

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SYMPOSIUM

A Symposium by Engineers Australia and the Royal Society of Queensland
Hosted by Institute for Future Environments, Queensland University of Technology
24 June 2015 at Kindler Theatre

Background

“Infrastructure” as a destination for public expenditure is squarely on the contemporary policy agenda of the Queensland and national governments. The Prime Minister for example has described himself as an “Infrastructure Prime Minister” (media release 19.9.2013) and the previous Queensland Premier referred to cranes on the horizon as an indication of the health of the Queensland economy (media release 14.8.2014).

Engineers Australia Queensland and The Royal Society of Queensland share an interest in advocating for adequate investment in all forms of infrastructure. They also are both concerned that procedures for planning infrastructure and evaluating proposed projects should offer investment certainty and be rigorous, transparent, non-politicised and consultative.

“Infrastructure” is normally defined as facilities, shared by a community, that are necessary preconditions for economic activity. Public debate commonly uses the term to refer just to the “hard” infrastructure of roads and railways, ports and airports, pipes, poles and wires. However economic activity also requires “soft infrastructure – social institutions such as research, education, libraries, governance, human capital; and “green infrastructure – a reliable flow of natural resources such as fuel, minerals, food, oxygen and water. Maintenance of these systems also needs adequate public funding.

Rationale for a fresh vision of infrastructure

The two non-government professional bodies consider that the contemporary public debate about the need for new public infrastructure raises several issues of concern to their members, including :

- the need for a transparent process, independent of political campaigns, by which project proposals are conceived, aligned with planning objectives and assessed;
- the need to include sustainability and energy security considerations in benefit-cost analyses for infrastructure projects;
- the need to evaluate competing demands on public funds objectively so that the broader foundations of economic activity – infrastructure defined broadly – are adequately resourced.

The two organisations have agreed to co-sponsor a cross-disciplinary symposium on the theme of publicly-funded community infrastructure. The Institute for Future Environments, Queensland University of Technology, will host the event.

Sponsors

Engineers Australia (Queensland)

Engineers Australia is the national forum for the advancement of engineering and the professional development of our members. With over 100,000 members embracing all disciplines of the engineering team, Engineers Australia is the largest and most diverse professional body for engineers in Australia.

Further information is available online at www.engineersaustralia.org.au

The Royal Society of Queensland

The Royal Society of Queensland, founded in 1884, is the State's oldest scientific institution. The Society seeks to increase awareness of science in Queensland. It encourages original research and the publication of research findings. Its *Proceedings* have been issued mostly annually since 1884.

As a non-specialist learned society, the Royal Society of Queensland is also keen to ensure that public policy formulation is adequately informed by contemporary science and it is keen to facilitate dialogue between separate scientific and applied disciplines.

Further information on the Society is available online at www.royalsocietyqld.org.au .

The Institute for Future Environments

This entity of the Queensland University of Technology studies how our natural, built and virtual environments interact, change and converge, to find ways to make them more sustainable, secure and resilient. It is based in the Science and Engineering Centre, a pioneering research, education and community hub for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Kindler Theatre venue for the event lies within this Centre.

Further information on the Institute is available online at <https://www.qut.edu.au/institute-for-future-environments> .

The event

A half-day symposium will be held in Brisbane on **24 June 2015** to explore relevant issues. The event will be addressed by speakers from the engineering, scientific and economics sectors. Attendance is free of charge but registration is required for catering purposes.

Publication

Papers and presentations including powerpoints will be placed on the organisations' respective websites. Presenters will have the option of submitting non-peer-reviewable opinion pieces or peer-reviewable short communications or research articles. Substantial papers may be published in print in the annual *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland*. Sponsors to cover the extra cost of printing are sought.

Papers on the themes covered are also invited from engineers, scientists, planners, economists and researchers who do not intend to present at the symposium.

Registrations now open

<http://goo.gl/3Kv2zE>

Background reading

http://www.royalsocietyqld.org.au/events/events_2015.htm

Contacts

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Joint Convenor – Royal Society of Queensland President Dr Geoff Edwards 04 8850 5887

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**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE SYMPOSIUM
PROVISIONAL PROGRAM – 24 JUNE 2015 AT KINDLER THEATRE, QUT**

8.30 am Registration

9.00 Welcome, background, format of day, house rules – Chris Warnock Queensland Division President, Engineers Australia and Dr Geoff Edwards, President of the Royal Society of Queensland

9.05 Opening by Distinguished Guest

9.10 Speakers

- *Dr Richard Denniss, Executive Director, The Australia Institute – use and misuse of economic modelling in project advocacy – 30min (20 + 10)*
- *Dr Adrian Volders, Director, Sustainability Queensland – economic value of green assets - 30min (20 + 10)*
- *Mr Simon Warner, CEO, SEQ Catchments – case studies of creating economic value through NRM – 30 min (20+10).*

10.40 Morning tea

11.00 Speakers

- *Professor John Quiggin, University of Queensland – The use and misuse of economics in State budgeting 30min (20 + 10)*
- *Dr Scott Elaurant, Jacobs –Politics, Finance and Transport in South East Queensland: National and international comparison 30min (20 + 10)*
- *Wally Wight, Convenor, Queensland Chapter, Association for the Study of Peak Oil Australia – peak oil, peak oil investment and fuel security 30min (20 + 10)*

12.30 pm Plenary discussion

12.55 Entertainment: John Rush, Public Service Troubadour

1.00 Close of proceedings. Lunch and networking

Attendees are invited to continue conversations over lunch at the food outlets nearby.

The outcomes will include:

- *web-published papers (Proceedings);*
- *a submission to governments and the professions;*
- *a press release.*

Geoff Edwards
The Royal Society of Queensland

Kate Condon
Engineers Australia

10 April 2015