member Varsity Lakes Steering Committee has been set up which seeks indicative pledge of support from the local community. The community bank model requires a percentage of bank's profit to be put back into the community for community projects, organisation and events. It is currently engaged in raising \$615,000, inviting local residents and local businesses to purchase \$1 shareholdings in the company.

Varsity Lakes Economic Development Strategy

The Varsity Lakes economic development strategy has its roots in the joint agreement between Gold Coast City Council and the developer to make Varsity Lakes a living and working community with targeted employment base of 4,500. In line with the city council's Pacific Innovation Corridor project that identified eight major industries, Varsity Lakes has been designated as the lead information and communication technology cluster within the city. It has also received support from the Federal government's Building Information Technology Strengths program (BITS) program, whereby an ICT incubator (inQbater) was established in Varsity Lakes.

Varsity Lakes Community Limited (VLCL)

Varsity Lakes Community Limited (VLCL) is a not-for-profit company developed to take over once the developer leaves the community, marking the transition from private to community governance in the master planned community. VLCL is represented by all key stakeholder groups within Varsity Lakes. This includes residents nominated by the Varsity Lakes Progress Association, local business groups nominated by the Varsity Lakes Management Association, and educational institutions nominated by the Varsity Lakes College and Bond University. The Varsity Lake Online group and the Community Bank are also represented, The VLCL is chaired by a senior staff of the developer's company.

VLCL is designed to act as a peak body representing the major groups. It is to act as the overarching custodian body to provide direction and support groups that may struggle occasionally. A staff member of the Gold Coast City Council sits on the committee as non-voting member. VLCL assumes the role of the owner and manager of proposed community facilities such as the Sports House.

Currently, funding for the bulk of its activities is provided by the developer. It is expected, however, that other stakeholders will gradually relieve the developer's burden by contributing to the running of the VLCL. It is in the process of developing a VLCL operations manual.

Key Issues on partnerships for community building and governance

Identifying the roles of VLCL and Council

Varsity Lakes Community Limited (VLCL) is a developer led initiative that may be classified as a community governance model which is still at a nascent stage of development. It is indeed one of the first models in Queensland where the developer of master planned community has sought to put in place a mechanism for continued community building before it leaves the scene. Unlike conventional practice in master planned communities where the developer leaves the responsibility of maintaining community services and open spaces to the local council when it withdraws, the developer has taken a positive and proactive approach of establishing community governance. In this model, the developer hands over the governance to both community (VLCL) and the local council.

In this situation, it is important to have clear understanding of the division of work between the local council and VLCL after the developer leaves. A memorandum of understanding between the two entities about their specific roles would be a good starting point to eliminate ambiguities. One concern with leaving the local maintenance to local government is that they don't have enough resources to carry out maintenance to the same standards as the developer has done. The local council can still provide the cost of basic maintenance of parks and public spaces at par with other communities. The VLCL could then provide the top-up to maintain higher quality maintenance as desired. Such an arrangement needs effective communication, coordination and a clear identification of roles of VLML and council to work efficiently and avoid duplication or mismatch of services. This may involve the services of technically qualified personnel.

Leadership and Mutual Trust

Currently at least two employees represent the developer on VLCL, with a senior staff of the developer holding the chair. When the project is completed the developer will withdraw its involvement in the management of day-to-day activities of Varsity lakes. There needs to be put in place a clear and transparent mechanism to identify and develop local leadership from within the community to fill the vacuum in the leadership of the VLCL. The leadership development process should commence well before the developers' departure from the development. Without a strong leadership to guide the VLCL after the developer leaves, it would be difficult to sustain community governance.

Mutual trust is an important element of community building, especially so in master planned communities with multiple stakeholders. Turf issues and self interest between different stakeholders can become a barrier to developing effective partnerships as discussed in earlier literature review and need to be handled. Turf issues may relate to perceived competition for limited resources as well as stakeholders wishing to preserve their autonomy and status and protecting their roles and interests. A number of trust

building mechanisms would need to be put in place to develop effective communication and to promote understanding of each other's roles and interests. Communication between VLCL, local council, communities outside Varsity Lakes,, business organisations and the residents have to be ongoing and frequent to avoid any build up of misunderstanding and misinformed expectations..

Strategic versus operation management

Community governance deals with long term strategic directions as well as day-to-day operations. It is not clear whether VLCL will be involved in both strategic and operational management of Varsity Lakes once the developer has withdrawn.

A master planned community in Pheonex, Verrado has two levels of community governance – the Verrado Assembly that focuses on strategic direction setting, and the Verrado Community Association, a resident association which deals with managing day to day activities. Varsity Lakes Community limited probably plays greater role in strategic management and bringing together diverse groups of residents, businesses and education providers. The organisational structure of Varsity Lakes could be developed to include a management committee or board to handle strategic management decisions whereas the Executive Director would be responsible for operational management of the VLCL.

Stakeholder access to resources

In the case of Varsity lakes there appears to be a range of stakeholders who may wield varying degrees of power and resourcefulness. For example, the business groups and residents group may be quite differently empowered. To ensure positive and sustainable partnerships, collaboration has to be aimed for. Collaborative partnerships based on mutual trust and respect are essential to promote a cooperative investment of combined resources in terms of time, effort and funds, joint risk taking and the sharing of benefit, between a multitude of partners. Elaborate mechanisms need to be developed for sharing of power and authority and defining roles and responsibilities. This may warrant the drafting of agreements by legal experts between different partners for contributing to the community.

The Community Bank

In the case of Varsity Lakes, the developer has put in the seed money to start VLCL. To be economically sustainable, it is important for VLCL would need to generate funds in order to reimburse the developer and run it after the developer withdraws. Towards this end, the developer has initiated the establishment of a community bank within Varsity Lakes. This is a novel idea to facilitate community enterprise by pooling together community resources. The community bank venture also has the potential to provide a format for the various groups and individual residents to buy a stake in investment ventures at different scales of investment. It can also be seen as a means

to gain greater stakes of the community in the local bank by encouraging local residents and businesses to invest in the local bank.

The community bank is a franchise of Bendigo Bank which has proven to be a successful model in Australia. However, its success is mostly reported from areas of locational disadvantage such as small rural communities. Bendigo Bank model has proven to be a viable substitute to commercial banks in communities threatened by the 'dying town' syndrome because of population decline and the withdrawal of services by government agencies. As private commercial banks followed suit and closed down branch offices, the community bank has presented an option to fill in the gap commendably. However, its application in an affluent master planned community is rather new and both its potential positives and negatives need to be understood.

While the setting up of a community bank promises great potential to ensure financial viability of VLCL, there may be some issues that warrant investigation. For example, it is not clear how this would affect the location and operation of other private banks in the area. It is also possible that having institutional links with other commercial banks may affect the commitment of some businesses within the area to support for community bank.

An elitist governance model?

The Varsity Lake community governance model could be criticised as one that seeks to promote an elitist community. It seeks to ensure that the standards of maintenance and community facilities within the community are of a higher standard than what the local council can provide for in other, non-master plan, communities. There are two main aspects that need to be considered. Firstly, the financial operations need to be transparent so that the interest and investment by the community and the local council can be separately seen. The local council should be able to show that its share of investment in Varsity Lakes in cash and kind remains at par with what it spends on other communities. Secondly, the community governance would need to ensure that Varsity Lakes does not become an inward looking community. Linkages with surrounding communities within Gold Coast would need to be developed. Opportunities for other communities to access and share the facilities located within Varsity lakes, such as the school and the community sporting club need to be considered.

Conclusion

Most master planned communities in Queensland seems to be managed by governance models put in place by the developer. *These developer led initiatives generally yield a private governance model initially where the developer assumes almost total responsibility in managing and maintaining community spaces and facilities. Once the development is complete and the developer has moved on, the governance model gives way to a local council led governance model as the responsibility of management of much of public spaces and community facilities become the responsibility of the local*

council. However there are problems with this model as local councils don't have resources to maintain them to a same standard as the developer.

The case study of Varsity Lakes has identified another model which is an attempt to address this issue by establishing a *developer led community governance model* with establishment of a Varsity Lakes Community Limited (VLCL). While this is an improvement over conventional practice, there is still the need to further develop it and strive to transform it into a *community led community governance model*. This would ensure that the community itself can work to ensure the sustainability of the master planned community long after developer has left the place.

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