

# Managing Growth in the Sunshine States: Urbanization and Planning in Queensland and Florida

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## Synopsis

This paper compares the urbanization and planning in the two sunshine states of Florida and Queensland highlighting the similarities and differences, evaluates how effective the growth management programs have been, and examines the recent changes and the challenges they bring to the respective states.

## 1. Introduction

The states of Queensland, Australia and Florida, U.S. have distinct similarities in terms of physical characteristics such as geography and climate as well as population growth trends, development history and structure. In fact, some parts of South Florida such as Fort Lauderdale and South East Queensland (SEQ) such as the Gold Coast are virtually indistinguishable. Both states are late bloomers and both are experiencing higher than average growth rates within their respective countries as a result of being desirable tourism and retirement destinations, both of them have very fragile environments and potentially growing vulnerability to climate change, and both try to cope with the development pressures they are facing by using growth management programs. However, they are different in terms of the planning regimes, central-local government relations, and patterns of urban/local politics.

In Florida, historically the 1985 Florida Growth Management Act (GMA) governed the growth management process whereas in SEQ, Australia's fastest growing region, the latest successor of the Regional Growth Management Framework started in the 1990s, the 2009 SEQ Regional Plan provides the framework for managing the expected growth. On June 1, 2009 Governor Charlie Crist signed the Community Renewal Act as Florida's new growth management legislation despite widespread opposition from environmentalists and local governments. At the same time the Queensland state election in March 2012 ended fourteen years of Labor government and brought to power the Liberal National Party (LNP) and major changes in planning regulations was set in motion. Freestone (2004) observes that historically transpacific exchanges of ideas have been more pronounced in times of prosperity. This may be about to change. These simultaneous developments arising during the aftermath of a global financial crisis make the evaluation and comparison of the planning regimes of these two states very pertinent and timely.

In this paper we first examine the relationship of urban development patterns of Australia and the U.S. and highlight the similarities and differences between the characteristics, development histories, planning regimes and growth management programs of the states of Florida and Queensland. Then we examine the latest developments in the planning frameworks and set up a framework for further evaluation and comparison of the two states.

## 2. Urbanization and Planning in the United States and Australia

Physical similarities aside, political structures and planning regimes of Australia and the U.S. are so different from each other that it is amazing they can produce so similar urban areas that are sometimes virtually indistinguishable. It makes one wonder whether planning regimes and political structures make a difference at all. A somewhat related question raised by the similarities is whether these similar outcomes are coincidental or intentional due to taking American cities as a model for newer developments in Australia. Most of these questions are beyond the scope of this paper, but they provide a framework for the comparisons we present.

There are many basic similarities between the two countries such as comparative size and isolation, new world colonial history, subsequent common cultural background and language, democratic-capitalist political and economic structure, and highly urbanized developed economies (Freestone 2000: 302) with large percentage of foreign born populations<sup>1</sup> (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a) that make the earlier developed U.S. the ideal model for Australia (see Table 1). The land area of the continental U.S. (48 contiguous states) is almost equivalent to the land area of Australia. However, population of the U.S. is over 13 times and density is over 10 times that of Australia. Furthermore, population distribution is more uneven in Australia (Margerum 1995). Gross Domestic Product in the U.S. is more than 10 times, Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity is 30 % and median household income is almost 32 % higher than Australia. Given these similarities Bell and Bell (1993: 82) state that “the model that seemed to be ‘natural’, given Australia’s geography and its relative wealth, was the American, or, at least, the Californian city.”

**Table 1. Australia and the United States in Numbers**

	United States	Australia
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	9,809,155 (total) (3,537,421 sq. miles <sup>1</sup> ) 8,080,464 (continental) (3,119,059 sq. miles)	7,682,300 (2,941,285 sq. miles <sup>1</sup> )
Population (2012) <sup>2</sup>	313,900,000	22,000,000
Density (people per km <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	33 (89 per sq. mile <sup>1</sup> )	3 (7 per sq. mile <sup>1</sup> )
Percent urban <sup>2</sup>	79	82
Gross Domestic Product <sup>3</sup> (millions of U.S. \$) 2012	15,684,800	1,520,608
Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity per Capita <sup>2</sup> (US\$) 2010	47,310	36,910
Median Household Income (U.S. \$)	50,007 <sup>4</sup>	38,000 <sup>5</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau (2009a), <sup>2</sup>Population Reference Bureau (2012), <sup>3</sup>The World Bank (2013), <sup>4</sup>U.S. Census Bureau (2007), <sup>5</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006).

Looking up to the “other” new world in addition to or instead of the United Kingdom is a long standing tendency in Australia. According to leading Sydney planning propagandist George Taylor in 1914 “America was ‘indisputably the land of the up-to-date’... America was a nation ... ‘inspired by the same motives as inspire us, and [it] is doing things generally in almost every sphere of activity as we would do them. It is the great university in which we should receive our schooling on how to prosper and progress’” (Freestone 2000: 306). Freestone (2004: 195) reports that “[b]y the 1920s ... informed planning commentators were actively promoting American and Australian cities as comparable “new world” environments.” Facing similar problems of sprawl, uncoordinated infrastructure provision and traffic congestion in the 1920s leading planning advocates in Australian cities “turned away from small area planning schemes based on British precedents towards an American-style master planning approach” (Freestone 2000: 301).

Post-war period witnessed conscious examination of the U.S. as a model. Visits from American professionals to Australia and visits of Australian planners to the States advanced

transfer of ideas. After visiting the U.S. on a Fulbright Scholarship Melbourne planner-economist George Connor concluded that “American technical know-how, optimism, and vision could assist in the resolution of the main problems facing Australian cities—traffic congestion, inner-city redevelopment, suburban infrastructure, and better planning systems” (Freestone 2004: 199). He wrote:

It is in the United States that we find civic problems more akin to those facing Australian cities and it is here where we have most to learn. One cannot but realise that America’s civic problems today are ours tomorrow. Many are, in fact, already comparable. Our traffic problems and general mode of living have so much in common (Connor 1955: 28).

Despite warnings by planners such as Rod Fraser against “an uncritical embrace of American solutions for a country of smaller population and resources” Australian urban development followed the model of freestanding malls and freeways along with the rest of the developed world (Freestone 2004: 200). By 1960s British planning influence in Australia was making further way for American ideas (Freestone 2004). Wright (2001: 49) mentions the urban freeway and corridor development ideas of the late 1950s and the 1960s, exported from the U.S. as the “solution to the problems of the cities.”

This trend continued in the 1970s. Among exported American influences in this period Freestone (2004: 204) counts “environmental management, landscape planning, public participation, transference of development rights, and human-scaled place-sensitive planning.” This was followed by “metropolitan area planning through urban redevelopment, systems planning and corporate planning techniques, the new urbanism, land use–transport integration, and growth management” (Freestone 2004: 205). Ward (2002: 384-385) claims that “given so much common ground between Australian and American suburbs, it was inevitable that the new urbanist philosophy would provide the design underpinning for urban consolidation.” Minnery and Bajracharya (1999: 36) note that “The initial visions for master-planned communities (MPCs) in the SEQ have been influenced by those in the U.S. particularly from Florida and California. Many developers and designers made trips to the United States to gain ideas. Some developers saw parallels between canal estates in Florida and the potential to develop such estates on the Gold Coast... In addition, like the growth of MPCs in sunbelt areas of the U.S., interstate migration to South East Queensland contributed to the planning and development of MPCs here.” Freestone (2004: 207) points to “the resort town ‘with old-fashioned neighbourhood values’ of Seaside near Coolumb on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, with the architecture a fusion of the American Seaside and traditional Queensland homes” as “a direct American inspiration.”

The brief history presented above shows that urbanization and planning in Australia have been influenced by American ideas and models for a long time. However, this does not mean that Australia borrowed everything “as is” from the U.S. Even by 1920s some planners such as Saxil Tuxen warned that Australia could learn from “America’s good examples without falling prey to . . . its many faults” such as “its relatively laissez faire organization of utilities” and the “ugly face of commercialism” (Nichols 1998: 667). After examining Sydney’s suburban employment centers, extending Mees’s (1994) argument Freestone (1997: 256) concludes that “American development trends, even in the large-scale decentralization of retailing, have still not reshaped metropolitan form and structure in a radical way since the turn of the century.” Freestone (2004: 190) agrees that “American ideas have been demonstrably assimilated into Australian planning theory, ideology, and practice over an extended period” however “Australian responses were not uncritical, deferential, undiscretionary forms of ‘undiluted borrowing’” (209) as Ward (2002) suggests. Thus he (2004: 210) concludes “[w]hat has ultimately been documented is arguably less the Americanization of Australian planning and more the Australianization of American planning.”

Whether coincidental or intentional, uncritically borrowed or adapted, the similarities are gaining attention from researchers. Freestone and Murphy (1998: 295) note “[a]n emerging theme in Australian urban studies in the 1990s has been the relative convergence and divergence of the urban development paths of Australian cities compared to those overseas, notably North American.”

Several underlying factors between the countries and cultures may explain the observed differences in urban structures. Australia has much smaller population and economy. Both have federal systems but even these are different as the U.S. has a federal republican system whereas Australia is governed by a parliamentary system (Margerum 1995). Australia is quite close in geographic size to the continental U.S. (see Table 1) but compared to its 48 states Australia has 6 states and two territories. This means each Australian state covers much larger areas with lot smaller populations. State populations in Australia are close to the smaller states in the U.S. In fact, population of Florida (18,328,34<sup>ii</sup>), the fourth most populous American state, is very close to the population of Australia (see Table 1). A closer examination reveals further differences in state-local government relationships and transportation and land use patterns.

### **2.1. State-Local Government Relationships**

While both countries have federal systems states have more power in the Australian system (Margerum 1995, Freestone 2000, Worthington and Dollery 2000) which makes stronger metropolitan and local growth controls, existence of special purpose metropolitan planning agencies or state agencies with metropolitan jurisdictions<sup>iii</sup>, statutory controls and supra-local laws and guidelines reflecting more growth control planning goals, i.e. higher level of state intervention, possible (Freestone 1997). Behind the power states hold in Australia lies the fact that many services provided by local governments in the U.S. such as education, health, police, utility (water, sewerage), (Freestone 1997), fire protection (Margerum 1995), public transport and social housing (Freestone 2000) are provided by state governments in Australia. Freestone (1997) remarks that this resulted in greater equality of service provision, lesser socio-economic balkanization and Parkin (1982 cited in Freestone and Murphy 1998) claims less local competition. Furthermore, states have primary responsibility for environmental and natural resource management in Australia while in the U.S. this authority held by the federal government is often delegated to the states by federal agencies under legislative authority (Margerum 1995). This results in more involvement of federal agencies at the state and regional level in both direct and oversight roles.

In Australia from the mid-1950s, urban development was under the control of state governments through special purpose metropolitan planning agencies or state agencies with metropolitan jurisdictions whereas local governments dealt with day-to-day development and zoning control and strong central authorities oversee their work and have the right of final approval of all local plans (Freestone and Murphy 1998). In contrast, planning systems are more fragmented and regional planning powers are weak or nonexistent in many American metropolitan regions. State oversight of local government plans brought by Florida’s Growth Management Act is one of the exceptions to this.

There are also differences in the local government structure and roles between the two countries. The U.S. has “a two-tiered system of local government, with counties performing functions as agents of state government and municipalities in the form of cities, boroughs, villages and towns” (Margerum 1995: 37). In Australia a single tiered structure exists. “Urban governance was therefore split between the state government and a mosaic of local authorities, with the central (state) government holding the ultimate mandate in metropolitan affairs” (Freestone 2000: 302). Furthermore, due to consolidation, the number of local governments is much fewer in Australia (Margerum 1995).

Different from the governance systems of many other comparable economies, local governments in Australia are responsible for relatively fewer functions. This is apparent even when contrasted with a federal system like the U.S. Worthington and Dollery (2000: 351) note that the services provided by local governments in Australia “are largely orientated towards ‘services to property’ and include roads, drainage, waste management, sewerage and water supplies, footpaths and flood mitigation works. By contrast, local governments in the U.S. generally bear responsibility for a large number of major social policy services, including social security, hospitals and health care, schools and police.”

## 2.2. Transportation Systems and Land Use

Australian cities have a similar land use to that of the U.S. cities. Both have sprawled extensively during postwar suburban boom (Newman and Kenworthy 1989). Kenworthy and Laube’s 1996 international comparison of automobile dependence reveals that among the developed and wealthy countries examined Australian cities are the next most automobile dependant after American cities and have either very similar values to them in the dependency factors, or are next closest to the American cities. The study includes six large Australian cities (Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra) and 13 large U.S. cities (Houston, Phoenix, Detroit, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Chicago, New York, Portland, Sacramento, San Diego) among others. The results of the study show that, in spite of the fact that Australian cities are less dependent on freeways and Central Business Districts (CBD) are still accessible by public transit (Freestone 1997) in transportation and land use patterns Australian cities are closest to American cities having similar levels of overall metropolitan densities, per capita metropolitan road provision, parking spaces per 1000 CBD jobs, and percentage of workers getting to work on foot and bicycle (Kenworthy and Laube 1996). In other factors of auto dependence such as the per capita auto use, transit service, vehicle ownership Australia is the next closest to the US.

Kenworthy and Laube’s (1996) study show that in 1990:

- *Overall metropolitan densities* in the U.S. (14 people/ha) and Australia (13 people/ha) are the lowest among all cities examined by a factor of three even compared to the next lowest, Metro Toronto.
- *Per capita metropolitan road provision* shows that U.S. (6.7 meters) and Australian (8.3 meters) cities provide most for the automobile. These are 3 to 4 times the roads in European cities, 6 to 8 times in the wealthy Asian cities, and 9 to 12 times in the developing Asian cities.
- In *parking spaces per 1000 CBD jobs* Australian cities lead the world with 489 spaces, followed closely by U.S. cities with 462. The numbers drop dramatically in Toronto and the European cities and reach very low levels in the Asian cities.
- U.S. cities, Toronto, and Australian cities have the lowest *percentage of workers getting to work on foot and bicycle* at only 5 %.
- The U.S. cities generally have the highest overall *vehicle ownership* with 602 vehicles per 1000 for passenger cars and 755 for total vehicles. Australian cities are next after Toronto with 491 cars per 1000 and 595 total vehicles. These figures also drop dramatically in European and Asian cities. The small gap between the two countries is narrowing. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2008) motor vehicles per 1,000 population between 2000–2005 is 787 for the U.S. and 663 for Australia.
- U.S. cities have 1.7 times *per capita auto use* of Australian cities with 11,113 kilometers per person compared to 6571 kilometers in Australian cities.
- With only 28 kilometers of *transit service per person each year* U.S. cities have the lowest level of service among the cities examined, whereas the Australian cities provide more than double this level (60 kilometers). In *service kilometers* U.S. cities

are again the lowest internationally with 63 trips per person annually, while Australian cities are a little better with 92 trips.

In 1980

- *Average gasoline consumption* in U.S. cities was nearly twice as high as in Australian cities with 446 gallons per capita compared to 227 gallons and much higher than European and Asia cities (Newman and Kenworthy 1989). The authors conclude that this difference is only partially explained by gasoline prices, income and vehicle efficiency. What is significant is urban structure.

Mees (1994 cited in Freestone 1997: 256) identifies the underlying differences between the cities of two countries as the Australian city's "long history of suburban diffusion, good public transportation systems, 'paucity of urban freeways', local government and planning systems promoting less 'open slather' development, and widespread gentrification and retention of status by inner and middle distance suburbs". Central cities maintained their status as the most important employment center in Australian cities. The socio-spatial structure of privilege is the "reverse of the American donut" (Freestone 1997: 255).

### **3. A Comparison of the States of Florida and Queensland**

In addition to the above highlighted similarities there are parts of the two countries that particularly resemble each other. Particularly the southern parts of the states of Florida and Queensland have similar physical characteristics that led to the similarities in their development histories and structures in spite of their different planning regimes.

#### **3.1. Physical and Demographic Characteristics**

The two states are similar in terms of physical characteristics such as geography and climate as well as population growth trends. The state of Queensland covers an area of 1,732,934 km<sup>2</sup> (669,090 square miles) and the SEQ region covers 22,310 km<sup>2</sup> (8,613 square miles) (Wyeth et al. 2000). Florida covers 151,670 km<sup>2</sup> (58,560 square miles) (State of Florida 2009). South Florida Regional Planning Council is the closest to a defined planning region in Florida that could be compared to SEQ. It covers a total area of 17,840 km<sup>2</sup> (6,888 square miles) and has a population of close to 4 million people (South Florida Regional Planning Council 2004). This is comparable to SEQ in population.

Both states are dubbed the Sunshine State in their respective countries. Climate of Queensland ranges from tropical in the north to subtropical in the south. The only subtropical climate in the continental U.S. is in Southern Florida and it is also located within a high-velocity cyclone zone (Abbate 2006). Queensland is also subject to cyclones. The Queensland coastal zone extends more than 9500 kilometers (5900 miles). Florida has 3363 kilometers (2276 miles) of coastline. Both have fragile environments and subject to more floods and droughts. Furthermore, both South Florida and SEQ have greater population pressure and older than average populations than the rest of their states and countries. The move from rustbelt to sunbelt in the U.S. was paralleled in Australia.

#### **3.2. Development Histories and Structure**

Similarities are also seen in the development history and structure of the two states. In fact, some parts of South Florida such as Fort Lauderdale and SEQ such as the Gold Coast are virtually indistinguishable. Both states are late bloomers and both are experiencing higher than average growth rates within their respective countries as a result of being desirable tourism and retirement destinations, both of them have very fragile environments and

potentially growing vulnerability to climate change, and both try to cope with the development pressures they are facing by using growth management programs.

Both states started developing later than the rest of their respective countries. The hot and humid climate and mosquito infested swamps were not habitable until the swamps were drained and air conditioning became widespread in Florida. Florida was the least populated and most impoverished state in the South at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nelson 1989). By the end of the century, it was South's largest and most affluent state, 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation in population size and among the ten fastest growing states (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Florida was the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state in the U.S. between 1980-1990 and 7<sup>th</sup> between 1990-2007 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a). There were no growth controls for a long time at the beginning of these fast developments. Troxler (2009) claims Florida choked on wild, sprawling construction from World War II until the 1980s when the growth management laws were put in place. Ben-Zadok (2005: 2169) explains that "Florida's massive growth from 2.7 million in 1950 to 9.5 million people in 1980 has precipitated state acts in 1972 and 1975. The legislation aimed to balance growth with the protection of natural resources."

Queensland is the growth state of Australia, and SEQ is still the growth region of the nation. With 18.2 percent of Australia's population in 1996, Queensland accounted for 36.8 percent of the nation's population growth between 1991 and 1996 (Minnery and Barker 1998). Over the same period, SEQ accounted for 25.3 percent of the growth with 11.7 percent of the national population and 77 percent of the State's total growth. SEQ is attracting both interstate and intrastate migration as part of the sunbelt phenomenon. Nine of the ten fastest growing local government areas in the State are near or along SEQ coastline.

Population growth in SEQ has taken place primarily along the coast or eastern corridor (referred to as the 'seachange' phenomenon) e.g. Gold Coast City, Brisbane, Maroochy Shire (see Figure 1). The region overall is characterised by low housing densities, typical in the Australian context. Finally, the region has experienced a significant fragmentation of rural lands and bushlands for rural residential development on the fringes of urban areas and in rural areas (Office of Urban Management 2005: 8).

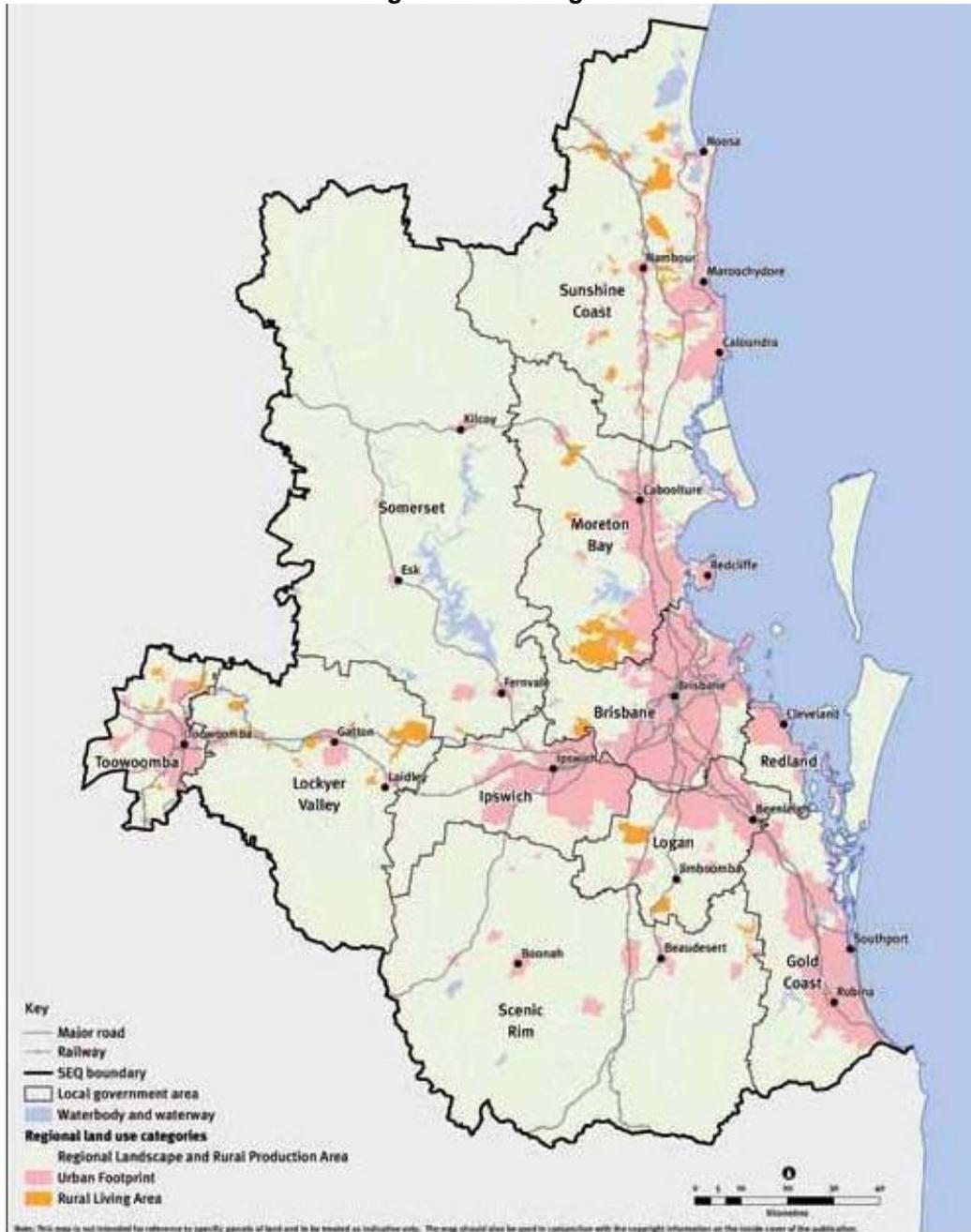
Queensland is the only Australian state that has more than one large city. Unlike other capital cities in the country Brisbane accounts for a relatively low proportion of the State's population (45.5 percent in 1996). Minnery and Barker (1998) diagnose the low-density settlement across a vast area that created a poly-centric urban form as one key feature which distinguishes growth in this region from other metropolitan areas. This low-density sprawling urban growth created difficulties for public sector managers in planning for and providing infrastructure and services (Roberts et al, 1996; Stimson et al, 1997). Furthermore, as Margerum (2002: 181) indicates "this rapid growth and urban sprawl have threatened the very amenities that attract people to the region."

### **3.3. Planning Regimes and Growth Management Programs**

While the states in Australia have more power than in the U.S. including planning authority Queensland historically had a free market approach to development under conservative rule (McKenzie 1997). Collie (1996) reports that unlike other states which used State Planning Authorities/Commissions as a fourth tier of government for land-use and infrastructure planning, development and co-ordination urban and regional planning in Queensland was essentially devoid of any significant direction at state level until 1995. This is not that different from Florida which has a history of promoting growth through land grants (Kelly, 1993).

McKenzie (1997) indicates that the change to a Labor Government in 1989 was instrumental in the State Government intervention in urban and regional development in addition to fast growth not only in urban growth centres such as Brisbane and the Gold Coast, but also in rural and semi-rural shires in the region.

**Figure 1. SEQ Region**



Source: Queensland Government (2009)

“Local governments in Queensland are creatures of the state government and have contiguous boundaries without any overlapping authority. Although the state government must approve local government plans, state intervention has historically been limited, except to ensure that local governments recognize state issues such as regional transport or issues affecting state land. This has created a culture of strong local government control” (Margerum 2002: 181). The lack of state involvement in planning issues resulted in Queensland local governments holding principal responsibility for planning and local

authorities are politically much more significant than elsewhere in the country (Wyeth et al. 2000).

The potential costs of unplanned, uncoordinated development to the community and the release of new population projections for SEQ prompted the state government to organize the SEQ2001 Growth Management Conference in December 1990. More than 250 representatives of Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, business and industry, the trade unions, professional groups, and community organizations were involved. Abbott (1996 cited in Wyeth et al. 2000: 112) writes that the conference showed:

that people feared that growth and development were out of control . . . the loss of valued agricultural areas, of bushland and coastal environment areas, of the relaxed Brisbane lifestyle, and (of) the region turning into a Los Angeles type urban sprawl from Noosa to Coolangatta.

The conference led to an agreement to develop a cooperative model for growth management in the region. In 1994, a draft regional framework for managing growth was produced, and was adopted in 1995. But issues such as limited commonwealth involvement, failure to coordinate state infrastructure funding, limited resourcing and implementation depending on voluntary agreement created major obstacles, primarily due to a somewhat variable willingness to participate in the process on the part of individual local governments. The SEQ Regional Framework for Growth Management was developed as a governance partnership involving the Queensland state government, the South East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and the Commonwealth. The approach was lacking directive powers needed for efficient urban management, but it pointed to the possibilities for cooperative urban regional governance, involving all three tiers of government, and politically was arguably a necessary precursor to the more directive statutory based system that was to follow (Gleeson 2007: 79). In February 2004, the state government announced the creation of a new office of urban management (OUM), followed by an Integrated Planning Act (IPA) amendment to establish the SEQ Regional Plan as a statutory instrument. The Integrated Planning Act 1997 provided a comprehensive framework for managing growth and change within Queensland. It included several elements: the performance based Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS), local government planning schemes, state planning policies, regional planning schemes, and State department infrastructure planning.

The SEQ Regional Plan 2005-2026 was defined as both a statutory and a planning instrument under different pieces of legislation<sup>iv</sup>. It had direct effects on infrastructure provision, urban growth boundaries, and resource allocation, and indirect effects through the amendment and alignment of local government planning schemes and state plans and policies (Office of Urban Management 2005: 2) e.g. local planning schemes contradicting the Regional Plan had to be amended. Additional key components of regional planning in SEQ included until 2009 the SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program (SEQIPP), local growth management strategies demonstrating how local councils would accommodate the projected increase in the number of new dwellings in terms of housing, employment, infrastructure and open space, prepared by local governments, local priority infrastructure plans, and a monitoring system through sustainability indicators.

Among its key strategic directions, the SEQ Regional Plan proposed an alternative to low density residential development by supporting a move towards more compact forms of urban development with higher densities in selected areas (major development areas), by creating an urban footprint (in essence an urban growth boundary) and its bounding Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (representing 80% of the SEQ region), by using regulatory provisions to ensure that developments are consistent with the regional plan and by linking the regional plan with state infrastructure and service delivery programs and budgetary processes.

The SEQ Regional Plan's main strength has been identified as its statutory force and focus on key issues of environmental and rural conservation, access and transport and urban form. The parallel production of the SEQIPP for transport, power, water and social infrastructure of hospitals and schools with a 20-year time span and provision for annual review, also contributed to its success. Local Growth Management Strategies have also been highly effective. Because the SEQIPP provides local governments with the necessary funded support to fulfil these implementation plans, local governments have had more incentives to meet the requirements to accommodate their allocated share of dwelling increases within the Urban Footprint, protect the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Zone and encourage transit orientated development (Margerum et al. 2008). However, the regional plan has been criticised for its lack of clear objectives and performance indicators, but also for the absence of a strong and inclusive accountability framework involving local actors and the lack of effective channels of public engagement.

During 2008 and 2009, the Queensland Government undertook a review of the SEQ Regional Plan 2005-26 to respond to important growth management issues that have emerged since its release, including continued high population growth, housing affordability pressures, transport congestion, and climate change (Queensland Government 2009). The new regional plan was released in July 2009. Since its release, the new plan was considered by some as a step back from the previous plan and has been criticised for its loss of statutory power.

Florida's growth management program was famous for the three Cs of concurrency (the requirement from local governments to ensure that funds and plans are in place to satisfy the demand for recreation, transportation, sewer, solid waste, drainage and potable water services created by any new development they approve), consistency (the requirement that state, regional and local plans be consistent with the goals and policies of the growth management program), and containment (to prevent urban sprawl) (DeGrove and Metzger 1993). In SEQ the SEQIPP parallels the concurrency element. While Florida's GMA required local plans to be consistent with its objectives, SEQ Regional Plan requires "any plans, policies and codes that relate to the SEQ region being prepared or amended by state agencies must reflect and align with the Regional Plan" and local growth management strategies to be prepared (Queensland Government 2009) providing consistency. The SEQRPs urban footprint is an urban growth boundary that contains development.

#### 4. An Overview of the Latest Developments in the Planning Frameworks

On June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 the *Community Renewal Act* replaced Florida's 1985 Growth Management Act. Opponents of the act, including some local governments which sued the state, argue that the act is a violation of the state constitution and label it as "a developer relief act" (Caputo, 2009). The law, which largely exempts builders from building infrastructure to accommodate the needs of new construction - an elimination of the much praised concurrency requirement - and eliminates the review process for some large developments is welcomed by the development industry who argued these changes were "needed to spur the state's development-based economy." Legislature views the act as the jump start the state economy needs after the global financial crisis and expect long-time shelved projects to start. Opponents who point to Florida's oversupply of residential and office space argue the state of the economy is an excuse to weaken the laws and transfer the burden of paying for infrastructure costs from the developers to the taxpayers (Hiassen 2009, Editorial 2009) Furthermore, environmentalists and local governments claim the new law will "exacerbate Florida's housing glut, increase traffic delays and allow uncontrolled development in rural areas" (Klas 2009). "It's a recipe for more reckless sprawl" (Hiassen, 2009). Even the change

in the name of the act governing development in the state of Florida is indicative of the shift in its focus from managing growth to community renewal (development?)

Similar to Florida in Queensland the *Sustainable Planning Act (SPA)* 2009 was opposed with claims that this is another hallmark of the government's "mantra of growth at all costs" (McCarthy 2009). Again, similar to Florida the development interests (Property Council of Australia) gave unequivocal and glowing support. One purpose of the Act is to streamline land use planning and development framework to achieve more timely approvals. However the new amendments may result in avoiding the necessary evaluation of applications that give rise to detailed ecological assessments, sustainability principles and subsequent recommendations.

SPA was not the only change in the planning framework of Queensland. After the change of government in March 2012 a series of new policies started reshaping the planning system of the state.

While the new government is continuing the statutory regional planning tradition of its predecessor their objectives are somewhat different. Department of Local Government and Planning has been renamed Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) and its website which was 'actively reviewed and updated to align with new state government priorities' makes clear that the new government's focus is on economic development and re-empowering local government is among its priorities (DSDIP 2012b). The new generation of statutory regional plans are given priority to 'aim to foster diverse and strong economic growth; plan and prioritise infrastructure; manage impacts on the environment; and where necessary, plan for urban growth and resolve land use conflicts such as those arising between agricultural and mining activities' (DSDIP 2012c).

In August 2012 the new government released *Temporary State Planning Policy 2/12 Planning for Prosperity*. The document highlights that the planning system will facilitate economic growth in Queensland through focusing on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction and by cutting red tape and regulation (DSDIP 2012a). The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that economic growth is facilitated by local and state plans, and is not adversely impacted by planning processes. The Policy will guide the amendment and preparation of regional plans. LNP's pre-election policy on 'Protecting the Scenic Rim' was critical of the South East Queensland Regional Plan and a review was promised within three years of taking government (LNP 2012).

In September the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Jeff Seeney, introduced the *Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill* (2012) into parliament, which included specific amendments designed to cut 'green tape' in environmental protection legislation (Part 4), changes to coastal protection legislation (Part 3), and alterations to the Sustainable Planning Act (Part 7). In his speech to parliament the Minister pointed out that:

The state government is committed to restoring efficiency and consistency to the planning and development assessment system to get the property and construction industries back on track. As promised, our government is well underway in reforming and simplifying the planning framework through removing unnecessary regulation from the system and fixing the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 (Queensland Parliament 2012: 1945).

In October 2012 Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning released the *Draft Coastal Protection State Planning Regulatory Provision: Protecting the Coastal Environment* (the Draft SPRP) (DSDIP 2012d). This new policy suspended parts of the Queensland Coastal Plan and some of the regional plans. Queensland Coastal Plan

prepared by the previous Labor government was composed of two policies: State Policy for Coastal Management and State Planning Policy 3/11: Coastal Protection. The new Draft SPRP suspended the operation of the State Planning Policy 3/11: Coastal Protection which required coastal development to consider the projected effects of climate change such as a sea-level rise and an increase in the maximum cyclone intensity. It also suspends the operation of parts 1.4.3 and 2.4 of the SEQ Regional Plan which required consistency with the Coastal Plan in general as well potential sea level rise projections specifically.

In April 2013 Newman government released the *Draft State Planning Policy* (DSDIP 2013) which sets out the state interests and related policies that should be used in preparing or amending local planning instruments and regional plans. It identifies a series of principles to support and guide the development of efficient and effective planning instruments. While the principles mention sustainability and protection of natural environment the implementation strategies are clearly focused on facilitating development. The government is currently preparing the *Queensland Plan*, a 30-year vision for the state.

These developments suggest that there has been a significant shift in state-level planning and climate change adaption policies which affect not only South East Queensland but the whole state. Neither climate change nor adaptation has been a priority in any of the LNP's policies, either before or after the election, and it does not appear in any of the legislative changes outlined above. The party has been consistent in its pursuit of its 'four pillar' policy of economic development, with environmental and planning laws being streamlined if they are considered as inhibiting development. Further, there has been a deliberate move to hand back more responsibilities to the local level of government.

## 5. Conclusions

Growth Management programs of both states have been praised for being pioneers but also criticized for ineffectiveness (Chapin et al. 2007). Their subsequent weakening/removal reframes the situation. In spite of the striking similarities between the states of Queensland and Florida no comparisons have been made to date. At a time when the two states are facing similar problems, trying similar methods to deal with them and changing economic conditions forcing a setback on growth controls they can learn from each other to deal with their problems more effectively. This paper sets up a framework and proposes such a comparison.

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<sup>i</sup> United States 12.9 % and Australia 23.8 % in 2005.

<sup>ii</sup> 2008 estimate (U.S. Census Bureau 2009b)

<sup>iii</sup> These may have their roots at the planning commissions of the 1920s which were metropolitan-wide rather than confined to the central city as their American counterparts (Freestone 2004). “With local government uniformly weak and fragmented, state governments were the only authorities capable of taking a synoptic approach to metropolitan questions. Their tentative interest in town planning matters in the 1920s came on top of established major responsibilities in the provision of metropolitanwide public services (water, sewerage, public transport, education etc). The political obstacles to adoption of a cross-jurisdictional regional planning commission concept were thus less formidable than in American urban government” (Freestone 2000: 317).

<sup>iv</sup> The statutory Instrument Act 1992 and the Integrated Planning Act 1997.