

## Urban and Regional Planning Systems: A component of mainstreaming fire and emergency management across policy sectors

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## Urban and Regional Planning

- Urban and regional growth, within the context of risk and uncertainty → exposing more people to risk
- Planning as prevention and adaptation – type and location of urban development;
- Rural/urban connection, cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary
- Importance of ‘spatial dimension’

## Planning for extreme weather events



The Age 29 Jan 2009

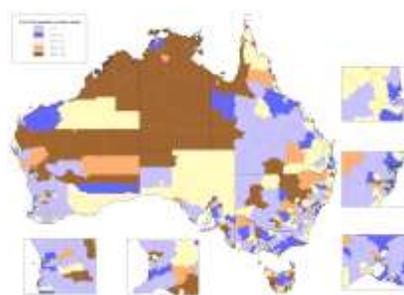


Courier Mail Jan 2011



The Age 29 November 2007

## The socio- economic dimension



Compiled and kindly provided by the Department of Regional Australia 2012

## Project design

### Research:

- Identification key research themes
- Comprehensive literature review
- Case studies & report

### Engagement:

- National roundtable of key stakeholders
- Engagement and communication on options for mainstreaming fire and emergency management across planning systems
- Discussion papers, conference papers and journal articles

### Teaching

- Education module on planning and bushfire risk, with broader application for emergency management in the context of climate change

## Update on project

- Extensive literature review completed and journal submitted with national and international presentation; fire note drafted
- Focus group method developed
- Case studies identified and agreed with end users
- National round table to be held with national planning conference in Canberra April 2012

## 'planning turn' in bushfire inquiries - 1980s and 90s

- Australian bushfire inquiry reports outline critical role for spatial planning; analysis of 16 major bushfire inquiry reports from 1939 to 2011
- The regional scale can link climate change adaptation and disaster risk management and social equity to build community resilience;
- Collaborative planning processes can provide the platform for exploring shared responsibility and sustainability;
- Spatial planning well placed to progress policy integration of bushfire risk and emergency management
- Critical importance of engagement, participation, dialogue and collaboration

## Proposed guiding principles for planning our cities

Some guiding principles for planning, decision-making and investment in our cities include:	
<b>ADAPTABILITY</b>	Our cities need to be adaptable to changes in technology, environment, economic conditions and demographics.
<b>RESILIENCE</b>	Our cities need to be resilient to perturbations as result of disasters, the effects of climate change and global socio-economic processes.
<b>EQUITY</b>	Our cities should support the equitable distribution of access to opportunities such as education, jobs and housing.
<b>INNOVATION</b>	The planning, design, construction and management of our cities requires creative ideas and solutions to meet the current and future challenges.
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	Policies and programs need to be integrated across the different levels of government, and within government, across portfolios that influence or are challenged by cities, markets and community processes and issues respectively.
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	Our cities and the social and economic infrastructure that underpins them should be planned and managed to maximise their efficiency.
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	Investments in our cities should be sustainable to return maximum benefits to communities and residents.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	For the quality of governance to be fit for the future, planning and investment should be directed to the most honest level of government that has sufficient scope and authority to successfully govern.

Our Cities Report, Australian Government, 2010, p17)

## Initial findings from review

- 1939 Victoria:
  - recognise the need to mainstream bushfire risk management ...including the planning sector
  - "townships have been allowed to be encroached upon by scrub" Stretton 1939
- 1967 Tasmania
  - Expansion of urban edge a major factor
  - Major bushfires could enter far into the suburbs

Sullivan, K and B Norman. (forthcoming)

*Spatial planning, risk and resilience: the urban edge and the Australian bush in a changing climate*

## Initial findings from review

- 1977 Victoria:
  - managing urban growth and modelling different risk scenarios – population projections, demographics and settlement patterns
- 1984 House of Representatives and Victoria (following Ash Wednesday)
  - 'Land use management which incorporates fire protection measures could significantly reduce impact of bushfires and should be given higher priority' (HoR 1984)
  - Settlement location and design; comprehensive planning and development controls to reduce bushfire risk
- 1994 NSW, repeated above

## Initial findings from review

- 2002 NSW
  - Inconsistent bushfire protection measures within local council planning instruments
- 2004 COAG report
  - Increasing *length* of the urban perimeter
  - Increasing complexity of urban bushland interface compounded by a convoluted pattern of subdivision
- 2009 Victorian report
  - Planning a major focus again!
  - Concept of retreat and resettlement strategies introduced
  - Balancing biodiversity and bushfire risk in the planning system

## Initial findings from review

- 2011 WA
  - 'recognition should be given to the changes in climate that might require a new approach to prevention against bushfires'
  - '...governments at the state and local level [must] act upon the reality of climate change and reflect this reality in town planning and building approvals'
- In other words:

***Since 1939 there has been a consistent recommendation for better integration of land use planning and bushfire management***

As Jim said yesterday – that's your job Barbara!

## Mixed messages: planning for risk



(Beach in Shire of Eurobodalla 2012)



(Coastal development in Byron Bay 2010)

## Planning for risk : the human cost



<http://www.smh.com.au/national/victoria-bushfires-2009>

## Australian Capital Region Current RDA regional plans



## Next steps: 2012

Selected case studies informed by focus groups

- Batemans Bay (NSW) – growing coastal town
- Mallacoota (Vic) – isolated village
- Canberra (ACT) – new urban growth area
- Katherine (NT) – rural and remote

## Focus group design

- Small roundtable of key decision makers related to planning
- critical questions over 2 hour period with approximately 12 people to identify issues and opportunities
- Mirrors concurrent process examining 'planning for risk and uncertainty in the SE coast Australia (NCCARF)- synergies in research

## Possible focus questions (feedback welcome today)

1. What are the emerging issues in relation to bushfire risk and land use planning in your region?
2. What do you consider is 'leading practice' in planning for bushfire risk in this 'place'?
3. To what extent is your organisation planning for bushfire risk in the context of climate change? How?
4. What are the key challenges and opportunities for bushfire planning and implementation? Who is responsible?
5. What types of information would be most useful to you in supporting your strategies and approaches to incorporating bushfire management into planning systems?
6. What would you like to see coming out of this research that could assist you in implementing change?

## Next steps 2013

- National Roundtable of Key Stakeholders – hosted with the national planning conference 2013 in Canberra (10 years after Canberra fires)
- Education module following active discussion with Melbourne University yesterday!!
- Questions??