



CONGRESS DIRECTION – IMPLEMENTATION:

FROM PLANS TO PLACES

Join Australian New Urbanists at our fourth National Congress, this time in Adelaide on 27-30 April 2010, for in-depth presentations, critical analyses and debate about what we have achieved, how we have failed, and how together we can and must do much better.

The theme of the 2010 Congress focuses on implementation, “From Plans to Places”. Although there are now many remarkable New Urban projects across Australia, we have not yet reached the critical mass to effect the necessary infrastructure and other improvements needed to make our cities sustainable and reduce carbon dependency. Join us at the Congress to help review national and international case studies and debate the pressing challenges for Australian cities.

WHAT IS AUSTRALIAN NEW URBANISM?

Australian New Urbanism is a rapidly growing and evolving practice, with strong values and on a steep learning curve. Its basic aim is to improve the urban sustainability, vitality and quality of life for existing Australian towns and cities, as well as for new urban extensions. New Urbanism advocates:

- a built environment which is diverse in use and population, scaled for the pedestrian, and capable of accommodating the automobile and public transport;
- a structure based on walkable neighbourhoods (400m radius/five minute walk) focused on fine-grained mixed-use town and neighbourhood centres with a variety of higher density housing in close proximity;
- a well-defined and high quality public realm which is responsive to site features and ecology, and supported by a distinctive architecture reflecting the climate and culture of the region; and
- a highly-interconnected street network, with traffic management to support pedestrians, cyclists and transit-users.

When applied at the regional, as well as the local scale, Australian New Urbanism provides a basis for developing liveable and responsive places and is a fundamental contribution to sustainable growth management and climate change.

WHY AND WHAT

In shaping our cities towards sustainable outcomes, New Urbanism’s task is all the more crucial and urgent. The needs are clear; we all need to raise our implementation game and capitalise on Australia’s current opportunities born of a resurgent economy.



National Congress of the Australian Council for New Urbanism

Australian New Urbanism and its allied movements seem to be generally on the right track, as far as urban design and planning are concerned. The NU design agenda effectively dovetails with other necessary measures (renewable energy, etc) to address the Climate Crisis. Of course, NU also strives to deliver prosperity and beauty.

However, many of us, who are implementing plans, know that we need to get much further and faster! With a few exceptions, we are generally only producing decent fragments that don't add up to enough impact on urban structure to affect necessary infrastructure, critical mass, and so forth. Or we are producing ambitious regional plans, which too often either do not get implemented well enough, or do not get implemented at all.

These shortcomings of New Urbanism are partly the fault of us practitioners. However, 'The System' in which all of us work is also a major impediment. 'The System' includes all components and players in the development process, including Regulation, Governance, Finance, Metrics, Private Development, The Market, Education, Design Processes and even how we think. So this Congress will analyse why, and how.

'The System' so often is impeding its own goals. And we will present and debate recommendations to reform all relevant components of 'The System'.

We acknowledge that Australian New Urbanism (and other allied movements) needs to work harder to earn more support from the key Australian leaders of urban development, in both the private and public sectors. There is no use in our just 'preaching to the converted'. Therefore, this Congress more than previous ones, is targeting a greater number and higher level of decision-makers, inviting them to directly participate.

So this fourth Australian Congress for New Urbanism will focus on all aspects of how we can improve the implementation of plans into exemplary places, at all urban scales and across Australia and New Zealand, and informed by perspectives from America and Europe.

APPROACH

Our Congress approach will rely on critical analyses and (probably heated) debate, by local and international urban designers, developers, and regulators. We will consider local, national and international case studies, and we will analyse in depth these projects' strengths and weaknesses in design, regulation, feasibility and implementation. Some projects will be relatively complete, so that we can evaluate their actual built outcomes. Others will be mid-way through design and/or implementation; presenters will share implementation challenges in these projects and their regulatory contexts, and expert panels and occasionally the audience will discuss ways to improve them before it's too late.



National Congress of the Australian Council for New Urbanism

INVITED KEY INTERNATIONAL AND AUSTRALIAN SPEAKERS

International

- Stef Polyzoides, architect and urbanist and co-founder of the Congress for New Urbanism in the US (www.mparchitects.com)
- Paul Murrain, urban designer, author and professor from London, with principal involvement in projects in the US, Australia, South Africa and across Europe (Google his name)
- Shelley Poticha (live presentation via satellite from Washington), former CEO of Reconnecting America and now Senior Urban Advisor to Housing and Urban Development in the Obama Administration Australian

Australian Speakers Include:

- Allannah MacTiernan, Former WA Planning and Infrastructure Minister
- Rob Adams, Director of Urban Design and Projects, City of Melbourne
- Tony Carey, CEO, Canberra Investment Corporation
- Fiona Roche, CEO, Adelaide Development Corporation
- Clive Alcock, Director and Urban Designer, Annand Alcock Urban Design, Sydney
- Wendy Morris, Director, Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd, Melbourne
- Evan Jones, National Planning Director, Brookfield Multiplex
- Professor Les Stein, Faculty of Law, Monash University
- Chip Kaufman, Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd, Melbourne
- Peter Richards, Deicke Richards Architects, Brisbane