



Vantage

Women's Planning Network - September 2007 Update

Education without Borders 2007: United Arab Emirates



Me outside the Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, where the conference was held.

Hi my name is Melanie Hearne, I am a fourth year Town Planning Honours student at RMIT in Melbourne and a member of Australian Red Cross. I am going to share with you a marvelous event that the Women's Planning Network was a part of, and bring your attention to an amazing experience. In November 2006, I applied to attend Education Without Borders 2007, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Education Without Borders is an event held every two years where 1,000 international students from a wide range of disciplines are challenged to implement solutions to global issues. This year the conference included world renowned guest speakers, as well as cultural, social and travel events.

So what made me want to be apart of this amazing event? Initially the location was one aspect that caught my eye, however, once I read the conference program one of the topics really interested me and I thought 'I can answer this, and have a chance of attending this once in a lifetime experience'. The topic was 'show how aid can be sustained in times of natural disasters'. Immediately I linked two of my passions, town planning and assisting vulnerable people through the work of Australian Red Cross. I decided to write my 10 page essay with two case studies focusing on the relief efforts of the Planning Institute of Australia and Australian Red Cross after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The first case study I covered was the Planning Institute of Australia and their rebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka. It involved the timelines and series of projects that PIA and volunteers are working on now and will be in the future,



Just one of the many models on display showcasing future development.

which clearly demonstrates that in this instance aid is being sustained. My second case study was the Australian Red Cross joint program with the Canadian Red Cross to provide permanent solutions to waste management issues in the Maldives. Whilst writing my essay I received assistance from both the Planning Institute of Australia staff as well as Australian Red Cross workers. I was fortunate enough to be selected to attend, and to receive funding from RMIT University and the Women's Planning Network which covered my airfares. In total I was in the United Arab Emirates for one week and stayed in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The development currently underway in addition to the major projects already completed was mind blowing. In the UAE they face many different issues and surprisingly have extremely poor public transportation and terribly congested roads! Overall, the trip was amazing and unforgettable and certainly broadened my knowledge to other planning issues. The culture, the learning experiences and the friendships made were fantastic, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

For more information visit www.ewb2007.com



Masaab, Me and Khalifa enjoying the dessert evening where Placido Domingo entertained us!

Lovely Lyon

Lecki Ord shares her experience of contracting 'urban designitis' while on holiday....

Here we were, having a relaxing time in Lyon, soaking up the sun, drinking local wines and enjoying the French food, window shopping along the narrow streets. Gradually I became aware of the ease with which we were getting around, the zebra crossings at every street corner at the intersections, widened footpaths, pedestrian zones. I was taking photos of these features, as well as the new subway system, trams and trolley buses. Noticing the banks of free bicycles at every train stop, parking station and public square. Taking photos of tourist signage.

Oh my god, **Urban Designitis** - the inability to switch off from analysing the finer points of urban design.

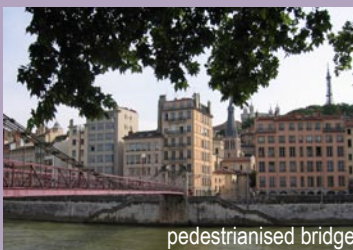
Once I had diagnosed this, I decided to be positive and make it a feature of our remaining week and collect material to write an article for Vantage.

Lyon is a city that doesn't loom large in the international tourist lexicon, however it is bustling with French tourists who like its central location, unique heritage, good food and wine, excellent fashion — from spectacles to shoes — and beautiful natural setting. The old city is located at the base of an escarpment and on a peninsula between the confluence of the Rhone and Saone rivers. It has been continuously occupied for more than 2,000 years, occupying a very strategic position between Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the rest of France and has always been an important trading and banking centre. There is, therefore, an wealth of Roman ruins, architecture, history, culture and museums to enjoy.

The planning authority seems to have taken livability to heart and we noticed:

- pedestrianisation of large areas of the Old Town and Presqu'île, within the UNESCO World Heritage area, defined by "rising" bollards which give card based access to taxis and local residents
- a new system of integrated underground and funicular trains, buses, trams and trolley buses, depending on the type of terrain newly paved squares incorporating underground parking stations
- newly paved pedestrian streets incorporating new subway lines beneath
- banks of "free" bicycles. These require a credit card swipe (not Australian though) and are free for the first half hour with a small charge for longer periods. Most people use them for less than the half hour and dock them back at another bike stand. No helmets are worn and I suspect they are mostly used in traffic minimised areas.
- height limit within the central (World Heritage) area
- limited colour palette for building facades (this might have been self regulating)
- many new pedestrian only bridges across the rivers
- newly planted trees in parks with notices about being the "lungs" of the city
- food and art markets along the riverbanks
- new children's playgrounds and entertainment spaces along the river banks

I can't find much about this on the web, perhaps a practicing urban designer needs to take a structured study tour?



pedestrianised bridge



rising bollards



pedestrian-friendly intersection



promenade with bicycles



tram stop



pedestrianised street

What Women Want In Real Estate

by Lisa Lowes
Senior Property Consultant
Thomson Real Estate, Carlton

It is obvious to real estate agents that women are the main decision-makers in purchasing a property. United States statistics have indicated that 90% of females are the decision-makers when it comes to purchasing the family home. This is an advantage I have as a female in the industry. Some male agents find it baffling when women say when they are looking at numerous homes that "it has to feel right". You have probably heard yourself saying this as you walk through properties and it is 100% correct. Decisions based on instinct in life are usually right. We are taught to trust our instinct and this applies to real estate. Sometimes it may be the oven that swings the woman or the kitchen or something simple that sways the mood to the house "feeling right".

However, there are a few basic rules in buying real estate. Real estate is two things: pricing, and supply and demand. When there is little stock on the market, this is a good time to sell as buyers are faced with less choice and buy what is there rather than being indecisive about what else is on the market. This makes the market stable and can increase prices in a local market. When there is a lot of stock on the market, this is a good time to buy based on the previous principle.

There is an old saying "Buy the worst house in the best street" and, with all old sayings, there is always truth in them. A little like our grandmothers' old wives' sayings, they were said often enough because some of them had proven truth in them. Also look for areas where a lot of young singles or couples are buying as they are the ones who will buy and sell and push the area up. These are usually the areas with street shopping strips with funky cafes popping up.

For single women like myself buying in the market place, don't be afraid to take a risk. Perhaps stay away from apartments with excessive body corporate fees as these can go up in price or have an unexpected levy which, without a second income, can be daunting. If you do buy an apartment, single women have traditionally not bought on the ground floor and recently I saw why when we had a peeping tom on the ground floor of the apartment block I live in looking in windows. I always thought that was a myth but sometimes it is a reality.

Safe real estate is always a period home or freestanding townhouse within 9kms of the CBD. Australia was slow in catching up to the worldwide trend of inner city living as we prized the quarter acre block until recent times. This trend will continue as we catch up to the rest of the world. An apartment in Rome will cost approximately two million dollars and, in central London, properties are only bought on leasehold not freehold. An apartment in Hackney, one of the least desirable but up-and-coming areas of London, facing a railway line and looking like a housing commission flat, will cost around 130,000 pounds.

If you are a mother looking to advise your children on property, tell them to buy as soon as they have a set income. No-one teaches women at school how to buy property. Even if they don't want a mortgage at a young age, they can buy the property as an investment, rent it out and reap the tax benefits. It is better to start with an apartment and achieve the equity in a couple of years which then can be a house deposit. It is daunting to start to save for a house deposit and, in the process, they can be priced out of the market. It is better to start somewhere with an apartment. I started at twenty-four, doubled my money in four years and really learnt how to budget when I had a mortgage. You might find your children are spenders – it is a part of the x and y generation culture but, once I had a mortgage, I went overseas four times. It teaches you to balance the budget and, if they feel that is unachievable, advise them to buy an investment property first and let the tenant help to pay off the mortgage.

Real estate is the traditional bricks and mortar investment and I think women are suited to investing in real estate because of its security.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to call.



WPN Rising Star Scholarship

Applications are open to all current second and third year male and female undergraduate students for the Women's Planning Network Rising Star Scholarship 2008. The scholarship is sponsored by Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, an award winning consultancy offering services in urban planning, urban design and landscape architecture in Australia and overseas.

The scholarship provides financial assistance for the HECS fees of a student intending to undertake third or fourth year of an undergraduate town planning course at a tertiary education institution in Victoria. The maximum amount of the scholarship is approximately \$5,000.

The scholarship encourages:

- sound research and analytical skills
- creative thought and initiative in seeking relevant information
- practical application of planning theory
- appropriate sourcing of a range of relevant reference material relevant to the topic.

The scholarship aims to enhance awareness about gender issues and the ways such issues can be addressed in the planning and development of our neighbourhoods, towns, cities or regions in Victoria. This may include issues associated with factors such as ethnicity, socially or economically disadvantaged communities or other groups who are faced with issues which impact on their lifestyle and opportunities to access jobs, housing services and facilities.

Entry Requirements:

A student entering for the WPN Rising Star scholarship will be required to prepare and submit a 1500 to 2000 word essay on a rural or urban issue in Victoria which he or she considers is important and provide a gender perspective and may include grounds of difference in analysing this issue.

Applications are due by **5pm on Friday 30 November 2007** at the WPN office.

Further details can be found on the Scholarship Flyer, which can be accessed from the WPN website www.wpn.org.au.



Annual Dinner and AGM 2007

Join us for dinner on Wednesday 26th September, catch up with your friends and colleagues, hear about our achievements of the past year, and what is in store for 2008! You can even nominate for the committee and join in the fun!

Where: **3 Degrees - QV centre, Melbourne.**
When: **Wednesday 26th September 2007**
6:30pm for dinner

\$30 for members, \$35 for non-members for 2 course meal.
Drinks at bar prices.

Further details on our website! RSVP to Jode at the office by Thursday 20th September.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Calendar of Events

What you have to look forward to over the coming months!

September 26 Annual General Meeting

October 17 Planning Week Breakfast
- Launch of the Research !

December Christmas drinks

Articles and contributions

At WPN we are always interested in receiving contributions to Vantage from our members, and feedback on our events.

If you would like to:

- contribute an article for Vantage;
 - let us know about a great event idea; or
 - advise us of any news from our members,
- please either give Jode a call at the office on 9347 4622 or email her at admin@wpn.org.au. We'd love to hear from you!