



VANTAGE

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMEN'S PLANNING NETWORK

The Spring/Christmas edition of Vantage for 2005 focuses on interstate and overseas planning issues and developments. This edition starts with an update from one of the WPN's more recent past-presidents, Gabriel Hodgson, reporting on all the happenings in WA, specifically Perth.

A West Side Story

Greetings from the very sunny and summery city of Perth.

I've been living, working and breathing the fresh salty air of Fremantle for two years now and I am loving it!

Highlights have included:

- Parenting an adorable little boy, Finn (now 18 months old);
- Being pregnant with baby boy number two (due March 2006);
- Having close ties with adoring and 'happy to babysit' grandparents;
- A new kitchen;
- Regular beach swims;
- Holidays at Rottneest and in the South West;
- Working two days a week at the City of Perth as a statutory planner; and of course, enjoying it all with Dave.



Gabriel & Finn at Rottneest, 2005

And that sums up my life here in WA – it's all good. But I must admit, I do have some strong pangs for Melbourne even now. Melbourne has a pulse that you just can't recreate anywhere else in Australia. I miss the vitality, the food, the festivals, the trams, the shops, the bars, the coffee, the bike riding, the people, the streets, the ... yeah, I miss a lot of things. When we are DINKs again we'll be back!

At a recent State Planning Conference, Melbourne was all the rage – it was showcased as an example of a successfully planned city with vibrant streets at both day and night. The City of Perth also has a passion for revitalising street activity using Melbourne as a guiding vision. Aside from promoting activity at street level, WA's liquor licensing laws need a major revamp to help Perth get part of that Melbourne vibe – it seems that no city can be vibrant without hoards of bars and cafes. Hear, hear!

Planning in Perth is still a bit of a mystery to me. Despite having worked with the City of Perth for over six months now (both full and part-time), I am still at a loss on the appeals process for example. This is because we rarely have appeals. The statutory planning process seems to be much more subdued, full of negotiation and not to mention, compliant applicants. This might just be the City of Perth's experience but, while I miss the thrill of a looming VCAT hearing, it certainly makes my life at work much less stressful. I must also let you know that working at the City of Perth has been fantastic – the team is great, very supportive and professional, and I really enjoy the occasional tower development – bring on the big stuff! In this regard, I can strongly recommend a sea change to the West – there's a shortage of planners here too you know!

So it is with a smile on my face and with the warmest of regards that I wish you all a very merry Christmas.

Gabriel

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Participatory Approaches in Samoa

**This article has been adapted from a paper submitted for the Samoa National Environment Forum 2005. The full text will be available online at www.mnre.gov.ws in the near future.*

Community participation that involves listening to local knowledge makes sense - it allows decisions and plans to be made and undertaken by local communities who know their own environment intimately.

Samoa has a strong tradition of respecting local knowledge and allowing village fonos (councils) to undertake the role of a decentralised 'local' government. It has been recognised that local people, or at least the matai (village chiefs), are normally in the best position to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of their circumstances and problems.

Samoaan culture is based on the communal lands and title system where families can live on communal lands owned and managed by their forefathers (ADB 2001). Customary land remains the main source of wealth for Samoa representing family, identity, history and security and not surprisingly attachments to and within the village are strong. The Village Fono Act 1990 recognises traditional law for maintaining law and order within the village and allows for the enforcement of the preservation of the village environment including land use and planning of development (Jones et al 2002).



The Samoan Experience with Community Consultation

In Samoa, the village system appears to present a 'community' that is homogenous and cohesive, with close ties between families, the church and the village fono. This is a long-standing tradition that has helped to ensure the longevity of the Samoa culture (Macmillan 1998). The strong leadership of the village matai, the use of extensive discussion to reach consensus and extended family commitment cements the community group, and its leaders, as the main consultation audience.

This community based model can encounter difficulties as it can be difficult to reconcile the public interest against the family interest, and the strong respect for authority in Samoa can often lead to less democratic practice which tends to exclude the lowly ranked from consultation and decision making (Taule'alo 2000). Whilst Samoa has many women in powerful positions in government and commerce, as well as women with matai (chief) titles and advanced educational degrees, their traditional role, particularly in rural villages, has largely remained (Macmillan 1998). Unfortunately this has often led to the exclusion of women in community participation activities, together with young men and children.

Many consultation activities undertaken in Samoa have made efforts to involve the women's committee such as in the example outlined below.



Natalie at a village meeting, and enjoying the meeting lunch

Long time WPNer, Natalie Mitchell has ventured overseas this year to work at the Planning and Urban Management Agency in the Samoan Government as part of an AusAID volunteer program - 'Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development' (AYAD). She shares with us her experiences of community participation in Samoa (and if the pictures of lunch with lobster and fresh seafood are anything to go by, things are looking pretty good there!).

The Coastal Infrastructure Management Plan project

The CIM (Coastal Infrastructure Management) Plan project is undertaking extensive community consultation using participatory approaches to ensure that villages and districts themselves formulate and therefore 'own' the plans being prepared. Each village and district will have an historical knowledge of the effects of natural disasters in the area, and will also intimately know the location, state and use of any important infrastructure.

However the formality of Samoan village culture, with dominant matai leaders, has the potential to lead to a process whereby only the already powerful members of the village have a part in the discussions. The project team's attempt to respect local culture and undertake the consultation activities through the traditional village meeting format sometimes results in little involvement of village women, untitled men and youth. It has been found in participatory approach exercises elsewhere, that where marginalised groups are identified, the local political structure may obstruct their empowerment despite all opportunities presented by the project team (Gujit & Cornwall, 1995). However, some villages in Samoa are very encouraging of the involvement of the wider community as witnessed during recent field trips.

In Samoa, there are communities that ensure representatives of different demographics are a part of the consultation activity, even if only for a short time. At a recent village meeting for the CIM Plan



A village family in Samoa

project, a few women and a young man attended parts of the meeting. They did need to leave the meeting at different times in order to arrange and serve the food and drink to those of us in the meeting, however. Some other women and young men sat in a small fale behind the main one but it is unclear whether they were listening in or had the opportunity to actively participate in the process. At one point during the meeting, one of the women, one who had spent the most time in the meeting fale, took the map being used as part of the activity out of the fale, perhaps to show the others in the smaller fale. So while there was the formal village meeting with matai and a select few others, there did seem to be some opportunity for others in the village to be involved – or at least to know what was going on.

A representative of the women's committee will often attend a village meeting set up for the purposes of consultation on an environmental project. The CIM Plan project utilises a formal village meeting approach, followed by more informal 'walk through' of the area and efforts are also made to talk to the women of the village separately while this is occurring. Although the matai (chiefs) of the village work hard to represent the community as a whole, it is important that those who will be required to assist with the implementation of project outcomes are involved at the outset also. Meeting with the women in a more informal setting can result in important information being gained that may have been missed during the meeting or walk through with the male members of the village. Sometimes the information is simply an expansion or clarification of issues already raised but often there are points raised that are particularly relevant to the women, and children, of the village.



Young women participating in the meeting, in a 'fale'

Future Community Consultation in Samoa

A mixture of approaches may be appropriate in Samoa, not just formal village matai meetings, but also small group and one-on-one interviews, workshops and household surveys. There is a need to ensure that all members of a community are represented. This will require knowing the make up of the constituency and appropriate ways to reach the most marginalised members of the community. Ensuring that women are consulted appropriately and are empowered to contribute and take some ownership of the project is important, particularly if they are to be involved in the subsequent implementation of any plans. This may be difficult in some cases due to the presence of traditional cultural norms, so imaginative approaches will be required.



Vavau beach, Samoa



Village meeting, around the kava bowl

Conclusions and the Way Forward

To ensure appropriate participation and consultation we need to take advantage of the natural tendency for Samoans to work together and solve conflict by negotiation and unanimity. The traditional village fono system can indeed be utilised effectively during participatory action as an important focal point for all communities. A focus on changing the physical behaviour of people is required to ensure that environmental projects are effective. That is, there needs to be a change in day to day habits and not simply a raising of awareness.

Ultimately, environmental initiatives will be more successful and sustainable if the people affected by them are intimately involved in their analysis, design and implementation and feel a sense of ownership and obligation. This requires effective participation of all community members and the limited influence of outside 'facilitators' where appropriate.

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Planning in the Northern Territory

Jan Salmon, former WPN committee member has moved to Darwin and has been working there for the past 6 months or so. Jan provides an insight into the consolidation of the planning system in the Northern Territory, and comments on what's developing in Darwin.



Legislative and Statutory Framework

On 30 September this year the Northern Territory Government amended the Planning Act. This is part of a major overhaul of planning schemes in the NT. The most significant change is that it provides for a single integrated scheme which comprises land use objectives, development provisions and incorporated documents (assessment criteria and guidelines). Up until this time the land use objectives, development provisions and incorporated documents were separate statutory documents, including 21 Town Plans and 82 Control Plans covering Aboriginal Communities and a myriad of different zones, similar to the situation in Victoria prior to the introduction of the new format planning schemes.

The other important change that will flow from this amendment is that it will enable a new NT Planning Scheme to be introduced, which will apply to the whole of the Territory (apart from the Town of Jabiru which is subject to Commonwealth legislation). This will consolidate the different provisions, which apply to Darwin, Alice Springs and other regional areas into one planning scheme.

Development approval for town planning is the domain of the Northern Territory government with the decision making powers vested in the Minister and the Development Consent Authority. The Development Consent Authority is appointed by the Territory Government. Local Government plays a 'referral authority' role with regard to stormwater and drainage. The amended Act has not changed these arrangements.

Development

Residential development is occurring at a break neck speed in Darwin, possibly driven by the investment sector. Recently within Darwin's CBD there has been approval given for a 27 storey, 267 apartment building, of which 200 are serviced apartments, as well as a 33 storey apartment building.

Another key development is the Darwin City Waterfront project which is a \$1 billion development. This proposal comprises 25 hectares of under-utilised industrial waterfront land in the vicinity of the Port of Darwin. The Darwin Cove Consortium is the developer for the Waterfront Precinct, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government. The consortium involves three key projects partners.

- Darwin Convention and Exhibition Centre (DCEC) will have seating for 1500 people and 4000sqm of exhibition space, and is being developed by the Sitzer Barclay Mowlem Joint Venture under a Build Own Operate Transfer (B.O.O.T.) contract arrangement.
- Public Infrastructure including swimming areas, wave pool, amphitheatre and water gardens, sea wall, promenade and waterfront activities by Macmahon Contractors, which will be gifted to the Managing Authority.
- Residential apartments, a serviced apartment hotel, restaurants, cafés & retail space developed by the Toga Group for private sales and leasing arrangements. Stage 1 is currently underway.

Kirsty Sword-Gusmao and Timor-Leste

“It is both a privilege and an honour to be able to speak to large gatherings of people; to be able to use my voice to make heard the voices of women and children in my adopted homeland of Timor-Leste.

Here is an account of my personal journey: one intertwined with the Maubere people; how I exist in and across two cultures; a glimpse of life as the wife of a President, and my work with the Alola Foundation, an organisation I established to respond to the needs of women and children.

As Timor-Leste’s First Lady, and wife of the President, part of my role is to support the President and today I meet leaders from all around the world. The world I inhabit after the formal occasions are over is that of women and children and I use my voice to advocate and advance the interests of women and children. I feel compelled to speak out on their behalf because their needs are so great and because they are with me each and every day of my life.

Just to give you an idea of what I am talking about. Over half of all Timorese women are illiterate. Timor-Leste has one of the highest fertility rates in the world, 7.5 children per family, and also one of the highest rates of infant and maternal mortality; 12 per cent of our children do not make their fifth birthday. Approximately 46 per cent of children under five are malnourished.

Believe me as First Lady, I have very few physical or financial resources, but my voice is one of them. That is important, in life - whatever gift we have, and whatever situation we find ourselves in, we have a responsibility to use it for the common good.

For me activism has been a vocation. I didn’t so much choose it as it chose me, and it was in the form of feeling deeply the injustice of what was happening to our nearest neighbours - I was awakened by the plight of the East Timorese.

It has taken me on a journey that has enriched my life in ways never envisaged when I first started translating reports of human rights violations in East Timor back in my Uni days in the 1980s. Meeting with and listening to the small group of East Timorese who studied with me back then opened my eyes to a side of Indonesia I had been shielded from. I went from imagining it as a land of emerald green rice terraces to seeing oppression, fear, and a people weighed down by poverty and without the means to change their lot.

I was tremendously inspired by the Timorese and I decided to put the skills I did possess – in this case language – at their disposal, to help them with their cause. In June 1993, I smuggled seven young East Timorese men into the Swedish and Finnish Embassies in Jakarta. They were pursued for their pro-independence beliefs by the Indonesian military and feared for their lives.

My escapades brought my presence to the attention of East Timor’s charismatic independence leader, Xanana Gusmao. He was serving a 20-year prison sentence at Cipinang high security jail in East Jakarta, and we began exchanging smuggled letters. A romance of sorts blossomed and before long I found my fate inextricably linked to that of the small, stillborn nation of East Timor.

The months leading up to the historic vote for independence in 1999 were intense, culminating of course in the terrifying violence and destruction in September. The country Xanana returned to a month later was a smouldering ruin, his people scarred and traumatised. However, within months of returning to Timor-Leste and with the UN in charge, we had children back into school, even if in the open air and without books.

We have not done things by the book, as there isn’t one on how to reconstruct and reconcile a nation. Most importantly though, Timor’s government decided that it did not want to be both poor and indebted,

On the 30th of April 2005, Kirsty Sword Gusmao was in Melbourne to address the Loreto Federation Conference – “Being Alive in the Circle of Life” to promote what for her is a lifelong passion, her adopted homeland of Timor-Leste. Below is an abridged version of this speech..



having seen the impossibility of countries trying to extract themselves from the double trap of poverty and debt. Extraordinarily, but also to help it achieve its independence, the Government and the President have managed to build a good working relationship with our closest and most important neighbours, Indonesia and Australia.

So I have gone from being an activist to the First Lady of the world's youngest nation. I often comment that the job of First Lady does not come with a job description. Not only that, while there is no job per se, there is that title - First Lady. Nevertheless, for someone with only a title, I am incredibly busy, faced with an interminable succession of demands, both public and private.

In my role, even though I have no support from the public purse, the State has no qualms in making many demands on my Alola staff and me.

The Alola Foundation hosts all visitors that I receive in my capacity as First Lady and supports me in my public duties. Recently, Madam Kristiani Bambang Yudhoyono called on me at the Alola Foundation. We gave her an overview of our projects in the areas of education, economic empowerment and maternal and child health. It was a far cry from the opulence of the istana merdeka in Jakarta, but I do believe that we left a positive impression on Madam Bambang and that she forgave us of the dust, heat and mosquitoes that are permanent features of our office.

My life is one succession of complexities but there are the joys of simple things, like the smile of a woman

that I have been able to help, the laughter of my beautiful boys.

I believe in the fundamental importance of education. We understand in Timor-Leste the importance of the contributions of girls and women to society, and so the Alola Foundation, with the support of my alma mater, Melbourne University, grants scholarships to secondary school age girls across Timor-Leste. We strongly believe in the adage that “when you educate a woman you educate an entire village”.

So, I can say that mine is an interesting life, one I am most grateful for, and one with many experiences and opportunities awaiting me. My role as First Lady is a real privilege as well as a real frustration at times. There is no textbook, as there isn't for life, but I have embraced it in all its challenges, frustrations and opportunities.

As independent Timor-Leste's first First Lady, I hope that I do a good job, to demonstrate to my people, primarily the women and children, that I try to make a difference to their lives, that I have taken on the role of public service, willingly and without reservation. I am committed to the needs of the women and children using my role, my voice to make theirs heard in a way that demands a response, from all who hear.”

Kirsty Sword Gusmao

The Alola Foundation is working for the advancement of the women of East Timor and was established in 2001 to raise awareness of and campaign against the sexual and gender-based violence inflicted on women. Today the Foundation has grown to respond to many other needs of East Timorese women such as advocacy, economic empowerment, education and literacy, maternal and child health and humanitarian assistance.

Mrs. Kirsty Sword-Gusmão, fulfils the role expected of her by the people and government of East Timor in large part through the Alola Foundation.

The Alola Foundation is able to mobilize from amongst the international community much needed assistance for vulnerable groups within the East Timorese community, particularly women and children.

www.alolafoundation.org

For more, check out these web links

www.perth.wa.gov.au

For some insight into City of Perth major projects.

<http://www.ipe.nt.gov.au/>

Northern Territory Department of Planning and Infrastructure - "Working together for the sustainable development of the Territory"

www.ausaid.gov.au

To find out about volunteer opportunities for the Australian Government abroad.

www.lwpcf.org

The London Women and Planning Forum is an information network for planning officers, architects, academics, students and community and voluntary organisations involved with urban environment and gender equality issue.

www.rudi.net

An independent unbiased resource, the Resource for Urban Design Information aims to create a network of users who also contribute to the Resource. Materials include contributions from several countries including the US, Australia, Canada, Hungary, Colombia.

www.samoa.co.uk

To find out more about Samoa.

www.alolafoundation.com and **www.gov.east-timor.org** for more about Kirsty Sword-Gusmao and the new nation of Timor Leste.

Congratulations Virginia Jackson

Congratulations to long time WPN member Virginia Jackson, who has recently been made a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia

Virginia Jackson, is Director of Harlock Jackson who are urban planners. She is an urban policy analyst and town planner with experience working in state and local government and, since 1987, as a consultant to government, the private sector, community groups and individuals. She has been conducting research in urban management for the last six years including a review of town planning policies and regulations for their impact on pet ownership. She is also examining the extensive literature on regulatory compliance for its potential application to urban animal management.

Virginia was a RAPI Committee Member for two years during 1998-2000 and contributed greatly to the viability of Planning News.

Welcome to the newest McNaughton!

The newest McNaughton has arrived. Cathy, Geoff and Ross McNaughton welcomed baby Erin, born at 9 pm on Monday 26 September. She was about 2 weeks early. Birth weight was 3.2 kg, which is firmly in the "OK" zone. Aside from weight, the important measurement is 100 dB - Erin is plenty LOUD enough.

Ross likes the idea, in general, of having a sister. He seems very satisfied with the concept that he is "the biggest kid" in the family, and has declared himself 'in charge of the baby'.

Congratulations to Cathy and the family!



WPN's Annual General Meeting 2005



On 22nd September 2005 the WPN held it's Annual General Meeting at Acquam in North Melbourne.

We were served up a delicious three-course meal and heard reports from President Kellie Burns and Treasurer Lecki Ord, before the new committee was elected for the 2005-06 year. We welcomed many existing committee members to another year on the committee, and also gained a new member, Gilda Di Vincenzo whose first job is to get the website back in order (more on that in the next issue of Vantage).

The committee for 2005-06 is:

- Kellie Burns** (President)
- Melinda Wealands** (Vice President)
- Lecki Ord** (Treasurer)
- Natalia Walker**
- Shannon Lea**
- Denise Payne**
- Bron Hamilton**
- Gilda Di Vincenzo**

and of course, **Cindy Bedgood**, our Administrative support.

We look forward to a great year, with a real focus on our research project. The topic is currently being refined, but will deal with issues relating to the provision of affordable housing for women, particularly in light of the Melbourne 2030 housing debate.

No doubt the highlight of the AGM was our guest speaker, **Susan Brennan** who shared with us her experiences of her participation in a recent YWCA global forum, as well as her extensive experience with the YWCA including her work in redrafting their charter, and working with women all over the world. Susan spoke broadly about the 'Make Poverty History' campaign also, and the implication this has on living conditions for women in developing countries.

The 2005-06 committee is looking forward to a busy and exciting year ahead, so we encourage you all to contribute to the Network whenever and wherever possible!



Members and friends enjoying the AGM





The Women's Planning Network would like to wish you and your families a great Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season. Thankyou for your support over the past year, and we hope to see you all at our events in 2006.



Calendar of Upcoming Events 2006

January

We're all taking a well-earned break!

February

- Launch of our new website - details to be confirmed

March

- International Women's Day breakfast

March onwards.....

- lots of exciting events, including further progress and events dealing with our research project on affordable housing for women.

Keep an eye on our website and email updates for further details.....

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The SUMMER edition of VANTAGE will be out early in the new year, and will focus on housing and affordability. So if you have anything you would like to contribute, please drop Cindy a line at the WPN office. All contributions welcome!

WPN Membership

If you are not already, why not become a member?

Benefits of being a WPN member include:

- Discount rates to attend WPN events.
- Up to 40 % discount on professional development courses.
- Priority to attend PD courses.
- Vantage Newsletter.
- Updates/Bulletins sent by email.
- Networking opportunities.
- Eligible to vote at AGM.
- Entitled to join WPN general committee of management.
- Eligible for WPN Award nomination (dependant on fulfilling other selection criteria as set by Committee)
- Eligible to be nominated for representation on non/government boards/committees.

Memberships are valid for the financial year (1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006).

Membership Category

Full time students/concession card holders	\$33.00
Individual	\$75.00
Company: Less than 8 employees	\$150.00
Company: More than 8 employees	\$280.00

VANTAGE goes Green!

The WPN Committee have decided to move to being more environmentally friendly, and are trialing distributing VANTAGE via email this month. This still means you get the benefits of your membership, as the latest edition will not be available on the website until the next issue is released. If you do want a hard copy mailed to you, please contact Cindy in the office.

We'd also love your feedback on this idea - so email Cindy any comments on how we could do this better!