

## LAMENTING THE LOSS OF VISION

Maroochy Shire recently commenced its Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project. At the official launch to the community on 16 April 2003, Steven Ames noted planner and futurist from the US and now frequent visitor to Australia was the keynote speaker.

Steven took the audience of around 100 through a number of his US community visioning projects and in particular gave focus to one such exercise in Portland, Oregon – Portland Future Focus. Extolling the virtues of Portland's method of dealing with visioning, Steven also indicated that Oregon was the home of intelligent planning in the US, even suggesting that

***Portland has legislation at the State level requiring its local governments to implement vision within their plans.***

Seated next to Wally White from NORSSOC, I could not help but observe:

***You know Queensland used to have such legislation...!!***

Scary, isn't it, but its true. Queensland used to have a requirement for local governments to include strategic plans in their planning schemes. These documents naturally took a strategic view and for those local governments with the capacity, led to strong visioning instruments.

Under the *Integrated Planning Act* (IPA) though, planning schemes can only be tools for implementing the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS). Whilst the templates issued by the Department of Local Government & Planning include provision for a strategic framework, these frameworks are restricted to being part of the toolkit for IDAS.

Gone is the opportunity for strong visioning instruments implemented with the force of law. More importantly though, if this visioning material is removed from planning schemes:

- Where will community vision now reside?
- Local government's corporate plans are sometimes where this is found, but should these plans not be a local government's organisational response to achieving community vision?
- As such were corporate plans ever an appropriate location for setting down community vision?
- Are local governments giving considerations to these issues or is the resourcing required needed for the mindset change involved in drafting IPA planning schemes simply so great that these questions are being left aside?
- If so, will anything fill the community vision void when planning schemes with strong community vision are replaced by dry sets of development driven codes?

One wonders that if a noted overseas planner now commissioned by many Australian state and local governments finds it is important for planning instruments to have vision, whether Queensland's new approaches are out-of-step.