

CELEBRATING PLANNERS: CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

8/11/10

PLANNING FACT SHEET

Monday 8th November marks the international celebration of the massive contribution of urban and regional planners to creating better places for people to live, work and play.

World Town Planning Day highlights the important role of planners in preparing for the future to create good outcomes for communities within the built and natural environment, whilst looking to address in collaboration with others, the 'wicked problems' facing society.

Good planning outcomes ensure a sustainable urban environment is created for current and future generations. With the population of Australia predicted to reach around 36 million by 2050, planners will play a crucial role in meeting the demand for housing, services and infrastructure. In addition, planners are addressing a range of pressing issues including climate change, peak oil, housing affordability, population health, and the security of our food, water and energy supply.

Planners help to create communities that offer better choice for where and how people live, work and play. As a highly urbanised nation, 75% of Australia's population lives in cities of more than 100,000 people. This strong focus on cities creates an important role for planners in improving the welfare of people and communities by creating more convenient equitable, healthy, efficient, and attractive places in which to live - often within higher density environments. As cities and towns continue to grow in terms of size and population, there is increasing demand for planners to manage these changes.

A key role of planners is to assist the community, governments and private sector envision the direction their community wants to grow, creating places of value for current and future generations, as well as challenging contemporary norms of urban settlement. It is a challenging undertaking, but good planning can improve the overall health and wellbeing of the community, economy and environment.

The benefits of good planning for the community can include:

- safe and walkable neighbourhoods
- a shorter travel time to work
- enhanced interface between urban development and the environment
- optimisation of land use
- affordable housing choices
- neighbourhoods with quality local services
- interesting and lively parks and public spaces
- better choices of jobs, education and recreation opportunities.

Generally good planning within our communities goes unnoticed, but it is evident when no planning or ineffective planning is happening, with results such as traffic congestion, housing shortages and land degradation.

Working within complex political environments, planners provide advice and direction to guide decision making, helping to provide a balanced view to the often conflicting positions within the community and business environments. On many other occasions, planners are decision-makers in their own right, making judgements that affect the lives of present and future generations.

Sometimes referred to as Urban and Regional or Town Planners; planners are highly skilled professionals that work across all tiers of government, business, academia and the community. With specialist university qualifications, planners are trained to understand all

CELEBRATING PLANNERS: CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

8/11/10

PLANNING FACT SHEET

the elements that make up our cities, towns and regions and are constantly managing change in our complex built, rural and natural environment.

Planners specialise in developing strategies and designing the communities in which we live, work and play. Balancing the built and natural environment, community needs, cultural significance, and economic sustainability, planners aim to improve our quality of life and create cohesive communities. As well as devising policies to guide future development and assessing development proposals, planners work in areas as diverse as housing, energy, health, education, communications, leisure, tourism and transport. They create new and revitalise existing, public spaces, conserve places of heritage and enhance community value.

Planners are at the centre of complex debates about the places in which we live and specialise in areas of planning that include:

- Urban development
- Regional and rural planning
- Development assessment and land use
- Social and community based planning
- Urban design and place-making
- Environmental planning and natural resources management
- Transport planning
- Heritage and conservation
- Neighbourhood and urban renewal
- Infrastructure and services planning
- International development

Planning is a dynamic and ever changing field and a vital profession in shaping the communities in which we live. At present there is a high demand for planners in Australia and the career prospects are excellent for professionals with an interest in and commitment to the quality of our communities, our built and natural environment.

The Planning Institute of Australia is the peak body representing the planning profession within Australia, with over 4,500 Members. The Planning Institute of Australia is the voice of the profession, advocating good planning to government and industry on behalf of the community and the public interest.

For more information on the planning profession or the Planning Institute of Australia please visit www.planning.org.au