



Julia Zivanovic.

Building Communities

Meeting Expectations on Revitalisation Projects

As the sector is encouraged to define a sustainable operational model for the future, Local Governments also face the challenge of managing for present community aspirations. Market Research and Strategy consultant Julia Zivanovic shares here her insights from her work on community revitalisation projects with Councils and tourism groups, both in Western Australia and interstate, and overseas trends.

What led you to your involvement in revitalisation projects?

In my work and research a common theme for many Councils was the desire for revitalisation of the city, town or region and to create a place people would want to “live, work, invest and play”.

This is not unique to Australia and there is a wealth of materials available on different approaches undertaken around the world. A lot of work has been done on trying to understand what makes a successful city/town centre.

What are the key success factors for revitalisation?

The key characteristics and features that contribute to the success of a town centre include its ability to be a multi-purpose venue with an integrated mix of uses including residential, office, retail, recreation, entertainment, civic, institutional and cultural.

The belief is that a diverse mix of functions contributes to self-sufficiency, and creates a critical mass of people and activities that enhances competitiveness and viability.

There is always tension between providing for residents and for visitors. Current thinking is that the town centre must be an integral part of the community it serves. The view is that a successful centre will attract visitors in any event.

A town centre needs to be active for extended periods everyday, not just part of a day. The extended hours are generated through a mix of town centre residents, visitors, and out of hours retail and

entertainment offers.

Strong functional and physical integration with surrounding precincts can be vital, benefiting from catering to the needs of residents, workers and visitors. It also needs to provide good accessibility both in terms of public transport and parking.

Great centres have an atmosphere that people want to experience. There are many things that contribute to a centre’s ambience such as the physical environment (building heights, effective use of plazas and open spaces), the scale (meaning easy to walk around), the mix of facilities, and the ability to provide for social interaction.

Together it should generate a sense of place, community ownership and a strong point of difference from other centres.

Local Governments around the World have attempted a more holistic approach to revitalisation of city and town areas.

They have also recognised that it is a multi-disciplined approach utilising a range of professionals such as economic development, strategic planning, research, urban design, community development, town planning, and marketing.

A holistic approach involves considering aspects such as Physical issues such as planning, design, development, access, circulation, safety; Economic issues of activity mix, retail feasibility, business development; Social issues in safety, inclusiveness, antisocial behaviours; Community Development in being useable and liveable; Organised and planned activities that have a clear direction with identifying and prioritising actions in a structured way; Local Ownership to generate interest, enthusiasm and passion with the aim of securing long-term commitment and resources allocation; Sustainability through funding and resources generated for the long term; Equitable partnerships; and by having a participative and inclusive Consultation Processes using a wide range of frameworks and techniques.

What has been the experience of revitalisation for Australian Councils?

Just this year a review was undertaken of publicly available

documents to gain an understanding of the models and approaches used by Councils in Australia to the issue of city revitalisation and marketing.

In addition, a literature review on the topic generally yielded some general trends from Australia and overseas. Eleven Councils were eventually selected for analysis to assist understanding on the best approach to city revitalisation.

The capital cities of Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne were included, along with major non-capital cities.

Of the Councils analysed, only three did not have marketing of the CBD in house. Of the external entities, one had a wholly owned company established for destination marketing purposes both for

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the City and the region. It employs 42 FTE people plus 40 volunteers and has a budget of \$9.6 million. It is funded by membership fees, general rates and sponsorships. The other two external entities were incorporated associations set up for CBD promotion.

However, the future of this style of arrangement is uncertain and both Councils are involved in major revitalisation projects that may see marketing of the CBD absorbed into the entity created for the revitalisation strategy implementation, or back into Council.

A special rate/levy was only applied by three Councils to fund CBD marketing activities. The three Councils applying a special rate/levy were those with a CBD traders association.

This highlights the evolution of thinking in Local Government to the understanding that marketing alone cannot revitalise a complex product like a CBD area.

Therefore many Councils have moved from a purely marketing focus to one where the product and its development are the focus, supported by marketing initiatives.

In this context it is easier to see why marketing of the CBD may work better if it is housed within Council and is a part of the strategic thinking/planning in economic development and urban



planning areas.

The destination/regional approach has been taken by the larger Councils and often houses the tourism and convention bureaux.

Many of the Councils stated that they undertake an extensive program of high quality research and analysis. Even those who mainly undertake advertising activities recognise that quality research underpins good campaign strategy.

Apart from the four Councils taking a Destination approach, the other Councils either stick to a city promotions type of entity with a narrow focus on marketing the CBD (resources, of course, may preclude them from engaging on larger scale activities) and do not engage in major tourism initiatives, or they work closely with other bodies responsible for tourism.

For example, City of Perth works closely with Experience Perth and Tourism WA. Townsville Council is a major sponsor of “Townsville Enterprise” which looks after regional development, tourism and the convention bureau.

In Cairns the Council sponsors and works with “Advance Cairns” on regional development and with “Tourism far North Queensland” on tourism initiatives.

City of Swan in Western Australia works with the Swan Valley Tourism Council, Experience Perth and Tourism WA. It also funds and runs the Swan Valley & Eastern Region Visitors Centre.

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Show Your Colours Banners in the Terrace 2006



You said earlier that revitalisation was not just unique to Australia, what has been the experience overseas?

There are a number of models in Europe and the one most prevalent in the United Kingdom is Town Centre Management.

Town Centre Management started in England in the mid 1980's primarily in response to the challenge of out of town shopping centres drawing people away from the traditional town centres.

There was also an expanding traffic problem in the centre of towns that these shopping centres were capitalising upon. The third

aspect was that town centres were declining with the deterioration of public facilities and the increase of crime.

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Town Centre Managers have been created in over 250 towns and suburban centres throughout the United Kingdom.

It should be said that the primary reason for the establishment of Town Centre

Management was economic in that property values in the centre of the town were declining and major national brand retailers such as Marks and Spencer and Boots the Chemist were experiencing a decline in customers in their traditionally located high street stores.

There was, also, a national interest in that public transport was losing out and car use was increasing at a major rate contributing further to traffic problems and air pollution.

While Town Centre Management is flourishing in the United Kingdom, its focus is on the town centre or CBD.

It is about maintaining and improving the centre not just

composed of shops but churches, libraries, schools, parks, and recreation areas. In some respects this is similar to the Main Street programs in Australia but there is also an emphasis on the town centre being for everyone, rich and poor, young and old, black and white. Therefore the Town Centre Management, which started for primarily economic reasons, has now a strong emphasis on social and cultural objectives.

In the United States, the Town Centre Management concept is represented by Business Improvement Districts, (B.I.D), in the larger cities.

The name indicates that the emphasis is very much economic and criticism has been directed at the B.I.D's at being more interested in pushing the social problems away rather than embracing all the people in that community.

A similar concept is also in the UK called UKBids. BIDs are intended to deliver a wide range of improvements to local areas, from town centres and business parks to market towns.

Often improvements will focus on a particular street or area, rather than for example encompassing the whole of the town centre. A BID will be set up to improve existing services or facilities, or finance new initiatives that will enhance a local area.

These improvements will be beneficial to business and hence businesses will be prepared to pay an additional rate to invest in the proposed improvements.



Association CEO,
Ricky Burges.

Almost 100 entries were received for this year's Banners in the Terrace competition, held in conjunction with Local Government Week.

Secondary school students from Geraldton were the overall winner of the competition this year and along with the other four category winners will receive a special print run of their banner artwork as a postcard to distribute in their community.

The Association is also offering to produce postcards for all entrants in the 2006 Banners in the Terrace competition on a cost of production basis.

Now in its 14th year, the Banners in the Terrace competition continues to be supported by the Perth City Council in displaying the 96 entries along St George's and Adelaide Terraces during Local Government Week. The winning entries this year were:

- **Lower Primary – Shire of Harvey: Harvey Primary School**
- **Upper Primary – Shire of Westonia: Westonia Primary School**
- **Secondary School (and Overall Winner) – City of Geraldton: Geraldton Grammar School**
- **Community/Non Professional – Shire of Murchison: Murchison Arts Council**
- **Creative Artist/Professional – City of Melville: Chris Williamson**

The postcards of the winning entries will be featured in the Association's reception area for visitors.

Postcards supplied to the winners, or ordered by other entrants, can be used by the Council to promote their area by distributing them via their tourist centre or could be used by Council to recognise the community group that produced the banner. It is entirely at the discretion of each Council how they use the postcards and whether they give them away or charge a fee.

The postcards measure 21cm by 10cm and feature the banner artwork on one side with details of the respective Council and logo on the reverse. On a cost for production basis Councils have the option of

receiving 1500 postcards for \$897 (excl. GST) or up to three Councils can share a print run of 1500 postcards for a proportionate quantity and share of costs (500 postcards for each Council at a cost of \$299).

All Councils should by now have received back their Banners in the Terrace entries. Councils are reminded that the PVC tubes used to deliver the banners should be retained and used again next year as entries not supplied in the tubes will be returned unopened to the respective Councils. New entrants should contact the Association for details and dimensions of the tubes to facilitate their entry in the competition.

In addition, as the result of a combination of severe weather and canvas banners used by some entrants, a number of banners were torn and damaged by mould this year. In some cases, in particular those entries by school children, the damage has caused distress. Consequently only PVC banners will be accepted for entry for the 2007 Banners in the Terrace competition.

Councils who entered Banners in the Terrace this year who would like to order postcards or register an expression of interest in sharing the costs with other Councils, please contact the Association's Public Relations and Marketing Manager, Zac Donovan on 9213 2000.

Winners are gridders – Harvey Primary School students.

