

Addendum

IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRATED PLACE, LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING SCHEME IN NSW

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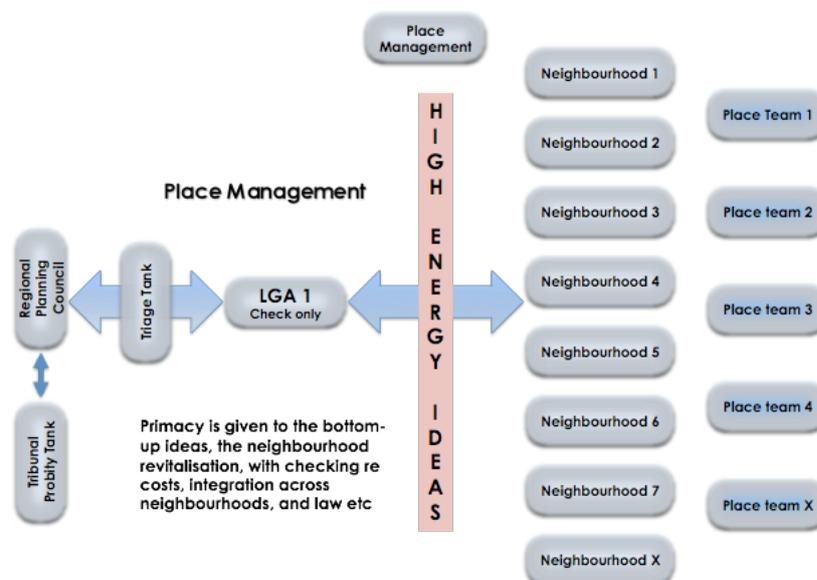
The 62 councils and their staff are distributed as follows (other regions might like to have the same facility):

Development assessment staff

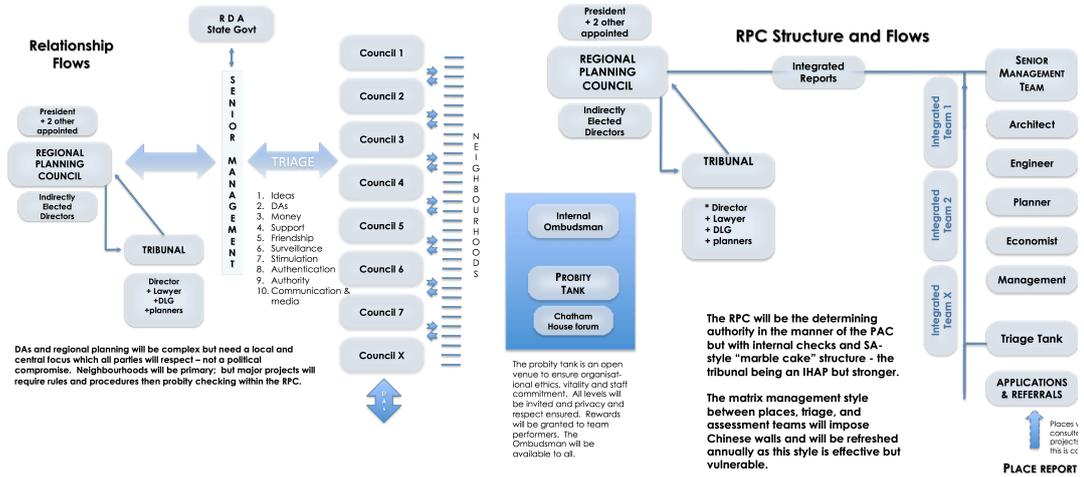
	Estimated cost					
	Number of LGAs	Resident Population 2008	Assessment Staff	Staff Cost \$	Ratio EFT/Pop'n '000	Cost per '000 reside \$
Northern Metro	13	1,050,000	147.9	25,054,260	0.14	23,861
Southern Metro	15	1,149,000	206.6	34,998,040	0.18	30,460
Western Metro	9	1,376,000	123.9	20,988,660	0.09	15,253
Hunter Development	13	945,500	165.4	28,018,760	0.17	29,634
Illawarra Development	7	681,000	104.5	17,702,300	0.15	25,995
Blue Mtns Dormitory	5	306,000	41.5	7,030,100	0.14	22,974
	62	5,507,500	789.8	133,792,120	0.14	24,293
	Average cost per '000 residents				24,293	

Average cost per staff member is \$110,000
 Number of staff from DOP "Local development performance monitoring 2009-19"
 Adjusted by 10% upwards to take account of staff not included in survey data
 Adjusted by 40% upwards to adjust for on-costs

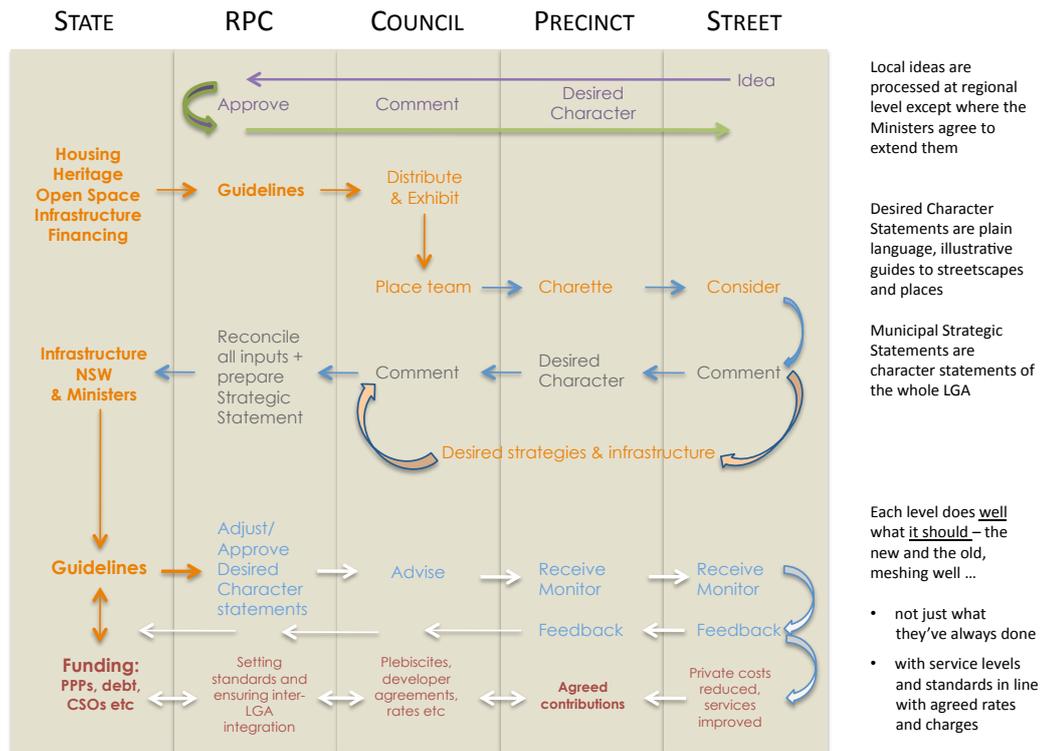
The proposed new system would look like this at the local level:



The structure of councils within the RPC and then within the RPC are shown below:



"Planning instruments" and local initiatives would be handled as follows:



Preparing a Council-level Planning Instrument linked with regional financing

The benefits of amending legislation in the rather urgent circumstances of today have been compared with extracts from Dr Peta Seaton's excellent Six Principles (left column) and would include:

Trust people

The field for testing creative ideas is as broad as our imagination. The will to do so remains limited due to centralist approach to governance and service delivery which will not risk empowering the community. To liberate policy creativity, decision-making must be decentralised. A thousand policy flowers can bloom, so to speak, by encouraging people to create and implement policy at local levels that best suits their priorities and needs.

- Precincts will be empowered for the first time
- Planners (multi-crafted) will be assigned to precinct support and isolated from strategic and DA work
- "Probity tanks" will empower staff to identify emerging issues for early treatment
- Mr Mant's idea of "marble cake" inter-weaving of different levels and silos of government will be achieved at regional levels as well as through Infrastructure NSW

Love the evidence

In many areas of life, evidence makes the world go round. Creative policy ideas would be more likely to emerge, and get a better hearing, if government performance was externally evaluated, especially in areas such as service provision and ownership of assets.

- Precincts as well as councillors/aldermen will receive local as well as comparative and "best practice" information
- Web-casting will open up performance to cleansing light
- Moving councillors away from operational and technical burdens will release them for facilitative actions and strategic policy engagement (including floods etc)

Admire the sunset

Creative policy often requires legislative abolition of existing policies. Wiping the slate clean is hard but we can at least ensure new policies don't become immovable objects. Sunset clauses, of say five to 10 years, should be built into new legislation. Too many government initiatives in NSW will limp on in perpetuity because their repeal is too politically risky.

- Five-year sunset
- The too-hard basket will be four or more items less heavy in weight – DA processing orientated to housing and employment targets + consolidation of 62 councils in a constructive manner + community engagement in a localism context + career-pathing for internal and external teams

Less is more

Creative policy does not need to result in more legislation, higher government spending, or greater government intervention. It should result in government doing less, not more—by changing people's understanding of the deleterious economic and social consequences of government intervention.

- Virtual councils will have lower direct costs and fewer monoliths, with much more on-line and more "complying" scope – more like community governments, with regional planning councils bringing state and municipal people together in an effective manner
- Expensive infrastructure projects will be better planned, assessed and funded, with engagement of the people-who-will-pay and benefit – the costs associated with "doing nothing" in our cities will not be accepted by the people who own our democracy and care about their grandkids

Probity and permeability

A legitimate function of government is to enforce the law and ensure public sector probity. Many Australian states have standing commissions to prevent, identify and prosecute public sector corruption. However, there is a view from the commercial sector that anti-corruption protocols covering tendering, discovery and other negotiations, particularly around large infrastructure projects, are unnecessarily costly to taxpayers and inhibit beneficial innovation. This is because existing bureaucratic processes sometimes handle benign and relatively inconsequential interactions with bidders with the same weight of costly legal process that they apply, with reason, to the consequential issues. Involving the private and third-sector providers in competitive public service provision will foster innovation and increase staff satisfaction.

- Complex technical and "confidence" issues will be taken into a replacement for the inefficient layer (PAC and JRPP), producing an improvement in local political engagement as well as consolidation of scarce-supply skills in an holistic and lower corruption context
- Mr Mant has attacked the mixed hats of councillors under the 1993 Act; this package removes at least three of those – assessing compliance with plans, management of operational services, and enjoinment of management in aspirational or political projects. (It also takes peer judgement to a regional tribunal, making "discipline" normal rather than "extremely rare")
- Explicit treatment of ICAC concerns over risk assessment, "separation", and ability to express concerns
- Better professional and ethical development of planning, architectural, engineering and like "development assessment" staff
- Reduced compliance costs in ICAC, various tribunals' and the Ombudsman's Offices, as savings or as diversions to better-focussed programs

Dr Seaton's original work will be found at <http://www.cis.org.au/publications/policy-magazine/article/2618-feature-creative-policy-destruction>.

The broader benefits are shown next:

