



Dormancy in two regional cities and its relevance to the growth of Western Sydney

(The cases of Honeysuckle, Newcastle; Palmer Street, Townsville and Penrith)

Dr Jonathan Drane, Western Sydney University, Sydney Graduate School of Management

Abstract:

The dormant cityscape continues to haunt many of our burgeoning, high growth cities. Former port lands, 'brownfield' sites and degraded suburban areas persist in these states for what appears to be decades without any apparent revival. Despite the usual forms of planning, zoning and controls they appear to display obstinacy over large time periods that continue to confound local and state planning authorities and leaders.

This article studies dormant cityscapes in two regional cities (Newcastle and Townsville) and their revival, to bring a clearer understanding to the nature and dynamics of dormancy. The cityscapes are viewed through a time-lapse, mechanistic view by charting of stimulus events over several decades to identify the often invisible forces at work. The results are discussed in light of the outer west centres of the Sydney Basin and their states of dormancy, with an example of one of these, a regional centre; (Penrith) and its transformation status.

The often urgent political reliance on lineal, visible change is shown to confound our view, along with the 'meta' use of the economic/demographic lens to view our cities. Missing is a view of not only artefactual indicators but the invisible markers of change. This, along with a mechanistic 'time-lapse' view is discussed as a means of enhancing our knowledge of dormancy periods and revival.

The study enhances our understanding of dormancy and the historical timelines that they operate under. In this way a revisionist view of this phenomenon informs planners and city leaders to understand dormancy and its revitalization, which goes beyond political urgencies.

Keywords: City growth, dormancy, cityscape, development processes.

Contact: Dr Jonathan Drane, Sydney Graduate School of Management, Western Sydney University Australia. j.drane@westernsydney.edu.au