

New approaches to learning for facilitating resilience in the built environment

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Human activities have been altering the earth's environment at a rapid pace since industrialisation. Many scientists documenting this change believe it is significant enough for a new geological epoch to have been entered into – the Anthropocene^{1,2}. The driving forces for these changes, are factors which urban planners and environmental managers have influence towards, including: land use change, population growth, urbanisation, industrialisation, and terraforming cities². Hence there is an opportunity for our professions to positively influence these changes, albeit under challenging, uncertain and complex conditions. Globally, these changes, combined with other factors including climate change, are resulting in the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters³, with increasing loss and damage due to these⁴. It has been acknowledged that traditional approaches to disaster management have had limited ability to affect these processes⁵, hence a new approach has been sought.

Approaching disaster management through a resilience lens

Resilience is a concept defined and utilised in many disciplines. For disaster management, the principle of resilience has been changing the way it is approached. Cutter and colleagues⁶ define resilience as: *'the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event, adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to re-organize, change, and learn in response to a threat (p.599)*.

The International Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030⁷ (which Australia has endorsed), seeks to reduce disaster risk and prevent new risks. The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach acknowledges the societal focus needed to integrate knowledge and action across many areas that might otherwise have been disparate. It seeks to address the diverse factors that can contribute to improved outcomes. Disaster Risk Management (DRM) includes indicators of social and ecological resilience, alongside the DRR assessment framework. By incorporating ideas of social and ecological resilience, the risk management lens moves from the traditional 'bounce back' and 'command and control' approach towards emphasising process.

Experiential learning to facilitate the resilience of built environments

A resilience approach to disaster management, and urban management more broadly, is a new paradigm – a new way of thinking and implementing. Urban planners, designers, architects, engineers, and others working in the built environment context may not have the knowledge, skills and practical experience to feel confident about this paradigm shift. Education scholars have advocated that resilience

requires a new approach to education^{8,9}. It is this need that our research sought to address, facilitated through a University of Melbourne Teaching and Learning Initiatives Grant.

In a joint collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the University of Manchester (UK), we have been piloting an Australian adaptation of Joe Ravetz's Synergistic toolkit^{10,11} which is a four-part process:

1. Mapping city systems to identify unseen gaps, vulnerabilities and pressure points
2. Exploring possible futures and risks, beyond short term horizons
3. Developing new models for resilience, based on shared learning and collective intelligence
4. Identifying the pathways/roadmaps which can lead towards these new models.

An invitation-based workshop and symposium was held in Melbourne's Docklands on the 27-28 April 2017. Forty professionals from various built environment disciplines participated, engaging with the first two components of the process. The symposium began with key note speakers including Professor Kate Auty (Commissioner for Sustainability in the ACT), John Schauble (Director of Emergency Management Resilience Victoria) Dr Aysin Dedekorkut-Howes (Griffith University), and Sheridan Blunt (Loc Environment and Place). The workshop, facilitated by Professor Joe Ravetz, then began work on part one of the process. A graphic facilitator (SketchVideo) was engaged to record key messages.

The Southbank precinct was used as a case study on the morning of day two, to catalyse experiential and reflexive thinking. Participants walked along the Yarra at Southbank and down Clarendon Street, then back across to the Docklands. Employees of Melbourne Water discussed the realities and challenges of flood and water management, including the consideration of future sea level rise. Back at the Docklands, Melbourne City Council's Kate Vinot (Director of City Strategy and Place) and Toby Kent (Chief Resilience Officer) discussed the Council's perspective of risk and resilience into the future. The case study emersion, and contact with professionals involved are critical elements of the approach. This approach to thinking and addressing resilience will be adopted in full for a new subject to be offered at the University of Melbourne in 2018. As part of this process we are developing a 'Living Repository' to act as an archive of case studies and learning outcomes for professionals and citizens interested in resilience in the built environment¹².

We are conducting a survey to benchmark resilience skills, knowledge and challenges faced by Australian built environment practitioners. We invite you to participate in an online survey. The survey can be found at www.surveymonkey.com/r/riskandresilience. More information about the survey is available on page one of the survey, or from Dr Anna Hurlimann at anna.hurlimann@unimelb.edu.au. We hope to provide an update of the project's progress in a future issue of *Planning News*.

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References:

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10. Professor Joe Ravetz is from the Collaboratory for Urban Resilience and Energy: <http://www.mui.manchester.ac.uk/cure/>. Information about the Synergistic Toolkit can be found at: www.urban3.net
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12. The University of Melbourne website for this project can be found at: <https://msd.unimelb.edu.au/experiential-adaptive-learning-tools-for-a-resilient-built-environment>

Demystifying Planning Panels

Most planners will get the opportunity to present to Planning Panels or VCAT at some time during their career. Two upcoming PLANET courses will give the opportunity to take a behind the scenes look at what makes Planning Panels tick and develop some core skills for presenting to panels.

The first half-day session 'Demystifying Planning Panels' is aimed at planners, lawyers and consultants presenting to Planning Panels for the first time. Participants will hear directly from current Senior Panel Members about the role of Planning Panels in the planning system, what panels look at when considering matters, and how to prepare for a Panel hearing. Panel members will share some secrets about what constitutes a good written submission and how to go about making a verbal presentation to a panel. Participants will get the opportunity to be involved in a mock directions hearing and discuss a few 'do's and don'ts'.

The second session, 'Presenting to Planning Panels', presents more advanced 'panel craft' skills. Participants will get some tips on how to decide if you need an advocate or an expert witness, and how to brief them properly. In this session, the Senior Panel Members will be joined by experienced barrister Emily Porter to talk about how to present and cross examine

expert witnesses. A special guest chair and two guest expert witnesses will then help demonstrate some hands-on skills in a mock panel hearing. Participants will also get the opportunity to practice some hearing skills and try their hand at cross-examination.

The courses are convened by Trevor McCullough, Senior Panel Member at Planning Panels Victoria: "The two sessions are designed to complement each other, so we expect most people will enrol for both, but they can also stand alone. We want to work through some core skills and some 'theory', but we also want to have some interactive 'live fire' exercises with mock hearings, including demonstrating what can go wrong. The sessions should assist those attending panel hearings for the first time, as well as aspiring advocates and expert witnesses."

Presenters will include: Sarah Carlisle, Brett Davis, Lester Townsend, Trevor McCullough and Emily Porter. The sessions are set down for:

- Session 1: Demystifying Planning Panels**
– Tuesday 1 August – 9.30am to 1.30pm
- Session 2: Presenting to Planning Panels**
– Tuesday 29 August – 1.30pm to 5.30pm

Registration and course details are available online at www.planning.org.au/vic Places are limited, so register early to avoid missing out.



PIA's Rural and Regional Conference

Last year we held our inaugural Rural and Regional conference in Stanthorpe with great success, as planners from all around the nation came together to discuss the issues facing the profession in Australia's smaller communities. Building on last year's objectives of showcasing and promoting rural and regional planning, this year will also provide access to strong professional development content that is not always easy to access in smaller communities.



So, save the date 4-6 October and book your flights (best prices available now) as we gather from all around Australia at the most iconic meeting place of all – Alice Springs. Program and Registrations opening soon. If you are very passionate about rural and regional planning and would love to be involved in the program committee, please get in touch.