Sample local plan of the Opeikuma-Kumbe area west of Kasoa, Ghana © Planning Department, Ghana

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Reviews

Editorial

Graham Sansom

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This second issue for 2010 contains a rich variety of material, reflecting in part a considerable increase in the number of papers submitted to the journal. Processing the large volume of submissions has stretched available editorial resources resulting in both a few weeks delay in publication and deferral of consideration of several papers until next year. We regret those delays.

There are five research papers in this issue. Desmond Amosa reflects on the important question of whether non-elected traditional local governance – in this case village governance in Samoa – meets acceptable standards of accountability and transparency normally associated with 'democratic' local government. He concludes that Samoa's village councils, consisting of matai (chiefs) do indeed meet those standards and that any attempt to build the capacity of local government in Samoa should therefore involve embracing and enhancing, rather than supplanting, its long established cultural practices.

Bruno Brosnan and Christine Cheyne from New Zealand, and Jason Prior and Jade Herriman from Australia, write about the systems of community strategic planning operating in both countries – focusing in Australia on the state of New South Wales. Brosnan and Cheyne trace recent experiences of this form of local government led, but community based, planning since its emergence in New Zealand around the turn of the century. They express serious concerns that the policies of the new national government elected in 2008 could undermine both community engagement and local government's capacity to be an effective community leader.

Prior and Herriman discuss the emergence of community strategic planning in NSW local government, including a recently legislated system of 'integrated planning and reporting' that has drawn heavily on the New Zealand experience. They identify both the influences at work and some of the common challenges and opportunities faced by councils in developing the new style of strategic plans.

Eric Yeobah and Franklin Obeng-Odoom also review the progress of local planning, but in the narrower sense of land use planning and development control, and in the very different context of Ghana. However, they identify a number of issues and constraints to effective planning that resonate with Australian and New Zealand experience, such as the adequacy and appropriateness of legislative framework, inter-government relations, the need for adequate human and financial resources at the local level, and managing the political dimension of local government. They also highlight the fundamental importance of land management in developing countries.

The final research paper, by Zachary Spicer, addresses the related issue of the respective roles and relationships of federal and provincial (state) governments in urban planning within federations. He considers two episodes of federal engagement with cities in Canada, specifically the differing approaches and relative success of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs established by the Trudeau government in 1971, and the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities created nearly 30 years later. His paper tracks their efforts to work with provinces and with other federal agencies, and draws lessons about inter-governmental relations and multi-level policy formation in federal systems. These are important issues for local government, which is often controlled by provinces but needs access to the resources of 'cashed-up' federal governments.

Urban planning is also the topic of Noman Ahmed's commentary on the Karachi metropolitan region of Pakistan. He echoes Yeobah's concerns about land management and the adequacy of both political and legislative frameworks, as well as human resources. He draws attention to the need for effective and informed community engagement, and for universities and research institutions to play a stronger role.

Two other commentaries come from southern Africa. Keshav Sharma reviews the status of local government in Botswana. He concludes that the prospects are encouraging: in particular Botswana enjoys an enabling environment of democracy, peace and the rule of

law that is essential for decentralization to succeed. However, he again highlights the importance of an informed and engaged populace.

Frances Kintu focuses on the urgent and complex question of how local government can play a stronger role in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa by 'mainstreaming' action into its core responsibilities. He highlights in particular the importance of addressing HIV/AIDS within the context of councils' Integrated Development Plans – roughly the equivalent of the community strategic plans in New Zealand and Australia.

Ray Plibersek and Alexandra Mills consider the similarly pressing issue of preventing corruption in local government, looking at examples of repeated corrupt conduct in New South Wales, Australia. They examine in detail a case of 'low level non-compliance' in a municipal waste collection service, and argue that a major factor in repeated workplace corruption was the failure to rigorously apply both existing anti-corruption measures and reforms recommended by previous investigations.

Melissa Nursey-Bray discusses the implications of climate change for Australian local governments, suggesting that they "perhaps face the most daunting challenge in relation to climate change as they are the arbiters of day-to-day policy implementation." She presents the findings of a case study from the northern coastal region of the state of Tasmania and outlines a model of 'adaptive climate change governance.'

This issue also contains several practice notes. Three of these describe activities being carried out under the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Australia-Papua New Guinea Good Practice Scheme. This involves a wide range of technical partnerships between local governments in the two countries. Cases covered in the practice notes include Sunshine Coast (Queensland) and Alotau; Townsville (Queensland) and Port Moresby; and Orange (NSW) and Mount Hagen.

Other practice notes cover diverse topics. Karen Purser and Helen Diggerson discuss Australia's 2010 Year of Women in Local Government and '50:50 Vision' program to promote increased women's participation in local government – a theme of broad international concern that has been raised in previous contributions to this journal. Averil Price looks at the similarly prominent issue of community safety, and outlines a World Health Organisation initiative that local communities may find beneficial.

The issue concludes with two book reviews. Claudia Scott reviews *Local Government in a Global World: Australia and Canada in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and John F. Martin. She notes that: "The magnitude and influence of globalizing trends on local governments in both countries has been less than anticipated by the editors, though the result reflects of the dominance of national and regional policy settings on local government practices."

Keshav Sharma reviews *Local Government and Decentralization in Ghana* by Kwamena Ahwoi, a former minister of local government in that country for over 12 years. He highlights Ahwoi's view that: "decentralisation is a political process which seeks to promote more realistic programmes, better coordination and participatory democracy" but (perhaps more controversially): "local resource utilization in unitary states works best when there is a strong centre to coordinate the local governments."

* * *

The May 2011 issue of this journal will include a number of the papers to be presented at the third Commonwealth Local Government Forum Research Colloquium, to be held in Cardiff, Wales, in mid-March – immediately prior to the Commonwealth Local Government Conference. The Colloquium will be hosted by the University of Cardiff, and the May issue will have as guest editors Professor Steve Martin and Alison Brown. We are most grateful for their support.

* * *

Once again, I have to thank my Assistant Editor, Daniel Grafton, and the other members of our production team at the University of Technology, Sydney, notably Chris Watterson and Su Fei Tan. We would also like to acknowledge the very significant contributions made by our reviewers. This year papers have been reviewed by:

- Dr Matthew Allen, (Australian National University)
- Professor Chris Aulich (University of Canberra, Australia)
- Dr Nicola Brackertz (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia)
- Crispin Buttriss (Bang the Table, Australia)
- Jeremy Dawkins (UTS Centre for Local Government, Sydney, Australia)
- Professor Brian Dollery (University of New England, Australia)

- Emeritus Professor Ron Duncan (Australian National University)
- David Hegarty (Australian National University)
- Dr Roslyn Irwin (Southern Cross University, Australia)
- Ross Kingsley (TechnologyOne, Australia)
- Dr Robert Mellor (UTS Centre for Local Government, Sydney, Australia)
- Dr Robyn Morris (Edith Cowan University, Australia)
- Dr Tim Robinson (Fairfield City Council, Sydney, Australia)
- Professor Ian Thynne (Charles Darwin University, Australia)
- Emeritus Professor Roger Wettenhall (ANZSOG Institute for Governance, Canberra, Australia)

* * *

- Dr Rupak Chattopadhyay (Forum of Federations, Canada)
- Professor James Lightbody (University of Alberta, Canada)
- Mark Redwood (International Development Research Centre, Canada)
- Melanie Robertson (International Development Research Centre, Canada)
- Dr Enid Slack (University of Toronto, Canada)
- Jill Symonds (Ministry of Community and Rural Development, BC., Canada)
- Brian Walisser (Ministry of Community and Rural Development, BC., Canada)

* * *

- Dr Ronald McGill (Ethiopia)
- Professor Rudith King (Kwame Nkrumah University, Ghana)

* * *

- Assoc. Professor Bhaskar Chakrabarti (Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta)
- Professor Om Prakash Mathur (National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India)
- Emeritus Professor Dinesh Mehta (CEPT University, India)

* * *

- Assoc. Professor Christine Cheyne (Massey University, New Zealand)
- Assoc. Professor Graham Hassall (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)
- Peter McKinlay (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)
- Mike Reid (Local Government New Zealand)
- Professor Claudia Scott (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

* * *

- Dr Alphonse Gelu (National Research Institute, Papua New Guinea)
- Dr Penelope Schoeffel-Meleisea (Samoa)
- Afamasaga Toleafoa (Samoa)

* * *

- Dr Bornwell Chikulo (North West University, South Africa)
- Professor Jaap de Visser (University of Western Cape, South Africa)
- Kobus Pienaar (Legal Resources Centre, Cape Town, South Africa)
- Professor PS Reddy (University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa)
- David Schmidt (Strategies for Change, Cape Town, South Africa)
- Douglas Singiza (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)

* * *

- Per Tiedman (Dege Consult, Tanzania)
- Dr Narathius Asingwire (Makerere University, Uganda)
- Dr Shuaib Lwasa (Makerere University, Uganda)

* * *

- Dr Munawwar Alam (Commonwealth Secretariat, London, UK)
- Alison Brown (Cardiff University, UK)
- Professor Richard Crook (University of Sussex, UK)
- Professor Paul Jackson (University of Birmingham, UK)
- Professor James Manor (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, UK)
- Professor John Raine (University of Birmingham, UK)
- Dr Randal Smith (London Borough of Hackney, UK)

RESEARCH and EVALUATION

Local government and good governance: The case of Samoa

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Abstract

Samoa is one of the many small developing countries that are now joining the international call to strengthen local government in a global effort to advance this institution as a recognized force for positive development, especially with respect to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Part of the process includes the introduction of good governance practices through capacity building in order for local government to become proficient in managing resources and to be efficient and effective in service delivery. Accountability and transparency are central to the capacity building process. This paper finds that these central principles of good governance are neither novel nor foreign to the cultural and social practices of local government in Samoa. Hence, it is argued that any attempt to build the capacity of local government in Samoa should involve enhancing and embracing those established cultural measures that underpin accountability and transparency.

1.   Introduction

Good governance in the form of greater accountability and transparency at the local government level has been in the spotlight in recent years. Local government has been identified as a potential institution to assist central government in driving development, especially in small developing countries. The call for sound governance practices at the local level is therefore warranted for a number of reasons. In particular, decentralization of authority and the transfer of public resources from the central government to local authorities require proper reporting relationships and transparent decision-making.

As in the case of other small developing countries, local government in Samoa is currently receiving considerable attention from the central government and donors as a potential institution and partner for development. Several initiatives have been undertaken in recent years to slowly build and strengthen the capacity of local government in the country, including a capacity building program funded through the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), and a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that is currently underway. Central to this program is the effort to introduce good governance principles of accountability and transparency to ensure proper decision-making at the local level when resources are provided by central government.

The intention of this paper is to make a case that accountability and transparency mechanisms are already entrenched in the cultural and social structure of local government in Samoa. This understanding is important for several reasons. First, donors, foreign consultants and central government officials responsible for capacity building efforts often fail to recognize the cultural practices and traditional mechanisms in place that are useful for their purpose. Second, in the absence of this knowledge, new measures and practices that run counter to these traditional settings may be introduced and the results are sometimes counterproductive. Third, donors and foreign consultants often use an inappropriate 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to fixing governance problems in small developing countries. Finally, it must be realized that when speaking of local government in Samoa, one is in fact talking about the traditional council of chiefs and system of governance as it applies to each village. The council of chiefs exercises all forms of power in the village, a stark contrast to the parliamentary system where there is a strong separation of powers. Promoting new forms of governance at the local level is therefore a very sensitive issue, particularly when proposed ideas or changes to local governance are seen to impact upon the council's authority in controlling village affairs.

It should be made clear from the outset that this paper does not attempt to evaluate the current CLGF-UNDP capacity building project, nor does it suggest that this project fails to recognize the traditional governance structure of local government in Samoa. On the contrary, this paper seeks to highlight the fact that there are traditional mechanisms in place that underpin the practice of accountability and transparency in local government, and

therefore that any process of capacity building requires a thorough examination and strengthening of those mechanisms. The CLGF-UNDP project is attempting precisely that approach.

In presenting the analysis, the focus is mainly on the council of chiefs and how its *fono* (meeting) protocols enforce accountability for council members and transparency in decision-making. This is not to say that the *fono* is the only mechanism for accountability and transparency in local government in Samoa. There are in fact other mechanisms but they are beyond the scope of this paper. Also, whilst references are made to the parliamentary model that applies to central government practices in Samoa, no attempt is made to present a comparison between the two models. Such a task requires further extensive research.

2.   Accountability and Transparency in Local Government

Accountability and transparency remain the fundamental principles that ensure the proper functioning of government administration, be it at the central or local level. Both principles are central to good governance and continue to be pivotal in ensuring that those in power are discharging their functions and duties honestly and legitimately. Both terms are not short of definitions. Accountability can be seen to be about an "authoritative relationship in which one person is formally entitled to demand that another answers for (that is, provide an account of) his or her actions; rewards or punishments may be meted out to the latter depending on whether those actions conform to the former's wishes" (Harmon 1995:25). Transparency on the other hand is about 'self-disclosure' or the 'opposite of secrecy' (Florini 2002).

In the central government context, both concepts become complex and ambiguous. Political accountability is often addressed at this level. In general, it is a way of upholding sound democracy, where ministers are asked directly by parliament and the public to explain their actions and rationales for their decisions (Lamour 1998). In fact, the survival of organizations and the legitimacy of programs are the prerogatives of political accountability (Jabbra and Dwivedi 1989). Managerial accountability also attracts attention at the central government level as it deals mainly with public officials. This form of accountability is about

making those public officials with delegated authority answerable for carrying out agreed tasks according to accepted criteria of performance (Day and Klein 1987:27).

Transparency in central government is about information openness and accessibility, including presenting clear, unambiguous information on government rules and procedures (Zurawicki 2003). The OECD (2001) divides transparency into two streams; regulatory transparency and information transparency. The former is about making the legislative process widely open to the public, coupled with clear directions on how one can appeal decisions. The latter ensures the availability of statistical and other information on government operations in a timely manner for interested parties and the general public's consumption (OECD 2001). Transparency can also be described as making public policy accessible and understandable in order to control abuse and to reduce cost and uncertainty (Helble *et. al.* 2007; Mitchell 1998).

Local government is no exception when it comes to accountability and transparency. Shah (2006) stresses the need to develop a governance framework that incorporates responsive, responsible and accountable local government that engages in local service delivery. The United Nations through its Human Settlements Program (2004) also recognizes the urgency to promote accountability and transparency in local government if decentralization of service delivery is to be effective. In doing so, four strategies are recommended:

1. monitoring of transparency;
2. access to information and public participation;
3. promotion of ethics, professionalism and integrity
4. institutional reform (United Nations Settlements Program 2004).

The same message also features in the Commonwealth's vision for improving local government. Accordingly, citizens and voters need to be empowered in order to put pressure on elected representatives to improve service delivery (Amis 2009). The Aberdeen Agenda, which was endorsed by Heads of Commonwealth countries in 2005, outlines 12 principles of good governance that should underpin democracy at the local level in member countries (Amis 2009:2). Accountability and transparency are amongst the adopted principles.

As members of the Commonwealth and the United Nations, Samoa and other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in recent years and presently have responded positively to the wider call for building a sound governance framework as the platform for local democracy. The Commonwealth, through the CLGF Pacific Project, is spearheading this campaign in the region through a series of capacity building projects.[1] This follows the recommendations of a regional symposium held in Fiji in 2004 (Commonwealth Secretariat 2005).

3.   Local Government in the Samoan Context

The fundamentals of local government are not new to Samoan society. Traditionally, the social structure of Samoa clearly outlines the status, roles, responsibilities, values, rules and jurisdictional boundaries of Samoans at the village and district levels. During the colonial era[2] there was attention directed to developing a 'modern' local government structure alongside that of the central government (Afamasaga 2006). In 1950, a Commission was set up to examine ways to integrate both systems effectively (Afamasaga 2006). However, at the time of independence in 1962 the existing traditional system of village governance was retained.

Since independence, several initiatives have been taken to further develop local government as a potential partner for development. These include the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1990 and the passing of the *Fono Act 1991*, and the *Internal Affairs Act 1995*. The Ministry was later reduced to a Division of Internal Affairs and Rural Development (DIRD) within the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development following the restructuring of government departments in 2005. At present DIRD is working closely with partner agencies including CLGF and UNDP in strengthening capacity for decision-making in local government.

Social structure of local government

The social structure of local government in Samoa is comprehensive (Figure 1) and applies in a broadly similar manner to all traditional villages.[3] In essence, it clearly highlights the respective authority and roles of various institutions and individuals in Samoa's society.

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[1] These are funded largely by the New Zealand and Australian aid programs.

[2] For more details on the political history of Samoa see Meleisea and Meleisea 1987; Meleisea, 1987.

[3] There are a substantial number of non-traditional villages, both in rural areas settled by non-indigenous people and also in recently developed urban areas.

Located at the apex of the pyramid are those individuals (men and women) who hold *matai* (chiefly) titles.[4] This group is the supreme authority in the traditional Samoan village and is normally referred to as the *pulega a matai* or the council of chiefs. Every *aiga* (family) in the village is represented in the council through its *matai*. Some may have more *matai* than others, depending on the size of the family. There is no rule on the number of *matai* for each family. This is at the discretion of the *Sa'o*, or the paramount chief of the family and his/her family members.

The *fa'avae* or the constitution is central to the operation of the village council. An integral component of the village *fa'avae* which is called the *fa'alupega* establishes the status and roles of each *matai* in the village council. The village constitution is unwritten: it consists mainly of the beliefs and values of that particular village and its rules approved over time as well as precedents. The *aualuma* (women's committee) traditionally comprised girls and women who belong to the constituent families of the village by birth. This included women *matai* and female relatives of male *matai*, but not their wives. This practice was an attempt to avoid conflict of interest as the *aualuma* is advisory to the council which is the ultimate decision making body. The *taulele'a* or *aumaga* (young men without a chiefly title) serve the village council and to some extent the *aualuma* if there is a need.

In most villages the a*uluma* has been supplemented or replaced by a broader women's *komiti*. This includes all women in the village: members of the *auluma*, wives of *matai* and women born outside the village who have married untitled men (Schoeffel 1977).

Roles, responsibilities and values

The council as discussed earlier is the supreme authority in the village. Its main role is to make rules for the welfare and security of villagers. The same authority also enforces the rules and adjudicates on village members who are accused of violating those rules. It also acts as a mediator to resolve family disputes in the village, especially amongst families who are going through a dispute over land or titles that is before the Lands and Titles Court.[5] This

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[4] It should be noted that not all villages in Samoa allow women to hold *matai* titles and in some cases female *matai* are excluded from the *fono*.
[5] For more information on the role of Lands and Titles Court, see: Tuimaleali'ifano (2005).

role of the village council remains intact at present and it is viewed as one of the pillars for stability at the village and national levels.

The *aualuma* or *komiti* occupy several roles. Traditionally, the *auluma* was concerned with maintaining peace and harmony in the village. This function underscored the role of women in their families. Another important role of the two bodies is to produce wealth for the village and individual families. This is normally in the form of *ietoga* (fine mats) and other Samoan artifacts. In addition, they are responsible for health and education matters, for instance, women are mainly tasked with hygiene and sanitation issues in the village. They also provide support for various government health campaigns and related projects. More recently, the *komiti* has become a point of liaison with central government through the appointed women's representative *(sui-ole-malo)*.

Pulega a matai
(Council of Chiefs)

Taulele'a/aumaga
(Untitled men)

Aualuma/Komiti
(Women's committee)

Aiga
(Family)
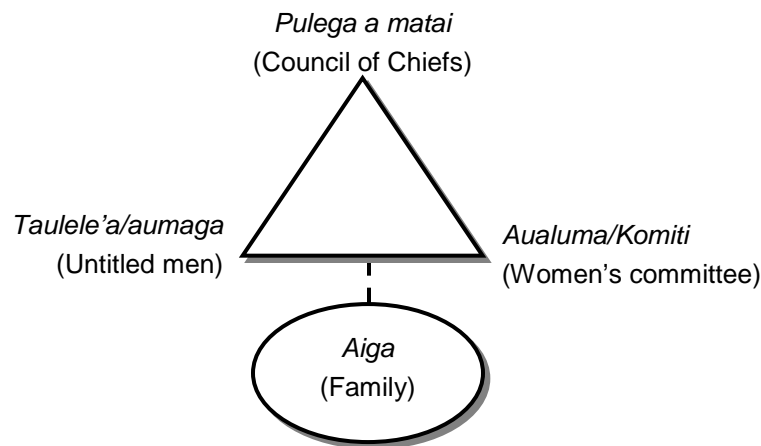
Figure 1: Social structure of local government in Samoa

In the Samoan culture, the *taulele'a* or *aumaga* is called *malosi o le nu'u*, which literally means 'the strength of the village'. This label mandates the main roles of the *aumaga*. Paramount to the *aumaga's* role is its obligation to serve the village council faithfully by implementing and enforcing its decisions. The *aumaga* is also obligated to provide assistance to the families of the village when in need, mainly in the form of labor. The provision of

food is also one of the priorities of the *aumaga* and is the main reason why young Samoan men are engaged in farming and fishing activities on a daily basis.[6]

The roles and responsibilities of these three arms of local government thus reflect the cultural values of Samoans. To date, comprehensive studies on those values are limited. That said, Hofstede's (1999; 2001) renowned cultural values framework is used here to illustrate some Samoan cultural beliefs. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a full account of Hofstede's work, however, it is widely accepted that there are five dimensions that explain cross-cultural differences amongst countries. These are:

1. power distance
2. individualism versus collectivism
3. uncertainty avoidance
4. masculinity versus femininity
5. long-term versus short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1999; 2001).

For the purpose of this discussion, the dimensions of 'power distance', and individualism versus collectivism are useful concepts. The idea of 'power distance' refers to the acceptance (or otherwise) of unequal power distribution in a society (Hofstede 2001). Societies at the higher end of the scale accept the existence of uneven power distribution, whilst those at the opposite end of the spectrum do not believe that there is uneven power distribution within their own society. Individualism refers to societies where individuals value independence over being a member of a community. On the contrary, societies that value collectivism culturally prefer to work together as a community in harmony. Samoa is on the higher side of power distance. Samoans traditionally believed that their chiefs are chosen by God and therefore they have the right to rule and to make decisions. This belief is instrumental to the Samoans respect for their chiefs and therefore of the council of chiefs as the ultimate authority in the village setting. The elders or senior members of society and church ministers are similarly respected: elders for their contribution to society and their institutional knowledge, and ministers as representatives of God.

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[6] For more discussion on the structure and the respective roles of the *matai, aualuma and auamaga,* please see: Iati 2000; Schoeffel 1977; Schoeffel and Turner 2003.

Collectivism is also a trademark of Samoan cultural beliefs. Its origin is in the family and its practice spreads to the village level and beyond. A family in the Samoan context is largely understood in the form of the extended family rather than the immediate family. In this setting, other values that are strongly linked to collectivism like sharing, hospitality, respect, love, support and loyalty amongst others are practiced in one form or another. For instance, it is a norm in the Samoan culture for one family to borrow cooking ingredients from another without compensation.

4.   Decision-making in the Council of Chiefs

Decision making in the council of chiefs can be seen to follow democratic principles comparable to those underpinning the parliamentary model. When the council sits in its monthly *fono,* or meeting (as is the practice in most villages), the *tu'ua* (the most senior orator) who is the chair of the meeting opens the proceedings. It is also the *tu'ua's* role as the chair to oversee the progress of the *fono* and to ensure proper procedures and protocols are followed. The *failautusi* (secretary) presents the agenda which is comprised of outstanding matters and new items brought forward by council members or any family or individual in the village.

Once the agenda is read out, the council decides which matters are of priority. Usually, the matters that threaten stability and peace in the village are dealt with urgently. This always applies in the case of a family or a member of the village that has committed a serious offence like murder, rape or other acts of violence. These are sensitive and emotional matters, as chiefs from the victim's family and the perpetrator are all present in the meeting. The important matters are discussed last in the meeting.

The process that takes place before reaching a final decision is central to the practice of democracy, accountability and transparency in the council's proceedings. The first round of speakers on any subject is mainly based on the village *fa'avae* and the *fa'alupega.* The latter provides guidance for chiefs who are expected to speak in the first round of discussion. The order of speaking is based on the status and role of every chief in the council. When the council meets, each chief is aware of his/her appropriate moment to speak. Usually, those chiefs with paramount status are included in the first round. Once the first round is

completed, it is a common practice to open the floor to anyone in the council who wishes to contribute to the discussion. This normally constitutes the second round of discussion. The third round is basically the summing up of viewpoints and this is conducted by those who took part in the first round. The *tu'ua* in his/her capacity as the chair of the meeting is the last person to speak and to make the decision. Normally the decision is based on the direction favoured by the majority opinion. Before the decision is final the *tu'ua* has to check with others who hold a contrary view for the last time to ensure consensus in council. If there is no objection, the decision becomes final.

In the event that there is an objection, the discussion is opened up again and the process of first and second round discussion is recalled. This practice often applies to complex, emotional and new problems. Sometimes, a final decision is reached after several rounds of discussions. In other cases a consensus may not be within sight after a long day, and the decision is deferred to the next *fono.* This practice is referred to in Samoan as *moe le toa.*[7] This phrase originated from past times of war: it literally means to rest and to find strength for the next day. Samoans believe that this is the moment when the warriors pray to the spirit of their ancestors to bring strength and courage for the next day. The same meaning applies when the concept is used in the council meeting. It simply means that the decision is deferred to the next meeting in order for every chief to pray to the spirit of their ancestors to help guide them to a good decision for the benefit of everyone. Depending on the urgency of the matter, the next meeting could be the very next day or the next monthly meeting.

There are more than 300 villages in Samoa. The practice outlined above may vary from one village to another. However, the fundamentals of consensus and the opportunity to voice one's opinion in the *fono* remain the essence of decision making in the village council.

6.   The *Fono* as an Accountability and Transparency Mechanism

The previous discussion suggests that the *fono* stands as one of the primary mechanisms for accountability and transparency in local government in Samoa. Council members, families and individuals in the village are held accountable for their actions (or lack of actions)

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[7] *Toa* is the name of the wood that was used as a weapon for war.

through the process discussed earlier. For instance, a council member who fails to follow a council's decision is mandated to appear in the *fono*. He or she is given the opportunity to explain and to defend his/her action before the council deliberates on a decision. The deliberation follows the procedure explained in the previous section. In the end, the member concerned is penalized if he/she is found guilty, and the weight of the punishment depends on the severity of the offence.

The question of who holds the council or the decision-makers accountable for a poor decision becomes the centre of attention here. Traditionally, Samoans believe that the council is accountable to God for the decisions that it makes.[8] This may sound outrageous, but there are strong cultural practices and beliefs that support such conviction. One for instance refers to the ritual of bestowing *matai* titles. This ritual starts with the *'ava* (kava) ceremony and according to the Samoan custom, this is about worshipping the gods of the Samoans.[9] In the context of bestowing titles, the *'ava* ceremony gives the village council the opportunity to thank God for its guidance to the family's paramount chief (*Sa'o*) for choosing those members of his/her family who are receiving the *matai* titles. Part of the council's representative speech also asks God to bless the family members chosen to become *matai*. Importantly, the bestowing of *matai* titles cannot be completed without the *'ava* ceremony and the participation of the village council.

What this means is that, when the council makes a poor decision, God punishes those who were at the centre of such decision. This mainly comes in the form of severe illness (even death) or a curse to the members of the families of those who promoted such a decision in council. This curse is mainly referred to in Samoa as *mala aunu'ua*, which literally means a village curse. The Samoans believe that God would hear the villagers' pain and suffering and therefore punishes those in the council responsible for such decision. While this may sound odd, the *matai* in Samoa are fully aware of such belief and are very cautious when making decisions in council.

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[8] Based on the interviews with Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi and Maulolo Tavita Amosa
[9] Samoans worshipped many gods before the arrival of Christianity. Samoa is now a Christian country and believes in one God worshipped by the Christian faith.

The strength of the *fono* as a mechanism to guarantee accountability in the village and in the council lies in several respects. The members of the council are not elected, they are appointed by the members of their respective families as chiefs for life. They are therefore members of the council throughout their entire lives, unless they are banned from the council or dishonoured by their families. Council members do not have to go through a political campaign in which they may be forced to make unrealistic promises to the voters as in the case of a parliamentary system. Nor are they obligated to look for financial support from individuals and organizations to fund their election campaign. Hence, when making villagers, families or council members accountable for violating a council's decision there is no pressure to manipulate the process to exonerate the offender because he/she is a voter or a financial sponsor for an election campaign.

Another quality of the *fono* is the absence of political parties. Unlike the parliamentary model where partisanship features prominently, the *fono* can be seen as a 'one-party' institution. This makes the accountability process effective and robust. There are no hidden political agendas amongst some members of the council to bail out an offender because of affiliation to their political parties. Council members irrespective of their status in the council and the village are therefore subjected to the same process and treatment. While there are rivalries, bickering, bargaining and coalition amongst chiefs internally at times, the system is transparent enough to keep the council in line with the values and principles underpinning its constitution.

Unlike the parliamentary model where there is a clear separation of the legislative, executive and judiciary powers of the state, the council of chiefs holds all three powers. Firstly, this gives more merit and strength to upholding accountability and transparency in the council *fono*. In particular, the deliberations are held in front of every council member. Unlike a system where Cabinet and political parties meet in secrecy or separately, the *fono* is an open forum where chiefs freely debate and boldly express their opinions in the presence of everyone. In this context, it is highly unlikely that accountability will be undermined. Secondly, the judicial process is simple and short. Anyone in the council or the village committing an offence is expected to face the council in the next *fono*. In serious cases that

involve murder, rape, and violence, the process is much swifter in order to keep stability and peace in the village.

7.   Lessons for Capacity Building Programs

What has been highlighted earlier in this paper should assist policy makers, donors and consultants engaged in the task of capacity building for local government in Samoa and other Pacific Island Countries (PICs). A useful starting point is to identify what local government means to the country concerned. Often in PICs, it refers at least in part to traditional authority and administration at the village level as in the case of Samoa, or at the provincial level in the case of Fiji (for more details see Hassall and Tipu 2008). A sound appreciation of these variations provides useful guidance in understanding roles and jurisdictional boundaries that may impact on or be affected by capacity building exercises. Any action – intended or otherwise – that would alter these traditional boundaries of jurisdiction through capacity building could be met with strong resistance as it could be viewed as a lack of respect for traditional authority.

Sound knowledge and respect of cultural practices in local government is also an essential requirement. Pacific Island Countries including Samoa are not short of local experts who are well versed in their own culture and can provide important advice to those spearheading capacity building campaigns. As is evident in the case of Samoa, most of the elements central to capacity building for good governance are already entrenched in the traditions of local government in that country, and similar practices can be found in other PICs. Having genuine insight into these cultural practices and beliefs enables development partners to build on those traditions. This strategy is important as it gives an assurance to local authorities and people that their traditional practices are important and deserve recognition and strengthening. In return, locals are more likely to be supportive of capacity building initiatives. By contrast, failing to recognize traditional practices and beliefs could have disastrous consequences for capacity building.

There are several ways in which traditional practices could be enhanced. For instance, members of a particular community could be reminded of the importance of maintaining and strengthening their practices through community awareness workshops. In addition, new

initiatives could be introduced as supporting measures. In Samoa, for example, the *fono* could be encouraged to document and to preserve all its decisions for the council's reference in the future. This type of approach is being applied by the current CLGF-UNDP project.

It is also important to understand that cultural practices in local governance vary significantly from one country to another. While there are similarities across PICs, there are also some fundamental differences. Often, consultants and donors paint different countries with the same brush, especially when it comes to small developing countries, and this can result in a failure to recognise important details that are relevant to the effort to strengthen local government.

8.   Conclusion

Samoa's case as discussed in this paper shows that accountability and transparency are not foreign ideas to local government in that country. The *fono* is ingrained with traditional protocols that ensure democratic deliberations and hold village council members accountable in a transparent way. Capacity building for local government in Samoa should therefore focus on strengthening *fono* proceedings and protocols to ensure its effectiveness in upholding accountability and transparency. There are, however, some fundamental differences in cultural practices of local governments in Pacific Island Countries. While local government in Samoa exhibits a high level of accountability and transparency mechanisms, practices in some other countries may not have the same advantages, and different approaches to capacity building may be warranted.

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Stronger communities? Changing prospects for community-led strategic planning in New Zealand

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Abstract

New Zealand's Local Government Act 2002 ushered in a new phase in local government, a phase that is best characterised by the term 'empowerment'. Not only were councils empowered to promote social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being, in contrast with previous more prescriptive legislation, but citizens were empowered to engage in community-led strategic planning. In many respects the new statute reflected contemporary international public management trends in which governance is increasingly being conducted via networks of public and private actors. However, with the change of government from a centre-left Labour-led coalition to a centre-right National-led government following the November 2008 general election, it is less certain that local government and communities will continue to experience a strengthening of the pluralisation of governance that has been a feature of the past decade. This article argues that the potential disempowerment of local government, and possible attenuation of community-led strategic planning in New Zealand, comes at a time when the momentum for devolution to local government and other communities is increasing elsewhere.

Keywords

New Zealand Local Government, Network Governance, Community-Led Strategic Planning.

1.   Introduction

Since 2008, local government in New Zealand has been the focus of two major reviews which have potentially far-reaching consequences for local democracy. First, following a change of government from a centre-left Labour-led coalition to a centre-right National-led government, in November 2008 legislation was passed which establishes a new Auckland Council from 1 November 2010, replacing the eight councils that previously existed. From 1989, the Auckland area, which has over a third of New Zealand's population, was governed by the Auckland Regional Council and seven territorial authorities. The new Auckland Council is New Zealand's largest unitary authority and represents a new approach to regional government in contrast with the past in which unitary councils were confined to largely rural regions. [1] There are strong expectations of further amalgamations in other regions following triennial local elections in October 2010, once the new Auckland governance arrangements are in place.

As well as the reform of Auckland governance, in April 2009 a second reform initiative was instigated. Known as the 'TAFM review', this process is concerned with improvements to Transparency, Accountability and Financial Management. While this review has direct consequences for the wider local government sector, it has been overshadowed by the Auckland government reform legislation. There has been minimal media coverage of the TAFM review and it appears to be unknown, not just to most of the general population in communities throughout New Zealand, but also to many elected members and those working in the sector. The purpose of this article is to outline the changes to community-led local strategic planning that are proposed as part of this review. In the first section of the article, we look at the recent history of local authority strategic planning and public participation in local government and situate this in the broader context of changing views about the role of government. This context has been dominated by a focus on a networked approach to governing, termed governance. The notion of governance has had particular salience at the local level. In the second section we outline the TAFM review. The final section considers the implications of both this

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[1] New Zealand has a two-tiered system comprising multi-purpose regional councils and territorial authorities (city and district councils). Unitary authorities perform the functions of both regional councils (e.g. regional planning and environmental management) and territorial authorities (e.g. sub-regional land-use planning and community services). There have been only four unitary authorities since the early 1990s, all of them with a small population in mainly rural and relatively isolated parts of the country.

review and the continuing momentum internationally for participatory governance networks.

2.   Governing Beyond the Centre

From the mid-19th century, New Zealand's colonisers ensured legislation reflected the prevailing English view of providing infrastructure, services and regulation (Wood & Rudd 1996, Cheyne 2002, Miller 2006). Central government dominated the country's governance arrangements (Bush 1980, Kelsey 1993, Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996, Gwynn 1998, Myers 1998, Wood 2002, Leonard & Memon 2006) with local government performing a narrow range of functions. Local government was to be controlled through statutorily prescribing its functions, rather than empowered (Bush 1980 Cheyne 2002, 2006). Central government was the designer of policies and provider of resources that the communities needed, with local government having a narrow mandate for certain functions – largely relying on locally-raised revenue but, in some cases, with central government funding (Bush 1980, Kelsey 1993, Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996, Gwynn 1998, Myers 1998, Wood 2002, Leonard & Memon 2006).

Traditionally, therefore, New Zealand local government has focused on provision of network infrastructure (roads, wastewater, drinking water, stormwater), disposal of waste, and environmental regulation. Up until 2002, local government's role was determined in a 'top-down' manner with central government prescribing the functions and powers of local government and prohibiting activity that was not specifically mandated (Bush 1980, Kelsey 1993, Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996, Gwynn 1998, Myers 1998, Perkins & Thorn 2001, Cheyne 2002, Richards 2002, Wood 2002, Freeman 2004, Cheyne 2006, Miller 2006, Leonard & Memon 2008).

During the 1980s and 1990s there was growing discontent with a cumbersome, overly-prescriptive local government statute, and a desire to strengthen local government and local democracy. Commentators noted frustration with slow, costly, and often duplicated work of government (Wood 1988, Bush 1990, Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996).

This increasing dissatisfaction was largely aimed at historical governance modes of hierarchical control and regulation (Martin 2003, Cowell 2004, Scott et al. 2004, Head 2007, Lee 2009). At the same time, internationally, there was a movement of rediscovery and revitalisation of civil society, improved communication technologies and access to

information (Reddel 2002, Berger, 2003, Head 2007, Hughes 2007). Many planning practitioners and some managers in New Zealand local government were aware of the emerging body of literature around community-based planning[2] (Lane & Corbett 2005, Head 2007, Uitermark & Duyvendak 2008), and in the United Kingdom, distinct moves were occurring in the late 1990s to introduce a new statutory framework for community-led strategic planning.[3]

Political rhetoric around this time focused on the high level of dissatisfaction with the prescriptive nature of previous legislation (Gwynn 1998, DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Cheyne 2002, Cousins 2002, Richards 2002, Rive 2003), the burgeoning sizes of municipalities (Business New Zealand 2001) and outrage at ever-increasing compliance costs and rates (Myers 1998, Business New Zealand 2001). Unsurprisingly, the end result of the election was a change in government. Almost immediately, the new government sought to revamp a number of the legislative tools to increase government efficiency and decrease costs in the process (DIA 2000). The government sought to create legislation that strengthened local authorities' connections to their local communities, codify responsibilities for sustainability and increase accountability to communities (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Cheyne 2002, Cheyne 2006, Local Futures 2006, Leonard & Memon 2008). In embarking on this reform process the new government sought to create new legislation with a number of key differences from its predecessors (Wood & Rudd 1996) but which also represented a paradigmatic shift from command-and-control to networked and participatory governance (Leonard & Memon 2008).

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss in detail the broader international context in which this paradigmatic shift was situated. However, we note that from the late 1990s there was a burgeoning of literature on the notion of government beyond the centre, or even governing without government (Rhodes, 1996, Rhodes 1997, Stoker 1998, Berger 2003, Haus et al., 2004, Geddes, 2005, Geddes, 2006, Klijn, 2008, Chhotray and Stoker 2010, Blakely 2010, Guaranos-Mesa and Geddes, 2010). This large body of literature reflects the use of the term 'governance' has been used in very diverse disciplinary,

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[2] The term 'community-based planning' refers to a range of participatory planning approaches including both those led by central and local government and those where citizens and community groups are a catalyst for community involvement. These include participation in the traditional concerns of land-use planning but also more broadly in budgeting and other strategic planning processes at the local level.

[3] 'Community-led strategic planning' refers specifically to more recent initiatives which promote strategic planning at the community level and by the community. While this may be facilitated by local government there is a deliberate intention to ensure that there is community 'ownership' of the process as opposed to strategic planning by and for a council organisation.

organisational and geographical loci. Rhodes (1996: 653) notes at least six different uses of the term: the notion of the minimal state; corporate governance, the new public management; 'good governance'; socio-cybernetic systems; and self-organizing networks. For our purposes, we recognise that the growing emphasis on collaborative working and partnerships between local government and key stakeholders has been, in part, a response to challenges at the local level similar to those faced by central government, namely, achieving solutions to 'wicked problems' such as social exclusion, environmental degradation, inequality, climate change which governments alone seem incapable of resolving.

Community engagement in strategic planning provided a stimulus to other forms of engagement, indeed, the concept of governance does not confine networks of actors to strategic planning but encompasses networks for the purposes of monitoring and reporting on plan implementation as well as service provision and management of resources. Hence there is often an overlap of terminology, especially when referring to governance at the local level, and a blurring of distinctions between concepts such as local governance, devolution, collaboration and partnerships.

Recognising the changing nature of government, and the need for responsiveness to communities, from the outset of the reform process, the Labour-led government wished to articulate, in statute, a requirement or responsibility to develop new relationships between central government (Memon & Thomas 2006, Hewison 2008), local authorities and communities (Scott et al. 2004, Larner & Craig 2005, Hewison 2008, LGC 2008). Policy-makers believed that strengthening local communities through local partnerships would help New Zealanders to respond more positively to economic and social change (Richardson 2005, Local Futures 2006, Memon & Thomas 2006, Lee 2009), allow for the sharing of 'best practice' knowledge and practices (Richardson & Winefield 2007), and more nuanced understandings of the local needs those practices must meet (Larner & Craig 2005, Richardson & Winefield 2007). The policy intent was that central and local government be viewed as two arms of the same system, with a shared focus on contributing positively to the well-being of communities. More importantly, an intent that local government along with community groups, non-governmental organisations and businesses need to work together to find solutions and advance the aspirations of local communities (LGC 2008, Lee 2009).

This political rethink created several new pieces of legislation that revolutionised political processes and created opportunity for community involvement in the planning process (Dann 1992, Cheyne 2002, Cheyne 2006, Leonard & Memon 2008). The Resource Management Act 1991 provided an environmental regulatory tool based on sustainable management and participation (Perkins & Thorn 2001, Freeman 2004, Leonard & Memon 2008). The heart of this document was the sustainable management of all natural and physical resources (Perkins & Thorn 2001, Freeman 2004). Decision-makers were not only required to talk to the present community, they were required to consider the future needs of the community (Dann 1992, Freeman 2004, Leonard & Memon 2008) and take account of the past (Part 2 – Historic Heritage considerations). The electoral system was also changed in the interest of increased representation and participation (McRobie 1985, Atkinson 2003), as well as the Rating Powers Act, and the Local Election and Polls Act (DIA 2001). However, it was the review of the main local government statute that provided the most significant changes to local political processes.

3.   Giving the Community a Voice

The forces at work in New Zealand through the 1980s and 1990s finally prompted a major review of local government in 2000-2001 following the election of a Labour-led government in 1999. That review culminated in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002), which provided a broad empowerment of local government similar to a power of general competence, and promoted a collaborative planning process by local authorities that engaged central government and a wide range of local stakeholders (Perkins & Thorns 1999, Department of Internal Affairs [DIA] 2000, DIA 2001, Cheyne 2002, Memon 2002, Cheyne 2006, Local Futures 2006, Memon and Thomas 2006, Leonard & Memon 2008, Local Government Commission [LGC] 2008, Nyseth and Ringholm 2008, Lee 2009). The LGA 2002 also contained reporting requirements against which local authority performance and progress towards a long-term vision would be measured (Local Futures 2006, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Leonard & Memon 2008, Society of Local Government Managers 2009a, 2009b, Ministry for the Environment 2009a, 2009b). Community-led strategic planning in New Zealand thus entered a new paradigm (Lane and Corbett 2005, Larner and Craig 2005, Thomas and Memon 2005, Houston and Katavic 2006, Memon and Thomas 2006, Waiheke Island Sustainable Development Group 2007, Hewison 2008, Leonard and Memon 2008, Lee 2009).

The LGA 2002 set out the role and purpose of local government and provided for councils to work collaboratively with other councils and with other public and private organisations in order to be able to advance community goals (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Cousins 2002, Local Government New Zealand 2003, Wilson & Slater 2003, Larner & Craig 2005, Thomas & Memon 2005, Cheyne 2006, Local Futures 2006, Memon & Thomas 2006, Hewison 2008, Local Government New Zealand 2009, New Zealand Government 2009). During the reform the government stated that the new Act needed to provide a coherent overall strategy on local government (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Richards 2002, DIA 2009). By providing a purpose, local government had validation for its existence (Richards 2002, Memon & Thomas 2006) and a framework it could work within and be measured against (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, DIA 2009). The new Act confirmed local authorities as the mechanism by which local communities promote social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being (Cousins 2002). The framework clarified the process and opportunities for individuals and organisations to influence the decisions that their local authorities make (Cousins 2002).

The LGA 2002 provided a broad empowering legislative framework under which local authorities could meet the needs of their communities (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Local Government New Zealand 2003, DIA 2009). This framework could then be seen as creating a mandate for community governance (Leonard & Memon 2008). The Act required local authorities to be more responsive to the community, and to provide opportunities for citizens to have input into planning processes, in particular, through the statutory visioning exercise known as the 'community outcomes' process and through the development of the Long-Term (ten-year) Council Community Plan (LTCCP) (DIA 2001, Richards 2002). The LTCCP is required to describe all local authority activities, how the local authority pays for them, and how the activities contribute to community well-being.

The LGA 2002's predecessor, the Local Government Act 1974, prescribed councils power and functions in detail resulting in an overwritten, difficult to understand, reactive Act (Richards 2002). The 2002 Act empowers councils to promote social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being which is, in effect if not in name, a power of general competence (Richards 2002, Memon & Thomas 2006). Albeit with not unfettered powers, local government has the full capacity to undertake activities and full rights and privileges for the purposes of undertaking local government. This means that

local authorities have the same rights and freedoms of action, consistent with general laws, as individuals and corporations. Unlike the previous states, councils have a broad discretion over the activities they can become involved in, without the need for prescription in law.

In direct response to increased powers for local authorities, the government imposed rigorous provisions for governance and accountability to local communities (DIA 2000, DIA 2001, Memon & Thomas 2006). Governance is a key role of local authorities (Richards 2002) and the Act provides principles and other provisions to ensure that elected members are responsible, open, transparent, and democratically accountable in their decision-making. The Act requires authorities to facilitate and identify community views, translate community wishes into defined outcomes, monitor, evaluate, and report to the community on performance (DIA 2001, Richards 2002). Local authorities are required to plan for and report on the effect of their activities on the four well-beings to their local communities (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a). Accountability is not achieved until the audited information is made available to ratepayers in a user-friendly format (Controller and Auditor-General 2006b).

The LGA 2002 provides that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are relevant to local authorities (DIA 2001). The Act contains specific principles and mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of the operation of local government decision-making processes, enhance opportunities for the participation of Māori in local government, and provide for appropriate accountability mechanisms as to the effectiveness of the operation of local government to Māori (DIA 2001). Central government recognised that local government plays an important role in the relationships between Māori and the Crown, and that much of what Local Government does is directly relevant to the active protection of Māori culture and way of life (DIA 2000, DIA 2001). However, it also recognised that Māori are under-represented on councils and that the level of participation in local elections is low (DIA 2000, DIA 2001). Therefore, the Act requires that councils work for Māori communities as well as for others (DIA 2000, DIA 2001).

4.   Kicking the Local Government Tyres?

The LGA 2002 contains within it reporting requirements that can be assessed. The Controller and Auditor-General reports triennially to central government on the results of its audits of local government, in order to encourage 'best practice'. In addition, central

government periodically initiates reviews on issues of significance to identify areas appropriate for legislative or other clarification or amendment.

The 2005/2006 review of local government (Controller and Auditor-General 2006b) and the review of the 2006-2016 LTCCPs (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a) by the Controller and Controller and Auditor-General highlighted several concerns about the capacity and the desire of local councils to meet the requirements of the LGA 2002. In both reviews, the Auditor-General expressed concerns about timeliness and report quality being provided to local communities by councils (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b). More disappointingly, the Controller and Auditor-General expressed concern about the lack of LTCCPs being used as a strategic and user-centric planning document (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a). If authorities are not using the LTCCPs as intended, the purpose of local government may not be fully realised.

The 2007 report of the Local Government Rates Inquiry (LGRI) highlighted the need for improved consultation by councils (LGRI 2007), echoing concerns similar to the Controller and Auditor-General that councils are not communicating to the community they serve and are creating unsustainable rating increases (LGRI 2007). The report recommends that central government provide funding, expand rate rebate programmes, reduce rating complexity through legislation, and co-ordinate with local government (LGRI 2007). Overall, the report recommends local government show restraint on expenditures and priorities (LGRI 2007).

The 2008 review of the LGA 2002 (LGC 2008) again identified no great problem with the Act but more with its implementation by individual authorities. The report purpose was to review the Local Government Act to see if any of the Act's provisions or if any of the ways that councils are operating as a barrier to achieving policy intent (LGC 2008). The findings indicate that the Act is sound and that it is more the interpretations and understandings of the Act's critical provisions by authorities which are making the operation of this Act more demanding that it needs to be (LGC 2008). Overall, the report recommended more dissemination of information on good practice and support for local authorities rather than major legislative reform (LGC 2008).

By contrast, following an extensive inquiry and consideration of thousands of public submissions, the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance which reported in March 2009 recommended significant change to local government in the Auckland region, and highlighted the need for more joined-up and collaborative governance arrangements, encompassing not just local and central government but other key economic and social actors including the social services sector and iwi (Māori tribes) (RCAG 2009). Although the government ignored many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission it has proceeded with structural reorganisation: the so-called 'super-city'. Critics consider that the new unitary council that will be established from 1 November 2010 will escalate costs and bureaucracy (Hansard 2009, Weber & Saunders 2009), increase the distance between citizens and elected members, and diminish progress being made by the previous councils towards social, cultural, environmental well-being (Humpage 2009, Hansard 2009, Weber & Saunders 2009).

Overall, however, the main recommendations from recent enquiries and reports on local government focus on building the capacity of councils to interpret and apply the provisions of the LGA 2002. These reviews, as well as numerous independent assessments by academic researchers, have generally found the Act to be sound and have validated the new planning paradigm and framework for community-led strategic planning, notwithstanding some issues associated with capacity and interpretation by some councils (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Controller and Auditor-General 2009, Controller and Auditor-General 2010). Despite that validation, following the change of government in 2008, the new Minister of Local Government, Rodney Hide, introduced legislation in March 2010 to amend the Local Government Act. In the view of the government, and in particular the Minister, the framework is flawed and in need of reform (Beatson 2009, Eames 2009, Hansard 2009).

The Minister's explicit goal, as the leader of a libertarian party that is junior Coalition partner in the National-led government, is to limit the activities of local government to a narrow range of core services and to streamline the long-term community planning processes. This reform agenda, if achieved, would undermine both the broad empowerment of local government that occurred from 2002, and an increasingly well-established long-term planning process characterised by strong community engagement.

Perhaps foreshadowing the National-led government's future intentions for reduced community involvement in long-term community planning, the creation of the new Auckland Council has resulted in a significant worsening of the representation ratio in New Zealand's largest metropolitan-region. Elected members on the Auckland Council will represent an average of 65,000 constituents. A further review, discussed later in this paper, the Transparency, Accountability and Financial Management (TAFM) review, seeks to alter the current statutory framework for community-led strategic planning in a way that is likely to diminish public participation in local strategic planning.

5.   Moving Forward – and Backwards

The theoretical assumptions underpinning the LGA 2002 are that partnerships are mutually beneficial and that efforts to 'join together' different organisations will create more than the sum of the parts. In order to achieve this outcome, authorities are provided considerable discretion in their conduct. However, this discretion may be seen as an opportunity to provide flexibility or for questionable practice.

The LGA 2002's main strengths lay in its blend of flexible and prescriptive approaches to decision-making, the planning process and accountability (Scott *et al.* 2004, Lee 2009). The provisions are largely consistent with the literature in terms of successful community engagement and partnerships (Thomas & Memon 2005). The legislation provides local authorities the freedom to use any consultation method or process to connect with the community (Richardson 2005, Richardson and Winefield 2007, Lee 2009).

Authorities are dealing with increasingly diverse interest groups and communities (Scott *et al.* 2004, Richardson 2005, Lee 2009), therefore flexibility is a critical component for successful connection (Houston & Katavic 2006). The Act also requires greater rigour with respect to local authority decision-making processes compared to previous legislation (Richardson 2005, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Lee 2009) and allows for the process to be adapted to differing circumstances (Richardson 2005, Richardson & Winefield 2007). As well, it provides principles to ensure councils take account of the impact of decisions on community well-being, affected people and community goals (Richardson 2005, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Lee 2009).

The community outcomes process requires authorities to engage the community to identify priorities and long-term goals (Richardson & Winefield 2007, Lee 2009). The purpose is to increase participation (Lee 2001) and ensure the aspirations of the community are understood and can be used to guide and inform the activities of councils and organizations in the community.

Once agreed, local authorities are required to report on the community's progress in achieving the community outcomes (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Quality Planning 2009, Richardson 2005). Monitoring is identified as a key component in effective community involvement and a key aspect of reducing community frustration with process (Wholey & Hatray 1002, Richardson 2005). This prescription in the Act completes the iterative planning cycle and provides accountability in the process (Richardson 2005). Local authorities are required to provide opportunities for contributions to decision-making by Māori through establishing processes to provide opportunities and fostering capacity among Māori to participate (Richardson 2005, Richardson & Winefield 2007). Some researchers consider that this provision has addressed the Treaty of Waitangi in regard to decision-making, and potentially a new constitutional convention for Māori, putting iwi on the same footing as a branch of government (Thomas & Memon 2005). The provisions of the LGA thus provide a balanced toolbox of both prescriptive and flexible measures to enable connection and accountability to the community (Richardson 2002, Richardson & Winefield 2007). The Act's provisions described above, and its consultation principles (which have been carried through into related legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Land Transport Management Act 2003) reflect the evolving body of 'best practice' and academic and practitioner research on effective community engagement and partnership; however, policy does not automatically translate into practice (Houston & Katavic 2006).

As noted earlier, various reviews (Local Government Rates Inquiry 2007, Richardson & Winefield 2007, LGC 2008) and audits (Controller and Auditor-General 2005, Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Controller and Auditor-General 2009) of the LGA 2002 have found that the main weakness does not necessarily lie in the legislation but in the practice of long-term planning (Richardson & Winefield 2007). This is consistent with the literature, which identifies that 'best

practice' is difficult to identify given the diverse groups and issues local government is required to deal with (Robinson et al. 2005, Houston & Katavic 2006, Hughes 2007).

As to be expected with new legislation, there were concerns in initial audits about individual interpretation of the LGA provisions by councils (Controller and Auditor-General 2005, Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Controller and Auditor-General 2009). The auditor considered that time and experience would rectify these issues (Controller and Auditor-General 2005, Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Controller and Auditor-General 2009). Yet it is evident from several audits that councils are still struggling to interpret core provisions (Controller and Auditor-General 2005, Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Controller and Auditor-General 2009).

The audits have also shown that the increased flexibility afforded to councils can be a weakness. Whilst some authorities have instituted a variety of engagement and partnership mechanisms, others are doing little more than the bare minimum to legitimize policy (Controller and Auditor-General 2005, Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Richardson & Winefield 2007, Controller and Auditor-General 2009). It is also important to recognise that the LGA 2002 promotes, and indeed requires, council-community engagement and partnerships by an already over-burdened society (Dixon et al. 1997, Chess 2000). Despite recognition of consultation fatigue and overload, a heavy reliance on consultation to determine long-term goals may result in only extremist views being represented (Campbell & Marshall 2000). Likewise, the core assumptions of the LGA 2002 with regard to empowerment rely on a diversity of participants being engaged in local authority decision-making and long-term planning (Robinson et al. 2005). As the literature shows, this is difficult to achieve given intensifying trends towards social exclusion (Campbell & Marshal 2000, Robinson et al. 2005).

Another weakness identified in the audits concerns the capacity not only of councils to implement and interpret the provisions, but also the capacity of the community to effectively participate (Wallis & Dollery 2002, Robinson et al. 2005, Memon & Thomas 2006). Not all councils, community groups, or individuals have access to the necessary skills, time or resources (Wallis & Dollery 2002, Robinson et al. 2005, Memon &

Thomas 2006, Richardson & Winefield 2007) to be able to effectively contribute or participate, thereby not only according unwarranted significance to the views of only a section of society but legitimizing it as the 'community view' (Robinson et al. 2005). Despite the weaknesses, the audits consider this can be rectified by appropriate central government leadership and through dissemination of 'best practice' policy (Richardson & Winefield 2007). However, as the literature has shown, 'best practice' remains elusive given the varied nature of communities and the challenge of integrating participation, engagement and partnership with the representative role of elected local government (Lane & Corbett 2005, Robinson et al. 2005, Houston & Katavic 2006, Nyseth 2010).

6.   Reinventing Local Government… Again?

Prior to the 2008 general election, the local government policies of the main opposition to the then Labour-led government focused on the need for efficiency, streamlining bureaucracy, and controlling costs (see ACT 2009, AUT University, National Business Review 2008). To form government, the conservative National Party formed a coalition with the libertarian ACT Party, a strong advocate of reductions in the size and scope of councils, and rate-capping. The new Minister of Local Government is the parliamentary leader of the ACT Party.

Following a review initiated by the Minister, and agreed by Cabinet in April 2009, the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill 2010 was introduced to Parliament a year later at the end of April 2010. The select committee report on the Bill is not due until November 2010 so the final form of the Bill is not yet known. The review undertaken during 2009 focused on transparency, accountability and financial management in local government and hence became known as the TAFM Review. Of particular interest for our present purposes are the implications of the review for long-term community planning, which is a particular focus of the Bill. The Minister for Local Government (2010:2) asserted that the intention of the amendments is to 'enable ratepayers to exert greater influence on the work of their councils'. Specifically, these reforms will:

- provide ratepayers and residents with better information about council costs, rates and activities, enabling them to understand and influence planning and decision-making processes;
- introduce pre-election reports, to stimulate debate during council elections;
- simplify long-term planning processes and give them a more strategic focus;

- achieve plain English financial reporting, so that ratepayers can understand what they are paying for, and how; and

- reduce restrictions on the use of the private sector to deliver council services, improving councils' flexibility to choose effective and efficient delivery methods for water and other services.

Long-term council community plans (LTCCPs) will continue to cover a ten-year timeframe and will still be produced every three years but the Minister's intention is that they become broad strategy documents rather than the detailed and dense documents currently produced.   Some changes to the process of long-term community planning appear to be cosmetic. For example, the Bill proposes a new definition of community outcomes, which are to be defined as "outcomes that a local authority aims to achieve in order to maintain and improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of its district or region". This change seems to be largely semantic.[4] Likewise, the Bill proposes a definition of core services to be provided by local government. It has been argued by some critics that because communities by their very nature are many and varied, it is not appropriate to define core services as this does not allow for sufficient acknowledgement of the diversity of councils and communities. However, the definition is broader than some commentators expected (and, arguably, the Minister for Local Government hoped) with both network infrastructure and community infrastructure included. To a degree, then, the status quo is unchanged with this definition. Indeed, the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) wrote somewhat wryly in its April 2010 newsletter:

> We have received advice that this clause is symbolic at best, and we advise people
> to avoid inadvertently giving it meaning by playing with it (Horan 2010: 33).

Other provisions are more substantive and potentially far-reaching in terms of their implications for long-term community planning. The intention is to streamline the long-term planning process but the proposed amendments if adopted will potentially diminish accountability, transparency and public participation. The Bill proposes the repeal of sections 91 and 92, which require a local authority to identify and report separately on the progress made towards achieving community outcomes, because the community outcomes process is to be merged with the long-term plan.

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[4] In referring to the lack of change in semantic terms, we acknowledge that there may be subsequent changes in practice by councils as suggested by one reviewer. Such changes would not be mandated by the Bill if passed as currently drafted. However, we acknowledge that changes to consultation requirements may result in a de-emphasis on the 'four well-beings', particularly social and cultural well-being.

Similarly controversial is the Bill's requirement that local authorities operate within a defined fiscal envelope. This is viewed by critics as imposing a 'sinking lid' on expenditure and limiting councils' ability to respond to changing and diverse community needs. Over time, it is feared, the cap on spending will lead to cutbacks in services. The Bill provides for extended leases on water infrastructure from the current fifteen years to thirty-five years. Given the growing importance of the management and supply of freshwater with increased demand as a result of population growth and lifestyle drivers, and the status of water services as a core service of local government, this is a critical issue for long-term community planning. Finally, the Bill proposes that a pre-election report be issued by a local authority chief executive before each triennial general election to provide information to promote public discussion of the issues facing the local authority. The report must be published no later than two weeks before the date on which nominations close for candidates at the election. It is hoped that this will also engender improvements in voter turnout at local elections.

As noted above, the final form of the amending legislation remains to be determined following the select committee's report due in late 2010 and subsequent revisions and parliamentary debates. However, it is clear that there have already been policy losses for the Minister as a result of discussions within Cabinet about the scope of the reforms. Of note, is that the long-term planning process has not been rejected. To have jettisoned it would have been contrary to a large body of scholarly and practitioner literature, as well as a body of good practice, that affirms the importance of strategic planning in both the public and private sectors.

With the fundamentals of long-term community planning intact, and transparency in some ways enhanced (notably, the pre-election report and simplified LTCCP) but in other ways possibly diminished (reduced consultation over some policies that were previously included in the LTCCP but now removed), what are the associated impacts on public participation – itself a key mechanism for accountability – and for the wider process of local governance of which community-led strategic planning has been a central element?

The Minister considers reforms "represent significant progress towards better local government, and towards easier and *more effective participation by ratepayers and*

residents in the activities and decisions of councils" (Minister of Local Government 2010: 2, emphasis added). The Minister's assumption, in promoting change to the long-term planning process, appears to be that the process does not adequately provide for participation by citizens. This is inconsistent with findings of the Local Government Commission (2008) as part of its review of the Local Government Act 2002 and Local Electoral Act 2001, that there is positive engagement by citizens with councils in long-term planning and that councils value the requirement to undertake long-term planning. The Local Government Commission argues that reliance on the use of the traditional approach of submissions in response to a public notice (the 'special consultative procedure' as it is termed in the Local Government Act) is problematic and recommends that councils use more effective consultation mechanisms. The limited provisions for participation at council meetings, reliance on traditional public meetings and communication via public notices, along with deficiencies in the electoral system have exacerbated the long downward trend in voter turnout since the 1980s. This concurs with two paradoxes associated with governance approaches:

> Firstly, despite accounts of the 'hollowing out' of the state as a result of an increasing plurality of governance arrangements, the power of the state is not necessarily diminished. Secondly, even when governments genuinely appear to do all they can to facilitate citizen participation, these efforts do not necessarily empower citizens. At the heart of both paradoxes lies the persistence of traditional forms of government (Blakely, 2010: 131).

Conclusion

The LGA 2002 provides a mandate for New Zealand local authorities to undertake community planning with explicit provisions for engaging and being accountable to the communities they serve. This Act was born out of growing dissatisfaction with cumbersome, reactive and prescriptive legislation with a limited strategic outlook, and growing public consciousness of sustainability. It resulted in a rebalancing of the relationship between communities and local government (Scott et al. 2004, Houston & Katavic 2006), following trends internationally towards a network approach to governing. Collaboration and partnership were hailed as the new core principles for local government to develop and achieve a prosperous shared future (Houston & Katavic 2006). The literature on engagement clearly indicates benefits are to be had, but considers 'best practice' is difficult given the diversity of communities and their capacity to participate in meaningful engagement (Lane & Corbett 2005, Houston & Katavic 2006, Smith et al. 2006, Taylor 2006, Hughes 2007). Similarly, research on partnerships attests to its effectiveness, but finds that issues around power-sharing and process can

undermine its effectiveness (Slack 2004, Robinson et al. 2005, Smith et al. 2006, Taylor 2006, Hughes 2007).

The LGA 2002 provides a mixture of prescription and flexibility in terms of engaging and collaborating with the community for long-term planning (Scott et al. 2004, Richardson & Winefield 2007). The Act's main strength lies in the options it provides for connecting with the community (Richardson & Winefield 2007), but its weakness lies in its interpretation and implementation by some local authorities (Controller and Auditor-General 2006a, Controller and Auditor-General 2006b, Richardson & Winefield2007, Controller and Auditor-General 2009). Reviews and audits have recommended further policy measures to improve performance but, given the diversity of the community and the range of the issues that need to be addressed, it may be impossible to achieve uniformly satisfactory results.

In summary, there has been a noticeable trend both in New Zealand for devolution from central government to local government and for broader citizen participation in government planning and decision-making processes at all levels (Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996). Although the stated purpose of the various government reforms have been efficiency (Mulgan 1994, Wood & Rudd 1996), economics and market stability (Mulgan 1994), it is clear that there has been a significant paradigm shift with respect to participatory governance networks. Although introduced by 'decree' by central government, in the form of statutory requirements, community-led strategic planning is a response to aspirations from communities and also from the local government sector to undertake strategic planning involving the range of local stakeholders whose efforts need to be harnessed in order for the desired outcomes to be achieved. Whilst there have been challenges to overcome (not least the development of capacity among elected members, local authority staff and citizens), and progress still to be made (in particular, in achieving alignment of central and local government strategies and in engaging many hard-to-reach sectors), the passage of the Local Government Act 2002 undoubtedly resulted in a quantum leap forward in community-led strategic planning in New Zealand as evidenced by, among other things, survey data on New Zealanders' familiarity with the LTCCP (LGC, 2008). Whether these achievements will be sustained, and further gains made, is not certain.

Despite several government reviews and audits indicating no major flaws with the current framework, the new central government has embarked on a road of major reform that has the potential to undermine the basic assumptions of community planning. If planning and decision-making become disengaged from the community, a future may be created that no one wants, by an authority that no one engages with or trusts.

Although the tide may be turning for community-led strategic planning in New Zealand with proposed changes to the LGA 2002, it is far from turning internationally.[5] Despite the paradoxes referred to above, and also the danger in over-optimism about the new institutional forms of participation, Blakely (2010: 141) notes that: "Participation has its own dynamism and displays a constant tendency to escape the channels and structures which work to institutionalize it." The 'empowerment genie' having been released is unlikely to be contained and the broader historical trend towards participatory governance networks and devolution is likely to prevail.

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[5] In the United Kingdom, for example, the new Conservative government has introduced a Decentralisation and Localism Bill which includes a power of general competence. See http://www.number10.gov.uk/queens-speech/2010/05/queens-speech-decentralisation-and-localism-bill-50673

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RESEARCH and EVALUATION

The emergence of community strategic planning in New South Wales, Australia: Influences, challenges and opportunities

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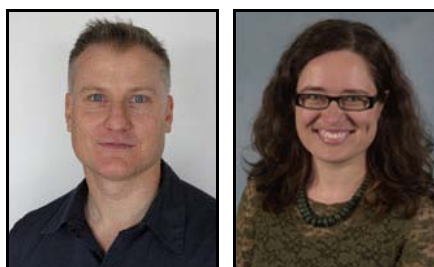
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Abstract

This paper investigates the emergence of community strategic planning in the New South Wales (NSW) local government sector, against the backdrop of a series of broad influences ranging from increased interest in participatory democracy through to sustainable infrastructure provision. It provides an understanding of how community strategic planning has evolved over the past few decades to embody these influences. The paper concludes with reflections on some common challenges and opportunities experienced by local councils in NSW that have undertaken voluntary community strategic planning or are in the process of developing community strategic plans. Given underlying similarities in the emergence of participatory long-term strategic planningin local government around the world, many of the experiences associated with the preparation of community strategic plans in the NSW context are likely to be of relevance to those undertaking similar processes in other jurisdictions.

Keywords

Community, Strategic Planning, Participation and Engagement, New South Wales local government, Australian local government

1.   Introduction

Recent amendments to the *NSW Local Government Act 1993* (*NSWLG Act*) require every local government in NSW to develop a minimum ten-year *community strategic plan* that is informed through "engagement with the local community", that is based on "social justice principles", and that acts as their principal planning document (see *NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402(1)-(7)). This new planning framework offers a mechanism to embrace a series of influences that have affected local government over the past few decades. At the same time it presents ongoing challenges to local councils in formulating and implementing community strategic plans.

This paper begins with an overview of how community strategic planning and the plans it produces fit into the body of planning instruments within the NSW local government sector, and how community strategic planning has evolved over the past few decades. It then examines shifts in local governance and planning that have *influenced* the emergence of mandatory long-term, community-driven strategic planning. Finally, the paper examines some emerging *challenges and opportunities*, based on the observations of a number of councils that have recently completed or embarked upon the development of community strategic plans.

The influences, challenges and opportunities presented in the paper are based on a review of key literature, the documented experiences of councils who have undertaken community strategic planning (before or after the adoption of the new legislative requirements), researcher field notes on participation in various aspects of community strategic plan making, and the reflections and questions put forward by councils in industry forums held to discuss the new framework. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the councils we refer to. While this paper focuses on NSW, we suggest that many of the issues discussed here are likely to have wider relevance, given underlying similarities in the emerging planning frameworks across Australia and in other countries in which state or national legislation now requires local government to engage the community in long-term strategic planning for local areas. Examples include New Zealand, which requires a councils to have a Long Term Council Community Plan[2] and the United Kingdom, which requires a Local Community

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[2] New Zealand Local Government Act 2002, part. 4 and 6. New Zealand, like the United Kingdom, has had a longer history of community-led strategic planning at a local level than New South Wales (Brady 2010).

Strategy.[3] This marks a shift over the last few decades towards strategic planning processes that seek to build long-term strategies on *genuine* engagement with the community and which allow communities to be fully involved in establishing both the long-term vision and priorities for action.[4]

2.   Community strategic plans and the evolution of local government planning

This section of the paper gives a brief overview of the place of the community strategic plan within the evolving framework of planning instruments used by NSW local government (see Figure 1). The 152 councils in NSW have powers delegated to them through state government legislation. The Division of Local Government (NSWDLG)[5] is the agency responsible for local governments across NSW. It is responsible for providing a clear policy and legislative foundation for local government, part of which includes the recent changes requiring each council to develop a 10-year community strategic plan.

Until recently the phrase *strategic planning* as used by NSW local government has tended to be synonymous with *strategic land-use planning*, regulated through the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1997* (NSWEP&A) (see Figure 1) and concerned primarily with the built environment and land use activities. Within this context, local governments are required to prepare strategic land-use planning instruments for their local area, such as Local Environment Plans (zoning plans) and detailed Development Control Plans, together with associated compliance mechanisms to assess applications for development activities in light of those plans. However, the latter decades of the 20th century saw the emergence of another form of strategic planning within NSW local government. It has been driven by a diverse series of influences such as the rise of participatory democracy, a desire for longer-term and more integrated forms of planning, and increasing concern about sustainability and social equity. It was also strongly influenced by the emergence of *corporate planning* within NSW local government.

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[3] United Kingdom Local Government Act 2000, ch. 22, part. 1
[4] For example, New Zealand Local Government Act 2002, part 6.
[5] Until July 2010, the Division of Local Government was called the Department of Local Government.

NSW Local Government Planning and Reporting Requirements
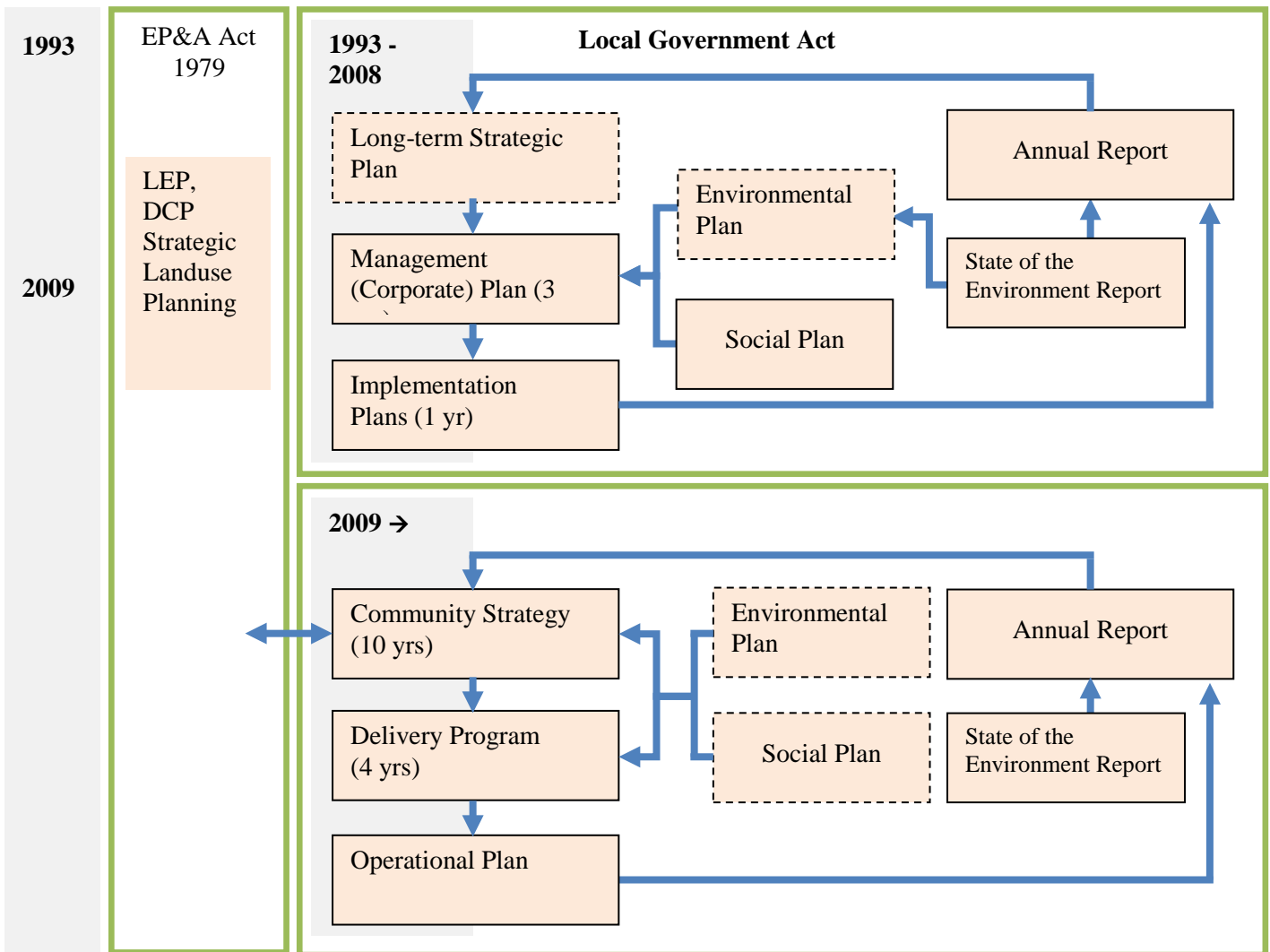
Figure 1: Community strategic planning as part of the evolving NSW local government planning framework (created by the authors) Note: Dashed lines indicate which plans are voluntary

The key instruments for corporate planning as set out in the *NSWLG Act* have until recently been the management plan and annual report, which are designed to be linked in coherent planning and reporting cycles (see Figure 1). The timeframe for management plans was at least three-years, with an annual update. Some councils interpreted the intent of the *NSWLG Act* as requiring both strategic and operational plans, which together address the legislative requirements for management planning. Other councils have developed longer-term strategic plans, even though this was *not* an explicit requirement of the legislation (see Figure 1).

The voluntary nature of these early long-term strategic plans meant that local councils across NSW chose to design and implement them in a variety of ways. For example, whilst Penrith City Council's (PCC 2005) strategic plan was formulated primarily by councillors[6] as representatives of the community, the neighbouring Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) carried out an extensive community participation process (BMCC 2000b). BMCC first adopted a 25-year strategic plan in the 1970s (Berry & Dillon 2005). The practical experience of developing long-term strategic plans within these innovative councils has arguably shaped the legislative context, providing legislators with tangible evidence of the feasibility of long-range planning horizons, the benefits of wide-ranging community engagement, and the value of comprehensive 'holistic' planning for local community priorities extending beyond councils' own responsibilities.

Influenced by the success of these voluntary strategic plans and by the broader influences we will discuss in the next section of this paper, the latter half of the 2000s saw the NSW Government revise its statutory planning framework for NSW local councils to include a mandatory (minimum 10-year) community strategic plan. The community strategic plan operates as part of an "integrated planning and reporting framework for NSW Local Governments" that is designed to make them "accountable for their actions" (NSWDLG 2006a; *NSWLG Act* 1993, ch. 13). It thus provides a clearer structure for councils wishing to undertake such planning. It also incorporates "social equity principles of equity, access, participation and rights" as one of its key drivers and in doing so, replaces the mandatory social plan that was previously required (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402(3)(b); NSWDLG, 2006a; NSWDLG 2009d). As these community strategic plans are prepared and enacted over the next few years, they will become the highest level of plan that councils will prepare (*NSWLG Act* 1993, *No. 30,* ch. 13; NSWDLG 2009d). Within the new planning framework, they are to be supported in each council by a resourcing strategy "for the provision of the resources required to achieve the objectives established by the community strategic plan" (NSWDLG 2009d, p. 5), a 4-year 'delivery program', and an annual operational plan, so that the community's strategic goals are systematically translated into actions (*NSWLG Act* 1993, ch. 13; NSWDLG 2009d, p. 6; NSWDLG 2010, p. 11-23).

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[6] Councillors are the elected representatives of local government in NSW. Local government elections are held every four years.

3.   Influences

A number of historical shifts created a policy environment supportive of the development of mandatory community strategic plans in NSW. Some are based on changes in theory and approaches in planning worldwide; others are specific changes in planning practice in the NSW local government context. We address five of these shifts. They range from the growth of participatory democracy within local government systems previously dominated by representative forms of democracy, through to the emergence of sustainability as an overarching concept which has increasingly refocused local government from the so-called 'three Rs' agenda – roads, rates and rubbish – to supporting the development of sustainable local communities (Brown 1997).

Increasing citizen participation

Throughout most of the twentieth century, citizen involvement in Australian local government, and in local government in many other Commonwealth countries, fell largely within the ambit of *indirect participation*; that is, "those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of [their representatives] and/or the actions they take" (Aulich 2009:46). This indirect participation has often been further diluted as a result of structural changes in local government, such as the decline in the number of elected representatives per head of population (Hearfield & Dollery 2009:73).

Since the 1960s, there has been a growing interest in increasing citizen participation in local government decision making and planning processes (Cook & Morgan 1971). This has led to a search for better complementarities between representative and participatory democracy (Innes & Booher 2004). As a result of this shift, there is now a significant body of political theory that argues for a more participatory model of democracy rather than a representative one that allows citizens to have a say only through elections (see Aulich 2009; Hearfield & Dollery 2009). Proponents of participatory democracy argue that citizens have a right (and indeed should be encouraged and supported) to participate in a range of ways, on an ongoing basis, in decisions that affect them. Rights-based reasons for participation relate to the democratic right of citizens to have input into policy: "bringing the pattern of values and preferences represented within the policy process closer to that existing within society as a whole" (Rydin & Pennington 2000:154); and focus on overcoming barriers to participation. Within this rationale, public participation is successful when it involves a wide range of parties, and works

towards a shared vision or consensus, and therefore results in a plan, policy or decision which operates with a greater level of consent. There is an ever-increasing number of examples of governments at all levels in Australia that are attempting to provide new ways for citizens to participate in planning, decision making and policy.[7]

It is at the local government level that there is the most activity of this kind, with many councils engaging their communities in a wide range of planning and policy-making activities. Some councils go beyond statutory minimum notification or consultation requirements, and engage their communities in order to pursue additional objectives of trust building, community development, long-term visioning, better integration or community building (Prior 2007; Prior 2008). Key amongst these have been the community engagement processes that councils such as Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC, 2000b), Coffs Harbor City Council (CHCC 2009a, 2009b and 2009c), Cowra Shire Council (Cowra Shire Council 2006a and 2006b) and City of Sydney (COS) (COS n.d.) adopted for the preparation of voluntary long-term strategic plans prior to the *NSWLG Act*.[8] The ability of councils to engage communities in planning and decision making processes is being supported by an increasing body of resource materials (see for example, DECC 2008; Carson & Gelbar 2001), and the inclusion of community participation as good practice within local government policies and codes (Marshall & Sproats 2000:502).

As noted earlier, much has been written in recent decades about the tension between representative and participative democracy at the local government level (Held 1996; Day 1997), about the weaknesses of each when they are applied separately, and about the need to combine them. For example, Somerville (2005) and Meadowcroft (2001) refer to the need for a balance between the two, and suggest that participatory democracy, like representative democracy, has its limits. An attempt to achieve this balance is evident within the legislation that guides the preparation of mandatory community strategic plans (*NSWLG Act* 1993).

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[7] See for example the Western Australian Government's 2003 *Dialogue with the city and other deliberative democratic processes that have been employed in Australia* (Carson 2007)

[8] The development of BMCC's voluntary 25-year strategic plan involved a wide range of community engagement activities, including creative arts processes and community festivals (BMCC 2000a, 2000b); Cowra's 30-year voluntary strategic plan (Cowra Shire Council 2006a) was created through a Future Search Conference in which 80 community members came together over three days to identify a vision and strategic directions; and the development of the voluntary Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategy (CoS n.d.) was based on consultation with 12,000 local residents through roundtable discussions, community workshops, Live Green panel discussions, six forums with the Indigenous community, eight primary school workshops, and government briefings.

The *NSWLG Act* requires local councils to prepare and implement a community engagement strategy to develop their community strategic plans so that local communities can be involved in important "discussions about funding priorities, service level, preserving local identity and to plan in partnership for a more sustainable future" (NSWDLG 2009e:2). At the same time, the legislation requires councillors, after each four-yearly election, to review and if necessary amend the existing plan or to develop a new one "to ensure that the area has a community strategic plan covering at least the next 10 years" (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402 (5)), with the understanding that council is the custodian of the plan "for the local government area on behalf of their community" (*NSWLG Act* 1993, ch. 13, Introduction). Further extensive community engagement is required.

Diversifying forms of knowledge

Over the past few decades there has been numerous critiques of the way in which planning and decision-making processes in local government have been traditionally dominated by a 'top-down' approach, based on positivistic forms of expert knowledge (typically knowledge held by council officers as a result of professional training) (Frieden 1968; Merrifield & Swyngedouw 1997). A broad range of hybrid approaches to planning were developed in the last decades of the 20th century in response to these critiques (Sager 1994; Healey 1998).

A key feature of these new approaches is that they seek to take into account the voices of a diversity of players, rather than just those of expert planners, and to use the knowledge that emerges from these alternative sources to inform the planning process (Healey 1998). They also seek to capture diverse knowledge through dialogue with community; through learning to read symbolic and non-verbal evidence; and through contemplative or appreciative inquiry (Frieden 1968; Smith 1997). The purpose of planning thus becomes the handling of multiple 'knowledges'.[9] The emphasis is on listening to unheard voices and hence previously unheard knowledges, variously categorized as lay, local, experiential or intuitive. The difficulty that this poses is how to handle the multiple sources of knowledge, how to engage different knowledges with each other, and how to make complementary changes to decision making. The answer that has generally emerged is for a greater reliance on deliberative and collaborative approaches such as:

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[9] The term 'knowledges' in this context means the diversity of ways of knowing, or bodies of knowledge that can be brought together to inform a plan-making process (see Healy 1996, 1998)

advocacy planning, equity planning, communicative planning and radical planning (e.g. Foster 1983; Sager 1994; Healey 1998).

These new approaches are often referred to as the *communicative* or *pluralist* turn in planning (Innes 1995) because they encourage a participatory approach emphasizing inclusive planning processes and highlighting the planner's role in mediating among stakeholders (Healey 1998; Habermas 1981). Increasingly, examples of such processes can be found amongst NSW local governments, such as Parramatta City Council and the City of Sydney. These councils have sought to develop processes based on the principle that community members are essential participants in developing knowledge about priorities and approaches to the delivery of services and projects, and the maintenance of infrastructure. In these processes, community members are actively engaged beyond a standard 'consultation on draft' approach (Prior 2007).

Reflecting this trend towards developing plans based on a broad range of knowledges, there is a requirement within the new community strategic plan legislation that councils ensure the plan is adequately informed by "*relevant information* relating to civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues" (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402 (3) (c)). This requirement raises questions about how to blend and balance expert knowledge with knowledge emerging from diverse community sources.

Emergence of sustainability as a focus within local government

Sustainability emerged as a key concern in local governance in the last decade of the 20th century. The idea of sustainability has led to a growing realization that achieving such goals as social inclusion, economic regeneration, environmental protection and the efficient delivery of services to communities involves an increased readiness to address issues holistically. This requires the introduction of mechanisms for more integrated forms of planning that actively seek community involvement (NSWDLG 1999; NSWDLG 2006a).

An important influence on community strategic planning in NSW is increasing concern in the local government sector about long-term *financial* sustainability. A study commissioned by the Local Government and Shires Associations (LGSA) in 2005 (the Allan Report), found that while NSW councils are generally low in debt levels (measured against asset levels), 25% were considered "financially unsustainable" (NSROC 2010).

Related issues include ageing infrastructure, limits to rate increases which are enforced by the state government ('rate pegging'), uncertainty about state and federal government funding, increased demands on the sector and 'cost shifting'[10] by other levels of government. Two of the seven recommendations of a recent NSW infrastructure task force referred to the need for long-term asset management planning and financial planning (DLG 2006), stating:

> Strategic long term asset management and financial plans be included as essential components of an integrated planning and reporting framework across NSW local government. (Recommendation 1)

and:

> Legislative amendments requiring ten year financial planning be introduced into the Local Government Act 1993. (Recommendation 6).

Infrastructure maintenance is an issue at the heart of this problem – roads, drainage, parks and other community facilities are in many cases ageing and need major repair or replacement (see for example Sutherland Shire Council 2009). Allan (2008) suggests that NSW councils will need to implement huge increases in rates, fees and charges over the next ten years unless the commonwealth and/or state governments come to their assistance, or they drastically cut services, or they allow a backlog of dilapidated infrastructure to grow worse, or they accept escalating budget deficits.

In the face of these financial challenges, community strategic plans provide councils with a way to distinguish between the 'critical few' and the 'important many' community needs. They may also provide a sound foundation on which to approach other levels of government for funding or rate increases (through special levies) to pay for these priority items (see for example Hornsby Shire Council 2009). As Pears (2008) suggests:

> By exploring its sustainability in terms of services, infrastructure and finances, a council can develop a business case for increased funding to put to its community and the Minister for Local Government.

Moves towards integrating *environmental* sustainability into local government decision making can be traced to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Gordon 1994). At the conference, Australia, along with other nations, agreed to Agenda 21 – an action plan implementing sustainable development principles. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 subsequently evolved into Local Agenda 21 (LA21) which set out a new role for local government: formulating

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[10] In 2003, a Federal Parliamentary inquiry (the Hawker Inquiry), suggested that the impact of cost shifting by the states onto local government was between $500 million to $1 billion per year (NSROC 2010).

sustainable development strategies and integrating social, environmental and economic sustainability into mainstream policies (Cotter & Hannan 1999; Gordon 1994). LA21 was firmly grasped by many local governments across Australia through the 1990s as a mechanism to improve quality of life through partnership working, coordinated action across sectors, and engaging local communities in forming a shared vision. The voluntary nature of such commitments meant they were susceptible to changing political priorities and resourcing constraints (Mercer & Jotkowitz 2000). However, since 1999 local governments in NSW have had a legal obligation to consider sustainability in their decision making. Councils, councillors and council employees are required to have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) in carrying out all of their responsibilities (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 7, 8, 403(2)).

A nationwide survey of Australian councils found that by 1994, councils generally recognized the need to combine social, economic, and environmental agendas in their planning and in their administrative structures (Brown 1997). Recent publications (see Holmes *et al.* 2008; Brackertz & Meredyth 2008), forums for local government practitioners (see NSWDECC 2008) and programs (see Cuming & Bragg 2006) focus on communicating the critical role of sustainability at the core of a council's governance responsibilities, and on helping councils better integrate these objectives into strategic planing and daily operations. Many councils have taken a strategic approach to planning for environmental protection or broader sustainability even though the framework for doing so has been emergent, voluntary and open to interpretation (see Herriman *et al.* 2008).

The shift towards local governance for sustainable communities is reflected in the new mandatory community strategic planning processes in NSW and the associated emerging framework for planning and reporting (Bibby 2009). The framework recognizes that "communities do not exist in isolation – they are part of a larger natural, social, economic and political environment that influences and, to a large extent, shapes their future direction" (NSWDLG 2009e, p. 2, see also *NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402(3)(a)). This recognition means that plans must address "civic leadership, social, economic issues in an integrated manner" (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402(3)(a)).

Addressing social justice and embedding social planning

The fourth identifiable influence, closely linked with the first three, is the ongoing attempt to entrench the notion of social justice within local government decision making and planning processes. The notion of social justice – the idea that there should be justice in every aspect of society, rather than merely in the administration of law, and that individuals and groups are entitled to fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of society – emerged as a key aim of social planning in the Australian local government sector during the latter part of the 20th century (Menzies 1993:3; see also Menzies *et al.* 1996). As Menzies notes:

> social planning should be underpinned by principles of social justice. This means that the social project should … protect the interest of vulnerable groups … avoid discriminatory practices … consider the equity implications of proposals … promote fair, open and participatory decision making … and ensure equal opportunity in it practices (Menzies 1993:5).

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the focus of NSW local governments on social justice was strengthened through the development of social justice strategies and directives for all levels of Australian government (see Commonwealth of Australia 1992; NSW Government 1996; NSW Government 2000). As a result of these directives and strategies, social justice principles have been incorporated into the NSW charter of local government (section 8 of *NSWLG Act*), and into 1998 legislation[11] that requires all councils in NSW to develop a social/community plan that addresses social justice issues. Also, in their annual reports councils are required to report on access and equity activities "that aim to promote social justice and enhance community wellbeing" (NSWDLG 2002, p. 7; Schwarz et al 2007).

The emergence of social sustainability as part of the broader concept of sustainability in the past two decades, whilst still nascent (McKenzie 2004:11; Koning 2001: 2), has added a new 'future focus' dimension to the notion of social justice – that is, of "a society that is just, equal, without social exclusion and with a decent quality of life, or livelihood, for all" (Koning 2001:9). As Partridge (2005:8) has noted: "the difference between social justice and social sustainability is the 'futures focus' that is contained within the sustainability perspective." It follows that social sustainability requires not only the creation of a just society in the present, but also the establishment of structures

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[11] See NSW Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) 1998; NSW Local Government Act (General) Regulation 1999.

and processes that will guarantee lasting and continuing justice for current and future generations (see also Smith 1997).

A number of NSW councils have already sought to incorporate social justice initiatives into voluntary long-term strategic plans (see PCC 2005:6), and have noted the ineffectiveness of the four-year planning cycle to address issues such as neighborhood disadvantage that require longer-term investment by councils and their partners (Prior 2008). Building on these experiences, mandatory community strategic plans require the establishment of "strategic objectives together with strategies to achieve those objectives…based on…social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights" (NSWDLG 2009e:6; see also *NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402 (4); NSWDLG 2010). As well as requiring social justice principles to be embedded within community strategic plans, the Act also requires that social *planning* be embedded in the process (NSWDLG 2010:31) replacing the previous mandatory requirement for preparation of a social plan. We later explore the challenges faced by councils in attempting to achieve social justice through the community strategic plan.

The trend towards longer-term, integrated decision making and planning

The final influence we examine is the increasing realization in the second half of the 20th century that there was a need for more integrated forms of planning within local government that broke down the departmental approach to planning – through the development of corporate planning, integrated planning and strategic planning. During the 1960s, a range of studies challenged the *traditional departmentalism* within local government and encouraged a shift towards a corporate approach to management and policy formulation (Redcliffe-Maud *et al.* 1969; Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1972). The corporate planning approach that emerged (Rugman 1973) sought to manage councils' resources to create a more 'integrated response to the present and future needs of its community' (Menzies *et al.* 1996:164; Menzies 1993:2). The reorganization of many councils that accompanied this approach (Boyd 1992) saw a greater emphasis on the need for staff and operating divisions to participate in more integrative forms of planning for the communities in their local government area (Kidd 2007; Healey 2005).

Australian has seen increasing attempts to create more integrated planning processes within local government such as the emergence in the 1990s of Integrated Local Area Planning (ILAP) which sought to create "a pathway to better local area government"

(ALGA 1993:5; NSWDLG 2005). It was argued that an effective combination of strategic and corporate planning within council was central to ILAP: strategic planning was seen as being concerned with influencing trends and issues across all facets of local government areas, whilst corporate planning was defined as planning for the administration of the council's own activities within that broader context.

Whilst the requirement for corporate plans contained in the 1993 Act provided a foundation for more integrated forms of planning, dependence on relatively short-term management plans has come under increasing criticism throughout the early 21st century. The Infrastructure Task Force (LGSA 2007), amongst others, noted the challenges of planning sustainable infrastructure within the 4-year election cycles of local government, and the three-yearly management planning cycle used by most councils. Following the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government 2006[12] (Dollery & Crase 2006), a need was identified for a planning horizon beyond three years to ensure longer-term financial and infrastructure issues were satisfactorily addressed. The new integrated planning and reporting framework for NSW local governments, in which the (minimum) 10-year community strategic plan is the principal document (*NSWLG Act* 1993, s. 402(1); NSWDLG 2006a; NSWDLG 2005), was introduced to address this need:

> each local government area must have a community strategic plan developed by the council for the future of the local community covering a period of at least 10 years. To support the community strategic plan, a council must have a long-term resourcing strategy that includes long-term financial planning, workforce management planning and asset planning (*NSWLG Act* 1993, Ch. 13 Introduction).

In the next section, we explore the challenges that local governments of different sizes face as the custodians of this new planning framework.

4.   Challenges and Opportunities

This section reflects on the recent experiences of several NSW councils that are in the process of creating, or have created, their community strategic plans. It identifies some of the challenges councils are likely to face in the plan-making process, and the opportunities that these challenges might bring.

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[12] The four main goals of the inquiry were to: determine the current financial position and performance of the NSW local government sector; to gauge the adequacy of existing NSW local government physical infrastructure and service delivery; to assess the financial capacity of local government to meet its statutory obligations, expected functions and likely future challenges; and to identify possible financial, administrative, governance and intergovernmental reforms that could address any problems (Dollery & Crase 2006).

The varying capacities of councils to implement community strategic plans

Earlier in this paper, we examined the ongoing emergence of more integrated forms of planning and reporting within Australian local government and discussed community strategic planning as a part of this process. Concern has arisen within many NSW local councils about how they can effectively undertake the varied and complex processes and changes required under the new integrated planning and reporting framework (IPRF). These concerns are not evenly distributed amongst councils but are very much related to their size and geographical context.

A large majority of Australian local governments are non-urban – in 2005, 560 Australian local governments, or 78% of the total number, were classified as 'rural' or 'regional' (DoTARS 2005:3 cited in Aulich 2009). This urban-rural divide represents a critical dimension of uneven resourcing (Aulich 2009:56). Similarly, the 152 local councils in NSW vary greatly in terms of their geographical reach, population and capacity. Populations range from 284,692 in Blacktown City to just 1,286 in Urana Shire (NSWDLG 2009b:14-16); geographical areas from 53,509km^2 (Central Darling Shire) to 5.7km^2 (Hunters Hill) (NSWDLG 2009b:14-16); and numbers of staff from 1517 full-time equivalent at the City of Sydney to just 32 at Urana Shire (NSWDLG 2009b:124–126).

A recent review raised concerns about the ability of smaller and regional councils to engage with complex issues such as sustainability, which are core to the success of the community strategic planning process (Pillora *et al.* 2009:16). Smaller and isolated regional councils identified staffing, resourcing and capacity as key concerns, with comments such as: "we don't have anyone to do the work on council's own sustainability. Even if we have the information there is no one to act on it"; "staff have to take on responsibilities that they're not trained for and so mistakes get made. We're forever playing catch up"; and "[we] don't have the resources to apply for and manage grant funding" (Pillora *et al.* 2009:16). While a phased roll-out of the new legislation[13] allows smaller councils more time to come to terms with the IPRF, they may still face considerable resourcing constraints. As yet, the reforms have not been linked to any explicit and targeted state government funding streams to support the transition (LGMA 2009:7).

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[13] Three phases of implementation are proposed. All councils will be required to comply with the new framework, and to have adopted a Community Strategic Plan, by 2012 (NSWDLG, 2009c)

In the coming years, it is likely that these concerns will extend to a large majority of NSW councils, not just those that are small or isolated, given the ongoing widespread skills shortages in the NSW local government sector, especially in land-use planning (Red Letter Communication 2005:2 and 20). Also, in interviews with councils across NSW on sustainability responses, staff capacity and turnover has been raised as a significant barrier to progress (Pillora *et al.* 2009:14). It is likely that these same skills shortage issues will affect corporate planning in the future, as requirements increase in terms of the number of mandated plan outputs, the extension of the planning horizon, and the increased requirement for community engagement in the plan-making process.

The NSWDLG has announced that it is considering a number of strategies to support implementation of the IPRF, including:

- identifying councils who are doing well in particular aspects of the planning and reporting framework, and liaise with them about how their practice may be used to support councils who need further development in these areas; and

- providing feedback to councils during the initial implementation regarding how well they are meeting the statutory requirements of the new Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (NSWDLG 2009a:12).

Councils have expressed an interest in "templates, check lists, standards and a resource library to assist with the transition" (LGMA 2009:6). It seems that these support measures will be critical to ensuring that opportunities for learning are maximized in the sector as individual councils may be too busy grappling with the changes required and feeling their way through their first community strategic plan process to initiate systematic information exchange. There will be an important role for state government and industry peak bodies to play in facilitating a sharing of approaches among councils, in a way that recognizes scale and capacity.

The role of councils as custodians of community strategic plans

The community strategic plan reflects the formalization of a previously voluntary form of strategic planning that emerged in many NSW local governments over recent decades. As the name implies, community strategic plans seek to give emphasis to community-led rather than council-led strategy development, the idea being that the plan is *owned* by the local community, developed through extensive input by the community, and is for the community / whole local government area. It is not developed by a single institution,

even though one institution – the council – is required to help bring the plan into being and operates as its 'custodian'.

Thus whilst councils will become the custodians of the strategic plans developed for the communities they represent, they are not seen as wholly responsible for their implementation. They are encouraged to partner with community organizations and NSW government agencies to deliver the objectives set out in the plans (NSWDLG 2009d:5). This is in line with the approach of many councils who voluntarily developed long-term strategic plans based on extensive community input prior to the implementation of the new legislation. For example, when Cowra Shire Council in central NSW developed 'Futures 30', a 30-year strategic plan (Cowra Shire Council 2006a), it was "sponsored and facilitated by Cowra Shire Council but the plan belongs to the Cowra Community" (Cowra Shire Council 2006b). The plan includes a statement of council's role but also identifies the 'other players' (such as the NSW Government and NGOs) involved for each strategic objective (Cowra Shire Council 2006a).

What this new role of 'custodian' means in practice is twofold. Firstly, that local governments are transformed into facilitators of planning, which the community as a whole must carry out. As some councils have noted, this constitutes a transformation of local governments towards 'enabling' organizations, with a focus on being facilitators of community projects and social outcomes:

> a funder and enabler of public services with the management and control of these projects devolved to the institutions of civil society … a process, as a way of encouraging communities of interest and mutual forms of political action (Latham 2001, cited in McGrath et al. 2004:7).

Secondly, local governments are learning that the IPRF requires them to become regional brokers between other agencies and the community. Councils are now required to consider actions in their plans that they themselves cannot carry out, and that other agencies will need to deliver. This involves brokerage – lobbying other agencies to implement actions which will deliver on the communities' visions. A concern of many councils is that whilst they are required to broker arrangements with other agencies (such as departments of the NSW Government), those agencies do not have a reciprocal obligation to consider local community visions when shaping their own strategic commitments.

Engaging the community in strategic planning

Over recent decades there has been a shift within NSW local governments to embracing greater participatory governance that actively engages communities in the formulation of policy (Aulich 2009). The new IPRF legislation, with its requirement for involving local communities in strategic agenda-setting through active two-way deliberation, provides a significant ongoing opportunity for embedding participatory governance within planning processes. Whilst many councils have seized this opportunity, it has also led to extensive discussion within local government on what it means to engage communities in strategic plan development; on councils' organizational capacity to support community engagement; and on the ability of councils to balance the new participatory dimensions of plan development with the traditional prerogative of elected representatives to devise plans and decide how they will be carried out.

Across NSW, the degree to which community engagement in strategic planning is a *new* challenge for local councils varies considerably, depending on past experience and capacity.[14] For example, Blue Mountains City Council, as previously mentioned, has a history of developing long-term strategic plans (BMCC 2000b) through an extensive community participatory process, and has had time to develop and establish extensive mechanisms to support such processes (see also Gosford City Council 2005:11).

By contrast, Ashfield Council needed to develop engagement processes for their community strategic plans from scratch. In Ashfield's case, it was able to draw on substantial previous work undertaken to develop a Community Engagement Policy and a Community Engagement Toolkit (Ashfield Council 2008). These documents were based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and the Brisbane Declaration (Brisbane Declaration on Community Engagement 2005), and represented a clear commitment to embedding quality community engagement into council policy and practice.

Guided by the policy, a key focus of Ashfield Council was to explore how it could incorporate community consultation processes into existing activities, rather than seeing

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[14]   A survey of 25 councils finds that municipalities with a population below 50,000 are much less likely to undertake community consultation (which, the authors suggest, may reflect general satisfaction with the elected members). In councils with populations above 50,000, they find little correlation between size and sophistication of consultative mechanisms. That is, councils with populations of 50,000 are just as likely to consult the public as those above 150,000. The authors also note that some of those with the largest populations did the least consulting (Marshall & Sproats 2000:501-502).

them as a collection of one-off and stand-alone activities which required additional resourcing and funding. It thus sought to balance council's capacity with the ideals expressed in the new legislation. Ashfield Council's response to the problem is evidence of an awareness that designing and managing significant community engagement processes not only demands a substantial time commitment by council staff, but also requires specific skill sets in these staff – skills that may not have previously been identified as important in roles which were traditionally focused on technical or contract management tasks (Jones 2002).

Other authors have noted that participatory approaches may require institutional change within government agencies (McGrath *et al.* 2004), and that hands-on facilitated training and reflective field experience of participatory processes may be required for senior managers and large numbers of agency staff (Korten 1988, cited in McGrath *et al.* 2004).

As previously indicated, another key issue for local government in the community strategic plan-making process is that direct community participation is given a legislative foundation (NSWDLG 2009d:6) but this does not extinguish the legitimate powers of elected representatives to direct / determine the final content of the plan. This has resulted in discussion about what constitutes a desirable balance between representative and participatory democracy in the creation of community strategic plans. A key question that has arisen within many councils is the extent to which elected representatives should be involved in the engagement process. How do elected representatives make sure they don't inappropriately influence the development of the strategic plan? What is the appropriate relationship between the other participants in the planning process, and the information they provide, and those who retain formal responsibility for making decisions in council about the final form of the plan?

All councils will need to carefully consider the aims of their engagement processes (where they sit in the IAP2 spectrum, for example), what it is they are asking the community, how they define 'community', and what consultation methods they might use. They will also need to decide precisely *how* the results of the engagement process will inform planning and decision-making, and what the relationship will be between the engagement process and the formal decision-making responsibilities of council. This may be another area where institutional support for capacity building is required. As Aulich suggests, "Given current constraints on local government's autonomy and

resources, in many cases, effective moves towards participatory governance may need leadership and support from outside" (Aulich 2009:57).

Balancing top-down versus bottom-up knowledge

The emergence of community strategic planning in NSW local government presents a new opportunity for local councils to explore ways in which relevant forms of information / knowledge from both top-down sources (such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics) and bottom-up sources (such as local knowledge emerging from the community engagement process) can be blended to create *optimal* planning instruments.

This joining together of top-down and bottom-up knowledge has been referred to as a *potential black box* by several local councils. The phrase reflects concern and uncertainty as to how knowledges collected during the plan-making process are used and merged; what is potentially lost during that merger; and the potential for misinterpretations and unwarranted exclusion of some inputs. These concerns stem from the question of how to determine the relative significance and weight to be allocated to varied and specific knowledges amid the plethora of data generated in such processes. For example, in instances of dispute between different knowledges, it is never clear whether the tacit/experiential knowledge of the local community is to be privileged over the formal knowledge of planning experts, or vice versa. What has emerged from these concerns is a desire, on the part of at least one metropolitan local council (Ashfield), to develop a series of principles and analytical frameworks for constructing a coherent synthesis.

These principles and frameworks ranged from the simple idea of acknowledging that all types of knowledge[15] need to be valued and taken into account, through to using a planning approach that favors the importance of workshop and engagement events that promote the 'co-construction' of knowledge amongst multiple participants. In this way, participants can be engaged in the negotiation and merging of knowledges. This would require a shift from simple information collection from individuals by experts (as an 'input' to expert-led planning) to 'negotiated knowledge' generated through collective learning and deliberative processes, that can better arbitrate amongst diverse claims and priorities.

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[15] Whilst the council attempted to value all forms of knowledge within the process, it is important to note that local governance contains a complex and intersecting mixture of normative precepts (e.g. protection of human rights, equality, and liberty to produce and consume amongst others) which inevitably restrict the types of knowledges that can be considered.

The ultimate aim of this approach to knowledge development within the plan-making process is to be concerned not with comparing the values of fixed knowledges, but with facilitating the negotiation of *emergent* knowledges. Thus Ashfield created a process that was focused on a range of events – large community meetings through to councillors talking to individual community members – using a conversational structure and allowing collective knowledges and negotiated knowledges to emerge. This process was branded 'Ashfield's biggest conversation' (Ashfield Council 2009a), and allowed blending and dialogue between top-down knowledge and bottom-up knowledge. Top-down knowledge has often been criticized for embodying a 'provider led' approach that could, intentionally or otherwise, take power, control of resources and decision-making away from the community; whilst and bottom-up knowledge has been criticized for being 'patchy' in the localities and issues that it champions, and for having a tendency to come from unrepresentative individuals and factions within the community (despite attempts to proactively engage with a broad cross-section).

Whilst councils such as Ashfield have attempted to make the processing of knowledge emergence and negotiation explicit to all involved, they acknowledge that such an ideal form of knowledge gathering and processing is not always possible (due, for example, to the varying capacities and abilities of some elements of communities to engage in such mechanisms). Consequently, most councils still also use methods for collecting individual knowledges (e.g. through surveys, interviews and feed-back forms).

Another area that requires attention is the balancing of top-down strategic commitments and bottom-up identification of needs. The notion of a community strategic plan based around a locally generated vision for the future implies that communities have a significant degree of autonomy in determining their own direction. In reality the legislative requirements (LG Act 1993s402 (3) (d)) for community strategic plans require a measure of alignment of those plans with state government strategies and other planning instruments (such as regional land use plans). This raises questions about the true extent of community and council autonomy in establishing a local vision and strategies.

Monitoring and evaluating the community strategic plan
In the same way that each council has a 'custodial' role in developing the community strategic plan, the legislation prescribes that councils also have a custodial role in:

> monitoring the community strategic plan for the local government area on behalf
> of their community (*NSWLG Act* 1993, ch. 13, introduction).

And to that end:

> The Community Strategic Plan must identify assessment methods for determining
> whether the objectives are being achieved (NSWDLG 2010: 10).

In addition, the specific requirements for reporting on the plan's implementation (beyond those for annual reports) state that:

> the Community Strategic Plan must be reviewed every four years. … A report on
> the progress on implementation of the Community Strategic Plan must be
> presented at the final meeting of an outgoing council. The review must include…a
> report from the outgoing council on the implementation and effectiveness of the
> Community Strategic Plan in achieving its social, environmental, economic and
> civic leadership objectives over the past four years (NSWDLG 2010:10).

Also:

> The annual report in the year of the ordinary election must include a report (State
> of the Environment Report) as to the state of the environment in the local
> government area in relation to the objectives for the environment established by
> the Community Strategic Plan (NSWDLG 2010:23).

Monitoring the community strategic plan requires a shift on the part of councils from primarily monitoring service delivery and expenditure (as in the case of annual reports) to monitoring the movement of the community towards its long-term vision and goals. This shift has raised a series of interlinked questions: What should be included within this monitoring? Will the new plans be assessed? Will it be according to their own objectives, their degree of alignment with the council's operational activities, how effectively they meet the strategic plan directions, or how transparently they communicate with their communities?

One of the obvious challenges associated with this shift is which indicators or methods of evaluating performance to use. They need to evaluate the implementation of a long-term plan whose focus is the entire local government area, including domains of responsibility beyond councils and actions taken by other agencies. An associated challenge is that of linking information back to decision making – knowing how to respond to the monitoring data about the state of the local government area.

A recent review of councils' capacities to engage with sustainability issues highlighted inadequate systems for managing information as a key barrier to reflective practice and adaptive management. The review noted that:

> even for councils with the right motivation and a range of good programs, there
> were challenges with putting in place systems that would best support their efforts
> and help with the planning, promotion, and monitoring of education initiatives
> (Pillora et al. 2009:14).

These same challenges are likely to be present for councils engaging in a transition to monitoring outcomes under the IPRF.

State of the Environment reporting has existed as a mandatory part of the planning and reporting framework for local government in NSW since 1993; at first as an annual requirement (as an adjunct to the annual report) and from 1997 on the basis of comprehensive reports every four years and 'supplementary' reports in others. This requirement formalized councils' obligations to consider and report publicly about impacts on, and management of, the local environment, under a prescribed framework. State of the Environment reporting in NSW has had a varied implementation record (see for example Kelly 2007), not least due to concerns about weak linkages to management (corporate) planning. Nonetheless, the retention of this element in the new IPRF (for a summary of requirements see LGSA 2010) allays concerns about how councils might otherwise be encouraged to continue to collect time series data on the environment, to report on this publicly, and to retain a strong focus on environmental management and outcomes.

State of the Environment reporting typically contains indicators beyond service delivery (that is beyond simply 'response' in the pressure-state-response model)[16] and features 'state' or 'pressure' indicators for local government areas (for example, coverage of remnant vegetation, stream water quality, or household greenhouse gas emissions). Similarly, reporting in relation to the community strategic plan requires 'community' level indicators. This means that in relation to the environmental outcomes of community-level planning, a range of indicators and data sets may already exist, and there may even be existing community-based monitoring efforts.

One way of developing the community-level indicators needed for the new IPRF is to draw on established community wellbeing frameworks which exist internationally and in Australia. These frameworks are usually integrated maps of key community priorities that show progress in areas of concern to local communities and how different issues fit

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[16] For more herrimation on the PSR model see OECD 1993

together (Partridge & West 2010). They can help local councils to measure and monitor selected features of the local community, and track progress at the local scale. Used in this way, they can be a powerful tool to support an integrated or 'triple bottom line' approach to policy development, program implementation and evaluation (Wiseman *et al.* 2006).

Community indicators can also assist with strategic planning goals by engaging stakeholders in local governance processes, and play an important role in keeping local governments accountable to their communities (Salvaris 1997). At the very least, this accountability applies to those issues for which councils have direct responsibility – but in a more general sense, community indicators can help councils to better understand their communities' needs and priorities, and inform less direct action by councils, such as advocacy or lobbying of other organizations (Partridge & West 2010). Community wellbeing indicators can also help ensure that the decisions councils make about policies and budgets are based on the best local evidence, both of community priorities and of the key social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance trends in their localities (Davern *et al.* in press).

A related challenge for community-level monitoring and reporting is the need for statistically reliable indicators and data, including indicators that are useful in a policy context and provide strong links to decision-making processes (Holden 2009; Dluhy and Schwarz et al; 2006). Without these, monitoring may well produce data that has no real bearing on communities and little impact on planning and resource allocations for their future wellbeing (Holden 2009).

An opportunity exists to draw on the experiences of councils who have already progressed along this pathway (for example, the Blue Mountains City Council's emerging State of the City reporting framework), and for the NSW state government to provide useful examples and guidelines to councils about what might work well. The existence of some early industry-led peer-learning groups (especially the corporate planning group of Local Government Managers Australia (NSW)), and formal training providers (including the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) and the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology, Sydney), will also provide useful forums for sharing approaches and models for successful monitoring.

Embedding social planning and social justice within the community strategic plan

Considerable interest has emerged around the challenges and opportunities that stem from embedding social planning and social justice into the new IPRF and community strategic plans. As noted earlier, this integration of social planning and social justice into community strategic plans is particularly important given that separate *social plans* are no longer mandatory. There is a concern that councils' focus on social services, assets and identification of community needs will diminish.

Recently a survey was conducted with 64 social planners in NSW (Prior and Partridge 2009) into the social planning challenges faced by NSW local government. Unreferenced quotations within this section of the paper are drawn from this survey. Two thirds of the respondents worked on social planning in local government; the remaining third worked in a private company or consultancy. The majority of respondents (63.5 per cent; 33 of 52) indicated that the scope and understanding of social planning had changed over recent years. Embedding social planning within the new IPRF was identified as one of a series of key challenges and opportunities for local government in the coming decade.

Whilst the IPRF was generally understood as an opportunity to plan for long-term 'intergenerational' social justice, concerns were raised about how to engage communities in strategic thinking about social justice issues (see Prior & Partridge 2009). These concerns included how to develop a community strategic planning process that supports community understanding and engagement with long term and short term social justice issues that emerge from financial crisis/recession, climate change/sea level rises, exponential population growth and the pressure on limited housing, health, food, energy and transport resources. As several planners noted, addressing such tensions may require planning strategies, not only to address issues of social justice, but also to inform "communities [that] they may not be able to live in a certain place (regardless of where they live), or continue to be supplied with the services they currently expect". Also: "social justice for some time has [often been perceived to mean bringing] people up to a certain level, in the future it may mean that some people may have to lower their lifestyle so that others can have a more equitable access to resources".

One respondent noted that the community strategic planning process presents both an opportunity and a challenge to engage local communities in "collective thinking about how to pursue [local and community] sustainability and leverage greater commitment to social benefits" at the same time as acknowledging that local strategic decisions on these

issues can no longer be thought of as outside of the broader global and regional systems on which these local strategic systems are embedded and depend.

The IPRF was seen by many respondents as an opportunity to strengthen the recent shift of social planning into the strategic planning domain and to ensure their practices and service provision are more socially sustainable. Social planning is [currently often] seen as a low level, detailed community activity, whereas the new integrated planning framework with its emphasis on community focused strategic planning that is based about such principles as equity, gives social planning the opportunity to be successfully elevated to a high level strategic, corporate activity. It will enable community/social planning to be placed as a critical and core element in New South Wales local government…as a change driver and motivator around which other strategic planning decisions should be made. Thus it was seen that the new integrated planning framework creates opportunities to consider the social impacts of councils' wider planning and to better integrate social planning at both the strategic and operational levels with environmental, land-use and economic planning.

Whilst the integration of social planning into community strategic plans was seen as an opportunity by many, it was also seen as a challenge, given that some local councils who currently "don't value social planning might use the integrated planning process associated with community strategic plans to devalue the role of expert social planners by dispersing social planning functions, allowing planners from other backgrounds claiming social planning expertise without appropriate training". Many respondents were also concerned about the ability of the community strategic plan to effectively replace all aspects of the previously mandatory social plan, and a number of councils have decided to retain a separate, non-mandatory social plan.

5.   Conclusions

This paper has traced the emergence of community strategic planning within the NSW local government context. In so doing it has provided insight into its influences and some of the challenges and opportunities which NSW councils face as they begin to implement processes for the development of their strategic plans. As indicated at the beginning of the paper, the influences, challenges and opportunities discussed are by no means a comprehensive list.

The challenges and opportunities presented are necessarily open-ended given that local councils in NSW are in the early years of developing their community strategic plans. What this paper provides is an understanding of the depth at which many local councils are engaging with the process, and the extent to which they are seeking to: engage with a new role as custodian rather than plan-maker; determine how best to integrate community knowledge with expert knowledge; address questions of resourcing and capacity to make the transition to the new framework; maintain a strong environmental and social justice focus in the planning process and planning outcomes; and monitor and evaluate the implementation of their plans in a way which links to decision making.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the ability of local councils in NSW to effectively develop community strategic plans depends in large part on a recurrent point raised throughout this paper: the relationship between the state government and local governments in implementing the new framework, and what roles the state government intends to play in supporting/regulating/overseeing/guiding councils in their implementation journey. Opportunities abound to share resources, to transfer knowledge and ideas through networks of councils and to disseminate successful approaches. In all of these transactions, the NSW government can play a strong supportive role. Defining how best to facilitate and support local governments' transition to community strategic planning will involve some important decisions about resourcing, support, guidance and oversight.

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'We are not the only ones to blame': District Assemblies' perspectives on the state of planning in Ghana

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Abstract

Planning has failed to exert effective influence on the growth of human settlements in Ghana. As a result, the growth of cities has been chaotic. The district assemblies, which are the designated planning authorities, are commonly blamed for this failure, yet little attention has been given to district assemblies' perspectives of what factors lead to failures in planning. This paper attempts to fill this gap. Drawing on fieldwork in Ghana, it argues that, from the perspective of district assemblies, five major challenges inhibit planning, namely: an inflexible land ownership system, an unresponsive legislative framework, undue political interference, an acute human resource shortage, and the lack of a sustainable funding strategy. The paper concludes with proposals for reforming the planning system in Ghana.

Keywords

Planning, Urban, Local Governance, Ghana, Africa

1.   Introduction

From a population of 6 million in 1957, the number of people in Ghana increased steadily to 18 million in 1996 (Ghana Statistical Services 2000), and is now about 24 million, the majority of whom reside in cities (UN-Habitat 2009). Globally, this

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demographic and spatial change has significant implications for planning (Huxley and Yiftachel 2000:334).

In the Ghanaian case, urbanisation has outpaced planning. Planning is reactive, and planners take short-term measures to address problems associated with the demographic and spatial change in the population (Larbi 1996). Physical development has been haphazard (Ubink and Quan 2008), and an estimated 45 per cent of the urban population is trapped in slum and squatter settlements (UN-Habitat 2009). It is projected that the slum population could double every 15 years unless effective measures are implemented swiftly (UN-Habitat 2009:4).

This paper empirically investigates *why* planning has not been effective in Ghana, particularly from the perspective of district assemblies,[2] and offers some thoughts for improving the state of affairs. It is divided into four main sections: Section 2 gives an overview of the nature of the planning process in Ghana, and provides a summary of the results of various evaluations of the state of planning. These form the basis for the main research question. Sections 3 and 4 discuss methodology and findings, while section 5 considers options for reform.

2.   Planning in Ghana

Generally, there is no marked conceptual difference between planning theory in the developed and developing worlds. Planning theory in Ghana as taught in institutions is strongly influenced by British town and country planning ideas which were handed down during the colonial period. The situation has not changed in the postcolonial period, partly because the planners in the country continue to be trained in the British system. It is in the realm of practice that the 'unique' Ghanaian experience becomes evident. According to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (the highest state institution that oversees planning in Ghana) planning should be regarded as:

- a process of preparing and implementing a set of decisions and actions at local, district, regional, and national levels
- that can effect a transformation in the living conditions of the people of an area and their environment in ways that improve their existing socio-economic

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[2] In accordance with article 295 (1) of the Constitution of Ghana and section 1 (1) of the Local Government Act of Ghana, Act 462, the term 'district assemblies' refers to local governments which have the responsibility to manage ordinary districts (settlements of 75,000 people), municipal areas (settlements of 95,000 people), and metropolitan areas (settlements with 250,000 people or more).

conditions and circumstances, their physical surroundings, and existing institutions (Adams and Annum 2005).

According to section 12 (1) of the Local Government Act (Act 462) of Ghana, it is the responsibility of local governments (district assemblies) to plan cities and towns. Other institutions which collaborate with district assemblies in performing this role are the Survey Department and the National Development Planning Commission.

The main planning function that the district assemblies perform is development control[3] (Flynn-Dapaah, undated). That is, controlling:

> the carrying out of building, engineering, mining and other operations on, in, under or over land or the material change in the existing use of land or building and includes subdivisions of land or disposal of waste on land including the discharge of effluent into a body of still or running water and the erection of advertisement or other hoarding (Section 162, Local Government Act).

In principle, district assemblies follow two stages to control development. The first entails the declaration of an area as a 'statutory planning area', the appointment of a planning committee to determine the present and future needs of the area, and the preparation of a base map to be used by the Town and Country Department to prepare a planning scheme. The second step requires the publication of a planning scheme, an invitation to the public concerning permit applications and their subsequent assessment or evaluation. However, across these two stages, it has been established that there are several problems that inhibit effective development control. These challenges are discussed below.

Ineffective planning: The perspective of district assemblies

Most evaluations of planning in Ghana reveal severe deficits. The district assemblies undertake little forward planning and the few plans that are prepared are rarely implemented. For instance, between 1996 and 2000, most district assemblies did not implement any of the medium term development plans which they prepared (Mensah 2005). Therefore, the normative sequence of planning-servicing-building-occupation has now been replaced with occupation-building-servicing (Adarkwa & Akyaw 2001:203).

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[3] The construction of buildings or any activity, action, or alteration that changes undeveloped property into developed property.

Antwi and Deankin (1996) have noted that urban areas are dominated by problems of unauthorised developments, lack of infrastructure, poor sanitation, health hazards, fire hazard, crime and squatter settlements. Planning in Ghana has been reactive rather than proactive and does not "proceed on sustained planning basis" (Larbi, 1996:212). More recently, Ubink and Quan (2008:202) have described physical development in Ghana as haphazard. Other issues include planners using short-term measures to resolve intractable problems, and urban settlements that lack essential services such as adequate water supply and sanitation facilities. According to Hammond (2001) the institution of planning has done little to improve the design and functioning of the towns and country in Ghana. Several evaluations have also shown the deficit of effective urban management in Ghana (see Konadu-Agyemang 1991; Yankson and Gough 1999, Gough and Yankson 2000; Yeboah 2003; 2006; Grant 2009). What they do not show is why this problem persists. Moreover, evaluations of the district assemblies' role as planning institutions have tended to be mainly accusatory. In contrast, this study draws on in-depth field investigation and analysis to 'hear the voice' of those assemblies. The main research question is: What are the challenges district assemblies face in performing their role as planning agents?

3.   Methodology

The field research was carried out between November 2009 and March 2010. Four district assemblies were chosen to reflect the urban and rural continuum in Ghana, and to take into account the different socio-economic, tenurial, and cultural characteristics of northern and southern Ghana (see Aryeetey-Attoh and Chatterjee 1988; Konadu-Agyemang 2004; Grant and Nijman 2004). The case study areas were the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (an urban area in the south), Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly (a peri-urban area in the south), the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (an urban area in the north), and Savelugu-Nanton District Assembly (a rural area in the north). This paper, therefore, discusses the problem of planning based on evidence from two urban areas, one peri-urban area, and one rural area.

Within the case study areas, 200 structured questionnaires were administered to private property developers randomly selected from a list of applicants for planning permits. Other respondents were selected through a 'strategic informant sampling technique'. A focus group discussion was held with the traditional authorities in Ejisu to understand the planning problems entailed in land management. In addition, two key players in

customary land ownership and management were interviewed in each of the other three study areas in order to establish the planning and land management challenges from their perspective. Likewise, two core members of staff of the planning department were interviewed in each of the four case study areas.

At the regional level, two respondents each were drawn from the Lands Commission,[4] the Land Administration Project, the Regional Coordinating Council, and the Town and Country Planning Department, which are the allied bodies involved in land management and spatial planning. At the national level, a total of 11 key stakeholders were interviewed. They were selected from the Lands Commission, the Land Administration Project, the Town and Country Planning Department, and the National Development Planning Commission. All the data collated from the different interviews was first transcribed into Microsoft Word and coded for examination and interpretation using content analysis.

4.   Findings

Responses from the field survey revealed that there are several challenges which inhibit planning efficiency. Five of these are particularly pervasive, namely: inflexible land tenure systems; a weak legislative framework; undue political interference in the planning process; weak human resource capacity; and inadequate funding. These issues are inextricably linked and are mutually reinforcing. Furthermore, they are national in character, although Van Leeuwen and Van Steekelenburg (1995), Adarkwa and Post (2001), and Heuber and Veer (2001) have noted that the problems are more pronounced in urban areas owing to population pressures. The rest of the paper discusses each of these problems in turn, highlighting how they inhibit effective planning.

The land factor

Planning is predominantly a spatial activity. As such, the management of land (mode of land alienation and the existing systems of tenure) has far-reaching implications for effective planning. It may even be asserted that whoever controls landholdings controls the land market and determines the nature of urban planning (Gareth 1991; Olima 1993; Kivell 1993).

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[4] Or 'the New Lands Commission', as it is currently called.

In spite of efforts by the state agencies such as the Lands Commission and the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands[5] to ensure effective land management, there is a recurrent problem of ineffective coordination and harmonisation between customary land holders and planning institutions in Ghana. Some customary landholders sell land for purposes which are different from the uses for which planners zone them. There is, therefore, no guarantee that the content of the plan can be realised in practice unless the landholders consent to the plans. This problem was revealed by one of the directors of planning, who noted that:

> Effectively, the implementation of the plan is left to the customary land holders. It is their land and the final authority in terms of how they want their area to look rests with them. To them, an approved plan is only a proposal by the district and not definitive. You cannot force them to release their land to implement the plan and there is no guarantee that an area zoned for a particular use will indeed be used for the particular purpose.

In effect, the district assemblies and the other planning institutions are at the mercy of landholders in their attempt to implement development plans (see Larbi 1995; 1996; Kasanga *et al.* 1996; Ubink and Quan 2008).

Even though in theory a permit is needed from the district assemblies before one can acquire land for a particular development, in practice the allocation of most land is done without sufficient reference to planning requirements. This was noted by all the planning officers interviewed. In the Savelugu-Nanton district, for example, the planning officer conceded that:

> They [developers] do not come to us for permits before they build and you cannot underestimate fact that chiefs do not consult us effectively is a contributing factor [sic].

The case was no different in Tamale, where one officer noted that:

> The fact that we continue to write stop work and produce permit on ongoing developments may be the clearest indication that people do not acquire any authorisation from us before they build. The situation can only change if we are actively involved in the land transfer processes.

In Kumasi, similar observations were made by the metropolitan director, who said:

> The first thing that goes into their [developers] mind [after acquiring land] is to dig the foundation and get some quantity of sand and gravels [all in preparation towards commencing development]. Coming to us [for planning permission] is not their priority.

The planning officer from the Ejisu Juaben planning authority also averred that:

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[5] *Editors note*: Stool lands are lands managed under customary systems.

> If the planning authority had much more control with respect to allocating land,
> then a major hurdle that confronts the planning process would have been cleared.

This situation where land management practices differ substantially from what planners intend them to be has wide implications. For example, 45 per cent of the structures in cities do not meet planning standards (UN-Habitat 2009), and only 44 per cent of the dwelling units in Ghana are fit to be called 'houses' (Ghana Statistical Service 2000). Furthermore, most traditional authorities and some individuals engage in the multiple sale of the same land to different people, a situation that has led to several land-related cases in the law courts. As of 2003, it was estimated that there were about 60,000 land cases in Ghana (Kasanga 2003).

The legislative framework for land use planning

A sound legal basis is important for effective planning because it provides the supportive regulatory powers to the planning authorities to facilitate the achievement of planning objectives and goals. However, in Ghana, the planning laws have established a framework which is not very responsive to the socio-cultural and economic context. One regional planning officer asked rhetorically:

> As a country, we need to rethink our planning. How can we still be using [town
> and country planning] laws and ordinances which were enacted in 1945? These
> laws are practically very limited in terms of their usefulness to our modern life.

The laws governing the requirements for obtaining a planning permit are a case in point. To obtain a building permit, a prospective developer in Ghana is required by Section 5(3) of the National Building Regulations to provide the following:

1. Clearly and accurately delineated plan in ink or otherwise to the scale of 1:100
2. A detailed description of the building showing clearly the purpose of each room
3. Indicate the stages and methods by which the developer intends to construct the building
4. Indicate the materials of which the building will be constructed and show clearly and accurately the position and dimensions of the foundations
5. Indicate the method of disposal of stormwater, domestic waste water and sewage, in a block plan to the scale of 1:1250
6. Clearly indicate the method of water supply
7. Include the plan and section of every floor and roof

8. A site plan to the scale of 1:1250 showing adjoining streets

9. A site plan which shows the height of adjoining properties.

In addition to the above requirements, applicants are expected to provide a land title certificate and detailed engineering, architectural and structural drawings and, sometimes, a geological certificate. The health and safety of physical developments in cities should not be compromised, so the intention behind these requirements to ensure decent physical development should be commended. However, conceptually, it is doubtful that they promote sound town and country planning in the context of Ghana. At their root are influences from indigenous elitism, colonialism, modernism and globalism (Njoh 2009), and, in practice, such requirements are very difficult to meet. It is hard to find enough professional architects, structural experts, geologists, and engineers who have the skill to produce all the drawings required to obtain a building permit. Obtaining detailed architectural and engineering drawings to different scales of the same proposed development is expensive. Moreover, title registration processes can take up to 3 years and may cost up to 5 per cent of the open market value of the parcel of land (Gambrah 2002). For that reason, the requirement for a land title certificate as a prerequisite for planning permission has proved to be counterproductive over the years. For example, in 2009, the inability of applicants to provide good title accounted for over 90 per cent of refused planning permit applications (Town and Country Planning Department [TCPD] 2009). Generally, it is estimated that less than 50 per cent of the urban population can satisfy the planning requirements in Ghana (Dowall 1992:23). In turn, there is significant incentive for breaching those requirements (De Soto 1989; 2000). As one planning officer said, the requirements for permit applications can be 'scary and intimidating'. Another officer noted:

> [The requirements] in practical sense make it more difficult for people to come to us [for planning permit before development]. But not all the documents are important. If you are assessing [planning] applications, there are few major documents you really need to focus on [sic]. The rest, we do not scrutinise.

In light of the above, why these long lists of requirements continue to exist is puzzling. What is clear is that the legal framework is a major contributory factor to the poor state of planning in Ghana.

Human resources

Planners need a blend of academic training and practical experience to appreciate and respond to the growing spatial challenges. To be effective, they require the ability both to

analyze societal needs and to formulate policies and strategies to address them. A planner should, therefore, have a good understanding of socio-economic, political, cultural, and demographic issues and be competent in their analysis. Professionals with these essential planning skills are lacking in Ghana. A regional planning officer's rendition of this problem is revealing:

> We are four planners and two sub-professionals who are responsible for the whole of the [Northern] region. We are responsible for 20 local planning authorities, about 2.5 million people and a land size of about 70,000km^2, which is almost 30 percent of the size of Ghana. Under such conditions, how do you expect us to deliver [planning services] effectively?

Moreover, only 50 percent of the 170 local authorities have planning offices. Of these, only one-third are staffed by professional planners. The 170 districts currently estimate their staffing requirement at 700, a figure which contrasts with the current stock of 101 planners (COWI 2009). While there may be other self-styled planners in the country, the Ghana Institute of Planners, the professional body, has only 270 members who serve a country with an estimated national population of 24 million. The planner-population ratio of around 1: 90,000 compares poorly with the situation in some developed countries such as the UK, where an estimated 22,000 planners manage the settlements of 60 million people (a ratio of about 1:2,300).

One official interviewed for this study noted that:

> [Ghana's] population is fast growing but the number of planners keeps shrinking. Those who are retiring, dying, and resigning are not [being] replaced. The result is there for us all to see. If nothing is done urgently, Ghana will be left with no planners in the next few years.

It is a problem that is likely to worsen as about 23 per cent of the existing professional planners are due to retire in the next five years (TCPD 2009:4).

Political influence

Planning is a tripartite activity, involving a professional bureaucracy, interest groups, and politicians (Kivell 2003:8). Thus the process is necessarily political. The Statutory Planning Committee (SPC) of each district is the technical body responsible for assessing applications, and enforcing development plans. The SPC is inter-departmental, made up of officials from the Town and Country Planning Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Survey Department, the Fire Service, and utility companies. It meets periodically to assess applications for planning permits. The composition of the SPC is cross sectional in order to ensure an integrated approach. The chairman is the

chief executive of the local government authority, who is appointed by the central government (Gyampo 2008).

As the representative of the central government, the chief executive officer is the single most powerful political person in the district, and the most influential in the SPC. So, although the chief executive may not be a professional planner, his views on planning issues can override professional planning decisions, echoing Flyvberg's (1998:323) assertion that in open confrontation between technical rationality and power, rationality yields to power. One planner recounted that:

> The politician is only motivated by the desire to win or retain power which is a matter of vote. A nicely planned neighbourhood does not vote but people who live in unapproved developments do. There is no chance for any [planning] proposal succeeding if our political leaders think it has the potential to affect their electoral fortunes.

This view resonated with an earlier opinion by another official that:

> The politician who should back you to enforce our plans is interested in his own political cost and benefit analysis. If to him [or her], strictly implementing and enforcing the plan can be costly [politically], then that is the end of it. After all what do they lose when plans are not implemented? As long as politicians will continue to have a big say in the implementation and enforcement of plans, then succeeding as planners will be difficult.

The chief executive officer in Ghana determines the final plan, a power he exercises not necessarily in accordance with planning principles. Of course, everywhere, political leaders take decisions based on other factors apart from technical planning advice. What makes the Ghanaian case different is that the leaders are not necessarily accountable to local citizens (Obeng-Odoom 2009). Thus the degree of political involvement in the planning process in Ghana could arguably be described as political *interference* rather than *involvement* in the planning process. The chief executive or the head of the planning team has upward accountability to the central government, not downward accountability to the people who are supposed to benefit from the planning process. In turn, the decision about what to do with slum dwellers, for example, does not come from planners but from the central government and the chief executive officer. A recent development in Sukura and Sodom and Gomorrah is illustrative.

Sukura and Sodom and Gomorrah are highly populated slum enclaves within the Ablekuma South and Odododiodio constituencies respectively. Both areas are under the jurisdiction of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). It is generally held that, while

residents of Sukura are ardent supporters of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), Sodom and Gomorrah is the home of people who are sympathetic to the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). Table 1 shows the results from the last two presidential elections.

Table 1: Results of Presidential Elections for 2004 and 2008

Ablekuma South Constituency			Odododiodio Constituency		
Year	NDC	NPP	Year	NDC	NPP
2004	43.8%	55.0%	2004	51.9%	46.8%
2008	48.1%	48.8%	2008	58.2%	40.7%

Source: Electoral Commission, 2010

The table suggests that there is some truth about the political affiliation of residents in Sukura and Sodom and Gomorrah. As part of an urban renewal programme, the AMA earmarked the slum settlements in both Sukura and Sodom and Gomorrah for demolition. When work commenced at Sodom and Gomorrah, the residents threatened to defect *en bloc* to the opposition NPP, and asked whether the government did not know that the place was a slum when they campaigned in the area for their votes (*Daily Graphic* 2009). This threat drew a quick intervention from the president, who instructed the AMA to discontinue the eviction. According to the president, the chief executive officer had to "suspend the decongestion exercise [because]… when we are working to improve the economy, it is not proper for us to treat our people in this manner" (Gobah 2009:1)

Accordingly, the demolition was halted. Shortly thereafter, the AMA began to demolish 140 unauthorised developments in the Sukura area. The Sukura residents, following the Sodom and Gomorrah example, called on the president to intervene. But, unlike the Sodom and Gomorrah case, the president did not. When demolition commenced, the opposition NPP strongly challenged the legitimacy of the exercise and threatened to sue the AMA. According to the NPP General Secretary, the party executives considered suing the AMA because they felt the demolition was 'politically-motivated'. He furthered averred that "the exercise is a calculated attempt by the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) government to make life unbearable for supporters of the main opposition party". He again accused the AMA of political selectiveness and wanted to know "why the Accra Metropolitan Assembly refused to demolish similar structures in

Sodom and Gomorrah" (Afriyie 2010). Thus, it would appear that political interference in the planning process may have contributed to the ineffectiveness of urban planning.

Funding

Most of the writing on local government finance in Ghana has been concerned with poor revenue generation (e.g. Crawford 2004) and the distribution of revenue between capital and recurrent expenditure (e.g. Obeng-Odoom 2010). The widely held view is that financial constraints on district assemblies are self imposed, especially in light of the introduction of central government funding through, for example, the District Assemblies' Common Fund.

From the perspective of district assemblies, however, there are three main restrictions on raising finance for their activities. First, article 88 of the Constitution of Ghana limits the ability of local governments to borrow money to US$2,000. If local governments require more than this amount, they are required to go through a labyrinthine procedure, including a requirement to seek approval from the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. Second, although the planning department generates considerable revenue through permit application fees and other charges, it has no control over these funds.[6] Third, the existing arrangement where part of their funding comes from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Science, Environment and Technology has paralysed the planning departments. In addition to the problem of piecemeal financing, the officials of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development usually feel that the planning of settlements should be funded by the Ministry of Science, Environment and Technology. This situation has compounded the problem of poor funding for planning activities in the districts. In Tamale, for instance, planning officials noted that:

> We do not have any budgetary allocations. If you submit your budget to the
> district and you are lucky, you can get between 15-20 percent [of the amount
> requested]. Without funds, we are like a car without fuel. That is why we have
> almost grinded to a halt.

5.   Options for Improving the State of Planning

The combined effect of the problems discussed above is a situation where rapidly urbanising settlements are poorly planned and managed. The present government has demonstrated some commitment towards addressing this state of affairs. Principal among

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[6] The only exceptions are the Kumasi and Accra Metropolitan Assemblies where the Town and Country Planning Department retain up to 15 per cent of all internally generated funds

the government's efforts is the drafting of the National Urban Policy (NUP) (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010) which seeks to "promote a sustainable, spatially integrated and orderly development of urban settlements with adequate housing and services, efficient institutions, sound living and working environment for all people to support rapid socio-economic development of Ghana" (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010: xii). It is a comprehensive and cross-sectoral document which "makes a bold statement to promote socio-economic development of Ghanaian urban centres" (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010:ii). However, whether this policy offers adequate solutions to arrest the current ineffectiveness of planning is open to debate.

For example to address the land problem, the policy recommends that:

> Land development planning for the purposes of human settlement will have to make adequate provision for the population density, growth and distribution pattern; physical growth, including direction of such growth (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010:46).

With regards to laws related to land use planning, the policy suggests that:

> [Efforts] must be directed at searching for and adopting new and innovative means of promoting development control and enforcement of regulations in our towns and cities (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010:47).

Again, the policy recommends that:

> Laws regarding access and rights to land must be reviewed to avoid discrimination on basis of gender and social status (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2010:47)

These aspirations are welcome. The challenge, however, is to think through possible ways of achieving them, and thereby overcome some of the problems this study has outlined. The following are some specific suggestions for the improvement of the planning situation in Ghana.

The land factor

The land challenge for planning results from the fact that land is mainly held privately while planning remains a public function. Under this arrangement, the district assemblies are mandated to control the growth of human settlement through the granting of development rights by issuing planning permits. Assemblies are limited to approving, modifying, or refusing applications for development rights. This approach has, however,

failed to effectively manage urban growth leading to the creation of slums and other problems resulting from unplanned settlement. What has proved to be problematic over the years is that acquisition of land for development is the result of private negotiations with limited state intervention. The continuous supply of developable lands through processes which are mainly outside the domain of the planning authorities has often led to a situation in which land owners allocate land for uses that are inconsistent with public plans (Barratt 1976; Asiama 2008).

The rapid pace of urbanisation has resulted in the continuous accretion of peri-urban areas with minimal planning influence. An estimated 51.5 per cent of the population lives in urban areas and the figure is expected to rise to 75 per cent by 2050 (Department for Economic and Social Affairs [DESA] 2008). Therefore, an appropriate land policy for urban management must be proactive in enabling district assemblies to plan the urban fringes in anticipation of urban sprawl. Currently, the transformation of urban-fringe lands from peri-urban to urban uses usually takes place by the subdivision of separate landholdings, and is subject to the problems of scattered development and poor subdivision design. This further leads to backlogs in the provision of public utility and roadworks, land shortages, excessive land speculation, and high land prices. Clearly, regulating urban growth through issuing development permits has proved to be inadequate for the purpose of ordering development. There is an urgent need to rethink the basis on which urban land policies are grounded.

For planning to succeed, the state needs to exert significant control over the supply of land for development (see Kivell 1993; Luitlen 1997 and Dixon 2009 on the UK case; Holzman-Gazit 2007 on Israel; and Huang 1986 on Hong Kong). A more active involvement of the district assemblies in the land delivery process is a prerequisite for effective management of urban growth.

The concept of land pooling has not been used in Ghana. Under a land pooling model, the public planning agency or development authority temporarily brings together a group of peri-urban landowners for the purpose of planning (Ballaney 2008). Thus district assemblies could manage settlement growth by preparing development plans and planning schemes for the agricultural land at the periphery of the cities and towns, or smaller settlements that are not yet urbanised, in anticipation of urban or non-agricultural uses. The owners would contribute land for communal uses such as roads, open spaces,

schools, and hospitals, and the remaining land would be 'readjusted' into suitable parcels for development. Also, services such as improved water supply, roads, water, and electricity would be provided.

Assembling peri-urban lands for the purpose of planning and servicing ahead of urbanisation in this way has two main benefits. First, land pooling acts as an urban containment strategy. Secondly, it ensures that planning influences the future growth of settlements. Earlier analyses by Acharya (1988) and Archer (1988) have provided a review of the strengths of land pooling and adjustment. More recent studies by Gurumukhi (2003), Karki (2004), Home (2007), and Ballaney (2008) have further illuminated the success of this model. Ballaney (2008) has observed (correctly) that land pooling delivers developable lands with regular shape, improvement in accessibility, increased potential for development, availability of social and physical infrastructure in the neighbourhood, better linkages with other parts of the city and improvements in the living environment.

One phenomenon which distorts orderly urban growth is land speculation. Speculators hold land outside the market in anticipation of higher land values. Land speculation creates dispersed human settlements, interspersed with vacant or unused lands, a feature which, subsequently, increases the cost of providing services. The land pooling technique checks this phenomenon by ensuring systematic delivery of planned and serviced lands for developers.

Land pooling can be self-financing and, hence, sustainable. Planning and servicing peri-urban lands usually enhances land values. In countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and India, where land pooling has been intensively applied, Conellan (2002) found that local authorities imposed betterment charges on developers. This practice gave the district assemblies a revolving fund for further land pooling projects. This ability to self-finance would be especially welcome in the Ghanaian case where funding for planning activities is inadequate.

Obtaining access to land for the purpose of planning through outright nationalisation often proves confrontational, partly because of the assessment and payment of compensation, which explains why, since independence, only 0.1 per cent of all compulsorily acquired land in Ghana has been used for the purpose of planning (Larbi *et*

al. 2004:122). The fieldwork on which this research is based showed that the problem of coordination between landowners and planning authorities arises from mistrust underpinned by the fear that the government may take over their land under the guise of planning. This was clearly illustrated in Ejisu where the planning authority altered the boundary between two landowners, sparking a boundary dispute. From this perspective, an effective approach to managing urban land should be participatory in character. Land pooling meets this requirement. Through land pooling, planning authorities assemble peri-urban lands in a participatory approach where landowners and other stakeholders are duly engaged (see Oli 2003 and Karki 2004 for reports on the Nepal and Kathmandu Valley experiences respectively). Land pooling, therefore, promotes coordination between planning authorities and landowners, an outcome which has remained elusive under the current land management policy.

Funding

The provision of adequate and sustainable funding for the core operations of the local planning authorities is central to the success of any planning reform. The authorities currently raise funds through various application fees, fines, and search for zoning status fees. Only a few town and country planning departments generate sufficient funds to meet their operational expenditure. For example, in the fast urbanising Accra metropolitan area, the planning authority generated more than 10 per cent of its expected annual expenditure in 2009. In the peri-urban area of Suhum, the activities of the planning authorities generated four times their annual budgeted expenditure between 2006 and 2009. In Ejura, Kintampo, and Kumasi, the operations of the planning authorities generated an estimated 50-75 per cent of their annual expenditure. However, as noted earlier, these revenues are for the use of the local government as a whole. So, the planning department still depends on annual budgetary allocations that may be inadequate.

One way to resolve this problem could be to introduce ring fencing of revenues for the planning department. Although there are no studies in Ghana to determine the effectiveness of this mode of funding, evidence of the benefits of ring fencing in countries such as Denmark, France, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, the United States of America and Hungary highlights its merits (Jokay *et al.* 2004; Lacsmandi *et al.* 2004; Falk 2004).

Human resources

To overcome the crisis in human resources, a twin strategy could be considered. First, the state could train more professional planning personnel who have the requisite knowledge for managing human settlements. Out of the 30 accredited tertiary institutions in Ghana, only one trains planners. Since the 1980s, the planning profession has failed to attract students mainly because it is considered to be uncompetitive in terms of remuneration. Thus a second strategy to improve the human resource needs for planning is to improve wages and other working conditions for planners, especially at the local level. Currently only 101 out of the 270 planners in Ghana registered with the Ghana Institution of Planners are working with local planning authorities (COWI 2009).

Thus in the short term, the human resource challenge can be tackled to some extent by attracting the 169 planners currently employed in other organisations by offering competitive salaries and benefits. In the long term, there needs to be a radical re-alignment of planning education in all tiers of the Ghanaian education system. The introduction of accredited planning programs in tertiary educational institutions across the country will be vital to addressing the human resource shortage.

6.   Concluding remarks

Planning has the fundamental goal of creating places that are economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive. However, these expected outcomes of planning have only been achieved in Ghana to a marginal extent. There is a proliferation of uncontrolled informal structures in almost every available open space in the built-up areas. Cities are rapidly sprawling and gradually losing their basic infrastructure and services. Planning in Ghana has failed to become effectively future-oriented and has instead remained reactionary.

Most writing and analysis has tended to blame 'planners' or the 'planning institutions' for these deficiencies. However, this paper has shown that the planners and the planning institutions themselves work within severe constraints, ranging from issues in land ownership and supply, through poor funding and inadequate human resources, to a weak legislative framework. They are correct in saying that: **'**We are not the only ones to blame'. This perspective shows that nothing short of a comprehensive strategy that addresses both the failings and justifiable concerns of district assemblies can improve the effectiveness of planning in Ghana.

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Institutional policy learning and formal Federal-urban engagement in Canada

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Abstract

Canada has experienced two formal federal ministries dedicated to addressing urban issues. The first, the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, encountered resistance from provincial governments and its fellow departments. Both worked to undermine it. The second, the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities, was created with a more conciliatory tone towards the provincial governments and its ministerial colleagues. This paper examines the establishment of both ministries and tracks their efforts using a policy learning and lesson-drawing framework, concluding that common institutional actors, such as the Privy Council, were responsible for the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities' change in tone and approach to multilevel governance. General lessons are drawn about inter-governmental relations and multi-level policy formation in federal systems.

1.   Introduction

In 1971, the Trudeau government announced the creation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MSUA). The ministry was intended to coordinate urban policy in Canada, but was abruptly dismantled in 1978. In *The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs: A Courageous Experiment in Public Administration*, H. Peter Oberlander, the former Deputy Minister, argues that the ministry's downfall resulted from a concerted effort by both line ministries and provincial governments to undercut MSUA because they felt its existence threatened or encroached upon their jurisdictions. Nearly thirty years later, Paul Martin's government created the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities (MSIC) with similar goals to MSUA. MSIC, however, would find more success with provincial governments and its fellow departments, largely because of its more cautious approach to intergovernmental and

interdepartmental relations. How and why did this change in direction and policy occur? Did the experiences of MSUA shape the direction of MSIC? Or was the more cautious nature of MSIC the result of thirty years general experience with intergovernmental and interdepartmental interaction?

This paper examines and tests two hypotheses through primary document analysis and interviews conducted with ministry officials. The first hypothesis argues that institutional policy learning was occurring, and once Martin's government began to address urban issues, it employed a concerted strategy to avoid the perceived failures of MSUA. The alternative hypothesis argues that the altered approach of MSIC was merely the result of thirty years of general institutional experience with intergovernmental and interdepartmental interaction.

2.   Policy Learning

Policy learning can be seen as the result of efforts to improve or enhance policy-making based on the assessment of past experiences (Etheredge and Short 1983; Sabatier 1988; Rose 1988). There are two views of this process. Peter Hall (1993) introduces us to 'endogenous learning'. Hall defines this activity as a "deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in the light of the consequences of past policy and new information so as to better attain the ultimate objects of governance" (Hall 1993:278). By contrast, Hugh Heclo (1974) argues that learning is more of a government response to exogenous change in a policy environment. In these terms, learning is more a reaction on the part of governments to new situations, albeit taking into account their past experience.

Bennett and Howlett (1992) find both stark differences and similarities between these two paradigms. They ask three distinct questions about each approach: who learns, what do they learn and to what effect? Based on these three questions, Bennett and Howlett create three typologies: government learning, lesson-drawing and social learning (1992:289). In the government learning paradigm, state officials conduct policy learning in order to effect organizational change. In the lesson-drawing typology, policy networks learn to effect program change, whilst social learning involves broader policy communities (groups of stakeholders) who influence policy paradigms (Bennett and Howlett 1992:289).

Andrew Stritch (2005) explores a contemporary example of policy learning in his examination of the origins of Quebec's worker compensation programming. Stritch explains that policy learning can be broadly defined as a process of evaluating new policy ideas, past practices and foreign precedents in the policy creation process (2005:553). It can thus be seen as a process of research and evaluation. Stritch further explains this process: "[governments] learn from the shortcomings of pre-existing programmes and practices in their own jurisdiction; they learn from the precedents of other jurisdictions; and they learn from the articulation of interests by societal participants in the course of the policy-making process" (2005:554). In this way, Stritch has provided a bridge for the endogenous and exogenous camps to cross: learning can take place based on both environmental and internal variables.

While Stritch provides the broader definition of policy learning, the term requires operationalization. Two direct criteria for observing policy learning would need to occur. First, there would need to be recognition of previous policy work in the field. This can take several forms, such as a formal review of previous policy efforts in the field or informal acknowledgement of an understanding of past policy processes by ministry officials. It would involve a concerted effort to recognize successes and failures of past policy experiences. The second criteria would be an intentional effort to avoid the noted failures and emulate the successes of past policy efforts in the field. Policy learning can thus be operationalized as a process of evaluating the successes and failures of past policy processes while utilizing such information to improve contemporary policy creation and implementation. Uncovering policy learning therefore depends upon finding 1) a recognition of previous policy efforts in the field and 2) a concerted effort to avoid the failures and emulate the successes of the past policy paradigm.

3.   The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs

The creation of MSUA was announced on June 30, 1971 with the stated goal of "the development and application of policies to influence the urbanization process" (MSUA 1972:1). The role of the ministry was seen as limited to planning, coordination and research functions and its activities were restricted mostly to enhancing cooperation between different levels of government, as evidenced by the tri-level meeting that MSUA organized in Toronto

in 1972 (MSUA 1973:i). Despite this limited mandate, the provincial governments were apprehensive. MSUA aroused the suspicions of the provinces, who believed that MSUA was an attempt to impinge upon traditional areas of provincial jurisdiction (Feldman and Graham 1979:xvii). Because of these early suspicions, the provinces were initially reluctant to participate in any sort of tri-level meetings that addressed urban affairs (Feldman and Graham 1979:xix). Eventually the provinces agreed to meet, but the assembled provincial representatives made it clear that they would not tolerate any interference in their jurisdiction. Saskatchewan Premier Alan Blakney spoke on behalf of the provinces by stating that: "we want our constitutional rights respected" (Watkins 1972:3). The federal government was on notice: tread carefully when addressing urban issues.

During the1973-74 fiscal year, the ministry undertook a number of significant research projects, such as examining urban waterfronts, rail links in city centres, municipal financing, and urban management training studies (MSUA 1974:9). There was also a renewed focus on interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation within this period, while the scope of the ministry's intergovernmental meetings increased. The President of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities was established as a co-chair of the next tri-level meeting (MSUA 1974: 9). Tri-level meetings eventually became policy specific to each province, focusing on issues such as housing and environmental sustainability (MSUA 1974: 9). MSUA held metropolitan tri-level meetings in Halifax-Dartmouth, Quebec City, Vancouver and Winnipeg intended to address issues specific to each city, such as regional growth in Halifax-Dartmouth and Quebec City, the development of transportation hubs in Vancouver, and organizational development for municipal administrators in Winnipeg (MSUA 1974:4).

During 1973-74, MSUA also had an increased focus on inter-departmental cooperation. For example, early in 1973, MSUA initiated a committee with the Ministry of Finance to compile a database of municipal property tax rates across the country (MSUA 1974:5). Later, in July 1973, the Senior Interdepartmental Committee on Urban Affairs was established, which brought together 15 administrators from different departments, such as the Treasury Board, Finance, and Public Works, and was chaired by the Secretary of MSUA (MSUA 1974:2). Then minister, Ron Basford, was clear about how he viewed MSUA. To

Basford, the ministry's main role was coordination, not funding: "We cannot deal with urban problems merely by transferring more and more money from one pocket to another" (Barker 1973:9).

Basford was replaced by Barney Danson in 1974. The ministry maintained its focus on intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation, but such efforts remained relatively stagnant. The national, provincial and municipal tri-level meetings remained in place, as well as the inter-departmental working groups and the Senior Interdepartmental Committee on Urban Affairs, but the ministry was less active in these areas. Its focus began to shift towards specific project funding, a departure from Basford's view that MSUA should be a coordinating and not a funding ministry.

Project funding began to increase in 1974-75. MSUA got heavily involved with land-use planning and helped in the construction of various urban projects, either in a financial or advisory role. Thus in 1974-75, MSUA helped Toronto develop its waterfront; in Calgary it assisted in the design and development of 400 acres of publicly held land; and in Vancouver it supported the expansion of the city's airport (MSUA 1975:4). This focus on project funding was maintained through 1975-76, with support to the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the City of Toronto and Halifax-Dartmouth (MSUA 1976:2).

In 1976, Andre Ouellet replaced Danson and quickly began reducing the size of the ministry and reorganizing its internal operations (MSUA 1977:13). Instead of having a number of separate departments, two were created: Urban Analysis and Urban Coordination (MSUA 1977:4). Urban Analysis handled interdepartmental urban-related policy and research, while Urban Coordination communicated with municipalities and other governments (MSUA 1977: 13). In every province, this coordination increased. For example, in Newfoundland, the ministry assisted with regional growth and development, and in Ontario it helped to force the arbitration of unused public land, assisted Toronto in the planning of a new waterfront, coordinated activities in railway redevelopment, and arranged the relocation of several army bases (MSUA 1977:5). This pattern continued through 1977-78.

Over its lifetime, the positioning of MSUA changed. The 1973-74 report states that the primary role of the ministry was "urban policy planning", which would be accomplished through policy development, urban research and coordination with different levels of government (MSUA 1974:i). In 1974-75, MSUA began describing itself as an agency designed for "formulating a set of national objectives for Canada's future urban development" (MSUA 1975:1). In 1975-76, the ministry's focus turned to the "development of urban-sensitive federal public-policy" (MSUA 1976:1). By 1977-78 the tone and mission had changed once again, the MSUA annual report noting that the ministry was primarily a "coordinating agency of the federal government concerned with ensuring, as far as is possible, that federal policies, programs and projects are undertaken with an awareness of their implications for the social, cultural and economic well-being of urban areas in Canada" (MSUA 1978:3). This reflected an earlier shift in government policy. MSUA's 1976-77 report had included a preface entitled "The Federal Role in Urban Affairs" which stated:

> Constitutionally, responsibility for Canada's municipalities and matters of local concern rests solely with the provincial and municipal governments. The federal government recognizes and supports this arrangement. The federal government also recognizes that it has constitutional responsibilities to carry out, and in doing so, federal policies, programs and projects affect the pattern, economic base and quality of life in Canadian settlements. This situation means that the federal government, given its concern with how it affects all Canadians, has a responsibility to ensure that its activities are beneficial to urban areas and that federal initiatives take into account provincial and local objectives and plans (MSUA 1977:3).

The 1977-78 report took a more cautious tone towards the provinces, stating that "the ministry cooperates with other federal departments and agencies, the provinces and, through them, their municipalities" (MSUA 1978:3). It continued: "the purpose of such cooperation is to seek provincial and municipal views and policy positions on urban issues" (MSUA1978:4). Thus over time, we see the tone of the ministry softening as it attempted to convince the provinces that it was respecting their jurisdiction. The gradual emergence of the provinces role within MSUA's mandate reflects the criticism the ministry was receiving. It evidently felt the need to reiterate that it was not a lone actor in this policy field.

Nevertheless, in November 1978 it was announced that MSUA would close the following year. Through its lifetime, MSUA had passed through a number of stages, beginning first as a forum for discussion and coordination, before moving onto direct project funding. When

direct project funding increased, so did the ire of the provinces, who began to feel threats to their jurisdiction. Oberlander (1987) has provided an account of the intergovernmental tension faced during his tenure as Deputy Minister of MSUA. Recounting provincial-federal relations, Oberlander states the following:

> The Provinces, having been alerted to the increasingly strong Federal position in urban issues, perceived a dire threat in a Federal/municipal alliance on urban affairs and demanded their explicit and exclusive Constitutional jurisdiction and ultimately succeeded in undercutting MSUA. The Ministry was offered up upon the altar of Federal-Provincial relations. (Oberlander and Fallick 1987:132)

Of the two areas that Oberlander identified as factors contributing to MSUA's decline, intergovernmental tensions were the most public. Interdepartmental tension, the second factor identified by Oberlander as a cause of the ministry's downfall, was less publicized and more challenging to account for. According to Oberlander appeared to raise tensions (Oberlander and Fallick 1987:131). Oberlander uses the urban transportation policy as an example: "as MSUA offered advice in the field of transportation and its impact on urbanization and regional development, eg: Toronto Airport II and Mirabel, the Ministry of Transport felt threatened and felt its advice undercut at Cabinet level" (Oberlander and Fallick 1987, 131). Such tensions are not documented in annual reports and rarely find a place in the national media, which is why Oberlander's candid commentary is invaluable in understanding why MSUA was so abruptly dissolved.

4.   The Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities

During the 2000 election, the Liberal policy platform contained a promise to establish a Prime Minister's Task Force on Urban Issues (Globe and Mail 2002, A14). Soon after the election, the Prime Minister's Task Force was established with Toronto MP Judy Sgro as Chair (Winsor 2002, A4). The Caucus Task Force report argued that the government must implement a national urban strategy that would balance municipal rights and responsibilities with those of the federal government, providing investment in urban centres. The report states that this urban strategy would entail: "an enhanced relationship between the Government of Canada and among our urban partners, provincial and municipal governments, the private sector, community and business leaders and the voluntary sector" (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002:5). The government planned on being only one part of this national strategy, not the lead. Thus the report talks of a national

urban partnership that "will guide strategic federal capital-investment in our cities and will improve the quality of life for millions of Canadians living in our urban regions" (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002, 5). The federal government would enter into projects with municipalities as long as such projects complied with basic federal guidelines, such as enhancing the quality of life, conforming with standards of fiscal accountability, and contributing to sustainable development (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002: 7).

The task force recommended that a cabinet minister be designated with the responsibility of coordinating the federal government's efforts and investments in urban centres (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002, 8). At the same time, this individual would act as the "voice" for cities around the cabinet table, ensuring that the federal government could not overlook pressing urban issues (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002:8).

The task force's report went largely unfulfilled during the end of Jean Chrétien's term as Prime Minister, and Chrétien instructed the task force to avoid specific commitments (Winsor 2002, A4). Clearly worried about a provincial backlash towards federal efforts, Chrétien, upon being questioned about his task force's efforts, stated that: "the cities are under provincial responsibility; we are not in a position to give them more power" (Winsor 2002, A4).

As the task force did its work and while Finance Minister Paul Martin was suggesting a 'new deal' for cities, the provinces were providing warnings to the federal government to tread carefully. Ontario Finance Minister Janet Ecker warned the federal government to not address taxation powers (Lewington 2002, A6). "We are willing to join the emerging dialogue about a new deal for cities – if it's the right one," stated Ecker, showing both enthusiasm and restraint about the prospects of a renewed federal-municipal urban strategy (Lewington 2002, A6). Ecker stated that any new taxing authority for municipalities had to come with a "precondition" between the federal government and the provinces that would "restore the balance between revenue and funding responsibilities for all levels of government in Canada" (Lewington 2002, A6).

Even with provincial concerns noted, Chrétien had an interest in urban issues, as evidenced through his $76 million urban transit grant to the City of Toronto and his commitment to improve urban housing (Winsor 2002, A4). The Office of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations was created in 2002, with a mandate to coordinate the public service's existing infrastructure (Forster 2010). The 2002 budget allowed for the creation of the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF) (Juneau 2010). The decision initially had to be made of whether to establish a foundation to distribute the funds from the CSIF or to create a small, bureaucratic department (Juneau 2010). In the end, with the input of senior public servants, the government opted to create a small department housed in the Treasury Board with responsibility for the portfolio assigned to cabinet minister Allan Rock (Juneau 2010).

Chrétien was interested in assisting Canada's cities but was unwilling to create a formal department to address urban issues. Paul Martin, however, was willing, although his proposed 'new deal' was short on specifics and he rejected the notion of sharing gas tax revenue very early on (Scoffield 2002a). "The finance minister did not offer any money…he offered understanding," stated Jack Layton, then the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. "He sympathizes with our problem, he is concerned about our problem, but there was a remarkably empty chequebook in the discussion" (Scoffield 2002a).

While running for the leadership of the Liberal Party, Martin began to address specifics about his 'new deal'. Martin argued that Ottawa should cede some taxation sources to municipalities so that cities would not have to rely on property tax as a main source of revenue (Scoffield 2002b, A4). "Property taxes were meant for snow removal and garbage collection," stated Martin, "they were not meant to take on the vast range of social programs cities face today" (Scoffield 2002b, A4). Additionally, Martin's plan would rely on the creation of government programs that would address urban issues, such as direct funding mechanisms (Scoffield 2002b, A4). Martin, much like Chrétien, was aware of provincial concerns about taxation and programming, as his 'new deal' was criticized by the government of Quebec as a way of siphoning money away from the province's health and education services (Scoffield 2002b, A4). "Without the full co-operation of the provinces," stated Martin, "a 'new deal' doesn't have a chance to get off the ground" (Scoffield 2002b,

A4). Much like Chrétien, Martin knew that he would have to tread carefully in the face of provincial demands, although he still planned to push ahead with his ambitious program.

Upon becoming Prime Minister in 2003, Paul Martin began to fulfill his 'new deal' vision, appointing a parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minster with sole responsibility for urban issues (Plunkett 2004:23). While this step fell short of the full cabinet minister recommended in the 2002 task force report, it was still seen as a positive step forward (Plunkett 2004, 23). Martin selected Toronto MP John Godfrey to be the new parliamentary secretary with an emphasis on cities (Globe and Mail 2003, A13). Godfrey's role was still ambiguous at this time, a fact that Godfrey himself readily acknowledged, but one that came with a direct mandate to listen to mayors and city councils, recommend solutions to the government and implement federal policies, negotiating with the provinces to ensure the approval of all levels of government (Rusk 2003, A18). Godfrey acknowledged the role of the provinces upon assuming the post: "we've got to work with the provinces to come up with goals that all three levels of government would say 'that's right'" (Rusk 2003, A18).

Godfrey spent the next several months meeting with provincial leaders, ensuring they were comfortable with Martin's proposed revised relationship with cities, commenting that: "what we want to do is the maximum possible to work together in partnership with the provinces" (Lewington 2004, A14). However, even with that noted, Godfrey stated that he would be prepared to move forward with the plan even if not all the provinces approved (Lewington 2004, A14).

Martin also established a fifteen-member committee, chaired by former British Columbia Premier Mike Harcourt, that would oversee the implementation of the 'new deal' along with a permanent cities secretariat based out of the Privy Council Office that would oversee urban spending (Globe and Mail 2004, A12). Martin's first budget began the process of changing the relationship between the federal government and cities. Martin eliminated the Goods and Service Tax on municipal expenditures and increased the amount of federal resources available to municipalities to nearly $7 billion (Liberal Party of Canada 2004:9).

As Martin headed into the 2004 election, he added to his existing urban plan through the Liberal Party platform, entitled *Moving Canada Forward.* The Liberal platform stated that if re-elected, municipalities would be included in pre-budget consultations, tripartite agreements would be extended, and municipalities would be provided with a share of the federal gas-tax (Liberal Party of Canada 2004:9). The language contained in *Moving Canada Forward* speaks of partnership and inclusion amongst all three levels of government. All three levels of government are described as "partners" and federal efforts are described as "co-operative" (Liberal Party of Canada 2004:9). At no point in *Moving Canada Forward* are the federal government's efforts in municipalities described as one-sided.

Soon after the election, Martin announced the creation of the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities (MSIC) and appointed his former parliamentary secretary for urban issues, John Godfrey, to be the department's first minister (Clark and Lewington 2004, A7). Godfrey built on his work as parliamentary secretary and began to implement many of the initiatives described by Martin during the election campaign. Godfrey clarified his role in regard to the provinces: "The job now becomes to work with the provinces…in consultation with the municipalities to find a formula which advances the needs of the municipalities" (Taber 2004, A1).

Godfrey's tone was deliberate. He, and the senior bureaucrats who established MSIC, knew that if the ministry was not established as collaborative it would not succeed. Some initial ground rules were established when approaching the provinces. The most important rule was that communication was established as an exclusive two-way channel between the federal government and the provinces (Juneau, 2010). The federal government would never negotiate with cities or their provincial municipal associations, unless a province requested it (Juneau 2010). Nor would they seek input about projects from cities or invite cities to identify potential infrastructure projects (Juneau 2010). British Columbia and Ontario were the exceptions to this rule, as both provincial governments requested that MSIC negotiate the gas tax transfer directly with their provincial municipal associations (Juneau 2010). MSIC intended to telegraph a simple message to the provincial governments: the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities was interested solely in cooperation with the provinces, not municipalities.

MSIC released its first annual report in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The report acknowledged the earlier actions of the Martin government's 'new deal', including GST rebates and the creation of the Cities Secretariat though the Privy Council, but made specific reference to "partnerships with [the] provinces" and "consultations with municipalities" (Infrastructure Canada 2004: 8). This positive tone continued as the report addressed previous government efforts to fund infrastructure: the Canada Infrastructure Works Program in 1994; the Infrastructure Canada program in 2000; the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund in 2003; the Prairie Grain Roads program in 2001 (Infrastructure Canada 2004, 8). Overall, the report noted over $12 billion in infrastructure investment since 1993 (Infrastructure Canada 2004, 10). The intended message from this historical overview is simple: MSIC is merely providing a formal face to the investment completed by the governments of Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien.

This initial report also laid out the new department's mandate. The report notes that: "an important part of [the Ministry's] mandate is to coordinate and manage funding programs that support public infrastructure initiatives, provide strategic advice and policy direction." It continues: "Infrastructure Canada concentrates on policy development and on research…it is also responsible for communications and dissemination of information on the federal role and contributions to infrastructure in Canada" (Infrastructure Canada 2004:11). On the coordination side, the ministry was clear that it was coordinating federal policy and aligning the needs of municipalities through several federal agencies, such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Industry Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Infrastructure Canada 2004:12). Much of this was similar to the previous Ministry of State for Urban Affairs in its initial mandate: it had coordinated policy activities amongst various actors, but specifically focused on policy coordination at the federal level.

Where MSIC differs greatly from MSUA is in its approach to funding. MSIC's first report is clear in its funding expectations and responsibilities: "provinces and municipalities are the managers of the projects while Infrastructure Canada provides policy leadership and horizontal coordination of project implementation" (Infrastructure Canada 2004:12). The ministry worked with the provinces and municipalities to identify "priority projects" and

from there, all three parties would: "clarify the scope and nature and funding mechanisms of these projects" (Infrastructure Canada 2004:11). Once a project is identified and approved, an environmental assessment and other procedures were completed and then a federal-provincial/territorial management committee was established and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both the provinces and the federal government (Infrastructure Canada 2004, 11).

Thus from the inception of MSIC, the provinces and municipalities were in the driver's seat, not the federal government – a clear and critical difference from previous efforts with formal federal engagement in the municipal sphere. The federal government alone was not identifying projects. Provincial involvement was not only encouraged but also demanded and sustained.

MSIC's 2005-2006 annual report mirrored the 2004-2005 report in tone and objectives, reiterating the ministry's restrained approach to intergovernmental relations by stating that:

> Constitutionally, municipalities are under provincial jurisdiction. Respect for this jurisdiction is a central principle of the New Deal. The complex challenges that play out in cities and communities require a coordinated   approach if workable solutions are to be found. A partnered approach is essential and approaches must be tailored to address the circumstances of different communities: urban and rural, large and small (Infrastructure Canada 2005:10).

The interdepartmental strategy employed by MSIC was also significantly different from that of MSUA. The former Assistant Deputy Minister for MSIC notes that there was an initial fear about interdepartmental tensions, so the ministry met to figure out a way to manage expectations and ministerial "shopping lists" (Laroche 2010). MSIC was a funding ministry, with a budget allotment that was expected to reach more than $5 billion dollars over a five-year period and nearly every ministry wanted a portion of it for their own projects (Laroche 2010). Its solution was to focus on one guiding policy area: in this case, environmental sustainability. Every project that MSIC approached or approved had to be related to environmental sustainability and had to contribute to Canada reaching its Kyoto Agreement targets (Laroche 2010). Additionally, MSIC was clear that it would not consider or fund federal projects, which eliminated the possibility of funding the particular projects of different departments (Juneau 2010).

To ensure that MSIC's relationship with other ministries was maintained, two committees were established: an interdepartmental infrastructure committee and an Assistant Deputy Minister working group. Both groups included representatives from MSIC together with Environment Canada, Treasury Board, Heritage Canada, the Privy Council Office, Intergovernmental Affairs, Human Resources and Skills Development, Agriculture, Industry Canada, and the regional development offices (Laroche 2010). These ongoing committees allowed MSIC to manage expectations and maintain effective communication with its fellow departments.

With these procedures in place, André Juneau, the former Assistant Deputy Minister recalls only small amounts of tension with the Ministry of Transport. For the most part, their portfolios were interdependent. In cases of conflict over a certain project, MSIC would work in consultation with the Ministry of Transport: (Juneau2010). MSIC would be responsible for the funding, while Transport would be responsible for the negotiation process (Juneau 2010). The current associate Deputy Minister for Infrastructure with Infrastructure Canada confirms that these strategies are still in place (Forster 2010).

The 2006 federal election saw Paul Martin voted out of office. With Martin went any sense of enthusiasm to actively engage cities and communities. In his place, Stephen Harper and his Conservative party sought to run a leaner government and operated on the principles of 'open federalism'. The Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities was amalgamated with the Ministry of Transportation to create the revamped Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. The rationale behind this consolidation was efficiency: "bringing the various tools and policy levers of this portfolio under the responsibility of a single minister offers great potential for strategic and coherent policy development" (Infrastructure Canada 2006:1). The minister responsible for the department, Lawrence Cannon, was just as positive about the amalgamation, stating that: "I believe that the alignment of Infrastructure Canada with Transport Canada and the Crown corporations will provide a tremendous opportunity to integrate federal efforts and address the pressing and long-term issues facing Canadians and our communities" (ibid). Additionally, the government stated that the amalgamation would allow the department to cooperate more efficiently with the provincial and municipal governments (Infrastructure Canada 2006:5).

5.   Did Policy Learning Occur?

To determine if policy learning was present when constructing the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities, two criteria were established: 1) a recognition of previous policy efforts in the field and 2) a concerted effort to avoid the failures and emulate the successes of the past policy paradigm.

Recognition of previous policy efforts

Comments referencing MSUA in the media by members of the Chretien-Martin government are rare. From the outset, their government attempted to clarify its goals and aims in the urban policy realm. Chretien (Winsor 2004), Martin (Scoffield 2002b) and Godfrey (Rusk 2003; Lewington 2004) were clear about the federal role in relation to the provinces. All three acknowledged that the provinces, constitutionally, had sole control of municipal affairs. They argued that existing federal policy had implications in the municipal sphere and, as such, a coordinating ministry should be created to enhance the effectiveness of those policies.

Aside from a brief mention in its initial annual report, MSUA is not formally mentioned in MSIC documentation. However, André Juneau, the former Deputy Head of MSIC, provides some insight. Juneau states that those in the original Office of Infrastructure assembled a strategy to approach the provinces acknowledging that MSUA "antagonized the provinces", and argued that "the constitution must be respected" (Juneau 2010). To Juneau, and many of those involved with the creation of MSIC, MSUA had not had a large impact and failed to change the course of urban Canada (Juneau 2010). Yazmine Laroche agrees with much of this assessment, acknowledging that those involved with the establishment of MSIC were not looking to "reinvent the wheel" (Laroche 2010). They knew that MSIC had to take a more collaborative approach with both the provinces and its fellow departments.

An effort to avoid the failures and emulate the success of the past policy paradigm

 While federal political actors worked to reassure the provinces that their role in municipal affairs was not threatened, the Prime Minister's Task Force on Urban Issues began an effort to emulate the successes of MSUA. The task force made it clear that coordination, collaboration and consultation were cornerstones of the new ministry. "We live in an era of

policy interdependence," the report stated, "where actions of one order of government have an effect on other governments" (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002:6). MSUA had found success when it initially established itself as a forum for discussion and coordination, but when it began to fund projects the provinces became concerned about their jurisdiction. The task force felt the need to emphasize that early success.

The task force also emphasized eight responsibilities that a designated urban affairs minister should hold, including chairing and coordinating a National Urban Summit with First Ministers and urban policy advocates, coordinating policies between different federal ministries, and creating an external urban affairs advisory body (Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues 2002:8). All three recommendations echoed the early successes of MSUA, such as the tri-level meetings, the inter-departmental collaboration and urban working groups.

At the departmental level, MSIC made it clear that it would not fund federal projects and that any projects it initiated had to have environmental sustainability as an overarching goal, removing the potential for influence from or interdependence with many line departments. The only ministry that MSIC occasionally came into conflict with was the Ministry of Transport. For the most part, these disagreements were solved amicably through project sharing: Transport would lead the negotiations and MSIC would lead the efforts to fund the project. Two working groups were established to ensure "buy in" from other departments, managing their expectations and maintaining open channels of communication (Laroche 2010).

Once created, MSIC made a concerted effort to avoid the failures of MSUA. First and foremost, MSIC designed itself as a partner in a broader urban affairs strategy, not as the lead. The ministry was clear that the provinces were ultimately in control of municipal affairs and that the federal government's role was to provide assistance and coordination where it was feasible. Discussions and negotiations took place only between the federal government and their provincial colleagues. There were no direct negotiations with cities unless sanctioned by provinces. Memorandums of Understanding were struck for each

project initiated through MSIC to ensure that affected provinces and municipalities understood their role in relation to the federal government and were comfortable with the arrangement. The Finance Minister met with municipalities in pre-budget consultations and kept the provinces informed on their long-term planning in regards to the urban policy realm.

Who learns? When do they learn?

There was one institutional actor that was common throughout both ministries: the Privy Council Office (PCO). During the MSUA era, the Privy Council was not as active in its operations or decision-making, but as a central agency largely responsible for provincial-federal relations, the Privy Council Office did field the outcomes of MSUA's occasionally conflict-ridden multi-level relations. When tri-level meetings failed and certain provinces did not attend, it was the Privy Council that was responsible for crafting a response (Newman 1987:60). Overtime, the Privy Council Office became more involved with the operations and strategic decision-making of MSUA, in an attempt to "rationalize" planning and policy process (Gertler 1987:110).

When comparing MSUA and MSIC, what is striking is the level of influence the Privy Council had over the process leading up to the creation of MSIC. In 2002, the Task Force on Urban Issues was created in the PCO (Forster 2010) and when it was time to further steps with the Office of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, it was André Juneau, the Deputy Secretary of Operations for the PCO that was selected to be its lead. The Cities Secretariat, established in 2003, was created within the PCO. After the creation of MSIC, we still see the influence of the PCO in both coordinating MSIC and its fellow departments and provincial-federal relations (Juneau 2010).

The PCO is an institution with a collective memory. Unlike the two ministries themselves, the PCO is consistent throughout both eras. After MSUA was dismantled, many of the employees and managers were dispersed throughout the government, leaving little institutional memory. Other ministries that have endured throughout both eras, such as Transport and Treasury Board, had a minimal amount of interaction with MSUA, especially in their relationship with the provinces, but the PCO, an institutional actor tasked with maintaining the internal and external relationships of the federal government, did. Because of

this relationship, the PCO took a more active role in the life of MSIC. It acted as an arbiter between MSIC and its fellow departments and ensured that MSIC had a more collaborative relationship with the provinces. Without the Privy Council, and its role as a learner and teacher, MSIC could very well have followed MSUA.

With that said, there is a need to consider the alternative hypothesis put forward at the beginning of this paper, namely that the altered approach of MSIC was merely the result of thirty years of general institutional experience with intergovernmental and interdepartmental interaction. In this case, specialized learning would not occur. One of the problems with the policy-learning paradigm itself is sorting out this general type of learning from specialized learning about specific policy areas. Studying MSUA and MSIC presents just this challenge. There can be no doubt that the years between MSUA's closure and MSIC's inception were tumultuous for Canadian federalism. The rise of regionalism and the strengthening of the provinces marked this time span and when MSIC was created, it would be natural to assume that policy-makers would create the department with these events in mind. The specific changes made, however, would indicate that a very specific type of learning was in fact occurring.

Interdepartmental and intergovernmental relations were identified as factors that contributed to MSUAs downfall. In both cases, those tasked with creating MSIC took proactive steps to correct what were seen as past errors. Safeguards were put in place to ensure interdepartmental cooperation, while rules were designed to guide interactions with the provinces. These were specific measures to avoid what policy-crafters viewed as MSUA's failures.

6.   Conclusion

 The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs began as a coordinating ministry but quickly moved into direct project funding within municipalities, often at the exclusion of the provinces. Other ministries in the federal government also feared jurisdictional intrusion on the part of MSUA and worked internally to undermine its efforts. These two factors worked against MSUA and it was eventually shut down. MSIC, on the other hand, remained a coordinating ministry and did not enter into project funding without provincial approval. Tensions were

reduced with other ministries through a system of sharing project leadership, reducing the interdepartmental friction that Oberlander argues ultimately led to MSUA's downfall.

It has been argued (Levy 1994; May 1992) that policy failure, either real or perceived, strongly influences future policy paradigms. In this case, there is a convincing argument that the comparison between MSUA and MSIC reflects policy learning. The Privy Council, once tasked with sustaining the relationship between Ottawa and the provinces that had been strained by MSUA's entrance into the urban sphere, worked to ensure that MSIC's relationship with not only the provinces, but also its fellow departments, would be different. Thus the two conditions of institutional policy learning, addressed earlier, were present with the creation of MSIC which recognises previous policy efforts and an effort to avoid past failures and emulate past successes. Those involved with MSIC argued that they wanted to create a ministry with a more positive approach towards the provinces and their fellow departments. The institutional knowledge necessary to put this change into practice, however, came from the Privy Council Office.

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From development authorities to democratic institutions: Studies in planning and management transition in the Karachi Metropolitan Region

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1.   Introduction

Karachi is a relatively young metropolis. The city is about three centuries old, founded as a port by local Hindu merchants and traders. The British conquered the city in 1839, occupied the entire principality of Sindh in 1843 and designated Karachi as headquarters of the territory. The city experienced different phases of growth. When Pakistan came into being in 1947, a large number of refugees entered the city and the population jumped from 435,000 in 1947 to 1,050,000 in 1951. Karachi has remained the primate city of Pakistan, with a high annual growth rate of 5-7 percent per annum (Ahmed 1998). Current estimates suggest that the city has about 17 million inhabitants.

Karachi houses 7 per cent of the total population and 23 per cent of the urban population of Pakistan. Its current rate of growth is estimated at around 5 per cent, of which 3 per cent is due to natural increase and 2 per cent to migration from the other parts of the country. Karachi provides 25 per cent of federal revenue and 15 per cent of Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, 50 per cent of the country's bank deposits and 72 per cent of all issued capital is contributed by the city (Hasan 2010; CDGK 2008). It houses the country's largest stock market and about 26 per cent of the total national industrial establishments.

2.   Governance Framework

Pakistan comprises four provinces, namely Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (formerly North West Frontier Province) and Balochistan. These are administratively divided into 110 districts which are further sub-divided into sub-districts or towns. Government is composed of three tiers: federal, provincial and local. Local government is controlled by the provinces, which have departments and ministries of local government that oversee the affairs of local bodies. The federal government has also instituted a Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for overall coordination and monitoring of local government affairs in the country (Planning Commission 1998). Many other government departments, autonomous bodies and semi-government organizations also extend support and assistance to local government institutions. For example, the government created the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) in 1999 with an aim to reconstruct local governments and the police force. It devised a new system which was enforced from 2001. This is discussed in more detail in following sections.

There is well-defined hierarchy for urban management in Pakistan. This is outlined in Figures 1-3 below.
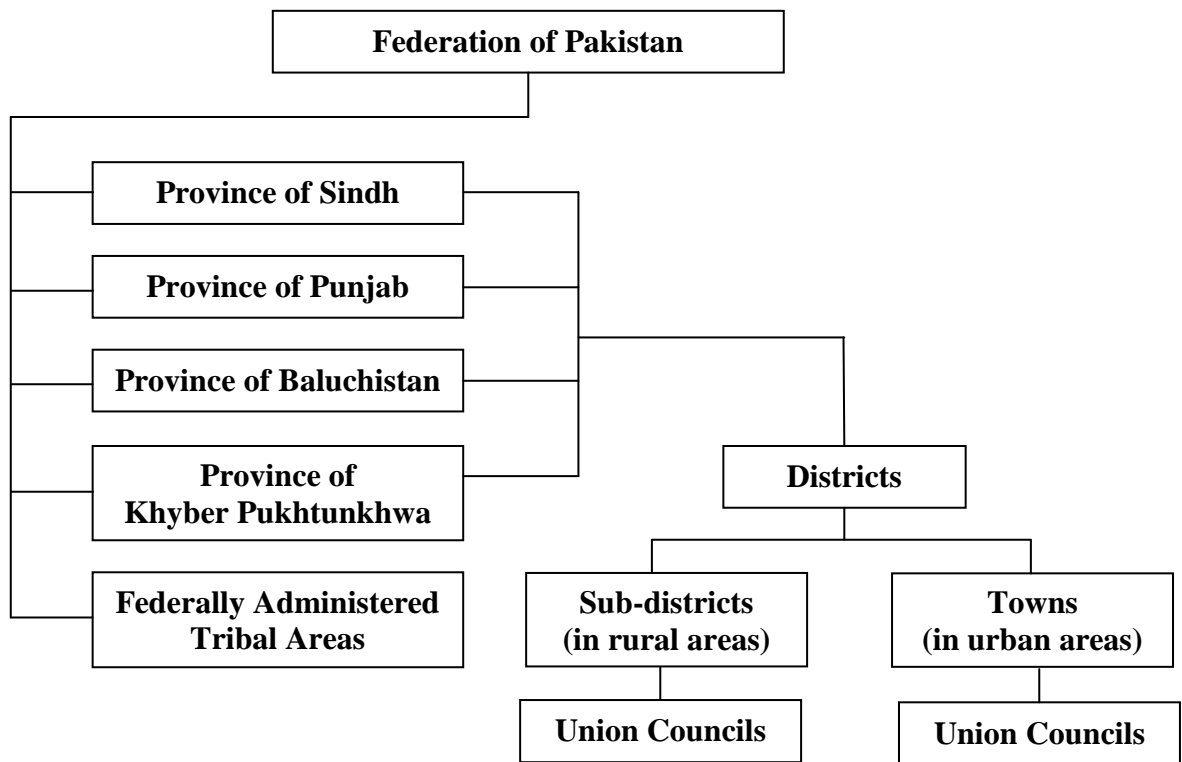
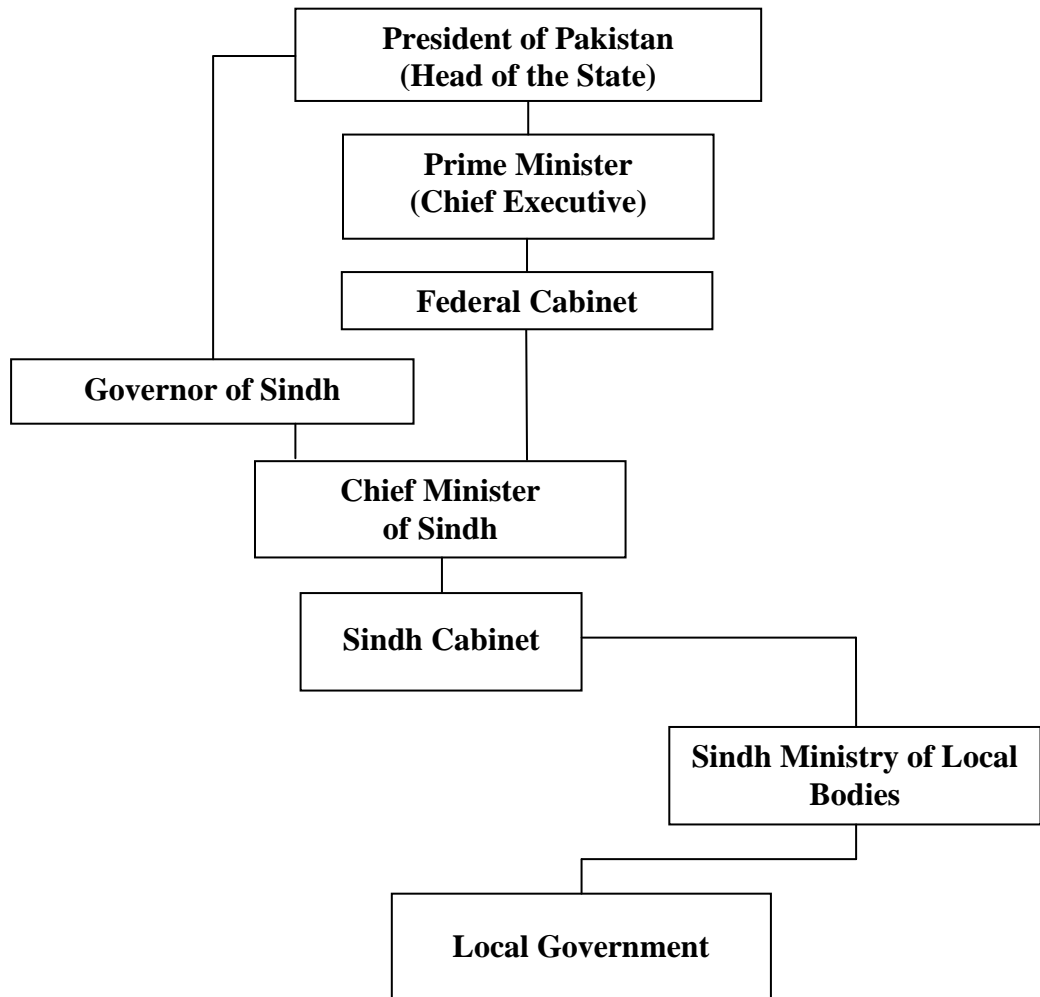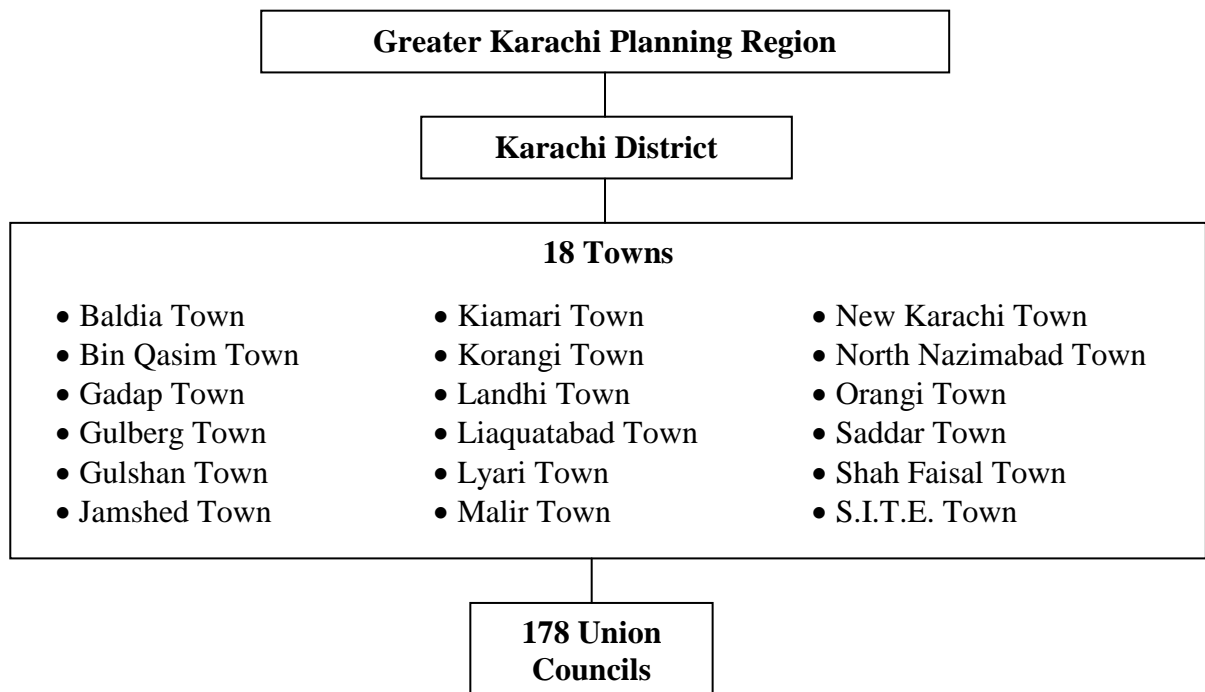**Figure 1:** Territorial Classification

Figure 2: Government Hierarchy

Figure 3: Administration of Karachi

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            ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
            │      Greater Karachi Planning Region          │
            └─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
                  ┌──────────────────────┐
                  │   Karachi District    │
                  └──────────────────────┘
                            │
  ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  │                          18 Towns                                 │
  │                                                                   │
  │  • Baldia Town        • Kiamari Town       • New Karachi Town      │
  │  • Bin Qasim Town     • Korangi Town       • North Nazimabad Town  │
  │  • Gadap Town         • Landhi Town        • Orangi Town           │
  │  • Gulberg Town       • Liaquatabad Town   • Saddar Town           │
  │  • Gulshan Town       • Lyari Town         • Shah Faisal Town      │
  │  • Jamshed Town       • Malir Town         • S.I.T.E. Town         │
  └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
                  ┌──────────────────────┐
                  │    178 Union          │
                  │    Councils           │
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Source: CDGK website, www.cdgk.gov.pk (2010).

3.   Urban Management Structure of Karachi

Organizational development

The organizational evolution and development of metropolitan administration in Karachi has passed through several phases in common with other similar cities in the Indo Pak Subcontinent. From a small scale municipality, the city has developed a complex urban management framework with a range of institutions of diverse nature, profile, functions, jurisdiction and approaches.

The Karachi Municipality was formed in 1852 by the British Government. It comprised appointed members, advisors and bureaucrats all approved by the provincial administration of Sindh. At this time the Sindh province was administered from Bombay, but in 1935, Sindh was completely separated from Bombay and the provincial headquarters were permanently settled in Karachi. In 1911, Karachi Municipality was partially restructured and representatives from the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Karachi Port Trust and citizen committees/philanthropists also entered the

council. It was upgraded as the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC). The arrangement was still non-representative in a democratic sense though led by a mayor elected from among the members.

In 1947, Pakistan came into existence and Karachi became its capital. Due to ample chances of employment, people emigrating from India flooded the city in large numbers. Several special directorates were set by the federal government in order to effectively deal with the refugee problem and urban rehabilitation. The Karachi Improvement Trust was formed in 1951 and upgraded to the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) in 1957. The KMC remained responsible for the municipal affairs of the old city quarters (Pithawalla 1960). In 1960 the capital was shifted to Islamabad, the newly planned city in northern Pakistan.

Also during this phase, the Basic Democracies Order of 1962 was issued by the President of Pakistan. It envisaged democratising the governmental organs from the lowest tier of the government. Under this Order, every 1250 people elected one representative to the new urban and rural councils (union councils, district councils and divisional councils in rural areas, and town committees, municipal committees and municipal corporations in urban areas). The KMC received its first batch of elected councilors in 1964, but the martial law of 1969 eradicated this representative structure (Ahmed 1998), and the period of 1971-79 saw KMC working as a core bureaucratic organ of government. The mayor was replaced by an appointed administrator who was solely responsible for all executive actions and initiatives.

The Sindh Local Government Ordinance of 1979 returned representative government and local elections were held that year. In Karachi, 167 councillors were elected from various constituencies of the city. Special representation was given to nominees of women, labour/major trade unions and minorities. These councillors elected the mayor and deputy mayor for a term of four years. The polls were held on non party basis, but later the councillors informally organized themselves into political groups within the council.

The second local elections took place in 1983 with the same structure. However, KMC was dismissed by the Sindh Chief Minister in 1987 over a conflict on sharing motor vehicle tax between the city and the provincial government. Also in 1987 Karachi was divided into four zones due to its large size and the administration of KMC accordingly

split into four units, termed Zonal Municipal Committees. The number of councillors was increased to 245 in total. Elections to these new local bodies were held in 1988 on non-party basis. The mayor was elected by the joint session of all the four committees. Municipal functions and delegation of power remained virtually unchanged (KMC 1990).

In 1993, the provincial government constituted two new authorities, namely the Malir and Lyari Development Authorities, to replace the Karachi Development Authority and take responsibility for planning, development, infrastructure provision, housing, landscape and horticulture and a number of other functions. The KMC and Zonal Municipal Committees remained responsible for 'routine' urban management tasks. In 1996, the city was further re-organized into five District Municipal Corporations (DMCs). The KMC remained perched on the top of DMCs with policy formulation, resource distribution and coordination functions (Ahmed 1998). All the municipal organs were headed by appointed bureaucrats.

Military rule was imposed on the country in 1999 and the military government introduced major local government reforms. Karachi was declared a City District to signify it as an urban area. Also a new Sindh Local Government Ordinance was promulgated in 2001 (SLGO 2001). The city was subdivided into 18 Towns and 178 Union Councils (UCs). At the same time, the KMC and development authorities were amalgamated to form a new City District Government Karachi.

Elections for the UCs were held in 2001, with the Nazim (mayor) of each UC subsequently becoming a voter to elect the Nazims their respective Towns and the City. Elections were again held in 2005. However, in 2010, the tenure of the elected regimes concluded, and they were replaced by appointed bureaucrats. Major constitutional changes are in the offing at present which will also have an impact on the status, structure and working of local governments.

Local institutional structure

As mentioned earlier, the Karachi Improvement Trust and later Karachi Development Authority (KDA) were established during the earlier post independence period. The KDA was composed of appointed managerial, technocratic and bureaucratic personnel. It had an appointed director general and a council comprised of the Mayor of Karachi,

Managing Director of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) and two nominees from the provincial government, chaired by the Commissioner Karachi Division, an office which is now defunct. Autonomous in its conduct, it was accountable to the Ministry of Physical Planning and Housing, Government of Sindh. It performed the following functions:

- Master planning/planning coordination/environmental control/urban design/urban renewal
- Building codes and planning standards
- Provision/development of public Housing
- Providing technical assistance to the other bodies (when required)
- Land management and developmental control
- Maintenance of infrastructure (in coordination with KWSB)
- Mass-transit planning
- Development of low cost housing

Its sources of revenue were land sales and development charges.

Urban management functions rested with KMC till 2001. They included:

- Maintenance of urban areas, parks and recreation grounds
- Community services/amenities such as hospitals, dispensaries, maternity homes and schools
- Leasing of public property for development or other use
- Roads and street maintenance
- Coordination in planning and development activities
- Solid waste management
- Fire fighting services
- Squatter settlements
- Flood control

Its sources of revenue included Octroi (a tax imposed on the goods transported by road and rail until 1999 when it was abolished); property taxes levied on fully occupied and utilized property; road tolls; and fire services and conservancy taxes. In addition, occasional grants were obtained from the federal and provincial governments for specific projects.

Until the KDA and other developmental authorities were merged with KMC, planning functions were managed by the Master Plan and Environmental Control Department (MPECD) of KDA. The MPECD collaborated with various national and international agencies for preparation of development plans. It produced two major planning studies and outputs, namely the Karachi Development Plan (1973-85) and the Karachi Development Plan (1986-2000). However, these plans were not notified, and as political and administrative support to the department began to dwindle, most of its staff and associated expert pool either sought employment in the private sector or left the country. When the next master planning exercise began in the early 2003, only a bare minimum of human resources remained. Thus this exercise was handed over to a private firm. This approach had many short comings as the said firm did not possess the overall competence and capability to undertake a large scale task of this nature.

As mentioned earlier, both KDA and KMC merged into the City District Government Karachi in 2001, according to a new local government dispensation. However the CDGK did not acquire control of building and development control, which were managed by the Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA) which functioned under the provincial government of Sindh. Similarly, water and sanitation works remained under the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB).

Delivery of services in Karachi is now undertaken by a complex web of multiple agencies with either singular or shared jurisdictions. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Service Delivery Mechanisms in the Karachi Planning Region (KPR)

Nature of Function	Jurisdiction	Level of Government	Authority, Department or Unit Performing Function
General administration	Karachi Planning Region	Local GoS	Administrator CDGK Chief Secretary to GoS
Administration of justice	Sindh	GoS	Various civil and criminal courts headed by the Sindh High Court
Police	Sindh	GoS	Home Department, Police Department
Traffic	Sindh	GoS	Traffic Police and Transport & Communication Department CDGK
Land development	KMA	GoS Local Authority Private Sector	CDGK, DHA, other development agencies

Housing	KPR	Same	Same
Physical planning	KPR	Same	CDGK, other land owning bodies
Bulk water supply	KPR	Same	KWSB
Retail water distribution	KPR	Same	CDGK, Cantonment Boards & other constituent units under the supervision of KWSB
Sewerage			
Works	KPR	Same	KWSB
Treatment plants and maintenance	KPR	Same	KWSB
Fire-fighting	KPR	Same	CDGK, Cantonment Boards, agencies of the armed forces
Environmental control	KPR	Same	CDGK, SEPA
Environmental Sanitation	KPR	Same	CDGK, Cantonment Boards, local authorities
Parks and playgrounds	KPR	Same	Same
Education:			
Primary	Sindh	Same	Education Dept., CDGK, Private Sector
Secondary	Sindh	Federal Govt. GoS Private Sector	Education Dept., Private Sector
University	Sindh	GoS	Higher Education Commission, Private Sector, GoS
Electricity	Sindh	Federal Govt.	KESC, WAPDA
Gas	Sindh	Federal Govt.	Sui Gas Southern Company
Telephone	Sindh	Federal Govt.	Pakistan Telecommunication Co Ltd, Private Sector
Transport			
Buses	KPR	Private Sector	Private Sector, CDGK
Circular Railway	KPR	Federal Govt.	Pakistan Railways, Karachi Urban Transport Corporation
Taxis, mini-buses rickshaws (para transit)	KPR	Private Sector	Private Sector
Port development	KPR	Federal Govt.	KPT, Port Qasim Authority

Airport development	KPR	Federal Govt.	Civil Aviation Authority
Industrial Estates	KPR	GoS Federal Govt.	SITE, Export Processing Zone Authority, Pakistan Steel
Medical care	KPR	Federal GoS Local Authority Private Sector	GoP, GoS, Dept. of Health, CDGK, other Councils, Private Sector
Collection of taxes:			
Property, betterment, entertainment and motor vehicles taxes	Sindh	GoS	Excise and Taxation Department
Custom, central excise duties, sales and income tax	Sindh	Federal Govt.	Federal Board of Revenue, GoP
Water, conservancy, fire, and other municipal taxes	KPR	Local Authorities	CDGK, Cantonment Boards

Notes:	
GoP	Government of Pakistan
SITE	Sindh Industrial and Trading Estates
GoS	Government of Sindh
KESC	Karachi Electric Supply Corporation
KPR	Karachi Planning Region
KPT	Karachi Port Trust
KWSB	Karachi Water Sewerage Board
LDA	Lyari Development Authority
MDA	Malir Development Authority
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority
CDGK	City District Government Karachi
DHA	Defence Housing Authority
SEPA	Sindh Environmental Protection Agency

4.   Planning and Management in Transition

Trends in political leadership

The early post-colonial leadership of Karachi was influential, honest and upright, possessed noble ideas, and contributed its best efforts to running the day-to-day affairs of the city as well as to resolve various crises. This phase lasted from 1947 to 1955. After this period, the administration of the city was passed to the bureaucrats. The tradition of elected local government was only revived after a long gap in 1979. Partyless elections

were held through which a house of councilors was elected. This leadership proved very fragile for a number of reasons. First, the Sindh Local Government Ordinance of 1979, which was the main law under which the municipalities of the province were constituted, provided only marginal independence to the municipalities. Thus it was difficult for the metropolitan leadership to emerge as a powerful voice of the citizens. Nevertheless, after 1987 the municipality was governed by councillors of a political group that represented the largest ethnic community residing in urban Sindh, and this group did produce viable leadership to run the affairs of the city. However, internal rifts, political deadlock with the upper tiers of the government, and acts of violence in the city disrupted the evolution of metropolitan leadership. In 1992, the elected local government was again abolished and was taken over by appointed officers and civil servants.

The re-vamped structure of local government in the form of CDGK has been dominated by various political groups, although elections have been held on a nominally non-party basis. In 2002, the Nazim (mayor) and other officers came largely from a religio–political party. Later, in 2005, the CDGK was dominated by the same ethno-political party that led the city's affairs during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Metropolitan leadership reflects the various interest groups that exist in the city. Although there is no formal structure of governance which accommodates the input of these groups, the power structure informally functions in conformance with their preferences. The extent of influence of each interest group is difficult to quantify, but the following constitute important groups that influence the decision-making process.

- *Builders and developers*: These stakeholders have formed the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD). Matters pertinent to land use, development of suburban areas, extension of infrastructure, and zoning by-laws and regulations are largely influenced by ABAD which enjoys close informal relations with the CDGK and the provincial administration.

- *Informal land grabbers*: They facilitate the occupation of state land through organized encroachments. They have been operating in the city for the past four decades and have converted almost one third of the urban land into informal settlements. They lobby for ownership rights and provision of basic services, and

enjoy the patronage of political leaders as these settlements constitute the major voting banks for the political parties.

- *Transporters*: They are responsible for running the entire passenger and goods transport system of the city, and influence policies and projects related to the development of roads, alignment of passenger/goods routes, and fares.

- *Religious pressure groups*: Though their electoral influence is dwindling, they constitute a strong pressure group due to 'street power'. That is to say, the religious lobbyists possess within their folds a considerable number of staunch followers and activists who are used in street protests, demonstrations and agitation.

- *Political parties*: They have a vast following owing to Karachi's multi-ethnic and multicultural context. The dominant groups are the Urdu speaking immigrants from India who migrated to Pakistan to begin new lives and settled in Karachi as the city was only emerging urban centre in the country. They constituted an upwardly mobile and progressively minded community which wanted to break free from orthodox customs and traditions.

Apart from the Urdu speaking community, the Sindhis, Punjabis, Baluchis, and Pushto-speaking Pathans also form important groups in Karachi. With the growing insurgency in the northern parts of the country, a large number of internally displaced people have entered Karachi; most are Pushto speaking and their political power has increased considerably along with their numbers.

Planning agencies and their roles

During the post independence period, the planning process gradually evolved under the direct supervision and advice of federal and provincial governments. Although in theory the planning process at the metropolitan level is now the responsibility of the CDGK and other local development agencies, the key decisions are still largely instituted at the federal and provincial levels, and all large-scale program and projects are formulated and approved by the institutions of federal and provincial governments. In other words, the metropolitan organs have no autonomy in planning for the city and local government is limited largely to implementation of program and projects. In the absence of an effective

local government, it is difficult to imagine that any urban planning process will function properly.

Land is undoubtedly the most important resource in the metropolitan planning process. In Karachi, there are about nineteen authorities that plan, develop, and float land in the market. Examples of such authorities include the Defence Housing Authority, Sindh Industrial and Trading Estate, Malir Development Authority (MDA), Lyari Development Authority (LDA), Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Port Qasim Authority, and the various Cooperative Societies. These agencies are independent in their respective actions and jurisdiction, although under the prevailing socio-political environment of the country, their decision-making is influenced by both upper-tier organs of government and the influential lobbies discussed earlier.

Neither the KDA nor the CDGK have possessed any legal or administrative control over these other development agencies of the city. Thus their capacity to execute plans has been grossly constrained. The most recent plan, the Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020, managed by the Master Plan Group of Offices (MPGO) of the CDGK, suggested various investment options to the development agencies, but with little likelihood they will be implemented.

Thus planning exercises at the city level tend to be somewhat academic. Moreover, while the planning *process* improved in its methodology and execution, there are several shortcomings in *content*. The city of Karachi is grossly deficient in basic maps, property records, and physical and socio-economic inventories. As a result of the lack of adequate data, planning assumptions have been drawn from sample surveys. This has led to under- or over-estimations. Each attempt at planning has focused on addressing this vital deficiency. The Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020 is no exception, but since it was conceived as a finite consultancy project, the creation of a multipurpose data base could not be effectively pursued.

A wide gap has usually prevailed between the planning process and social, economic, administrative, and practical realities. This has become extremely visible during the last decade. The Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020 has been criticized for this reason. The plan does not deal sufficiently or realistically with environment related issues nor take into consideration various social and political factors that have a direct bearing on

the way the city is governed and development takes place. No viable institutional arrangements have been developed to oversee the implementation of the plan, although a clear analysis of the institutional issues involved was one of the outputs of the planning process.

Therefore the intended implementation process is not sustainable because: (a) there is no political support for the plan from provincial government; (b) there are no institutional arrangements for inter-agency transfer of information or data; (c) there is only lukewarm commitment to the planning process; (d) organizational culture within the CDGK is a major hindrance; and (e) the plan has not sought to develop links with the NGOs, informal sector, communities, and other development lobbyists whose support is essential to achieve its objectives.

Another problem with metropolitan planning is that each time the process has started afresh: the previous plan was consulted merely as a passing reference. Never until the most recent effort was an evaluation conducted to review the performance of past plans, and while the present plan did attempt an evaluation, it was confined only to basic records, not the review and analysis of developments on the ground.

It is also interesting to note that those groups who actually decide on the fate of the city were not invited to the policy or plan-making exercise. Transporters, shopkeepers, estate agents, brokers, dealers, religious and political groups, professionals, builders, and businessmen remained aloof throughout the process. Nor were local communities or the general public involved.

5.   Lessons Learned

A viable political system that is capable of transforming populist aspirations into an agenda for development is a pre-requisite for any sustainable urban planning process. This process exists to some extent in Karachi, but only basic statutory provisions are contained in the Sindh Local Government Ordinance 2001 and planning lacks the robust legal framework needed to place this vital activity on a firm footing. In particular, better coordinated management of land is fundamental to an improved planning process, and planning and urban management institutions must have the ability to generate enough revenue to support their functions.

Also an effective consultation process needs to be formed to develop a vision for the city and region. It must be understood that Karachi is more than a city; it is an expanded urban region. If we fail to give direction to its growth and sustenance, the city will become a melting pot of problems. Karachi is a mini-Pakistan as far as its composition is concerned. Therefore views from each discipline of learning and every section of society are vital to shape a consensus on the future of the metropolis. Furthermore, it is essential to initiate debates on crucial planning issues to raise popular awareness among the people. Although the newspapers and magazines are doing commendable work, it needs to be reinforced by the efforts from the electronic media which has a greater reach into the masses. CDGK could seek to create this institutional space.

Demonstration planning projects have a key role to play. A few of the town councils of Karachi should be selected for this purpose. Plans could be developed initially for those towns and after suitable review, evaluation and modification, the lessons learned may be extended to all the remaining jurisdictions in a systematic manner.

In order to develop a stronger professional base, universities and research institutions should be involved in the process. The universities should develop relevant specialized program whereby they become capable of providing professional support to this vital activity. According to their capacity and past performance, universities should be directly involved at least during the fact finding and evaluation phases of planning. Also, instead of creating competition, the approach of fostering collaboration between institutions should be promoted to gain benefit from the strengths of all concerned.

Planning is not a product; it is a continuous ongoing process and needs to be treated as such.

Role of local government in Botswana for effective service delivery: Challenges, prospects and lessons

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This paper begins with an explanation of the nature of local government in Botswana, its structures, and their functions and accomplishments since independence. It then proceeds to look at the challenges, and considers measures for meeting them. It ends by looking at future prospects and draws some lessons.

1.   Local Government Structures in Botswana

Botswana is known as a country in Africa which has operated within the political framework of democracy since independence and has promoted local government as an instrument of decentralization and public participation for local level governance and service delivery. Local government in Botswana stands on four pillars: (a) Councils (City Councils, Town Councils and District Councils); (b) District Administration, headed by District Commissioners; (c) Land Boards, created after independence for allocation of tribal land; and (d) tribal administration, headed by Chiefs as traditional leaders (Sharma 2005a, 2005b).

City and Town Councils in urban areas and District Councils in rural areas as agencies of devolution derive their authority, theoretically, from statutes and perform functions allocated

by statutes. Their main functions are primary education, primary health, roads, village water supply, community development and social welfare. Although these are statutory bodies, their autonomy and capacity are limited by political and administrative realities.

The District Commissioner heads the District Administration and operates as a representative of central government in the district. This office is an instrument of de-concentration and performs the functions allocated by the central government. The main function of the District Commissioner is to coordinate rural development activities at the district level, primarily as chairperson of the District Development Committee (DDC). This committee has representation from the District Council, Land Board and Tribal Administration, as well as district level representatives of various government ministries, and has a central role in coordination of district level development plans.

Land Boards were created after independence. Half the members of Land Boards are elected by the community at *Kgotla* (traditional village assemblies) and the other half are appointed by the Minister of Lands. The Land Boards hold the tribal land in trust and allocate it to citizens for residential, agricultural or commercial purposes. The boards took over these powers from the Chiefs. They derive their powers from statutes and work in cooperation with the tribal administration, District Council and District Commissioner.

The traditional institution of Chiefs played a significant role during the pre-colonial and colonial periods and has continued to exist after independence as an integral part of local government machinery. The Chiefs play a significant role as chairmen of *Kgotla*, a traditional forum for consultation and two-way communication between the government and the community on the formulation and implementation of public policies and local level development plans. Chiefs also preside over customary courts which handle more than 80% of cases tried in the country (Sharma 2009). The House of Chiefs (*Ntlo ya Dikhosi*) is a forum where the Chiefs articulate their views on matters of interest to them (Sharma 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b).

2.   Botswana's Accomplishments in Local Government

Botswana has a commendable track record regarding the growth and functioning of local government in the African context (Sharma 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b). It has a conducive and enabling democratic political environment in which local government can develop. There is peace, stability and the rule of law across the country. There is also freedom of expression, criticism and opposition. Public participation in public policy making, development planning and implementation has grown steadily. Political leadership has demonstrated a commitment to promote decentralization as evidenced by the establishment of Presidential Commissions in 1977 and 2001. Local level political leadership has grown steadily. District Administration displays improved administrative capacities.

Land Boards are now well established having gone through initial hostility from the Chiefs and limited administrative capacity. They are politically neutral and have their own Land Board service of officials. Traditional authorities (Chiefs) have been well integrated into the public administration machinery for local governance (Sharma 1999, 2003a, 2008). Kgotla also play a role in local level development activities. Customary courts are popular with the community as they are not too technical, inexpensive and comprehensible to the ordinary tribesmen. Decentralized (district level) development planning has improved considerably (Sharma 2000a, 2000b, 2004). Problems such as HIV/AIDS are being confronted with commitment and determination. Nevertheless, local governance continues to be faced with a number of significant constraints and challenges which have to be confronted.

3.   Challenges

One of the greatest challenges is that of limited capacity. Although their strength and capacity have grown steadily since independence, local governments are still not able to perform their roles and discharge their functions as well as expected. Their autonomy is limited and they remain unable to manage essential functions without assistance from central government ministries such as Education, Health, Works and Water Affairs (Sharma 1997). The central government also plays a dominant role in formulation of policies and development plans and their implementation. Although the councils are notionally autonomous statutory bodies, in reality one could say in many ways they operate like de-

concentrated agencies of the Ministry of Local Government, given the extent of control and direction.

The councils do not have significant independent sources of revenue and their entire development expenditure is met by the central government. The central government also meets 97% of the recurrent expenditure of rural councils and about 80% of that of urban councils (Sharma, 2003b).

Qualified manpower is scarce in the country, and local authorities are faced with big challenges related to human resource development and management. As they were not able to attract, remunerate, retain and train their own staff independently, the central government organized the Unified Local Government Service (ULGS) which is now known as Local Government Service Management (LGSM). Through this service the central government recruits, posts, transfers, disciplines, trains, promotes and regulates the conditions of service of staff in local authorities. This arrangement helps the local authorities to get qualified manpower, gives them attractive conditions of service, and facilitates training opportunities; however, it also strengthens central control and inhibits local government autonomy (Sharma 1997, 2005a, 2005b). It results in the accountability and loyalty of staff in local government being to the central administration of LGSM instead of the council. However, there has been some decentralization in human resource management, and the councils have gradually been given increased authority to take decisions related to their staff. Human resource management departments in councils have also been strengthened, but adequate human resource development, management and autonomy will remain a major challenge for the foreseeable future.

Local level political leadership has a significant role in strengthening local government. Local level leadership has grown since independence but the capacity of many councillors leaves much to be desired. The grassroots organizations such as Village Development Committees need to be more active and community participation strengthened. Decentralization of authority from the central government has been primarily confined to the bureaucrats in local level organizations, and the effective participation of local politicians has remained limited. Although there has been considerable progress in participatory

development planning, effective bottom-up processes remain a distant dream in spite of proclamations, and planning continues to be essentially top-down. The integration of district level plans and vertical and horizontal coordination also need to be improved (Sharma 2000a, 2000b).

Productivity of local level organizations remains another challenge despite various productivity enhancing measures such as work improvement teams and performance management systems. Declining standards of integrity are also a matter of concern (Sharma 1998). The administrative machinery's accountability to the people needs to be strengthened, and administration needs to become more responsible, responsive and sensitive to people's needs and expectations.

4.   The Way Forward: Measures to Meet the Challenges

Decentralization will not be fully effective and local government organizations will not be strong unless their capacities are further developed. Efforts to strengthen decentralization should therefore be directed at building the capacity of local government organizations. This requires clarity of policy and a commitment to its implementation. People have to be taken on board and policies *for* them have to be made *with* them.

Capacity development requires financial autonomy and sound management of finances. The local authorities need to reduce their heavy dependence on the central government and develop their own independent sources of revenue (Sharma, 2003b). They will not be autonomous unless they make a significant advance in that direction. It is not only independent sources of revenue that are required: sound financial management is even more important. The local authorities must ensure that their finances are not mismanaged and standards of integrity and accountability are maintained. There has to be zero tolerance for corruption and mechanisms of control and accountability have to be strengthened. Audit machinery and bodies like the Local Government Public Accounts Committee (LGPAC), Directorate on Economic Crime and Corruption (DCEC) and the Ombudsman have to play more effective roles (Sharma 1998, 2005a, 2005b).

Capacity development requires strengthening of human resource development and management in local government. The local authorities need enhanced decentralization in human resource management, and human resource departments in the councils need to be strengthened further. The councils need to give closer attention to manpower planning and human resource development measures. Morale and motivation need to be lifted to enhance productivity, and measures such as work improvement teams, performance management systems and performance based rewards adopted more widely and sincerely. Other productivity enhancing measures, such as contracting out to the private sector for service delivery, public-private partnerships etc. also need to be pursued to check the expansion of bureaucracy (Sharma 2007a, 2007b).

The performance of local level political leaders could be strengthened through organization of workshops, seminars and published material which could enhance their knowledge and understanding of their expected roles. Grass-roots organizations such as Village Development Committees (VDCs) need more support from higher levels and could go through similar training programs to get better informed. They need to come closer to the community to be able to understand their felt needs, problems and expectations. Decentralization cannot be effective if it stops at the district level. It should be taken further down to the village levels and the current mindset about the significance of VDCs has to change to make them more effective instruments for enlisting people's participation in local level governance (Sharma 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b).

The Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) could play a more effective role in promoting decentralization by serving as a strong pressure group at the central government level on behalf of local authorities. It could undertake capacity development activities on behalf of local authorities (such as organization of workshops for councillors) to strengthen leadership (Sharma 2005a, b).

5. Prospects and Lessons

Prospects for decentralization and growth of local government in Botswana are encouraging. Local level democracy has taken root in the country, and central and local government organizations are working jointly for the realization of Botswana's Vision 2016 and National

Development Plan. Challenges are being addressed and capacities are being strengthened. Commitment of political and bureaucratic leadership is growing (Sharma 1996).

Botswana's experience offers some important lessons. Creation of an enabling environment of democracy, peace and the rule of law is a prerequisite for decentralization and strengthening of local government. If decentralization is to be meaningful and to promote effective participation of people in local level governance, it has to be taken to the grass-roots in the villages instead of stopping at the district level. Decentralization has also to be taken to the people and their political representatives rather than being limited to bureaucrats in the local level organizations. Local political leadership and grass roots organizations such as VDCs therefore need to be strengthened alongside the elected councils. Vertical and horizontal communication and coordination have to be improved to strengthen bottom-up planning and integration of local plans in to the national development plan. The people need and deserve accountable, responsible, responsive, sensitive, productive administration at the local level. The political and bureaucratic leadership at the national and local levels have to demonstrate their commitment to take up this challenge to ensure that the people get that sort of administration.

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Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Gauteng urban municipalities: A bridge too far?

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1.   Introduction

Local government in South Africa, or 'developmental local government' as the lowest tier of government is often called (RSA 1998), carries the mandate of executing national development priorities of the country, as empowered by the constitution (RSA 1996), and by local government policy and legislation such as the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000), that spell out the roles and responsibilities of local government. In terms of this mandate, local government is categorized into metropolitan, district and local municipalities, and has the responsibility of providing basic services such as water and sanitation, housing, and roads within those municipal jurisdictions, based on local integrated development plans (IDPs).[1]

The developmental role that has been assigned to local government becomes highly strategic in dealing with responses to HIV/AIDs. The *National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2007-2011* (RSA 2007) acknowledges the role of local governments in executing multi-sectoral

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[1] Integrated development plans are comprehensive strategic and corporate plans formulated by municipalities in South Africa as the basis for their operations, for inter-government cooperation and for executing socio-economic development in communities. They are one of the core elements of a municipality's responsibilities, as legislated in the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000*.

responses in communities by emphasizing the function of integrated development planning as an entry point to addressing HIV/AIDs.

The promulgation of the *Framework for an integrated local government response to HIV/AIDS* (DPLG 2005), developed as a support instrument to guide HIV/AIDS coordinators and IDP managers in municipalities on how to 'mainstream' the HIV/AIDs issue, has moved it to the centre stage of local government development and governance responses to HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Municipalities are gradually incorporating HIV/AIDS into their integrated development plans, with varying degrees of success depending on the availability of resources, levels of political support, the availability of planning expertise, and also the strength of partnerships between municipalities and civil society groups – community-based and non-government organisations.

As multi-sectoral efforts continue to be applied by local governments in urban areas in Africa and other countries as the optimum ways to deal with HIV/AIDS, more research input is needed to supplement existing information available to policy makers in various national governments on how to enhance approaches to HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral planning processes in various urban settings. It is in that context that this article seeks to add value to existing research.

This article discusses research about 'mainstreaming' HIV/AIDS in municipalities that was carried out in Gauteng province in 2009. It starts with a brief description of the background to the research in part two, and then proceeds with a conceptualization of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS at the local government level in part three. Part four presents the research methods used, and part five sets out the findings. Part six presents the main conclusions and recommendations.

2.   Background

The research that informs this paper was carried out in the province of Gauteng, the smallest province by area in South Africa and the most urbanized, with 97% of its people living in urban areas. It is also the most heavily populated province, with a population of nearly 10.5 million people who account for 21.5% of the national total (Tomlinson 2007). The province

is faced with the challenges of coping with high rates of in-migration from other parts of South Africa, leading to the proliferation of informal settlements (23% of the population live in informal settlements), and the poor housing conditions associated with those settlements such as poor water supply and sanitation conditions, poor environmental health, poor nutrition etc. It is these conditions within the settlements that are the 'drivers' of the high HIV prevalence rate of 17.3% (Tomlinson 2007; Van Donk 2007).

On a province by province basis, Gauteng currently has the second highest HIV antenatal prevalence (36%) after Kwa Zulu Natal (ASSA 2008:3). In order to address the high prevalence of HIV, the province adopted a multisectoral HIV/AIDS strategy along with the establishment of a provincial Multisectoral AIDS Unit (MSAU) in 1998 to coordinate a provincial mainstreaming strategy. The MSAU coordinates the multi-sectoral Gauteng AIDs programme with a broad coalition of partners, ranging from provincial sector departments, to thirteen civil society partners (business sector, traditional healers, women's groups etc), and the metropolitan, district and local municipalities.

The Gauteng AIDs Plan 2009-2010 (Gauteng Multisectoral AIDS Unit 2009) which reflects the principles of the HIV/AIDS National Strategic AIDS Plan 2007-2011, envisages a central role for local government in the HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral response, in terms of coordinating prevention and care activities, working with civil society organizations, preparing workplace AIDS programmes, and the mainstreaming of AIDS responses into municipal services.

One of the key stipulations of the Plan charges local government departments with taking up the responsibility of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in other sectors: "all government departments are required to address AIDS both internally, through workplace AIDS programmes and externally according to their core business in partnership with stakeholders from the relevant sectors" (Gauteng Multisectoral AIDs Unit, 2009:12).

3.   Conceptualizing mainstreaming HIV/AIDS at the local government level

The United Nations philosophy behind mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in communities is based on addressing deprivations rooted in socio-economic imbalances that 'drive' the pandemic, such as poverty, gender inequality, the lack of adequate housing and sanitation, and food

insecurity; whilst working with bio-medical interventions like prevention and care in order to create long lasting and sustainable responses (UNDP 2004; UNAIDS/GTZ 2002).

Multi-sectoral responses, or 'integrated responses', to HIV/AIDS interventions worldwide are proving to be a more effective way in dealing with susceptibility to HIV infection, as well as mitigating the burden of the disease on affected communities (UNAIDS/GTZ 2002). Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS at the local government level as a multi-sectoral response offers long lasting solutions to the pandemic, since it is able to address the factors that drive the pandemic within the broader community development context, or the 'social ecology' of HIV/AIDS (Van Donk 2007). According to UNAIDS (2002:10), mainstreaming HIV/AIDS is premised on six guiding principles. These include mainstreaming HIV/AIDS within existing institutional structures, distinguishing mainstreaming efforts as both internal and external domains, identifying 'entry points' in sectoral activities where HIV/AIDS can be targeted, and encouraging partnerships with civil society groups as well as community advocacy.

The central focus of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in municipalities involves activities that ensure that HIV/AIDS becomes part of the core business of their functions, such as sector planning, budgeting, human resources policies, school curriculum, housing, roads, and water and sanitation. This process involves identifying entry points through which HIV/AIDS interventions can be integrated into municipal programmes without changing their core business (Elsey & Kutengule 2003; UNDP UNAIDS & World Bank 2005). Development programmes in municipal sectors such as housing, water and sanitation, roads etc. can be used to target both the social impacts of HIV/AIDS, as well as the 'environmental' factors that drive the epidemic. These efforts are known as 'external mainstreaming'. Internal mainstreaming on the other hand supports local government staff against the effects of HIV/AIDS. *Effective mainstreaming* means that all sectors in a municipality are able to successfully integrate HIV/AIDS into their day to day operations, giving consideration to: "how their day to day work contributes to vulnerability to HIV infection, and how their work impacts on people's ability to cope with HIV/AIDS" (HALOGEN 2009:5). Figure 1 below shows how HIV/AIDS is mainstreamed in municipal sectors:
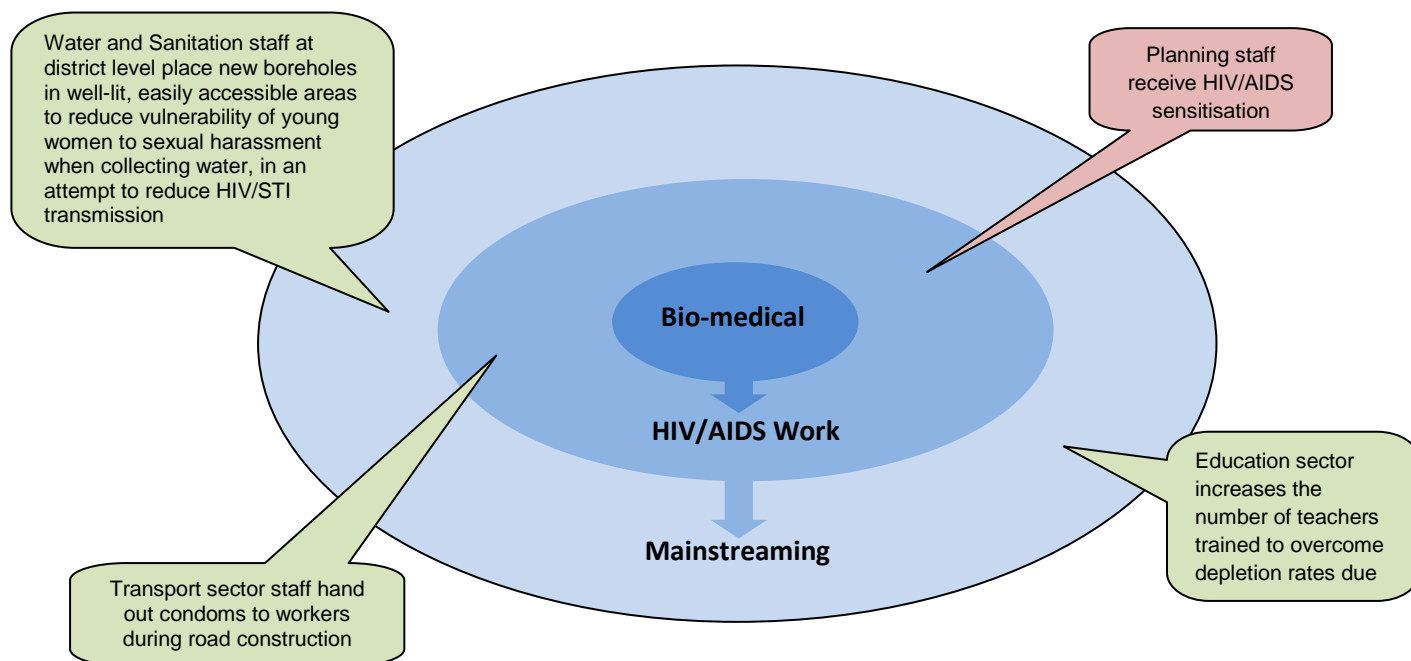
Figure 1: A conceptual model of HIV/AIDS mainstreaming at the municipal level (adapted from; Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division, University of KwaZulu Natal 2003).

Key: Red – Internal: Staff and organisation issues – the sector as the employer; Green – External: Service delivery work

These sector wide approaches to mainstreaming (SWAPs) are widely used in places with high HIV prevalence, and have proven to be successful in urban areas of countries such as Ghana and Uganda where local governments have used this approach to curb the spread of the pandemic (Elsey & Kutengule 2003).

Despite the success of such programs, implementing sustainable mainstreamed HIV/AIDS responses through decentralized local government as the main delivery institution is also has challenges. Perhaps the greatest challenge is that of coordinating mainstreamed responses within the structure of multilevel governance and inter-governmental relations that demands joint operations by different spheres or levels of government, with their different responsibilities. Local governments must often grapple with a range of challenges:

- lack of clarity in the respective powers and functions of different tiers of government;

- poor integration of vertically decentralized departments (particularly health departments) at the local level;

- poorly articulated frameworks for fiscal decentralization and unfunded mandates for local governments to respond to HIV/AIDS;

- problems in efficient management of inter-governmental transfers;

- lack of support for intergovernmental relations and co-ordinating structures;

- limited capacity of officials and councillors to manage the affairs of local government beyond delivering basic services (and specifically for planning and managing the new demands on local government as a consequence of HIV/AIDS); and

- lack of models for leading local government responses to HIV/AIDS (Kelly 2006:11).

4.　　Research Methodology

The research carried out in Gauteng province was exploratory in nature and aimed at drawing a comprehensive snapshot of how municipalities in the urban areas of Gauteng province are mainstreaming HIV/AIDS. It began with a desktop review of the integrated development plans of selected metropolitan, district and local municipalities to assess how municipalities integrated HIV/AIDS in those development plans. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with municipal HIV/AIDS coordinators and integrated development planning managers in order to get first-hand information about approaches to HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, and thus to construct a consolidated report about the extent and nature of HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in the municipalities of Gauteng province.

5.　　Results and discussion

Literature review

An in-depth literature review of integrated development plans (IDPs) revealed that metropolitan municipalities had better responses to HIV/AIDS in terms of better strategic planning, well integrated sector plans, better inter-sectoral coordination, and better planned bio-medical (health based) responses.

Planning for HIV/AIDS in district and local municipalities lacked substance, reflected in poorly integrated municipal sector plans, less articulation of HIV/AIDS plans in terms of deliverables or planned targets, and weak inter-sectoral coordination/integration for HIV/AIDS, as well as a marked preponderance of health based responses (e.g. curative, preventive care efforts etc.). The dominance of health based responses implies that these municipalities lacked the requisite capacity to manage mainstreamed responses. Mainstreaming was particularly absent in local municipalities, as opposed to district municipalities, suggesting that local municipalities on the whole lack the necessary skills needed to execute mainstreaming, or are disadvantaged in terms of their status as the lowest tier of government.

Interviews with municipal officials

The results from the interviews of municipality officials (HIV/AIDS coordinators and integrated development planning managers) corroborated the findings of the literature review. Metropolitan municipalities were clearly far ahead of district and local municipalities in all matters related to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS. Planning for HIV/AIDS was well orchestrated, in terms of involving other spheres (national, provincial) in their HIV/AIDS plans. Another distinguishing feature was that metropolitan municipalities had far less difficulty in integrating HIV/AIDS across municipal sectors, due to less internal bureaucratic resistance. One of the factors behind this well-coordinated HIV/AIDS mainstreaming was the level of political support behind the multi-sectoral strategy; in one metropolitan municipality, for example, the city's entire HIV/AIDS strategy was headed by the Executive Mayor, advised by the 'Metro Aids Council', responsible for strategic and operational planning of the HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral campaign in the city.

If the biggest weapon in the arsenal of the metro municipalities' HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral campaign was political support from the Mayor's office, then this was certainly the weakest link for district and local municipalities. Weak and largely uncoordinated HIV/AIDS mainstreamed responses that lacked both bite and substance were indicative of weak political support, and of the prevailing attitude that HIV/AIDS was primarily a health based issue. In most interviews respondents revealed that municipality officials failed to see HIV/AIDS as a

developmental issue where socio-economic deprivations that 'drove' the pandemic needed to be given primary attention.

Given this attitude, it is hardly surprising that multi-sectoral responses had not yet taken root (especially in local municipalities) or were quite weak (in districts). District and local municipalities lacked the drive, initiative and organizational capabilities that metro municipalities exhibited; mainstreaming suffered from a 'triple whammy' of less than adequate planning, serious lack of resources, and most importantly, lack of inter-sectoral coordination or collaboration. Responding to HIV/AIDS was left to the social services and health sector. This problem affects areas with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Gauteng province. In some municipalities mainstreaming was simply non-existent, yet these areas were in the direst need of implementing HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in order to break the stranglehold that the pandemic had put on the necks of urban communities.

The lack of partnerships between civil society and municipalities on one hand, and between spheres of government on the other, was another missing link that weakened HIV/AIDS mainstreaming. Successful mainstreaming operations at the municipal level require the full support and participation of civil community based and non-governmental organisations, but partnerships between these groups and municipalities were often either weak or simply non-existent. Lack of sufficient vertical coordination between spheres of government resulted in irregular execution of HIV/AIDS efforts, inadequate resource allocation due to uncoordinated planning, and weak, uncoordinated HIV/AIDS efforts in municipalities. To date, the peculiar South African pseudo-federal structure of governance with its complex, top-down and bottom-up systems of inter-governmental planning has proven difficult to master; complications in inter-government coordination arising from this system are a major factor when it comes to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS (Van Donk 2008:2-4).

6.   Conclusion and Recommendations

For most municipalities in Gauteng province, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS is a fairly new phenomenon in urban planning. It is not surprising therefore that the present pace of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Gauteng municipalities is slow and irregular, especially in district and local municipalities. Successful HIV/AIDS mainstreaming requires the optimal

availability of human and non-human resources. Chief among these are sufficient skills and capacity in the municipality for strategic planning, financial planning and programme management skills, as well as the financial resources needed to bankroll multi-sectoral activities. There is also a need to optimize the functionality of inter-governmental planning and coordination, and legislation such as the groundbreaking *Inter-governmental Relations Framework* (2005) needs to be fully operationalised and implemented on the ground. This will greatly assist in realizing the effective joint planning and coordination between spheres that is essential in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS.

Nevertheless, municipalities can get still get it right provided:

- sufficient political support is available to drive HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral efforts;
- whether structures of governance such as partnerships between civil society and municipalities are robust enough; and
- whether sectors work together in municipalities to execute multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS responses.

One of the limitations of the research was an inability to focus sufficiently on these governance issues. Effective partnerships are one of the key determinants in successful HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral efforts, and further research is needed to better understand and evaluate their role in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in the South African context. This will add more depth to the findings of this research in terms of understanding how best to implement sustainable and long lasting multi-sectoral responses to communities ravaged by HIV/AIDS in urban areas of South Africa.

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Is monitoring implementation the key to preventing repeated workplace corruption?

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1.   Introduction

Survey results published in 2009 by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of New South Wales[1] reported that most public sector organisations in its jurisdiction have established integrity policies and procedures – or 'organisational integrity systems' (ICAC 2009).[2] Despite this, many of the public inquiries conducted by the ICAC that find corrupt conduct often also find a failure to implement or enforce existing anti-corruption mechanisms in agencies. More recently an ICAC inquiry reported that similar patterns of repeated corrupt conduct had been pervasive in one government agency since the early 1990s despite being prohibited by organisational policy (ICAC 2008). These findings are also consistent with the anecdotal experience of integrity practitioners that public sector agencies are experiencing repeated workplace corruption despite the presence of apparently adequate organisational integrity systems. When workplace corruption is exposed, it may be professionally investigated and reforms to address the problems proposed and attempted, yet the same or similar workplace corruption reoccurs. As Barber suggests, ensuring successful delivery requires

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[1] The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was created by the ICAC Act 1988. Its aims are to protect the public interest, prevent breaches of public trust and guide the conduct of public officials. The ICAC has the authority to investigate any matter involving public sector corruption in NSW.

[2] Organisational integrity systems are policy and operational frameworks that are intended to integrate an organisation's anti-corruption strategies. They usually comprise standard elements including risk assessment, audit and investigation capacity, reporting, education and training, organisational controls and policies, administrative structures, leadership and communication.

a "long grind" of "steady, persistent implementation" and "gentle pressure, relentlessly applied" (Barber2008:112 and 119).

This paper examines cases of low-level non-compliance in a municipal waste collection services and a state owned railway to identify some of the factors that could be contributing to reoccurring workplace corruption. The analysis suggests that a major factor in repeated workplace corruption is the failure to monitor and implement reforms recommended by investigations and existing organisational integrity systems.

2.   Sutherland Shire Council Waste and Cleansing Services

2005 Investigation[3]

Sutherland Shire Council is a large metropolitan local (or municipal) government area in southern Sydney, Australia. It has an annual budget of about AUD $220 million and employs about 1,400 staff. It is responsible for providing services to the local area such as planning/building controls, road construction, environmental management and cleaning/waste collection.

In 2005 the council received a number of complaints about the service provided by its Waste and Cleansing Services for the collection of commercial waste from shops and businesses. These complaints were investigated by the council's Internal Ombudsman. They included:

- Cleansing Services collecting commercial waste from shops, restaurants and businesses that were not paying customers of the council.

- Extra non-contracted waste being collected from council customers above the agreed amounts without extra payment.

- Private bins or waste being collected from private residences.

- Private waste being collected from the homes of council employees.

- Cleansing Services employees using council vehicles to conduct private business such as moving furniture.

- Some Cleansing Services employees receiving small amounts of cash or food and drinks from shops and businesses for collecting extra waste without any payment to the council.

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[3] This case study is based on material first presented in Canberra, Australia, at the Second Annual Ethical Leadership & Governance in the Public Sector conference. (Plibersek 2008)

Council's Internal Ombudsman investigated the allegations including conducting surveillance of the Waste and Cleansing Services employees. The investigation found many of the allegations outlined above proven.[4] However, because the activities appeared to be infrequent and the evidence of systemic corruption was inconclusive the investigation was unable to make a finding of entrenched corruption. The investigation also demonstrated that the council's comprehensive Code of Conduct and process/supervisory controls were inadequate in preventing the alleged corrupt conduct. Although corruption controls were generally in place, they were not observed by staff nor enforced by management.

2007-2008 Investigation

In 2007 further complaints were received that extra or unauthorised waste continued to be collected and that Sutherland's waste employees continued to receive gifts/food or payments. These complaints suggested that the activity was more widespread than was first identified in 2005. As a result of these complaints a second investigation was made into the same area. In summary, the 2007-2008 investigation found the existence of the following activities.

- Immediately after the 2005 investigation, the waste employees that were not implicated took it as a green light to continue their corrupt activities. Training in corruption prevention and the Code of Conduct was dismissed by many employees as being theoretical and not applicable to them. For these employees it was 'business as usual'.

- Waste truck drivers having a large organised network of business locations where added waste collection services were being provided for their own personal gain.

- Demands that relief drivers undertake these added waste collections on corrupt employees' behalf when they are off duty to maintain the unauthorised waste collections.

- Evidence that if relief drivers refused to undertake these added unauthorised waste collections pressure was brought to bear on those drivers suggesting that their job depended on it.

- Division of Cleansing Services employees into two factions, one involved in the corrupt behaviour and another which was aware of the behaviour but 'looked the other way'.

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[4] Internal Ombudsman Sutherland Shire Council *"Investigation into Cleansing Services"* 2005

- Some corrupt employees were protected from being reported because of friendships outside work.
- Rosters were prepared allocating like minded employees together. This ensured the continuation of the system of unauthorised waste collection and minimised the risk of these collections being reported by employees not involved.
- Employees known to be opposed to unauthorised waste collections being threatened with disciplinary action or allocated to less favourable roles.

The investigations by Sutherland Council in 2005, and by the ICAC into nearby Liverpool City Council (to be discussed below), identified a number of corruption risks in waste collection. However, the 2007 complaints concerning Sutherland's Cleansing Services provided evidence of a further significant effect of low level corruption not previously identified. They demonstrated the contagious effect that low level corruption can have on the integrity and ability of a group to do its work efficiently.

As noted above, the 2007 complaints uncovered two 'factions' of employees. One group of employees participated and maintained the system of unauthorised waste collection. This group favoured its members wherever possible, particularly by altering work rosters. Those outside the group were bullied or ostracised and casual staff were pressured to join the unauthorised waste collection. Any supervisors or employees that were not involved did not report it but tolerated the behaviour. This led to a loss of these supervisors' authority and their ability to effectively direct staff to do Cleansing Services authorised work. It also allowed a damaging public perception to develop amongst some of Council's waste customers that Cleansing Services employees were corrupt and that Council management was unable to control corruption.

The 2007 complaints made it clear that despite the program of education and training, the corrupt behaviour had continued and seemed to worsen. Thus the training and education in corruption prevention and the Code of Conduct together with existing management controls were proven to be ineffective to prevent the reoccurring corrupt behaviour. In fact, unknown to the Internal Ombudsman or senior management, after the corruption prevention training had finished, the waste employees still did not view their own behaviour as corrupt but as a part of doing their job or just good customer service. Because of the relatively low level of gifts/food/money involved and as long as the garbage was collected, the waste employees and their immediate supervisors continued

to treat this behaviour as acceptable and a minor issue not requiring any remedial action. Other recommendations that had been allocated to the Waste and Cleansing Services managers had not been implemented, nor had any senior manager checked implementation.

With the evidence uncovered by the 2007-2008 investigation that the corrupt behaviour present in 2005 had reoccurred – and possibly worsened, the paramount issue now became: What different initiatives or reforms could prevent continual reoccurrence of these same issues?

Ensuring implementation: 2008-09

It was clear that the 2005 investigation had failed to identify the full extent of the problems and action taken to address them had been inadequate. In the 2007-2008 investigation the first step was to fully analyse the causes of the corruption problem and why the response in 2005 had been ineffective in preventing ongoing corruption. The causes of corrupt behaviour are complex and the subject of much debate. Despite this complexity, or perhaps because of it, what became clear was that for any response to be effective in reducing corrupt behaviour a range of solutions had to be attempted to address the range of possible causes.[5]

One possible approach was to follow an approach pioneered by the Hong Kong ICAC which saw its role as extending beyond the investigation of specific cases to identifying structural factors that gave rise to corrupt behaviour by evaluating how work should be done, how it is actually done, and how it is controlled by managers. These structural factors include: policy weakness, inadequate instructions, unnecessary procedures, inadequate supervision, excessive discretion, unenforced laws and regulations, and misuse or abuse of position (Doig 1995:159).

Another possible approach was suggested by a study of cases in 35 countries that concluded that a combined package of strategies was most effective in dealing with corruption. These strategies included: political will, new laws, new procedures,

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[5] Frank Anechiarico 1996 at 18-26 argues that there are layers of anti-corruption controls that have been added until the basic purpose of a regulatory body becomes ancillary to its corruption monitoring and control. New corruption controls do not do not displace old ones but rather they supplement them. Anechiarico argues that corruption controls implemented by law enforcement personnel has become the dominant approach in municipal government. These controls incorporating investigation, prevention and deterrence have become ends rather than the means to more effective governing.

enforcement, public awareness, prevention and accountability (Spector, Johnson & Dinino 2005). Of particular relevance to the Sutherland Waste and Cleansing Services, the Spector study concluded that the effectiveness of anticorruption programs should not be based on what worked elsewhere under different conditions. It argued against the 'tool kit' approach to reform in which "… good ideas are pulled 'out of the box' and expected to work. Whether they will work at all and how they might interact with each other are very complicated questions" (Spector *et al.* 2005:228). Drawing on these conclusions, what was needed was a careful analysis of the causes of particular instances of corruption and a targeted practical response to each of those factors that were identified as contributing to the corrupt behaviour.

This approach parallels one proposed by Sparrow for dealing with a range of 'harms' that might include poverty, disease, illegal drug trafficking, natural disasters, workplace accidents or corruption. He also advises against applying the regulator's toolkit recommending instead that the tools used to control a particular harm be dictated by an understanding of its "dynamics and dependencies" (Sparrow 2008: 27). He suggests that regulators responsible for reducing harms should see them as individual problems to be solved - or knots to be undone - rather than simply the absence of their opposite. In the Sutherland Waste Services case, for example, the clearly unethical behaviour of the waste employees could not be adequately addressed simply by re-emphasising their ethical obligations.

A Sparrow analysis of the action taken after the 2005 investigation might be that the agency had relied only on its 'broad prevention program' (or organisational integrity system) that aims to promote the good to be desired (general ethical behaviour) rather than attack the specific harm to be reduced (theft, misuse of resources, secret commissions, bullying etc) (2008:36-37).

While this paper asks whether monitoring implementation of reforms is the critical prevention factor, it must be acknowledged that in the Sutherland case considerable efforts were also made to understand how and why the undesirable behaviour had occurred and become so entrenched. The causes of the recurring corruption uncovered in the 2005 investigation of Waste and Cleansing Services seemed to include: inadequate instructions; inadequate supervision; low risk of detection; discriminatory supervisory

practices; unchecked discretion; unnecessary procedures; unenforced regulations; and misuse or abuse of position; irregular and irrelevant training.

This analysis of the 2005 investigation also suggested a number of other lessons. First, low level or minor corruption cannot be ignored because of its tendency to corrupt the organisational structure that in turn reduces the organisation's ability to work effectively and achieve its goals. Second, just like a broken window was found to be a marker for an increased likelihood of individual crime, so low level corruption can be a marker for at least the potential for ongoing or more serious corruption to develop (Wilson & Kelling 2003). In Waste and Cleansing Services, for the system of unauthorised waste collection to continue it needs to recruit and then corrupt other employees to ensure its survival. Third, because the corrupt behaviour continued after training in the Code of Conduct and despite the existence of process/supervisory controls, such measures are by themselves ineffective in reducing corrupt behaviour. More or different measures were clearly needed to deal with the recurring problems.

After analysing the reasons for the failure of the 2005 investigation to uncover all the corrupt activity, the next step was to interview a large number of Waste and Cleansing drivers and supervisory staff about their experience of the corruption issues. The interesting point to emerge was the large number and diversity of complaints that many of the drivers had. These complaints included: unfair rostering, unequal pay rates, unfair pay bonus system, unfair distribution of work, use of casual drivers, inconsistent supervisory practices, inadequate training, inadequate performance reviews, bullying and favouritism.

The investigation team realised that one further reason for the failure of the 2005 investigation was the failure to identify the full extent of the problems and to limit the anti-corruption response to training and reliance on ineffective management controls. What was required was a precise analysis of the full range of problems and grievances of the drivers and a comprehensive response to address all of these issues. This process took some months and resulted in a lengthy investigation report with 55 detailed recommendations for reform. The recommended reforms were allocated to a number of senior managers for implementation. A system of reporting back and monitoring the progress of implementation was put into place to allow senior managers and the Internal Ombudsman to ensure implementation and judge whether the reforms were succeeding.

The entire process of investigation and implementation monitoring took over two years. Some of the training programs dealing with workplace culture are still continuing.

A summary of the recommendations from the 2007-2008 investigation show the diverse and far reaching nature of the reforms that were recommended and implemented:

- Appoint a senior manager to ensure implementation of the reform recommendations.

- Intensive training and counselling of supervisory staff to change poor management practices to promote a team focussed approach.

- Improved management of staff disputes and inter-personal skills.

- Review of staff rosters, use of casual staff and the system of performance review of staff.

- Review of overall communication mechanisms including regular workplace meetings and improved performance reporting.

- Review of the payment of the productivity bonus, division of runs, more efficient use of staff at the end of their shift, taking meal or rest breaks, driver training, providing assistance to drivers for missed bins.

- Improvements in recruitment, appointment and training of staff to make these fairer and more transparent.

- Stricter driver training and annual licence checking.

- Training and cultural change program to reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment.

- Revised and more detailed reporting to allow better monitoring of the effectiveness of reforms.

- Introduction of a totally revised corruption prevention training system based on regular workplace based meetings delivered by managers specifically designed to be relevant to staff.

This revised ethics training program was designed to deliver training that was relevant and tailored to the identified needs of individual workers. Previously all staff were given similar ethics training based on informing staff about each individual council policy. This was found to be ineffective. The new ethics training program was based on a two level system. The first level gives several sessions of training to all staff on the general principles of ethics and good decision making contained in the council's policies such as its Code of Conduct. Those nine principles are: Integrity, Selflessness, Objectivity,

Honesty, Accountability, Openness, Respect, Leadership, Economy and Efficiency. The aim of adopting this approach is to ensure that staff have a good understanding of the principles which form the basis of corporate policies on staff conduct and ethics. Its purpose is to allow staff to understand the type of behaviour expected of them and to differentiate proper from improper conduct.

The second level is entitled 'Management Assurance' training. This is a decentralised training program of short (15 minutes) regular training delivered by local managers at the workplace. The local managers are provided with notes, training resources and support, and they provide regular briefings to staff in relation to new policy or other issues directly relevant to those employees at that workplace. This type of targeted training is designed to capture staff attention as it is short, focussed specifically on their needs, and is relevant. As it is delivered regularly it acts as a reminder to staff as to what ethical conduct and decision-making is expected of them. It is intended to overcome past criticism made by some staff that the previous training was too theoretical and not applicable to them in their workplace. This model of regular, short and tailored training is based on proven successful models of workplace occupational health and safety training used in Australia.

3.   Measuring and Evaluating the Reforms

A review of the reporting and implementation of the reforms disclosed the following results. The great majority of reforms recommended by the 2007-2008 investigation were broad ranging. Rather than exclusively targeting corruption prevention, the reforms were designed to respond to the whole range of problems identified or perceived by the staff. The intention was that by addressing all the entrenched problems, in a holistic way, the entire work process would be improved including reducing corruption.

The reforms have led to a complete revision of the way that the work is done, allocated and supervised. Waste truck drivers see the system of recruitment, rostering, work allocation, bonus payments and supervision as fairer and more structured. The perception of staff has changed to be more trusting and team based. The culture of the whole group has been changed so that corruption, bullying and harassment are clearly seen as unacceptable. Staff morale and skills have improved. After lengthy consultation agreement was reached with the drivers and unions to introduce GPS tracking and data logging devices on waste vehicles for safety and data collection purposes. This has

resulted in improved efficiency and an ability to pay productivity bonuses based on the work actually recorded as being done. All the reforms have resulted in increases of between 5-10% in revenue, commercial waste customer numbers and productivity by reduction of lost on-the-job time. There has also been a reduction of about 5% in operational costs.

The key differentiating factors accounting for the failure of the 2005 investigation and the success of the 2007-2008 investigation seem to be attributable to:

- the detailed analysis and identification of the causes of the corrupt behaviour in that particular work area;
- a comprehensive response to all the problems identified by staff including the issues identified as contributing to corruption; and
- the allocation of responsibility for the implementation of reforms to senior managers with a system of close monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of the implementation.

Addressing each of these factors requires attention to 'little' things that individually might seem insignificant but together contribute to a situation that is exposed to corruption risks.

4.   Related ICAC Inquiries

Over the last 20 years failure to implement or monitor implementation of reforms has frequently been a factor in public inquiries reported by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption. Indeed, a study of the ICAC's first 100 public inquiries found that this had been a factor in 40% of cases (Cooper & Mills 2007).

Similar problems to those uncovered in the 2005 investigation into Sutherland's Waste and Cleansing Services have also been found to occur in other waste collection operations.[6] An example is Liverpool City Council, which is a large local government area in the western suburbs of Sydney. An ICAC investigation of Liverpool City Council's privately contracted waste services found that financial losses occurred because vehicles that should have been used for domestic waste collection were collecting commercial waste and charging the disposal fees to Liverpool Council (ICAC

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[6] The ICAC has conducted investigations and issued discussion papers addressing problems of corruption in local government cleansing and waste services. See ICAC Discussion Paper *Taking the Whiff out of Waste.*

2001). There were no checks on what the vehicles were collecting or on what charges were being incurred. Nor were there checks on waste disposal fees to reconcile these with the amount of waste being collected. The ICAC determined that Liverpool City Council had poor systems, inadequate monitoring and inexperienced staff. It lost significant amounts of revenue. The ICAC report concluded that risks for Councils in relation to waste collection and transportation generally include:

- loss of revenue from fraudulent or negligent performance;
- loss of reputation from poor service delivery;
- damage to commercial and community credibility through inadequate monitoring;
- damage to the environment from wilful or negligent waste disposal; and
- damage to the recycling of waste policy from failure to properly differentiate waste products resulting in disposal of recyclable material.

ICAC (2002) subsequently produced a discussion paper *Taking the Whiff out of Waste* that noted common allegations of corruption in the waste industry include:

- misuse or theft of waste resources;
- links between the waste industry and organised crime;
- failure to make or keep proper records;
- fraudulently altering waste weight records; and
- bribery and collusion between interested parties.

There is substantial money to be made operating outside the regulated industry, and the threat of detection is seen to be particularly low. ICAC concluded that government agencies are at risk of losing valuable resources through theft and misappropriation of valuable recyclable waste assets, as well as the loss of income from the fees they derive in providing waste services. Furthermore, it could also fall to the agency or council to contribute to the cost of remedying any environmental damage caused by illegal dumping.

The ICAC has also investigated repeated allegations of bribery, corruption and fraud at RailCorp (a state owned railway corporation). It has conducted eight inquiries over 16 years involving this agency in its various incarnations (ICAC 1992; ICAC 1993; ICAC 1998; ICAC 2001; ICAC 2006; ICAC 2007; ICAC 2008a; ICAC 2008b). These investigations reported findings of corrupt conduct on the part of 31 individuals

including 14 RailCorp employees and staff of 16 private firms. The investigations exposed 'endemic and enduring' (ICAC 2008b:11) corruption involving employees and managers at many levels of the organisation. They uncovered fraud, bribery, improper allocation of contracts, unauthorised secondary employment, failure to declare conflicts of interest, false time sheets, and the cover-up of a safety breach. RailCorp employees were found to have improperly allocated contracts totalling almost $19 million to companies owned by themselves, their friends or their families, in return for corrupt payments totalling over $2.5 million (ICAC 2008b:5). Over 400 suggested criminal charges were referred for possible prosecution (ICAC 2008b:12).

The ICAC investigation found that the structure of RailCorp and the way it operated allowed and encouraged corruption. Contracting and purchasing procedures, reporting processes and poor management controls were all found to contribute to endemic corruption. The ICAC concluded that:

> …the decision to outsource the provision of certain goods and services in an environment of dysfunctional markets, a lack of internal firewalls within procurement positions, the inability of management to effectively manage the procurement process, and the weak oversight by the RailCorp Board of an activity fraught with corruption risks, worked in concert to allow the widespread corruption to develop (ICAC 2008b:11).

The investigations exposed widespread corruption in many levels of RailCorp from workers to senior managers. Corrupt employees seemed confident that they would not be caught. The ICAC inquiry heard intercepted telephone evidence of conversations between RailCorp employees showing that corrupt purchasing practice were continuing at the same time as evidence about the same type of corrupt conduct by other RailCorp employees was being heard by the inquiry and reported in the media.

The investigations revealed serious and widespread management failures in the Asset Management Group (AMG) within RailCorp. These failures worsened the problems associated with the procurement process and assisted the continuation of corrupt conduct. Managers within the AMG failed to properly check the work of their staff, failed to take action to manage known corruption risks, and failed to ensure proper recordkeeping or to conduct proper checks. As a result, the ICAC inquiry found there was no credible threat of detection to act as a deterrent to prevent corrupt conduct (ICAC 2008b: 5).[7]

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[7] Because of the size and seriousness of these management failures the ICAC made a number of recommendations to reduce the corruption uncovered by the investigation. These include the appointment of an external expert to develop and implement change in the AMG, a review of the responsibilities of

The ICAC reported preventing corruption in RailCorp was not a priority for the senior executive managers. It noted that whilst Railcorp had an Internal Audit unit which had identified problems including corruption, senior management had failed to implement its recommendations (ICAC 2008b: 56). In December 2006 the RailCorp Board commissioned Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu to undertake an independent review of issues brought to its attention relating to three individuals. The Deloitte report found that:

> ... many of the procurement and contract management issues raised in this report were investigated and referred to the ICAC by RailCorp's investigations and internal audit. We note however that had the recommendations made by the [Internal Audit] unit in several investigation and internal audit reports been effectively implemented, the need for further investigation and referral to ICAC may have been avoided (ICAC 2008b:56).

The Deloitte report went on to state that:

> It appears that many of [Internal Audit's] recommendations have not been adopted or are still in progress, despite the ongoing efforts of Internal Audit to persuade management of the importance and necessity of change (ICAC 2008b:56).

Thus the key lesson from both the eight ICAC RailCorp investigation reports and that of the independent Deloitte audit report, is that the explanation for the failure to prevent reoccurring corruption was the failure to implement identified recommendations. Had the recommendations been effectively implemented, the need for further investigations and repeated anti-corruption work may not have been necessary. This conclusion is similar to that reached in the Sutherland Waste and Cleansing Services case.

5.   Conclusion

In the light of these cases we answer the question posed in the title of this paper with three observations:

- the causes of repeated corrupt behaviour or problems in a workplace need to be analysed in a specific, rather than generalised, way in their own context;
- the proposed solutions need to target all the relevant behaviours occurring in that context; and finally,
- the successful delivery of reforms aimed at reducing repeated workplace corruption, can be best assured by steady and persistent monitoring and

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managers in AMG and a continuous program of management training to improve management skills. The investigation made recommendations to improve significant gaps and deficiencies in RailCorp policies and procedures. These recommendations included: limiting secondary employment of RailCorp staff, a prohibition on the receipt by procurement staff of gifts and benefits from contractors and tenderers, and procedures to ensure that staff, contractors and subcontractors comply with RailCorp's Statement of Business Ethics

implementation of the reforms recommended after careful investigation of the causes of corruption in that particular workplace.

Further analysis is needed to understand why implementation of recommended reforms is ignored or, more often, abandoned. It may be that public organisations lack the necessary resources or skills. Possibly the contagious effect of low-level non-compliance is under-appreciated or the limited capacity of supervisors to influence the behaviour of their staff is not acknowledged.

There are also some fundamental questions to be answered about what kind of activity we are engaging in when we try to reduce the reoccurrence of workplace corruption. Should we look to research and analysis of prevention activities, such as workplace accidents? Alternatively, is it about encouraging compliance with rules which opens up an even wider body of comparable research? Does it require an understanding of the psychology of how we learn and apply ethical principles or virtue ethics? Or is it an even wider issue to do with ensuring the effectiveness of reforms or workplace change, in which case the organisational change and policy implementation literature would be helpful. Perhaps all of these are relevant and useful and should be applied in a combination that can be determined only by understanding the dynamics of the context in which the problem occurs.

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COMMENTARY

Local governance for local governments: A framework for addressing climate change

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1.   Introduction

Climate science has established that climate change and associated global warming will impact the world. Already the global temperature has risen by between 0.2 and 0.6 degrees centigrade since the late 19th century, and in Australia, average temperatures have increased by 0.8 degrees centigrade (Pillora 2010). Furthermore, the last IPCC report concluded for the first time not only that climate change was real but reported a 90% certainty that it was also human induced (IPCC 2007). Moreover, Australia is predicted by 2030 to experience the following: (i) a further 1ºC of warming; (ii) up to 20% more months of drought; (iii) up to 25% increase in days of very high or extreme fire danger; (iv) increases in storm surges and severe weather events; and (v) a rise in mean sea level, with the anticipated range of sea level rise to be between 18 to 76 cm by 2100 (Pillora 2010: 4; IPCC 2007).

2.   Implications for Local Government

Local governments perhaps face the most daunting challenge in relation to climate change as they are the arbiters of day-to-day policy implementation. What then will be some of the implications for local government of these predictions, and why does it matter?

Firstly changes will be felt at both policy and practical levels. For example, planning policy and development assessments will be affected as will decision making about the location of urban expansion areas. Increased uncertainty in land use planning and pressure to respond to these changes from rate payers, as well as the projected increased pressure on resources (i.e. emergency services) are additional concerns (Pillora 2010). The loss of private property and community assets also begs questions about how insurance will be handled into the future. For coastal local governments, erosion, inundation, and subsequent impacts on infrastructure will potentially cost millions and require forward planning. Responding to these challenges will require shifts in how economic development and tourism programs are navigated into the future, as will changes in social mobility, community structure and migration of people in and out of cities (Pillora 2010). Community health issues, bio security risks, water management and environmental management – whether along the coast or bio-diversity protection generally – are all likely to be the planning challenges of the 21st century. These implications also raise the possibility of litigation or claims, a prospect that should motivate further action from local governments concerning climate change.

3.   The Law, Climate Change and Local Government

Local governments are under intense pressure in relation to liability. Council decisions can theoretically be challenged on the basis that (i) they may contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, i.e. development approvals for power or other polluting activities, or (ii) that they *unreasonably fail to take into account the likely effects of climate change* when exercising a wide range of their service, planning and development activities. Climate change is an activity that could be used as the basis of testing what is 'reasonably foreseeable' (England 2006). As England notes, types of decisions may include: those questioning the appropriateness of development approvals in flood prone, coastal zone or at risk areas; the adequacy of building standards to withstand extreme weather events which can lead to erosion and landslides; the adequacy of emergency procedures (when put to the test more frequently); failure to undertake disease prevention programmes,

and; failure to preserve 'public' natural assets in the face of climate change – if and when the technology becomes available (England 2006). Moreover, in relation to negligence, courts could award damages if the following can be shown:

- a reasonable person in the defendant's position could have avoided the damage by exercising reasonable care; and

- the defendant was in such a relationship to the plaintiff that he or she ought to have acted with that degree of reasonable care.

Already, a number of legal precedents have been set in relation to the issue of climate change and local government (Edgar 2010). For example, in 2007 the Land and Environment Court of NSW ruled against a $250 million housing and aged care development due to the possible impact of coastal flooding caused by climate change. In August 2008, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal handed down a landmark decision where it quashed a proposal for a development at the coastal town of Toora (in Victoria's Gippsland region) because of the impact of climate change. It cited 'potential sea level rises due to the effects of climate change' as the basis for its decision. Similarly, in *Gippsland Coastal Board v South Gippsland Shire Council* [2008] (VCAT 1545), development consent for six residences along the coast was overturned by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal on climate change grounds (Bartley 2009).

The New South Wales Court of Appeal (Court of Appeal) in *Minister for Planning v Walker* (2008) 161 LGERA 423; [2008] NSWCA 224 acknowledged that if decision makers do not adequately account for long-term environmental risk factors, including climate change, there is the potential for future challenges to planning and development approvals under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (EP&A Act). In South Australia, the Supreme Court, in *Northcape Properties Pty Ltd v District Council of Yorke Peninsula* [2008] SASC 57, upheld the decision by the Environment, Resources and Development Court to refuse a subdivision of a large parcel of coastal land on the basis that sea level rises and associated flood patterns caused by global warming would cause erosion to a buffer zone (Briggs and Taberner 2010). Finally, in Queensland, the Planning and Environment Court dismissed an appeal against decisions taken by Redland Shire Council to construct a building pad on the basis that it was

relocated to an area less prone to tidal inundation (*Charles & Howard Pty Ltd v Redland Shire Council* [2007] QPEC 95).[2]

4.   Case study: Tasmania and Climate Change

The Tasmanian case study documented the risks caused by climate change identified by local governments in the northern region of Tasmania. Results from initial desk-survey work found that a wide spectrum of environmental, social, health and economic impacts were pertinent to local government (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Estimated impacts of climate change to Tasmania

Extreme Events

- Tasmania is likely to experience moderate rises in temperatures with evaporation likely to increase in all areas except the west coast and associated highlands where small decreases are indicated.
- Rainfall is likely to increase by 7 to 11 per cent in the west and central areas, and decrease by around 8 per cent in the north-east by 2040.
- Sea level rises and frequent and severe storm surges are likely to result in inundation and erosion to Tasmania's coast.
- Warmer temperatures and changing rainfall patterns would impact on water availability.

Industry losses: Agriculture

- Tasmania's primary industries are under threat by climate change; however some industries, such as wine growing, could benefit from the projected changes in climate.
- Climate change impacts will likely lead to a decline relative to what would otherwise have been in Tasmanian farm output. Dairy output is projected to decrease by around 8 per cent by 2030 and by 12.5 per cent by 2050.

Aquaculture

- Increased sea surface temperatures may present challenges for the production of cool-water farmed aquaculture species, such as Atlantic salmon. The value of Tasmanian salmon aquaculture was $221 million in 2005-06. However, there is potential for adaptation by the industry.

Infrastructure

- Increases in extreme storm events are expected to cause more flash flooding, affecting industry and infrastructure, including water, sewerage and stormwater, transport and communications, and may challenge emergency services. In low-lying coastal areas infrastructure is vulnerable to sea level rise and inundation.

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[2] A building pad exists on properties subject to flooding. It raises the natural ground level to around 300mm above Q50 (the flow of a river which is exceeded on average for 50% of the time) so that the house built on the pad with a minimum 150mm slab will be the required 450mm above the Q50 <www.ccbuildingapproval.com.au/Building%20Glossary.doc>

Tourism

- Impacts on the natural environment and the region's wine industry could directly affect the tourism industry.

Biodiversity

- Natural habitats, especially alpine environments and coastal systems, are likely to be impacted. The Southwest region of Tasmania is densely forested and holds some of the last temperate rainforests and oldest trees in the world.
- The *Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA)* includes most of these forests and also alpine environments. Increased temperatures from climate change will diminish the extent of Tasmania's alpine area and reduce the habitats available for native species.
- A 10-40 per cent reduction in snow cover projected by 2030 would result in a change in the dynamics of alpine communities and may lead to serious population declines of some species and loss of ecosystems.

Marine Biodiversity

- The warming of sea surface temperatures, which is projected to be greatest off south-east Australia, is likely to affect the distribution of species with flow on effects to the broader marine ecosystem. Waters off the east coast of Tasmania have recorded an increase in temperature of more than 1°C since the 1940s.
- In the last decade, around 36 species of marine fish have shown noticeable changes in distribution, including range shifts further south and new species not previously recorded in Tasmania.
- The long-spined sea urchin migrated south from NSW with the southerly extension of the East Australian Current. It has spread along the east coast of Tasmania and is believed to be impacting kelp communities, with potential implications for the sustainability of rock lobster and abalone fisheries in the absence of control measures. The value of Tasmanian rock lobster and abalone production in 2004-05 was approximately $150 million.

Coastal zones

- Over 20 per cent of the Tasmanian coastline will be a risk from sea level rise and more severe storm surges associated with climate change.
- Within in the next 50-100 years, 21 per cent of Tasmania's coast is at risk of erosion and recession from sea-level rise, potentially affecting 17,000 coastal buildings. (Based on information from the Hydro Tasmania (2006), State of Tasmania (2006), DPIWE (2004) and CSIRO Reports (2002).

The brief for the case study project was to also conduct workshops in each municipal coastal council in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) North Region of Tasmania. Workshops were designed to document the risks local governments in the northern region of Tasmania identified in relation to climate change, and inform the councils on current projects and tools in the climate change field. Project outcomes documented each council's priorities, the perceived risks that climate change presented to them, and a gap

analysis on what other tools are needed to help councils deal with climate change impacts on their natural and man-made assets.

Eight councils were involved in the study: Georgetown Council, West Tamar, Launceston, Northern Midlands, Dorset, Flinders Island, Break O' Day, and Meander Valley. In each case, the NRM Facilitator assisted in setting up workshop dates and meeting spaces, and undertook follow up work with the researcher to ensure project completion. Ongoing liaison occurred with NRM north staff. Launceston Council is the only council that chose not to participate, largely because funding had been previously secured to undertake a detailed risk assessment.

5.   Findings

Developing adaptation-focused responses to climate change at a local government scale is challenging. The case study began with the intent of documenting the climate change risks that local governments in the northern region of Tasmania that have been so far been recognised. As the work progressed it became clear that the overwhelming need, as expressed by local government, was better access to climate change information. Without this, all councils felt they could not identify the scale and scope of the risks and as a result, communicate to rate payers and others the issues associated with climate change.

Other shared concerns across the case-study councils were how to deal with the uncertainty surrounding climate change impacts and how to incorporate climate change into day-to-day management or 'governance structures'. The next section outlines the above areas of shared concern and weaknesses in more detail.

Issue 1: Institutional arrangements

Workshops highlighted that local governments were aware of climate change as an issue but face a number of significant constraints including: the demands of 'sea changers'; climate change scepticism; a lack of funding; and, a lack of clarity about respective institutional obligations at local, State and Federal levels. The uncertainty of the actual impacts of climate change predictions inhibits the potential for institutional action or application of precautionary engineering solutions to effect change. This is consistent with other studies across Australia (Strengers 2004, Burton and Dregde 2007, AGO 2007, Gurran 2008) that identify similar barriers faced by local government. These include:

- Inappropriate policy scope

- Inadequate or inappropriate public participation and involvement

- Lack of resources for policy making and implementation

- Information base is either inadequate or drawn from a narrow range of sources

- Lack of appropriate capacity and skills

- Lack of political and community support

- Institutional and leadership inertia

- Lack of adequate monitoring of policy implementation and policy review

- A shift in emphasis by key agencies from local to regional scale

- Unreasonable demands by funding agencies

- Lack of trust in the key decision-making agencies

- Some of the key agencies are perceived to have conflicting roles as both a regulator and a facilitator of policy making.

In the Tasmania study, these issues crystallised into an overarching practical concern about how councils can incorporate climate change management into existing day-to-day management. This question was raised time and again and it was clear from the research that until councils have the means to properly face the issue and deal with it directly, there is a preference to camouflage the problem within mainstream council business and local governance arrangements. Indeed, some respondents were of the view that climate change management should always be incorporated within existing governance structures as they felt this would ensure it was actually dealt with over time. This was due to a perception that climate change was the current 'big ticket, big funds' issue, but one that would fade over time, along with its funding and hence needed incorporating within governance regimes in more permanent and sustainable ways.

Issue 2: Communicating the issue to rate payers and other stakeholders

Effective communication between stakeholders and policy makers is important to the success of any program, and essential to forging links between local government and the community on climate change (Demerritt and Langdon 2004). This was a theme collectively articulated in all workshops by a diversity of staff, from engineers, to planners, to elected councillors about the ways in which the issue might be communicated. Some findings under this theme were:

- While coming from different directions, staff and councillors nonetheless faced a dilemma between the need to deal with the issue and the *perception* of it.

- Staff particularly felt they were 'between a rock and a hard place', where any decision made could be uncomfortable or unpopular.

- In all workshops there was a high level of dissatisfaction within local government as to the style, substance and depth of information they had about climate change.

- Many participants noted they did not have the level of geographical detail about the predicted impacts for their own regions, and argued that this inhibited them from engaging fully with management of the issue.

- Community scepticism was also cited as a reason for the ambivalence about dealing with the issue, as was the fact that most staff, already overworked, indicated they did not have the time to 'get climate change under my belt as well...'.

Again, these results are consistent with experiences elsewhere. For example, a similar case study of local authorities within the UK in 2003 found that over three quarters of respondents felt they did not have access to the best information about the impacts of climate change on their areas. [3] The survey also recorded high levels of stress, cynicism, and a sense of futility amongst these officials. The UK workshops also highlighted that there are a number of barriers to effectively communicating climate change at local levels, the first being the scale of the problem *per se*.

Getting stakeholders to forge the conceptual link between the global and local scale is difficult. A risk perception study undertaken in the US showed that while Americans perceived that climate change was a risk, they did not perceive that it was a risk to them personally (Lieserowitz 2006). The US research highlights the need to build the link between the issue and people, and the need to do so on a scale that resonates locally. Moreover, when the scale of the problem is seen as too large, it effectively creates inertia, as amply highlighted in research undertaken by the UK Tyndall Centre for Climate Change on the societal response to the film *The Day after Tomorrow*.[4]

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[3] A survey of environmental officers in every Local Authority in England and Wales to assess the reception and response of local government to the information being provided through the UK Climate Change Program.
[4] Interestingly, findings highlighted that while the film raised awareness of the issue, it also increased people's sense of helplessness and reinforced the notion that there was little to be done about the problem, thus effectively enforcing inaction (Lowe 2006).

As confirmed in the Tasmanian research, many staff and councillors raised the fact that communicating climate change was bedevilled by uncertainty. Will the sea level rise be 20 or 80 cm? What will be the frequency of extreme weather events? How can planning decisions be made when the science itself is unclear? Thus the issue lacks immediacy for people, amplified by the disjuncture between people's experience of the 'weather' and the discourse about climate change. People cannot 'see' climate change, and additionally, reconcile it as being simply an 'unusual weather pattern'. Convincing them that climate change is real and that something really needs to be done about it is that much harder.[5]

The complicated nature of scientific and management 'speak' about climate change makes it very hard for people to understand the problem in the first place. It becomes challenging for policy makers to respond to the issue when having to interpret a multitude of documents across different disciplines. Staff at the workshops asked how they could make climate change language accessible to the general public. It was observed that:

- This is a key governance issue because unless rate payers of the local government community understand what is meant by climate change terminology, the uptake of climate change action(s) will not only be impeded, but may lead to instances of mal-adaptation.

- Access to climate change information is often constrained - too often there is a lack of knowledgeable, credible *and* local people who could champion effective communication about climate change.

- There is also a lack of presented alternatives, which increases the levels of disenfranchisement that individuals and communities may feel.

In Tasmania these communication issues are further hampered by the pressure caused by the migration of individuals to coastal regions popularly known as 'sea changers' (Burnley and Murphy 2004). While retirees were the original drivers of the sea change phenomenon (Gurran *et al.* 2008), new residents within high growth coastal areas are generally of a younger age (in some cases significantly so) than the existing profile of

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[5] There are a number of studies that focus on the importance of effective communication in dealing with uncertainty (Moss 2007, Lorenzoni et al. 2007, Marx et al. 2007, Patt 2007). Marx et al. (2007) argue that people process 'uncertainty information' in different ways, particularly in relation to 'hard' scientific information. They conclude that 'retranslation of statistical information into concrete experience will facilitate intuitive understanding of probabilistic information and motivate contingency plans' (Marx et al. 2007). Moss (2007) agrees with this theme noting that in order to improve decision making about climate change, scientists must improve how they communicate uncertainty to the public and decision makers.

communities affected by sea change.[6] While it is the baby-boomer generation who will start retiring within the decade - thus increasing the number of retirees moving to the coast - 'sea-changers' are now individuals and families of all ages. How to communicate climate change to these different stakeholders in a way that is cost effective and has impact was another issue raised at all workshops.

Issue 3: Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a key difficulty for policy makers in assessing how to deal with pinpointing how climate change will manifest, and the extent, diversity, regularity, distribution and magnitude of its impacts (Ha-Duong *et al.* 2007, Petit 2005). Uncertainty is a key theme in the discourse about climate change, and debate continues on how fast change will occur, at what scale, how catastrophic it will be, and on the accuracy of climate predictions (Carter *et al.* 1999). Uncertainty arises from insufficient, inaccurate or unavailable data, external developments and cross-boundary issues, and the unpredictability of human behaviour (Westmacott 2001). As Jones (2001) notes on the importance of uncertainty within policy planning:

> Uncertainty management is the raison d'etre of risk assessment, extreme care
> must be exercised throughout an assessment, so that uncertainties are identified,
> the nature of their propagation throughout the assessment is understood and that
> they are communicated as part of the results.' (Jones, 2001)

In this context, there are a number of practitioners trying to address and find ways of developing planning frameworks that address uncertainty. For example, Fankhauser *et al.* (1999) suggests that the solution to dealing with uncertainty lies in ensuring that adaptation policy is robust, and anticipates future impacts based on a wide array of predictions. By building social and economic capacity to respond to diverse sets of circumstances, it is possible to factor in uncertainty within planning frameworks (Fankhauser & Tol 1997). Dessai and Hulme (2007) design an assessment framework that identifies robust adaptation strategies. Using a sensitivity analysis to a case study of water resource planning in the east of England, they find that water resources are sensitive to uncertainties in regional climate response and impacts.

During the workshops, local government staff frequently talked about the difficulty of getting ahead with climate change science and how to develop strategies to assess or address uncertainty. There are a number of governance questions for local government to consider:

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[6] The National Sea Change Task Force Report states that 79% of new residents in coastal areas are younger than 50, compared with 71% of Australia overall.

- How much climate change uncertainty do we want to adapt to?

- How can we trade-off robustness with increasing cost?

- Are robust adaptation options socially, environmentally and economically acceptable?

- How do climate change uncertainties compare with other uncertainties (e.g. changes in demand for housing or natural resources)?

- How much public money should be invested to research the largest scientific (tractable) uncertainty to try to reduce it? (Dessai and Hulme 2007).

The Tasmanian case study highlights some of the problems facing local governments in their governance of climate change, including how to deal with the uncertainty of climate change predictions, how to communicate with rate payers, and how to build appropriate and resources institutional arrangements.

6.   Discussion: Implications for Governance

This paper started with an overview of the pressures faced by some Tasmanian local governments in instituting climate change adaptation measures. The case study further highlights that there is a time lag between identification of the problem in the public arena, and the ability of professionals to respond to it. These results have some key implications on governance. Climate change is indubitably a difficult or 'wicked' problem. As Crowley (2008) observes in relation to the development of mitigation strategies, part of the way forward requires addressing local level governance structures. Indeed she describes good governance as 'well considered, well embedded, effective policy, made in the absence of pressure by special interests or electoral cycles' (Crowley 2008). I suggest that governance arrangements at local government levels incorporate and emphasise three dimensions that might underpin a 'local adaptive climate change governance framework': (i) adaptive management, (ii) communications and (iii) reflexive practice into local governance structures. These are outlined in further detail.

Building Local Adaptive Climate Change Governance - A Framework

Dimension 1: Adaptive Management

Incorporating 'adaptive management' principles into governance is one way of building 'key stones' for governance at local and domestic policy levels. Adaptive management is based on the assumption that circumstances change (Leach 2006). It is a technique that

provides a framework for continually improving managerial practices. Adaptive management can also build on environmental assessment techniques to deal with uncertainty, making it ideal for climate change management (Holling 1986). Thus, adaptive management can embed greater fluidity and flexibility within conventional environmental management systems, one that is based on the principle of continuous improvement. The fluid nature of adaptive management also suits the dynamics of working with the changing quality of coastal areas – of great interest to a majority of Australian local governments.

Implementing adaptive management takes place in two phases: (i) the institutionalisation of a framework in which intentional and varied policies may be implemented, and (ii) learning over time by monitoring the responses of the system on which the varied experimental policy systems have been implemented (Arvai *et al.* 2006). Employing adaptive management techniques can enable policy makers to focus on variation over time within policy, and local government planners could deal with this by reviewing their planning schemes periodically. Another strategy could be to 'mainstream' climate change into existing strategies and day-to-day business, otherwise known as 'climate proofing'. As such, adaptive management enables the synchronous treatment of different options across periods of time and place.

Moreover, local governments would benefit from building more strategic alliances with their rate payers and other local/community groups to build greater acceptance of, and willingness to trial different mitigation and adaptation options.[7] As part of a local governance framework, an adaptive management dimension could guide planners at the evaluation stage of coastal management programs. Such a framework could have five elements: (i) information collation, (ii) systems analysis and vision, (iii) plan making, (iv) implementing actions, and (v) monitoring and reviewing (adapted from Leach 2006). Embedding adaptive management then as a key feature of local governance will in turn encourage development of good climate policy.

Dimension 2: Communications

International experience shows that there are a number of ways in which climate change can be communicated effectively (Moser 2005). A local climate change governance

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[7] The idea of trial and error is an overlooked one, but one that is supported within the idea of continuous improvement embodied within adaptive management.

framework needs to have a communications component so the need both to develop and then implement climate change management can be accepted. Within this there are two key principles:

1. Local governments need to be transparent about communicating the issue by: communicating the existence of increasing climate change and variability using the science to explain current climate events and possible future ramifications, communicating the need to take proactive action to ameliorate negative impacts, and create the conditions for discussing positive adaptation strategies and shared experiences and lessons.

2. Employing other strategies to ensure communication about climate change is appropriate, by: choosing language that is appropriate to the audience (a good first step); concentrating on what is feasible for different groups (important); and maximising opportunities by aligning climate change as an issue with other contemporary issues that resonate with local interests and local agendas (Nursey-Bray and Ferrier 2009).

What does this mean for local governments that have, or are already developing responses to climate change? A number of suggestions are made:

1. *Communicating the idea of climate change management so it is culturally palatable.*
Communication materials and strategies need to work within the culturally accepted discourse at local government level about how this issue is run and implemented. These may need to be varied depending on whether the audience is ratepayers, internal staff or elected councillors. Important but often overlooked is the requirement to employ, or get advice from, communications professionals on how to do this – good content or knowledge is sometimes not enough to translate and convey information so it can be understood and accepted. Ultimately, communication strategies must also be based on solid guidelines.[8]

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[8] While these principles are commonly understood by communication practitioners, they bear repeating: (i) carefully define communication goals, (ii) identify and characterize the intended audiences, (iii) have those working on the front lines well informed and committed, (iv) ensure that communication is not just one-way and (v) don't reinvent the wheel; learn from other fields and from retrospective/evaluative studies of climate change communication efforts. There are many resources on communication and climate change that might be adapted. See for instance the centre for the Communication of Climate Change, based at Mason University: <http://www.climatechangecommunication.org/>. Another good source is the proceedings of a conference on communicating climate change, a 657 page document that can be downloaded and/or viewed at <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/En56-157-2000E.pdf>

2. *Consistent communications*

Building communication strategies that are in line with existing branding and messages about the place or locale makes good sense. For example, Tasmania is branded as 'clean and green', a message that its local governments could use to build their profiles and to market climate change projects and schemes. This would be especially persuasive to many 'sea changers' and would reflect back to this demographic some of their original motivations in moving to Tasmania.

3. *All interests need to be involved*

Involving all groups (from the smallest Landcare group to the Mayor) will not only build trust in the project, but will build momentum as the network of each party becomes employed. This creates a ripple effect and maximises the effectiveness of the message. The role of and power of social networks could be better harnessed or considered in this space as could the role of interdisciplinary collaboration (Nursey-Bray 2008, 2009).

4. *'Mainstreaming' climate change into existing processes*

Most local governments already have strong emergency management or occupational health and safety departments therefore, adding climate change into existing processes is a very useful mechanism. For example, climate change could be incorporated into policies regarding flood management without too much difficulty. In such ways, climate change management and impacts can be subtly communicated and disseminated through the community.

Dimension 3: Reflexive practice

This concerns putting practice into policy and embedding reflective practice as a guiding principle within climate change for local level governance. There is an enormous amount of work currently underway in Australia and internationally on the topic (see figure 2 for a snapshot). This scope is a reminder that local governments do not have to reinvent the wheel but build upon what has already been done.

Figure 2: Review of climate change programs in local government

International
- **Cities for Climate Protection:** International program launched in Australia 1997 that encourages councils to reduce greenhouse gases and undertake other climate change management activities.
- **40 Cities Project:** The 40 Cities project gives advice and real case study examples of how local governments across the world are navigating successful adaptation to change and achievements in environmental sustainability in the areas of housing, energy, renewals, ports, transport, water, waste etc (see http://www.c40cities.org/bestpractices).

- **The Beacon Scheme:** UK schemes designed to develop and share best practice in service delivery across local government.
- **City of London Adaptation Strategy:** The City of London has developed *Rising to the Challenge - The City of London Corporation's Climate Adaptation Strategy 2007*.
- **East Riding of Yorkshire Council Coastline 'Rollback':** East Riding of Yorkshire Council is implementing a coastal 'rollback' strategy to manage high rates of coastal erosion as part of its *Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan.*
- **City of Keene Climate Adaptation Plan:** US based city Keene, developed *Adapting to Climate Change: Planning a Climate Resilient Community.*
- **2007 King County Climate Plan:** US based, in King County, Washington, has a climate plan that incorporates climate change mitigation and adaptation into agency activities, plans, policies and major investments.
- **California Climate Change adaptation plan:** Has developed comprehensive Climate Change Adaptation Plan, with a detailed action plan, with timelines for each objective.

National

- **The Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council (LGPMC):** One of 40 Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils that in 2009 agreed to develop national framework and tools for local government to help them in planning for climate change.
- **Australian Local Government Association:** Runs many climate change initiatives, and is base for information about how to conduct climate change actions.

State based local government associations

- **Local Government Response, South Australia:** Some initiatives include the (i) LGA Climate Change Strategy 2008-2012, (ii) Climate Change Sector Agreement with the SA Government, (iii) Climate Change Risk Management and Adaptation Program, (iv) Beyond Carbon - Local Government Climate Change Summit, (v) provision of Information Papers, (vi) a Climate Change Questionnaire Survey, and (vii) the LGA Climate Change Strategy 2008-2012.[9]
- **Victorian Local Government and Climate Change:** Provides information on how to undertake climate change actions with examples - *Victoria Local Government and Climate Change: Case Studies.*[10]
- **NSW Local Government association:** Amongst other support and initiatives exists a Climate Change Action Pack – An online resource for NSW Local Government on the NSW LGA web site. This action pack includes information on Tools, templates and techniques for addressing climate change, case studies, news, media releases, upcoming events and funding opportunities, and links to other useful websites (see http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/1899-climate-change.asp).
- **Western Australia Local Government Association:** WALGA has developed a detailed web site / toolkit that provides needed information to councils in relation to climate change management.[11]
- **Municipal Association of Victoria:** The Local Government Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation program has been operating for four years to help councils address the significant challenge that climate change presents.
- **Local Government Association of Tasmania:** Also has a good climate change toolkit and a suite of suggestions for local government on how to deal with this issue.[12]

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[9] For more information on these projects see <http://www.lga.sa.gov.au>
[10] See: <http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/summit/Resources/Vic+Local+Gov+Climate+Change+Case+Studies%5B1%5D.pdf>
[11] See <http://www.walgaclimatechange.com.au/planning-case-studies.htm>

Regional initiatives

- **The Western Port Greenhouse Alliance:** The WPGA carries out projects to help councils and the community respond to climate change.
- **Sydney Coastal Councils:** The SCCG has, with CSIRO's Climate Change Adaptation Flagship and University of the Sunshine Coast, developed a Systems Approach to Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Metropolises. The aim is to work with the 15 SCCG Member Councils to determine key vulnerabilities and their capacity to adapt to manage climate change issues at a regional scale.

Some examples of local initiatives

- **Climate Change and Coastal Risk Assessment Project, Tasmania:** The project takes a risk management approach to produce a range of tools to assist with the development and implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies. It will identify the probabilities relating to various sea-level rise scenarios that will need to become a foundation of future risk assessments in the coastal zone.
- **Clarence Council Foreshores Project:** Integrated Assessment and Response to Climate Change Impacts on Clarence Foreshores (CCC). This project has determined what climate change impacts will be and what to do about them in the Clarence Foreshores.
- **Kingborough Council Risk Assessment for Climate Change Decision Making Tool:** Kingborough has conducted and built a risk assessment tool to enable staff to assess risks in relation to climate change impacts (Nursey-Bray and Ferrier 2009). The risk assessment tool is based on a 800mm rise over 100 years.
- **West Tamar Council:** The West Tamar Planning Scheme (2007) has formal sections addressing climate change that mean that all building location and design must ensure that (a) it will not cumulatively increase the risk of flood to other land, and (b) takes into account potential sea level rise due to global warming.

Other examples

- Peel Harvey Climate Change Adaptation Project; Ku-ring-gai Council Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Model; Western Port Human Settlements Impacts and Adaptation Project; Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Project; Ku-ring-gai Council Water Conservation Projects; Port Adelaide-Enfield Council Flood Risk Study; Byron Shire Council Climate Change Planning; Manly Council Ocean Beach Coastline Management Plan.

What *is* a challenge for local government professionals is finding the time to invest in a review of other initiatives and practices and how then to adapt them to suit individual needs or locales. For example, local governance reform could be as simple as appointing someone within Council with the responsibility of (a) developing a data base of information relevant to the municipality, (b) updating it in relation to the current science, and (c) communicating key ideas. Another option is to dedicate a web link within the Council web site to this action. Councils could also collate a database of experts in the region and invite these experts to give regular briefings within Council sessions over the

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[12] See <http://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=542>

yearly cycle. Councils also may pursue funds to enable specific scientific work and social / economic assessment in their region.

This form of reflexive practice as part of a local governance framework for climate change will also cut costs, and facilitate innovation on existing ideas. Introducing policy makers to existing initiatives in this manner also lessens the pressure caused by the sheer psychological weight of climate change, and can help organisations build regional to international alliances and networks that may offer future opportunities to adapt to change.

7.   Conclusions

This study highlights that at time of writing, with a few exceptions, the case-study councils were only just beginning the conversation about climate change and climate change management. Thus the project, while not fulfilling its anticipated objective, revealed some core vulnerabilities within local governance arrangements about climate change. Local governments face increasing challenges in developing responses to climate change and need to work on both mitigation and adaptation strategies. Effective governance regimes (that operate at domestic policy levels) will be the cornerstone of the successful implementation of climate change programs.

Using the results of a Tasmanian case study, this paper has presented a model of adaptive climate change governance based on the three dimensions of adaptive governance, communication and reflexive practice. I argue that for local governments to enact good governance, these elements need to be built into domestic policy detail. Also highlighted is the opportunity inherent in looking to and working with other projects and initiatives, saving both time and costs. In Tasmania, local governments need to consider how (both separately and together) they can continue this conversation, and build programs and locally responsive governance arrangements which will insure councils against, and assist them to adapt to, the impacts of climate change in the future. Climate change is more than making locally specific information about climate change impacts available. Motivation and appropriate action on the ground will only occur when confidence is built up at local level.

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PRACTICE

Australia-Papua New Guinea Good Practice Scheme: Alotau-Sunshine Coast

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Introduction

In 2007 the CEO of the then Noosa Council became aware of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum's (CLGF) Good Practice Scheme in the Pacific program through his involvement as the President of Local Government Managers Australia. He contacted the CLGF with a view to contributing to the program. Alotau Urban Local Level Government (ULLG) was chosen as Noosa's partner for the program due to its enthusiasm to improve waste management practices in order to clean up the town and create an aesthetically improved environment. Noosa Council considered that it was well credentialed to assist in this regard. Later in November 2008, after Noosa had become part of the new Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) the Milne Bay Provincial Government and Alotau Urban Local Level Government (AULLG) sought further technical assistance for the preparation of an Urban Development Plan for Alotau and surrounds.

Alotau is a small coastal community (approx. 12,000 people) in the southeastern extremity of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) mainland. It is the administrative capital of Milne Bay and the key service centre for the numerous surrounding islands and villages. With an abundance of natural attributes, an expansive bay and foreshores and a forested backdrop overlooking the town, Alotau is emerging as a potential tourist destination and

has significant capacity for further development and economic growth. There is, however, a lack of essential infrastructure such as roads, drainage, water supply, sewerage treatment, electricity and telecommunications to support future development and the growing population. Alotau is also constrained by the lack of easily developable land due to a number of issues including the township being surrounded by customary land, squatter housing, flood prone areas and general topography.

The Sunshine Coast, South East Queensland

Alotau Town, Papua New Guinea

Part A: Waste Management

1.   Background

A request by Alotau Urban Local Level Government (AULLG) was submitted to the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme in the Pacific (CLGGPS) in early 2007 for assistance to improve waste management practices. The intention of AULLG was to improve waste management practices within the town in order to ensure

that it was kept clean and tidy with a view to enhancing its natural beauty. A direct benefit of this would be Alotau's desire to become a tourist destination as the region has a huge potential for further development and the subsequent job creation this enhanced industry would bring. AULLG also needed assistance to ensure that waste management administration including budgeting and billing supported a sustainable program for the future.

A scoping visit by the Mayor and staff of Noosa Council was undertaken to establish the nature and scope of the required assistance. This visit established a relationship with the Mayor and staff of Alotau ULLG and confirmed that improvement in waste management was a priority need for Alotau ULLG. In December 2007, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed. The Noosa Council has since amalgamated with the Maroochy and Caloundra Councils to form the Sunshine Coast Council (SCC), and it has agreed to honour the three partner MoU. SCC further developed a five-year program in conjunction with CLGGPS and AULLG, with funding provided through AusAID. SCC contributes in-kind resources in the form of staff time and expertise, and has also donated equipment (computers). To date, nine visits to AULLG have been undertaken by Council staff over a period of 3 years. Additionally, two staff members from AULLG were seconded to the SCC for training purposes for a period of 2 months and both gained valuable knowledge and experience during this time.

The partnership between CLGGPS in the Pacific, the AULLG and Sunshine Coast Council is progressing well. The partnership was extended in 2010 to include a project to assist the Milne Bay Provincial Government and the Alotau Urban Local level Government to develop a new planning scheme for the Town. A separate MoU has been drafted for this extension to the partnership.

2.   Context, Challenge and Approach

The Waste Management Project was developed to address:

- A growing waste problem in Alotau compounded by population increase;
- Health issues associated with poor waste management;
- Income generation for the Urban Local Level Government; and
- Tourism potential.

The challenges in developing the project included:

- Providing the 'tools' to address the problems – bins, trucks, landfill site, computers;

- Increasing public awareness;

- Funding availability – CLGGPS can only fund to a point; and

- Training across all levels of operation.

A needs assessment was established after the Technical Officer's visit that focused on the two key areas of training and the provision of vital equipment. The needs identified included:

- Training of waste management and clerical staff;

- Provision of a reliable waste collection service (refuse vehicles);

- Provision of litter facilities throughout the town (120 bins on stands);

- Provision of litter education to the community (Litter Control Committee);

- Provision of lidded bins for premises (1000 bins provided);

- Improvement in revenue generation and recovery;

- Improvement to the existing billing process;

- Provision of computers & software for the billing process (8 laptops);

- Establishment of a recycling-reuse program; and

- Planning for a future new landfill.

3.   Progress update

The progress achieved so far within the Waste Management Project includes:

2008

- A scoping visit and subsequent development of an action plan and budget.

- Signing of the MoU between CLGGPS/AULLG/Noosa Council.

- Repair to the road to the Alotau dump to enable wet season access.

- Reconfiguration of the dump site and burial of the accumulated rubbish.

- Provision of 7 computers and a printer, also provision of other computer accessories to enable electronic billing of waste accounts. These were second hand computers donated by SCC.

- Provision of training to AULLG staff in regard to billing and other accounting processes.

- Secondment of the Alotau Health Inspector and the Deputy Manager from AULLG to the Noosa Council for training purposes.
- Provision of 60 street litter bin stands and 120x 240 litre garbage bins which have been installed throughout the Alotau Township and are serviced regularly.
- Provision of 300 x 240 litre garbage bins to AULLG that will be utilized to replace 44 gal drums used by commercial and residential premises within the Town. (600 more bins are required.) The bins will be sold to customers to assist in generating income for AULLG.

2009

- Development of electronic billing software by SCC for AULLG and training of staff in use of the software. The software is now in use replacing the previous card file system.
- Review and amendment of the AULLG fees and charges for waste billing.
- Establishment of the Alotau Litter Control Committee (ALLCC). This committee consists of members of the business community in Alotau and also staff from AULLG and the Provincial Government. The committee has its own modest budget and has had an excellent impact on the litter education of the community and on cleaning up the Township.

- Arrangement has been undertaken to provide the AULLG with broadband internet services which will enable the SCC to remotely access the computers at AULLG and to repair and service the AULLG computer software as required from Sunshine Coast Council.
- Further training has commenced in regard to accountancy and billing processes.
- Various software programs have been developed and provided to the administrative staff at AULLG to enhance the billing process.
- Protective clothing has been provided to waste management workers including overalls, safety boots and gloves to protect their well being.
- The Health Inspector has been sent to attend WPH&S certificate training in Port Moresby in order that WPH&S measures can be applied within AULLG.

2010

- Work has commenced to secure the landfill from illegal dumping. Fencing and entrance gates are in the process of being installed at the landfill to ensure that illegal dumping does not occur.

- A Caretakers house (traditional house) is being constructed adjoining the landfill along with housing for the garbage truck labourers and their families. This process will also assist secure the landfill from illegal dumping and also assist in the collection of dumping fees at the dump.

- Further works are being undertaken to cover the waste on the dump and to re-contour the landfill area and stormwater drainage.

- The access road to the dump is in the process of being regraded to ensure access throughout the wet season

- A further 600 wheelie bins (SULO) have been delivered to Alotau ULLG from Australia; these bins are now being distributed throughout the Town of Alotau.

- All computers have been serviced by the SCC team computer technician and cleared of any viruses. AULLG now has 10 working computers all have email service.

- The waste billing system is working well and outstanding accounts have decreased significantly.

- As a result of the introduction of the electronic billing system reducing labour time, a staff member of AULLG has now been reallocated from manual billing to working on reducing outstanding debts for waste services.

The Mayor and Town Manager inspect the reconstructed road to the dump

PNG local government staff with the new wheelie bins

- An audit of the number of bins located at each premise has been undertaken and an improved billing system is being developed to ensure that commercial premises pay for the quantity of refuse they produce based on the service frequency and number of bins serviced.

- Education of the public in regard to anti-littering is an ongoing process and is mainly implemented through the local radio station, however more remains to be done in this regard.

- Further training in accountancy and book keeping was provided to AULLG staff by SCC accountancy staff (visiting team member) the training has been very successful and rewarding for all concerned.

- The financial affairs of AULLG have improved considerably.

- The establishment and funding of a community based Litter Control Committee is an important milestone. The committee is responsible for education of the community in regard to "Keeping Alotau Clean". The use of the local radio station for promotion of anti litter measures has resulted in a large reduction in litter throughout the town.

4.   Future Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The challenge for the partnership is to develop waste management practices that are both efficient and financially sustainable for the longer term. The partnership is progressing

well and has achieved about 75% of its goals so far. In delivering the project the following challenges are to be overcome:

- Uptake of Bins – educate people of the benefits of new bins over old drum style.
- Accessible Dump site – costs to maintain access road and high rainfall impedes ability to use landfill site.
- Proper Billing and Finance – Without steady income the ability to sustain the project is affected.
- Reliable Trucks – Constant mechanical problems with trucks significantly affects the entire program.

The largest hurdle at this time is the final point; the provision and maintenance of refuse trucks to provide a reliable refuse collection service. The existing trucks were provided through the Provincial Government several years ago. The trucks are second hand and are subject to frequent break down, and their repair using local workshops is extremely expensive. The lack of reliability of the refuse service due to vehicle break downs encourages some customers not to pay their bills as the service is not always provided in a timely fashion.

Options for conduct of the Refuse service

Subject to AULLG continuing to gain an improved revenue flow, they may be able to borrow sufficient funds to purchase a new or second hand refuse truck in the future. AULLG would then continue to operate the refuse service as they do now. The business case for this procedure is being investigated. A further option is for AULLG to call for tenders for the conduct of the refuse service by a commercial waste company; this would require AULLG to pay a monthly payment for the collection services received. Investigation of this option has commenced. It may well be necessary to utilize an open tip truck for future waste collection services due to the high cost of a compactor truck. This option is also being considered.

Future requirements

The intended actions for the following calendar year include:

- Completion of traditional houses for caretaker and waste staff adjacent to the dump.
- Erection of gates and fences at the dump entrance.

- Amendment to a local law in regard to waste fees and charges (Provincial Government solicitor actioning).

- Implementation of a producer pays policy for charging waste fees (for commercial premises).

- Continued financial support for the Alotau Community Litter Control Committee's educational program.

- Implementation of a training program for Alotau ULLG staff in the Microsoft suite of software programs.

- Investigation of a possible new landfill site as the Provincial Government wish to use the existing site for other purposes.

- Possible design of a new landfill site subject to a new location being offered.

- Ongoing training in financial management and accounting.

- Ongoing training in waste management practices.

- Ongoing information technology support.

- Secondment of selected Alotau ULLG staff to the SCC for training purposes.

- Investigation of a business case for provision of reliable waste collection trucks for the town.

- Further visits to Alotau ULLG to continue the support programs.

Lessons learnt

The Alotau Waste Management Project has been in operation for approximately 4 years now and there have been two clear lessons learnt for this project. The first is the need to ensure the project maintains momentum to prevent cyclic effects. For example:

- If bins are not emptied regularly complacency sets in and littering increases.

- If bins are not emptied the income to ULLG is affected.

- Reduced income affects the ability to maintain equipment which results in the ability to collect the bins. This cycle is difficult to break.

A second lesson concerns alternative ways of funding vital capital purchases:

- ULLG are constrained in their ability to get projects off the ground due to the high cost of items i.e. the purchase and regular maintenance of garbage trucks.

- GPS is not designed to fund capital purchases.

Alternative funding options could be how contracts are established (i.e. contract out the waste collection and revenue return); involve the Provincial Government further i.e. consider lease and maintenance arrangements; or seek out other funding grants.

Summary

Excellent progress has been made over the past three years. Overall, waste management practices in general have improved, the Town is much cleaner, and the waste management billing system is now efficient. Staff administrative efficiency continues to improve. The potential exists to achieve excellent outcomes in Alotau over the next 4 years but in order for the program to be successful a reliable efficient waste collection service must be provided. A successful program will provide both public health and financial benefits to the Alotau community. In summary, Alotau ULLG is well on the way to becoming self sufficient and sustainable in regard to waste management practices, and staff are to be congratulated on their persistence in very difficult circumstances.

Part B: Urban Development Plan

1.   Background

The urban development plan project is an extension of the work that has been ongoing since 2007 when SCRC (then Noosa Council) agreed to assist with waste management within Alotau. Since that time SCRC has assisted with the procurement of bins and setting up a budgeting and billing system for the AULLG to ensure sustainable long term waste management practices that will keep the town clean and tidy. This project is outlined below in more detail.

An existing urban development plan is currently in operation, but has officially expired and requires a comprehensive review. The proposed urban development plan is to be a strategic land use plan to guide the timely provision of future development and infrastructure for Alotau for a 20 year period until 2031. A number of preliminary studies are being prepared to identify the range of economic, social, environmental and

infrastructure needs. The urban development plan will also include a detailed town centre plan of future community buildings and public open space, guidelines to improve existing and future buildings, designs to improve traffic and pedestrian flows, plans for upgrades to road works and stormwater drainage, and general streetscape improvement works. There will also be a works delivery program for government to use as a budgeting tool.

February 2010 scoping visit

An initial scoping visit was carried out in February 2010 which identified a number of priority needs that SCRC could assist with in the first instance, including:

- Initial capacity building and guidance for town planning and technical staff to get the project underway;
- Technical assistance with supporting planning studies, town centre plan and design guidelines;
- Assistance with the development of a GIS system and base mapping layers;
- Improving technical mapping skills;
- Provision of GPS equipment and mapping software;
- Technical advice around major infrastructure improvements such as roads, drainage, water, sewerage, marinas, power and telecommunications.

Memorandum of understanding

The government and administrative functions relating to physical planning (town planning) come under the responsibility of the Milne Bay Provincial Government and as such the provincial government is an additional partner to the SCRC-Alotau partnership. This requires a separate memorandum of understanding (MoU) to be signed by the SCRC, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), AULLG and Milne Bay Provincial Government. This MoU has been drafted and is currently being finalised.

2.   Getting started: Town Planning Objectives and Issues

The Alotau-Sunshine Coast Partnership allows for information sharing on Noosa's experience of achieving ecologically sustainable development and tourism. It also provides an insight and new skills for SCRC staff on urban development planning in a developing country whilst providing invaluable cultural experiences. The emphasis is on capacity building and skills development rather than task completion. The approach is to create a rapport and an understanding that the project is based on interaction and

collaboration to build the capacity of local staff. At all times SCRC personnel ensure that they are considered as support staff and not as project managers or as lead consultants. This is vital to making sure that local staff do not consider themselves as subservient and that they retain ownership. With this ownership it is envisaged that the staff will not only gain the most in skill and personal development but that the plan is more likely to be understood and adopted into the future.

The main planning issues to be considered by the project team are:

- Incorporating the core social needs of the local people into the urban development plan;
- Defining and incorporating the key economic drivers for Alotau into the urban development plan;
- The processes around making customary land available for development;
- How to improve the roll out of residential housing land;
- How to minimize uncontrolled squatter housing;
- How to increase land for business;
- Upgrading existing infrastructure and relocating certain industrial activities;
- Allocation of land for major new infrastructure such as water and sewerage services;
- Impacts of future development on the natural environment and ensuring natural resources are sustainable for the long term;
- Creation of a more cohesive town character and general civic improvements.

The following actions were used to start the project:

- Preparation of a schedule of tasks and creation of a programme and budget around the required tasks;
- Meeting with relevant stakeholders;
- Review of existing data;
- Issue of information requests from relevant agencies;
- Meeting with political and administrative leaders to explain the project and the need for high level support;
- Providing technical assistance with the preparation of supporting planning studies on the range of economic, social, environmental and infrastructure needs;

- Assistance with the preparation of the design brief for town centre plans and design guidelines for streetscape improvements, future community buildings and promoting traditional building character;
- Community and business surveys to gather the community's ideas and views about the future development of Alotau;
- Survey of existing land uses;
- Assistance with the development of a GIS mapping system to map property information, zoning, environmental values, etc;
- Improve in-house technical mapping skills through on the job training by National Lands Department staff and funding of technical university training;
- Provision of GPS equipment and mapping software.

3.   Progress update

Overview

The most recent visit to Alotau by SCRC representatives in July and August was constructive in setting up and commencing work on background planning studies, community feedback surveys, project budgets, project briefs, land use surveys, and important base mapping. These tasks will all be progressed over the coming months in advance of the drafting of the urban development plan and its detailed land use and development requirements.

Budget update

Based on the priority needs identified during the scoping visit, a budget and supporting information was prepared to accompany a funding request to AusAID. A budget of just under $50,000 was provided via the Commonwealth Local Government Fund in Port Moresby. There are a number of expenditure items in progress including further on the job mapping training, and the preparation of a socio-economic planning study. These are likely to be completed by the end of the year with a component carrying over into early January 2011.

Tasks and achievements completed

The project has maintained good momentum throughout the year with the main driving force coming from both AULLG and the Provincial Government

Detail of progress achieved so far includes:

Confirmation of full scope of project – it was realised early into the visit that the project was a bigger task than first anticipated, requiring a large amount of background data, demographic interpretation and research before the drafting of the urban development plan could commence. The original project completion date of November 2010 was extended until late 2011, allowing for more in-depth investigation and reporting and a more accurate and effective town plan. SCRC staff were pleased to see how much work had been carried out since the scoping visit in February and the commitment shown by both levels of government, elected representatives and other community interests.

Government and community meetings – a number of meetings were held with high level staff and elected and community representatives during a 5 week visit in July/August. This included elected members Charles Abel and Gordon Wesley, the Provincial Administrator Henry Bailasi, Chamber of Commerce chairman, and Physical Planning Steering Committee Members. From these meetings there now appears to be strong local and provincial government enthusiasm and political support for the project. These are important for achieving good outcomes and ongoing resourcing.

Community and business surveys – a community feedback survey was distributed around the community to get an understanding of local people's views and preferences for the future. This was completed with the paid assistance of 10 (5 male, 5 female) local unemployed student graduates. Approximately 400 responses were received. A separate targeted business survey was also distributed to the chamber of commerce and business owners in Alotau. This was acknowledged to be the first time Alotau locals and businesses have had the opportunity to individually voice opinions on the future direction of their town.

Land use survey – data was collected over one week on the general use of all lands across the Alotau physical planning area. The Alotau Urban Local Level Government engaged a further 10 (5 male, 5 female) unemployed student graduates for this task. This data will be valuable for correlating intended and existing land uses.

GIS mapping by national lands office staff – staff from Port Moresby Lands Office visited Alotau for a week to assist local staff with compiling mapping and survey data into a MapInfo Geographical Information System (GIS). Once completed, the GIS mapping for Alotau will be the first time the physical planning area has been accurately and digitally recorded in Alotau allowing for better land management. It is also being seen as a model for town planning in PNG for other provincial governments to follow.

Preparation of socio economic needs assessment brief for University of PNG – two project briefs were prepared for a Population and Housing Needs Assessment and an Economic and Employment Needs Assessment, with the University of PNG invited to complete the studies. The university has agreed to carryout the consultancy and is to commence work in November this year.

Preparation of town centre design brief – this brief provides the parameters for the detailed design of the local commercial centre including for future community buildings, streetscape improvement works, and the preparation of design guidelines for new commercial buildings. The provincial government have committed staff resources to complete the project in-house given their high level of architecture and design expertise. Emphasis will be placed on incorporating traditional design in keeping with the local culture.

Budget and future program – time was spent with government staff setting up a program and budget for completion of the project throughout 2010 and 2011.

Reporting and information sharing

Periodic reports to the CLGF are prepared to record the progress, achievements and future needs and recommendations. These reports are provided for their information and potentially distributed to other local governments interested in similar initiatives. Sunshine Coast Council also internally reports on the program benefits in terms of its social sustainability aims and outcomes. In addition, local staff report monthly to the Alotau Physical Planning Steering Committee on progress and to direct priorities

3.   Future tasks, Suggestions and Lessons

All of the currently funded project tasks have either been completed or have commenced and are due for completion early into 2011. The remaining work includes:

- Completion of the socio economic planning studies by the University of PNG;
- Completion of digitising of the land survey data and further assistance from National Lands Office with the GIS base mapping and zoning maps.

With the success to date, there is opportunity for the partnership to provide further guidance and capacity building with the urban development plan throughout 2011. Staff from Alotau have indicated that assistance would be valuable in the following areas:

- Drafting the Urban Development Plan;
- Town centre design and master planning; and
- IT technical support.

SCRC has prepared a draft budget submission for 2011 and are in correspondence with CLGGPS regarding the ongoing support.

Suggestions and lessons

Whilst there have been many challenges and impediments, they have not been significant enough to prevent progress. The challenges arise largely out of the complexity of the project and the nature of work in Papua New Guinea, and others relate to the operation of the program. Below is a brief list of those challenges to date, how they have been faced, and some lessons learnt.

- The time taken for approval and transfer of project funding from CLGGPS. Our experience is that there is need for a quicker turn around for identified projects to obtain CLGF approval. Staff often have other work commitments and require the earliest advice to organise travel dates.

- The initial lack of availability of funds from provincial government to assist in the preparation of the urban development plan had hindered the early stages of the project. This has since improved with the Provincial Government's allocation of K100,000 (approximately AUS$39,600) into 2011. There is good strategic policy now coming from the national level (PNG Vision 2050) that will hopefully filter down locally to direct priorities and further funding around the role of good planning.

- Difficulty in maintaining regular email communications. Alotau offices are subject to equipment and service faults and this will be an area of future work if it is approved under the program in 2011.

- Access to accurate data records has proved difficult. For example, the majority of survey cadastre files are still in hard copy and date back over 30 years. A large part of the current project to digitise the planning area should significantly improve access to accurate data.

- Lack of timely information impacts on the ability to assess it and include it into the urban development plan. For example the urban development plan requires specific input from other government agencies that are not able to provide information in the timeframe requested. It is hoped that ongoing liaison and involvement with the agencies through the preparation of the urban development plan will improve the provision of information.

- Personal challenges include how to deal with general health issues such as the risk of malaria, noting that the use of anti-malarials is not always an option.

- The other personal challenge is the perceived security risks when travelling via Port Moresby.

- Less of a challenge and more of a lesson from this project is how inter-government relationships and cooperation adds significant value in achieving local project outcomes. The facilitation and use of National and Provincial staff expertise to add value locally could help coordinate the national roll out of successful project models such as Alotau's to other areas of PNG. It is also important that there is continued awareness of the CLGGPS capacity building program throughout all levels of government and in particular to distinguish itself from a traditional AusAID Capital Works program. Ideally this display of a unified government achieving outcomes for the local community may contribute to an improved public confidence in all levels of PNG government.

The partnership has gone well so far and the potential exists to achieve excellent outcomes for Alotau over the coming years. The preparation and completion of the urban

development plan aims to be the first step for Alotau to clearly define its future over the next 20 years and deliver both community and economic expectations.

Postscript: Port Vila CLGGPS Workshop and Symposium

SCRC project staff Adam and Rebecca Britton presented an outline of this project at the CLGF Pacific Project Symposium and Commonwealth Good Practice Scheme Workshop in Port Vila in October 2010. There was agreement that the workshop provided valuable information regarding the other CLGGPS local government partnerships within PNG and areas for improvement in the way of information sharing. There are plans to set up a website for PNG-Australia partner councils to post information of mutual interest regarding program activities.

PRACTICE

Project Hetura: Reflections on an international local government partnership

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1.   Background

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the Townsville/Port Moresby partnership activities and explore the challenges and benefits to both Councils from the perspective of a Townsville City Council employee associated with the program.

Since 2002, Townsville City Council has been engaged in a capacity building project with the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The project, named Hetura, means mateship or friendship in Moto, the predominant language group in Port Moresby. Project Hetura is coordinated through the Commonwealth Local Government Forum' (CLGF) Good Practice Scheme with funding from   AusAID.
[1] Townsville City Council provides in-kind support through the contribution of staff time and participation while the National Capital District Commission provides a budget allocation for the project.

The overarching goal of Project Hetura is to strengthen management, planning, and governance within the NCDC and to improve the capacity of the organisation to deliver efficient, responsive, accountable services to the community. Rather than engaging in a traditional consultancy, the approach by participants of Project Hetura has been that of a

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[1] Four other partnerships operating along the same guidelines currently exist between councils in Australia and Papua New Guinea under the coordination of the CLGF Good Practice Scheme.

partnership built through a relationship of trust and good-will developed over time between the two organisations. Within this partnership, the skills and contributions of all parties are valued, and team members work together to develop sustainable solutions to identified problems.

View of Hanuabada Village in Port Moresby Harbour

2.   Overview of Partners

National Capital District Commission

Port Moresby is the national capital and the administrative and commercial centre of Papua New Guinea. The NCDC operates as the local authority and has responsibility for urban planning and regulation, roads, waste management and community services. Economic activities in Port Moresby are primarily associated with service industries. Like many cities in the Pacific Region, urban migration has resulted in a significant increase to the population of Port Moresby which in turn challenges to the ability of the NCDC to govern effectively and ensure necessary service delivery. Other important considerations:

- Land ownership in Port Moresby is divided between customary land (40%) and 'alienated land' which is either owned by the State or in private hands (60%).
- A lack of available housing has resulted in many migrants having no option but to inhabit unplanned settlements which generally lack basic infrastructure and essential services such as water, electricity, refuse collection and sewerage.

- It is estimated that 45% of the population live in settlements which are also associated with high unemployment, elevated crime rates and poor sanitation.
- Population is growing rapidly in the settlements which are unregulated and do not provide a source of revenue to the NCDC thus placing a great deal of pressure on the organisations available resources and capacity.
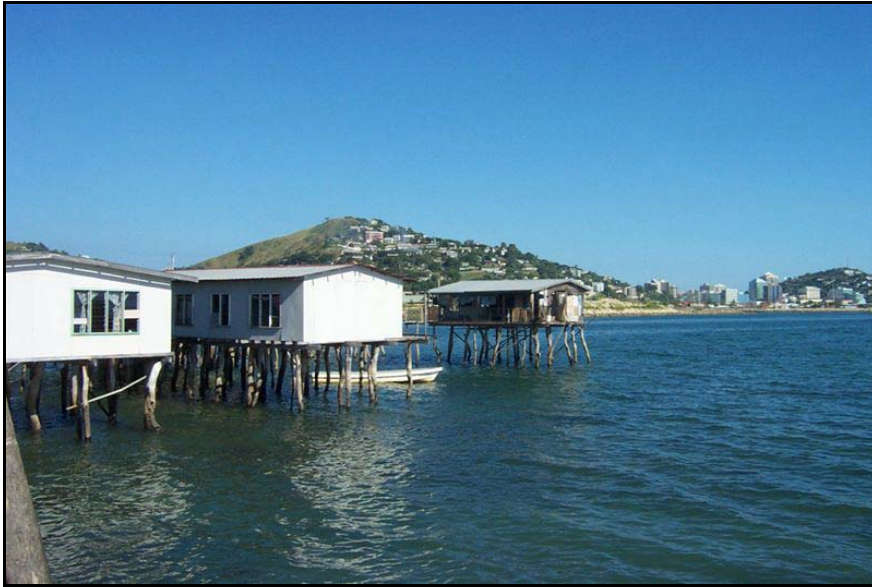
Stilt Houses on Port Moresby Harbour

Townsville City Council

Townsville City Council (TCC) is located in north Queensland, Australia and is the main centre for government administration outside of Brisbane. The economy of Townsville is diverse and includes industries such as retail trade, health and education services, government administration and defence, construction, mining, manufacturing and property and business management. Townsville enjoys a strong growth rate which is higher than the state average and is currently in the process of developing a new planning scheme that will serve to ensure appropriate infrastructure and sustainable growth.

Figure 1. Comparison of Port Moresby – Townsville key indicators

	Port Moresby	**Townsville**
Population	600,000	180,000
Area	399 km2	3,738 km2
Road Network	750 km	2,450 km
Land Parcels	22,225	82,726
Households/ Res. Properties	37,221	64,750
Unemployment	18.5%	4%
Growth Rate	-	3.2% (2.6% Qld)

3.   Project Goals and Achievements

Project Hetura - Phase 1

In 2000 a scoping project was initiated by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (under the auspices of the PNG Urban Local Level Government Association) in order to initiate a partnership with the NCDC and Townsville under the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme. The scoping exercise was and jointly undertaken by officers of Townsville City Council and the NDCD. The primary focus was to review the overall regulatory services planning capacity of the NCDC and resulted in six recommended activities which were later scaled back to a more achievable program with a focus on urban planning and information technology. Activities identified in the initial scoping such as human resources and financial management were to be addressed in the second phase of the project. Phase 1 of Project Hetura was originally scheduled to operate from 2002 to 2006, but was extended for an additional three years through a second Memorandum of Understanding. The following activities were identified:

1.   Structural changes

- Changes to the organisational structure to strengthen leadership in the area of Planning, Lands and Building Services.
- Strengthening of the corporate planning process throughout the organisation and transferring responsibility for this to Planning, Lands and Building Services.
- Establishment of planning and development compliance functions as core responsibilities of the Planning, Lands and Building Services Division.
- Improvements to the customer service function including the development of a 'one stop shop' concept, creating a customer service centre to function in

conjunction with Planning, Lands and Building Services, and adoption of workflow and procedural changes to reinforce the 'one stop' model.

2. Policy and legislation

- The NCDC make representations to the National Government seeking amendments to the Physical Planning Act and Regulation.
- Amendments to the Urban Development and Services Master Plan as necessary, and the adoption of a Development Plan pursuant to the requirements of the Physical Planning Act and Regulation.
- Funding for a program to undertake preparation of Local Area Plans for the Local Planning Areas of NCDC with priority being given to plans for the areas of Downtown, Boroko and Waigani.

3. IT systems

- An IT systems audit and needs analysis to specifically determine system needs, development options and associated costs.
- Upgrades of the NDCD Property Database
- Improvements to network connections between NCDC buildings and the standardisation of equipment across the organisation.

4. Records management

- Establishment of a single, centralised electronic information and records management system.
- Development of program to provide publications with corporate information, including services offered and programs.

Outcomes of phase 1 Project Hetura

For Project Hetura to succeed it was crucial that participants form a strong working partnership. Building on a "Sister City" relationship that has existed between the two Councils since 1983, officers from Townsville City Council and the National Capital District Commission had early on formed relationships and built a partnership that set the foundation for future constructive interactions. This element of the project is what sets the Good Practice Scheme apart from a typical consultative approach and sees participants work together to navigate through the inevitable setbacks and frustrations of implementing change.

Phase 1 of Project Hetura benefited greatly from a very generous visiting program by Planning and Development staff from Townsville City Council. Working closely with the Strategic Planning staff in the NCDC, a Planning Officer from TCC was able to visit frequently to organise training and provide mentoring in order to ensure the project was moving forward and staff met milestones. This is reflected in the progress made with the restructure of the Division and the development of policy documents such as the Urban Development Plan, Port Moresby Local Development Plan, and the initiation of Settlement Strategies. There was also a marked improvement to governance structures or within the NCDC including greater community and stakeholder involvement and increased transparency and accountability of policy development.

Process review and redesign was carried out throughout the Regulatory and Planning sections and resulted in flow on improvements to areas such as records management and customer service. Customer service was centralised and a centralised filing system was developed with regular audits. Achievements in the area of information technology included the recruitment of a qualified IT Manager who worked with TCC Technical Officers to scope the requirement for a property database, improve network connections between the two main administrative buildings, standardise computer purchases, and make improvements to the email system.

Despite success in some areas, there were external factors that impeded progress. For example, although process review and staff training created efficiencies within the Enforcement Section, external factors such as physical threats against officers and fear of reprisals continue to impact on the ability of staff to carry out the function fully. Issues such as poor accommodation, frequent power outages, and telephone and email communication breakdowns also contributed to delays and required patience by all parties. It was also reported that some managers needed to take a greater role and embrace the principles of the project. Management training was scheduled, but didn't take place during Phase 1 of Hetura and will be carried forward into Phase 2 of the project. The fact that most of these issues have been addressed by the NCDC prior to the implementation of the second phase of Project Hetura shows their commitment to improving the performance of the organisation.

In 2008, a state initiated Council amalgamation took place between the neighbouring Councils of Townsville and Thuringowa. Project Hetura was put on hold by the new

Townsville City Council whilst its new structure was developed and services and processes were reviewed. In 2010 when planning for the next phase of Hetura commenced, several of the activities associated with the project had been progressed by NCDC management while Hetura was on hiatus. This is a good indication that the goals of building capacity within the NCDC are being realised.

4.   Lessons learned and Project Forecast

The Phase 1 activities has produced some valuable lessons for all partners. These include:

- Communication is a vital element of the process and should be formally addressed throughout the second Phase of Project Hetura.
- The primary focus of the first phase has been on two Departments within the organisation – Regulatory Services and Information Technology with solid results. Widening the focus within Phase 2 to include elements such as human resources and corporate governance will positively impact the NCDC as a whole.
- Delays are a part of the process and have impacted on the participation of both partners.
- There is a valuable role for external trainers and other service providers; developing relationships with people and organisations that can provide additional skills and services is advisable.

Planned 'modules' for Phase 2 are:

1. Information Technology
- Governance: Security Management: virus management, incident management and firewall control systems; Backup systems and procedures; Business continuity planning; Documentation of Standards and Policies.
- Expand TARMIS to incorporate Permit Processing System.
- Records Management: Development of records management policy; Exploration of archiving requirements strategy and capacity.
- Case management system for legal services.
- Linking GIS to TARMIS: Link to revenue system; Property layer finalised; Finalisation of data collection (outsourced) and upload of information.

2. Regulatory Services/Enforcement

- Staff Training; Process review   for efficiency; Centralisation of enforcement responsibilities and duties; Review of Structure of Enforcement Division and Finalisation of Structure.

3. Human Resources

- Policy Development: Review of existing policies; Development of Code of Conduct Policy; Disciplinary Policy, Remuneration Policy; Development of Retention and Recruitment strategies.
- Recruitment and Retention.
- Review and Development of Organisational Development and Training program
- Development of Cadetship/Studies Assistance Program.
- Corporately supported Reward and Recognition Program.

4. Asset Management

- Survey and identification of Assets and development of process to enter Road Assets in system.

5. Environmental Sustainability

- Development of Environmentally Sustainable Building designs/codes.

6. Waste Management

- Assistance with Future Planning and Waste Management System Alternatives

There is a great deal of enthusiasm and support going into Phase 2 of Project Hetura. Expanding into new operational areas within the NCDC will strengthen the partnership and provide opportunities for both organisations to develop an even stronger working relationship. The past and future success of the program can be attributed in large part to the professional approach and active support by the leadership teams within both the NCDC and Townsville City Council.

PRACTICE

Mutual capacity building: Mt Hagen local government and Orange City

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1.   Context

Orange City Council and Mount Hagen Urban Local Level Government (MHULLG) in the Papua New Guinea Highlands have had a strong history of working in partnership to build capacity. This is based on a Sister City relationship extending to 30 years founded on the acceptance that to build better communities more than just physical infrastructure is needed. The Australian Government AusAID organisation funded the capacity building program, supported by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum who provide back-end administration and acts as a broker in drawing together a number of partnership agreements and AusAID funding applications in addition to information exchange. Council's work has been recognised and supported nationally in PNG and by AusAID, and there has been a tight focus on assisting the 60,000 people that live in and around the township of Mt Hagen. So far, Council has worked on numerous issues including waste management, sanitation, traffic and pedestrian plans and governance.

Orange is a regional city in Central NSW. It has a population of 38,000 people and with its surrounding towns and villages, supports a population of 100,000 through industrial, commercial and service resources. The city has grown from its rich mining past - Orange was the home to Australia's first payable gold discovery at Ophir in 1851.The Orange Local Government Area is 290km2.

Mount Hagen is third largest city in Papua New Guinea. It is the capital of the Western Highlands Province and is located in the large fertile Wahgi Valley in central mainland Papua New Guinea, at an elevation of 1,677 m (5,502 ft). The Highlands Highway is the main arterial route to connect Mount Hagen with the coastal cities of Lae and Madang. The city is named after the old eroded volcano Mount Hagen, located about 24 kilometres to the northwest.

2.   Recent initiatives and outcomes

There has been a recent, renewed focus on capacity building opportunities for both the Mt Hagen local government and community, and skills of Orange City staff. In 2009 an Orange City Council delegation of senior staff and a councillor travelled to Mt Hagen, Papua New Guinea (PNG) to re-scope the existing Sister Cities program and AusAID capacity building program. The following outlines the outcomes achieved during the trip and the future steps required to continue the capacity building of the Mt Hagen local government and community, and skills of the Orange City staff.

Urban planning project

Orange City Council has been working collaboratively with the Mt Hagen Urban Local Level Government (MHULLG) and community for the past five years to develop an Urban Plan for Mt Hagen city. This new plan has been approved by the PNG National Physical Planning Board and provides a framework for the development of control plans and civic and civil infrastructure planning and development. Planning for the redevelopment of Mount Hagen Airport to facilitate international flights, an associated business park, redevelopment of the City's bus bay, a major civic square with an arts centre, civic facility and housing are also complete. As part of this plan, $3mil Australian dollars was gained for a new market in the city, and building a pedestrian safety garden project that has reduced pedestrian fatalities and injuries.

Figure 1. Mount Hagen

Figure 2. (l-r) Mount Hagen Lord Mayor, Titus Doa with Mount Hagen ULLG, General Manager Victor Megauo.

Key elements of the Plan which Council will continue to focus on in conjunction with Mt Hagen City Council include:

- Urban development planning;

- Waste management;

- Water and sewerage supply;

- Transport facilities, particularly relating to public transport;

- City beautification;

- Sporting and recreational facilities; and

- Capacity building for women's groups.

This Plan is the first of its type in PNG and sets the strategic direction for the city of 60,000 residents - the third largest in PNG - and opens up significant opportunities to attract international aid funding and commercial investment. This will address many infrastructure and service issues in the Mt Hagen region. This Plan was launched and placed on public exhibition during the delegation's visit to PNG and the Mt Hagen community now has the opportunity to comment on the plan prior to it being adopted by the PNG Planning Department.

Impact of the plan today

Local Mount Hagen Council employee Wak Kewa has had a significant role in the development of the plan. He is well qualified to understand the development and plan delivery process in PNG today and his skills in ensuring the plan's base work was completed and then getting the plan approved have been recognised. The City Plan was launched by the Prime Minister of Papau New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare in Hagen,

October 2010. The launch also identified a number of activities set out in the plan and the national government has allocated over K125 mil (AUD $50 mil) over 5 years which may be augmented by AusAID, European Union and World Bank funding, with K20 mil allocated by the PNG national Government (AUD 8 mil) in the first year. The primary targets for action are now about delivery of infrastructure through the partnership between the local, provincial and national governments. Council's role will now focus facilitating specific community projects to do with a range of administrative and governance capacity building.

Sydney based firm Crone Partners (headed by Greg Crone) has been working closely in a partnership with the Governor of the Highlands Tom Olga, MHULLG, Mayor Doa, his Assistant General Manager Wak Kewa, and Orange City Council to construct a business model that ensures effective project delivery. Orange City will participate in the probity and governance role in the business model.

Future program organisational issues
A review of Orange Councils' staff involvement is mooted as the work with Mt Hagen is now moving from a planning to an operational phase. The plan is to now focus the majority of the work on the delivery of specific projects, particularly those relating to the delivery of infrastructure projects and ongoing capacity building projects involving women's groups in Mt Hagen. The overall co-ordination of the delivery of these projects and liaison with the CLGF will be undertaken by Council's Directors supported by other staff at Orange City Council. Specific project delivery will be undertaken by community volunteers with identifiable skills who will be available to travel to PNG on a more regular basis to deliver these projects. There is continued opportunity for individual staff members (and possibly strategic involvement by staff from local business) to travel to PNG to provide assistance relevant to their roles at Council. This also allows staff to gain valuable experience in different and challenging work environments that can broaden overall skills and provide a different perspective for their local government careers.

This current project administration organisational structure will enable the existing relationships (which have developed between Mt Hagen and Orange over a 20 year period) to continue whilst also ensuring key projects identified in the Mt Hagen City Plan are effectively delivered. To support Orange Councils advocacy work, the project uses video as a means of recording the events and communicating to all stakeholders. It has

been found that this is an effective process when language issues arise, particularly when relaying matters of a technical nature.

Sister city discussions

Orange City Council has had a Sister City Relationship with Mount Hagen in Papua New Guinea for some 15 years. The relationship is founded on an intrinsic acceptance that in building better communities we need to do more than provide physical infrastructure. As the divide between rich and poor in world regions and within developed countries widens, the need to build skills grows. Without capacity building Mount Hagen might be tempted to look to use non-renewable resources instead of sustainable economic futures to survive in a difficult world economy. Such skills range from building inclusive planning processes to creating environments for learning and problem solving that are self-sustaining and lead to empowerment.

During a recent visit Orange Councillor Chris Gryllis held discussions with a number of groups to further the ongoing Sister City relationship between Orange and Mt Hagen. A possible key point of focus is the Mt Hagen Cultural Show, a bi-annual celebration of traditional dance, music and culture from the central highlands region of PNG.

Women's capacity building project

The Human Services Administration Assistant coordinated the women's capacity building program. This is an on-going program designed to provide new skills to women of Mt Hagen so they can gain greater independence. The Human Services Administration Assistant facilitated the group, advising on a simple, workable and achievable structure which would not only empower women but also facilitate the transfer of their skills to other women in their particular clan, school, church or ward group. Each of the women in the initial group has made an undertaking to transfer her skills to a further ten women and so on to exponentially increase the knowledge transfer of these skills to the women of Mt Hagen. .

A practical session involving food hygiene, preparation and costing of jams and preserves was undertaken over two days. In these sessions, women learned how to identify and source the best fresh produce, prepare various fruits for conserve making and to take part in the physical preparation and bottling. This project will continue with Council representatives mentoring and advising. Positive results have already been

achieved and it is hoped that the skills and earning capacity gained by the women will assist them greatly in generating income to support their families, in particular their children's education. A considerable achievement has been women from diverse social backgrounds working as a cohesive group.

3.   Future working prospects and lessons

Papua New Guinea and the highlands are experiencing significant resource activity with gold, minerals and natural gas discovery. With a strong focus on mining, civil infrastructure and civil works too, Orange has a number of companies that can advise on infrastructure within the Western Highlands as its resource work unfolds. To capture these mutual opportunities, an Economic Development Agreement between Orange Council and the Western Highlands Provincial Government was signed in August 2010 to facilitate future business opportunities. This includes proposals to:

- support the development of partnerships with businesses in Orange with a special focus on the mining industry, environmental protection and governance support industries

- facilitate business networks with private sector providers in WHP and Orange area business in the provision of infrastructure planning, governance and development

- facilitate business introduction in Mount Hagen, Port Moresby and across PNG when appropriate

- for Orange to conduct business forums to inform appropriate business of opportunities and processes for engagement

- facilitate contact of Orange region business' with the key stakeholders in the WHP

- encourage local farmers to access itinerant workers from the WHP in consultation with the WHP Governors Office

The existing relationship of Orange City Council in the region can provide a springboard for local Orange companies to expand into international business. Similarly, opportunities to engage seasonal workers from the Highlands region can also be explored under current international agreements between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

(L-R) Orange Mayor, Cr John Davis, Stephen Sykes, Western Highlands Province
Governor Tom Olga, Mt Hagen Lord Mayor Titus Doa

Lessons and approach

The Mt Hagen work demonstrates a drift from north/south capacity building (from developed to undeveloped countries), to a more regionally focussed approach that stresses networking *between* neighbours with similar challenges. Such relationships can generate benefits *beyond* capacity with important cross-cultural, 'social capital' oriented lessons to be gained, in addition to and extensive inter-organisational learning. In the case of the Mt Hagen-Orange partnership, an open exchange has been pivotal to its success and continuing relationship. This approach has so far engendered mutual commitment and goodwill, and 'power' has been exercised with a view to harnessing mutually benefits for all stakeholders.

One of the important lessons in such cross-council working is the value of collaboration, and that key collaborative elements have structures that are flexible, responsive and open. These must be developed from a voluntary basis and should remain 'organic', ie, the collaborative structures need to grow to meet the needs of the stakeholders. Imposed structures, either from government or statute, will not engender true ownership and will fail unless stakeholders embrace facilitation, emissary or almost diplomatic values in managing outcomes.

Options for meeting community need that facilitate empowerment, ownership trust, goodwill and commitment is in the hands of communities since it is not government that empowers people: people empower each other. The Mt Hagen Urban Local Level

Government is very positive about the future of their city and can see the significant opportunities for improving the quality of services for the residents of the city and the central highlands region of PNG.

Further reading about Mt Hagen-Orange

- Building capacity for sustainable resource management through Sister City arrangements: <www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/3/sykes.htm>.

- Action plan to improve Western Highlands Province: <www.renewnsw.com.au/PDFs/Action%20plan%20to%20improve%20WHP,%20PNG%20oct.pdf>.

The Australian Year of Women in Local Government: 2010 and beyond

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1.   Introduction

2010 was the Australian *Year of Women in Local Government*. This paper provides some background information on the Year, an outline of the activities undertaken and some thoughts on how to take the agenda forward beyond 2010.

The most recent Equality and Human Rights Commission's (UK) report, *Sex and Power 2008 Index* was damning about the future prospects for women being equally represented in the UK Parliament. It looked at women in top positions of power and influence across the public and private sectors over the past five years, and suggests a worrying trend of reversal or stalled progress. Current data suggests the situation is not any better in Australia. Although half the population, women in local government account for only 30% of elected representatives and only 20% of senior managers in local government. Moreover, only seven percent of women are chief executive officers.

Despite many initiatives to increase women's representation in executive and elected leadership roles in local government, this imbalance has been the status quo for the last 20 years. For this reason alone, the need to recognise, value and promote women in local government is as great as ever. Even more pressing is the fact that over the next decade, the majority of senior local government executives will become eligible to retire, and as suggested above, 80% of these are male. This is a significant opportunity for the sector to address gender imbalances. Without more women managers, executives and elected representatives, the local government sector simply does not have the depth of talent, experience and skills to meet the challenges that lie ahead. In addition, for local government to strengthen policy debate and ensure local decision making represents and meets the needs of the communities it supports, both management and elected representatives must reflect the gender balance and social diversity found within their communities. Thus there are both equity and compelling business cases to promote workplace diversity and increase the participation of women in executive and elected leadership roles.

2.   Background

The Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) is a key organisation supporting women in local government. ALGWA aims to assist in furthering women's knowledge and understanding of the functions of local government, and to encourage women to participate and make a career in the sector. In 2007 ALGWA conducted a review of the National Framework for Women in Local Government called *The Way Forward*.[3] In early 2008 the national board of Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) voted to support ALGWA in attracting the necessary resources and commitment from the Commonwealth government and other stakeholders to implement the findings of the review. Additionally, they developed a proposal for a *Year of Women in Local Government* for 2010. This dedicated Year was envisaged as the basis for an ongoing national program to involve all local government professional peak bodies, state divisions of the LGMA, ALGWA and local councils towards a single aim of increasing women's participation.

In 2009 ALGWA again reviewed the National Framework for Women in Local Government and launched a number of initiatives under the banner *50:50 Vision*.

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[3] See <http://www.lgma.org.au/downloads/File/ALGWA%20The%20Way%20Forward.pdf>

The Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council (LGPMC) is another important organisation that has helped facilitate the longer term promotion of increased women's participation. The LGPMC is made up of ministers from across Australia as well as the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). In October 2009 the LGPMC strongly endorsed ALGWA's *50:50 Vision* and released its own *Women in Local Government Strategy 2009-12*. Under the strategy, the LGPMC committed to a nationally consistent, five-part program of action to improve the participation and status of women in local government, both as elected members and as senior staff. The ministers agreed to:

- Support goals for increasing women's participation
- Support the establishment of an ongoing database on women's participation
- Incorporate women's participation into the proposed local government workforce strategy
- Support the establishment of a national awards and accreditation program that promotes gender equity and cultural change in local government
- Support the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government.

The LGPMC has adopted targets for 2020 whereby 40% of women are elected members, 35% are mayors, and 30% are senior staff. As outlined above, currently women are 30% of elected representatives and only 20% of senior managers. Ministers also supported the establishment of a national steering committee representative of the federal government, all states and the Northern Territory, ALGA, ALGWA and LGMA.[4] This committee, chaired by ALGWA, will promote both the LGPMC strategy and the *50:50 Vision* program.

The 2010 *Year of Women in Local Government* sought to re-invigorate commitment to systematic cultural change in local government, while at the same time supporting women and building their capacity to thrive in leadership roles. The primary focus was to raise awareness of the benefits of increasing the participation of women, and the Year provided a clear focus and opportunity to build the business case for this to happen. Activities were coordinated by a broadly-based steering committee.

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[4] A representative of the Australian Services Union, which covers a large proportion of local government staff, has since been added to the committee

3.   The *Year of Women in Local Government*: Some key activities

Year of Women in Local Government website banner

Throughout 2010 numerous activities were carried out under the *Year of Women in Local Government* banner, and many councils undertook a variety of independent initiatives to address gender equity issues. State branches of ALGWA, local government associations, and the LGMA also conducted various networking, mentoring and training programs. An outline of key achievements for the year follows.

Ambassadors

The steering committee appointed as Ambassadors 21 outstanding women and men who were nominated by their councils as having made significant contributions to the advancement of women in local government. The 19 women and 2 men represented a variety of levels and positions including chief executives, elected members, departmental managers and officers, each with a unique story and view on the issue of the role and place of women in Australian local government. The Ambassadors came from each state and territory, acted as role models, hosted events and forums for women in local government, and promoted the Year both within their organisations and externally in their local communities.

Screenshot of *Year of Women in Local Government* 'Ambassadors' webpage*: <http://lgwomen2010.org.au/ambassadors>*

Management Challenge: Pre-challenge task

Each year the LGMA conducts a 'Management Challenge' that provides executive development for current and emerging local government leaders through real life problem solving and a hands-on approach to leadership development.

The 2010 Challenge attracted 128 teams across Australia and the pre-challenge task (an 'assignment') had the theme of women in local government. Specifically, teams were required to analyse their council's workforce data in order to identify gender barriers and issues, and were encouraged to interview their Mayors and chief executives about the issue. Once the data collection was finalised teams were asked to develop an action plan showing how their council would go about overcoming the particular issues and barriers that emerged. These action plans were then presented to their council's executive management teams.[5]

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[5] The full report on the Management Challenge Pre-Challenge Task can be read at <http://lgwomen2010.org.au/article/2010-pre-management-challenge-task-report-on-gender-equity-now-available-for-download>

Whilst the objectives of the pre-challenge task were modest, many teams not only undertook the data analysis and interviews with the chief executive and Mayor, they also conducted focus groups and staff surveys and interviewed senior women in their executive as well as female elected members. Moreover, while the pre-challenge task was designed as a conversation starter many councils took this a step further and responded to the team's action plan.

Australian Local Government Association – Women in politics

The Australian Local Government Association is the national voice of local government, representing 560 councils across the country. Its key activities are to represent local government on national bodies and ministerial councils, provide submissions to government and parliamentary inquiries, raise the profile and concerns of local government at the national level, and provide forums for local government to guide the development of national local government policies. In June 2010, ALGA released a booklet on *Women in Politics* at its National General Assembly. This booklet provides an overview of the state of women in local government across Australia including a range of profiles and success stories. Some of people the featured in these stories were also *Year of Women in Local Government* Ambassadors. [6]

Local Government Women's Charter Project

The Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition is a non-party political coalition of 8 local government, community and philanthropic organisations, women councillors and individual women in the state of Victoria. It was originally formed in 1996 to work towards the equal participation of women and men in local government. The coalition is resourcing and encouraging local governments to adopt the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and implement an action plan looking to 2012 and beyond. They also facilitate information sharing across local governments, coordinate and share resources related to women's participation, provide advice and support to nominated women's charter champions, and document actions taken by local government in Victoria to achieve gender equity, diversity and active participation/citizenship.

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[6] The booklet can be downloaded from the ALGA website <www.alga.asn.au>

4.   50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity

The fourth platform of the LGPMC strategy was to support the establishment of an awards and accreditation program that promotes gender equity and cultural change in local government. This had been proposed by ALGWA as part of its *50:50 Vision*. Accordingly, the federal government agreed to provide substantial funding to ALGWA to establish a new program *50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity*.

This 10 year program is the first national accreditation and awards program that encourages councils across Australia to address gender equity within their organisations and among their elected representatives. All councils regardless of their size, location or progress on gender equity can participate in this program. Councils can apply for accreditation (sequentially) at bronze, silver and gold levels, and will move along a path of commitment, reflection, policy development and cultural change. It is envisaged that identification of councils as *50:50 Vision* employers of choice will make it easier for them to attract and retain female councillors and managers. Councils' participation in the program is encouraged by local government ministers in all states and territories. The first round of bronze awards was presented to 22 councils from across the country at the ALGWA National Conference in November 2010.

Bronze award winners at the 2010 ALGWA National Conference.

A key feature of the program is the sharing of information among councils, that is, providing a platform for the development of case studies and sector wide discussion about gender equity issues and progress. The program highlights and supports the targets set by the LGPMC and promotes them in much of its material.

5.   2010 and Beyond

One year of activities to promote women in local government is not enough to bring about gender equity. All the partners involved in the initiatives described above have accepted that cultural and systemic change requires continued commitment and engagement. However the *Year of Women in Local Government* has done much to raise awareness and put gender equity on the agenda in many organisations. For instance, the Management Challenge has re-invigorated the conversation in many councils, and addition, 100 councils have joined the *Year of Women in Local Government* Partnership Program and contributed funds to the development and implementation of the Year's activities. Although the involvement of these councils is a good start to achieving change, there are still too many that have not actively engaged in the conversation and need encouragement. One way of achieving this is to continue awareness raising and education on the need for change and to promote good practice, using the new *Councils for Gender Equity* program as a platform. Also, an updated *50:50 Vision* strategy

document is being prepared, and the LGPMC national steering committee will be strengthened with the appointment of more people who played leading roles in the Year.

Thus the focus on the importance of increased women's participation in local government is stronger than ever; governments are engaged, there have been widespread re-affirmations of support, and the groundwork has been laid for a decade-long effort to achieve – and hopefully exceed – specific targets. Significant progress has been made.

Websites and Useful Links

- Year of Women in Local Government: www.lgwomen2010.org.au
- 50:50 Vision Councils for Gender Equity: www.5050vision.com.au
- Australian Local Government Women's Association: www.algwa.net.au
- Australian Local Government Association: www.alga.asn.au
- Local Government Managers Association: www.lgma.org.au

Chelmsford Borough Council: A designated International Safe Community

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1.   Introduction

This article provides some background to the Safe Communities concept and sets out the criteria to be satisfied as an International Safe Community (ISC). It concludes with reflections about Chelmsford Borough Council's responsibilities as a Demonstration Site within the UK, and how Council has contributed within an International Network.

There are currently over 200 communities across the world that have been designated as International Safe Communities by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and in June 2010, the Chelmsford Borough Council became the first local authority area to achieve this recognition in the UK. International Safe Communities is a World Health Organisation initiative that recognises safety as a 'universal concern and a responsibility for all'. [1] It is an approach to community safety that encourages greater cooperation and collaboration between a range of non-government organisations, the business sector and local and government agencies. In order to be designated as an ISC, communities are required to meet six criteria developed by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety. [2] The ISC

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[1] Manifesto for Safe Communities. Safety – A Universal Concern and Responsibility for All. Adopted in Stockholm 20 September 1989. <www.phs.ki.se/csp/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>.
[2] Based at the Karolinska Institute for Social Medicine in Stockholm, Sweden.

accreditation process provides support for communities and indicates a level of achievement by an organisation within the field of community safety.

2.   Defining a safe community

The Safe Communities concept emerged from the first World Conference on Accident and Injury Prevention held in Stockholm in September 1989, accompanied by a Manifesto for the international Safe Communities movement.[3] Many people and organisations worldwide invest energy and resources into the goals of achieving safe communities. The concept acknowledges that no single approach to injury prevention and safety promotion can be as effective as a collaborative approach between local organisations and the local community. Furthermore it recognises that the leading role is played by the community itself. The Safe Community initiative differs in comparison to other injury prevention programs because the leading role is played by the community itself. The term Safe Community implies that the community aspires to safety in a structured approach.[4]

Any community that can document a systematic approach to defining local injury prevention and safety issues, a collaborative process to address them, and a commitment to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts are eligible to be designated as a Safe Community.[5]

3.   Chelmsford's Designation

Chelmsford Council's designation as the first Safe Community in the UK provides recognition to a number of activities delivered by its own community safety program, the Safer Chelmsford Partnership. These include:

- **Chelmsford Street Pastors:** An inter-denominational Church response to urban problems, engaging with people on the streets to offer care and listen. It was pioneered in London in 2003 and has seen some remarkable results. Working out of a base at Chelmsford Cathedral, Chelmsford Street Pastors (inter-dominational Church response) have 86 volunteers where two or three prayer team members

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[3] Ibid.
[4] WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion website viewed November 2010 <http://www.phs.ki.se/csp/who_introduction_en.htm>.
[5] Following Lidkoping (Sweden) becoming the first Safe Community in 1989, many communities have been formally designated Safe Communities with populations ranging from 1,000 (Northcott, Australia) to over 2 million in Dallas, USA.

support a street-based team each Friday and Saturday evening patrolling between 10pm and 4am. In their first year of operation, anti-social behaviour in the town centre fell by 30 per cent. They helped around 2,000 people and have contributed greatly to the safety of residents and visitors enjoying Chelmsford's nighttime economy.

- **Chelmsford Publink and Behave or Be Banned (B.O.B.B.) scheme:** A partnership forged between licensed premises in Chelmsford town centre, Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex Police covering thirty four licensed premises. In its first full year of operation the partnership led to 118 police interventions for a variety of offences involving drugs and alcohol. Potential troublemakers can be dealt with quickly, and a successful 'Behave or Be Banned' mechanism ensures that known unwanted patrons are excluded from all participating venues between three months and three years, depending on the severity of their anti-social behaviour. The length of each ban is decided between the licensees, Essex Police and the Borough Council.

- **Community Wheels:** A project funded through partnership grants received by the Essex Casualty Reduction Board from the Department of Transport in 2007. It is an integral part of Chelmsford's strategy to reduce the number of what is termed 'killed and seriously injured' (KSI) casualties, and enables the Chelmsford Road Safety Officer to engage with local communities and groups with specific accident problems. In addition, a 'Community Wheels' vehicle is equipped to target a variety of audiences in diverse locations to discuss specific local issues via audiovisual education resources and a driving simulator, along with response measurement and hazard perception equipment. It was also designed to provide access for disabled visitors. Some campaigns from this Safer Chelmsford Partnership activity include discouraging young men from speeding; advice for older drivers on safe driving and provision of eye and speed reaction tests, and a car maintenance and driving project aimed at young people to discourage offending.

In the designation process, the WHO's 'Indicators for International Safe Communities' (figure 1) ensure that internationally Safe Community organizations share common goals and

objectives. Since January 2009, applicants have had to demonstrate their capacity to meet a minimal set of activities for each indicator.

Figure 1: Indicators for International Safe Communities

Indicators for International Safe Communities

Communities in a Safe Community Setting have:

- An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in the community
- Long-term sustainable programmes covering both genders and all ages, environments and situations
- Programmes that target high-risk groups and environments and programmes that promote safety for vulnerable groups
- Programmes that document the frequency and cause of injuries
- Evaluation measures to assess programmes, processes and effects of changes
- Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks

Source: Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion,
<www.phs.ki.se/csp/pdf/indicators_2004/indicators_for_international_safe_communities.pdf>

Receiving the WHO Safe Community award are (from left) Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC) Community Safety Manager Spencer Clarke; Chelmsford District Commander, Chief Inspector Joe Wrigley, CBC Cabinet Member for Safer Communities Cllr Ian Grundy; WHO senior adviser Bo Henricson and CBC Director of Safer Communities Averil Price.

4.   Chelmsford as a Demonstration Site

Chelmsford Council acknowledges that the WHO designation is the *beginning* of the ongoing process of becoming a safe community. Council's Safer Chelmsford Partnership has embraced its designation as a platform for future achievements, and a way to objectively recognise past successes and acknowledge Council's future work in this area. As such, Council views itself as a demonstration site that can facilitate and support other communities within the UK along the pathway to designation,[6] and is continually seeking opportunities to

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[6] Discussions are underway with the Partnership Development Unit at the Home Office to raise the profile of the International Safe Communities movement within the UK with Chelmsford as a flagship authority.

share what we have learned about promoting safety in our Borough with existing and potential Network members.[7]

The Safe Community Network recognises the fundamental role played by the community itself, an entity that is larger than any of its parts. This concept fits well with the UK's Coalition Government's 'Big Society' agenda to empower communities: '...we need to create… neighbourhoods who are in charge of their own destiny, who feel if they club together and get involved they can shape the world around them'.[8] High on the agenda for consideration is also the potential to create a Certifying Centre within the UK that can take the lead in overseeing future designations of other communities. Chelmsford Council's involvement in the Network helps to raise the profile of its community programs locally which increases public confidence and provides reassurance to local residents. It also enables local partnerships to gain international recognition for good practice and to share their experiences and knowledge with others internationally. The application itself provides partners with a useful reference document detailing their work and identifying priorities for the future.

5.   Conclusions

Chelmsford intends to play its part in exploring how we can continue developing and renewing the Safe Community concept and practice. As a Demonstration Site, Chelmsford is keen to share experiences and help other areas in the UK to involve their communities in promoting safety and preventing injuries in their localities. With the Big Society agenda focused on giving communities more powers and encouraging people to take an active role in their communities, this programme provides an excellent framework for priorities to be developed locally and shared internationally.

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[7] Further lessons will emerge from the 20th International Conference on Safe Communities in Falun, Dalarna September 2011.
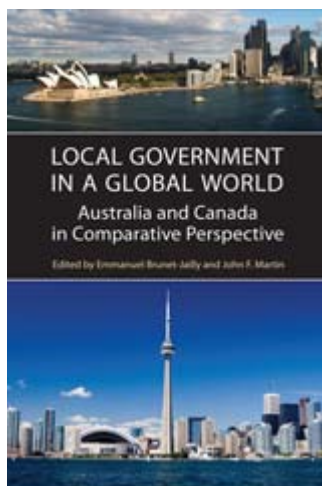[8] Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister David Cameron on the Big Society, 19 July 2010 <www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts>.

Book Review: Local Government in a Global World: Australia and Canada in Comparative Perspective

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BOOK REVIEW: Local Government in a Global World: Australia and Canada in Comparative Perspective

Edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and John F. Martin (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada, 2010)

This book compares reform trends in Australia and Canada's local government systems over the past two decades, with attention to the impact of globalization on local governments, their bureaucracies, and local democratic accountability.[1] Local governments in Australia and Canada show striking resemblances in relation to history, development, and contemporary issues. This reflects that in both countries, local governments remain an instrument of the states and provinces.

The exploration of the connections between globalization and local government is timely given the importance of international influences on the economic, social and

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[1] The impetus for the book followed from an Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) sponsored conference on municipal performance and measurement practices featuring experts from Canada and Australia. The IPAC commissioned the publication as part of its series on public management and governance.

environmental challenges facing governments. For the local governments discussed in the book, and for many others, economic and fiscal constraints have reduced the sector's ability to meet community expectations while also responding to growing competitiveness across jurisdictions. These pressures have highlighted the benefits of encouraging regional and local differentiation, and giving prominence to 'place' in policy and management designs and practices.

The phrase 'glocalization' reflects the trend in which the local communities are becoming more influenced by global trends, while at the same time seeking to differentiate their regions and localities. Is this phenomenon a sign of an overloaded policy agenda which seeks to simultaneously reap the benefits of globalization while also furthering regional and local distinctiveness? Such issues deserve more attention by both academics and practitioners and more widespread debate about the appropriate balance between these competing pressures.

Both Australia and Canada have experienced increasing rates of urbanization over recent years and employ diverse policy and management practices in metropolitan and urban as opposed to rural areas. Canada's population of over thirty-two million is organised into ten provinces, three territories and 3,700 municipalities. Australian's population of over twenty-one million has six states and two territories, but only 600 local councils. The smaller number is the result of rationalisation in some states and territories including, most recently, in Victoria and Queensland. An important difference relates to the wider range of services provided by Canadian governments, and accounts for the fact that local government revenues are 10% of GDP in Canada but only 6% in Australia. In the two countries federal and state/provincial governments make up 15-20% of revenues.

Canada and Australia make interesting comparisons and share many similarities, but differences also exist. This relates, in particular, to the fact that local governments are part of a federal system, and the way they operate on a day-to-day basis is governed by legislation set at the state or provincial levels. Australian local councils have never offered the wide range of functions carried out by municipalities in other Anglo-based nations. Primary responsibility for policing, health, public housing and education in Australia has always been the responsibility of state governments from the country's inception in the nineteenth century until after the Second World War, when municipalities became pre-occupied with physical infrastructure requirements such as

building roads, bridges, sewerage systems etc. From the 1970s, the sector's profile shifted to the development of facilities for communities.

In both countries, state and provincial governments dominate, on a day-to-day basis, how local governments operate. Sources of funding for local government consist of property-based funding, local fees and charges, and revenue sharing with higher-level governments. Canadian communities benefit from access to a local goods and services tax. In Australia, a goods and service tax is levied by the federal government and the proceeds are distributed to state governments, though transfers to local government are made by both Commonwealth and state governments.

The pattern of local government reform is by no means consistent across jurisdictions, and strategies are sometimes adopted which involve different policy and management approaches in urban, as opposed to rural, areas. While there are some signs of changes, which support a strengthening of local government and community governance, other measures appear to give attention to gaining higher levels of performance and accountability of local government. In both countries, there is sometimes reluctance to decentralise or devolve functions and funding to local government units. Tight fiscal climates can lead to unfunded mandates for/to local government, a phenomena known as 'cost-shifting' in Australia, and 'downloading' in Canada.

This reflects the current nature of intergovernmental relationships in both countries, and may also provide the explanation as to why there appears to be somewhat limited evidence that local communities have influenced and adapted to globalization *per se*. While there has been substantial reform in both countries, the specific drivers of this are often unclear, and change is often underpinned by particular ideologies; for example, New Public Management approaches which have been adopted in certain Australian jurisdictions.

Editors Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and John Martin provide a sound rationale for their selection of Australia and Canada as the basis for comparative analysis. They consider the phenomena of globalization, drawing on relevant literature and identify the linkages and impacts on policy and practices in local governments. The analysis and discussion of reform and globalization influences draws on contemporary literature, and is organised into four themes: citizen participation and governance in local decisions; the

restructuring and reforms of local governments; the usage of performance measures and management systems in the administration of local governments and; the relations of local governments with higher level governments. Each theme is treated in a set of paired chapters which consider individual country experiences coupled with cross-country comparisons. In the concluding chapter, the editors draw together the discussion of country experiences in the context of the four identified themes and provide many interesting insights.

Chris Aulich (Chapters 2) and Susan Phillips (chapter 3) explore aspects of community engagement and governance in Australia and Canada respectively. Participatory governance is at an early stage in both countries and, despite various attempts at reform – including modernisation, there appears limited change in the power nexus between state and local governments, and no new functions have been introduced in Australia and the evidence to support stronger participatory democracy is weak.

The Canadian experience in this regard is more complex and there appears to be the emergence of participatory governance in large metropolitan jurisdictions in Canada. The authors cite evidence that New Public Management has influenced the design features of reforms in Australia, but with much less emphasis in Canada.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Neil Marshall and Andrew Sancton explore patterns of restructuring and reform in Australia and Canada. In Chapter 6 Louise Kloot and John Martin compare theory and practice in Australian local government performance management, and offer a discussion and analysis of trends, competing views and current and future challenges. In Chapter 7, similar issues are addressed by Carol Agocs and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly in the Canadian context. While the authors have adopted different methodological approaches to the topics, they reach similar conclusions with respect to the nature of future challenges relating to local governments.

In Chapters 8 and 9 Graham Sansom and Catherine Graham review the literature and discuss issues and questions which underpin debates about intergovernmental relations in Australia and Canada. The authors suggest that the two countries are noticeably different in their approaches. For example, Australian local governments seem to be involved in many formal policy processes relating to national and regional policy issues. This contrasts with Canada where there is more limited engagement in policy-making at the

provincial and federal levels. The countries also differ in that policy settings are more uniform across municipalities in Australia, whereas in Canada the largest municipalities seem to be set apart.

In the final chapter the editors discuss the key drivers and influences on policy and management practices within the local government sector. They revisit research questions and report on international literature and on policy and management trends, and comment on the importance of global (as opposed to the national and local) influences on local government reforms. The magnitude and influence of globalizing trends on local governments in both countries has been less than anticipated by the editors, though the result reflects of the dominance of national and regional policy settings on local government practices.

Local Government in a Global World is very accessible to practitioners and academic audiences. A distinctive and valued feature of the book is its specific attention to local government trends and the emphasis given to a local government perspective on roles and relationships with state/provincial and federal levels of government.

The discussion of various theories surrounding governance and reform trends in the two countries offers useful insights on specific country experiences, as well as broader trends and developments in the sector.

The editors and authors provide valuable perspectives for those seeking more effective ways to enhance the contribution of local governments to the sustainable development of communities. Moreover, the growing influence of 'place' in policy and management practices suggests untapped potential for local governments to make an enhanced contribution to achieving desired outcomes at federal and state/provincial levels, as well within local communities.

Book Review: Local Government and Decentralization in Ghana

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Book Review: *Local Government and Decentralization in Ghana*
Kwamena Ahwoi (Unimax Macmillan, Accra, Ghana, 2010, pp.282)

The author of this volume, Kwamena Ahwoi, has no doubt benefited in the writing of this book from the insights acquired as a Minister of Local Government in Ghana for over 12 years (he is presently a staff member of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration). Kwamena Ahwoi was the Minister who piloted the Local Government Act 1993 and other important legislation related to local government such as the District Assemblies Common Fund Act 1993, and the National Development Planning (System) Act 1994. This book therefore is both an insider's view and an academic account.

The book is organized in four parts. It begins with a theoretical framework where the author correctly emphasizes that decentralization and devolution are closely aligned, whereby actual authority over and responsibility for resources are ceded to local governments. Effective decentralization does not occur without devolution. Delegation, de-concentration and privatization do not result in effective decentralization. In the second part a history of local government in Ghana and decentralization efforts undertaken since independence is presented. The third part explains the operation of local government as provided in the 1992 constitution, and in the final section, the author discusses how some of the mistakes – past and present – could be tackled to strengthen local government and decentralization today.

Thus, the book covers several crucial aspects of local government and decentralization in Ghana. This includes detailed accounts of the present structure of local government at different levels such as administrative decentralization, decentralized planning, and fiscal decentralization. Ahwoi highlights major problems confronted by local government in Ghana, discusses the prospects for decentralization and puts forward his proposals for reform.

The problems confronted in the process of decentralization and strengthening local government are familiar and confront all African countries. For instance, at the beginning of his concluding chapter he writes that "many of the problems that confront local government and decentralization efforts in Africa generally have fortunately been overcome in Ghana's programme for local government reform and decentralization implementation" (p. 241). He continues: "Nevertheless, they bear recapping because they could easily recur and because some of them linger on in the form of problems or near problems occasioned by the reform programme" (p. 241). Notwithstanding this conclusion, the following problems in Ghana deserve serious attention for the potentially worthwhile lessons for other African countries engaged in strengthening decentralization and local government.

1. *Vague Local Government Laws:* Laws on local government and decentralization have often been criticized as being vague, unclear and uncertain. The organizational structures are diffused and the role relationships and lines of authority are ill defined. Consequently, officials lack sufficient understanding of local government reforms and of the roles expected of councillors and the district bureaucrats.

2. *Insufficient Preparatory Groundwork for Reforms:* Central government reformers often do not correctly assess the functional capacity of local authorities to which functions are to be transferred. Local authorities may not be ready or capable to manage such functions, or the functions are transferred to the local authority but they are performed or managed ineffectively. Furthermore, stakeholders are often not involved in the design and structure of the reforms. As a result, when they are introduced such reforms look alien or appear as foreign impositions,which makes their acceptability and implementation difficult. Worse, there is often inadequate or no training to prepare stakeholders for the reforms.

3. *Large-scale transfer of functions:* Often there is a single transfer of large-scale responsibilities and powers to unprepared decentralized units. The potential for improving outcomes with transfer of functions would increase if they are transferred incrementally, according to capacity, or by selective decentralization in different stages or areas. Issues of costs, benefits and local context should also be considered.

4. *Lack of Trained and Experienced Personnel:* Local governments are unable to attract skilled manpower because of a poor image, difficulties associated with training the human resource pool, and inadequate training facilities.

5. *Inadequate Financial Resources:* In Ghana, local government does not receive an adequate share of national resources. Central government controls the lion's share leaving local government with a minimal amount. Elastic and easily paid taxes such as customs duties, excise duties, income tax and value-added tax are appropriated by the central government. This leaves the more difficult 'inelastic' and regressive taxes for local governments to collect such as property rates, basic rates (poll tax), and market rolls. This tendency results in over-dependence of local government on central government grants, which further strengthens the central government's stranglehold control over local affairs.

6. *Corruption and other Financial Malpractice:* Corruption at both central and local government levels is a major concern in Africa. Incidences of corruption in local government arise when more resources are released to local governments than there are functions to perform or undertake. In such situations, excess resources are simply dissipated through corruption and other financial malpractice. Another result of mis-matched allocations of functions to local government is inefficiency when there are *not enough* resources to perform functions. Annual reports of the Auditor General on the accounts of District Assemblies are replete with numerous instances of financial malpractice and corruption, such as payments in millions to companies for contracted work not completed, overpayments, payments without records, embezzlement, misappropriation, irregular procurements, tax irregularities and violations of financial rules, regulations and instructions.

7. *Bureaucratic Obscurantism:* African countries are faced with the problem of a lack of bureaucratic will to decentralize. African central bureaucrats have a paternalistic, centralist orientation and are thus reluctant to cede their power.

8. *Apathy:* Citizens do not take much interest in the work of local governments; many do not even know what they do. Local government election statistics reveal a much lower voter turn-out compared to central government elections.

9. [1]

Having observed, however, that many problems related to development of local government and decentralization have been resolved in Ghana – or are in the process of being resolved – Ahwoi's view is that the prospects of local government in Ghana are "very bright indeed" (p. 251). He identifies a number of proposals for further reform that in his view could help in meeting some outstanding challenges in Ghana. Some of these are highlighted:

- Central government must be committed to decentralized planning systems so that the programmes and projects of District Assemblies are truly reflected in national development plans.

- The constitutional ban on chiefs taking part in active party politics must be reviewed.

- Sanctions must be applied to those who breach the law on the non-partisanship of District Assembly elections because those are breaches of the constitution.

- Issues of district boundaries demarcation, the configuration of districts, the naming of districts, and the selection of district capitals should be addressed in consultation with and through the active involvement of chiefs, opinion leaders and those people affected by such changes.

- A future revision of the Local Government Service Act should properly define the roles and relationships between the Ministry of Local Government, the Local Government Service (appointed officials) and the Local Government Service Council.

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[1] The election statistics for local government elections in 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006 were 29.3%, 41.6%, 33.1% and 42.6 % respectively. The comparative turnout figures for the Presidential elections for the same years was 50.2% (1992), 77.9% (1996), 61.7% (2000), 60.4 % (2000) and 85.1 % (2004).

Some of the material on organizational arrangements and statutory provisions devised in Ghana for promoting decentralization and strengthening local government may be of value as lessons for other countries. One such organizational innovation is the District Assemblies' Common Fund established by the Constitution of Ghana as an instrument for promoting fiscal decentralization – an essential prerequisite for strengthening the meaningful autonomy of local government.

Article 252 of the constitution of Ghana provides that the Parliament has to allocate not less than 5% of the total revenue of Ghana among District Assemblies, to be distributed in quarterly installments. This is done on the basis of a formula to be approved by Parliament and to be administered by a District Assemblies' Common Fund Administrator. The formula for the distribution of the Common Fund, as developed by the Administrator over the years, uses five main factors as inputs:

- *Equality:* Every Assembly irrespective of size or population is allocated a fair amount of the Fund;

- *Population Density:* The greater the population density of a district the more of the Fund the Assembly receives.

- *Service Pressure:* The greater the population of a district the more of the Fund the Assembly receives, reflecting the greater absolute demands on services provided by the Assembly.

- *Development Status:* The more developed a district, the less of the Fund the Assembly receives. The development status of the district is measured by the number of schools, the ratio of teachers to pupils per class, the number of health facilities and ratio of doctors per head of population, the availability of electricity, telecommunications and postal services, and the presence of banking and other financial institutions.

- *Incentive:* An increase in locally mobilized revenues in real terms relative to a given base-year results in an increased allocation, whilst no increase or a decrease results in a zero percent allocation.

Once developed, the Common Fund Formula is submitted to Cabinet by the Minister of Local Government and subsequently to Parliament for approval.[2] Once approved and passed on the floor of the House by resolution, the Minister of Local Government then formulates guidelines on the categories of projects on which the Fund must be expended.

These practices adopted in Ghana promote decentralization in so far as the District Assemblies receive a certain percentage of central revenue as a right. However, the authority vested in the Minister of Local Government for the formulation of Guidelines for the utilization of Funds is a significant provision that strengthens central authority and maintains centralization. Between 1999 and 2007, as much as between 41% and 50% of the Common Fund was transferred as 'tied grants' determined by the Minister of Local Government. Also, the Parliament has allocated 6% of the Fund for use by Members of Parliament as an 'MP's Constituency Development Fund' and retains 4% of the Fund for central government agencies. This instrument for fiscal decentralization therefore does not strengthen the autonomy of local government in reality as much as the constitutional provision suggests.

Some of Ahwoi's other observations in the book should also be highlighted as these reflect the insight of an ex-Minister of Local Government. Ahwoi is indeed correct when he emphasizes that decentralization is a political process which seeks to promote more realistic programmes, better coordination and participatory democracy. He also recognizes the need for a strong central government for promoting decentralization, and is of the view that local resource utilization in unitary states works best when there is strong centre to coordinate the local governments. Further, he emphasizes that decentralized governance requires a strong national civil service and strong local government administration(s).

This book is a worthwhile addition to the existing academic literature on decentralization and local government in Africa. Although it deals exclusively with Ghana, it is of relevance to students, scholars and practitioners outside that country.

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[2] The convention that has developed in Ghana's parliament is for the formula to be considered by a Parliamentary Committee and, upon agreement, passed on the floor of the House by resolution.