



Refreshing the Barossa

Design is a verb

Creating a community that's liveable, workable and economically and environmentally sustainable is the goal of the Barossa & Light Regional Development Board and a priority those who value the lifestyle, amenity and opportunities this unique region offers.

And it's a theme that emerges time and time again when The Barossa Council consults its community on changes to its development policies.

"We are known internationally as a premier wine, food and tourist destination and the community constantly tells us they are worried about the erosion of the qualities that make it that way," says Barossa mayor Brian Hurn. "We need to leverage our best assets for greater prosperity and be careful not to undermine them."

It's also a topic close to the heart of

South Australia's 2009 Thinker in Residence Professor Laura Lee, a highly regarded architect and teacher in architecture and design invited to the Barossa earlier this year to talk about how the decisions we make today will leave a lasting legacy – socially, economically and culturally.

For Laura, growing prosperity, improving quality of life and attaining sustainability are not just buzz words – they are real outcomes that stem from an engaged community that takes an active role in planning for its future.

Developing a process and a framework for ongoing masterplanning for growth across the wider Barossa region has emerged as a key project of Professor Lee's residency.

'Good Design' is the key theme, with a focus on an integrated design process where all stakeholders and all users of the final product are engaged in the pre-

planning process.

"Put simply, Professor Lee's equation is that Intelligent Investment = Good Design + Planning + Development," observes Anne Moroney, BLD CEO.

"It is critical that the pre-planning includes a long term vision of the spaces and places and how they will connect, how people will get to work, to school, to play and what infrastructure needs to be in place to realise sustainable communities. It is also important for the economic architecture of the region.

"The first important step is engaging the four regional councils in a shared vision and a shared strategy for achieving it. The proposed restructure of regional development boundaries to join Gawler and Mallala with the Barossa and Light region will facilitate this shared dialogue for sustainable economic growth."

The work of BLD and Professor Lee

seeks to establish a collaborative approach to the individual Council development blueprints, such as the Barossa Council's Better Development Plan (BDP).

The BPD sets out guiding principles for development in the region, with an emphasis on protecting the unique character of Barossa townships. Retaining the region's most valuable assets as the cornerstone of the community is a serious priority for The Barossa Council.

While the plan continues to place emphasis on opportunities for 'in-fill' development in Barossa's townships, it also seeks to discourage indiscriminate "metro-style" development by increasing the boundary setbacks for new houses to create a sense of space. Two-storey homes must also satisfy strict criteria to get a tick of approval, especially in heritage areas.

The BDP also seeks to limit urban sprawl, and future strategies are oriented towards a new township for major population growth rather than expanding the boundaries of existing townships.

Council's rural policy has also been reviewed in a bid to create greater flexibility for people who want to live and work their land.

"The aim is to enable bone fide use of the land and enable it to be kept in primary production, which we recognise as

critical to our local economy as well as our visual and tourism amenity," said Mr Hurn.

There are other changes outlined in the BDP, and Mr Hurn encouraged people to familiarise themselves with the document by visiting www.barossa.sa.gov.au or arrange to discuss it with a council planner by phoning 8563 8444.

Integrated regional planning includes investment in jobs and services. "Planning for infrastructure and industry is critical for building communities where people live, work and play," says Anne.

"Innovative communities supporting future thinking industry (including agribusiness) and responsible environmental management is a future we can all engage in."

For information relating to investment opportunity in the region, workforce development or business investment and expansion go to BLD's website www.bld.org.au or call 85 633 603 to speak with Anne Moroney (Investment & Economic Development), David Henderson (Business & Industry Development), Barbara Lightburn (Workforce Development), Felicity Trinne (Skills Training) or contact Emma Dowling to book into a workshop. If you are not sure who you need to contact, Jessica Bahnisch on reception will be pleased to help.

Clockwise from Left Page: 1) Community members present their vision for good design in the Barossa region at BLD's annual Business Forum, featuring Thinker in Residence, Professor Laura Lee. 2) Anne Moroney CEO Barossa & Light Regional Development Board, Thinker in Residence Professor Laura Lee, and Brian Hurn Mayor, The Barossa Council. 3) Australian Institute of Architects contributed strongly to the design debate. Pictured is Richard Hoskins, AIA. 4) David Henderson, Barossa and Light Regional Development Board Business Development Manager.

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