# PLANNING INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA
# PLANNING CONGRESS 2015
## Melbourne, May 2015

## Conference Report
## By
## Max Hipkins, Mayor
## City of Nedlands, Western Australia

# PLANNING INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA
# PLANNING CONGRESS 2015
## Melbourne, May 2015

## Conference Report
## By
## Max Hipkins, Mayor
## City of Nedlands, Western Australia

## Introduction

The Planning Institute Australia's Congress 2015 was held in Melbourne 14 and 15 May, 2015, with one super session held jointly with the Australian Institute of Architects.  There were over 700 registered delegates.  After Victoria and New South Wales, Western Australia had the biggest contingent.  The largest WA representation was from the City of Swan, with eight elected member and staff representatives.

There was no particular conference theme.  The event revolved around several keynote speakers, most from disciplines related to planning, and four concurrent sessions.  Common messages were the importance of the arts and open space in place making and commercially successful development, providing alternative transport to the motor car (public transit, cycleways) and acknowledging variations in demographics and needs.

This report summarises presentations of the main keynote speakers.

## Keynote Presentations

<u>**14 May 2015**</u>

<u>Rob Adams, Director City design, City of Melbourne</u>

Cities are places of hope.  Dublin emphasised culture, Barcelona concentrated on the public realm, Bogota had a social emphasis (music, bikeways), Seoul reopened covered waterways, Melbourne in 1985 set a goal for a 24-hour city that looked like Melbourne.  What are the ingredients that make a good city – if you achieve them, you achieve the triple bottom line?
- Density – can be low rise
- Mixed use – taller the buildings, greater dead space at ground level
- High quality public realm – especially streets, where activity should be encouraged
- Local character – retain external street character with towers centrally located behind
- Connectivity – separate pedestrians, bikes and cars, each with their own network
- Acknowledge climate change – increase tree plantings in response to rising heat
- Preserve heritage – important to tell history
- Engage the public – allow communities to adapt their public spaces

<u>Sarah Horsfield – Director, URBIS, Melbourne</u>

There are changing global trends affecting developers:

- More mixed use – minimum of 3 uses (residential/hotel, office, retail, open space) is desirable, with no one use more than 60%
- Must respond to culture – people use space in different ways; deeper desire for face-to-face contact
- Technology will stimulate inner city redevelopment.  No longer is it about location, now about amenity eg dog parks to differentiate lifestyle, pools, lounges, gyms, libraries, events and activities.
- Property development is driven by demographics – young want to be downtown; desire for affordable green buildings; connection to nature with more open space and links to farming.

<u>Mitchell Silver – Director, Parks Department, New York City</u>

Planning for the future – what's next?  Some old issues, some new ones – population growth, jobs and the economy, climate change, affordable cities vs gentrification, equity and income inequality.  Planners are doctors of places, to make them healthy, to create new memories and experiences.  Planners are guardians of the future, managing growth and chang , to protect the public interest.  They have to deal with uncertainties about the future.  If we say no, we are saying yes to something else.  The new reality:

- People are older, more diverse, more disabled, more single mothers
- Households are smaller, more without children, more single person
- Six generations co-exist at any one time, each with different values and needs eg Generation Y (born 1982-1995) will volunteer but there must be a purpose.  Generations XYZ comprise 60% of Australia's population but will the Baby Boomers give up their ruling place in society?  The 21$^{st}$ century belongs to Generations XYZ.  Older populations like

public meetings, not XYZ.  XYZ love cities, excitement, change; they are hard to control; they think regulations outdated eg. success of Uber.

- Planners must make the economic case, with sociological input and evidence based decision making

**15 May 2015**

Larry Frank – Professor, University of British Columbia, Director UD4H

Build roads and you get road oriented development, build public transit and you get transit oriented development.  Health is the biggest cost to government. Driving makes you fat and unhealthy.  An ageing population needs easy access to facilities.  There is more physical activity in walkable cities.  Walkability can be measured (WALKSCORE) – highest in old cities.  Proximity of parks and coffee shops most predictive of seniors' walkability.  Every hour spent driving per day results in a 6% increase in obesity.  In mixed use areas people walk more.  If people live near a park they are 1.8 times more likely to walk; if in an area of connected streets, more likely to walk; if there are fewer cars in the household, more likely to walk.  Transit users on average walk 12-18 minutes more than car drivers per day, which represents 25% of required exercise.  Trucks should be located away from walkable areas.  Compact, walkable, transit oriented development has health benefits – it reduces diabetes, high blood pressure and cardio-vascular diseases.   Hugh savings in health costs are achievable with appropriate planning.

Andrew Dixon – Cultural Advisor, UK

Cities can be very like each other in a global world.  Culture and the arts start to define cities.  Andrew helps cities position themselves through arts and culture, by identifying what is the unique and distinctive story of each city.  Creative cities are not New York, London and Paris, but Kabul, Newcastle (UK), Melbourne and Caracas.  Artists and individuals make creative cities.  Newcastle didn't have any arts venues.  People missed corner stores, these were recreated by artists.  Angel of the North sculpture – 80% of the population were against it for many reasons; once built, 80% liked it.  A music centre was built on the river; it required a new bridge to get there; it resulted in ambitious events, festivals and stimulated artists.  Newcastle found its place.  Hull has colourful history and many assets but had lost industry and was written off.  With the help of artists, it bid for the UK City of Culture.  People told their stories and a video was made.  The day the city changed for ever – 25,000 people saw the YouTube video in four weeks.  Transformation can be people as well as place. Leave room for artists.  Find the narrative.  Step change vs gradual development – both can work.  Global connections are worthwhile.  Identify gateways eg which six people would represent the city?



*Angel of the North*