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BOTTOM-UP REGIONALISM IN SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND
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The earliest white inhabitants of Queensland made their way north from Sydney to the penal settlement of Moreton Bay which was established in 1825 for 'the worst Class of Offenders' while Governor Brisbane was in charge of the colony of New South Wales. It was not until 1839 that the period of convict occupation came to an end and the beginnings of growth of Brisbane, Ipswich and other free settlements in what is now south-east Queensland commenced in the early 1840s. By the mid 1850s, the region's earliest newspaper, the Moreton Bay Courier, was instrumental in articulating the grievances against southern neglect and maladministration that helped shape an awareness among settlers in the region of their separate identity. The creation of a new self-governing Colony of Queensland in December 1859 was due in part to agitation in these fledgling settlements for separation from Sydney.

From that time on awareness in south-east Queensland of its separate identity within the Colony (and, from 1 January 1901 the State) of Queensland developed as a result of various influences. These included the setting up of administrative districts and regions within specific functional areas of Queensland government such as lands administration, police, public works, the Home Office and so on; and, of course, the articulation of beliefs in their separate identities in central and northern Queensland that culminated in separatist movements in those regions. The latter movements tended to sharpen regional self-consciousness in south-east Queensland because central and northern Queenslanders from the mid 1860s on began telling their fellow Queenslanders in the south-east in unmistakable language that they were different and their interests were not the interests of settlers in central and northern parts of the Colony.

The first conspicuous institutional expression of the growing regional self-consciousness in south-east Queensland came with the creation of the Greater Brisbane scheme in 1925. It must be said straight away, however, that other influences had also played a part in this movement including, for example, the developing belief in the efficacy and democratic virtues of consolidated metropolitan government (as already demonstrated in the Greater London and Greater New York schemes, which had been operating from 1889 and 1898 respectively). Nevertheless, the architect of
Greater Brisbane, Charles Chuter\(^4\), had by the early 1920s and perhaps as early as 1917, considered that an even larger area than that eventually adopted for Greater Brisbane would have been more suitable. He argued at the time, though unsuccessfully, that there were 'other areas contiguous, whose economic interests were closely bound up with Brisbane, and that transport alone urged further extension'.\(^5\)

Although Greater Brisbane was eventually established by 'top-down' action at central (state) government level through enactment of legislation by State Parliament, broad community support for the scheme was essential to its introduction. Twenty years after its establishment Chuter at the end of the Second World War was placing Greater Brisbane in a wider regional context when he wrote:

"Regional planning and regional development are subjects which are now receiving much prominence, in relation to the post-war future. Discussions on these subjects indicate that they embrace far-reaching changes including the devolution of Commonwealth and State administration and the development of Local Government in regions. The Greater Local Government policy in this state was a definite trend in the development of Local Government in regions."\(^6\)

It seems that Chuter had, by this time at least, come to view greater cities and greater shires as part of a broader movement along the road to the development of regional governments, if he had not already done so a quarter of a century earlier. In this, Chuter's thinking was consonant with ideas being put forward elsewhere at the time. For example, Professor Abercrombie's planning proposals for the London region in 1942 were stimulating discussions in the United Kingdom about possible post-war developments. In this connection the December 1944 issue of *Public Administration* (Sydney) contained some timely remarks on the New South Wales experience with the regional movement being promoted by the Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction. In a paper on regionalism, Professor Bland emphasised the importance of the grass roots (or bottom-up) dimension of regionalism when he observed that:

"...one of the members of the Sherrard Committee [for drawing up regions], Professor Macdonald Holmes, clearly exposed the dangers of ignoring the local authorities in the development of the new regions... If the idea of 'community' is to have any force, it must emerge from the people in the region...[It] cannot be imposed upon them from above without completely stifling local initiative and community consciousness."\(^7\)

Meanwhile, the Queensland government had set up a small committee of State government officials at departmental head level chaired by Industry Bureau Director Mr (later, Professor) Colin Clark in response to Commonwealth government pressure to move into regional planning and development. The Committee on Regional Development, as it was known, eventually reported to Treasurer 'Ned' Hanlon in February 1945 that 25 regions could be created throughout Queensland by ultimately amalgamating local councils and devolving State government functions to the new regional governments to be formed in this fashion. (The late Sir Allan Sewell subsequently recalled, in a taped interview with the author, that Colin Clark viewed local authorities predominantly, but not totally, as downward administrative extensions of State government agencies.)

In the event, a storm erupted over the report, with most of the criticism emanating from local government. The hostility generated by the proposal to create 25 regional governments was so intense that on 11 August 1945 the Queensland government released a press statement on the Clark Committee's report which said in part: 'Cabinet had recommended that while uniform regional boundaries were desirable for electricity, employment councils, hospitals, libraries and other State activities, it did not endorse the proposal in the report for the mass amalgamation of Local Authorities'.\(^8\) That effectively killed the top-down, coercive thrust embodied in the Clark report.

Little note was taken of it in this early post-war period or later, but there were other extremely powerful enemies of the Clark vision of regional government which were not vocal in their opposition but were no less hostile than were Queensland local governments. These were the powerful State agencies themselves - the functionally specialised ministerial departments and statutory authorities whose vested interests in the *status quo* were directly threatened by the Clark Committee's proposal that State government functions be devolved to the proposed new regional governments.

The State government agencies concerned had, over the century since free settlement commenced in Queensland, developed their own individual patterns of field administration across the face of
Queensland, and all insisted on the absolute necessity of maintaining those unique patterns of district or regional administration. No State agency was prepared to concede that its internal pattern of field administration could be restructured without the most severe consequences to the efficiency of its operations. Thus, Cabinet's press release of 11 August 1945, with its talk of common regional boundaries, was very unwelcome to the senior officials in charge of the services concerned.

The strength of bureaucratic resistance to the brand of top-down regionalism which imposed uniform boundaries for State government field administration purposes may be inferred from two circumstances. First it took almost two more years before the State government was able to announce, on 12 June 1947, a final regional structure which carried government endorsement for purposes of regional development while being explicitly not mandatory for State functions and services. The second circumstance is that the 18 regions announced by the government made very little impact on the hospital, electricity, education, water resource, railway, police and other major State government activities administered on a regional or district basis. The whole notion of coordinated regional development and coordinated regional services would now lie dormant for another 20 years.

In local government circles, it was the Clark report which prompted widespread and continuing suspicion of the term 'regionalism', and cognate terms, which had become synonymous with oppressive, top-down, forced amalgamations. Paradoxically, however, local government itself was willing to develop regional perspectives on local government problems that were recognised as having supra-local as distinct from merely inter-local significance. Inter-local issues could be tackled by means of bilateral discussion, negotiation and agreement. Such bilateral discussions between neighbouring councils might even result in the formation of joint local authorities, or 'joint boards' (as they later came to be called) to undertake specific local government functions.

Larger-scale problems, however, could not be dealt with satisfactorily in bilateral discussions between neighbouring councils. Whole-of-district and whole-of-region problems called for multilateral discussions in regional forums. Hence, bottom-up regionalism survived around Queensland in the form of the voluntary regional groupings of local councils lacking any formal statutory basis but loosely affiliated with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ). One of these, the South-east Queensland Local Government Association had been formed in the early years of the 20th century and delegates from local councils met - usually four times a year - to discuss matters of common concern which might eventually be referred to the LGAQ executive (or perhaps to the LGAQ annual conference) if deemed of wider significance to local government generally. Matters of narrower regional significance would be taken up directly with the Minister concerned or possibly acted upon directly by individual councils where that was deemed appropriate.

During the 1950s, Clem Jones, a young surveyor who had built up the largest surveying firm in Australia undertook post-graduate studies at the University of California (UCLA) and subsequently became a consultant town planner to a number of local councils in south-east Queensland, including Redland Shire and Landsborough Shire (later Caloundra City) Councils. In April 1961 he was elected Lord Mayor of Brisbane and later the same year he proposed to other councils in the region that another regional group of councils be constituted to create a new forum to facilitate discussion of regional issues and the taking of coordinated action on them. The body was formed under the rather unwieldy name of the 'Brisbane and Contiguous Local Authorities Association.' The 20 or so member local councils met regularly for just over 10 years until the councils concerned decided to wind up the Association in 1973 when a new statutory body, the Moreton Regional Coordination Council was formed: this was one of ten such statutory bodies which were created pursuant to recently enacted State legislation.

In 1977, the somewhat paranoid Bjelke-Petersen government decided to wind up these regional coordination councils which it suspected of having been hijacked by the Whitlam and Fraser federal governments for the purpose of undermining the states (the 'feds under the bed syndrome'). Local governments in south-east Queensland thereupon responded to Brisbane Lord Mayor Frank Sleeman's call in mid 1977 to continue to meet to discuss and to act on regional issues: the new Moreton Regional Organisation (MRO) was essentially the Moreton Regional Coordination Council without State government representation.

As had been the case with the former Brisbane and Contiguous Local Authorities Association, meetings of the MRO were held in Brisbane, with the Lord Mayor taking the chair and the Brisbane
City Council providing secretarial assistance. The Advisory Council for Inter-government Relations (ACIR) subsequently observed that the MRO was acting as a forum for information exchange and consultation between councils allowing for councils to better plan and rationalise services where appropriate.¹²

The MRO continued during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s as the pace of development in south-east Queensland quickened. In 1988, Skinner et al. estimated that the population of the Brisbane-Gold Coast-Sunshine Coast corridor, which includes the Brisbane and Moreton Statistical Divisions, would grow to around 2.3 million by 2001 (up from 1.8 million at present).¹³ In a later publication, Skinner and Gillam estimated that by 2005 Queensland’s population would be 4 million and would top 5 million by 2021. They noted that Queensland’s overall growth rate is double the national average and that at 6 per cent per annum south-east Queensland’s growth rate is double the state average.¹⁴

In response to increasing concerns at both state and local government level about the planning, infrastructure and environmental implications of this growth, the recently elected Labor Government organised its ‘SEQ 2001 Planning Conference’ at Parliament House in December 1990. The Goss Government’s approach, as articulated by the Premier, was to be proactive rather than reactive to growth generated and driven by others, and that effective planning now required a regional focus rather than a local one: south-east Queensland had now become one cohesive region and needed to be developed as such. Subsequently, the Government launched the SEQ 2001 Project and appointed a Regional Planning Advisory Group (‘RPAG’) comprising local, state and Commonwealth government representatives together with business, industry, union, professional, community and environmental group representatives.

Meanwhile, at a meeting of 24 May 1991, the MRO responded to these developments by agreeing amongst other things to a name change to the South East Queensland Regional Organisational of Councils (SEQROC). Subsequently, at a meeting of 5 July 1991, a new Constitution for SEQROC was approved. At the same time, SEQROC adopted an official policy statement which specified broad objectives under a number of headings such as transport and communications, water supply, urban form and new urban development, social justice and equity, and management of data. SEQROC also initiated action research with the aim of ensuring that local governments in south-east Queensland consult effectively with one another and with other levels of government. Effective participation of local government in RPAG deliberations also became a major objective.

Bottom-up regionalism in south-east Queensland has a longer and more continuous history than the top-down variety which, in the past, has been tried for brief periods before crumbling under the resistance of local councils and the functionally specialised state agencies. The current State government proactive approach to the development of south-east Queensland has the advantage of active support from local councils. Predictably, state instrumentalities have not attempted to reshape their field administration to adopt a common south-east Queensland regional boundary. Hence, effective vertical and horizontal inter-government coordination will require continuing effort and dialogue at both state and local levels. SEQROC is currently working at developing effective coordinating arrangements by means of the appointment of full-time coordinators at the sub-regional level where both State and local government decision-making is often crucial. Whether effective horizontal coordination for the region can be achieved across state government instrumentalities remains to be seen.

NOTES


3 See for instance C Doran (1981), Separatism in Townsville 1884-1894, Townsville, James Cook University Press.


6 C E Chuter (1945), Local government in Queensland, Public Administration, (Sydney), 5 (5), New Series, 229-33 (especially p. 233).

7 F A Bland (1944), A note on regionalism, Public Administration, (Sydney), 5 (4), New Series, 176-82 (especially p. 181).

8 Quoted in Queensland, Bureau of Industry (1945), Twelfth Annual Report 1944-45, Brisbane, Government Printer, p. 3.

9 Mary E Seefried (1989). The Moreton Regional
The 16th. Annual Conference of the ANZ Regional Science Association will be held at Ballarat University College from Monday 7 until Thursday 10 December

The conference features a practitioner workshop with Bill Lindsteadt, Executive Director, Crown Economic Development Corporation, Kings County, California and Professor Alan Williams of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Unit, University of Newcastle

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PLANNING FOR HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES IN QUEENSLAND

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Editor's note: Waste disposal and hazardous manufacturing activities are the lepers of modern society. Even though they offer considerable opportunity for local economic development, they are naturally viewed suspiciously or with hostility by most communities. Perhaps their acceptability could be improved by more careful planning processes that offer stringent protection against unacceptable risk. Read on!

FOREWORD

In 1991, the Queensland Government invited the Queensland Division of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies to review the current land-use planning procedures concerned with hazardous industries, and to consider how they could be improved. The Institute commissioned the authors to carry out the investigation, and this paper is drawn from their report. (Milburn and Cameron 1992).

The paper outlines the systems used in Queensland, and suggests a possible approach to land-use planning for hazardous establishments that incorporates the ideas of total risk management. The approach is generic in nature, and draws from experience and practice within Australia and overseas.

INTRODUCTION

In regional economic development, the essential aim of the State Government is to reduce regional disparities and increase regional employment opportunities. These activities bridge the economic development initiatives at state and local levels. At the local level, such initiatives often span several local communities.

Those who plan, develop, use and regulate land for industrial purposes, are becoming increasingly aware of particular problems associated with establishments that use, store or produce hazardous substances. In these types of operations, events occurring on-site may have significant off-site impacts. Such impacts can impinge on regional development if they occur over areas wider than just a single municipality.

There is a growing community awareness of the implications of having hazardous establishments close to urban areas. This has brought pressure to