

RUSSELL ISLAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

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Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

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Dear Committee Members,

Inquiry into public good conservation - Impact of environmental measures imposed on landholders

1. Impact on Russell Island landholders of public-good conservation measures imposed by State of Queensland,

The issues raised in this paper relate to 'public good conservation' measures imposed, approved or foreshadowed by the Queensland government to the detriment to Russell Island landholders and include a variety of measures including land clearing restrictions and retaining and expanding remnant vegetation over Residential A land for questionable environmental and below Q100 flow lines (on the basis that no drainage would be provided). These are provided in a case by case basis at the end of this submission.

Here the costs to the landholders are not fully amenable to quantification as the measures imposed or threatened involuntarily include loss of certainty, which is a major factor towards massive devaluation of island land.

It is in this framework that the failure of recognition has extended to the planning process itself where a plethora of "public good conservation" measures have been progressively proposed, as a solution to make the problem go away. In effect, this was to try and make an urban island second in the number of urban lots to that of Tasmania into a rural one. It is a sort of process of anarchy that will have far reaching consequences for those who own land, now and into the future.

The attitude of State and Redland Shire Council Planners is important and to quote two gives an incite to their planning drive behind "good public conservation measures". To quote

"The image that you get over Russell Island at the moment is one of a very much a non-urban character, very much a retreat, a rural type character. It's something special of a retreat type

nature. The land was subdivided in the late sixties. It was subdivided under the control of the State Government at the time and Council was presented the package in 1973. There were certain reasons for that but regardless of the history, we inherited those islands in 1973, cadastral boundaries and all. In addition to Russell Island, there are also blocks on the other islands as I mentionedabout 13200 on Russell IslandOn the other islands , the total brings the whole allotment yield up to 18000 allotments. To give yourself an idea of the type of township capacities you are looking at, Russell Island alone is equivalent to three times the size of Warwick. Try to superimpose a town like character or urban type situation, or whatever, that's equivalent of three versions of Warwick sitting out there in the Bay.

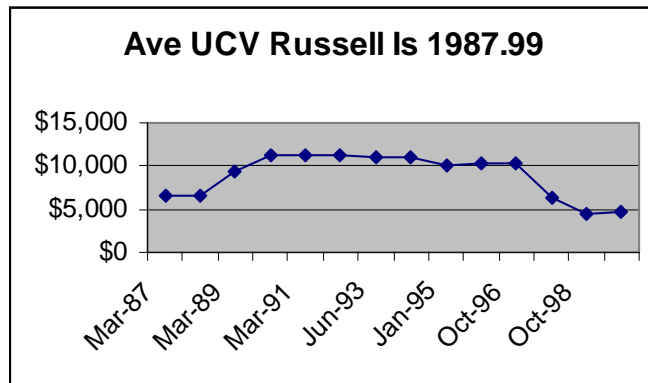
The subdivision which took place on those islands, not only was it indiscriminate in the way it took place ie. the subdivision of land in areas which are clearly flood-prone, drainage problem areas, swamps, whatever else. Not only was that irresponsible, but it was the type of subdivision that took place over there. If you looked at the type of urban subdivision patterns that are over there, the nice regimented grid patterns, the nice straight and up and down road systems, the allotments there, average 500 square metres in area. So, that in itself is a, is another factor of very poor planning. In fact, I don't like to use the word "planning". That's non-planning. Totally non-planned that island was."

Even the Director of Planning in the State Government Stan Wypych in a meeting with the Russell Island Development Association Inc on 22 February 2000 refers to Russell Island as "rural" which it is definitely not.

The attitudinal basis (not to accept that Russell Island is actually a very highly urbanised town plan consisting of mainly Residential A land clearly is a delay mechanism to provide only a minimum of servicing and sets an atmosphere which is more conducive to proposing "public good conservation" measures, to limit later works.

The impact that this has had on landowners has been devastating and probably this has been shown in a massive devaluation of island land where landowners have not been compensated. The average unimproved capital value of land from Department of Natural Resources data has seen a fall in this seaside land to about 40 per cent of what it would have realized in 1991 when the first of several 'public good conservation, measures' were mooted to a rapid decline when the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Land Use Study proposed a massive acquisition program of island homesites.

Case by case, the Association will show how there has been a tightening of these "public good conservation measures, where the baked up, not backed up solutions are proposed and the little person gets squeezed out.



2 Appropriate mechanisms to establish private and public-good components of Government environment conservation measures

- a) From the case studies attached clearly the appropriate mechanism to establish ‘public good conservation’ measures is to exclude those areas not worth conserving in an environmental sense. When land is deemed residential then it is pretty sure that this land should not be used for an environmental purpose. In the case of Russell Island, we have seen this mechanism completely abused by planners but it is not only by planners as in the case of a Federally funded catchment committee (Bulimba Creek) that had tried to stop an approved development all for about 150 square metres of a filled in creek bank outside a vegetation protection area.
- b) “Public good conservation” measures should only be considered after exhaustive studies so that only significant places are selected. The Southern Moreton Bay Island Planning and Land Use Study and its predecessor “Southern Moreton Bay Islands Draft Background Report have been extensively reviewed and have shown fundamental gaps in data collection to base conclusions. To base the recommendation to acquire 2000 lots of Residential A land towards the Southern end of Russell Island on the basis of no detailed flora study and fauna studies that found 17 cane toads, 16 crickets, 3 rats and sighting of 37 common bird species does not elucidate a confidence in the mechanism whereby this “public good conservation”, measure is seen to be fair.
- c) Federal funding of acquisition programs should only be based on guidelines being met. The case of Redland Shire Council trying to obtain Federal grant funds for its acquisitions on Russell Island by the Committee is recommended.
- d) In respect to the Committee’s call to receive suggestions for improving or replacing existing schemes that support landholder conservation the Commonwealth could assist states and territories to manage their own programs more effectively if it takes a greater interest in funding

programs where it has an interest. One of these areas is Moreton Bay and direct funding of say \$65 million on a Sewerage Scheme for the islands and this could do well in maintaining the balance between development and the fragility of the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

- e) It is agreed that effective, equitable schemes to support conservation in an appropriate manner may be developed more easily if good data and methods exist for use in assessing and modelling their costs, benefits and impacts on different sections of the Australian community. But it would be of great assistance that a classification of “public good conservation” measures could be arrived at so that there is an emphasis of protecting what is good not by screening every type and every lot of land on every type of land tenure. Here, priority and action plans could be classified for various conservation regimes. The States themselves need to have joint legislation that covers like classifications and where these “public good conservation” measures should be handled and at what level and urgency. Apart from the cases stated in this report, terrible things are done to the environment by local Councils and it would seem appropriate that the Minister in charge of the EPA’s in each state should have the legislative backing to stop the more radical of these. A case in point is the Berrinba-Scrubby Creek Local Area Plan recently approved by Logan City where a proposed large Mixed Industry Business Area will impact heavily on the Karawatha Forest that is listed on the National Estate unless the State Government vetoes the proposal.

3. Potential legislative and constitutional means to ensure that costs associated with public-good conservation measures are shared equitably.

- a) Existing residential land should be excluded from environmental and indigenous cultural heritage studies of the natural environment.
- b) There has to set legislative or regulatory guidelines of conducting environmental studies and environmental consultants should be registered under legislation.
- c) States should have legislative powers to protect the environment from the avarice of local government or other agencies and this could be in joint legislation with the Commonwealth.
- d) Federal grants should satisfy guidelines and heavy penalties set for those persons or groups applying for grants for “public good conservation” without putting in the work to justify their projects.

The compilation of this submission has taken many hours of research and I should hope provides an work on which the Committee can gain much through the Case studies examined.

It is dedicated to the thousands of island land owners who have been caught in limbo by the wave of “public good conservation” measures that have swept over them and their dreams of a bridged island and their dinky di aspirations of building a home on their own quarter acre block.

Yours faithfully

Ian Olsson MappScBuiltEnv(City and Regional Planning
President of the Russell Island Development Association Inc.

This e-mail is taken to be signed

Case 1

Prior to “Public Good Conservation Measures”

Russell Island was originally divided into rural properties. Produce was grown capitalising on early season harvest and then shipped to the mainland for sale. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Russell Islands were subdivided into over 13400 unserviced lots and since then has been destined to become a major centre. At the moment there are probably 8,500 vacant island lots on which housing can be built upon which is about the same as the present number of developer allotments on sale in other parts of the Brisbane region. There was no local authority administering the islands to ensure that the subdivisions were properly laid out and that all services were provided for. Owners had unfettered rights to do what they wanted to do, within the confines of State Legislation. Subdivision was based on the traditional grid system of the time. In most cases this was well planned for and took into account topographical constraints. However, along some of the ridge lines and in some drainage problem areas, subdivisions were not planned as well. A minority of lots were affected by tidal inundation. The sale of these tidally affected drainage problem lots became the subject of a long running but inconclusive Judicial Inquiry.

It was part of the Bjelke-Petersen Government’s decision to place Queensland's offshore islands into local authority areas. This followed sovereignty threats by the Whitlam Government to extend the Australia’s territorial limits. Official files confirm that there was little discussion before Russell Island was included into Redland Shire in 1973. At the time of incorporation of Russell and four other islands into the Shire, the number of the Shire’s rateable properties more than doubled from an estimated 11000 to an estimated 25300.

The Shire had no objections to incorporation of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands (*Redland Times*, 14 Feb. 1973) and recognised that with only 271 residents, the islands could not become a separate shire. The council did not object to the decision of the then Minister for Local Government, Mr McKechnie to incorporate Russell Island into Redland Shire. The council's main concerns were for the then Harbours and Marine Department to pay the full costs associated with jetties and that additional Loans Council borrowing to be allowed for an enlarged Shire. It has only become fashionable in recent years to blame the original condition of the islands for the slowness of development progress. The Redland Shire Council intended to collect about \$300000-\$400000 pa

in rates from the Russell, Karragarra, Lamb and Macleay island group. By agreement with the State Minister the Redland Shire Council was to ensure that this money would be spent on the islands after allowing for administration costs. But apparently the Minister did not ensure the agreement was kept and the council's intention changed over the years and only a small proportion of the rate money collected from the islands has been returned for island works. Consequently, the basis under which “public good conservation” measures were later introduced is that the island was not serviced so in places it still resembled bushland etc.

Little thought was given to incorporating Russell Island into the closer Albert Shire Council area (now Gold Coast City area). Like Bribie Island in Caboolture Shire Council area, Russell Island was close to the mainland. Russell Island had a distinct advantage over Bribie Island, in that it was 24 km closer to the Brisbane CBD and at the time many times the number of available building lots. Even by 1986, Bribie Island with 7000 residents had 2800 of its 4,000 Residential A properties blocks built on whereas Russell with 420 residents had only 150 of its 9500 Residential A properties built on. From 1986 to 1996, the bridged Bribie Island's population has risen from 7000 residents to 12000 residents (5000 more). In the same period, the unbridged Russell Island's population has increased by 500 to just under the thousand mark. People have built on a bridged Bribie Island but they have not built so actively on an unbridged, unserviced Russell Island.

In planning and development terms, a significant planning threshold was reached in 1976, when the islands were first incorporated into the Town Plan of the Shire of Redland. The generally smaller lots were incorporated into zones favouring the Residential A zone, leaving a deficiency of land in other zones. With an oversupply of Residential A land, there has been some sub-standard housing and squatting on land suitable for redevelopment. The Redland Shire Council enforced the provisions of the Town Plan in 1984, clearing off many caravans and their owners from the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It was a Catch-22 situation. Without services and better access caravan and land owners would not build expensive houses on the islands. With no thriving community, the council could supply minimal infrastructure and services to detract others from using their land. This process has continued to today. This only reinforced the basis under which “public good conservation” measures could be later introduced.

It is somewhat surprising that Southern Moreton Bay Islands market has been neglected for many years. This is probably a result of lack of recognition of the urgent need to provide better access and services. For many years, the island's road layout was not until recently part of the *UBD Refidex* street directory. Property guides such as the *ANZ Brisbane Housing Guide (Courier-Mail, various years)* have failed to include the Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

Yet, at times the direction for the island has been towards linking it with the mainland which is one of the objects under which the Russell Island Development Association was set up in 1987.

This bridge push at times has been certain, “a goer” on which thousands of Russell Island landholders have bought a block of Residential A land and expected to build on the island once the bridge had arrived. The more vocal proponents of a bridge speak of displays off the bridge in the Council Chambers in 1973 or have cut an article or more out of the paper to attest its reality. For instance,

The Albert and Logan News front page story of Wednesday February 16 1983 by Mark Mulligan is one and the story verbatim reads

“North Stradbroke Bridge is a ‘goer’, Likely by 1988

Cars will be driving along the North Stradbroke Island Bridge within five years.

With a March 25 deadline set on a State Government invitation to prospective construction companies, the controversial bridge is certain to be a goer.

An 18-page document , issued on request of intending developers late last year, has set the final date for proposals for the project.

Despite the apparent non-commitment by the Government, the Invitation Document for Submission of Proposals for Construction of a Road Bridge to North Stradbroke Island, sets out unequivocally what will be expected from the winning tender.

A map in the document shows the bridge leaving the Redland Bay side of the mouth of the Logan River crossing the southern tip of Long Island and through the middle of Russell Island, and then rendezvousing with a notional north-south road link on North Stradbroke Island.

Moreton Bay Islands which could be affected by the proposed North Stradbroke Bridge are currently experiencing a real estate boom.

Redland Bay real estate spokesman Mr Alan Falconer said this week land prices on the islands near or in the path of the proposed bridge were steadily climbing towards mainland prices.”

In the Town Plan Review of 1988, when drawing up the current Development Control Plan, council town planners recognised the *status quo*. They assumed that a bridge would not link Russell Island, as there was no decision that this would occur. They planned that by the year 2000, there would be from 2000 to 3000 residents. They were not concerned too much about the planning situation. Objectors who called for a bridge in line with the council’s preference for a bridge to stimulate development were not heeded. The (1988) Redland Shire Council Town Plan at page 138 of Part "B" supporting information gazetted 20 February 1988 supported a Stradbroke Island Bridge. The plan states

"For many years the Council has been pressing the State Government to provide a road link to North Stradbroke Island, a proposal to provide which has its supporters and its detractors. From a planning point, the provision of such a link is considered desirable because of the increased accessibility to the island's outstanding recreational facilities which a road link would provide for the population of the metropolitan area and also because of the increased accessibility to the mainland which would provide for the island's residents. It is recognised that an increase in visitors to the island would create pressures which would have to be handled carefully if undue damage to its special character and environment is to be avoided. The attraction of an island which is comparatively inaccessible and remote is also recognised, but the need for such is met in

the Moreton region by Moreton Island, although the State Government has discontinued action to provide a link at this point of time, it is understood that such provision has not been ruled out in the longer term. If the proposal is revived in future, there are routes which could be followed other than the last preferred by the State Government (through Russell Island) including a route via Cassim and Peel Islands which is probably the only route which will bring real savings in the time people to and from the island's townships which are all situated on the northern part of the island."

By proposing a different route for a bridge that excluded Russell Island not only created uncertainty of whether the island would be adequately accessed but reinforced the basis under which "public good conservation" measures could be later introduced.

The islands' Development Control Plan was thus framed around the existing inferior water transport terminal at the jetty at the northern end of Russell Island with adjacent business and other facilities. Little consideration was given to a southern access to Little Rocky Point on the mainland. This alternative route would cut the one way ferry trip from 12.5 km to 1.25 km with a closer link to city train and bus services. Without a long-term plan, the Redland Shire Council has been caught on the horns of a dilemma. It can not sewer and service the Russell Island's 9500 Residential A blocks under the intent of its Town Plan quickly enough to the satisfaction of all the land owners. It may not be able service most of the blocks even within 50 years from the date of original subdivision. If council had zoned these Residential A blocks to anything else, then till recent changes in the Integrated Planning Act, it would be up for one of the most massive claims for compensation in Queensland's history. This is the environment that has made it conducive to propose "public good conservation" measures, to limit later works.

Case 2

Two Early attempts down zone land (Council but approval by the State)

In the original 1976 Town Plan, there were 15452 Residential A lots in a total of 19116 Southern Moreton Bay Island lots but this number has decreased to 14456 lots in a total of 19316 lots with zoning changes, mainly down zoning to Drainage Problem (DP) zoning. There was insufficient land zoned for future commercial development, open space and for education, health, welfare and emergency services. Down zoning of land from Residential A Zone to Drainage Problem Zone at the time was a process ratified by the Minister of Local Government at a State level. Yet, this process was arguably harsh as the amount of fill needed to rehabilitate those lots to building standard is minimal. For instance, quantities of fill required to rehabilitate 70 Russell Island lots down zoned in 1991 ranged from half a truck-load to 20 truck loads. Again this only reinforced the basis under which “public good conservation” measures could be later introduced over this land and earmark it for acquisition against the owners of such land rights to fill.

Planning of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands is exacerbated by the extended period of time taken to acquire all the designated drainage problem allotments. This is necessary to contain ultimate island populations levels. This is surprising as lots have been offered for \$800 a lot and have been advertised in the *Courier-Mail* for as low as \$990 per lot in early 1997. The council could have started buying up and redeveloping the island from 1973. Instead it has relied on the gift of many drainage problem blocks for arrears in rates. These are generally fragmented and can not be readily redeveloped, at this point of time. Credit should be given to the council’s buy back of a parcel of over 1000 drainage problem lots for \$800000 in 1995 but this was only possible when the State provided loans to do so. This obviated the threat of further fragmentation of the more environmentally sensitive drainage problem lands. At a public meeting on 10 December 1994, the Russell Island Development Association Inc. (RIDA) called on the Government to allocate \$1 million for purchase of these lots. The then owner was in the process of breaking up his land holdings of the 1000 lots at \$1000 each. If the government didn’t buy or back local government purchase then the cost for each lot could escalate on resumption as per the *French Report* (valuer) of 1989. With the Federal and State Government’s allocation of a \$23 million package to buy back subdivided rainforest land at Daintree, there was a precedent for State and Federal Government assistance to buy back further drainage problem lands. By definitively not making an attempt to demarcate land that was legitimately drainage problem there was always doubt cast and stigma over the island where uncertainty itself reinforced the basis under which “public good conservation” measures could be later introduced over this land and buffers to it.

Case 3

1989 (State) Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan

The assessment of the impacts of infrastructure and access issues of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands was avoided in the 1989 *Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*. Not all of the area of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands was included. The southern half of Russell Island, where a bridge was most likely to connect, was excluded. The southern limit of the draft plan was the Port of Brisbane Authority southern boundary at latitude 27 degrees 41 minutes south. In effect, this severed Russell Island in two planning areas. The other half of Russell Island was included in the Gold Coast Waterways Draft Waterways Management Plan to the south. No responsibility was taken by either plan to assess the impacts of future access and development. The lack of co-ordination between State planning agencies avoided the pressing need to consider the bridge to Russell Island and this single most factor is probably the mechanism whereby “public good conservation” measures could be proposed easier.

In its submission to the Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan, the Russell Island Development Association (RIDA) promoted environmentally responsible developments. These referred to a road bridge and educational, emergency, recreation and health facilities. RIDA promoted *“the location of a road bridge that has minimal environmental impact, at the least possible disturbance to the majority of land owners.”* It opposed a Russell via Peel Island and North Stradbroke Island bridge, Redland Shire Council’s preferred choice. RIDA promoted a cheaper and less visually intrusive bridge direct to Russell Island from Little Rocky Point. This would protect North Stradbroke Island's tourist character and would improve boating safety and amenity. RIDA wanted a new Russell Island development control plan to be prepared and implemented. This was to protect the integrity of the Moreton Bay environment in the event of the bridge being built. The argument was simple. Environmental risks of encroaching development on Russell Island should not hinder future lower intensity redevelopment. Otherwise, landowners feared that the resultant slump could reduce land values by thousands of dollars and destroy Moreton Bay's tourist potential. Whilst a Moreton Bay Management plan was the buzz word, the islanders saw greater urgency to repair their home patch than to develop the Bay. So even in 1989, the Russell Island Development Association Inc. saw the massive slump in land values that was going to occur if the bridge was not built and was proposing a new development control plan to provide even then measures (“public good conservation” measures) that would protect the integrity of Moreton Bay.

The Association argued that with lower intensity redevelopment, a bridge to the mainland was justified. It would encourage many landowners to build. The islanders themselves would benefit from accelerated social, economic and environmental development. This would be highly conducive to the development of quality recreational and tourist facilities. Bridge access would improve Russell Islander's quality of life. They would enjoy extended social life in the comfort of cheaper 24 hour access. Noisy ferries, that ran to daylight schedules and then oftentimes carried inflammable cargoes would be a thing of the past. The public paid highly for barge fares and incidental freight. Yet, serious delays to schedule occurred with increasing regularity, especially during holidays. With a decade of bridge uncertainty, existing barges were dilapidated and ferries were poorly coordinated. They provided services to below the standard generally expected by many for emergencies and the safety of increasing numbers of Southern Moreton Bay Island

commuters. A bridge would provide the impetus for cheap mass water transport that would encourage tourism. With a bridge, there would be ease of ordered access to shopping, medical, dental, education and welfare facilities on the mainland. Later, Russell Island would become a centre for such facilities and would also serve other nearby islands to a higher order of specialisation. A marine oriented tourist potential existed. It could parallel the Hawkesbury River experience. The lack of social order of unlawful driving unregistered motor vehicles, sly grogging, drunkenness and unruliness could be better policed with 24-hour bridge access. At Russell Island, irregular water police services allowed offenders relative immunity to prosecution.

RIDA also argued the economic benefits of a bridge, such as reduced road transport costs. These would stimulate ordered economic growth. From RIDA surveys at the time, it had been established that hundreds of families had wished to build. These would draw in other visiting interstate families at holiday peaks. Because of high transport costs, landowners would not opt for substandard houses and services. Nor would older folk build retirement homes prematurely, due to bridge indecision. A bridge would encourage job creation through the multiplier effects associated with housing, services, roads and tourist and commercial node development. Shift work would become possible. Specialist hospitality shift workers could move to and from the island with relative ease. Redland Shire's rate base would be increased by higher valuations. If the Little Rocky Point bridge route was selected, North Stradbroke Island water would be available for supply to northern parts of Albert Shire (now Gold Coast City) via Russell Island. . These social, economic considerations were not heeded and also set the basis for “public good conservation” measures to be introduced.

RIDA stressed the environmental benefits of a bridge. Promotion of a bridge would force acquisition of expensive to develop privately-owned drainage problem lots for environmental wetlands, public open space and for other purposes. This was very important, so that the visual impact to passing water transport was not spoiled. A bridge would arrest severe blight, a legacy of poor water transport. This had allowed the accumulation of sub-standard accommodation and rusting motor vehicles on the islands. Increasingly, as governments encouraged tourism in heritage areas, the value of those heritage areas would be heightened. Sensitive areas such as the pristine parts of the southern end of North Stradbroke Island (especially its escarpment) would be protected as National Park. Russell Island residents who had spectacular views of Canaipa Passage and the North Stradbroke Island escarpment would support such preservation. With easy cheap ferry access to planned nodes on North Stradbroke Island, that island would be open to the future masses for controlled bushwalking, camping, fishing, surfing and similar recreational activities. RIDA pointed out that such nodes must be planned well recognising that on the present zonings 30000 people would live on Russell Island which was 300 metres away from North Stradbroke Island. Here, environmental and heritage resources such as 40 known aboriginal middens, some dating back 20000 years, would have to be protected. A bridge would allow the Redland Shire Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Fire Service better access for implementing land management policies. Hence, severe land degradation could be curbed by proper land and fire management practices that the then present isolation disallowed. On environmental grounds, RIDA rejected the notion that a bridge be delayed because the State Government or Redland Shire Council could not cope. RIDA sought a comprehensive Russell Island development control plan with public input to order and alleviate development. The council was morally obliged to invest millions of back rates and future rate dollars into the island. This was to pay for infrastructure and to ease

environmental risks of endemic erosion, substandard building, bush fire nuisance, chemical pollution and noxious weeds infestation. RIDA also argued that if the Redland Shire Council was incapable of providing ordered development, then the State Government should intervene to allow free enterprise to redevelop the island. Such redevelopment would include a new plan of the island to keep it in balance with nature for future generations. Specifically, RIDA stressed consistent to its stance taken in the *Redland Times* of 27 April 1988, that it opposed a Peel Island bridge route which would make North Stradbroke Island a dominant commuter destination. A less visually intrusive bridge via Russell Island would protect North Stradbroke Island's tourist and Moreton Bay's natural environs. The proposed Toondah Harbour development and any other possible bridge take-off point projecting into the Bay from other areas north of Russell Island would be opposed. These environmental considerations were not heeded and also set the basis for "public good conservation" measures to be introduced

Case 4

Gold Coast Waterways Draft Management Plan October 1989 (Funded by the Queensland Government)

Anyone who read the Draft Management Plan of the Gold Coast Waterways Study may be forgiven for thinking that Russell Island did not exist. References, in the draft plan, indicated that all islands except for South Stradbroke were being acquired, on Russell Island crabs were caught, it was an important area for conservation and that hovercraft are routed to the west. On plan, Russell Island was bordered with green, when clearly as a freehold island it should have not have been. The Gold Coast Waterways Draft Management Plan omitted the impacts of infrastructure and access of Russell Island with only the southern half of the island included in the plan.

The Russell Island Development Association (RIDA) made a submission to the Gold Coast Waterways Draft Management Plan. It's submission stated that under the terms of its objects, it supported a bridge to be built by 1991 in the least environmentally damaging manner, south of Rocky Point. RIDA pointed out that under its present subdivisional layout, Russell Island had the potential to become Australia's most populous island with the exception of the island State of Tasmania. A proposed bridge link to Russell Island would act as a catalyst for redevelopment on a lesser scale. Unless this occurred, then actual street resubdivision may have become increasingly more difficult (Now resubdivision is very unlikely indeed). Opportunities were seen as a bridge would open Russell Island to urban development, including canal development, seen as a possibility in the Division of Environment's Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan; there would be increased opportunities for water transport nodes; there would be an opportunity for an air/sea rescue station on Russell Island's south end for emergency access to Jumpinpin Bar; there would be new opportunities for waterfront industries, there would be a more peaceful environment for passive recreation without the Christopher Skase hovercraft passing due to height restrictions on the bridge; there would be increased opportunities for boating, especially small boating, (cadet sailing and the like), photography and bird watching in the really protected waters of Canaipa Passage; there was a real opportunity for a commercial fishing wharf; there were ample opportunities for tourist water related activities, such as a smuggler's inn casino and houseboat hire; there was an opportunity to replan Russell Island with less than 9000 allotments; and the future island population potential could have been reduced from 40000 to 25000 residents, so that its impacts on the Bay could be ameliorated.

RIDA's submission was not heeded and this also set the basis for later "public good conservation" measures to be introduced or threatened.

Case 5

The 1991 Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan (Queensland State Government)

The first “public good conservation” measure to strike Russell Island landowners was the 1991 Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan by the Department of Environment and Heritage. It had little appreciation of terrestrial land-use planning. Some of the plan’s notions in connection with the islands’ access and land-use planning needs were substantially deficient. This was inherent, as the plan covered several different local government areas and land tenures. To a certain degree, there would have been a momentum of planning considerations and a reluctance of planners to incorporate new ideas, once the study area had been extended to cover the whole of Moreton Bay, instead of that area covered by the Port of Brisbane Authority area. For instance, no work was undertaken to accurately reassess servicing and accessing of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands including its largest island, Russell Island.

At the time of preparation of the Plan, the Southern Moreton Bay Islands were a large urban area of approximately 15000 blocks zoned Residential A. These had been so zoned for about 17 years. In terms of land-use planning, it was a residential area equivalent to about fifteen Brisbane suburbs. The sheer size of the existing island urban fabric meant that the formulation of legitimate land-use planning policies. These needed to incorporate planning policies for a bridge (a legitimate land-use linkage), if land-use planning was to be effective. This was so that 15000 Residential A blocks could be adequately serviced. They could not be adequately serviced using the then present water-only transport access. Those promoting the Moreton Bay Strategic Plan were denying this fundamental right of legitimate land-use planning and land owners’ rights by recommending that a bridge not be built. To quote

“As part of the Strategy to protect the Bay from adverse impacts of increased residential and visitor populations, no further bridges should be constructed connecting the mainland to the islands within the lifetime of this Plan” - 1991 Draft Strategic Plan page 59.

As a result there was a proliferation of inadequate housing, a lack of community facilities and the continuation of poor services. Blocking access was to support the Redland Shire Council in its thrust to neglect the islands and to divert rates elsewhere.

A major failure with the Moreton Bay Strategic Plan was that island landholders were not surveyed for their needs before the draft Plan was released. The whole strategy aimed at restricting access (hence services). It was essential to find out the likely impact on what a person could or could not do with his own land. Was the lack of the bridge holding up person’s decisions to build? Was the lack of a bridge devaluing land so much that persons could not raise the collateral enough for a bank loan to build? Seen from these perspectives the draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan was introducing planning limitations over an unquantifiable number of people external to the Moreton Bay area in an extraordinary manner without compensation. If the Plan adversely affected owners legitimate rights, then the Plan should have specified compensation provisions. For instance, if the owners of the 15000 Residential A blocks were restricted in some way, then they could collectively sue. It was very important that the Plan did not restrict existing land-use, unless substantial compensation was offered. For the same reason, the Plan should not have been able to influence Redland Shire

Council spending of rate disbursements collected for island works unless it too provided adequate compensation to the Redland Shire Council.

The Russell Island Development Association Inc (RIDA) submitted at the time that anyone reading the Draft Strategic Plan may be forgiven for thinking that Russell Island had been cut in two. Its waterways could not be meaningfully planned as a whole. Such a divide-and-rule planning approach failed to elicit a comprehensive strategy for the future of the southern part of Moreton Bay. A main objective in the 1991 *Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* was to encourage an efficient transport system servicing the mainland and Moreton Bay Islands, catering for Bay residents and visitors (page 40). It therefore really did not matter how many respondents were opposed to any bridges from mainland to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands (page 16). The question was one of efficiency, not public opinion. The Plan recognised that developments such as bridges, canals or waterfront developments could result in rapid increase in residential population and must be reviewed (page 25).

The reasons for restricting population were spurious or not backed up by fact. The ultimate population was seen as 60000 residents. One would think that this projection would support the need for a bridge. Rather, a judgement was made that this population would likely exceed the environmental capacity of Bay Islands (page 25). This thesis was insupportable, as the sustainable population capacity would have to be determined by a study under special legislation (page 25 and 31). Then in another section of the draft plan, the sustainable population capacities of the residential Bay islands should be determined by studies carried out by State and local government agencies (page 58). The notion that the population potential should be restricted through State Government support in conjunction with revised subdivision by-laws and local authority policies was abhorrent. Continued restriction of building approvals in drainage problem areas and resumption may be possible (page 58) but not on the Residential A and other non drainage problem land. Without a study of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, the Plan was imprudently prepared. Its conclusion, that on the basis of the existing subdivision pattern the population potential was far in excess of environmental capacities was insupportable. To then argue that development should not exceed current levels from an environmental, visual, infrastructural and social point of view was unjustified (pages 27, 39, 40 and 59). So pointed was the intent of the Plan that it dramatised that the landscape character of residential islands could be destroyed by unlimited population growth and promoted restriction of opportunities for urban development by the retention of vegetation buffers to maintain the Bay's natural character (21). In fact, the Plan went as far as saying that the impact of urban development would have major repercussions. Issues such as infrastructure and transport needs would become critical. So would the threat of increasing quantities of sewage effluence and urban run-off entering the Bay (27). All of these reasons were spurious, as they assumed that the carrying capacity of the Bay Islands was beyond what a study would find out. What was amazing was that bureaucrats orchestrating the draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan had already taken four years since 1988 to go nowhere in establishing a carrying capacity of the islands. As part of the strategy to protect Moreton Bay from the adverse impacts of increased residential and visitor populations it was not justified to restrict construction of further bridges connecting the Mainland to the islands within the lifetime of the plan.

Case 6

The Redland ORCATS Study of 1992 assisted by Government Funding

In 1992, the Redland Shire Council directed the preparation of an Open Space, Recreation, Conservation and Tourism Strategy (ORCATS). Like the draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan, it did not include land-use planning of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. Nor did it include survey information of residents and absentee owners as to their needs. At the time, the Russell Island Progress Association had collected a survey that showed three out of every four islanders had supported a Russell Island bridge. But the ORCATS planning process was based on public workshops to form the basis of vision statements based mainly on outside influences. These outside influences included mainly mainland green groups, developers, farmers, wildlife groups, mainland progress associations and anti-freeway groups. This had little relevance to the land-use needs of Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

Similar to the Moreton Bay Strategic Plan above, there was therefore a major omission of the Redland Shire Council to recognise that land-use planning considerations. The need for a bridge was essential for sustaining the substantial urban fabric of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. The Russell Island Development Association (RIDA), believed at the time that the Redland Shire Council's motives not to consider land-use planning were to based on its history to neglect the islands and to instead disburse rates collected from the islands for mainland works. At the time it was suspected that this was not the result of good town planning practice but the result of putting Southern Moreton Bay Islands in a too-hard basket situation and neglecting the islands' land use planning needs. A poorly attended workshop was held on Russell Island at night when public ferries did not normally run. The RIDA Inc. president was excluded despite offering to pay his own share of the chartered ferry to attend. Thousands of absentee owners of island land had no access to even know that the ORCATS study was being prepared or that the results of such a study may deleteriously affect them. The exclusion of the main group of land owners from the planning process is considered to be a factor that later contributed to the impact of "public good conservation"

Case 7

Local Energy Efficiency Project 1992 (Commonwealth Government)

Sponsored by the Russell Island Development Association Incorporated (RIDA) this project was awarded \$10000 Commonwealth Grant. Competing jealousy of other island groups and the direct political intervention of the local Federal member (Con Sciacca) and Shire Chairman torpedoed the project. Major criticism was that there would be duplication of effort as the Redland Shire Council had just announced that it would spend \$100000 on a study to better identify the drainage problem lands. This announcement occurred in the interim period between the application and announcement of the Grant.

The objectives of the project were not to identify the drainage problem land but were examine the concept of redevelopment on energy efficient lines, namely: to provide a fresh approach based on new policies and management guidelines to redevelop Russell Island on energy efficient lines; to provide land owners timely quality solutions to their planning needs which encompass energy efficient solutions: to ensure government encourages energy efficient solutions and to ensure that quality replanning occurs through the implementation of quality control standards and review procedures; to recognise that the level of services required warrant better access to the island if energy efficient urban planning solutions are to be implemented; to recognise that as development is beyond the financial capability of the Council and State Government the project must be self-funded by owners who do not want the delivery of costly energy inefficient urban infrastructure; to recognise that the State government needs to set up legislation to set up a redevelopment corporation, so that owners as a collective can buy land on the open market and redevelop it at cost with energy efficiency in mind so that the debt burden is reduced; to recognise that the public sector can contribute to energy efficiency (eg at school sites) where the state may feel obliged to contribute in return for receiving land at nil cost; and, to provide a mechanism where the State government acts as a facilitator to assist land owners to be provided with energy saving services at minimal cost and to limit government outlays through good replanning.

These objectives above formed the basis of the Association's own "public good conservation" response to a Russell Island redevelopment project with energy efficiency as a major theme. It was envisaged that to test the concept of servicing 5000 existing allotments and redeveloping another 8296 into 4040 new allotments and providing better access so that this could occur with a savings of \$250 million. Energy efficiencies could be realised by developing the southern access and redevelopment of the island. The number of lots would be reduced from 13300 to 9000 where the \$170 million invested could be further reduced by say incorporation of special narrow width low-speed roads etc. Russell Island would benefit by having fewer allotments with less energy spent on roads water reticulation sewerage etc. As it was distant from the CBDs of Gold Coast and Brisbane, energy would also be saved on transport costs. By giving the island better access, there would also be reduced pressure for development of Redland Shire's superb koala habitat and prime agricultural land. Careful planning of the island's access could even better link parts of the agricultural base.

The redevelopment proposal envisaged that owners pay a quarter of the cost of servicing their own land (say \$5500 over 15 years or a dollar a day) and less if a regime of energy efficient measures

were implemented. If redevelopment did not occur, then the low rate base and high costs of existing energy inefficient services would impede service provision further. Services such as sewerage would be delayed which in turn would lead to likely pollution of foreshore and mangrove areas. Redevelopment would also encourage stable prices so that rampant speculation did not impede development. It was also likely that the tapping of Russell Island's 9000 blocks by a better access would see a land oversupply that was conducive to peg back land prices throughout the greater Brisbane area. It was likely to reduce housing prices and therefore increase the propensity for more of these houses to incorporate energy efficiency. This aspect was most objected to by the opposing Russell Island Progress Association who complained that RIDA's proposal was creating a land bank which they opposed.

A major project of this kind in the present regime of low interest rates could be self-funded for about \$15 million per year. It would provide at least 200 jobs directly and another 1000 or so through the multiplier effects of private housing construction. By dovetailing energy efficient measures into the concept, then both the prospects of worthwhile redevelopment and promotion of energy efficient urban replanning would pay handsome dividends.

The concepts included at the time were considered too controversial but no longer able to be implemented in an era of "public good conservation" measures because subsequent development has ensued making redevelopment next to impossible.

Case 8

The SEQ 2001 Project - Queensland State Government

This document and its *Regional Framework for Growth Management* introduce “public good conservation” measures that have been the fundamental planning instrument guiding subsequent plans to date. Put simply, in introducing the SEQ2001, Regional Framework of Growth Management, planners ignored the Southern Moreton Bay Islands including Russell and the existence of their 19316 rateable residential allotments. They tried to pass the area off as non-urban and their reasons for doing so are highly contentious and very difficult for anyone to understand.

Most of the body of recommendations in of "*Creating Our Future*" in the SEQ 2001 Project was not based on accurate, clear, concise, factual written and graphic information on the Bay Islands including Russell Island. SEQ 2001 (*Open Space and Recreation Discussion Paper p. 22*) indicated that landscape and visual quality was under threat particularly if there was further development of the Russell Island without consideration of the regional implications. Arguments were made for conserving such "regional landscapes" as far as possible (*Open Space and Recreation Discussion Paper p. 21*) but such arguments were naïve as they did not accept that further building development on existing Residential subdivisions was likely. In this matter the die had been cast and it was a foregone conclusion that regional landscapes would change with residential development.

The nature of the inhabited Russell Island is very large urban subdivisions mainly with Residential A zoned allotments. These are next to impossible to resume, hence they are destined to become very large dormitory suburbs. These were predestined to be very expensive to provide infrastructure for and to service. The *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* and one of the *Rivers and Coastal Management Policy Paper* both agreed that the potential residential population of the Bay Islands was 60000 persons. The origin of this number was erroneously attributed to Hennessy (The Redland Shire Council Engineer) who said nothing of the sort in a previous Moreton Bay Symposium organised by the Institute of Engineers. However, such a figure established the Bay Islands with a potential catchment of 60000 residents. Therefore, it would satisfy the notional catchment criteria of 50000 to 150000 people for which they would be classed as a Regional centre (*Major Centres Policy Paper p.38*). Two of the Bay Islands, Russell and Macleay were the largest urban areas in Redland Shire, according to the Queensland Department of Lands. In terms of rateable allotments, Russell Island had over twice the number of rateable properties than did Cleveland the largest mainland suburb in Redland Shire.

Colour coding of the islands to brown representing a non-urban area on the draft Regional Outline Plan was incorrect, as it should have been pink representing an existing urban area and the inclusion of the island within a Regional Open Space System Core Area misleads as the area is very unlikely to become part of the open space system. This incorrect information was later used by the Department of Transport to later oppose bridge access to Russell. Islands like Russell, Karragarra, Macleay and Lamb were not part of a regional recreational park. Nor should have they been part of a Regional Open Space core area as the architects of SEQ 2001 would lead us to believe. The preferred pattern of urban development on the SEQ 2001 Regional Outline Plan needed to be reviewed as a regional centre. The Southern Moreton Bay Islands are a major existing urban area of

the Redland Shire. Similarly, hatching the Regional Open Space Map to indicate that the islands were part of a open space core area was criticized as the islands were intensely subdivided into 19316 allotments mainly zoned residential. It was essential to ensure that the centre was provided with better transport options in line with the SEQ 2001 *Major Centres Policy Paper*. This meant that responsibilities had to be agreed to between State and Redland Shire officials. Transport corridors would have to be planned for so that the necessary bridges could be built to support the centre. Policies for resumption of island bayside land and precinct development needed to be worked out. Staging of infrastructure programs needed to be dovetailed into the development process. Possible redevelopment of areas with greater diversity and environmental concern needed to be considered.

Case 9

The Southern Moreton Bay Islands Draft Background Report and Update 1993 Prepared by: A. Bullen. N. Flanagan B. Slack. (Redland Shire)

These were prepared at the direction of the Office of Cabinet by officers of the Queensland Department of Housing Local Government and Planning with input from other Departments and Redland Shire Council. There was no public consultation. By 1993 “public good conservation’ measures were actively sought by the State Government to provide radical solutions to servicing Russell and the other habitated Southern Moreton Bay Islands. The purpose of the *Southern Moreton Bay Islands Draft Background Report* was to outline the islands' historical background and development history. It presented perceived planning problems and development circumstances, a range of potential planning responses and initiatives designed to address existing problems. Five options were identified for future planning and development of the islands. The options identified range from low impact, conservation based management of the islands, to high cost, development based alternatives. While adopting a different theme, each option would require further work identifying improved planning controls, the possible acquisition of drainage problem land; the provision of urban infrastructure and potential environmental management measures. The selected option, Option 3 proposed a range of effective environmentally based measures which actively addresses the Island's key planning, problems. It would need a further additional to establish an environmentally sustainable population and drainage regime, a conservation based planning strategy and a full valuation study. Draconian amendments to the existing strategic plan extension of drainage areas design and vegetation clearing controls were proposed as well as a Development Control plan identifying environmentally friendly solutions to existing planning/development deficiencies. (eg. provision of sewerage in conjunction with reticulated water). There would be partial subdivisional redesign to achieve improved foreshore access, human service provision, increased open space recreation area) and acquisition of additional areas. to implement tidal buffers/esplanades adjacent to all tidal lands - (Nominal width 100 metres). There would be compulsory acquisition of drainage problem land through special legislation or tendering in conjunction with special legislation. The inclusion of tidal lands in Fisheries Reserves/Moreton Bay Marine Park. An Environmental Park over non-tidal drainage problem areas would be declared, following acquisition by crown, buffer esplanades would significantly improve public access to foreshore.

An essential element of this plan was that there would be no bridge to Russell Island and progressive up-grading of island jetties, and water taxi services. The State would provide funding assistance for extension of reticulated water and the provision of sewerage infrastructure on Russell Island. Headworks and major trunk servicing made a priority.

The following critique is based on the *Southern Moreton Bay Background Report* The *Southern Moreton Bay Islands Draft Background Report*

The presentation of size data and unsuitability of small lots for widespread waste water disposal were questionable. The *Draft Background Report* emphasised that there were many lots smaller

than 600 m² in area^{1,6}. But, many of the Residential A lots were larger (Average areas have been calculated from the *Update* for Russell 650 m², Lamb 709 m², Macleay 884 m² and Karragarra 908 m²). The *Draft Background Report* stated that was not uncommon for the size of lots, especially on Russell Island to fall below 600 m² and 500 m², particularly near the coastline which was at variance to that information presented in Table 1. Only 18.4 per cent of Russell Island's of lots fell below 546 m² (21.6 perch) and few of these were in proximity to the coastline. Only 1.4 per cent of Russell Island lots fell below 500 m² in area and most of these were in a very old subdivision near Koro Street, inland from the coastline. The lot yield of Southern Moreton Bay Island subdivisions were above *The Regional Framework for Growth Management for South East Queensland* (page 33) target of 15 dwellings per hectare by year 2011. In this context, Bay Island lots were adequately sized, not too small. In fact at the time of incorporation of the Bay Islands into Redland Shire, the predominant lot sizes became those on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. Without supporting evidence, the *Draft Background Report* claims that the prevalence of small lot sizes has made widespread use of septic or sullage waste disposal systems unsuitable, as housing densities increase with potential for environmental pollution and possible health risks. Without technical support, the *Southern Moreton Bay Islands Draft Background Report* expected problems with absorption trenches to over 10 per cent of island lands because of a high water table due to rock or heavy clay but did not link the suspected areas to subdivisions containing small lots.⁷ Therefore, the *Draft Background Report's* assertion that problems could be expected from the combined effect of small lots and relatively high population growth trends was unsubstantiated. The low island population base, combined with the low percentage of lots built on and low occupancy rates quoted elsewhere in the *Draft Background Report*. This would discount the claim that septic disposal could pose problems by year 2000 as a result of the cumulative effect of increased settlement in certain areas and small allotment sizes. The *Draft Background Report* failed to acknowledge that for both water and sewerage reticulation to be financially and environmentally viable, the maximum number of allotments (large and small) should be reticulated, thus reducing unit costs of provision. However, the *Draft Background Report's* precautionary advice is welcomed. Where a reticulated water supply exists the future provision of reticulated sewerage should be required.

There was a preoccupation that Residential lots had been sold for ostensibly for residential uses. The *Draft Background Report* failed to recognise that most purchasers probably bought good Residential A lots for housing and were quite satisfied. Rather, reference was made to dubious marketing practices. This included unsubstantiated claims that unserviced land was bought for investment and that a significant proportion of island allotments were being developed and sold "ostensibly" for residential development. The word "ostensibly" was used inappropriately, as Bay Islands have one third of the number of lots (80 per cent of the vacant lots) in the Residential A zone in Redland Shire. This stock has been thus zoned since 1976.³

There was an over-critical concentration on unsuitability of existing subdivision layouts. The *Draft Background Report* was over-critical of road layouts and subdivision design which had little regard for physical features and constraints imposed by the land, that adequate public access to the foreshores was not provided. It pointed out that little provision was made for schools shops open space etc. Yet, the traditional grid road layout was characteristic for the time it was planned and most lots for the period were well planned for, leaving aside those in drainage problem

environments. Only a small proportion of the street blocks containing land in the Residential A zone were partly affected by drainage problem allotments.

The *Draft Background Report* emphasised that Island subdivisional redesign and redevelopment was a positive means to overcome a variety of planning problems, evident on the islands. It was needed to firmly establish a sustainable population ceiling for the islands. This in turn would overcome the existing and potential environmental degradation resulting from development on existing subdivision patterns and the detrimental use/development of environmentally significant areas. Redevelopment would also overcome undesirable development forms as well as removing unsuitable land from freehold ownership and to resolving existing deficiencies of inadequate provision of urban services, unconstructed access and poor subdivision and allotment design. But, then the *Draft Background Report* acknowledged that acquisition of existing freehold properties would be difficult to implement as it would necessitate existing owners being dispossessed and when the land is redesigned, then offered to others. This would be to permit subdivision redesign, to eliminate drainage problem areas from development, to protect environmental areas and to create urban areas of an acceptable standard. Then the land would be reallocated or resold. 29

The *Draft Background Report* was silent on the real costs of development and understated the cost of roads. The *Draft Background Report* stated that since 1973, Redland Shire Council had provided services commensurate with population growth. But the *Draft Background Report* was silent on the fact that the Council should have attempted to provide services not only to a small resident population but also to all rate paying owners of 15000 Residential properties. These owners had by then cumulatively paid over \$50 million in rates. The *Draft Background Report* omitted to comment on the consequences of under-servicing. In effect, the costs of providing the islands with normal services to Russell Island had blown out to over \$250 million.

The *Draft Background Report* mentioned preliminary sewerage disposal plans. These plans considered limited island disposal by Moreton Bay outfall, by pumping effluent to the mainland, by injection into deep bores in mined areas of North Stradbroke Island and by ocean outfall. Disposal into the Bay or by pumping into bores in North Stradbroke Island may be cheaper than that the estimated \$70 million that it would cost to sewer the islands. However such an idea could be environmentally hazardous (costs per island see Table 4). The *Draft Background Report* mentioned the costs of sealing the island roads at between \$30-40 million, which was very optimistic considering a Redland Shire Council Engineering Services Committee Report of 5 July 1994 had costed sealed bitumen strips to all Bay Island roads at \$80 million.

The *Draft Background Report* referred to a perception, that providing extensive services would “lock-in” sub-optimal subdivisions. These would require additional servicing such as sewerage. This was hard to justify because of the extent of building and reticulation of electricity to over 10000 lots. Subdivisions were already “locked-in” and whether they were sub-optimal, or not, they needed services. The *Draft Background Report* did not concede that redesign of existing subdivisions was not really feasible on Macleay/Perulpa, Lamb and Karragarra Islands. Nor did it concede that small scale resubdivision may only be possible on Russell Island, despite the possibility of some minor allotment amalgamation on all islands.

Realising the Bay Islands population could rise to between 4000 and 5000 residents by year 2000,

the *Draft Background Report* over-emphasised two issues. Firstly, if the islands were fully settled with 60000 plus population, then urban subdivision and the resulting built development would threaten the natural values. These were to maintain the Bay's "green corridor" and visual amenity, a key element of the *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*. Secondly, such development could impact on surrounding Moreton Bay waters from urban stormwater and from nutrients from point source waste water discharges. But based on the dwelling occupancy rates contained in the *Draft Background Report*, the resident population of the Bay islands could rise to 27800 if fully developed. This was less than half the 60000 stated in the *Draft Background Report* and the draft *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*. Consequently, the impacts were not likely to be as great as envisaged. Even so, solutions would need to be found to reduce the impacts of stormwater and waste water discharges.

Tables in the *Update* incorrectly stated that Russell Island has 1809 Residential A lots and 8856 drainage problem lots. Thus it could be assumed to be seen there was a lesser problem of servicing and a greater problem with drainage problem lands. In 1993, Russell Island had 9527 Residential A lots in about 8900 ownerships.

In effect the *Draft Background Report* emphasised a negative planning process to accommodate potential populations over existing Residential A land by limiting services and therefore adverse impacts to the environment due to increases in resident and visitor populations. Such a study failed to recognise what Residential A allotment stock was already available and what necessary sewerage scheme was necessary for that stock. To evaluate the sustainable number of allotments under various scenarios indicated that the number of Residential A lots could be varied. Thus the rights of some owners to build as-of-right would ultimately be violated. The suggested study was not actioned, which indicates a low level of confidence in such a retrograde planning measure for preservation of the islands and their surrounding environment.

The *Draft Background Report* suggested that a drainage problem study, incorporating a catchment study, would be needed as a prerequisite to defining areas for acquisition, redesign, redevelopment and forward planning. This would take time to implement. The current joint State and Council planning study of the islands will not publish accurate data till late 1997. Consequently, the 100 year A.R.I. (Average Recurrent Interval) flood levels have not been set. To counter this, the Council proposed Town Planning amendments so that no filling would be allowed on land which lay below the 100 year A.R.I. flood level. The applicant of any development would have to provide information prepared by a suitably qualified person of contours. These would be at 250 mm intervals on plans of the subject allotment and adjacent allotments, to identify and indicate the 100 year A.R.I. flood level to establish whether it affected the allotment (including where applicable, the MHWST and HAT levels). Any alterations to be approved to natural surface levels would also have to be shown and comply with interim design standards. As the A.R.I flood level was not identified, applicants would have had to engage such expertise if the amendments become law. This was irrespective of whether their property was in a flood area or not. The amendment was premature as consultants were yet to identify areas of 100 year flood and tidal inundation and would propose regulation lines to restrict certain development.

The *Draft Background Report* over-emphasized a lack of planning controls which recognised and

addressed the unique planning problems present on the Islands. What the *Draft Background Report* did not accept was that all town planning problems were unique. In this case planning controls were being proposed the first time since the Redland Shire Council first zoned the island in 1996. But in a climate of under-servicing of the islands, the council's reason to do so was clearly to limit exposure to the high servicing costs that were becoming increasingly apparent. There have been several Town Plans each with certain controls over the Bay Islands and to over-emphasize the lack of planning denigrated those who have attempted to plan.

Whilst the *Draft Background Report* recommends improved planning controls, it did not necessarily mean that the planning approach adopted, in the absence of council funding of services, must impede predictable future island development on the existing subdivisional layout. Rather, those measures, that were quantifiable and would have an adverse affect on the Bay, should be corrected if it was economically possible to do so. Severely constrained no-go areas could be excluded. A future development framework could be established for redeveloping some precincts. The *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* could be sympathetically applied in balance with the competing interests of landowners who wish to build as-of-right on lots in the Residential A Zone.

The *Draft Background Report* suggested restricting ownership fragmentation of the drainage problem lands. Yet now 7 years on years on and despite over one thousand drainage problem lots been recently acquired, the remainder of drainage problem land is fragmented including council's own holdings. Only outright purchase will resolve this.

The *Draft Background Report* suggested a valuation study to provide reliable insight into the island's property markets. The study envisaged an assessment of existing values, trends in land speculation, land acquisition costs, compensation and real estate implications of various redevelopment options including allotment sizes, provision of services, open space, foreshore buffers and improved public access. Yet, redesign of existing subdivisional patterns was not really feasible. The Redland Shire Council and State Government responses to buy land for open space, health education and human services were not predictable. At the time, there were something like 4000 island lots presently for sale. It was reasonable to expect that the government could have bought land for such uses at affordable market prices that would be at less than forced compensation value and costs.

The *Draft Background Report* did not examine appropriate interim vehicular barge and ferry upgrades that would be needed prior to bridging Russell Island. A \$4 million Russell Island O-Bahn bus-vehicular barge link at Rocky Point was promoted at the time. Vehicular movements generated by increasing numbers of island residents and visitors would be totally redirected away from koala conservation areas. Adding a further extension of the Bay's littoral zone and fish habitat, mangrove-lined barge ramps would extend 340 metres from Russell Island and 370 metres from the mainland (0.0 m Moreton Bay Datum).

The 750 metre gap would form the vehicular barge link, a sixteenth of the distance of the present 12-km direct route from Redland Bay to Russell Island. Trip times would be cut from one hour to

five minutes and fares cut from about \$20 to \$5 each way. Some 150000 cum of material would be dredged to form a deeper navigation channel at Rocky Point and would be used for the mangrove lined ramps. Three kilometres of road would be constructed to complete a sealed link on approaches to the ramps. This route would use only 800 metres of causeway or a fifth of the four kilometres of causeway that were envisaged in bridge proposals on the 1986 “preferred link” via Pannikin and Lagoon Islands.

The *Draft Background Report* highlighted as a major issue the ongoing pressure for a bridge linking Russell Island to the mainland. It erroneously stated that “It was estimated by the Deputy Premier in a meeting with the Russell Island Development Association before the last election that it would be at least 10 years before such a bridge might be seriously considered.” What the *Draft Background Report* didn’t state, was that no such meeting took place. It is discouraging to see the same wording from the (then a restricted Cabinet document) was repeated in a Redland Shire Council letter to the Russell Island Development Association in January 1994. The *Draft Background Report* referred to a 1989 Premier’s Department document that found a \$55 million toll bridge would at best pay for itself. The report extrapolated this cost to \$90 million. The \$55 million bridge referred to was via the Pannikin Island route but there were also two cheaper options proposed via Lagoon Island. From FOI sources, the initial costs of the three Thiess Contractors Pty Ltd and Sinclair Knight and Partners joint venture options ranged from \$25.2 to \$34.6 million. The upgraded cost of the Pannikin route was \$50.6 million, not too much different from the Main Roads Department estimate of \$55 million for the Pannikin route quoted in the Premier’s Department report.

In contrast to the \$90 million extrapolation for a Russell Island bridge in the *Draft Background Report*, the estimated initial cost of the 750 metre Rocky Point bridge in 1996 would have been about \$20.6 million and \$28.5 million if upgraded. With proclamation of the Moreton Bay Marine Park, the Pannikin Island route with four kilometres of causeway would be environmentally challenged, whereas the Rocky Point route which has a fifth of the causeway length would avoid Redland Shire’s koala habitat. Its road link to the mainland would interchange with the Gold Coast Railway line .

The *Draft Background Report* emphasised the need to recognise the environmental significance of drainage problem land and that preferred land use designations were consistent with the low impact development and environmental conservation intent of the *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*. It recommended the inclusion of island wetland and drainage problem lands under a “Special Protection Area” designation. But the islands’ urban areas would be designated “Island Residential or Island Village”. This would discriminate island residential areas from mainland residential areas to promote low density low impact residential and ancillary development in keeping with the ecological and other amenity qualities of the islands. Residential development would be at a scale, intensity and character compatible with the Bay’s ecological, water quality, physical infrastructural visual amenity and land use constraints. All developments would conform to the “green corridor” nature of the Bay. But the *Draft Background Report* failed to recognise that any designation that would render Residential A land to a lesser use than for a dwelling house would invite claims of discrimination and injurious affection. An urban designation was common both to the two thirds of the Redland Shire’s Residential A allotments on the mainland, as well as the third of the Redland

Shire's Residential A allotments that constituted the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It was not justified to discriminate using the proposed designation for such a large urban island area.

The *Draft Background Report* highlighted the Queensland Government's *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* of 1993. This provided a framework for the future environmental management of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands to preserve the island's environmentally significant areas. These included various tidal wetland, mangrove and freshwater wetland environs and the surrounding marine environment. Its thrust was for ecological sustainability and provision for primarily low impact, environmentally sustainable residential and ancillary development. But then the *Draft Background Report* referred to *Draft Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* 1991 initiatives that have not all been implemented. These recommended:

- Urban development of the Bay Islands, particularly Russell, Macleay, Lamb and Karragarra be restricted to environmentally sustainable levels;
- As part of the strategy to protect the waters of Moreton Bay from the adverse impacts of increased residential and visitor populations, the Strategic Plan recommends against the construction of bridges connecting these islands to the mainland;
- Domestic waste water generation on the Bay Islands to be restricted to those activities requiring water frontage such as public esplanades, boat building and boat harbours, but excluding activities such as residential development and non-marine oriented industry;
- Bayside and waterfront development to complement the green backdrop for the Bay, with building heights and colours blending into the background, or striving for a national heritage character and atmosphere;
- Clearing of native vegetation for development adjacent to the foreshore wetlands to be limited and buffer areas retained to facilitate maintenance of the natural landscape values; and
- The natural character of the Bay's coastal areas to be preserved by limiting developments which reduce natural and largely undisturbed visual amenity.

More care could have been taken to examine the 1993 *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*, as it did not recommend against a bridge. The *Draft Background Report* recommended several other measures. Freehold tidal lands should be acquired to allow extension of the Moreton Bay Marine Park and declared as fisheries reserves. All mangrove and other tidal plant vegetation would be protected. Tidal buffer areas would be established to improve public access to the foreshore, increase public open space and recreation areas (Particularly for water-based recreation activities). Such tidal buffers would allow the management of adjoining Wetland Reserves to be upgraded to Fish Habitat levels (suggested 100 metres wide). This would be part of a land acquisition program in association with redesign and redevelopment. Whilst these sentiments may be towards the environment, such an action would be difficult to implement. Ultimately some owners would need to be dispossessed and their land given to others in the redevelopment exercise. It can only be by open market purchase that such land can be amalgamated. This takes time, so why should other land owners be deprived of their rights to build and receive timely services in the interim?

Case 10

The Draft Impact Assessment - South Coast Motorway March 1995 State Government

One of the main “public good conservation” measures is to provide environmentally friendly transport access yet this can not apply if you divide planning of major corridors so that linkages to places are not properly established.

The Draft Impact Assessment of the South Coast Motorway, like the original Moreton Bay Strategic Plan and Gold Coast Waterways Studies, divided the EIA into two segments, one south and one north of the Logan River. Effectively, the responsibility for assessing the impacts of development by bridge access and increased infrastructure servicing on future trip generation could be avoided by the presumption that a future bridge would be built outside the respective planning areas. The question of the impacts were first raised by B.R.I.D.G.E. (Beautiful Russell Island Deserves Government Encouragement) in the first submission to the then Brisbane-Gold Coast Eastern Corridor Planning Study on 11 February 1991.

In addition, the maps used in the 1995 plan were out of date and did not show the whole of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands which had about 1500 homes and about a nine hundred streets. The use of such mapping should have never be countenanced as it gave an incomplete, incorrect and misleading visual depiction of the route and its environs. Up-to-date maps should have been used. Other maps depicting the route and its attributes could have shown greater detail of actual location and how these related to major roads nearby.

Trip generation was reputedly taken from SEQ 2001 population figures. Those figures underestimated the official government projections for Redland (excluding the notion of a bridge according to Barker per personal call). In year 2011, SEQ2001 predicted 142000 residents in Redland, but the DLGP predicted 146978 low, 158458 medium and 171034 high projections which were used by Redland Shire Council. A bridged Russell Island and bridged Macleay Island could have 30000 persons by year 2011 with 15000 more coming immediately after 2011. This meant that Redland was likely to expand to between 145000 and 170000 residents by year 2005 and to between 174000 and 198000 by year 2011. At the time, trip generation should have been run for all contingencies, not just the low highly politicised SEQ 2001 projected populations but the possibility that 198000 residents would reside in Redland in year 2011. Since that time, intensification and consolidation of subdivisions into denser AMCORD designs could result in Redland having even larger populations by year 2011. The Russell Island Bridge and possibility of a Macleay Island Bridge should have been considered as major feeders to access the South Coast Motorway. Their non-inclusion was a fundamental flaw in terms of equity, government infrastructure, environmental and social impacts.

In terms of Government infrastructure, a bridge was needed to Russell Island mainly to cut the contingent liability of outstanding Bay Island infrastructure costs. Without a bridge to Russell, the contingent liability for Southern Moreton Bay Islands infrastructure stood at \$350 million without including the cost of bridges. On the trends at the time, the contingent liability to Redland Shire Council of unbridged Bay Islands in year 2006 would mushroom to one billion dollars. In effect, this would write off one half of the economic gains from the Governments South East Planning

Initiatives. This was seen as the most cogent reason why the two projects of the Russell Island Bridge and South Coast Motorway should be brought together as one. Preferably a more coastward route would provide easy access to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It was submitted to the study at the time, that to deny or omit or to say it would be too late to consider contingent liabilities as they existed then would be to err on the side ineptitude.

Other government infrastructure was not being used efficiently, unless the Russell Island Bridge was considered as a part of South Coast Motorway infrastructure planning. On then values, for every year that the bridge to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands was delayed, then the final development of those islands would be held back at a cost of \$11 million pa in income that SEQEB would forego and \$4 million in motor vehicle registrations (15500 lots and businesses times \$700 pa. in electricity and 11250 vehicles relocated from other Australian states at an average \$356 average rego fee). Indefinitely delaying certain returns of \$15 million pa income to the State Government was one impact that should be investigated. Another State Government charge that would certainly be able to be recouped was the increase in State stamp duty which was capable of paying the interest costs of a bridge but this was not included in submission at the time.

In terms of environmental considerations, the non-inclusion of the impact of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands meant that there were major environmental impacts that were left out of the equation. Valuable farmland would be destroyed more rapidly under Town Planning changes to the Redland Bay DCP. Koala populations would be under greater threat, where instead they could be contained by a Coastal Highway that could access the Southern Moreton Bay Islands away from major core koala areas. An alternative coastal highway and Russell Island bridge would have minimal impact to that of destroying Daisy Hill Forest with the tunnel or above road bridged freeway. These were very compelling environmental reasons why the two projects of the Russell Island Bridge and the South Coast Motorway should have been brought together as one (with preferably a more coastward route). They would provide less environmental impact, yet provide better access to the developing islands.

In March 1995, Russell Island Development Association Inc (RIDA) requested reasons why transport infrastructure planning for the Bay Islands was not included impact assessment study report on the South Coast Motorway. This was because the growth of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands would impact greatly on traffic flows further with massive economic cost blow-outs. A formal submission later in March 1995 included a request under the Judicial Review Act for reasons why no consideration was given on the South Coast Motorway to the impact of 15000 existing Bay Island homesites. A letter by the consultants confirmed that the impact of 15000 Bay Island homesites were not included in the studies terms of reference and referred the request on to Queensland Transport. Queensland Transport replied saying that consideration of the issue why transport infrastructure planning for the Bay Islands was not included would be inappropriate, referring to indicative SEQ 2001 growth scenarios instead of the statutory plans. The reply confirmed that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning and Redland Shire Council did not input into the Terms of Reference the need for to include transport infrastructure planning for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. By this time RIDA pressed for reasons under Judicial Review advising the Department of the Ombudsman's 1994 comments on development potential of the islands.

"The sole limit to population on the bay islands is the extent of subdivision in an area. Given that Russell Island (the major subdivided Bay Island) is already subdivided and comprises primarily residential land, under current legislation any property owner would be entitled to apply for building approval.. I would therefore anticipate that the number of residents on Russell Island will be in direct proportion to the number of residentially zoned blocks, unless at some future stage the land is excluded from the Residential zone by Council (with the appropriate payment of compensation). "

Case 11

The Redland Bay DCP of 1995 (later to be approved by State Governor in Council)

One of the main “public good conservation” measures is to provide least environmentally damaging alternatives and one of these is to maintain a regimen of significance such as maintaining prime agricultural land if there is an availability of nearby Residential A land. Using this basis, it seems Redland Bay Development Control Plan amendments of 1995 depicted much too prematurely a residential development over prime agricultural land, beyond the realms of what should be expected in Redland Shire at that point of time.

There was no justification to sterilize good farming land, koala habitat and to impede the servicing of existing Residential subdivisions on Russell Island. It seemed that the Redland Shire Council was not servicing one third of the Shire the residential land on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, mainly Russell Island. Premature residential development of a mini-city at Redland Bay was promoted by vested interests instead. The cost of servicing one of the islands, Russell, was estimated to be \$287 million, (\$30 million on a bridge; \$145 million on island roads; \$46 million on sewerage etc). Yet, it was impractical to limit Russell's projected population to 29172 persons (Redland Shire figure) as the Council had made no attempt to buy back Residential A land. By early 1995, 5000 lots had been reticulated with electricity with another 5000 to be reticulated before year 2001.

Case 12

Strategic Plan Review - Vision 2005 Later ratified as a Strategic Plan by State Government

One aspect of “public good conservation” measures stems from what one would call a broad brush approach or indeed using a precautionary principle to include measures over lands where no field study occurs.

Early Vision 2005 planning, which was the forerunner to the current State Gazetted Strategic Plan for Redlands showed a distinct mainland bias. The Russell Island Development Association (RIDA) lodged an official complaint on information included in the Vision 2005 Video, the printed vision and questionnaire and the associated residents’ survey.

Very little was shown about the Bay Islands on the video and the printed vision newsletter for the future planning of the islands. Some misleading material like the comment "And on North Stradbroke and the Bay Islands we also see no significant bushland loss" was a vision that could not be sustained as the Southern Moreton Bay Islands were urban areas and would sustain great bushland loss due to development of housing and roads. The issue of a bridge to the Bay Islands was not addressed. Hence, it was not a discussion point when it should have been. Clearly, in the existing 1988 Town Plan on page 138 of the supporting information there was a preference for a bridge (mentioned earlier).

RIDA submitted that the major issue was that the vision should be directed at residents and all ratepayer groups who help to fund it. There were 15115 rateable properties on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands or 31.23 per cent of the 48398 rateable properties in Redland Shire as at March 1996. RIDA submitted that at least 31.23 per cent of ratepayers were absent from the Shire and had a right to be sent the questionnaire form and to comment to the attitudes surveys as to their goals, their fears and their aspirations.

RIDA called for immediate remedial action and for independent interviews to be taken of Southern Moreton Bay Island ratepayer on Vision 2005. The interviews should include issues such as the bridge, transport and how Redland Shire Council was going to cater for the 45000 residents that would eventually reside on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

The basis of the Vision 2005 was to decide population placement. The Southern Moreton Bay Islands already had the capacity to house all additional residents to Redland. Federal and State

Government statistics did not predict population levels to year 2005. ABS did for 2006 and 2011 but only on a State basis. The Department of Local Government and Planning did not predict population levels to year 2005 but they did predict low, medium and high projections based on population trends for years 2006 and 2011. This was not based on the subdivisional potential. Vision 2005 whilst probably not meaning it, was biased as it gave an implicit knowledge that directed the survey to a 40000 extra person goal when this goal was likely to be much larger.

The first question on the survey form left no latitude that with more people there may be a better change to lifestyle. The question on the importance of the Shire's different towns and localities was biased as it did not offer a negative response. The question of declining household size was biased, as it could not be applied to Redland, as it was a rapidly growing area of increasing and declining households. The Southern Moreton Bay Islands question on development, according to environmental impact thresholds, infrastructure and service needs, should not have been asked because it showed a council bias against the development of nearly one third of the Redland Shire - absentee ratepayers' land. It was symptomatic of the Redland Shire Council abdicating its charter of effective, efficient and accountable government as per the Local Government Act. It was not going to plan for the future population of 45000 island residents. The council was reneging to build a bridge as per the 1988 Town Plan and was failing to provide good infrastructure and services that would have then cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

A exclusive islander week-night meeting was boycotted by /most in protest. As occurred in the ORCATS study workshop, the RIDA president was excluded from attending despite offering to pay his own share of the chartered ferry to attend. The council caused some furore at the meeting by indicating bitumen strip roads (not proper roads would be built). For a council duck its responsibilities to provide proper services was inviting an Administrator to look after the affairs of council, nothing surer.

RIDA in its submission requested the Council to study two statements by the Ombudsman. On 21 October 1994 the Ombudsman said,

"The sole limit to population on the bay islands is the extent of subdivision in an area. Given that Russell Island (the major subdivided Bay Island) is already subdivided and comprises primarily residential land, under current legislation any property owner would be entitled to apply for building approval.. I would therefore anticipate that the number of residents on Russell Island will be in direct proportion to the number of residentially zoned blocks, unless at some future stage the land is excluded from the Residential zone by Council (with the appropriate payment of compensation). "

And, on 10 November 1994 the Ombudsman said

"Residential A land (free of any other constraints such as drainage problem declarations) provides an 'as of right' basis for constructing domestic dwellings. There was no dispute about this. Such zonings currently stipulate the lawful use rights a property owner would have. In this context, it needs to be understood that the RPAG (Regional Planning Advisory Group) report was not an attempt to represent or portray the current statutory lawful use rights attaching to properties throughout South East Queensland. As a planning document prepared by an advisory group

(through extensive consultation with the community), it thus reflects a community view as to what would be preferred development in this area. This may or may not coincide with the current development possible under various town planning schemes. Thus, whilst the Bay Islands are shown as non-urban or Regional Open Space areas, this does not alter the fact that there is substantial potential for urban development of these islands at this time."

RIDA requested that a survey similar to the interview survey but including relevant Bay Island questions on access and the bridge be sent to Russell Island ratepayers both local and absentee. RIDA also requested from council a timetable on the quantum of infrastructure and service provision to the Bay Islands for the following ten years. RIDA also requested that a minimum of \$40 million be allocated in the 1995-1996 budget for capital works programs on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands and to respond. In its response the council did not intend to specifically seek additional comments from absentee owners.

On Public Display, it became apparent that whole of shire planning studies were not completed. The scope of the plan only aimed at conserving the water quality and ecological functioning of Moreton Bay. In the interim, a Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Study (encompassing planning for Russell and the four other inhabited islands was separately commissioned to

- provide an environmentally sustainable population level for the Bay Islands and an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable approach to any future development;
- provide a comprehensive framework for planning and managing the development of the Islands within the context of the surrounding region;
- outline a strategy for development of the area in a manner sympathetic with the preservation, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, landscape character and heritage values.
- provides a sound basis for the programming, costing and funding of social and physical infrastructure in a coordinated and timely manner;
- creates a flexible strategy that would cater for the current and future needs of the Island community;
- promotes the creation of an urban structure which uses land both efficiently and sustainably and provides an acceptable level of accessibility to shopping and commercial facilities, open space, recreational opportunities and community facilities;
- facilitates the provision of a range of housing types and allotments to meet the needs of a wide cross-section of the population;
- promotes a high standard of residential amenity with particular regard to safety, privacy, convenience, microclimate management, visual attractiveness and the impact of traffic noise;
- provides a sound and logical basis for the determination of development expectations thereby

limiting inappropriate market speculation”.

Instead there was a statement that future environment, planning and development policy for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands be subject to separate investigation. This was unjustified as the Bay Islands should have been included in the Strategic Plan as an integral part of the Shire. The study must include detailed investigations to justify the conclusions made. You just can't roll over a Strategic Plan into a Development Control Plan type format without significant justification.

One of the aims of the Southern Moreton Bay Island's Study was to provide “a comprehensive framework for planning and managing the development of the islands within the context of the surrounding region”. The Strategic Plan did not aim to do likewise to the islands and logically it must not have been as comprehensive.

Other provisions that were likely to emanate from the Southern Moreton Bay Islands study could not be spelled out at that stage. They could only take effect as part of a completely new scheme or as an amendment to an existing scheme and in each case only after all the prescribed procedures had taken place. Therefore, the linking of the island's study with the Strategic Plan was tenuous. Therefore, adequate investigations should have been carried out in respect of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands prior to approval of the Strategic Plan. The reference in the Draft Strategic Plan to the issue greenspace was very pertinent as the provisions related to limiting development in certain greenspace areas on the “islands”. The Greenspace Map had not even been drawn for such areas leaving uncertainty to what was being planned.

It was recognised that the Strategic Plan covered the whole Redland Shire and the project brief whilst saying the Southern Moreton Bay Islands had certain planning challenges failed completely to convey council's wishes. Item 36 entitled “Planning Scheme Review” of the adopted *Environment, Planning and Development Committee Report* of 15 November 1994 discussed the review in terms of needs, issues to be addressed, major work tasks, resource needs, timing and resolution to prepare a new town planning scheme etc. It spoke of a comprehensive whole-of-shire review. This was backed up by the Annexure F “*Redland Shire Planning Scheme Review Project Brief*” that talks of Whole-of-Shire studies. The planning process of the ultimate footprint of development of the Shire could not have been achieved if the Southern Moreton Bay Islands were not included in the Strategic Plan Review study, as part of the Shire would not be included.

The exclusion of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands from study was also borne from the Redland Shire Council's Vision 2005 which excluded comment from the majority of Bay Island landowners, the absentees. Leaders of the Russell Island Development Association Inc. were excluded from island meetings by refusal of Council to negotiate night time ferry transport. Complaints were submitted to the State Ombudsman over the conduct of the project. Yet, the Community Reference Group was composed of mainland community groups and no island groups were involved. This showed a definite preference toward mainland planning. Selection of those community groups also included the Redland Preservation Council which has opposed island development and the Redland Farmers Association whose objects were to support the development of an alternative land supply to already subdivided island urban land - agricultural land. The Community Reference Group focused on the mainland and not the Shire as a whole. This was a crucial planning mistake.

There was no doubt that the process of Vision 2005 rightly or wrongly excluded pro-development community groups of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. When the Russell Island Development Association Incorporated (RIDA) attended Vision 2005 meetings at Thornlands and at Redland Bay, its representative raised the issue that all ratepayers should be approached as the Southern Moreton Bay Islands should be developed in preference to prime agricultural farm land. But the Redland Shire Council refused to contact the absentee owners for their views. Instead, the results of Vision 2005 were communicated to Redland households by a newsletter in July 1995. The absentees that represent 30 per cent of all Redland ratepayers had no say. Hence, a golden opportunity to see the vision of those ratepayers was missed. So the exclusion of Southern Moreton Bay Islands magnified this lost vision and blinded the alternative vision splendid of agricultural lands extended and the wealth that agricultural land can bring in food we eat.

The Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Study was not and never would be a study for the purposes of a strategic plan. It was an exercise described as a planning study that would lead to strategy recommendations, to be subsequently put into a Development Control Plan to be prepared by Council only. The Department of Local Government and Planning had stipulated verbally that funding would only be available for the planning study and not the formulation of a statutory planning document (*Environment, Planning and Development Committee Report* 28 November 1995 p.62). Hence, the Strategic Plan needed to provide a statutory planning document for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands with up-to-date information stipulated by legislation. This included an assessment of topography; natural or built environment (or both); regional land use patterns; public utility infrastructure systems and transport systems; regional or local economic and employment factors; social and cultural features of the population, including housing; any constraints and opportunities in respect of development and any reasonable development options available. These issues were not given enough study.

The scope of the study was too narrow. Morally, the omission of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands from the study investigations shows an undue concentration on the residents and ratepayers of one part of the Shire but not on the other. If you isolate too smaller an area for planning, then you isolate areas of development potential and your good plans exclude crucial regional considerations with deleterious impacts.

Originally, the period was a vision for 10 years, "Vision 2005" and this would have satisfied the Act. But the that vision was extended to year 2011. This was not advisable as in fifteen years much could happen to part of the Shire that contained a third of the Shire's properties and consisted mainly of vacant Residential A lots. Sub.s 2.16 (5) of the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 states

2.16 (5) A local government is by resolution to determine to prepare a new planning scheme to supersede the existing planning scheme within 10 years following the date of publication or notification of each order in council last notifying approval of a planning scheme (other than an amendment of that planning scheme) within its area.

It was strongly recommended that the time frame be reduced to ten years consistent with the Act. A ten year time frame was better as the mainland growth pattern may be impeded by spectacular island growth. In any case, public perceptions were for a vision for ten years. Public responses to the Vision 2005 were not for a fifteen years and the vision could have been quite radically different. Therefore, the vision community consultation process should have been redone.

The Strategic Plan assessment of the natural and built environment was insufficient and or inadequately reviewed.

Good Quality Agricultural Land (GQAL) was identified for the mainland and not for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. This was unsatisfactory. All GQAL throughout the Shire should have been studied for all holdings of one hectare in area where agriculture is possible and where the land was not alienated for urban development. This was generally the old standard for ABS Annual Agricultural Census collection. A cut off figure of either \$1000 or \$5000 annual production is used nowadays. It is State Policy that no GQAL should be sacrificed for urban development. In Redland Shire there was no overriding need for the development in terms of public benefit. There was a suitable site for urban development (the alternative land supply on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands). As there has been no study of the alternative suitable site, there was no justification whatsoever to allow development of GQAL. If the Shire's aim of sustainable development in the strategic plan was to be upheld, State Government policy on GQAL should not be compromised by development of agricultural lands.

Utilisation of GQAL for its stated agricultural purpose was less dependent on treated town water and short-sighted planning placed undue strains on the future water supply of Redland. Some 14467 Residential A lots and about 328 other lots on the Bay Islands were by the very act of being levied a water charge (most since 1988) and were entitled to an allocation of water first.

he reason to direct the bulk of new urban development to traditional farming areas in Thornlands and Redland Bay was influenced by considerations in bushland protection; urban form; serviceability and accessibility and structural change in the agricultural industry but no mention was made of the obvious alternative to bushland or GQAL. Yet, under sub.s 2.7(2) of the Act, a strategic plan must include an assessment of topography; natural or built environment (or both); regional land use patterns; public utility infrastructure systems and transport systems; regional or local economic and employment factors; social and cultural features of the population, including housing; any constraints and opportunities in respect of development and any reasonable development options available. Not all of these assessments were considered in respect of agricultural land. This included the reasonable options such as examining the potential existing Southern Moreton Bay Island residential land as an alternative to developing bushland or farmland which was to receive the bulk of new development.

The Greenspace Map was substantially deficient in that the major part of the Shire's area of 537 sq km (over 300 sq km including the Southern Moreton Bay Islands) was omitted and other areas outside the shire's bounds were designated as Greenspace although the Shire has no jurisdiction

over those areas.

Base mapping for that part of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands in the Environmental Inventory Map of the Study was incomplete. It reflected aerial photo-mosaic imaging of conservation management areas that had not been checked in the field. Such mapping was indiscriminant, as it had scant regard for built form, fieldwork and road network. It was inconsistent to the final plan. The mapping should have been updated but restricted to properties of over 0.5 hectares the minimum possible in view of firebreak requirements for urban area designations but could include smaller properties with Drainage Problem designations or properties with waterfront boundaries. It was naive to have included over 500 Southern Moreton Bay Island homes in Conservation Management Areas of priority or major conservation significance, as had occurred in the Bay Islands map. This was counter to the consultant's recommendation that vegetation and fauna surveys be carried out on North Stradbroke, Russell, Macleay and Coochiemudlo islands.

The consultants compiling the Conservation Management Areas recommended that they be checked in the field (Chenoweth and others p 33). Their description of the islands flora was that Coochiemudlo, Macleay and Russell Islands had small remnant patches of eucalyptus open forest above tidal influence amongst the urban development (ob cit p. 12). If a minimum standard of 0.5 hectares was used, then more meaningful field mapping over a smaller number of lots could be easily attempted. It would be less intrusive to the owners of all but a handful of the privately owned 14467 Residential A lots and 328 other privately owned non drainage problem lots. Mapping should have only been incorporated in a green space map after extensive field visits and after extensive consultation with the owners involved. Greenspace mapping needed to be consistent with to the Development Control Plan type mapping that emanated out of the study. This meant that areas of designated as urban residential use should not be included. So too the road network should not be included as preferred dominant land use designations refer to land that was either, freehold land, a holding or mining claim under the Local Government Act and not roads. If this concept had been understood, then the naivety of Environmental Inventory Map should have been seen, as the majority of 14467 residential lots with 328 lots in other non drainage zonings were entitled to have a cleared firebreak on their boundaries and road frontages. To retain base mapping of the type shown in the Environmental Inventory Map over a cadastral base was unwise. The mapping could have been challenged in the courts from owners seeking injurious affection or straight damages for stigmatising the landed assets of individuals without a just cause. For this reason it was strongly recommended that the map be omitted from the study.

Because of the misinterpretation of the Regional Open Space System maps and inclusion of the an untested Environmental Inventory map there needed a review of the Environmental Inventory Map. In the *Southern Moreton Bay Islands Terms of Reference (Environment, Planning and Development Committee Report 28 November 1995)*, there was an unfortunate reference to the Bay and its islands forming part of the SEQ 2001 Regional Open Space System. There was no explanation that the inclusion or exclusion of the islands did not validate the larger regional scale assessment of Southern Moreton Bay. The SEQ 2001 Directorate had commented on a submission by the Russell Island Development Association Inc in respect its SEQ 2001 *Open Space and Recreation Policy Paper* (14 April 1994) It indicated that precise exclusions would be determined at subsequent and more detailed levels of planning. As this did not occur in the *Regional Framework of Growth Management* map of November 1995, there was a special need to have up-to-date clear concise and

appropriate mapping of Greenspace of the Bay Islands prior to approval of the Strategic Plan.

If base mapping of the type shown in the Environmental Inventory Map was validated by the preceding points, the retention of major and priority classifications for areas of mainly council-owned land on the Bay Islands should have been strengthened. There were glaring omissions of land with high conservation values at Fern Terrace and The Boulevard, Russell Island.

The Strategic Plan assessment of regional land use patterns was insufficient.

Without considering the Bay Islands in detail, the footprint for the whole Shire could not be analysed in a regional sense.

The SEQ 2001 *Regional Framework for Growth Management* identified land use patterns in respect of urban land use and standards for Good Quality Agricultural Land had been set down. While hotly contested by pro-development residents and island development groups, how could the SEQ 2001 planning be tested for its validity if the Southern Moreton Bay Islands were excluded?

A population target would never be agreed upon, until there was a serious attempt made by planners to understand that the islands were a vacant repository of urban Residential A land. This supply was greater than the then vacant supply of the combined South East Queensland urban areas.

The SEQ 2001 *Regional Framework for Growth Management* had shown the Southern Moreton Bay Island preferred dominant land use designations as non-urban but the Strategic Plan Map has shown the study area to be mainly urban. In terms of urban development, the Redland Shire Council had supported the SEQ 2001 *Preferred Pattern of Urban Development Report* of 14 April 1994. This provided a valuable overview of the forces that shape the development of the region and an gave an insight into the choices for the region's future. Indeed, the Council had supported preferred dominant land use designations similar to its 1988 Town Plan for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It refused to have SEQ 2001 reassess such land uses. The consequences would be uncoordinated planning. There would be a likely delay in provision of essential services, the price of which was ballooning out at over \$50,000 per day.

The Strategic Plan assessment of public utility infrastructure systems and transport systems was insufficient. No assessment was made of the cost of providing initial services to 31.2 per cent of the rateable properties of the Shire, namely the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. In 1996, the cost were estimated to be \$227 million for roads, \$70 million for sewerage and \$30 million for water and \$26 million for the Russell Island Bridge was needed. The bridge would force Redland Shire Council to provide those services at a pace appropriate to island growth.

3.342 The *Southern Moreton Islands Bay Draft Background Report* of 1993 (p.28) and publicised in the *Sunday Mail* in 1996 year has highlighted that if it

“is considered that reticulated water be provided to the (Lamb, Karragarra and Macleay Islands) they should also be provided with sewerage, as unless the residential populations are severely restricted, without sewerage, septic tank effluent would inevitably cause water pollution of surrounding Bay Waters”.

The very fact that water was to be provided to the islands meant that the islands, and Russell too, needed strategic planning policy, not a deferment to another study as suggested on page 8 of the *Draft Strategic Plan*.

Future water supply for Redland Shire is contained and is a very vulnerable water resource. The use of sand aquifers such as the Tomago Sands in the greater Newcastle area has been successful in the past but have now great problems with extraction. Redland Shire Council should not have taken for granted the North Stradbroke Island aquifer. It should only allocate that resource for existing tenements and those properties being levied a water charge. It should not allocate the resource to future urban areas first on a belief that the Shire’s water supply can already be expanded. Redland should not allow any further mainland development until it either connects to the South East Queensland supply or else prove that the existing properties in Redland have proven future water supply.

The thesis of the draft 1991 Moreton Bay Strategy recommends that no further bridges be built during the life of the *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan* and re-echoed in the terms of reference of the *Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Strategy* should have been reassessed. The Moreton Bay Strategic Plan was only to last five years. By the time a bridge could be built in 1999, the plan would have to be revised.

The reluctance to plan for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands has had the potential to impact greatly on the Koala Coast Conservation Area. The most obvious omission was the impact of growing residential communities on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. These communities would access the Koala Coast and add to human impacts that may threaten the koala’s sustainability with road kills etc. There was a transport solution that the Minister for Transport had agreed to assess in the Redland Transport Study and assessment of that Study should be occur prior to the finalization of the Strategic Plan Review. This was the O-Bahn-Ferry link that posed a solution to lessen impacts on the Koala Coast.

In 1996, a total of 15115 or 31.2 per cent of Redland Shire’s 48398 rateable properties existed on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. From 1996, the UBD *Refidex* started to show the road layout of the massive island subdivisions that offer the opportunity that development can occur. The Koala Coast does not need to rapidly develop when such a huge stock of nearby alternative land already exists. Why build new houses in the Koala Coast Conservation Area and endanger the sustainability of koalas or on Agricultural land for that matter, when there were already 14795 good vacant Southern Moreton Bay building lots, a few kilometres away?

With the rapid growth occurring on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, the adequacy of ferry transport to generate large volumes of vehicular traffic on the mainland would have to be planned

for carefully. In 1992, it was estimated by the Engineering Design Office of Redland Shire that the commercial ferry berths to Southern Moreton Bay Islands per day by year 2001 would be 3000 each way. By comparison with a \$60 million bridge to Russell Island over the Point Talburpin route (Pannikin Island partially shown on the latest UBD *Refidex*), RIDA has already estimated that the Bay Islands would generate up to 8000 vehicle trips per day through the Koala Coast by year 2011. Recently, Ausplan Research promoted development of a \$4 million Russell Island O-Bahn bus-vehicular barge link from the island to the mainland south through Rocky Point. The link would ensure that increasing vehicular movements, a potential contributor to koala road kills, from increasing numbers of island residents and visitors, would be totally redirected away from koala conservation areas. But more important, it provided an alternative solution to use of the private car, where residents and visitors could use an O-Bahn bus to access the Gold Coast Rail. Allowing natural progression of Southern Moreton Bay Island development to generate traffic would otherwise impact adversely on the future sustainability of koalas in the Koala Coast Conservation Area.

RIDA argued that the findings of the Redland Transport Study must be incorporated in the Strategic Plan prior to the Plan being approved and gazetted. This was because it was an important planning issue that must be addressed. In the past, strategic plans had been criticised for placing too little emphasis on future impacts on transport. This is a fundamental issue for Redland being commuter shire where the speed of transport was reduced for koalas in breeding seasons and where the Southern Moreton Bay Islands with a quarter of the Shire's rateable lots were made inaccessible to public transport after dark.

The 1996 Draft Strategic Plan assessment of regional or local economic and employment factors was insufficient.

The Southern Moreton Bay Islands economy and economic potential were not fully addressed in the Strategic Plan Study and should have been. At the time, just in dead rates, some 14000 vacant island properties were levied up to \$856 pa. in rates and charges, about \$8 million pa, which would sustain massive injections into council works and pay packets mainly on the mainland. The islands needed services worth \$24 million pa to match the inflated cost of servicing the islands. For the Redland Shire Council not to include this in its Strategic Plan Review was not unlike the administrative inertia of the New South Wales Government and the Opera House but without an Opera House lottery to pay for procrastinated delays.

The Strategic Plan should have addressed the problem of buying land zoned Drainage Problem on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands and designating this land for environmental reserves. It was and still is well overdue that this land should be in public ownership. By not purchasing the land, the golden opportunity to totally protect green edges of the Bay may have already have been irrevocably been lost. The total cost may have been only a few million.

The Strategic Plan needed to consider the Southern Moreton Bay Islands in respect of the impacts that inconsistent planning policy or uncoordinated planning would mean for the provision of other government services. For instance, a high school on Russell Island would be needed by year 2005, if a bridge of similar cost was not provided.

An assessment of social and cultural features of the population, including housing was not made for the Southern Moreton Bay Island populations, those very populations that were in greatest need of basic Council services. By all accounts it was the poorest socio-economic group. No assessment was made of the proliferation of housing that could blight the landscape values talked about in the Strategic Plan. This aspect is a statutory requirement like all the others and an assessment of Southern Moreton Bay Islands' social and cultural features should have been undertaken in the regional context.

The 1996 Draft Strategic Plan needed to recognise that the ultimate population of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands would be between 20000 and 36000 persons. This was based on populating 13330 or 90 % of the existing 14656 Res A lots. Average households would range from 1.5 to 2.7 persons. This ultimate population was unlikely to be reduced by resubdivision of Res A lots, as household sizes would increase negating any such reduction. But this could be added to if drainage problem lots were developed, instead of being resumed. If the population reached 5000 persons without a bridge link, then the islands will require stage one of a \$20 million State high school. Provision of such a school could be delayed till the population reached 20000 persons, if a \$26 million Rocky Point bridge link to the mainland was built. Such a link was needed by time the islands' population reached 4000 persons, when ambulance, police, fire services and major roads would need to be upgraded. This was likely to occur within the first half of the Plan's life and needed consideration.

Population projections have seriously underestimated growth of the Shire's Moreton Bay Island populations. In its 1996 Draft Strategic Plan, the Council envisaged another 2790 residents on the Shires islands by year 2011 (8000 total), which was much too low when considering the then present growth trends of 7.3 per cent pa for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. In 1996, islands had 5.1 per cent of the Shire's population but 35.6 per cent of all rateable properties in the shire. Unless there was a review of the population projections, then it was more likely that planning options for the islands would be neglected. The then \$0.4 billion cost of servicing the Southern Moreton Bay Islands group would balloon out and pose problems for an ageing Shire. Instead, there would be an over-emphasis on policies such as subdividing and populating the mainland's agricultural land and koala habitat. Were the Redland Shire Council's population projections realised, then by year 2011 an estimated 13500 vacant island properties would remain dormant and their owners collectively levied as much as \$274.1 million in dead rates and charges (\$421 general + \$205 water + \$371.75 sewerage = \$897.75 x 13500 lots x 15 years = \$181.79 million at 7.0 % pa 1987-96 average. increase = \$304.55 million or \$274.1 million after discount). This was unacceptable in terms of equity and the nexus between population and service provision etc.

To test the *Draft Strategic Plan*, low (7.0 % pa.), medium (8.5 % pa.) and high (10.0 % pa.) population estimates were projected by RIDA to establish whether these will vary from the *Draft Strategic Plan* projections. This will also be tested to establish whether there will need to be an overall reappraisal of prematurely alienating mainland agricultural lands for urban use. The unbridged islands' population will be boosted by between another 5653 and 8972 residents to year 2011 (10863 to 14182 total) as can be shown in Table 8.

In terms of Southern Moreton Bay Island dwelling provision, RIDA looked at projections using a

low growth of 7.0 % pa. and high-average 2.7 persons per household projection as shown in Table 7 was unlikely due to increased services stimulating growth coupled with a high number of retirees. For over a decade, the Southern Moreton Bay Islands' population had increased in excess of 7.3 % pa. and this was expected to increase at a more rapid rate with the extension of water supplies and anticipated early provision of sewerage. A higher rate of an increase in population would be more conducive to ensure that a 15000-resident threshold was met earlier so that major employment opportunities were provided from tourism, hospitality and retailing sectors. A more likely scenario was a mid-growth of 8.5% pa. and mid-average 2.1 person per household projection trend, where the number of occupied dwellings for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands would increase by 4582 to 5696 by year 2016.

Another likely projection RIDA made was one of high-growth of 10.0% pa. and a low 1.5 persons per household projection where the number of dwellings over the same period would increase by 8935 to 10495 in year 2016, also shown in Table 9. The equivalent net mainland over island land supply that would be alienated at 10 dwellings per hectare by year 2011 would range between 415 and 845 hectares. Thus, mainland agricultural land that was capable of 10 dwellings per hectare would be more inefficiently used for housing than servicing the existing subdivisions of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. The islands were subdivided into about 15 dwellings per hectare which is the SEQ 2001, *Regional Framework for Growth Management's* target.

It was noted that at then present growth that the mainland component of designated urban lands had the potential for well in excess of 125000 residents. This coupled with the potential of between 20000 and 36000 residents on the Southern Moreton Bay Islands was enough at least for the next ten years and justification for saving the mainland's farmland. It was therefore recommended that the *Draft Strategic Plan* should be reviewed. This would be to reduce development of mainly agricultural land on the mainland by 845 hectares and to ensure that the final Strategic Plan includes comprehensive planning of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It was not acceptable that owners of dormant lots have the prospect of being levied \$274.1 million in dead rates to year 2011. Instead, the *Draft Strategic Plan* needed to review the need for the Rocky Point Bridge and its impact on the mainland land supply and timely servicing of the island that would give the bulk of land owners a choice of better social, economic and environmental solutions like that below.

The Strategic Plan Assessment of any constraints and opportunities in respect of development was insufficient. It was simply not attempted for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands and is yet to be addressed to justify the preferred dominant land use designations for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, in terms of the regional context.

The Strategic Plan assessment of any reasonable development options available was insufficient. Reasonable alternative scenarios addressed only the mainland part of the Strategic Plan. No attention was given to targeting population and infrastructure to the urban form of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands to justify such scenarios.

Case 14

Draconian Amendments to the Redland Town Plan approved by the Governor in Council and Levy for works – 1996-97

Whilst the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Study was being commissioned .in early 1996, two direct measures were introduced so that “public good conservation measures” could be actually implemented on Russell Island.

One was to introduce a levy for works, which was later to be found illegal by the State’s Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman. This levy was to implement a preconceived infrastructure plan that which has an uncanny resemblance to the final solutions promoted in the \$500,000 Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Strategy unveiled in September 1998. The plan was to provide basic bitumen or concrete strips about 3-metres wide for roads and some drainage which but the levy because of its illegality was paid back without works commencing.

The other was to introduce certain planning scheme amendments which were subsequently gazetted by the State’s Governor in Council. These included stringent development conditions that replaced the landholders as-of-right to build a house on land without such approval. Any one of the 8,000 Russell Island landholders affected had to apply for town planning approval to build a house on his own land. The amendments which do not apply on mainland parts of Redland Shire included special requirements including

“No person shall, without the written approval of Council construct or commence to construct a dwelling house, extension or alteration to existing structures, domestic out building, alter surface levels (cut and fill) , retaining wall or domestic effluent disposal system on any land, on any island, being one of the Moreton Bay Islands.

Any application for approval to permit the construction of a dwelling house, extension or alteration to existing structures, domestic out building, alter surface levels (cut and fill), retaining wall or domestic effluent disposal system shall be determined having regard to criteria as follows:-

a) Construction shall not be allowed on land which lies below the 100 year ARI (Average Occurrence Interval) flood level. Accordingly, the applicant shall provide information in accordance with Council’s “Interim Design Standards for Development”, prepared by a suitably qualified person, detailing the following:-

i) a plan of the subject land and adjacent allotments showing:-

- survey contours at 250 mm intervals to Australian Height Datum;
- the location of the 100 year ARI flood level including, where applicable, the mean high water spring tide (M.H.W.S.) level and the highest astronomical tide (H.A.T.) level.

ii) The effect of any proposed alterations to surface levels being existing levels above the 100 year ARI flood level on both the subject land and surrounding allotments.

b) For dwelling houses on allotments under 600 sqm in area, the applicant shall comply with the provisions of Council's "Residential Code for Small Allotment Detached Housing".

For dwelling houses on allotments in excess of 600 sqm in area only Design Element E9 - "(Building Appearance)" of the said Code shall apply.

c) Where construction requires the disposal on site, of septic and/or sullage effluent, the applicant shall comply with Council's "Household Wastewater Treatment/Disposal Policy".

d) Minimum floor levels are required to be identified so that no buildings shall be erected with a floor level of less than 300 mm above the 100 year ARI flood level and the ground immediately below such floor level shall not be at a level of less than the 100 year ARI flood level provided that no building will be erected with a floor level of less than 2.7 metres A.H.D., and the ground level below such floor level shall not be less than 2.4 metres A.H.D.

(e) Any proposed development shall have all weather vehicular access. All weather access means access to the subject lands by a road of sufficient standard (in terms of surface, gradient and structural capacity) to allow all weather access by a conventional two wheel drive vehicle and which in turn connects to an existing bitumen sealed road.

(f) Notwithstanding any of the above no filling applications shall be accepted for any Moreton Bay Island allotment, unless submitted as part of a building application notification of development approval or consent application."

Case 15

The Southern Moreton Bay Island's Development Strategy (SMBI) 1998 Joint State and Council

This \$500,000 joint State Government – Redland Shire Study was put on Public Display in September 1998 and approved by Redland Shire Council in January 1999 but to the time of writing (the last day for submissions) there had been no Cabinet Approval of the Study which is necessary for it to proceed.

“The key features (quoted from) of the strategy are as follows:

- Development has been precluded from, or limited in, areas of greatest environmental value, areas which would also enable significant savings in infrastructure provision to be achieved, and in areas likely to be significantly affected by overland stormwater flows or tidal inundation. Elsewhere, it is generally proposed to retain the existing subdivision pattern with an ongoing reduction in the number of developable lots encouraged through a limited range of amalgamation incentives.
- Ultimately the lots will be serviced with reticulated sewerage. Roads will be upgraded to provide all weather access, and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- Best practice stormwater measures (such as retaining basins, overland drainage systems and erosion and sediment controls) are crucial to the sustainability of development and will be used to manage both the quantity and quality of runoff into the marine environment.
- Controls are also proposed to reduce tree clearing on lots in order to reduce impacts of development on the landscape.
- Open space corridors are proposed along the major drainage corridors, appropriate sections through which a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails is ultimately envisaged.
- These open space corridors would also serve to break up the subdivision pattern and contribute to the establishment of precincts. In turn, these precincts will help define housing areas (particularly when nearing full development) and reinforce “sense of community”.
- Strategies for the long term provision of a basic range of community facilities and services appropriate to both the needs of each Island and to the needs of the Island group, as a whole, are proposed. These strategies will reflect the fact that the Islands will always be reliant on the mainland for highest order facilities and services, and residents will have made the conscious decision to trade-off immediate access to such facilities and services for an Island lifestyle.

- Locations for the clustering of shops, community facilities, services and other suitable local economic activities have been identified. Opportunities will also be provided for appropriate low key tourism and education/ research activities.
- Access to the Islands will be by water-based transport (ferries and barges). Use of public transport both on the Islands and on the mainland will be encouraged to reduce the need for private vehicles. The strategy will include ongoing liaison with the Department of Transport and other service providers in relation to the need for progressive upgrading of public transport services.
- The ultimate number of lots available for development on the Islands delivered through the strategy is around 11,348. This would translate to an ultimate population of around 22,696 distributed across the Islands as follows:

– Russell Island	13,054
– Macleay Island	7,512
– Lamb Island	1,550
– Karragarra Island	580”

Comments to the SMBI Planning Study

1. Cost of Strategy is too low to believe.

Reference is made to a late 1980’s Premier’s Department report where to bring Russell Island planning and services up to an acceptable standard would cost \$100 to \$200 million.

At the time the French valuation of the cost of resuming drainage problem land was over \$20 million.

Apparently, ten years later, the strategy sets out only to spend \$46.1 million on Russell’s infrastructure and services and \$17.4 million to buy land.

This massive discrepancy needs to be investigated. It seems the strategy is aimed at a very poor provision of services, which could surely result in economic blight and social deprivation of the residents.

2. Support for Bridge not acted on.

In the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning Strategy Planning Study Report pages 69-72 there is evidence of two Island Summit meetings strongly supporting a Russell Island Bridge and a bridge option should have been examined and findings incorporated into the study.

The first a mainland forum expressed “strong support for a bridge link”. “Ferries do not provide after hours transport”. A “bridge was required in view of commuter numbers”. A “bridge would not affect development principles”. “Have the environmental costs water-based transport been properly assessed?” The “lack of a bridge is the reason why relatively few people have built on

the Islands.”

The second a Russell Island forum strongly supported a bridge either in the short-term or long-term with the overwhelming feeling “How could Russell Island cope without a bridge?” This contradicts the notion that the need for a bridge to Russell Island was a point on which no consensus was reached.

For the Strategy to recommend that 3000 residential lots be resumed to limit population and to thus stop a bridge to Russell Island after the people said they wanted one is a travesty of the public consultation process.

3. Mapping

The Proposed Acquisition Areas Map for sale as part of \$15 summary has problems in being clearly understood. It is apparent that all DP categories are not presented, as certain areas that should be acquired are not shown. Compare Map 7. The amount of Council owned land is also not up to date. Council owned land is also not shown as DP or not DP and this also applies to INTERNET maps 7 and 11. This can be misleading, so can this land be categorised as DP or non-DP in the final maps?

The Strategic Plan Land Use map Map 10 is critically deficient in parks/playing areas for Russell Island. Apart from 3 small boat ramps there is not a park for active recreation or a playing field for organised sport south of Jackson Road. Playing areas at the sports field and bowling club at Jackson Road are already allocated. The new parks at Kings Road (2ha) Wright Street (4.8 ha) and Canaipa Point Drive Yacht Club (1 ha ROS) are totally insufficient for active recreation or organised sport, except at the local precinct level.

The Strategic Plan Land Use Map does not identify a sewerage treatment or point/s discharge (as does present DCP), site for additional primary school on southern end or emergency helicopter point. It also does not show point of new water tower locations necessary for balanced water reticulation.

4. Services and roads

Services The Draft Strategic Plan appears not to have inquired into the legal and policy implications of Telstra, Energex and RSC Water provision.

Telstra Is Telstra to be compensated for the hundreds, maybe thousands of properties that it has already provided cable to and for injurious affection for lost customer share for up to over 3000 Res A lots that will not be built on in the proposed buyback?

Energex Is Energex to be compensated for the thousands of properties that it has already provided cable to and for injurious affection for lost revenue from potential customers for nearly 3000 Res A lots that will not be built on in the proposed buyback?

Will the owners of this land be properly compensated for their right to have electricity

connected to their properties which is part of an agreement between Energex and Redland Shire Council up to year 2051?

SEQEC agreement is enough to stop any buy back of Russell Island land

A buy back will not be determined on environmental qualities of the land but the SEQEC agreement with Redland Shire Council (Signed by SEQEC's B.E Blinco and RSC's E. Santagiuliana & H. G. Wright 27/1295.)

Under Clause 3., SEQEB will make overhead supply available to the remaining non-reticulated existing allotments of land on Russell Island at domestic tariffs.

Under Clause 6, where a supply of electricity is required to premises located on a presently existing allotment, it is a pre-requisite condition of that supply that such an allotment shall have a current building permit issued by the Council in relation thereto.

Under clause 7, SEQEB will not be required to supply electricity to any premises located in a drainage problem area.

Under clause 9, the Agreement shall expire and be of no further effect as of 31 December 2050 and from that date SEQEB will be under no obligation to provide electricity supply available etc.

With the exception of isolated land, all the land in the benefited area which includes up to 8498 presently existing non-drainage allotments will be reticulated and those requiring electricity will be reticulated if there is a current building permit up to the year 2050.

Thus people have a land use for supply of electricity at domestic rates. This will be the main stumbling block to any buy back as the right to electricity supply to year 2050 will allow development on all existing Russell Island non-drainage lots that are part of the agreement.

It is noted, that the Russell Islands Electricity Agreement is separate and not related to other islands. In other words, there is not an impediment to a buy back of land to year 2050 on Karragarra, Lamb, Macleay or Perulpa Islands.

The purpose for which electricity will be supplied is at a domestic tariff for "domestic homes, flats, units, some caravan parks and some serviced holiday flats" and that for the term of the Agreement this does not include a forest.

The ramifications of this are that Council has agreed with SEQEC to reticulate all non-drainage allotments on Russell Island and have agreed that the owners of those lots who build by year 2050 have a right to receive electricity.

In fifty years time, Council may wish to buy back forested land but it cannot justify this action now on the basis of another purpose. As the land's foreseeable use is residential, non-urban/rural etc. the Council cannot buy up or rezone land to another purpose for fifty years. All

it can do is to buy land on the open market. When this is amalgamated and is free from all current and potential users, or users or users beyond that area of a domestic supply of electricity, the Council can conserve the land for environmental park. But there is a complication as under the agreement the SEQEB now Energex will still have to make overhead supply available to the remaining non-reticulated existing allotments of land on Russell Island. You will not see the forest for the poles and clearing away from the live conductors,

Thus in the crudest sense, Russell Island's destiny is not like the other islands which can have a buy back. Russell is set to be urbanised. Not to recognise this, is to open a war chest of reparations in the form of compensation to owners aggrieved by forced resumption or an act of rezoning. They could claim hefty damages for loss of services not necessarily under IPA but also under common law.

RSC Water

Water can be connected to any Residential A lot within ninety days of application and payment of a fee of \$580.00 if there is an existing pipeline on the road frontage. From discussions with the appropriate Water Connection officer there has been a slight change in policy that could already be expensive. Water will not be provided to vacant lots where there is no pipeline and no extension will be made to the existing water system unless there is a development application. Subsequently, the Council could be in breach of its obligation to provide water to all vacant lots, without a water pipeline at their frontage within the Russell Island part of the Mainland System.

Consequently, if there is a Residential A land acquisition program;

- a. Will owners be compensated for their lost water rights from 1989 that is 1989 when water was first reticulated?
- b. Will existing owners not affected by acquisition but on a street not serviced by water be also compensated?

Roads

As per the island summit, 4.5-5.0 metre wide roads are acceptable on the larger islands and this is the only parameter that is acceptable. Concrete roads, planned to be 3.5 metres wide, are a joke. They are dangerous and highly polluting though verge erosion of passing vehicles.

No truncation of roads should be considered if views or easy access to the water or facilities are to be interfered with.

5. Does the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning and Land Use Strategy and its background flora and fauna reports adequately support proposals to acquire Residential A lots in so called conservation areas? If not, has there been anything untoward in the planning process?

An initial analysis relevant data in reports was made of conservation and indigenous cultural heritage designations were initiated for Conservation Areas R22 R31 R35 and R 32.

Throughout fauna reports only one rare species reported at Botanical Polygon R20B (South end of High Street on Browns Bay) is confirmed habitat for the False water rat. The report assumes that the Burrowing skink (*Ophiscincus truncatus*) is in all the eucalypt forests of Russell and Macleay Islands but during the fauna survey none have been found on Russell and none have been found since and reported (Queensland Museum's K Wilson 18 September 1998). The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the skink may or may not be there which is insufficient reason to use this data in support of retention of fragmented eucalypt areas on Russell Island.

Table 4.2 lists the habitat conservation priorities for R22, R31 and R35 as forest residential which have and overall habitat conservation rating of low for flora but medium for fauna and overall significance with an ecological capacity of high for flora, fauna and overall significance. Yet, the conservation priority is a rating of 6 or at the lower end of medium significance. The question is how has this been arrived at as this is totally conflicting to descriptions given. The Terrestrial Fauna Report describes these habitats on page 63 as: R22 Forest Residential poor condition; R31 Forest Residential poor condition with many cleared areas understorey slashed and burnt; and R35 Forest Mosaic similar to R34 and in tables listed as "degraded forest".

Assessments of the island's flora do not show species lists for R22, R31 and R35. It is remarkable that the reports show that no fauna fieldwork was done in polygons R 22 or R 31. Yet, there was field work done in R35 Polygon (980 homesites) which was described as mixed blackbut and eucalypt forest with some heavily burnt areas with no understorey mixed with dense regrowth. Here some ten species (thirteen birds) were identified including a noisy friarbird, two scaly breasted lorikeets, three pale headed rosellas, a laughing kookaburra, a dollarbird, a rufous fantail, a rufous whistler, a grey strike thrush and within 60 metres or flying overhead were an olive backed oriole and a rainbow lorikeet. This is hardly enough evidence to recommend that 980 residential lots in the area of R35 be acquired for conservation purposes. From this initial conclusions were made

a. No botanical species have been listed for R22, R31, R32 and R35 except for the in the forest description so how can the forest significance be assessed particularly when such lands have a higher predominant land use of residential on the current strategic plan.

b. There is no recorded rare fauna and the existence of the rare burrowing skink is clearly wrong in respect to Russell Island. The writer of a report on the rare subspecies at Queensland Museum has said he and the Museum has no record of such a reptile reported.

c. There was only one short survey on one morning in January 1997 for birds only at Polygon 35 for which no uncommon, vulnerable or rare birds were observed, rather the ten species found were very common. There were no surveys done at polygons R22 and R31 for other

species of fauna. From this one can conclude that the faunal significance of the polygons could not be assessed and to call them of medium significance or anything else would be only possible with detailed research.

d. To justify a buy back on the aforesaid and without seasonal qualitative and quantitative analysis would be very unreliable and to grade the polygons to medium significance cannot be justified on subsequent ecological grounds. Remember they are highly disturbed homesites that at one stage or another have generally been cleared.

e. To base the high cultural heritage significance to these areas under this unreliable grading of medium conservation significance is also likely to be very unreliable. Aerial photos of the past for instance show the areas of R22, R31 and R35 to be highly disturbed. They are far from intact from a cultural heritage perspective, owing to extensive development of subdivisions and clearing in the past. Consequently, these polygons should be considered to have little if any cultural heritage significance. The Southern Moreton Bay Islands have been extensively bulldozed at one time or another for subdivision and clearing. Slides shown by Eddie Hegerl of Australian Marine Conservation Society Inc. (then the Littoral Society) at the Bay Search Seminar on 25 November 1989, then clearly showed the nature of clearing at a time soon after subdivision. Island land is far from pristine, although a few minor pockets may have rare flora and fauna present.

f. The overall recommendation was to request that the researchers or the consultant to table more detailed information from the researchers involved or to abandon the strategy in respect to acquisition and cultural heritage management because of the paucity of baseline data. It does not stack up.

Descriptive analyses

We can use aerial photography for mapping vegetation conservation areas but we can only second guess the canopy cover and not the understorey or built environment or ground cover that is obstructed from view. Another way to analyses general areas or specific sites, say for fauna habitat protection is to inspect areas, to raise issues from that inspection and to promote a range of actions. It is not even known if inspection of each general area or specific site has been accomplished because these areas marked X on Mike Olsen's fauna map (Figure 1) generally fall outside the areas of land for acquisition.

To rely on descriptive information, without inspection, is not enough to justify acquisition. In the case of the fauna in Table 5, there was no action proposed for acquisition of many lots in areas of eucalypt forest (sic). Rather there was "Habitat preservation and management through education and cooperation with landholders" in areas of "Mixed eucalypt forest" where "Some large blocks remain on Russell and fewer on Macleay, Lamb and Karragarra."

Here the specific action is not for acquisition but for "Areas that cannot be reserved should be managed to minimise clearing. In particular blocks such asR20A, R22, R30-1, R34-5...." These blocks, also known as vegetation polygons, cumulatively represent 1750 residential A lots designated for acquisition in the strategy.

Without detailed data, descriptive information is likely to be applied to more generalised areas. When this occurs, errors can be more than minor. Take the example of descriptive fauna data on Table 5 that refers to other specific but small-scale sites of diverse low-lying forest. Now focus into the one that lies at X12 on Fig 1 within the bounds of vegetation polygon R43 south of Glendale Road, Russell Island. Somehow, the fauna data of X12 was generally applied to the much larger neighbouring vegetation polygon R32 of elevated substantially modified bushland vegetation and to which there is now a planning strategy to buy over 200 lots on conservation grounds. Really, is this good planning?

All told, approximately 1750 lots are proposed for acquisition in areas that the fauna consultant advised that they cannot be reserved and should be managed to minimise clearing. In addition, over 200 more lots have been incorrectly identified due to applying data to a more generalised neighbouring vegetation polygon. There was not a detailed descriptive examination of these major vegetation areas. It may have been clumsy planning, as detailed studies of these areas were not required at the time. There was no intention to acquire so many residential lots as these lots of medium conservation priority extended to where at most “*stringent controls on development would be desirable to reduce loss of vegetation*” (*Key Findings September, 1997 p7*). Only after a major fall in island market prices has these lots of mainly medium significance been targets for acquisition at \$5500 a lot instead of \$10000 a year ago.

Other survey techniques

Without detailed analysis of the flora, there needs to be a study that includes substantial floral specimen identification and counts such as found in the flora species studies, such as those in appendices 5 to 24 of the flora report. This is so placing a level of floral significance can be justified. And, in the case of flora that has been modified by urban environments, such as that present on the Bay Islands, there would have to be an exhaustive seasonal analysis of flora, avifauna and fauna to really justify acquisition.

If any such analysis study found vegetation to be of a particular significance rating, then its overall conservation significance could be upgraded or downgraded depending on avifauna counts and other fauna data. Data from all three; flora, avifauna, and fauna studies would provide a comprehensive basis to assess overall conservation significance values. And when land is to be acquired from owners of house sites, it seems prudent that land in a particular vegetation area needs to have all three surveys conducted to assure both owners and Council or the financiers of such, that such an acquisition is justified. That is, that the land’s overall conservation values are that urgent to preserve that public acquisition (usually a last resort process) is justified on environmental conservation grounds alone. Without the three surveys, the question in one’s mind would be “Does the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning and Land Use Strategy and its background flora and fauna reports adequately support proposals to acquire cheaply conservation areas and has there been anything untoward in the planning process?”

The alarm bells that would tend to alert one to the very fact that land has not been adequately surveyed is the words “subject to survey” in the description of certain polygons requiring

“further survey” and the acquisition Map 11 acquisition areas are designated “subject to survey”.

Any acquisition of land for environmental purposes must be justified on overall environmental significance. This must not be confused with the issue of reducing overall infrastructure requirements and ongoing servicing costs as per 14.1.3 of the strategy. A year after the flora fauna study, lots for acquisition were designated as Residential A on the 26 February 1998 update of the 1998 Redlands Strategic Plan with the future use being residential. If such land had a rating of low flora significance, in a particular vegetation polygon area, it would need a species list say of the vegetation and as well some higher significance fauna data to justify upgrading to a higher level of conservation significance for acquisition purposes. Without this, the owner of the land might think that there is no justification and the real reason for acquisition is say the overall need may be to reduce infrastructure or ongoing service costs and he may ask “Has there been anything untoward in the planning process?”

Following is a detailed analysis of the flora and fauna studies to date assuming the technical reports provided all the known data. Some 165 terrestrial vegetation polygons were examined in the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Planning and Land Use Strategy. Only two of these had combined vegetation/avifauna/fauna studies that would normally be seen as a minimum requirement to justify acquisition of land for conservation purpose. One of these was a polygon of low vegetation conservation value, where fauna studies involved the capture of one house mouse and one cane toad over one night and were not as extensive as one might hope.

Russell Island

An analysis was made of 3035 Residential A lots proposed for acquisition on Russell Island with and without vegetation species list surveys, bird transect count surveys and small mammal trapping site surveys. This may include lots to be obtained for dual overland flow and environmental conservation and some houses not for acquisition.

No vegetation polygons containing lots for acquisition on Russell Island had the combined three surveys completed (vegetation species list survey, bird transect count survey and small mammal trapping site survey).

One vegetation polygon containing approximately 293 lots for acquisition had both a vegetation species list survey and a bird transect count survey - R18A (293 lots).

Five vegetation polygons containing approximately 260 lots for acquisition had both a bird transect count survey and a small mammal trapping site survey in the polygon or very nearby. These were polygons R20A (0 lots), R20B (1 lot), R23 (47 lots), R32 (209 lots) and R33B (3 lots). In vegetation polygon R32 there was no vegetation species list prepared and bird counts recorded along the transect were much less than would be expected for an area that was significant for preserving good samples of bird communities. This would reinforce the argument that the descriptive information in Table 5 for X12 relates to vegetation polygon R43 and that vegetation polygon 32 is actually of no significant avifauna significance. The extensive mammal trapping in polygon R32 resulted only in the capture of 17 cane toads and 16 crickets (common for mid-summer) which does not support a greater level of significance.

One vegetation polygon, containing approximately 98 lots for acquisition, had both a vegetation species list survey and a small mammal trapping site survey - R25B (98 lots).

Four vegetation polygons containing approximately 22 lots for acquisition had vegetation species list surveys only - R6 (13 lots), R15 (9 lots), R21 (0 lots) and R27 (0 lots). As you can see, there is no vegetation species list surveys for polygons numbered higher than R27. This means that without other information that may come to hand that it is likely that no vegetation species lists were prepared south of Seaward Drive, Russell Island. Thus over 1700 residential A lots are in conservation areas proposed for acquisition without a species list prepared for all vegetation areas south of Seaward Street. Without flora study, the same area was seen to be “magically” intact and of high indigenous cultural heritage significance.

Three vegetation polygons containing 1023 lots for acquisition only had bird transect surveys carried out - R13 (42 lots), R 34 (1 lot) and R35 (980 lots). Considering size of polygon R35, its low vegetation significance and its very low bird count, it seems that upgrading the overall significance to medium conservation significance is far from justified. Perhaps, this large vegetation polygon should have been subdivided into sub-areas for more accurate study. One inference in the report must be challenged in that such a large area of eucalyptus is not necessarily the home for a rare burrowing skink found in bushland. This reptile is not known on Russell Island. This begs the question. Has there been an attempt to include this area of homesites into a conservation area to protect the existence of a burrowing skink, without the factual evidence to support this thesis?

Three vegetation polygons, which had approximately 112 lots for acquisition, had a small mammal site trapping survey only - R8A (21 lots), R 25A (69 lots), R33C (22 lots).

Many vegetation polygons which had approximately 1227 lots for acquisition had no vegetation species list survey, no bird transect counts and no small mammal trapping site surveys. These polygons and respective approximate number of lots for acquisition include R8B (1 lot), R4 (13 lots), R7 (2lots), R8C (8 lots), R9 (41 lots), R11 (73 lots), R12 (25 lots), R14 (76 lots), R16 (5 lots), R17A (38 lots), R17B (53 lots), R18A (12 lots), R18C (11 lots), R20C (28 lots), R22 (95 lots), R25C (41 lots), R28 (26 lots), R29 (61 lots), R30 (68 lots), R31 (474 lots), R33A (4 lots) and R43 (72 lots).

Many vegetation polygons which had no lots for acquisition, had no vegetation species list survey, no bird transect counts survey and no small mammal trapping site surveys taken. These include vegetation polygons R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R10, R19, R24, R26, R36, R37, R38, R39, R40, R41, R42 and R44.

TABLE I

Russell

	a	b
TYPE OF SURVEY		
IN AREAS PROPOSED TO ACQUIRE LOTS		
No survey (1)	22	1227
Bird only (2)	3	1023
Mammal only (3)	3	112
Bird+Mammal (4)	5	260
Vegetation only (5)	4	22
Vegetation + Mammal (6)	1	98
Vegetation+ Bird (7)	1	293
Vegetation+ Bird + Mammal (8)	0	0
IN AREAS NOT PROPOSED TO ACQUIRE LOTS		
No survey (9)	20	0
TOTAL	55	3035

Notes on the table

a. It is noted from the table at (1) above that 1227 (40 per cent of the total) were not surveyed either by preparation of vegetation species lists, bird transect count or by small mammal trappings. The largest of such vegetation polygons was R31 on Russell Island where it is proposed to acquire 474 lots for conservation purposes and to include the whole polygon as an area for indigenous cultural heritage. The official 1984 Small Craft chart shows the area to be extensively cleared and a review of the conservation significance is needed.

b. It is noted that from the table at (2) above, some 1023 lots (34 per cent of the total) were surveyed by bird transect counts only. One vegetation polygon R35 (approximately 980 homesites) was described as "*mixed blackbut and eucalypt forest with some heavily burnt areas with no understorey mixed with dense regrowth*". It was rated of low vegetation conservation value. On the morning of 24 January 1997, the only survey period, some ten species (thirteen birds) were identified from bird transect site No. 24 (code "eucs east") which is located in vegetation polygon R35. There was a noisy friarbird, two scaley breasted lorikeets, three pale headed rosellas, a laughing kookaburra, a dollarbird, a rufous fantail, a rufous whistler, a grey strike thrush and within 60 metres or flying overhead were an olive backed oriole and a rainbow lorikeet. It may seem incredible that 980 homesites would be proposed to be acquired on such a paucity of data and even more incredible that the polygon has been placed in an area of high indigenous cultural heritage. Has there been anything untoward in the planning process?

c. It is noted in the table at (4) above that of the 260 lots for acquisition were in conservation areas where only bird transect counts and small mammal trap surveys were undertaken, vegetation polygon R32 had 209 lots designated for acquisition. This is supposed to be mixed eucalypt forest (sic) in the south-west of Russell Island bounded by Bangalow St, Bunya St then a rough squiggle east to South End Rd and then Glendale Rd. It is of grave concern as to how this polygon could be nominated as a forest area in need of protection and without a

botanical survey. In vegetation polygon R32, there was no vegetation species list prepared and bird counts recorded along the transect were much less than would be expected for an area that was significant for preserving good samples of bird communities. This would reinforce the argument that the descriptive information in Table 5 for *X12* relates to vegetation polygon R43 and that vegetation polygon 32 is actually of no significant avifauna significance.

The extensive mammal trapping in polygon R32 resulted only in the capture of 17 cane toads and 16 crickets, which does not support a greater level of significance. Has there been anything untoward in the planning process?

Second Best Test

If one is to arrive at a second best test and not do all of the three surveys of vegetation lists, bird count and mammal trapping, there would need to be as a vegetation species list survey of degraded forest. This would have to be coupled with some type of fauna or avifauna study that conclusively upgrades the vegetation polygon's overall conservation value and only then should the land be considered for acquisition. This could have been attempted in degraded forests such as R18B, R19, R22, R31, R32 and R35. In the latter two fauna studies were carried out but the inconclusive fauna data from R32 (low bird counts, 17 cane toads and 16 crickets) and R 35 (a very low bird count of 11 birds) could simply not justify acquisition. Even at this basic second best test there is no evidence that would justify upgrading these vegetation polygons to medium significance. You have to ask whether the designation of medium significance has been the product of a scientific or scattergun approach and it appears without other information surfacing, that the latter description is appropriate? Simply the resources were not enough to cover many vegetation polygons and consequently there is a dearth of data being presented to justify acquisition. The fact that it in this case it is Residential A land that in a Town plan amendment of 26 February 1998 shows the land as future residential which conflicts with the database description. The description needs to have some note on species understorey and groundcover as well a note on threats and long -term prospects etc.

For Table 2.1 (Summary of Conservation Significance) to have credibility, there must be detailed vegetation studies plus faunal studies. Without one detailed vegetation study south of Seaward Drive, Russell Island, (1920 residential A lots), one does not know what the exact significance priority to be placed on the land or the need to provide linkages to it as part of a future on-going conservation management plan. To describe the land in terms used without backing is to denigrate the use of the land by its present owners. Really, the land is a mosaic of cleared and vegetated residential housing sites; some built on and with normal subdivided roads (some sealed) and things like power lines. To call it, say a forest is to exaggerate, as a forest is a larger (homogenous) tract of land with trees on it. Thus the creation of the illusion that the vegetation polygon areas contain a certain floristic quality cannot be justified on the data and this must be rectified at once.

Polygon R32 is clearly placed in a higher grade of significance as its elevation is greater than polygon R31 and the data was wrongly transcribed from polygon R43 which has those

attributes. Floristically, R32 is degraded forest and should be recategorised to low floristic significance. In respect to the fauna table, vegetation polygons R22 R31 and R35 have been wrongly classified if we take into account the paucity of bird, mammal and reptile data elsewhere. R22 and R31 did not have data presented in the report as to any vegetation, bird or mammal survey. There are waders that perch on high tide roosts to the east of R22 but good management practices between the 1.6 to 2.4 AHD line and where no building is generally allowed would be adequate. It would be simply illogical to remove 95 housing lots because of a couple of wader roosts on the foreshore. R35 has had a bird count and this was very low. The burrowing skink on Russell Island location on the fauna table is unsubstantiated, as no such animal has been found to date.

Conclusions

Baseline vegetation and fauna studies in strategy background papers are not sufficient to warrant a proposal to acquire land for conservation purposes and in most cases for indigenous cultural heritage story places. The question that must be asked is “Has there been anything untoward in the planning process?”

Clearly the planners did not have the resources to do the studies needed and it will be unlikely to achieve their goals this way.

The paucity of environmental data is making it difficult to legitimately acquire such lands besides some landowners would see this as confrontationist approach by local government to do what it has done before - next to nothing and delay infrastructure. It is not something that planners should be proud of.

Recommendations

Analysis of the reports available lead to the conclusion fort mandatory suspension of proposed acquisition and indigenous cultural heritage designations in the strategy until independent baseline studies are completed to justify acquisition. There is no justification for purchasing any of these lots until such studies are done. Of particular concern are lots in vegetation polygons R18B, R22, R31, R32 R35 which are so deficient in data from the study that the conclusions drawn must be discounted outright, totally and publicly acknowledged.

The Redland Shire Council should immediately and publicly advise the owners that such studies have not fully ascertained reliable data and that their land will not be purchased. Council should also apologise to owners and to compensate them for any fall in the value of their land.

In the case of Indigenous Cultural Heritage for story places, Ann Ross and the Quandamooka Land Council should be officially informed told that the land has not been fully analysed as to its conservation significance. So should the Executive Director of Centenary of Australia Qld an agency involved in Federal State Significance grants to which Redland Shire has applied for a grant to purchase 2180 lots of high and very high environmental significance. They can review their options accordingly. Without adequate justification in designating the

environmental significance in the first place, there could be adverse ramifications affecting places of indigenous cultural heritage and compensation if the land is excluded from the Residential A zone. It is poignant to state the Queensland Ombudsman's 1994 comments to RIDA when the issue of the SEQ2001 RFGM threatened owners for the first time. He said

"The sole limit to population on the bay islands is the extent of subdivision in an area. Given that Russell Island (the major subdivided Bay Island) is already subdivided and comprises primarily residential land, under current legislation any property owner would be entitled to apply for building approval. I would therefore anticipate that the number of residents on Russell Island will be in direct proportion to the number of residentially zoned blocks, unless at some future stage the land is excluded from the Residential zone by Council (with the appropriate payment of compensation)."

A full review should be made to what studies are needed and the process by which it can be done prrly, remembering the land is residential and any attempt to research the land in the field will need the owner's permission for experts to enter land etc.

What is being done is to achieve a set outcome at a later date without the evidence at this stage. The question is, is this morally wrong and has there been anything untoward in the planning process? The matter should directly be referred to the State Ombudsman. Without such a reference, the taking of homesites for conservation purposes without adequate background studies necessary, could have adverse ramifications to the planning and environmental science professions.

6. Land in Medium Conservation Significance Priority Acquisitions

The Key Findings last September put land in the Moderate Priority of conservation significance as "areas for which stringent controls on development would be desirable to reduce loss of vegetation". There have been no environmental studies of the land since January 1997. Since then, the land has been designated as mainly future Residential A or of higher zoning categories in the 26 February 1998 amendment Redlands Strategic Plan, Southern Moreton Bay Islands Insert on DCP1. Subsequently, there is no justification to designate this land for acquisition for conservation purposes.

It is pointed that land down zoned to drainage problem since 1998, is currently listed on DCP1 and where this land falls into the medium conservation significance priority, there are doubts to whether that land should also be acquired without further environmental study.

7. Omission of High School and additional Government services.

The Strategic Plan of Redlands needs to consider the Southern Moreton Bay Islands in respect what inconsistent planning policy or uncoordinated planning would mean for the provision of other government services. For instance, a high school on Russell Island would be needed by year 2005, if a bridge of similar cost were not provided. Some essential health services are

needed by year 2004.

The Strategic Plan needs to recognise that the ultimate population, even if it was to be pruned down as envisaged in the plan is going to be at least 22696 residents. With such a population, the islands will definitely need a \$20 million high school. If the population reaches 5000 persons by year 2005, then the island would normally need a \$12 million stage one of such a facility. This is simply because of a planning boo boo to place the closest high school away from Redland Bay and to build it at Victoria Point. You haven't a second chance to get it right. The islands have been double isolated and will need their own State high school. You can subsidise travel but there is a limit to what should be subsidised as with a greater number of high school aged children there are an increasing range of people with handicaps and socioeconomic reasons to force the need for the facility.

Provision of a high school could be delayed till year 2020 when island populations are likely to reach peak population. But this would only be possible if a bridge link was provided to a school on the mainland. Unless there is coordinated planning with the State Government, a non-bridged Russell Island will need an islands' based high school as early as year 2005 or by the time the islands' population reaches 5000 persons.

This could be obviated, if a first stage of a \$20.8 million bridge is built from Russell Island to the Mainland at Rocky Point or a \$16 million bridge and road was built from Russell Island to North Stradbroke Island to give islanders easy access to Dunwich High School.

The issue of a primary school on Russell Island has been handled very badly. The present education site at Centre Road could be used for both State primary and State High School facilities but is earmarked for acquisition for environmental purposes. It is the only one area large enough for one facility that could handle primary pupils from both ends of the island. It is not right for primary pupils to travel up to seven kilometres to the existing facility.

The issue of pre-school students is another point overlooked by the study. A Rocky Point bridge could rationalise preschool education of Russell Island and with that of Woolgoolba.

8. The health consequence of not clearing bushland in urban areas.

The local Council of any area is responsible for health programs to stop endemic diseases such as Ross River Virus.

Recent epidemiological research by either the University of Queensland or Griffith (since the formulation of background papers of the SMBI) has found a strong correlation between Brisbane's Bushland areas and Ross River Virus. Bushland is an area where mosquitoes breed.

Has this issue been really researched properly for the larger areas of vegetation that are now being proposed to be acquired and has the council evaluated its public risk liability? Is it endorsing a strategy that is in effect buying back residential home sites that have less chance of harboring mosquitoes and returning them into a more vegetative bushland state capable of harboring more mosquitoes and thereby risking the health of residents in Redlands?

9. Land in High Conservation Significance Priority Acquisitions

Polygon R43 should be split into two, as per Key findings maps and the eastern portion remain low or medium significance and perhaps the best person to advise on this is Mike Olsen. The western portion seems right to remain in high as it provides low level eucalypt forest with some high bird roosts and it is contained within one large lot.

Polygon R11 should be upgraded to very high as it contains a very important, almost pristine elevated eucalypt vegetation community of vivid diversity. There is a 4-hectare portion on Fern Terrace that was purchased by Redland Shire with the Environment Charge funding after it was promoted for acquisition on environmental grounds. Some of the photographs will be on file that shows its floristic splendor.