

Paradox and Innovation in local climate change adaptation

Some stories from Australia

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Earlier work

- Australian responses to CVC (Byrne et al 2009; Steele et al 2012)
 - Path dependent but piecemeal
 - Little acknowledgement of unevenness of impacts/vulnerabilities
 - Benefits tending to flow to wealthy property owners
 - Climate-just cities?
- SEQ climate change action plans, 2011 (MacCallum et al 2014)
 - Technocratic and managerial
 - Setting aside diversity and engagement
 - Importance of Federal policy and consultants
- Metropolitan plans, 2011 (MacCallum et al 2011)
 - Climate change embedded in environment/sustainability
 - Risk v resilience
 - Adaptation focus = the coast

- Shift to certainty
- Challenge/opportunity
- Personal choices
- Segregation of environmental and social concerns
- Undifferentiated community
- Planning to plan
- Reassuring manageability

This project

- National audit of LGs' adaptation strategies
 - Desktop search
 - Online survey
- 8 LGs from 4 metropolitan regions
 - Selected as 'promising'
 - Close analysis of published strategies
 - Interviews
- Desktop search for community initiatives
- 8 community initiatives
 - Selected for variety and social purpose
 - Desktop
 - Interviews
 - Direct observation
- 12 focus groups
 - LG and State government
 - NGOs
 - For-profit

Marrickville	2015
Blacktown	2011
Darebin	2008
Whitehorse	2011
Fremantle	2011
Stirling	2013
Redland	2011
Sunshine Coast	2010/14

Nature Conservation Trust
Climate Action Now Wingecarribee

Elwood Flood Action Group
Transition Towns Maroondah

Green Cross Australia
Gold Coast & Hinterland
Environment Council (GECKO)

Environment House
Ecoburbia

Each of us has to develop this very deep well of self-reliance. But in order to do that we have to be connected to the social fabric around us. That is the conundrum of how we get through a change in climate. We have to take personal responsibility and develop the capacities to adapt and be vulnerable, and understand shock, and mourn, but at the same time be optimistic and positive, and prepared, and there for each other. You know what I mean?

(QNG2)

Risk

- Is technocratic ...
- Is conservative ...

... originally they had said we want to base it on better data, research But it ended up just being, "what do you think?"

(WLG1a)

... that was our best failure! OMG, that failure led to the insights ... to be the right expression of it.

(QNG2)

Space - time

- Is bounded and linear ...

Yeah – that’s the XXX Alliance. And that rivalry is used to help stretch us. They might work on something that we haven’t worked on - we might work on something that they haven’t worked on. We borrow from each other.

(VLG1)

... the barrier is because it’s such a long term vision, that maybe there’s no urgency to get on and get this done, change the way we do things now rather than in ten years’ time.

(NLG2a)

Politics

- Is inconsistent ...
- Is unspeakable ...

One individual reacted, “I don’t want to talk about climate change”, but when I asked them about their experience of heat, they were happy to talk about that.

(NLG2a)

Energy

- Is a mitigation issue ...

So we realised – this will actually be a good adaptation strategy. We're comfortable now with saying this is not a maladaptation strategy. This is actually a complementary strategy.

(VLG1)

Adaptation's probably more relevant to climate justice in a lot of ways

(WNG2/2012)

What about spatial planning?

- Time consuming and difficult nature of statutory change
- At local scale, little scope for innovation
- Difficulties balancing adaptation with more central goals of urban regeneration and infill
- Tension between mitigation aims and adaptation?
- Communicative energies often taken up with arguing for contentious proposals
- Politicisation of operational areas of councils vs depoliticisation of strategic discourse

Direction

I direct council to amend its draft planning scheme to remove any assumption about a theoretical projected sea level rise due to climate change from all and any provision of the scheme, including strategic framework, zones and precincts, overlay assessment tables, codes and policies.

Reasons for the direction

1. This direction is necessary to give effect to the guiding principles and state interests articulated in the State Planning Policy (SPP). The guiding principles are central to the interpretation of policies about matters of state interest.
2. The SPP requires council to reflect and balance state interests in planning schemes. The key relevant state interests to be reflected and balanced in regard to coastal development in the Moreton Bay region include:
 - a. liveable communities
 - b. housing supply and diversity
 - c. development and construction
 - d. coastal environment
 - e. natural hazards, risk and resilience.
3. I am satisfied that the most appropriate way for council to reflect and balance these state interests is by basing the planning scheme on the state wide coastal mapping that will remove the “one size fits all” approach that incorporates a mandatory 0.8 metre addition to historical data. I am satisfied that the most appropriate basis for council’s planning scheme is that all mandatory elements of the scheme must reflect only proven historical data when dealing with coastal hazards such as storm tide inundation and erosion control areas.

Thank you.