

Understanding the role and expectations of local government planners in the contemporary political environment: A South Australian perspective.

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Abstract: Planning is a discipline constantly in transition, reflecting the economic and political ideologies of the time. These trends cause the relationship between the state and the individual to change, altering the intentions and expectations attributed to the profession. As such, planners are continually forced to assess their role, motivations and own values in their working environment. Considering the impact of the current neoliberal ideology upon global and Australian governance, this article aims to consider the current role and expectations of the individual local government planner in the South Australian planning system. Ultimately, this paper is based mainly on a close analysis of neoliberalism in relation to recent South Australian planning reforms.

This paper provides a desktop study of South Australian political and planning documentation, and assesses these in light of the neoliberal agenda. Although this list is by no means exhaustive, it gives some understanding to how South Australia has adapted to this phenomenon in their own policy. This paper concludes that one can begin to understand that modern local government planners theoretically appear to be confronted with facilitating the public interest, as is the duty of their profession, while facing increased needs to be cost-effective, time-efficient and 'accountable'. Ultimately, the value of this paper lies in the understanding that the individual planner's identity and validation is important in contemporary political discourse.

Keywords: neoliberalism; values; South Australian planning policy

Introduction

Urban planning is a discipline of constant transition, most often reflecting the current socio-political climate of a particular region or country (Searle and Cardew, 2000). Changes in governments, ideologies and policies, along with other circumstances, can all contribute to the redefinition of the purpose, expectations and values attributed to the profession. In this paper, 'values' relate to:

'what is right and what is wrong; they are central concepts or beliefs regarding final states or desirable behaviour that transcend specific situations, guide decisions and their ex post evaluation, and therefore human conduct, becoming an integrated part of an individual's way of being and acting' (Sager, 2009: 67).

These values, and their impacts, ultimately affect the planner's position within society, often leading to confusion as to their role and purpose (McClendon et al. 2003; Lai, 2005; Steele, 2009). Considering the impact of neoliberal ideology upon global and Australian governance, this article aims to consider the current role and expectations of the individual local government planner in the South Australian planning system. Ultimately, this paper is based mainly on a close analysis of neoliberalism in relation to recent South Australian planning reforms.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the ideological shifts leading to the current neoliberal ideology, within the context of the current Australian political and planning environment. Understanding this background is important, as the political environment influences and potentially alters the planner's role and disciplinary requirements (Gleeson and Low, 2000; Campbell and Marshall, 2002), affecting individual values and identities (Sager, 2009; Campbell and Marshall, 2002). The second section considers how current and future political agendas and planning policy integrate these neoliberal ideals into practice. The case study of South Australia, Australia, will be investigated, including how a major state planning reform in the early 21st Century: the *State Planning Review* (2008), may affect the planner's role in local government and local decision-making processes. This includes considering generalised neoliberal effects demonstrated within documentation related to the

area, such as: deregulation; the restructuring of local government and relationships between government tiers; the increase of private/public partnerships and the strive towards 'certainty' in practice.

Finally, the discussion considers the impact of political, economic and ideological shifts in governance upon the individual local government planner, their role and their values. It considers criteria outlined by Sager (2009) who argued that there are various values that adequately affect (and reflect) how an individual acts in their capacity as a planner. These include such attributes as autonomy, responsibility and respect. In assessing current South Australian State political and planning documentation, we can begin to understand that modern local government planners may face difficulty in striving towards facilitating the public interest. Ultimately, the value of this paper lies in the understanding that the individual planner's identity and validation is important in contemporary political discourse.

Neoliberalism and Planning: A brief overview

The nature of urban planning, situated within the sphere of modern governance, is recognised as both messy and political (Albrechts, 2003), a 'highly political set of practices...attempting to shape much of our physical and social reality' (Gunder, 2010a, p.40). Recognising the continually changing nature of urban governance is therefore vital in understanding the role and expectations of the planner within society (McGuirk, 2012; Alexander, 2009). During the late 1970s, the established rational-technocratic model of planning came under fire, as economic developments globally saw the shift from Fordism to a post-fordist system (Searle and Cardew, 2000; McGuirk, 2012). Along with the economic and social factors attributed to this movement, many English-speaking countries saw a 'decline in public faith in the efficiency of government expenditure and regulation' (Searle and Cardew, 2000, p.356). Ultimately, these economic and social changes reflected a repositioning of the state and the individual within society (Campbell & Marshall, 2002).

Since the 1980s, neoliberalism has been recognised by scholars and political commentators as the dominant political and economic ideology in the Western world (Gleeson and Low, 2000; McGuirk, 2012 & 2005; Wilson and Davidson, 2011). In the modern understanding of the term, neoliberalism is seen as providing 'economic instruments (as the) best solutions to problems of allocation, distribution and coordination, even in the sphere of politics' (Gleeson and Low, 2000, p.9). Advocates for this ideology, including varying right-wing economists, global corporations and political institutions, view neoliberalism as 'the only viable framework for the successful transition to restructured economic regeneration' (Broomhill, 2001, p. 115), after the 'failure' of the Keynesian economic model (Searle and Cardew, 2000). Opponents have argued that neoliberalism has seen the rise in uncontrolled competition and the reduction, even death, of many local government services (Gleeson and Low, 2000). The shift towards this type of economic liberalism was typified by Thatcherism in the United Kingdom (Steele, 2009 Campbell and Marshall, 2002) and Reaganism in the United States (Searle and Cardew, 2000). Effects of this movement have included: the reshaping and deregulation of governments and society (Campbell and Marshall, 2002; Broomhill, 2001, Gleeson and Low, 2000), the rise of private/public partnerships; and the heightened competition between nation states (Searle and Cardew, 2000).

In the Australian context, the neoliberal agenda has had an immense effect upon the structure and operation of urban governance (Gleeson, 2012; Gleeson and Low, 2000; Bunker and Searle, 2009). It is widely recognised to have been encouraged by the Hawke/Keating led Federal Labor Government in the 1980s (Searle and Cardew, 2000), but not reaching full strength until the Howard-led Liberal Government of the 1990s (Gleeson and Low, 2000). Elements of the neoliberal ideology/ethos have been incorporated into various Australian State policies and plans in varying strengths and degrees, and have subsequently filtered through to local government agendas (Broomhill, 2001). For example, in Victoria, the Liberal government led by Jeff Kennett, saw radical changes to government policy, such as 'extreme in cuts to public services, privatisation and deregulation of the labour market' (Broomhill, 2001, p.131). Similar effects occurred in New South Wales (Ruming, 2012; McGuirk, 2012; Searle and Cardew, 2000). In South Australia, consecutive Liberal-led State governments from 1993 to 2002 saw the post-fordist, neoliberal agenda being pushed to extremes, with the privatisation and/or contracting of transport and government services, water and power supplies (Broomhill, 2001). This was encouraged no doubt, by the State Bank Collapse of 1991, leading to the demise of the John Bannon-led Labor Government (Hutchings and Bunker, 1997). However, the economic rationalist approach to governance does face resistance because

of the socio-democratic of Australian governance, with some protectionist and interventionist measures remaining in place. This subsequently lessens the impact of neoliberal policies in various Australian states (Gleeson and Low, 2000; Searle and Cardew, 2000).

The global neoliberal ideology has impacted upon planning tremendously (Gunder, 2010b, McGuirk, 2005; Gleeson and Low, 2000; Sager, 2011 & 2009), as the profession has essentially been 'opened up' to the influence of the market (Searle and Cardew, 2000, p.355). Gleeson (2012, p.1-2) notes that neoliberalism 'explicitly set(s) out to dissolve the institutional power of planning, although with varying success.' Gleeson and Low (2000) argue that this led to a reactionary effect on planning, and seen the rise in grass root movements. Authors (such as Gleeson and Low, 2000; Fuller and Geddes, 2008) have also questioned how evolving political and economic agendas, such as neoliberalism, affect planning and increasingly appear to impact upon and/or intervene in property rights and ownership. Ultimately, the local government has had to contend with radical changes within their own structure and organisation, because of these ideological shifts (Fuller and Geddes, 2008), which will now be analysed in greater detail.

The effects of neoliberalism on local government and governance in Australia

The role and positioning of local government and governance within Australia has altered extensively because of the impacts associated with neoliberalism (McGuirk, 2012; Wilson and Davidson, 2011). This includes the relationships between state and local governments, as well as the role attributed to public sector planners. As the third tier of government in the Australian context, the role of local government is diminished; so as to be almost negligible (Wilson and Davidson 2011), having 'limited resources and policy responsibilities' (Broomhill, 2001, p.115). Furthermore, under the Australian Constitution, planning is a state responsibility, with local government having 'no specific standing' under this document, with the State designating planning responsibility to the local government (Searle and Cardew 2000, p. 362).

The role attributed to local government and the individual planner has also changed because of widespread developments within urban politics and global governance (Sager, 2011; McGuirk, 2012). Since the early 1990s, accountability in the public sector has been indicative of the global neoliberal trend (Allmendinger, Tewdwr-Jones and Morphet, 2003). The rise (and some would argue, fall) of New Public Management (NPM) typifies this transition of administration (Sager, 2011), placing emphasis upon 'competitiveness, market-orientation, and economic accountability in bureaucratic institutions' (Sager, 2009, p.65). Other aspects of economic rationalism attributed to governance, including the transition from 'managerialism to entrepreneurialism', have seen government priorities move from social policies to more competitive politics, aimed specifically at facilitating the economic needs, attracting mobile investment and prioritising 'business elite interests' (McGuirk, 2012, p.257). However, regardless of this neoliberal trend, commentators have argued for the return of increased state intervention in economic and social policy (Broomhill, 2001).

Considering these developments, what does this mean for the role of the individual local government planner and their motivations, values and identity within the current economic climate? How does it affect their capacity of acting as a planner with individual discretion, and considering their own value judgments (Sager, 2009; Steele, 2009)? The evolving role of planners is well recognised (Steele, 2009). Even so, there is evidence that NPM directly conflicts with the dominant communicative theory paradigm of urban planning (Sager, 2005 & 2009). Counter-discourses have thus appeared to challenge the dominating communicative paradigm (Gunder, 2010a), including power-entrenched, conflict-based views on planning (such as Flyvbjerg 2004; Flyvbjerg & Sampson, 1998). Considering this, how have current political and economic trends influenced planning in the South Australian context?

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study on neoliberal impacts in the South Australian planning environment saw the analysis of South Australian policy and related reports for indications of the key impacts of the neoliberal agenda. Works and terms relating to the nature and administration within governance, especially relating to the relationships between government tiers, the planner and the community were considered. For example, these include statements or processes alluding (but not restricted) to: accountability; private/public partnerships; deregulation; reduction in local government powers; certainty and competition.

The consideration of the past and current political ideology of South Australia was important, as the literature review attests – planning is directly affected and influenced by the economic and political climate of the time. Planning is directly overseen and administered by the State level in the Australian context (Broomhill, 2001; Wilson and Davidson, 2011). Information for this study was gained by a desktop analysis of the ideology and policies of the South Australian Labor Party – available on their website. Further information was obtained from the current Premier of South Australia's, Jay Weatherill, website; the South Australian *Economic Statement 2013*; the State Government's Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) website and various related planning documents, policy and legislation.

Although the entire South Australian planning system was considered in this study, a key event was selected to assess the impact of the neoliberal agenda upon the planning landscape and consideration of their effect on the individual planner: the *South Australian Planning and Development Review* in 2008. This event was chosen because it has had a profound impact upon the structure, organisation and direction of planning and planning governance within the state. The Planning Review and Reforms of 2008 also provided the basis for the development of the current Planning Strategy for South Australia, containing five volumes covering various geographical areas in the State (including the Greater Adelaide Metropolitan area's *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide*). Under legislative requirements, this political planning document guides local government Development Plans; key statutory documents within the South Australian planning framework (The Government of South Australia, 2010, p.2).

The South Australian Government in relation to planning history

South Australia is currently governed on a State level by the South Australian Labor Party, which has been in power for the past eleven years. (Since 2002). Under the current leadership of Jay Weatherill, the party prides itself on fostering strong economic and social liberal policies, epitomised by the Donald Dunstan led era in the 1970s (The South Australian Government, 2013a, p. 15). During the 1980s and 1990s, the South Australian Labor Government, as with various other Australian states, operated under a form of 'social democratic managerialism', emphasising an improvement in living standards and social justice. This form of managerialism 'sought to elevate urban planning in the bureaucratic hierarchy by linking it with strategic economic goals and with economic planning and management structures' (Gleeson and Low, 2000, p.11). The resulting effects have trickled down to the local government.

South Australia's political history has had a substantial impact upon the state's planning policy and practice. These economic and political developments, as well as shifts in governance, have seen the transition from a social welfare emphasis, to that of a strong neoliberal basis. It is also evident that events unique to the South Australian experience, such as the collapse of the State Bank in 1991, have further exacerbated these trends. These major developments are important to recognise and shall be discussed briefly below. (For more detailed analyses of South Australia's planning and political history, see work by Hutchings, 2011; Hutchings 1989; Hamnett 1997, Bunker and Hutchings 1997).

Since the 1960s, three major legislative Acts have dictated South Australian planning policy: *The Planning and Development Act 1967*, *The Planning Act 1982* and *The Development Act 1993*. Over this period, there was a noticeable and dramatic shift in the style of governance (Hutchings, 2011). The agencies in charge of the implemented legislation and the policy instruments utilised have changed accordingly (Hutchings, 2011). The 1967 Act was the first statutory recognition of planning in the State and saw the development of a Metropolitan Development Plan and the creation of the State Planning Authority. This body was comprised of key Government experts, ranging from infrastructure; development agency and housing chiefs (Hutchings, 2011). South Australia was also experiencing a strong population boom, with the then Labor Premier Don Dunstan, proposing a new satellite city to be known as Monarto (Hutchings, 2011). Social planning was emphasised in this city, along with economic and environmental ideals (Hutchings, 2011). The culmination of these factors saw a 'Golden Age' for planning and political excellence in the state: the stress on good urban design, a 'whole of government' approach to planning and emphasis upon social and environmental issues.

During the 1970s, there was a redirection of planning governance in South Australia. The Federal Government, led by Labor's Gough Whitlam, saw the first intervention of Federal Government in State planning affairs. After the oil shocks of 1973 and 1975, along with a slowing national economy, Whitlam was replaced by the Fraser Liberal Government. In the South Australian context, the booming population started to wane and Monarto was abandoned. There was a marked rise of the local government in planning affairs, with this tier of government now more active in decision-making (Hutchings, 2011). From a political philosophy perspective, the drive towards greater community consultation and lobbying by relevant interest groups (such as developers) saw a decrease of need for the State Planning Authority as the relevant agency for strategic planning approval. There was now need, it was believed, for an 'appropriate minister' to take charge. These new philosophies were reflected in the development of the *Planning Act 1982*.

The *Planning Act* was implemented at a time of further slowing in South Australia's population and economic growth. Following the Corcoran and Tonkin Liberal Governments, the State Planning Authority was abolished, and the implementation and structure of Development Plans was overhauled. The Development Plans were now viewed as 'planners' documents' (Hutchings, 2011; Hutchings, 2006), with the implementation of local government planning provisions for various areas. Local government planners were now responsible under the Act for regulating certain land use under the Development Plan (Hutchings, 2006). There was also an increase in the partnership between State and local governments (Hutchings, 2011).

Events in the 1990s saw dramatic changes in the South Australian political landscape. The collapse of the State Bank in 1991, followed by the demise of the Bannon Labor Government in 1993, had (and continue to have) extensive impacts upon the State's economic environment. These impacts were subsequently felt by the planning discipline. Before his ousting, Bannon initiated another review of State planning legislation and policy. Although not as wide-ranging as the 1982 Act, there were still extensive changes to policy administration. This led to the creation of the *Development Act 1993*. A two-volume Planning Strategy was to be developed, guiding strategic development of Metropolitan Adelaide and regional areas. The Strategy was overseen by 'the appropriate Minister'. The role and expectations attributed to strategic planning in South Australia has subsequently gone through varying changes depending on the political party in State Government. Hutchings (2011, p. 26) argues that since 1993, for example, these views have varied extensively, from 'indifference' by the Liberal-led Dean Brown and John Olsen governments (1993-1996 and 1996-2001), and 'positively' (the early Mike Rann Labor years). Hutchings continues that in the latter Rann years (2005 to his retirement in 2011), strategic planning was treated with 'hostility'.

In terms of modern era of Jay Weatherill, the *2013 South Australian Economic Statement* provides a sound basis for analysis for the economic ideals and directions of the current State Government, while also describing in detail the perceived economic climate. The policies and agendas espoused by this document seemingly complement the neoliberal rhetoric- sections dedicated to the strengthening of public-private relationships (Chapter 4) and the outward growth of the economy, especially in the Asian market (Chapter 2). Of particular interest for this study, is the emphasis upon, 'Strong Government', one of seven key priorities under the current Labor Government (The Government of South Australia, 2013a, p.48. Chapter 4 of this document). This includes the development and strengthening of the State Government partnership with community and business. Values such as 'accountability' and 'improved competitiveness' are seen as increasingly paramount (The South Australian Government, 2013a). Interestingly, this section also stresses the importance of increased government regulation in the economic development of the State (including in urban planning and infrastructure services).

Recent developments in South Australian planning policy and ideology also reflect this shift to a more cost-effective, time-efficient planning framework. From 2007 to 2008, the South Australia planning system was extensively reviewed by the State Government. Subsequently, findings from the review noted that there were large inconsistencies within the development process between local government authorities (The Government of South Australia, 2010). This led to the Planning Reforms, known as 'Better Planning, Better Future' (2009). There were extensive changes to the local development assessment procedures, typified by the creation of a Residential Development Code. This Code essentially is a 'tick-box'

assessment framework (known as 'Performance Controls'), covering general residential development issues such as height, setback and site coverage (The Government of South Australia, 2010, p.4). The *Planning and Development Review* saw the introduction of 'a number of changes to improve competitiveness and reduce red tape and costs caused by unnecessary delays with the planning system' (The Government of South Australia, 2010, p.3). Specifically in regards to development assessment and local government, changes included the improvement in performance, accountability, the length of assessment times for development (The Government of South Australia, 2011) and a review of the role and responsibilities of the South Australian and local government (Colliers International Consulting Services, 2007).

Recent developments in 2013 have seen a review of the South Australian planning system, a call to 'modernise planning processes'. The State Minister for Planning, John Rau, has noted that the planning system focuses on 'urban sprawl, rather than urban renewal' (The Government of South Australia, 2013b). Five key themes are to be addressed under this reform: Partnerships, Integration, Design thinking, Urban Renewal and Performance. Again, seemingly reflective of the neoliberal dominance, the reforms stress accountability and partnerships. The website encourages 'openness' of the planning process, with visitors welcomed to become part of the process. At the time of writing of this paper, the project is in Stage 2. This involves the analysis of the current South Australian planning system and extensive stakeholder consultations (The Government of South Australia, 2013c).

Increased accountability; decreased identity?

In the old days of utopias, garden cities, new towns, and master planning, there was great faith in the creativity and acceptance of the planner as an artist and philosopher-king. Today, the planner has lowered himself or herself to the level of an advocate for others' values, a broker of interest, or a property manager. Neo-institutional economics perhaps adds one more dimension to this pedestrian view of planning: everyone is a player in a spontaneous order in which everyone is perceived to be competing with each other and the plan, or any other institutional arrangement, is just a means in this perpetual wealth maximizing, cost minimizing behavior.'

(Lai, 2005, p.14).

The global neoliberal ideology has certainly impacted upon the South Australian planning system, as is demonstrated by relevant literature (Wilson and Davidson, 2011; Broomhill, 2001; Hutchings, 2011) and supported by the results of this study. The remainder of this paper explores the impacts upon the role and responsibility(s) of the individual planner. It includes some general hypotheses about the role of planners and other individuals within South Australia local government, their motivations and values, as well as providing some future directions for further research and analysis.

The above quote from Lai (2005), as well as the review of South Australian policy and political history, certainly encapsulates the current predicament of the planner in modern times. The evolving nature of the discipline, including the continual redefinition of the role and expectations attributed to the individual planner, has seen planning as confusing, even contradictory by nature (McClendon et al. 2003). In South Australia, the evolution of planning legislation under varying governments demonstrates this transition. For example, responsibility for major strategic planning decisions has moved from the technical expertise of professionals in the discipline to that of the 'appropriate (State) Minister' (Hutchings, 2011, p.12). Further confusion appears to lie in the constant repositioning of the State's planning agency within differing departments under various government changes. Under Rann's leadership in 2005, for example, Planning SA became part of the Department of Primary Industries and Resources (PIRSA). This was considered a significant step down for planning as well 'reduc(ing) the ability of planners to carry out cross agency co-ordination' (Hutchings, 2011, p.23).

Obviously, the nature of governance and the political landscape of the time dictate the role of planning in society. There is recognition of how the restructuring and repositioning of the individual within the state and society contribute to this confusion (Campbell and Marshall, 2002; Lai, 2005; Gleeson and Low, 2000; Bunker and Hutchings, 1997). For example, in Britain, the restructuring of society, caused by the Keynesian model of social democracy, contributed to people feeling unsure about the planning system,

and even, left the planners unsure about their role and expectations (Campbell and Marshall, 2002). In Australia, the role of the planner and planning is continually contested, with the current neoliberal agenda reinforcing the reduction of government-controlled planning (Steele, 2009; Gleeson and Low, 2000). Ultimately, neoliberals see the planners' role as minimal; a market-driven venture purely serving a means to an end, rather than promoting community participation and empowerment of groups (Sager, 2009). This idea appears to be gaining prominence in the South Australian context.

Other examples highlight how the modern day planner is seemingly torn between the ideological expectations and the realities of their profession (Sager, 2009 & 2011; Gunder, 2010b; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). This potentially compromises, or even diminishes, planners' values and judgment within their daily job. For example, although planning is now recognised as a multilayered, contentious and politically charged (Sandercock, 2004), the discipline still adopts and heavily relies upon techniques entrenched in the Enlightenment tradition of scientific rationality. This includes such methods as environmental impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis (CBA). Hillier (1999, p.180) argues that these techniques 'implicitly value 'arguments of sense' and recognise 'science, quantification, economics and instrumental values above aesthetic, spiritual and intrinsic values'. In comparing this to the South Australian context, one can see the economic rationalists' drive to be more efficient potentially further removes the local government planner's discretion, to that of a checklist, 'tick-box' system, such as is evident within the South Australian Residential Development Code. Although it could be argued that these developments are relatively minor in terms of the repression of personal autonomy, what is to say that future shifts in economic and political governance and ideology do not restrict this further? Is there a marked reduction in the local planners' *phronesis*, or their 'ability to make excellent judgments as to what constitutes good life and community' (Gunder, 2010a, p. 41)?

Therefore, in considering these expectations and the external and internal factors faced by public service planners, one must consider the values of these individuals. Sager (2009) created a list of values that adequately affect (and reflect) how an individual acts in their capacity as a planner. These include:

- **Democracy**, defending every citizen's right to influence collective decisions in matters that concern them.
- **Responsibility**, taking care of the social and natural environment required to uphold the quality of life for everyone.
- **Solidarity**, implying that society should help individuals out of poverty, and that increasing the capabilities of people should be a primary policy concern.
- **Autonomy**, asserting that adult persons are themselves the right judges of what public goods will serve them best.
- **Respect**, protecting integrity, identity, and things held sacred from being traded off for economic gain.

(Sager, 2009, p. 67. Emphasis added)

In his work, Sager (2009), having interviewed Norwegian planners, concluded that these individuals were striving towards the communicative planning paradigm of open communication with stakeholders, regardless of the New Public Management push as a style of governance. In considering the values above, two points strike as interesting in regards to public service planning in the South Australian context: 'Autonomy' and 'Respect'. These two factors will be increasingly compromised by the reduction of the role of planning in the neoliberal environment (Gleeson and Low, 2000), the emphasis upon the utilisation of private contractors for traditional government services, the influence of neo-institutionalism (Lai, 2005) and increased focus on accountability in government (Government of South Australia, 2013b &c).

The local development assessment planner, not only in South Australia but elsewhere, holds a vital, yet somewhat conflicting role. They are the public service professionals who regularly interface with the public, and at times, are confronted with the brutal reality of their choices and allegiances (such as is demonstrated in Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). They are charged with protecting a multilayered 'public interest' and making value judgements which impact upon streets and neighbourhoods (Alexander, 2009), but are increasingly restricted to adhering to 'performance controls' and development standards. Sager (2009,

p.66) argues that tensions arise for planners, as 'external pressures' force individuals to act 'contrary to (their) values', as they are required to often 'trade off different values'. Therefore, what is the place of values in a world increasingly pressured to conform to the desire for a more simplified, market-driven mentality? Based on this assertion, and this initial study, further research is being conducted in the area. This includes interviewing planners, and other stakeholders in the planning process, about their own attitudes towards their profession.

Conclusion

Planning is continually evolving with political and socio-economic trends and ideologies. It is therefore important to not only continually reassess the role and expectations attributed to the profession, but also the values of the individuals who operate within these systems. This article has demonstrated how the neoliberal agenda has impacted upon planning both globally and in the Australian context. It has argued that political and economic developments over time have subsequently impacted upon the confusion evident in the discipline today. Recent developments in South Australian economic and planning policy indicate the transition towards a more cost-effective, efficient governance system. But at what cost to the discipline of planning, and the planners themselves?

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