POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND PLANNING PROMOTION IN 1940S AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Post-war reconstruction emerged as a political imperative during and immediately after World War 2 in many nations. In Australia reconstruction was essentially a political philosophy informing new redistributive policies. Its significance as a national imperative is reflected in establishment of a Commonwealth Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction (1942-1950). The crucial mission at this level was to secure a peace time economy of full employment. Housing and town planning were seen as crucial to raising living standards. The 1940s represents a crucial watershed wherein longstanding ideals were synthesised into compelling urban visions. The decade is notable for its richness of communication initiatives as progressive politicians, officials and professionals sought to inform the community about the basic principles and promise of town planning. This paper provides an overview of the major planning exhibitions staged during the 1940s. Of central interest is a major exhibition sponsored by the Commonwealth Government that visited several cities in 1944-45. The analysis seeks to recover the central ideas and values, their inspiration, the visual content, and visitor reactions. This is set against the backdrop of deepening Commonwealth interest in urban affairs, an aspiration ultimately checked at the state government level.

INTRODUCTION

While the major effort of nations involved in World War 2 was on marshalling resources for military victory, on the homefront an alternate discourse of planning for peacetime emerged. Post-war reconstruction emerged as a political imperative during and immediately after World War 2 in many nations. It had both ideological connotations and tangible realities in countries directly impacted by the war, extending into major economic and social reforms. War underlined the importance of an organised response to national challenges. Looking ahead presented comparable challenges in transitioning from war time to a prosperous peacetime economy, rebooting construction and development activity, and repatriating war veterans. Integrated planning at various scales and for different purposes offered pathways to realising these goals. Physical planning specifically flagged the importance of a pro-active role for the state in ensuring an orderly deployment of public and private resources for building new communities and renewing old ones, war-damaged or not.
Securing community understanding of and support for a new phase of planned national development required major education programs. Exhibitions played their part. In a pre-television and internet-world, the exhibition was a time-honoured medium for conveying creatively and visually new opportunities and needs to a captive audience. In many countries, both allied and axis-aligned, exhibitions on physical planning were staged by government, professional and special interest groups to engage the community in the process of preparing for peace. In the UK over 80 town-specific exhibitions on reconstruction were mounted between 1942 and 1949 (Lilley and Larkham 2007) alongside more general replanning and design events staged by professional groups and societies (e.g. Gold 1997). Somewhat neglected by historians, these events were a vital historical phenomenon for articulating and transmitting modernist ideas of design, engaging the community in deliberations about city futures, and providing a fillip for the development of planning profession and education as the demand for expert technicians to guide the post war development became generally accepted (Lilley 2003).

Reflecting overseas trends, an Australian reconstruction era marks a watershed in 20th century national development (Sheridan 2001). Post-war reconstruction was essentially a political philosophy informing redistributive policies to secure a new social and economic order. The rhetoric and initiative from official sources at federal and state levels were complemented by a broader propagandist discourse generated by professional groups, unions, community organisations and individuals. Planning - be it social, economic or physical - was clearly an idea whose time had come. Physical planning, the main focus of this paper, was able to build a constituency through the 1940s as an indispensable component of an orderly, efficient, healthful, attractive post war world. Propagandist exhibitions extolling these virtues were more prevalent in this decade than any other of the 20th century, probably even moreso than the 1910s at the birth of the modern town planning movement. Of central interest is a major exhibition in Sydney sponsored by the Commonwealth Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction that travelled to cities into mid 1945. The paper develops the vignette in Freestone and Amati (2011) and seeks to recover the central ideas and values, influences, visual content, visitor reactions, and lasting legacy of this high profile initiative at a pivotal time when the rhetorical promise of planning was set to be institutionalised within government bureaucracies.

The ultimate significance of this inquiry is related to the rationale and role of Commonwealth involvement in Australian urban affairs. The Commonwealth (federal) government assumed a major leadership role in reconstruction as a national and political responsibility across many fronts, extending its interests into promoting regional planning, town planning, housing and community development. The Australian Government had no constitutional powers for city development as a national obligation and trod warily into matters of state governments because of their traditional responsibilities for large scale metropolitan infrastructure. The significance of its touring exhibition of 1944-45 is not just as an event channelling the fervour for reconstruction and the maturation of modernist design ideals, but as a means - ultimately unsuccessful - for securing a significant Commonwealth presence in urban planning.
RECONSTRUCTION IN AUSTRALIA

In 1944 H.C. Coombs depicted the aftermath of war as both “economic confusion and social instability”. Mitigating those outcomes involved a choice between a pure market economy driven by individualism and suffering the inevitable vicissitudes of boom and bust or a mixed economy with greater government involvement in resource allocation. Only the second could secure a new order as the major targets lined up: full employment, higher living standards, ongoing development, and national security (Coombs 1944). Post-war reconstruction programs sprayed into many areas - employment, education, social welfare benefits, health, conservation, public works, organisation of industry, rural development, higher education and immigration.

Planning issues intersected with these and through the 1940s numerous books and other publications, government inquiries, forums, conferences, radio talks and displays explored the ideals and issues involved. As early as 1941, organisations representing engineers, architects, and surveyors passed a resolution urging “the desirability of introducing immediately a policy of planning for post-war reconstruction” (Architecture 1941). Reconstruction treatises were a fixture of architectural and building journals for the next five years. There were recurrent themes: the importance of multi-disciplinarity across physical, economic, social ends (anticipating the contemporary sustainability perspective); coordination across all three levels of government (highlighting the importance of national leadership); treating the urban environment holistically (with planning and housing linked); the importance of good organisation, research based evidence and scientific values; promotion of economic development; resource conservation and elimination of waste and inefficiency; and ultimately securing enhanced welfare for the whole community. In spatial terms, the goals were translated via the influence of international modernism into a fairly standard set of targets: well designed houses and flats; plentiful open space; better community facilities; good transport; an end to suburban sprawl; urban renewal; and the ideal of pre-planned communities.

The reconstruction cause was not uncontested, especially when translating vision to reality introduced the spectre of increased government intervention. The cause of physical planning from before the war was dogged by apathy, ignorance, hostility, and a fragmented system of governmental functionalities resistant to holistic ideologies (Parker 1940). Reconstruction at once raised these stakes along with signposting a momentary pathway for transcending them. The reconstruction ethos with its acknowledgement of the importance of planning ahead helped forge a cross-political consensus which made it possible for urban planning to be finally recognised as an indispensable cog of urban public administration (Freestone 2010). However, truly visionary proposals requiring radical reshaping of existing processes remained circumspect, as the Commonwealth Government certainly discovered.

For most of the war and the years immediately following Australia was governed by a left-of-centre Labor Government first under John Curtin (1941-45) then Ben Chifley (from 1945). From the early 1940s, several Commonwealth departments and agencies became involved in planning for the post war world.
Chifley became the first Minister for Reconstruction in December 1942, while continuing to hold the Treasury Portfolio. Coombs (who had been Director of Rationing) was appointed Director-General in January 1943. He held the position to the abolition of the Ministry in 1949 when he became Governor of the Commonwealth Bank (Hasluck 1970). In his autobiography, Coombs (1981, 62) states that the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction (MPWR) from the beginning was “especially concerned with the physical aspects of planning and development strategy" as a countervailing force to dependence on purely financial instruments of resource allocation. He recounts the influence of various thinkers such as Lewis Mumford, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin, William Morris and Peter Kropotkin.

The concern that post-war urban expansion would continue its economically costly, socially inequitable, and aesthetically underwhelming haphazard course generated two key and intertwined initiatives. The first was to establish a commission to inquire into and report on the present and future housing needs. Interim reports were produced in October 1943 and March 1944 with a comprehensive final report in August 1944 (Butlin and Schedevin 1977). Nearly 100 detailed recommendations for government action were made, including establishment of a Commonwealth Planning Authority, a national school of physical planning, and state planning authorities (Lloyd and Troy 1981). The second initiative from late 1944 into mid 1945 arose from the Commission’s recommendations and explored with the states the idea of a Commonwealth Planning Authority. This was seen as a small, independent organisation of highly trained technical personnel overseen by a board representative of major government departments. It would assume several tasks: undertaking special investigations; assisting new technical planning organisations at state level; providing post-graduate courses in town planning; advising Commonwealth Departments on planning in Commonwealth territories; coordinating planning research; and disseminating information on town planning through state organisations to local authorities and the man-in-the-street. Optimal utilisation of federal monies made available for social housing programs assumed local planning frameworks overseen by the states. In August 1944 Cabinet agreed in principle to contribute 50% of the cost of new state town planning services for a period of up to five years. An important influence on this thinking was the “cooperative planning” activities of the US National Resources Planning Board (Brinkley 2000). As had been done on other matters including regional planning, a meeting of commonwealth and state officials was convened to discuss the proposals. Held in Canberra in April 1945, it uncovered significant concern at possible Commonwealth interference in state affairs.1

An important gauge of the community’s interest in these housing and planning issues - and which might help provide a mandate for the government taking steps to implement the Housing Commission’s recommendations - was the MPWR’s own exhibition on planning and housing staged through this same period. Attendance at the first Sydney show in August 1944 and subsequent

1 ‘Draft Notes on Commonwealth-State Officers Conference on Town Planning, Canberra, 12 April 1945’, National Archives of Australia (NAA), A659, 1944/1/47555, Commonwealth Town planning Bureau.
requests to stage the exhibition in other cities indicated to the government “the keen interest that Australians have in this subject”. 2 A series of other displays through the 1940s seemingly sent the same message.

RECONSTRUCTION EXHIBITIONS IN THE 1940s

The number of exhibitions might not have matched the extraordinary range of activities in countries like Great Britain during the same period, but they nonetheless evinced the same broader “culture of display” of the era and similarly sought to balance both educational/propaganda and consultative functions (Lilley 2003). Through media such as plans, maps, charts, diagrams, statistics, photographs, models, films and brochures, they cumulatively reinforced a positive message of town planning to diverse stakeholders. They ranged from corporate-sponsored exhibits at annual city fairs through capital city displays announcing new comprehensive planning strategies to major national touring exhibits provided by foreign governments that moved beyond the major capital cities into regional centres and country towns. In addition to explicitly planning-targeted exhibitions were housing exhibitions with community planning content and there were undoubtedly more architectural, design, technological and cultural exhibitions appealing to the planning audience (e.g. Goad 2011; Jackson 2011).

The first major event was an October 1943 show in Melbourne that subsequently toured through regional Victoria and Tasmania. It was made possible by technical input from Frank Heath and other members of the Victorian Housing Commission’s Architects Panel to demonstrate how “the housing, transport, and recreational needs of the citizen and his family” can be “assured ... in a planned city”. 3 In 1944-45 an exhibition of American initiatives in housing and town planning toured throughout Australia under the auspices of the US Office of War Information (OWI). Highlighting American innovations in war and peace, including planned icons Radburn, Greenbelt and Yorkshire Village, the content was put together by New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) with technical advice from Catherine Bauer Wurster and also toured the UK and other countries (Anon 1944). In 1948 the Cumberland County Council and Brisbane City Council staged major exhibitions on their metropolitan and city planning schemes in Sydney and Brisbane respectively. The last major event of the decade was fully imported. The British Council’s ‘Town and Country Planning in Great Britain’ covered new towns, urban redevelopment, master plans and regional planning. Its showing was intended to coincide with the beginning of a national speaking tour by Sir Patrick Abercrombie (Amati and Freestone 2009). The Commonwealth’s venture in 1944 was far more home-grown.

SYDNEY, AUGUST 1944

Plans by the MPWR to stage an exhibition on “Living in the Cities” in Sydney early in 1944 had emerged by December 1943. The exhibition would deal with a variety of “problems arising from present day urban life” including housing. The

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2 ‘Planned cities and towns’, The Argus, 5 October 1943, p. 5.
Ministry would seek the “cooperation” of the Modern Architectural Research Society (MARS) as well as the Victorian Housing Commission which agreed to let them use reproductions of the material used in their Melbourne Exhibition, and a film on city life would be shown.\(^4\) This captures the essence of what transpired. In addition the OWI exhibition would be combined in Sydney at the same venue, the only time this occurred.

The central curatorial role was played by John Oldham. Oldham was a Perth architect skilled in architectural renderings, lino cuts, posters, photomontages, cartoons and graphic design. The archetypal “young turk”, he became the driving force behind the Sydney-based MARS which stood for the advancement of international modernism and the ideals of the Bahaus and CIAM and involved other leading young architects including Walter Bunning, Morton Hermann and Arthur Baldwinson. Ideological links to the more famous British MARS were strengthened through its modus operandi of research and critique (Bogle \(\text{xxxx}\)). Oldham had a strong social conscience; he was a committed socialist having joined the Communist Party and thus becoming a person of interest for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. Into this mix came his experience as the chief designer of the Australian Pavilion for the 1939 New York World’s Fair which showcased his interest in European social realism and avant-garde exhibition design (Stephen 2006). Oldham would be involved in other exhibitions in the 1940s including the Sydney Empire Exhibition (1947), Art in Public Life (for the People’s Council for Culture), and “Return to Civil Life” (also for MPWR). The MPWR convened a very broad Exhibition Committee to sponsor and help prepare exhibits but Oldham enjoyed “an absolutely free hand in design” working with a small construction team (Oldham 1981).

**On display at the Sydney Exhibition**

The Exhibition opened in the ground floor showroom of the Sydney County Council on 8 August 1944. Three political dignitaries spoke at the opening ceremony: Minister Chifley, New South Wales State Premier William McKell, and Nelson Johnson, US Minister in Australia and its former emissary to China. Only Johnson’s remarks were reported. Less an endorsement of planning than an anti-urbanism rant, Johnson critiqued the modern city as “one of the most potent sterilising influences that society has ever had to contend” particularly in its alienating effect on children.\(^5\)

The exhibition slotted into the general educational activities of the MPWR. The primary rationale was “to educate the public on the necessity of modern town planning and better housing”.\(^6\) The Commonwealth understood that support for planning could not be imposed and that the importance of civic pride could be learnt through demonstration: “People cannot be dragooned into ways of living designed for them” (Anon 1943). Moreover, a questionnaire encouraged visitors to rate features desired in their homes and neighbourhoods.

\(^{4}\) ‘Housing Commission - Housing and Town Planning Exhibition File note dated 31 Dec 1943 from Lloyd Ross’. NAA, A11676/1 HC 1944/2.

\(^{5}\) ‘Cities Sterile Influence’, Sydney Morning Herald, 9 August 1944, p. 4.

The exhibition was quite modest in scale: around 20 standard display panels variously comprising photographs, plans, and text; 6 hardware models showing progressive new house designs; a 3-D model of a planned neighbourhood; and a display comparing the unplanned growth of Sydney and the layout of an ideal town. The standard panels were modularised at 6 x 4 feet in dimensions to enable easy erection, dismantling and travel in packing cases. To Oldham this neatly illustrated the logical efficiency of pre-fabrication, a major theme of the MARS mission. To leaven the seriousness, he scattered around little red flex stick figures dressed in coloured felt with ping pong ball heads. They were made by his wife Ray and were inspired by a visit to the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco in 1939. Guiding the visitor around the exhibition were red footsteps on the floor, a technique used for design exhibitions at MOMA (Staniszewski 1998).

The footprints tour provides a succinct description of the visitor experience. The show room was divided into two halves by an island counter and waiting spaces. Entering the exhibition on the right hand side and after picking up brochures from the literature and inquiry counter, the visitor made their way past 11 panels stretching from the entrance around the perimeter to almost the left rear corner of the showroom. These panels, largely constructed out of the Melbourne exhibition, sequenced across three main themes. The first 3 panels captured the needs of the community to be addressed by planning from home through neighbourhood to region. The inclusion of a plan of Sydney reconfigured by green belt and satellite towns reflected the influence of A.J. Brown, a former assistant to Louis De Soissons at Welwyn Garden City and who represented the NSW Town and Country Planning Institute on the Exhibition Committee. The next 4 panels stressed the importance of community facilities (“homes alone are not enough”) and featured work undertaken by Grenfell Rudduck after winning the Royal Victorian Institute of Architect’s Haddon travelling scholarship in 1941. The third set of 4 panels along the rear of the room reiterated the message that “the future of our cities must be planned” showing bad and good approaches to land subdivision as well as the legacy of non-planning in slums, traffic congestion and inferior provision of open spaces. In the back left hand corner was a large mural map of Sydney with magnifying glass graphics highlighting the shortcomings of a city developed without a plan. Immediately beneath it was a graphic panel of an “ideal town to accommodate 18,000 people” prepared by Frank Heath and highlighting the stark choice between “the past” and “the future”.

From here the footsteps led back to the room’s central dividing display. A series of models sat atop tables with layouts illustrated behind. The first of these at the back of the room was the display centrepiece: a neighbourhood unit model for 5000 people illustrating the principles of Clarence Perry (1930) with central community centre, school and shops; apartment blocks; wedges of open space; and cul de sac streets to deter through traffic. Keith Newman wrote that “though there is no sign anywhere of a hotel, model or otherwise, the effect of the display upon people now compelled to live in huddled, unhygienic, and ugly environments is profound.” This model is also featured in Bunning’s Homes in the Sun (1945). Alongside were five home models with internal floorplans to the

same scale, three of these selected from winning designs in a recent NSW Housing Commission competition for its new Westmead housing estate. Intended to be placed opposite these models was a full size home section illustrating indoor-outdoor living spaces. However this idea did not progress and instead the red footsteps led diagonally back across the room to a screen adjacent to the Sydney mural that introduced another exhibit on the internal floor plan of a modern home, illustrating various components (e.g. sleeping and living spaces) as parts of the whole, captured by yet another physical model. Now back near the entrance, the visitors were directed to the theaterette showing the documentary film “The City” originally made for the 1939 New York Worlds Fair and the complementary US “Housing in War and Peace” display. They could return daily at 7.45pm for the lecture program.

Immediate reaction

Lloyd Ross reported to the Exhibition Committee on the success of the event at its close.\(^8\) He stated that 500 persons daily attended the screening of “The City” and that overall 100,000 persons visited the Exhibition over three weeks. Moreover, Cinesound news made a short newsreel estimated as being shown to 4½ million people. Among those attending were “a considerable number of service people”, army education officers, and senior domestic science and technical high school students. Over 10,000 questionnaires were filled out with overwhelming support for town planning legislation (96%) and most of the featured design ideas.\(^9\) Ross listed the main types of inquiries fielded and opinions expressed: wanting copies of plans of the model houses and estimated costs of building; questioning why no verandahs on the models; desiring larger family houses; and asking about eligibility for public housing. Some keen observers wanted to know when the next exhibition would be held.

Critical observations were shared by members of the Committee.\(^10\) Criticisms were made that the panels were too small, the photographs too numerous, and the models too few. The anti-clockwise flow was questioned and the need to assist visitors with guided tours was suggested. The main concern was the poor attendance at the evening lectures. This was attributed in part to the concert tour of the classical maestro Eugene Ormandy from Philadelphia (and again courtesy of the OWI) on a triumphant tour of Sydney and other Australian cities as a guest conductor for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Overall, however, the Sydney Exhibition was declared by Ross to be “a very successful piece of educational achievement”.\(^11\) Oldham said that “everyone agreed that our exhibition outshone the Americans” and that Coombs was “delighted” (Oldham 1981).

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\(^8\) ‘Report to the Housing and Town Planning Committee’, Lloyd Ross, c August 1944 Sydney City Council (SCC) Archives, 1814/44 - Town Planning and Housing Exhibition.


\(^10\) ‘Report of Meeting, Housing and Town Planning Committee, 29 August 1944’, SCC Archives, 1814/44 - Town Planning and Housing Exhibition.

\(^11\) ‘Report to the Housing and Town Planning Committee’, SCC Archives, 1814/44.
The report of the Sydney Committee’s meeting concluded that “it is assumed that further exhibitions of this type will be appreciated by the community”.

The exhibition had generated nationwide interest and the MPWR received official requests to have the display shown in other cities. The modularisation of the display anticipated taking the show on the road and Coombs sanctioned this next step. Oldham managed this process for another year, organising similar committees to the Sydney one so that they “would feel personally involved” and for local contributions to customise the display in different places (Oldham 1981). The itinerary was Newcastle (October), Brisbane (November-December), Toowoomba (early 1945), and Adelaide (March-April). Perth closed the tour with a “highly successful” two weeks at the Town Hall from 20 June to 5 July 1945 attracting over 13,000 visitors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Mirroring the international scene, the planning propaganda generated through the 1940s is remarkable. Exhibitions were at the forefront in providing an engaging medium involving all of the community. The main intention was educational - the winning of “hearts and minds” to lock in community support for what would have often seemed far-reaching aspirations to both replan existing cities and plan afresh for communities to come. The exhibitions usually stopped short of detailed institutional, fiscal and legal pathways toward implementation; the accent was on vision.

The Commonwealth exhibition described here was a modest and low-cost one, but its importance lies in its backing by the national government, its context within a more ambitious Commonwealth agenda for town planning, its exposure coast-to-coast, and its definitive capturing of contemporary planning and housing ideals underpinned by strong social idealism through popularising the ideas represented in the final report of the Commonwealth Housing Commission.

While underlining the developing post war consensus on the necessity for government intervention into planning, the staging of the exhibition still revealed ideological cleavages in the community. The extent to which resources during war-time could be diverted to advance planning let alone the realisation of housing and planning dreams was a sensitive issue even for the MPWC. At the launch of the exhibition in Brisbane, the Queensland Premier Frank Cooper cautioned that “there was a tendency for some people to think that the war was over, particularly the planners ... when there was still a big job to do”.

More fundamental albeit a minority viewpoint was the criticism that the Exhibition represented radical goals out of step with the needs and desires of the Australian population. When John Cramer of the Sydney County Council caught wind of the proposed exhibition in March 1944 he accused the Commonwealth Government of “using the Department of Post-War Reconstruction to publicise its socialistic doctrine of communal housing”. The

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12 ‘Report of Meeting, Housing and Town Planning Committee’, SCC Archives, 1814/44.
13 ‘Was Highly Successful’, Sunday Times, 8 July 1945, p. 4
actual exhibition strongly promoted single family detached housing as it turned out, but this prompted a third expression of concern relating to the likely cost of model homes. One observer calculated the houses to cost on average £850 whereas the big demand lay for houses costing less than £650. Brisbane Lord Mayor, J.B. Chandler refuted this analysis: “A good home for his family is the natural requirement of every man, and no argument by economists or government servants should be allowed to obscure that important issue”.  

The singular impact of the Exhibition as an advertisement for town planning is difficult to ascertain in a decade when there was a surfeit of propaganda activity and adjustments to institutional regimes to accommodate a statutory planning function in several states. The exhibition came just as the pre-war tide of advocacy begins to translate into administrative machinery. NSW is the state which best fulfilled the Commonwealth’s aspirations - with a state housing commission already in place incorporating progressive design ideals into its housing and estate layouts, new legislation gazetted in April 1945 authorising local councils to prepare planning schemes to be overseen by a new secretariat, and preparation of a metropolitan strategy that would embody its ideas for a new Sydney encircled by “a green belt of parks and agriculture” and a “planned group of satellite towns”. The response in other states was admittedly more uneven. Town planning was just one of many areas where “the Government was inclined to assume unrealistically that the States would accept Commonwealth leadership ‘in the national interest’” (Butlin and Schedvin 1977, 707).

When the Perth showing of the Exhibition ended in early July 1945, the Commonwealth’s national agenda for town planning was still on the table. Germany had surrendered in May and the war in the Pacific would be over by the end of August. But fatefuly on the very last day of the Perth showing, Prime Minister John Curtin died. He was eventually succeeded by Ben Chifley, the former Minister for Post-War Reconstruction. This changed everything.

Coombs (1981, 67) noted that after Curtin’s death, “government enthusiasm for the national works idea began to wane”. In the lead up to a fateful Premier’s Conference in late August 1945 with Chifley as the new Prime Minister, Coombs lobbied vigorously for his Ministry’s proposals for a national planning bureau, postgraduate courses, and financial assistance to the states. When this issue was raised by the new Minister John Dedman - as the second last item at a meeting which had already consumed nearly three days - the Victorian Premier Dunstan and Acting NSW Premier Baddeley indicated that both had the town planning question in hand. This stance was more an opening hand than a definitive position, but new to the portfolio Dedman did not pursue the issue. Coombs would be subsequently lobbied by state representatives to revisit the matter, but on the day Chifley’s closing remarks pointed the way ahead: “I assume from your remarks that you consider that the matter ought to be left to the States” (Commonwealth of Australia 1945, 80). So when the opportunity presented a few years later for the Commonwealth to support the touring British Council planning exhibition, there was not the same largesse evident as in 1944-45 and Chifley insisted that, since planning had now been confirmed as  

16 ‘Good home is natural requirement’, Courier Mail, 8 March 1945, p. 5.  
17 Patrick Troy, ANU, personal communication, 1 February 2012.
a matter for state governments, they must share a proportionate part of the costs.\textsuperscript{18}

Even by then the idea of an exhibition had switched to more specific city agendas. The exhibition culture would still endure and the inaugural meeting of the Planning Institute of Australia in Canberra in 1951 would be marked by an exhibition and such events were a notable adjunct of professional meetings into the 1960s.\textsuperscript{19} But enthusiasm waned as the business of planning descended to very site specific land use zoning and development control issues and conflicts with direct implications for property rights. The paraphernalia of exhibitionism remained with models, plans and photographs conveying information, but this visuality was now being played out in a very different context.

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