Effective governance for the urban nexus: Some possible lessons from Queensland

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Brisbane City
3. South East Queensland region
4. A brief visit to Kedungsepur
5. Lessons
1. Introduction

- Some lessons from an Australian case study region
- Different governance approaches have been tried over the years. What can we learn from this experience?
- This is basis for discussion and comment. It is not about how it should be done
In other words.....

Governance of an urban nexus

Brisbane and SEQ case study

What works

Problems

Lessons
- Region in the south east of Queensland, centred on Brisbane, the State’s capital
- About 2.9 million (62%) of the State’s 4.7 million
- Projected to be 4.4 million by 2031
Urban activities concentrate along the coast but much of the region is environmentally and agriculturally important.
• Infrastructure reinforces linear form
• Problems of rapid population growth, water supply, housing costs, environmental protection, destruction of farming land, infrastructure provision
2. Brisbane City

- **Theme: Amalgamation as an approach**
- “Greater” Brisbane formed from 20 local governments in 1924
- Also given tramways, electricity, water and sewerage and ad hoc powers (e.g. cross-river bridges)
- “General competence” power for governance
- Covered the whole of the 1924 metropolitan area
- Still the largest local government in Australia in terms of population and budget
Combined two cities, five towns and all or parts of twelve shires in 1924.

New greater Brisbane City Council

Radius of about 11 miles (18km)
Greater Brisbane advantages

- Single administration:
  - Scale economies and large scale resources (money, personnel) and full-time councillors
  - Cross-subsidisation (spatially and by function) and removed cross-border problems
  - Multi-functional: normal local government plus
  - Politically significant and attracted political parties
Greater Brisbane problems

- Single administration:
  - Local democracy reduced
  - Large bureaucracy
  - Political parties
- Metro has grown beyond Brisbane’s boundaries
- Still a ‘local government’ subject to state government legislation
- Conflict with state government – e.g. Water distribution and electricity distribution (which made a ‘profit’) removed in 1977/78 and given to state-owned enterprises
3. South East Queensland region

- The capital-city region
- 200km north to south
- 18 local governments when formed
- Forced amalgamations since then
Brief history with themes

- **1976** Moreton Region Growth Strategy
- **1990** SEQ2001 collaborative regional planning process
- **1996** Regional Framework for Growth Management
- **2005** South East Queensland Regional Plan
1976 Moreton Region Growth Strategy

- Theme: Technical expertise as a solution to problems
- National and state government experts
- Technically competent plan but little local government or community involvement
- Never implemented as no political support
- Regional organisation of councils formed as part of this... and continued (an unintended consequence)
1990 SEQ2001 process started

- Theme: Collaborative process
- Need for proper regional planning recognised because of population growth (no regional planning until then)
- Driven by state government, with local government collaboration and private sector advice
- SEQROC formed by local governments to advise and lobby
- Lots of community and professional consultation
1996 Regional Framework for Growth Management

- Theme: Collaborative advisory outcome
- Outcome of SEQ2001 process
• Collaborative but advisory – no legal power
• Set a general framework for land use planning
• Compact city ideal to prevent sprawl
• When there were difficulties, ignored by state government departments and local governments
• No links to budget or real links to infrastructure
• Uncertainty for private developers
• But support continued even with political change in 1996
2005 SEQ Regional Plan

- Theme: Legal power and certainty
- The first statutory regional plan for South East Queensland
- Regional objectives incorporated into local government town plans
- Linked to the infrastructure plans for the region and to state government budget
• Includes a “growth boundary” (called the “urban footprint” – no land subdivision less than 100ha outside this)
• Protects environmental and productive land
• Claimed to be enough land for development for 25 years
• Supported by state government, local government and private sector
• Special state government agency to create and implement it (later absorbed into the state planning department)
• Revised and strengthened in 2009; still in force
• Still combines land use, infrastructure and linked to government budget
Recent changes: Water

- Storage, treatment and wholesale water from SEQwater (a statutory authority)
- Queensland Urban Utilities (since 2010) as water distributor and retailer for most of SEQ (5 local governments as shareholders)
- Plus sewage treatment and recycled water
Power

- Most generated by coal-fired power stations on a state and national grid
- Energex (statutory authority, formerly SEQ Electricity Board) the wholesaler
- Number of competing retailers, some national
- Economic rationalism
Ecosystem services

- SEQ better at managing hard infrastructure than ecosystem services
- Still struggling with how to incorporate these into planning and management
- Regional open space under threat, wetlands being converted
- “Urban footprint” gives some protection
SEQ Planning Advantages

- Fulfilled need to plan for rapid population growth.
- Collaborative and advisory start (1990-2004) overcame problem of lack of trust between state and local governments.
- But eventually legal status and authority needed (2005).
- Linked land use planning and infrastructure provision and budget.
SEQ Problems

- Advisory collaborative framework was inadequate but a necessary first step
- Some state government agencies still ignore the plan or don’t want to commit to long-term infrastructure
- Hard infrastructure (e.g. electricity, water supply, major roads, rail) central; ecosystem services not well incorporated
- Still very mixed management of urban growth and services: local government, state government, statutory authorities, private entities
4. Brief comparison: Kedungsepur

Total population: 4,190,120 (2005), 17% of Central Java

Source: Ministry of Public Works, 2006
Administration is complex and many-layered.

Central Java:
- Province
  - District
    - Sub-District
      - Village
      - Village
    - Sub-District
      - Sub-District
      - Urban Village
      - Urban Village

Queensland:
- State
  - Cities
  - Towns
  - Shires
    - Regions
      (Since 8/2007)
Land use and infrastructure

- Uncoordinated planning is leading to unsustainable patterns of land use and conflict
- Potentially sustainable mixed-uses (e.g. urban agriculture) are giving way to ad-hoc development
- Responsibility for infrastructure is divided – need integrated mechanisms and institutions
- Plans and budgets not well connected
- Fragmentation & jurisdictional conflict the main problem (‘jurisdictional ego’). Unified regional governance needed
- Quality of relationships between local government and state/provincial government is important but difficult
5. Lessons

- Needs for metropolitan planning and coordination change over time, and so do the responses – it is a long-term project.
- Both institutions and mechanisms to overcome fragmentation.
- Not just technically competent plan – needs government (and political), community, private sector and non-government support.
- Connect land use planning, infrastructure and budget – but how to link to food security, energy, water still unclear.
- Important role for strong local governments such as Brisbane City, with mandate, good resources, and necessary powers.
- But state and local government relations can be problem.
- Impact of competition policy and economic rationalism? Competition implies fragmentation.
Thank you

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