

Third Meeting of Working Parties dealing with State and Regional Planning held on Thursday, 30th January, 1975, commencing at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT Mr. G. P. Webber (Chairman)
 Mr. G. Andrews
 Mr. K. Campbell
 Mr. L. P. Carter
 Mr. J. P. F. Kacirek
 Mr. D. I. McLean
 Mr. E.A.B. Phillips
 Mr. P. Standen
 Professor R. Atkins

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. G. Clarke, Mr. T. Cappie-Wood, Mr. J. DeMonchaux and Professor K. Robinson.

NOTE:

Professor Atkins presented a brief statement and withdrew from the meeting. She has subsequently asked that it be recorded that she formally withdrew from the Working Parties because of her dissatisfaction with the procedures and the subject matter of the first and last meeting. Professor Atkins spoke briefly and commended the publication "New Lives - New Landscapes" by Nan Fairbrother.

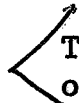

The book deals with problems of townscape and landscape (discouragement of subdivision, coping with caravans and campers, industrial development, disposal of refuse, etc., and campaigns to gain the support of the young in landscape conservation and improvement.

The following points were made by various speakers:-

- (1) There was a need for initiative and innovation to be encouraged at the local level so that the community may develop its own character.
- (2) The guidelines must be flexible to enable development to proceed.
- (3) The initiative in preparing a draft document of guidelines should come from the Commission and then public comment/criticism sought from various groups and the public generally. Availability of the guidelines and the opportunity for comment should not be restricted.

State-wide

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- (4) As a fundamental concept, planning responsibility must also carry responsibility for infra-structure, or at least co-ordination of such.
- (5) Presentation of the guidelines should be in a form which is easy to read and understand, giving examples of what local councils and regions should be able to do.
- (6) Authority to deal with regional and local matters should be delegated and not centralised.
- ? (7)  The appeal system would need to be capable of being adaptable to any changes.
- (8) the draft guidelines to contain details of the powers/responsibilities at present available to councils, with details of what additional powers/responsibilities were to be transferred.
-  (9) There was a need to ensure that "cut-off" points were established for the transfer of additional powers/responsibilities to councils/regions.

The recommendations as to procedure to be followed were in summary:-

- (1) The Commission to prepare draft guidelines (based on advice from Government and agencies, institutes and private bodies.
- (2) The draft guidelines to be distributed for comment to selected organisations, but also made available for general public comment.
- (3) The draft guidelines to be reviewed in the light of public comment.

Conclusion - the meeting concluded at 4.45 p.m.

ROLE OF WORKING PARTIES

The Working Parties were invited to report to the Commission, by not later than 5th February, 1975, on the aims of, and the means of achieving effective State and regional planning guidelines which would permit local planning authorities to exercise greater discretion in local planning decisions at the earliest possible time, without placing State or regional objectives in jeopardy.

MEETINGS

The Working Parties met on 13th, 21st and 29th January, 1975. Attendance was as recorded in the Notes of Meetings.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

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This report briefly summarizes the main conclusions of the Working Parties; it must be considered against the background of additional material prepared for the groups, which is attached as appendices.

Appendix A - Material Prepared by officers of the Commission -

- (i) Background Notes for first meeting.
 - A. Formation of Working Parties
 - B. Basic Questions
 - C. Planning Defined
 - D. Perspective of State Planning
 - E. Present Policies, Guidelines and Controls
 - F. Changes in State Government Organisation
- (ii) "Supplementary Notes on State and Regional Guidelines" prepared for the second meeting (includes schedules of guidelines presently in use).
- (iii) Notes for the third meeting (includes comprehensive schedule of over 40 Committees involving the Commission presently active in State and regional planning matters).

Appendix B - Brief Notes listing attendance at the meetings and some of the main points made by participants.

Appendix C - Papers and Notes submitted by participants -

- (i) Professor Ruth Atkins -
 - (a) Written comments submitted following the meeting of 13th January.
 - (b) Copy of statement made at the meeting of 30th January.



(ii) Mr. George Clarke

Letter of 21st January enclosing relevant material from City of Sydney Strategic Plan.

(iii) Professor Kenneth Robinson.

Notes provided following meeting of 13th January.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The Working Parties generally AGREED that, from the information available to date, it seems reasonable to assume that the major Government objectives in the development of a new planning system for New South Wales are:-

- (a) To provide for practical, economic and environmentally satisfactory land use throughout the State.
- (b) To provide a system which is easily understood and expeditious in its procedures.
- (c) To separate as far as possible Statewide, regional and local issues.
- (d) To encourage the positive guiding rather than the restrictive aspect of planning, to achieve practical, economic and highly desirable land use.
- (e) To enable better recognition of social, economic and environmental aspects to be achieved.
- (f) To provide for extensive delegation of authority on local planning, it being recognised that the degree of readiness to accept such delegation in terms of organisation and staffing must be an important consideration.
- (g) To facilitate effective public involvement.

It was recognised that the Minister requires the new system to be finalised during 1975 and, as a consequence, the Commission is obliged to be in a position to commence implementation by the end of the year.

GUIDELINES

The Working Parties RECOGNISED the need for the development of comprehensive State and regional plans. These were seen as essentially long-term objectives. However, in the light of the need to have effective guidelines available for the operation of a new planning system, it was generally AGREED that short-term action should be limited to the preparation of essential State and regional guidelines, sufficient to provide a minimum framework within which local government can operate without jeopardising State or regional objectives and policies.

"Guidelines" were seen as policy documents to set the directions for action and change rather than being land use plans and codes in the traditional sense. They may vary in scope, content and commitment so as to guide thought processes and action at each level of the planning system. They may be advisory or obligatory, and take the form individually or in combination of the following:-

Statutory directions, advisory statements, plans, diagrams, design criteria, etc.

They may cover procedures or management processes or aspects of techniques. They would of necessity give clear statements of objectives and recommend future action priorities for each level of the planning process. They would identify where possible, gaps in information and recommend programmes to remedy such situations and areas of need.

It is the understanding of the Working Parties that State and regional planning guidelines should provide a procedural and technical context within which planning and development organisations at every level in both public and private sectors can operate on a semi-autonomous basis within their direct area of responsibility. To this extent they indirectly provide co-ordination of action. Plan making and development control decisions may then be taken at appropriate levels in the total system.

For the purpose of this report there were identified no clear differences of principle between guidelines developed for State or for regional levels.

The need for education in the new approach at all levels, but particularly the local level of the community was stressed by members of the group. The need was seen for a deliberate and continuing education programme in parallel with the introduction of the guidelines and the new system generally.

BASIC AREAS NEEDING GUIDELINES

The Working Parties generally AGREED the following identified basic areas within which guidelines are necessary. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather indicative of the areas to be covered. In each case general and/or specific goals should be set for State and Regional levels.

- (a) Guidance on population and economic activity for growth and change, and distribution in the State, including any influence of Government actions. In particular, this will determine the urban patterns of the State and of regions.
- (b) (i) The development and/or conservation of agricultural land and other natural and man-made resources such as forests, minerals, water, etc., by reservation, zoning and subdivision control;
- (ii) The conservation of important areas of landscape on the coastline and elsewhere by reservation, zoning and the control of subdivision, including other measures such as building setbacks from foreshores.
- (c) Conservation and preservation of historic buildings, and areas of environmental value, from an aesthetic, scientific or historic point of view.
- (d) Development and protection of the essential elements of the State and regional communications and utilities network.
- (e) Reservation and/or zoning of land for State and regional public and community purposes, such as education, health, roads, railways and open space.
- (f) Co-ordinating programmes for the provision of regional community facilities (hospitals, universities, etc.) and for the co-ordination of government policies and action affecting the above areas.
- (g) The definition and description of procedures for the planning system.
- (h) Communication of planning principles and techniques for training and educational purposes, including in urban areas, guidelines on the grouping of related, compatible land uses and the control of development.

Members of the Working Parties stressed on numerous occasions the need for the guidelines to take cognizance of the very considerable differences in needs between the metropolitan and the rural regions, and the substantial differences in the organisation and abilities of the many local Councils throughout the State.

MEANS OF PREPARING GUIDELINES

On the understanding that there was a need for initiative and innovation to be encouraged at the local level so that communities may develop their own character, and that guidelines must be flexible to provide adequate opportunity for decisions at local level, it is essential that presentation of the guidelines should be in a form which is easy to read and understand, and should give clear examples of applications of the guidelines.

Various procedures for preparation of the guidelines were considered, such as the setting up of advisory groups from the private sector, government, academic and other areas. However, it was agreed that initiative in preparing a draft document of guidelines should come from the Planning and Environment Commission following which comment and/or criticism should be specifically sought from selected groups although the document should be available to the public generally, without restriction.

Two essential first steps are seen in bringing together the guidelines.

- (i) The Planning and Environment Commission to draw upon advice from all relevant Government authorities and agencies; and bring together a clear statement of State and regional policies which already exist.
- (ii) The assembly of information about the powers and responsibilities at present available to councils, with details of what additional powers and responsibilities might be transferred.

The Working Parties AGREED that when the draft guidelines are ready for public discussion, a wide range of community groups be directly approached for comment. One suggestion aimed at co-ordinating and perhaps rationalizing responses, was the use of certain groups to co-ordinate discussions. For example, the New South Wales Division of the Australian Planning Institute might be requested to act as a co-ordinator of discussion by relevant professional institutes; the Urban Development Institute might arrange discussions with the private development sector; the Local Government and Shire Association might present an overview of local government attitudes; the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) might co-ordinate views of conservation groups, and C.R.A.G. might bring forward views of general community interests. Some members of the Working Parties expressed a willingness to participate if required in later stages of this process, perhaps assisting in the review process.

CONCLUSION

The Working Parties, recognised the need for the development of State and Regional guidelines. After discussion of documents prepared by the Commission's officers, the Working Parties agreed upon the purpose of and areas needing guidelines and means of preparing such guidelines.

In summary, the Working Parties AGREED that the Commission should prepare draft guidelines, based on advice from Government and agencies, which would be distributed widely for comment with particular reference to groups related to the planning process and that, subsequently, the draft guidelines be reviewed in the light of such comment. This procedure was considered by the Working Parties to be a practical means of meeting the objectives of having minimum adequate guidelines available when any new planning system is introduced.