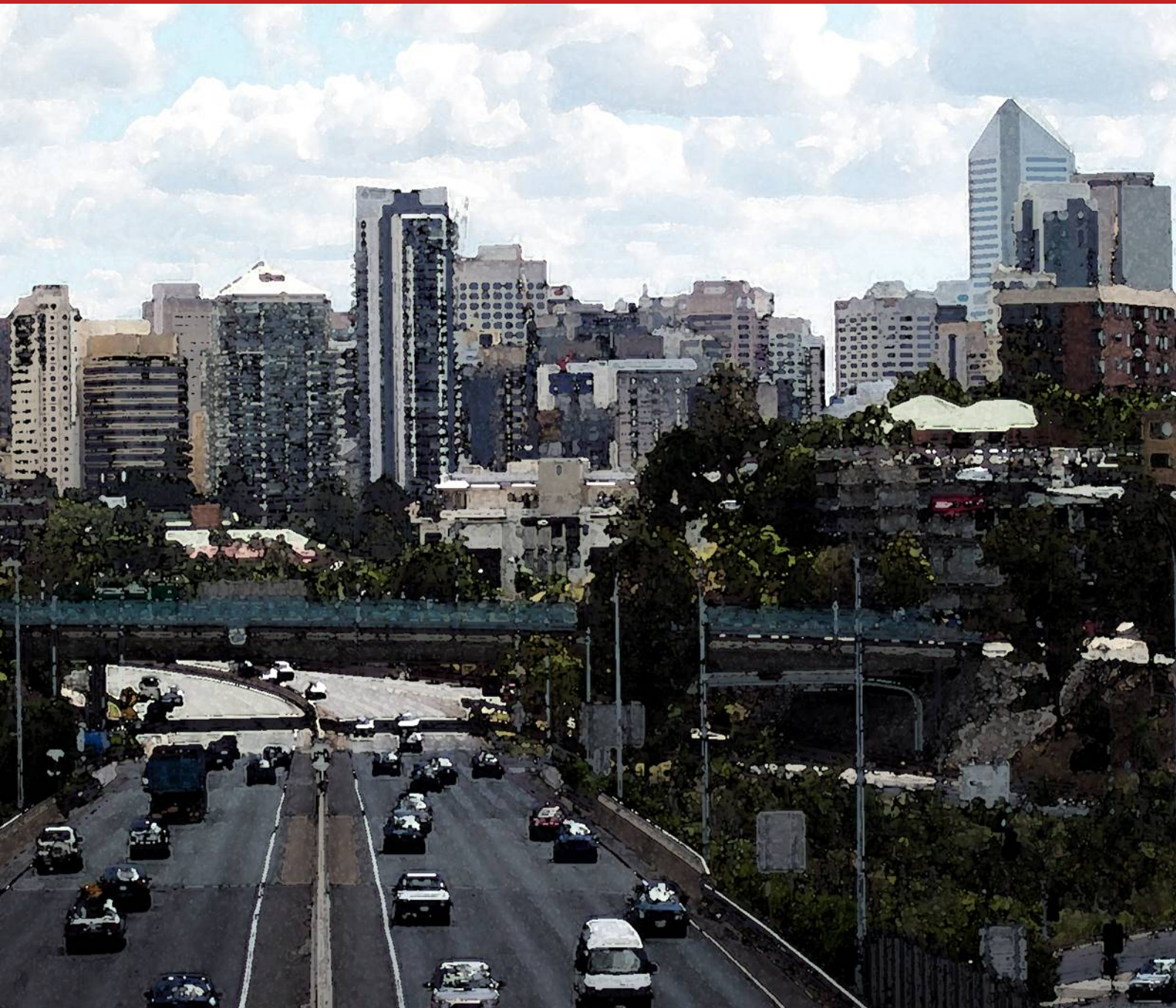


**Planning *in* climate change
Towards a relational framework for action**

Wendy Steele and Brendan Gleeson



Urban Research Program

**Research Paper 26
September 2009**

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Executive summary

This paper critically engages with the Australian planning reform and review agenda to argue for a re-conceptualisation of planning located firmly within the conditions of climate change. Drawing on Australian/Queensland examples of planning in practice, we outline a relational framework for action comprised of three quite different institutional agendas: 1) planning *about* climate change; 2) planning *for* climate change; and 3) planning *in* climate change. We conclude by highlighting the potential for this framework to work as a platform for evaluating the role of planning in relation to climate change and as a means for moving beyond the anti-planning ambitions of neoliberal reform and the professional theory/practice cul-de-sac.

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“Think climate. Think change. We can't afford not to.”
(Australian Government 2009)

Introduction: The professional planning cul-de-sac

The contribution and direction of Australian planning as a field of professional endeavour is once again under review (Gurran et. al., 2008; PIA, 2009). As in the past, the focus is on identifying the changing role of planning, the relative merits of different models of planning education as well as ways to better strengthen the links between planning research, theory and practice. Debates about the relationship between planning theory and practice are well trodden paths that continue to generate critical discussion in the 21st century Western planning context (Friedmann, 2008; Healey, 2008). The nature and extent of the ‘theory/practice divide’ has filled numerous planning books and journals, most lately fomenting concern that planning is in a state of crisis with much of its theory having little to do with the work of most planners (Hall, 2002). Counter arguments posit planning theory as the creative tension that defines and drives forward the field of practice by engendering both the reflective practitioner and the practical scholar. The emphasis is on how the role of planning can better develop “the good city and region within the constraints of a capitalist political economy and a democratic political system” (Campbell and Fainstein, 2005, p.1). Alongside this social reformist agenda, the double-edged role of political and institutional reform in potentially furthering both progressive and regressive planning agendas has also been highlighted (Gleeson and Low, 2000; Yiftachel, 1998).

Recent reflections in the planning literature emphasise the role of planning as intimately linked with the discourses of sustainability and the “challenges of co-existence in shared spaces” that require planning theory and practice to relate together in “mutually enriching ways” (Healey, 2008, p.431). This is held to increase collective learning by challenging the introspection that can result from an emphasis on the institutionalisation and routinisation of practice. The potential of planning theory as a transdisciplinary global endeavour to shape the planning field (practice and education) has been defined as a triad of key tasks: a *philosophical* task of evolving a humanist philosophy to guide planners in their work; an *adaptive* task that highlights the constraints and opportunities for planning practice within the continually changing course of human affairs; and a *translation* task whereby concepts and knowledge from other disciplines are adapted and made accessible and useful for planning and its practices (Friedmann, 2008, p.255).

Central to these endeavours are deeply existential questions that go to the core of professional identity and purpose: ‘who are the planners?’ and ‘what do planners do?’ This in turn has led to more critical questions related to ‘planning for what and whom?’ and how planning education and practice might be better focused to achieve progressive democratic, environmental and economic aims (Friedmann, 2008). Yet despite this sustainability agenda that underpins contemporary planning scholarship and pedagogy, there remains a tendency to privilege the planning endeavour itself as the key concern. In Australia key documents informing the national planning review agenda such as the *Planning Education Discussion Paper* (Gurran et. al., 2008) prepared for the Planning Institute of Australia and the symposium papers prepared as part of the celebrations around *60 years of Australian Planning Education* (Rofe and Hamnett, 2009) direct attention and effort towards issues such as:

- the relative merits of the ‘Bologna’ model which emphasises postgraduate over undergraduate professional education;
- the value of work experience; the cultural differences between strategic planning and statutory planning; and
- the specialist or generalist role of planning.

The danger of this, as Yiftachel (2007, p.213) points out, is that planning debates soon come to a cul-de-sac, focusing largely on the important yet limited sub-field of professional practice which tends to “quickly change and become forgotten while the material legacy of planning decisions remain for generations”.

Within this context the 21st century agenda of climate change, understood as a dramatic manifestation of the sustainability crisis, is demanding conceptual changes to the focus of planning in practice (Davoudi and Strange, 2009). Climate change offers a compelling supra-narrative for building the shared knowledge and action that leads to transformative change within continuous (if not pervasive) planning reform and review. The climate change imperative raises ideological, political, institutional, and spatial challenges that require both short and long term thinking, deliberative engagement, strategic action and democratic coordination to take human settlement systems in a new and different direction (Flannery, 2008; Garnaut, 2008; Lowe, 2006; Stern, 2007). In short climate change requires a planning response rich in understandings of space and place. Planning for its part needs the focus of climate change in order to re-orient collective efforts towards something greater than the existential tensions within itself.

In this paper we draw attention to the contemporary relationship between Australian planning and climate change. We critically engage with the Australian reform and review agenda to argue for a re-conceptualisation of planning within the conditions of climate change. Our empirical context is Australian planning practice and debate but the conceptual resonance extends to international discussion of planning possibility and purpose in the contemporary age (e.g., Friedmann, 2008; Healey, 2008). Australian and international planning debate is increasingly mindful of that most terrible human and natural prospect, global warming. Climate change now faces a human species – *homo urbanis* – that is for the first time largely urbanised and for whom planning represents a critically important means for social and natural resilience (Gleeson, 2008).

Despite the significance of this urgent ‘glocal’ agenda, climate change is still typically subsumed as but one of many areas of special interest in planning policy and practice (e.g. housing, transport, land use, infrastructure etc.), and largely peripheral within professionally oriented planning education increasingly splintered into ever-diverse urban specialisations. In response to this marginalisation we draw on insights from the ‘spatial turn’ in planning to offer a conceptual framework that seeks to re-orient planning praxis firmly within climate change. To this end we build on relational understandings of space and place to outline three quite different institutional frames for action that include:

1. Planning *about* climate change;
2. Planning *for* climate change; and
3. Planning *in* climate change.

The structure of this paper is threefold. Firstly, we point to the strong social reformist agenda that has historically shaped Australian planning, before critically examining the relationship between planning and reform as a ‘double-edged sword’ that has seen the agenda of climate change subsumed by an era defined by neoliberalism. In the second section we move to a more conceptual focus to outline a framework for action that centres on the rich diversity of potential practice responses planning *in* climate change. We build on insights from the ‘spatial turn’ in planning to emphasise the need for planning to embrace different ways of conceptualising socio-spatial relations than those traditionally associated with land-use planning space (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009; Davoudi and Strange, 2009; Healey, 2001). This framework shifts the focus of planning towards the kinds of learning and activity required to build the fundamentally different kinds of cities, settlements and territorial regions necessitated by the climate change era. In the third section we apply this relational framework to planning in the aspirational Australian

growth state of Queensland where political and institutional reform has resulted in planning practices that “do not adequately address climate change” (Young, 2008, p.1). We conclude by re-emphasising that climate change offers a normative and ethical focus that moves planning beyond the anti-planning ambitions of neoliberal reform and the confines of the professional theory/practice cul-de-sac.

Planning and reform – the double-edged sword

The origins of modern Western planning are closely associated with strong social reformist ideals around improving the human misery and squalor associated with early industrialism in the late 19th century. Whilst the planning responses to these conditions varied significantly at the time they converged in their focus on the slum conditions associated with poverty, inadequate housing, overcrowding and sanitation. Through powerful driving social and public health reform agendas planning-related knowledge and action converged around a larger purpose – the improvement of urban areas and the plight of the poor (Hall, 2002). However unlike this early reformist endeavour more recent neoliberal change agendas have largely failed to capture and engage planning as purposeful strategic spatial action within the ‘glocal’ conditions of climate change.

Progressive interests, especially social movements and environmentalists, sought, from the 1970s, changes to planning systems that were seen as sclerotic and insensitive to ecological and human values. This advocacy helped build the case for widespread reform, which in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s was largely carried out during an era of wider neoliberal reform of the public sector. Many environmental ambitions were denied as improved economic and administrative efficiency became dominant ambitions (Gleeson and Low, 2000). The relationship between reform and planning has emerged as an increasingly double-edged sword that does not necessarily further progressive democratic and environmental aims (Yiftachel, 1998).

Within the Australian context there have been a number of key moments that have shaped and re-shaped the role of planning within society more broadly. As indicated above, one strong agenda of reform in Australia has been a platform for those who have sought a more expansive interdisciplinary understanding of the political domain of the broader planning project and its affect on Australian society, economy and environment (Stretton, 1979; McLoughlin and Huxley, 1986; Sandercock, 1998). For example during the 1970s a new social democratic reform context gained ascendancy with the Whitlam Labour Government whose election promises included economic redistribution to those previously marginalised as well as addressing the costs and disadvantages of growth (Sandercock and Berry, 1983; Huxley, 2000). Planners during this era were urged to evolve as interdisciplinary generalists with a largely socio-political and community-based orientation (Stretton, 1970). However, by opening the space of political negotiation, these progressive critiques unintentionally empowered those with quite different, possibly contradictory reform agendas such as the proponents of a free market society (e.g. Moran, 2006) who prefer to see a reduced role for the state.

The 1980s witnessed the rise of neoliberalism in Australia amidst a substantive re-imagining of the national position, standing and attitude relative to an increasingly competitive global world context. Keynesian policy in post-war Australia was under siege amidst increasing concerns around escalating foreign debt, poor trade performance and the decline of manufacturing (Broomhill, 2009). The welfare mentality of State paternalism, the so-called ‘nanny state’ that had guided Australia since the 1940s was in the process of being dismantled in order to better facilitate innovative, entrepreneurial activity at the global scale. The federal Labour treasurer at the time Paul Keating (1986 cited in Kelly, 1992, p.196), famously remarked that Australia would

end up as ‘a banana republic’, ‘a third rate economy in an international hole’ if it did not act swiftly to make the ‘adjustments’ necessary to be competitive within a global economy.

What followed was a period of intense and rapid structural change in terms of capital, labour and the state. This was coupled with a re-orientation of policy and institutional frameworks in order to open the economy to global forces through a greater emphasis on market orientation and a reduced role for the state. A ‘new right’ ideological framework of faith in free market capitalism rather than the state for resource allocation and income distribution re-defined Australia (Stilwell, 2000). This spawned a raft of neo-liberal policies designed to “subordinate a wide array of possible social goals to more narrowly defined economic priorities” (p.14). At the urban scale, this agenda has subsequently emphasised economic growth and competitiveness within the context of globalisation (McGuirk, 2007; Searle and Cardew, 2000).

The new right political economic reform agenda has significantly re-shaped Australian planning in terms of its role, purpose and attendant spatially-oriented policies, processes, practices and roles (Buxton et al., 2005; March and Low, 2007). Caught within the pervasive neoliberal reform agenda focussed around economic growth and investment, planners have struggled to find ways to effectively respond to the pace of transformation within a market-oriented governance framework (Steele, 2009; Williams, 2007). Within this prevailing environment Australian planning has been recast as a relatively narrow endeavour with planning tools “so stripped of their effectiveness by notions such as ‘flexible planning’ and discretionary decision-making, as to be almost the antithesis of the word planning” (Stein, 1998, p.72).

Alongside the transformative agenda of neoliberal reform, a parallel reform movement around environmental sustainability has also been gaining force within Australia since the mid 1980s and early 1990s. As a meta- political discourse environmental sustainability has penetrated at multi-scalar levels and raised important questions about the need for fundamental changes to the status quo in the face of the scope and seriousness of the environmental problems confronting humankind (Baber and Bartlett, 2005). Although largely separate to the debates around political reform and economic restructuring, the impact of this international agenda has been strongly felt in Australia leading to increased political leverage to government policies and processes. The imperative of environmental sustainability and the need for new ways of imagining and balancing the sustainability tripartite of economic development, environmental concerns and social justice jostles for space on the national political platform (Dryzek, 2006).

Central to the discourses surrounding environmental sustainability are the possibilities broadly outlined in the Brundtland Report (1987) of the need to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The formal Australian response to the this report emerged through the 1992 National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSES) which recommended an expanded conceptualisation of the terms *progress* and *development* to look beyond economic considerations to include ecological dimensions and social improvements in areas such as justice, education and community participation. The NSES emphasised the need to consider, in an integrated way, the wider economic, social and environmental implications of decisions and actions and the development of new processes to support long-term rather than short-term environmental objectives. A new integrated reform agenda has emerged in the wake of these initiatives recasting the spatial ambit of Australian planning in its wake.

As an inherently urban nation the impacts of climate change in Australia are already being felt particularly in relation to drought and flood, but also through bushfires and oil production and consumption. The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) formally acknowledges that “climate change is occurring” and is “one of the most important issues facing the global community today” (PIA, 2009, p.1). This position is reflected in the *PIA Climate Change Position Statement*

which suggests that “the planning profession is relatively well positioned to take a lead in tackling many aspects of climate change” (PIA, 2007a, p.3). The emphasis for planning action articulated in this strategy focuses around adaptation such as the need to: include climate change in long term strategic planning; and incorporate climate change into tertiary and professional training.

The PIA climate change policy draws on a report entitled *Shifting Towards Sustainability: Education for Climate Change Adaptation in the Built Environment Sector* (Lyth et. al., 2007) which seeks to move planning beyond ‘education about climate change mitigation’, towards the idea of ‘education for climate change adaptation’. The aim of this shift is to “increase the ability of individuals, groups or organisations to adapt to changes associated with climate change through the development of critical skills necessary for understanding the complexity associated with climate change and the systemic changes needed to address these” (p.3). The need to build critical skills for conditions characterised by uncertainty and complexity has been reinforced by recent findings from a series of national seminars on climate change adaptation for planning practitioners organised by PIA in conjunction with the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO). Key recommendations to emerge from the seminars included the need for Australian planners to have greater skills, training and tools in order to better address climate change as well as better resources, funding and champions and stronger leadership within the profession across all three spheres of government (PIA, 2007b).

These strong recommendations are not taken up in the *Planning Education Discussion Paper* (Gurran et. al., 2008) prepared for the Planning Institute of Australia which provides a meta-framework for guiding the focus of future decisions related to the direction of planning pedagogy and praxis in Australia. The discussion paper raises very salient professional issues around: the current state of planning education; quality assurance; accreditation; and resourcing. It also makes seven key recommendations that focus around reviewing policy, increasing access, enhancing industry engagement, supporting scholarship, and building professional advocacy around resource issues facing planning education. However the agenda centres almost exclusively on the professional foundation of planners and planning educators in relation to the issues of resourcing and practice with climate change largely peripheral to the core concerns of this pivotal discussion paper.

Yet outside the planning education review process a sense of national urgency is building around climate change serving to heighten an already existing sense of disquiet about the degree to which the rhetorical aims of environmental sustainability more broadly, and strategies such as ESD more specifically, are being achieved in practice. The ‘de-greening of ESD commonwealth [national] policy’ and the new primacy given to economic growth from the late 1990s have been linked with a series of conservative agendas in government (Gleeson and Low, 2000, p.162). The climate change imperative has further exposed the lack of recognition of the scale of the problem, urgency of the situation and development of real strategic vision has been linked to a governance and planning culture that is “obsessed with short-term economic priorities and ideologically committed to market-based approaches” (Lowe, 2006, p.58). Efforts at reform around sustainability and climate change have been largely muted by the neoliberal spectre of economic growth and competitiveness which have combined to recast Western planning since the 1980s as anti-planning (Hall, 2002) or ‘pseudo-planning’ (Lovering, 2009), far removed from the social justice origins from which modernist planning began.

Indeed there is a growing recognition that the scope and scale of the climate change challenge demands quite different relational and temporal understandings of planning in practice than has occurred before (Davoudi and Strange, 2009). Climate change has been recognised a ‘diabolical’ planning and policy challenge that is demanding planning action (Garnaut, 2008). As such there is a need for a more focused conceptualisation of planning practice reconceived as being located within the lived conditions of immediacy, uncertainty and complexity that characterise climate change. In the next section we explore one potentially fruitful direction for re-framing the role of

planning in relation to climate change. The proposed conceptual framework draws on insights gleaned from the recent developments towards a 'spatial turn' in planning which emphasises relational understandings of space and place within a global capitalist context (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009; Healey, 2007). It is to the insights from this new spatial order that we now turn to build the beginnings of what we describe as planning *in* climate change: a relational framework for action.

Spatial planning and climate change – towards a relational framework for action

The aims and ambitions of the neoliberal reform agenda that continues to dominate planning practices in Australia contrast sharply with the findings of the Garnaut Climate Change Review (2008). The review, jointly commissioned by Australia's state and national governments to examine the impacts of climate change cautions that "on a balance of probabilities, the failure of our generation on climate change mitigation would lead to consequences that would haunt humanity until the end of time" (Garnaut, 2008, p.29). This echoes the message of the UK's Stern Report (2007) which concluded that "it is still possible to avoid the worst impacts of climate change; but it requires strong and urgent collective action". The Stern Report went further to caution that to "delay would be costly and dangerous" (p. xxvii).

This is a clear 'call to arms' for re-conceptualising planning firmly within the conditions of climate change in ways of that embrace both the urgency and uncertainty of the climate change agenda. These conditions have profound implications for the endeavour of planning with its long history of rational comprehensive planning and prescriptive Euclidean conceptions of space and place. If the 'global' conditions of climate change operate in "highly flexible and contingent ways" (Thornley and Rydin, 2002, p.9), then there is pressure for planning to respond to the "uncertainties arising from these multiple forces operating at multiple levels" by developing a clear ethical focus to shape practice.

Since the 1980s there has been a shift within planning towards a deeper understanding of space and place that emphasise the open-ended and networked nature of the relationships between spatiality and social processes (Amin, 2002; Healey, 2007; Thrift, 1996). This 'relational' approach to space emphasises: interactions as opposed to objects; relational webs and layers over physical patterns; structure and agency; institutions and individuals; dynamics not statics; embedding and emergence; multiplicity of relations versus homogeneity; and the friction of conflict not equilibrium (Healey, 2007). Theory must therefore be reflexive and focus on relational and situated understandings amidst the flow of practice. The key characteristics of 'relational' approach to space can be summarised as follows:

- Space cannot be held fast in fixed compartments, or regular, measured intervals but is in a constant fluid process of being formed and transformed
- Space is a turbulent field of structures, solidarities, disruptions and dislocations;
- Space is understood as relational; produced or constituted through 'action' and 'interaction';
- Space necessarily entails plurality and multiplicity; and
- Productions of space are inseparable from the structures and functioning of capitalism (Johnston et al., 2000, p.770-771).

A conceptual framework for this spatial turn has emerged in the work of geographer David Harvey (2006). He outlines three dimensions to space that include: 1) *absolute space* which is the material, concrete entity that can be fixed and discretely bounded most commonly associated with cadastral mapping; 2) *relative space* that is the space of Einstein and emphasises the modes of

time, temporality and interconnectedness; and 3) *relational space* which is the socially constructed space that does not exist outside the processes that define it. These processes according to Harvey (2006) represent challenging terrain due to the tendency for “a wide variety of disparate influences swirling over space in the past, present and future to concentrate and congeal at a certain point” (p124) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Tripartite divisions of space and place

Types of space	Described by Harvey as	Expressed through
Absolute	Concrete, material, fixed Bounded territorialisation Space of Euclid	Blueprint plans Cadastral maps Private property
Relative	Multiple geometrics Frame dependent Variety of choice	Public transport networks Water infrastructure Telecommunications grid
Relational	Complex Socially constructed Space-time convergence	Ground zero Rented land Climate change?

(Adapted from Harvey, 2006)

Instrumental to Harvey’s work is a focus on the complex links between spatial practices, politics and capitalist modes of production. In particular he was concerned with the characteristics of a new regime increasingly flexible in terms of the processes of production and consumption. This labour-market flexibility was seen to arise as a result of two related epochs: 1) post-Fordism; and 2) the globalising economy. The post-Fordist regime of accumulation that followed in the wake of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom and Reaganism in the United States was characterised in particular by increased flexibility and the evolution of a new spatial order. Within the post-Fordist regime there has been a shift to three key interlocking elements which include: a reduced role for the state; government to governance activity; and the rise of a neoliberalised political regime (Jessop, 1995).

The post-Fordist regime outlined above is intimately connected to the second epoch characterised by the global cultural economy. This mode of production is what Appadurai (1999) describes as a relational and situated construct between different globalised scapes that are deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable (p223). He locates this global cultural disjuncture within a framework that explores the relationship between five key interrelated dimensions (or scapes) that include: *Ethnoscapes* - persons who constitute the shifting worlds (e.g. tourists or refugees); *Mediascapes* – the distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information, images and narratives; *Technoscapes* – global configurations of technology that operate at a transboundary level; *Finanscapes* – the disposition of global capital that is increasingly mysterious, rapid and difficult to follow; and *Ideascapes* – the political realm that relates to the flow of ideologies and counter-ideologies. Together the dialectical tensions between these different cultural scapes summon up cultures of ‘possibility and mobility’ but also ‘discontinuity and disengagement’ amidst the increased rate and unpredictability of changing circumstances (Appadurai, 1999, p.23). Together with the flexibility of post-Fordism these shifts straddle political-economic *and* socio-cultural spheres thus broadening their spatial scope and impact. As Harvey (1989) identifies:

Spatial practices in any society abound in subtleties and complexities. Since they are not innocent with respect to the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of class relations under capitalism, they are a permanent arena for social conflict and struggle. Those who have the power to command and produce space possess a vital instrumentality for the

reproduction and enhancement of their own power. Any project to transform society must therefore, grasp the complex nettle of the transformation of spatial practices (p.261).

Within the European context these conceptual shifts have had a profound influence on the thinking and activity surrounding planning (Albrechts, 2004; Davoudi and Strange, 2009; Faludi, 2008). The term 'spatial planning' rather than 'land-use planning' has emerged from the European context in efforts to better reflect the multidimensional nature of planning as a 'geopolitical vision' (Dijking, 1996) or 'geographical expression of policy giving direction to regional development' (Council of Europe, 1984). In line with its geo-political and territorial development, the European Union has sought to engender collective action by building a "credible narrative about the need for a territorial dimension in European policymaking" (Hague and Hachmann, 2008, p.40). In Australia 'spatial planning' is not the dominant semantic *modus operandis* although recent shifts have indicated that as a concept it is used interchangeably with 'planning' to reflect a field of endeavour that "encompasses urban, rural and regional planning and is inclusive not only of land-use planning but of specialisations such as social, cultural, transport, environmental and economic planning" (Whitzman, 2009, p.14).

We seek to build on the insights from both this 'spatial turn' in planning and the experiences in building a European territorial agenda to outline a conceptual framework for locating and critically evaluating the role of Australian planning within climate change. The proposed framework is sensitive to the relational, temporal, praxis and pedagogical dimensions of the planning endeavour as it intersects (or not) with the agenda of climate change. Within this framework three quite different institutional agendas emerge: 1) planning **about** climate change; 2) planning **for** climate change; and 3) planning **in** climate change. The key characteristics of each will be outlined in turn and summarised in Table 2 below.

1. Planning *about* climate change

Within this first frame climate change is understood as something that may be real but is still 'out there' in the distant future. The concept has penetrated the planning consciousness but is considered to be something peripheral and disconnected to the everyday practices of planning. From a temporal perspective planning action in relation to climate change is considered to be needed in the future, if at all. This is the realm that largely defers to the sceptics and naysayers for whom climate change is little more than a theoretical consideration and contestable agenda played out largely in the media. This is reflected in a planning curriculum in which climate change is marginalised and largely incidental within both higher education and professional development forums. For example whilst the *Planning Education Discussion Paper* (Gurran et. al., 2008) prepared for the Planning Institute of Australia provides a meta-framework for guiding the focus of future decisions related to the direction of planning pedagogy and praxis in Australia, the agenda centres on the professional foundation of planners and planning educators in relation to the issues of resourcing and practice with climate change peripheral to the core concerns of this pivotal discussion paper. Another instance is the otherwise laudable Southeast Queensland Regional Plan (Queensland Government, 2009) whose latest draft version (2009-2031) contains very little recognition, and certainly little operational outlook, for climate response. Mirroring this larger strategic level of planning, from the underside, is the massive endeavour that defines and consumes much of everyday planning, development assessment. In this 'workhouse' of planning life, the professional is unlikely to encounter the term 'climate change', let alone any legislated consideration of this key shift in the field of human and ecological possibility. For most planning professionals, the social consideration of climate change, and the personal experience of everyday work, are parallel universes.

2. Planning *for* climate change

In the second frame climate change is recognised as an agenda that requires some interventionist planning action in the short term with the intention of more strategic intervention to come later

in the future. In planning practice climate change is positioned as just one of a suite of other 'wicked' planning interests and agendas such as affordable housing or public transport. Planning activity in this frame operates mostly at the policy level or project level with the aim of building community resilience and encouraging adaptation strategies at the household level. This is still planning 'business as usual' with little in the way of substantive shifts to practice or pedagogy. Within planning education, climate change is an elective curriculum subject but with links starting to be made across other subjects as well. At a professional development level the emphasis is on one-off seminars, workshops and guest lectures which are increasingly well attended. An example of this frame is evident in the report, *Shifting Towards Sustainability: Education for climate change adaptation in the built environment sector* (Lyth et al., 2007), which directly addresses the need to increase the ability of planners to adapt to changes associated with climate change. Adopted by the Planning Institute of Australia the ambitions of this endeavour recommend a focus on "the commencement of discussions about professional development for climate change adaptation in a range of forums" and for university educators "to begin to include climate change adaptation case studies within existing curricula" (p.3). The approach is tentative, propositional and even conversational – hardly likely to compel professional or institutional change. Climate change in this scenario becomes part of 'the mix' of everyday planning consideration, but remains outside the small sphere of intervention and meaningful change.

3. Planning *in* climate change

The third and final frame emphasises the immediacy and lived dimensions of climate change as intimately linked with planning praxis in all its diversity. This understanding of planning *in* climate change as opposed to *about* or *for* climate change draws attention to the need for both a short term focus and long term strategic thinking in order to develop the collective action around education, mitigation and adaptation required at multi-scalar governance levels. This will demand a profound change in the way planning practice is both conceived and undertaken in order to address the conditions of climate change operate in highly flexible and uncertain ways arising from the multiple forces operating at multi-scalar levels. Re-conceptualising planning *in* climate change shifts pedagogical debates towards a direct and present engagement with the rich multiplicity of planning practices with climate change as the core agenda and overarching meta-theme driving educational curriculum and professional development. For example the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) formally acknowledges that "climate change is occurring" and is "one of the most important issues facing the global community today" (PIA, 2008, p.1). We argue, however, that Australian planning has yet to embrace this relational conceptualisation of the role of planning within climate and remains rooted within a 'business as usual' approach, albeit with a new climate focus.

This proposed conceptual framework is designed to draw attention to different institutional frames for planning within the meta-agenda of climate change. It provides a first step towards building a 'relational' framework for planning action that holds the potential to act as the basis for further evaluation of planning policies and programs. Although this framework does offer a hierarchy of institutional frames in relation to planning and climate change, there is every possibility that all three frames may operate concurrently in any given situation highlighting "a dialectical tension that emphasises the interplay between them" (Harvey, 2006, p.126). In this way the framework might also serve as a critical platform for considering what directional shifts might be needed within the planning praxis (theory, professional practice and pedagogy) in order to achieve the transformative change necessary to effectively address this most compelling of issues.

If climate change is indeed "one of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges of our time" (Australian Government, 2009) then planning **about** and **for** climate change seem wholly inadequate. Yet it is in these two frames that we argue most of the practices of planning occur. The radically simple relational concept of planning **in** climate change might just make the world of difference. It does carry the danger, however, of normalising and thereby making banal

a key threat to human welfare and the natural order. There, however, are surely means for a compelling and unsettling instatement of climate change in ‘planning reality’ that resists such object pacification. Careful choice of rhetoric will be decisive. It may, for example, be important to deploy the language of ‘climate emergency’, as with Spratt and Sutton’s (2007) influential book, to maintain the underlying momentum of institutional change.

Table 2: Planning and climate change: A relational framework for action

Institutional planning frame	Relational dimension	Temporal dimension	Praxis dimension	Pedagogical dimension
<i>Planning about climate change</i>	Climate change as peripheral/ disconnected Agenda to planning	Action required at a later stage, if at all	Rhetorical consideration. e.g. Media, reportage	Incidental inclusion in curriculum and professional development
<i>Planning for climate change</i>	Climate change as a real but still distant agenda – part of a suite of planning interests and efforts	Some action required now with more effort later if required	Largely a policy agenda and orientation, focus on developing planning tools. e.g. Adaptation Strategies, Building resilience	Elective subject in curriculum and reference made in other subjects Focus of one-off seminars, workshops and guest lectures
<i>Planning in climate change</i>	Climate change as a lived agenda with multiple and ongoing implications. Planning has a core role to play	Immediate action required that must be sustained over the long-term	Rich diversity of planning theory/practice for action and change, focus on transformational learning and change. e.g. Political and cultural mobilisation, Mitigation, Adaptation, resilience	Core agenda and overarching meta-theme driving curriculum agenda and professional development

An application to planning practice in Queensland – what role for climate change?

In this final section we apply the proposed conceptual framework outlined above to the Australian context of Queensland as a means of locating and evaluating the role of planning in relation to climate change. Located on the Eastern seaboard, Queensland is the aspirational growth state of Australia and has an historical legacy as “a ragged edge of empire where everything depends on taking, holding and exploiting the natural environment” (Schultz, 2008, p.13). Consistent with the national agenda the dominant reform narrative since the 1980s has been the pursuit of sustainable development accompanied by a micro-economic agenda that has sought to create “an environment in which the economy can operate efficiently with minimal government interference with commercial decision-making” (Queensland Government, 1992, p.2).

Within this context twenty-first century Queensland planning was envisaged to be a strategic, flexible and integrated endeavour that would embed a commitment to sustainability at the core (Yearbury, 1998). Indeed *The Integrated Planning Act* 1997 (IPA) became the first land-use planning legislation in Australia to have ecological sustainability as the stated purpose of the act whilst also seeking to advance key elements of economic reform such as the reduction of red tape and enhancing the efficiency of government (England, 2004). The Queensland reform ambitions thus sought to marry through the IPA the agendas of sustainable development, economic growth and development, local government autonomy and community cohesion (see Figure 1 below).

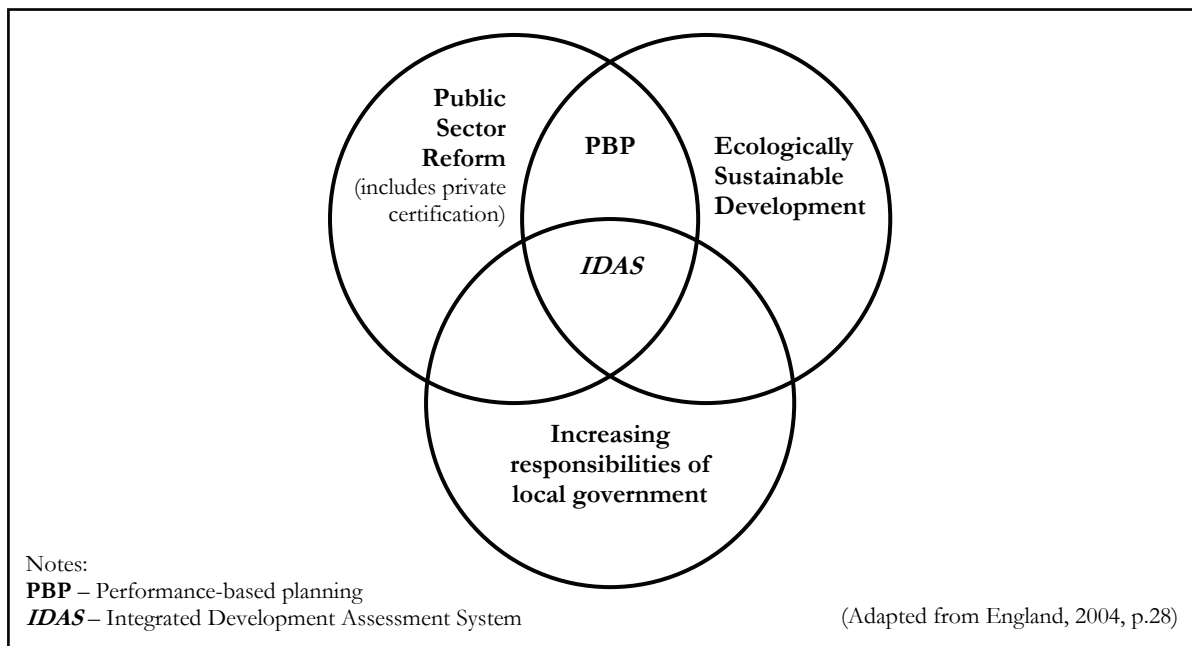


Figure 1: The Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA) – Key drivers of reform

A discussion paper released in 2006 by the Queensland Government as part of a major review of IPA, *Dynamic Planning for a Growing State*, observed that what was required in Queensland was a “fundamental change in the culture and practice of the planning and development sector in which planners had to take on new responsibilities, develop different skill sets and engage with other users of the planning system in different ways” (Queensland Government, 2006, p.13). Yet this cultural change has been criticised for eroding progressive practice with planners “increasingly employed instead like process workers on a production line” (Day, 2005, p.1). In their submission to the IPA review the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO Qld) a non-profit public interest environmental and planning law community legal centre expressed the following concern about the outcomes of the new planning regime:

Queensland has prided itself on its innovative, flexible approach to planning and development. Your message in the review has been that the principles in IPA are sound. What good, however, are sound principles, when the outcomes are clearly not sound? We have engaged widely with the community regarding IPA, both in this review and in the years since IPA was introduced. The community is strongly dissatisfied with IPA and its outcomes... (O’Hart, 2006, p.3).

In particular the EDO Qld in concert with other peak community and environmental groups argue that planning has failed to adequately address the biggest threat to the future of Queensland - climate change (O’Hart, 2006). Like other Australian states, Queensland is in the process of developing climate change adaptation strategies that includes initiatives such as improving the energy efficiency of buildings, reducing water consumption, and encouraging compact development and transit oriented development (Queensland Government, 2009a). The need for action in planning-related areas such as human settlements and natural environments is also emphasised through documents such as the ClimateSmart 2050: Queensland climate change strategy (Queensland Government, 2007a), Queensland’s Climate Smart Adaptation 2007-12: an action plan for managing the impacts of climate change (Queensland Government, 2007b). However these initiatives fall short of a regulatory mandate (Byrne et. al., 2009) and are not substantively reflected in planning legislation such as the *IPA 1997* - Queensland’s premier piece of land use legislation responsible for guiding development decisions and coordinating planning at State, regional and local levels (Waters, 2008).

The 2007 IPA Reform Agenda does call for the introduction of a State Planning Policy (SPP) for climate change which will require areas vulnerable to climate change to be identified in planning schemes, however larger scale infrastructure, mining and transport infrastructure will all be exempt (Waters, 2008). Within the population, development and growth intensive south-east corner of the state, the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (2009-2031)* (DSEQRP) also includes a new section on climate change in recognition of the “overwhelming scientific evidence that human-induced climate change is occurring primarily due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere” (Queensland Government, 2008, p.33). When it comes into effect the DSEQRP will have statutory power to be considered through the State statutory instruments. However the translation of policy position statements around climate change into substantive planning resourcing and thereby action, remains a highly contested and uncertain agenda in Queensland despite the need for “urgent action necessary to stabilise our greenhouse gas emissions at a level where dangerous climate change impacts can be avoided” (Queensland Government, 2008, p.33).

Submissions from community, environmental and conservation groups on the DSEQRP have argued that far from substantively addressing climate change the draft plan will “do nothing to curb greenhouse gas emissions, protect communities from climate change impacts or protect the region’s internationally significant remaining biodiversity from destruction” (Adams, 2009, p.1). One of the largest local Councils, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council submission points in particular to the limited guidance provided on how to minimise and manage the impacts of climate change. Their strong recommendations include the need for planning that delivers: new policy and programs for areas vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; stronger policy and programs to minimise energy and water consumption and the emission of greenhouse gases; and new policy and programs that support local government in addressing sustainability measures such as energy and water efficiency through planning schemes (Knaggs, 2009, p.5).

These recommendations support findings from an earlier project initiated by the Queensland chapter of the Planning Institute of Australia (2003) which sought to embed the role of planning within an agenda of climate change and develop planning tools to prepare communities and industries for the likely impacts associated with climate change. The project concluded that there was a ‘clear and demonstrable need’ for the planning community to better address climate change. In particular the project found that:

- The planning profession did not have the tools to address climate change; and that
- Climate change is of interest and concern to planners; and
- There is an expectation nationally and internationally that planning will do 'something' (PIA QLD, 2003)

However despite these calls for planning action in relation to climate change, the most recent review agenda of IPA that began with the document *Planning for a Prosperous Queensland – A Reform Agenda for Planning and Development in the Smart State* (Queensland Government, 2007c), has instead emphasised action around the development of standard planning provisions. This includes consideration of matters around planning scheme composition and structure, standard use definitions, standard codes, standardised format and map design, standard zones and the like without explicitly linking these to climate change. This process has involved numerous working groups and reference panels made up of over one hundred planners representing all sectors from across Queensland meeting over two years. The primary issues under consideration emphasise planning procedures related to: the widespread inconsistencies in structure, language and application; and the duplication of effort to produce planning schemes. Thus while the Planning Reform Implementation (PRI) team acknowledge the “outstanding collaborative effort that has been undertaken to progress the reform agenda and transform them into legislative operational and cultural change actions” (Queensland Government, 2009b, p.4), the questions remain for

whom and for what do the reform efforts serve and where on this procedurally dominated planning agenda is climate change?

In efforts to appease rising community concern that ‘a business as usual approach’ will no longer suffice, the Queensland Government has rolled out three new initiatives that seek to more purposively link planning and climate change. First, the *Climate Q - Towards a greener Queensland* strategy (Queensland Government, 2009c) stakes out a leadership role for Queensland at the ‘forefront’ of the national climate change response. The message is that by building a better understanding of climate change and adopting more climate appropriate standards for new development Queensland can significantly reduce its emissions output. To this end the strategy opens with the reassurance that the “Queensland Government has started planning for climate change and extreme events in planning frameworks and has introduced measures to reduce emissions” (p.117). These tentative footsteps are also reflected in the newly released *Sustainable Planning Bill*, which went before parliament on the 19th June, 2009. As a means of advancing the purpose of the act the Bill includes the need to ‘avoid if practicable, or otherwise lessening, adverse environmental effects of development, including: climate change and urban congestion’ (p.42). According to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning the *Sustainable Planning Bill 2009* is ‘evolution not revolution’ that allows developments to get off the ground sooner via a user-friendly ‘fast track’ system. “At the end of the day, this is about creating more efficient processes for construction sites and as a result keeping Queenslanders in jobs” (Hinchcliffe, 2009, p.1).

The third initiative is the draft *South East Queensland Climate Change Management Plan* (Queensland Government, 2009d) which includes proposed actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and help communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The draft plan has been pitched politically as “a bold step to ensure we *implement* the climate change policies of the SEQ Regional Plan with clarity and commitment” (p.i). The intent is for the actions outlined in the management plan to then be used to implement the climate-change policies of the *South East Queensland Regional Plan (2009–2031)* which in itself has been widely criticised in its draft form as a wholly inadequate response to climate change (see above). The outcomes of both reviews are due soon.

Applying the proposed conceptual framework to the Queensland context indicates that whilst a dialectical tension exists between all three institutional frames, planning practice is located predominantly within the frame of planning *for* climate change (see Table 3 below). Climate change in Queensland is increasingly recognised as a very real agenda that requires some planning action now with more to come in the future. However despite a growing rhetoric that reflects some sense of urgency surrounding climate change, planning practice is still operating as ‘business as usual’ with the development of policies and programs slowly taking place. Thus although climate change is very much on the Queensland planning agenda - indeed rising considerably in importance and profile - it is still considered part of a suite of ‘wicked’ planning problems such as housing affordability, transport, infrastructure and urban congestion rather than the normative and ethical meta-frame driving planning purpose. Thus despite accumulating evidence that there is a lack of planning knowledge, training, tools and resources around climate change in Queensland, this has not as yet translated into action and significantly shifted the substantive focus and/or ambition of planning practice, education curricula or professional development processes.

Table 3: Queensland planning and climate change: A relational framework for action

Institutional planning frame	Relational dimension	Temporal dimension	Praxis dimension	Pedagogical dimension
<i>Planning about climate change</i>	Climate change as peripheral/ disconnected Agenda to planning	Action required at a later stage, if at all	Rhetorical consideration. e.g. Media, reportage	Incidental inclusion in curriculum and professional development
Planning for climate change QUEENSLAND CONTEXT	Climate change as a real but still distant agenda – part of a suite of planning interests and efforts	Some action required now with more effort later if required	Largely a policy agenda and orientation, focus on developing planning tools. e.g. Adaptation Strategies, Building resilience	Elective subject in curriculum and reference made in other subjects Focus of one-off seminars, workshops and guest lectures
<i>Planning in climate change</i>	Climate change as a lived agenda with multiple and ongoing implications. Planning has a core role to play	Immediate action required that must be sustained over the long-term	Rich diversity of planning theory/practice for action and change, focus on transformational learning and change. e.g. Political and cultural mobilisation, Mitigation, Adaptation, resilience	Core agenda and overarching meta-theme driving curriculum agenda and professional development

Within Australia climate change has been articulated at a national policy level as a ‘diabolical’ planning and policy challenge that is “harder than any other issue of high importance that has come before our polity in living memory” (Garnaut, 2008). Climate change offers an unprecedented multi-scalar challenge that requires fundamentally different ways of understanding and doing planning within a new spatial order characterised by conditions of flexibility, uncertainty and complexity. Despite these shifts climate change in Queensland is not (yet) institutionally framed as an immediate imperative - one that requires significant shifts to planning in practice. Yet the implications of the climate change agenda for the planning community are profound in a context where:

20th century forms of comprehensive and rational planning are even less likely to work...Planning will have to operate with a short time scale if it is to have influence and be able to take advantage of opportunities. And yet it will have to do so in a way, which retains the longer-term and more integrated perspective that is the hallmark of planning activities. This is not an easy task for the planning community (Thornley and Ryadin, 2002, p.10).

Symbolically climate change is only one of the many topics up for discussion at the Queensland Planning Conference (2009) - the peak state professional annual gathering. The conference theme of *Live, Work and Play* emphasises in the promotional material a focus on “the current economic climate and regulatory reform” alongside other professional planning-related topics such as ‘strategies and tools for maintaining a live, work and play balance in these times’ (QLD PIA, 2009, p.1). Far from taking a leadership role, Queensland/Australian planning in practice confused and consumed by a grinding professional agenda linked to a neoliberal reform focus around competitiveness and efficiency, seems unable or unwilling to rise to the very real, lived challenges posed by this most fundamental of planning agendas - one that already affects the “most basic elements of life for people around the world including access to water, food production, health, and the environment” (Stern, 2006, p.vi).

Conclusion

Our review of the Australian planning reform context, and especially of planning practice in Queensland, showed that despite growing recognition of the urgency of climate change, the focus of the planning field remains coupled to the discourses of neoliberalism and the dilemmas of professional practice. These tensions manifest in national debates around the divide between planning theory and practice, the benefits of undergraduate or postgraduate training, and how best to equip planners for international practice within the context of a global economy. Recognising the saliency of climate change to planning purpose in the contemporary age we proposed a framework for planning *in* climate change that draws on relational insights from the 'spatial turn' to planning. This framework shifts the focus of planning, away from anxieties over professional foundations towards the kinds of learning and activity required to build fundamentally different kinds of cities, settlements and territorial regions than those envisaged by the anti-planning ambitions of neoliberal reform within the Australian context.

In the last fifty years there have been many critical advances in understanding both the limits and potentialities of the work undertaken by planners within structural constraints. Normative recommendations that have emerged from this work have emphasised that the task of planning theory and education is to develop planning expertise that is grounded in "an ethics of service, of inclusion, of knowledgability and of dynamic reflexive critique" (Healey, 2005, p.253). However despite a broad commitment to sustainability, within the current professional and reform agenda it is increasingly unclear for whom and for what this planning expertise serves. Unlike the early reformist agenda that emerged in direct response to the conditions of poverty and squalor ushered in by the Industrial Revolution, planning "the good city and region within the constraints of a capitalist political economy and a democratic political system" (Campbell and Fainstein, 2005, p.1) has struggled to provide a strong focus and platform for responding to the imperative of climate change. More recently throughout the West, and especially in Anglophone countries, the once progressive reformist agenda of planning has been captured by the global competitiveness discourse associated with the neoliberal political and economic agenda.

But what if the meta-narrative being constructed around planning was the imperative of climate change rather than neoliberal reform and the global competitiveness discourse? What shifts would then occur in spatial planning policy, practice and pedagogy? The seriousness, scope and scale of climate change demands not only a 'radical re-thinking of the way we live' (Lowe, 2006) but also the role of planning within it. Recent national initiatives such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF), an emerging interdisciplinary community endeavour focused on building both knowledge and action in relation to climate change are a promising step in this direction. Climate change offers both a conceptual and concrete focus and ethical agenda for building the shared knowledge and action that leads to transformative change reminiscent of early planning reformist origins. An emphasis on the role of planning located within climate change channels the multiplicity and diversity of planning in both theory and practice, rendering old debates around the theory/practice divide increasingly redundant. A relational framework for planning *in* climate change offers new insights into the practices of planning that provides an opportunity to transcend the anti-planning ambitions of neoliberal reform and move beyond the confines of the increasingly weary planning theory/practice cul-de-sac. Can planning afford not to?

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