

Public open space planning in Western Australia

Presentation to PLA WA members
29 October 2009
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What we going to do today??

- ▶ Review the content of the current draft of the PLA WA discussion paper
- ▶ Clarify the **key issues**
- ▶ Ensure this discussion paper **reflects your input** as PLA WA members
- ▶ Demonstrate PLA WA is committed to finding **a way forward**
- ▶ **Prioritise recommended actions**

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How did we get here?

- ▶ Small lot development seminar in May 2009
- ▶ Council proposal to develop position paper
- ▶ Call for comment - July 2009
- ▶ Interviews and email contact with a small number of PLA WA members
- ▶ Early draft for comment
- ▶ Workshop 9 September 2009
- ▶ Consolidation of input
- ▶ Current draft

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PLA WA position

- ▶ **It is the position of Parks and Leisure Australia (WA Region) that local and state government policy and operational guidelines regarding the acquisition, allocation and quality of local, district and regional public open space must be examined and reviewed in light of current and future community expectations and changing environmental conditions.**

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PLA WA position

- ▶ **It is further proposed that state government agencies adopt a proactive position towards public open space provision and assist local government authorities to acquire and develop suitable lands as regional and district public open space.**

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Key issues

- ▶ Application of Liveable Neighbourhoods (LN) operational policy
- ▶ Developing POS policy and understanding of planning processes within local governments
- ▶ Challenges relating to bushland and regional open space policy
- ▶ Designing flexible, creative, adaptable, ecologically sustainable public open spaces
- ▶ Infrastructure management and maintenance costs

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10% of subdivisible land for public use

- ▶ Origin in Stephenson–Hepburn Plan 1955
- ▶ 10% rule entrenched in planning policy over five decades with little reference to changing social and environmental conditions
- ▶ POS expected to contribute to a range of community service and environmental functions
- ▶ How to meet changing demand??

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Application of Liveable Neighbourhoods (LN) operational policy

- ▶ LN operational policies include clear guidelines and assessment frameworks for context and site analysis
- ▶ Limited capacity in some LGAs to ensure adequate compliance with these assessment processes
- ▶ Focus on local and neighbourhood POS – not district or regional space

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Application of Liveable Neighbourhoods (LN) operational policy

- ▶ Specific design guidelines
 - parks be bound by roads
 - situated within 150 metres of all dwellings
 - = pocket parks = fragmentation and lack of connectivity
- ▶ Location of district open space between neighbourhoods
- ▶ Co-location of school ovals as POS
- ▶ Application for reduction to 8% (drainage + bushland + wetlands)
- ▶ Sub-regional planning works ...

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Developing POS policy and understanding of planning processes within local governments

- ▶ Local governments with clear policy on provision and design of public open space were seen to be most successful in negotiating optimal POS provisions within residential developments
- ▶ Whose interpretation of policy??
- ▶ Perception or reality that SAT decisions are developer-driven? Or do they comply with statutory requirements??

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Challenges relating to bushland and regional open space policy

- ▶ Incorporation of bushland and wetland areas, particularly areas designated as Bush Forever, into POS allocations presents new challenges
- ▶ Is Bush Forever POS or conservation reserve?
- ▶ Is land designated as regional open space in new planning strategies destined for residential development?
- ▶ No current mechanism for acquisition of regional open space ...

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Designing flexible, creative, adaptable, ecologically sustainable public open spaces

- ▶ POS allocation considered only as a regulatory requirement, not as an important ingredient in building vital, sustainable communities
- ▶ POS as a marketing tool?
- ▶ Apart from adoption of CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles, there is little scope within current planning policy to impose design guidelines

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Designing flexible, creative, adaptable, ecologically sustainable public open spaces

- ▶ Separation of responsibility?
 - **Strategic land use planning staff** responsible for local town planning schemes
 - **Planning officers** responsible for compliance with statutory frameworks, regulatory guidelines and policy
 - **Engineering staff** responsible for urban water management
 - **Natural resource management staff** responsible for bushland reserves and other significant local ecological features
 - **Community development and recreation services staff** responsible for provision and management of public facilities
 - **Horticulturalists and parks operational staff** responsible for maintenance of green (and other) infrastructure.

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Infrastructure management and maintenance costs

- ▶ Who pays for community infrastructure??
- ▶ Comparisons between existing and new developments = equity??
- ▶ Can communities access a spread of diverse, accessible community facilities located within local, district and regional open spaces?

- ▶ How do LGAs meet the cost of infrastructure provision and POS maintenance ...?

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The gap between hope and happening

- ▶ Good intentions ↔ functional outcomes
- ▶ Interpretation ↔ implementation
- ▶ Spatial plan ↔ public open space
- ▶ Can the gap be bridged?

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Recommended actions

- ▶ Increase understanding of public open space planning processes
- ▶ Instigate regional programs of public open space acquisition
- ▶ Develop effective local planning frameworks
- ▶ Review current state government policy relating to allocation of local, district and regional open space
- ▶ Encourage development of public open space policy and inter-sectoral planning by, and within, local government authorities
- ▶ Develop industry accepted terminology to describe public space, and support further research

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Increase understanding of public open space planning processes

- ▶ **PLA & DSR co-host a series of workshops and discussion forums with targeted stakeholder groups (planners, designers & developers):**
 - address key issues and specific concerns identified in this paper;
 - demonstrate inadequacies in current practice through case study examples;
 - generate greater understanding of the perspectives and expectations of various stakeholder groups;
 - develop understanding of the economic implications of POS provision for all stakeholders;
 - develop inter- and cross-sectoral dialogue and ongoing relationships; and
 - develop the capacity of local government operational staff to participate effectively in public open space planning processes.

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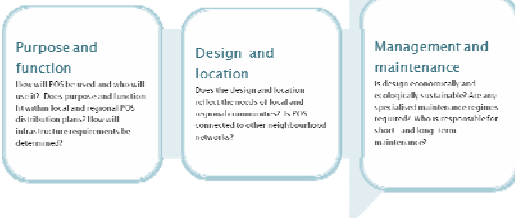
Instigate regional programs of public open space acquisition

- ▶ State government agencies, in collaboration with local governments and regional councils, develop and implement acquisition programs of land identified as suitable for POS

- ▶ Directions 2031 states that the “continued identification, acquisition and management of public open spaces” is supported and it is imperative that appropriate mechanisms for acquisition of suitable lands are developed and implemented

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Develop effective local planning frameworks



PDM Model for POS (planning, design and maintenance)
(adapted from a planning model developed by Syntex Environmental Pl.)

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Develop effective local planning frameworks

- ▶ LGAs develop district and regional open space distribution plans that map purpose, function and design of existing public and other open spaces
- ▶ Decisions regarding short and long-term responsibility for management and maintenance of POS be addressed in the initial stages of planning
- ▶ Design considerations take economic and ecological sustainability into account

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Review current state government policy relating to allocation of local, district and regional open space

- ▶ Encourage diversity and enable more flexible, adaptable and community-focused approaches to provision of public open space
- ▶ Review process utilise a collaborative inter-sectoral approach to develop policy, strategies and integrated sustainable design frameworks

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Encourage development of public open space policy and inter-sectoral planning by, and within, LGAs

- ▶ LGAs be provided with incentives and support to develop public open space policies and planning frameworks that meet the current and projected needs of local populations
- ▶ LGAs must assume responsibility for inter-sectoral planning and assessment of structure plans within their own organisations

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Develop industry accepted terminology to describe public space, and support further research

- ▶ Developing terminology and definitions that are accepted and understood across different disciplines is critical (DSR)
- ▶ DSR research agenda
- ▶ Research must consider economic implications of POS provision and maintenance

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What needs to happen now?

- ▶ Which actions are critical?
- ▶ What can be done NOW?
- ▶ How can PLA WA make it happen?
- ▶ **What can YOU do??**

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► Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

Barack Obama