

Place Leaders Association

2007 – 2008 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

President's Report

Introduction

I have pleasure in reporting the activities of the Place Leaders Association for the year 2007 – 08.

Network of Peers

The PLA is recognised as a network of peers from similar agencies within the public sector both within Australia and internationally. During the past year the PLA has focused on further developing that network to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences across a number of areas of common interest. The peer groups that have been established include Finance and Corporate Governance, Operations, Place Development, Place Management, Planning as well as Sustainability.

Membership

Membership increased from ten (10) to fourteen (14) organisations during the past year. The primary growth has remained within Australia; however, the PLA continues to attract interest from potential members internationally.

Secretariat

The PLA has been fortunate to have retained the ongoing services of Trisha Hurley, as Executive Officer, on a part-time basis to manage the Secretariat. She has been joined by Mandy Cooper, a part-time Administrative Assistant, to handle the increased load being experienced.

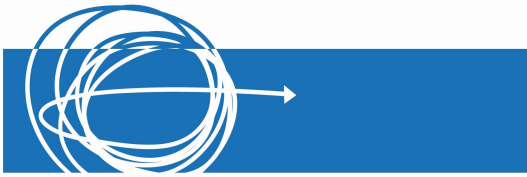
The Secretariat continues its important role in many of the PLA initiatives, including :

- the establishment and continued success of the peer groups;
- the launch of a new public website;
- management of the members' online information sharing and exchange portal;
- co-ordination of bi-annual workshops and;
- supporting the Steering Committee and Management Team as Secretary.

Key Initiatives

The key initiatives of the Association during the year include :

- The publication of a report by the PLA's Working Group on Water Management. The report considered the various existing strategies and practices of PLA members, as well as a number of non-member organisations. A number of practical recommendations were developed for the improvement of water management practices. This work was very capably led by Egle Garrick of SHFA.
- Commencement of the PLA's Benchmarking Working Group's project which will focus on benchmarking elements of the public domain and the factors that instil a 'sense of place'.
- Conducting a number of skill-sharing workshops :



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- ♦ “Water Sensitive Urban Design and Development – Towards Zero Water” hosted by the Land Management Corporation. Case studies were discussed within the context of related field trips and a variety of approaches to water sensitive urban design were presented by a range of expert presenters.
- ♦ The second workshop held outside Australia was hosted by Auckland City Council. The theme for the workshop was “Solving the Puzzle of Quality Urban Redevelopment” and the program included an informative range of field trips, presentations and case studies that incorporated culture, heritage, renewal and evolution in the planning and design of new developments in strategic locations.

A number of other exciting initiatives are planned and will be launched during the forthcoming year.

The Future

Although it recognises that contributions from non-member individuals and organisations can offer significant benefit to the members, the PLA is committed to taking full advantage of its unique position as a non-profit organisation created for the exchange of information and research between public sector agencies. These organisations are in the process of developing, or planning to undertake major urban land development / renewal projects, or are managing such places, designed to attract significant visitor numbers. This knowledge and skill sharing directly assists in the education of all stakeholders involved in making places that build and sustain diverse communities and is central to the PLA’s stated purpose :

*to improve the quality of place making in places of significance
for visitors, residents and workers.*

Whilst the PLA’s three key offerings to members are :

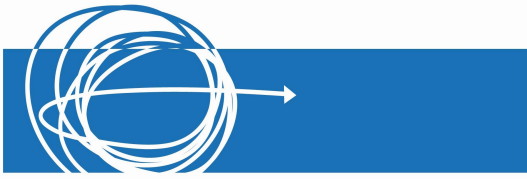
- Experience-sharing workshops
- Joint research projects and initiatives, and
- Information sharing and exchange

it actively seeks new ways to enhance the benefits of PLA membership and participation.

Conclusion

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to have taken a leadership role as PLA President for the past year. Much of what has been achieved has been through the strong support I have received I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals:

- Mr Wayne Gibbings, Chief Executive, and his team at the Land Management Corporation for hosting approximately 40 PLA delegates in October 2007 for the “Water Sensitive Urban Design and Development” workshop;
- Mr David Rankin, Chief Executive Officer, and John Duthie, Group Manager – City Development, Auckland City Council and their team who have hosted the PLA’s second workshop held outside Australia, themed “Solving the Puzzle of Urban Redevelopment”; and



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- Dr Rob Lang, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for his generous support of the PLA Secretariat with a variety of resources over the past 12 months.

I also wish to acknowledge the continued support and counsel provided by all Steering Committee members and the dedication of the Management Team representatives who have encouraged many of their colleagues to realise the benefits of building relationships with peers across the PLA network.

In conclusion, I believe the past year has been one of challenges, but also of growth and success. These have provided a solid foundation for the Associations' emergence as an influential organisation in the field of urban development.

Malcolm Snow
President
22 April 2008