

Session 5

DISCOVERY RISE - PLOTTING THE FUTURE FOR JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY TOWNSVILLE

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In the last half century Australian cities, like other first and new world cities, have expanded outwards.....and outwards. The key agents of this expansion have been the perception of limitless land and resources, and the private car. While initially our cities were mixed zones defined by the geography of walking, carriages and horseback, post WW2 cities became discreet 'zones' for shopping, living, working, leisure work, education and entertainment serviced by cars. The notion of a university town was replaced by universities as 'places apart'. JCU's Townsville Campus is one such place apart, having been designed in the early 1960's as a place of "space and clean air – a space where people could relax and think deeply in an Australian Country Atmosphere". Unfortunately the resulting 'pavilions in the park' encourage the development of disciplinary silos and separation from the community.

Since the 1970s oil crisis, increasingly the design and planning professions, and then city administrators have been questioning the city of zoned sprawl. In the 1980s New Urbanism proposed cities formulated as a series of denser mixed use villages organised around a network of public transport, and by the 1990s the planning formulae of the new urbanist proposal had become a popular for redressing sprawl and planning schemes throughout Australia now enshrine more compact, transport-oriented development forms.

In parallel with these developments, universities have found themselves having to reposition themselves to respond to change. Once insular in nature, universities are now commercial enterprises, in charge of their own destinies operating in a competitive environment. In response to these circumstances, universities have sought to mobilise land assets to reconceive their campuses for competitive advantage.

The design for Discovery Rise 'retrofits' JCU as a University Town with great urban spaces where walking and outdoor interaction is actively supported. It creates higher density mixed use hubs where academic and residential life intermingles supporting lively learning and living environments. The development will set new benchmarks for sustainability in energy, water and resource consumption, providing a new model for how universities can become the anchor for the creation of sustainable communities and in turn recreate themselves as magnetic places of exchange.

Presenters Biography:

Caroline Stalker is an architect and urban designer and a Director of Architectus' Brisbane office. Throughout her career Caroline has sustained a strong involvement with all aspects of urban place-making and urban sustainability. In over twenty years in practice her project work has spanned the design of new towns, urban infill projects, city centres, public spaces, and public and community buildings. Her design work pursues unique solutions that emerge from the special characteristics of places and communities and has attracted both Australian Institute Awards and Planning Institute of Australia awards. Caroline is a member of The Board of Urban Places, which advises the Queensland State Government on design projects of State significance.

Alan Carpenter is the Project Director for James Cook University's Discovery Rise project, which plans to transform the Townsville Campus from a 1960s bush campus to a university town. Prior to his work at JCU he spent 20 years in the mining industry engaged in increasingly complex tasks

culminating in the project management of a town development in the Highlands of PNG, a task which provided good preparation for work at the University. His early career was as a land surveyor and subsequently took a degree in economics to round things out.