Improving on perfect in world’s best city

Ed likes

- Outdoor cafés make the city a friendlier place and bring it back to street level.
- Light rail on Parramatta Rd could attract more residential development.
- Academics should be encouraged to settle around Sydney University to stop the loss of intellectual capital.
- Central and Surry Hills areas should be revamped to bring it up to date with the rest of Sydney.
- Overdevelopment has caused traffic congestion on Sydney’s roads.
- Residents should be attracted back to the city centre to counter the city’s urban sprawl.

Ed Blakely’s Sydney report card

Overall performance: 10/10

Very “liveable” and has a distinct family and neighbourhood feel even though it’s a major city. But infrastructure hasn’t kept up with booming development and city is now paying the price for it.

Area by area

Sydney CBD: More open-air restaurants, cafes and bookshops to bring “sizzle” of city back down to street level and away from the tall buildings. Government could contribute to rents for more small businesses to open.

Ultimo, Broadway, Surry Hills: Left behind in the redevelopment of the inner city. Need more apartments to boost residential sector.

Around Sydney University: Need to get academics moving into suburbs around the uni and setting up their businesses here as well, modelled on the University of California’s Berkeley campus, to stop the loss of “intellectual capital”.

Liverpool: CBD growing very quickly around medical industry. Need to strengthen residential development.

Parramatta: Strengthen its role as a transport hub with more residential development but also focus on University of Western Sydney.

Inner west: Parramatta Rd cut to one lane each way with a light rail system down the median strip in a bid to bring more residential development along the congested strip. Would have to be done in conjunction with the M4 East freeway tunnel proposal.

“Second ring” suburbs: Greystile, Fairyfield, and other suburbs near major centres need more residential density to make them more charming.

Penrith: Development of “executive housing” to entice executives then industry to the booming area.

By STAVRO SOPHAS
Political Reporter

THE man who holds the future shape of Sydney in his hands has outlined his vision to The Daily Telegraph.

In a report card on the city, Premier Bob Carr’s new top urban planner Ed Blakely raised a “red flag” as the best in the world, far ahead of such cities as London and New York.

But despite the high regard the American professor has for Sydney he still sees room for improvement.

Some of his plans are certain to create controversy — from trains running down the middle of Parramatta Rd to huge apartment developments to house a booming population.

The urban affairs academic who became an Australian citizen just a week before Mr Carr gave him one of the city’s top planning jobs said Sydney and San Francisco were the best cities in the world — while New York and London rated just as a seven.

“Sydney is a very big city and San Francisco is a very big city but you feel like you’re family cities. The neighbourhoods are intact here, people feel that their neighbourhood is corner-stone.”

Professor Blakely said.

Professor Blakely, who has lived in Sydney “on and off” for 30 years, will head a metropolitan planning kick-back which has until the end of the year to report back to the State Government on how to plan Sydney’s growth.

He has suggested the State Government subsidises rents for small businesses to bring them back to the CBD.

Planning Minister Kris Beattie said last week he wanted an end to vacant shops and discount bargain retailers in Sydney’s rundown shopping areas.

Professor Blakely wants more apartment complexes to key areas on the inner city to draw people back.

“I think Sydney grew too fast in the 1970s to the 1980s, we grew faster than our infrastructure and we’ve been playing catch-up ever since,” he said.

The Sydney metropolitan plan’s strategy, announced last week, will target parts of Sydney struggling to cope with the urban sprawl, including congested Canterbury Rd and the Inner West Highway.

Developers could also be hit with a $50,000 charge on each house they build in the booming western suburbs in a bid to pay for infrastructure.

How would you improve Sydney?

dailytelegraph.com.au


11/16/2004


How Parramatta looks in the proposed metropolitan strategy as a transport hub with more residential development but also focus on University of Western Sydney.


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