SEEING THE WHOLE: INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPE VALUES INTO PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

Many contemporary land use and natural resource management planning initiatives have embraced a values-led planning approach. At the same time, there have been increasing calls to recognise and respect culturally diverse values in public policy (European Landscape Convention and UNFPII, 2008). Although Indigenous consultation in many land use planning and natural resource management initiatives has been undertaken throughout Australia, Indigenous input (with a few exceptions) is seldom visible in the project outputs. In most planning studies at local and regional scales, there has been a significant hiatus in incorporating Indigenous landscape values.

This paper presents initial research findings confirming that it is possible to work with Indigenous communities, comprised of both traditional and non-traditional owners, to identify Indigenous landscape values of relevance in a rapidly urbanising planning region such as South East Queensland (SEQ) (Low Choy et al, 2009 & 2010). Whilst this research is ongoing, this paper will outline the methodology adopted for Indigenous engagement thus far and that proposed for the ongoing research. Specifically, it examines the question of how should the planning and associated professions address these unique challenges of Indigenous engagement in order to incorporate their landscape values into conventional, essentially European based, planning processes, particularly those within an urban setting.

BACKGROUND

The Indigenous communities in Question

A good deal of work has been undertaken in relation to Indigenous communities in remote areas of Australia, particularly in the central and the far north regions (see in particular the work of the former Desert Knowledge CRC). Much of this work has been conducted on designated tribal lands where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the dominant socio-cultural group.

However, in other more developed parts of the country this is far from the norm. In the South East Queensland (SEQ) region, centred on the City of Brisbane - the state capital of Queensland, some 32% of Queensland's Indigenous population reside (whilst Brisbane is home to 24% of the State's Indigenous population). In fact, some 43% of Australia's Indigenous population reside in urban centres, whilst in most cities they constitute approximately 2% of the city's total population (DIT, 2010a: 106).

The Major Cities Unit of the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport makes the point that: "Indigenous heritage, often neglected in highly built up areas, is a unique part of Australian cities to be honoured." and along with other aspects of our cultural heritage that it should be protected (DIT, 2010b: 47).

Dugdale (2008: 614) makes the point that ".... few Indigenous people live in remote communities, with the majority widely spread through the general population …. Most Indigenous people in Queensland are widely spread through the general population …."

This reality makes the challenges of Indigenous engagement for regional and urban planning purposes quite specific and essential.

Defining Values for Planning

O'Brien (2003: 5), in addressing the complex nature of values and their formation and role in decision-making, sees values as: an enduring concept of worth; being formed out of a social process of dialogue and debate; influenced by the social, cultural, historical and geographical relationships between society and the individual; constructed between individuals and institutions; and informed by ethical and moral judgments and by creating priorities in ideas and belief systems. In an environmental context, values have been defined

as: "*direct and indirect qualities of natural systems that are important to the evaluator*" (Satterfield, 2001: 332). Again the emphasis is on the 'personal'.

However these values constantly evolve over time through processes of social dialogue and experiences, and being learned in response to the environment in which people are exposed (Rokeach, 1973; Grünberg, 2000). Once these values are learnt, they become part of a value system and are then prioritised in relation to other values (Rokeach, 1973). People however, can hold multiple values which can be contested and subject to change over time as a result of new experiences and the influence of others (O'Brien, 2003).

Dietz et al (2005) have noted the strong links between values and identity, in particular, the relationship between values, self, identity, and emotions. Of importance to this research in this regard is the role that Schultz (2001: 336) argues for values, namely "that objects (e.g., plants, animals, other people) are valued because of the degree to which they are included within an individual's cognitive representation of the self". This suggests that values are related to an individual's exhibited feelings of interconnection between the self and nature - a link between values and identity. Kempton et al. (1995) have also highlighted the close link between environmental values and personal identity, especially a spiritual dimension of identity. These issues are particularly relevant to this research.

Satterfield (2001) holds that people's values can be ascertained through their emotions. Interestingly, she elicits public values through 'image-based and narrative-style' tasks arguing that such approaches provide more opportunities to draw out a greater variety of responses, as it acknowledges the emotional, moral and symbolic nature of values. The definition of values through stories as told by Indigenous participants in this research is explored later in the paper.

Defining Indigenous landscape values

Whist this research has stayed well clear of native title matters, the requirement for traditional owners to demonstrate a continuous connection to their traditional lands has obvious associations to the principal themes of this project. Tony Anghie (quoted in Charlesworth, 1999: 20) summed it up thus: "*Respect for other people, and of the total environment (the land, water, animals and so forth), is fundamental to Indigenous value systems, and that culture is not merely some ornamental aspect of an individual's existence that can readily be dispensed with or displayed on ceremonial occasions, but is integral to the self-concept and social functioning of individuals and the communities of which they form a part*".

In Queensland, a number of initiatives have been developed over the past number of years in attempts to address the issue of drawing Indigenous landscape values into planning. One relevantly recent Queensland Government example, titled: "*Looking after country together*", was a Discussion Paper with the stated aim of developing an agreement to improve Indigenous people's access to and involvement in the management of land and sea country (NR&M and EPA, 2002). One of its three Key Outcomes sought "stronger Indigenous influence on broader natural resource policy development and planning". To this end, the document articulated a 10 year plan to ensure that by 2012 Indigenous people would participate in and influence State, regional and local planning and policy development for land, cultural heritage and natural resources.

Noting that better processes were needed to deliver effective involvement of Indigenous peoples in sustainable management of land and sea country, one proposed strategy sought to "create effective mechanisms for Indigenous involvement in State, regional and local-scale planning" in order to achieve an outcome where "Indigenous values are reflected in land use plans and policies at all geographic scales" (NR&M and EPA, 2002: 22).

Clearly this has not been achieved and the fate of this Discussion Paper is unknown. However it does not diminish the recognition of the longstanding relationship that traditional owners have with their lands and their knowledge that is held as part of their custodial and customary lore. Any future approach to Indigenous engagement in the planning process must fully acknowledge and build upon these facts. This will be regardless of whether the Indigenous engagement is in term of eliciting their views as landowners, land managers or as members of the broader community.

A "Values led" Planning Approach

Such approaches, based on values, can be facilitated by contemporary planning processes and practices. For example, contemporary planning documents for many regional and local communities abound with vision and aspirational statements attesting to the collective values of those communities. These are traditionally expressed as 'value' statements. In this manner the subsequent planning process is guided by and towards these ends.

Essentially a community's values express a desire for the planning process and associated policies to deliver a high degree of liveability for themselves, their community and their area. In pursuit of that aspiration, these values will call for the protection of key landscape attributes – ie those attributes that can make a positive influence on the achievement of the aspirational vision of liveability. The relationship between community (environmental) values and their aspirations of liveability through key landscape attributes is graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Relationship between Community (environmental) Values and Aspirations of Liveability

Operationalising the "Values led" Planning Approach

In the Queensland context a values-led approach to planning was the foundation to its new performance based planning approach that was introduced into the State's statutory planning system by the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* (IPA) and to some degree continued in the subsequent legislation – the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA). Under the IPA arrangement, community (environmental) values were encapsulated in the planning schemes' Desired Environmental Outcomes (DEOs). DEOs defined the end-result that local governments wanted to achieve for an area. They provided the foundation of the scheme from which all other elements were derived.

The State's first statutory regional plan - *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026* (SEQ RP) continued the values-led approach. Regional values were incorporated into this Plan as Desired Regional Outcomes (DROs) in the same sense as the DEOs of local plans. The second iteration of this regional plan, the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031*, upon which all other regional plans in the State are now based, gave explicit recognition to Indigenous cultural heritage values, specifically in DRO 3 – Regional Landscape and DRO 7 Engaging Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The sub element to DRO 3 – 3.6 Landscape Heritage – contained a policy (3.6.2) which stated: "Through the planning process, identify, recognise and respect Aboriginal peoples' cultural connections to the regional landscape" (The State of Queensland 2009: 64). The second specific reference to Indigenous landscape values was contained in 7.4 Cultural values, whose Policy 7.4.1 stated: "Protect and maintain traditional Aboriginal cultural landscapes and culturally significant places in land use, planning and management arrangements in partnership with the traditional owners of those landscapes and places, and maintain or improve traditional owners' access to cultural resources" (The State of Queensland 2009: 89).

However, despite the good intentions expressed in these DROs, specific Indigenous landscape values for the region were not described or mapped. In relation to the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (some 84% of the SEQ region), the plan acknowledged a number of landscape types which were accepted by all stakeholders (eg the working, protective, leisure or viewed landscape). Most landscape types have been addressed in some detail by an appropriate study or strategy (eg Rural Futures Study, Nature Conservation Strategy, Outdoor Recreation Strategy or Scenic Amenity Study) and as a result, their values were known. However, this was not the case with the Indigenous landscape and regional planning outcomes were subsequently uninformed of these values - hence the motive behind this research.

The research question that is guiding this study is:

Can Indigenous landscape values be identified and represented in ways that respect Indigenous culture and represent their interest in conventional regional planning processes?

THE METHODOLOGY FOR ENGAGEMENT

The research utilised a case study research strategy – this has been fully described in Low Choy et al (2009 & 2010). Within this overall case study methodology, it was necessary to scope out and to develop a tailored made engagement process for the purposes of engaging with the SEQ Indigenous community in order to conduct discussions on regional landscape values – there were no precedence to draw from. The adopted engagement process is graphically outlined in Figure 2.
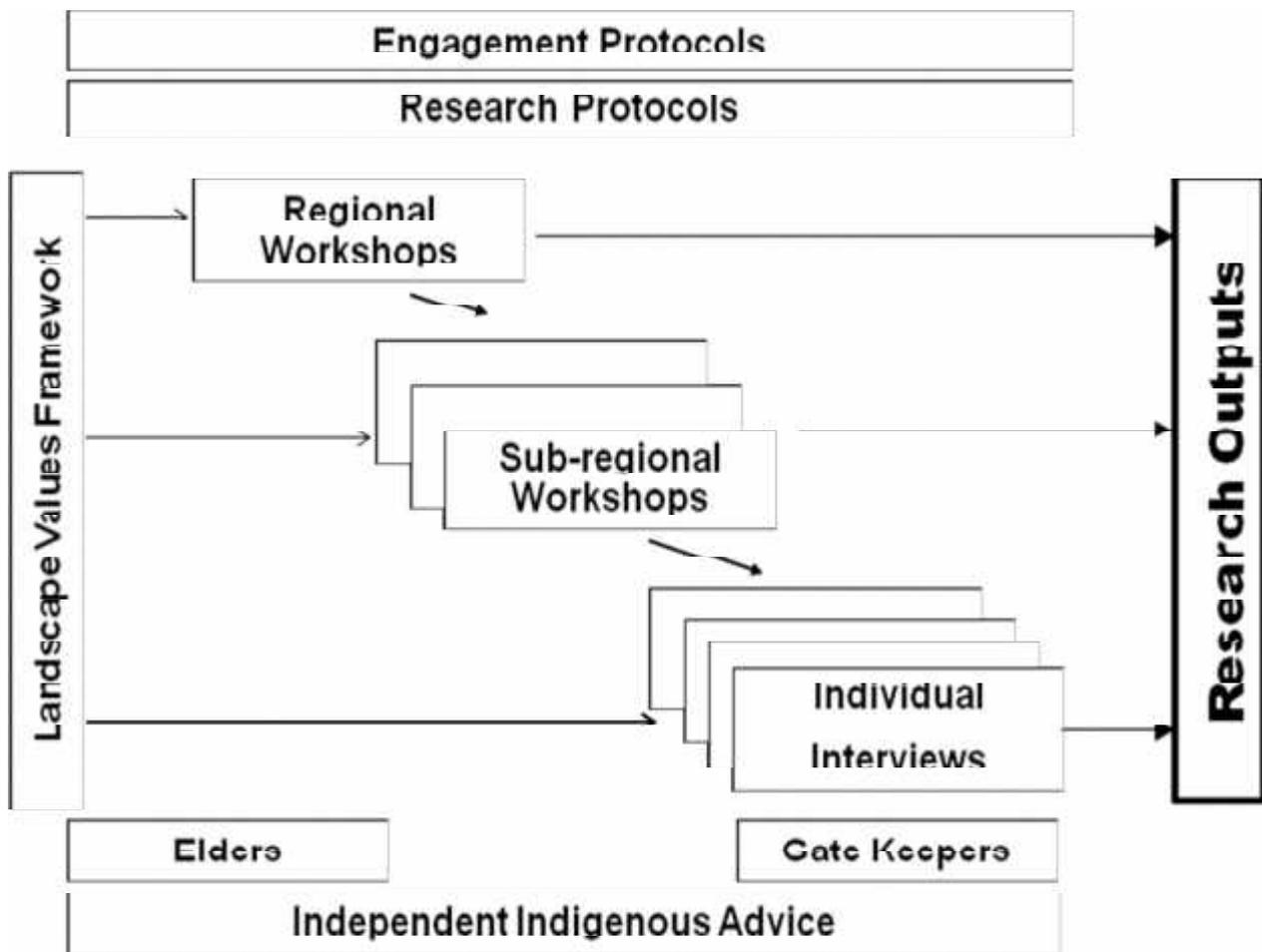

Figure 2: An Indigenous Research Engagement Process

As this figure illustrates, the whole engagement process is governed by a set of overarching protocols. In the first instance, the research is being conducted in accordance with the University's Code of Ethics for human research which applies to all such research being conducted under its auspices. Secondly, it was considered necessary develop a specific protocol to address the particular research nature of this engagement. Subsequently, a draft protocol was developed titled: *Project Protocol for Incorporating Indigenous Landscape Values into Regional Planning Processes*. This initiative is consistent with a priority engagement element articulated by Smallacombe et al (2007: 78) which advocated for "demonstrably valuing Aboriginal Knowledge in a formal charter and putting the charter into action". This protocol is a living document and has been peer reviewed by a number of experienced and respected researchers in the Indigenous studies field. It was also approved by the SEQTOA Board in 2010. This protocol acknowledges that Indigenous communities and their people own their traditional knowledge and have their own customary law and

protocols for managing, sharing and protecting this knowledge. This protocol is intended for use by both researchers and Indigenous people and communities of SEQ considering their involvement in the research project. Whilst it is relevant to both Traditional Owner and Non-Traditional Owner communities in SEQ, it also recognises specific Traditional Owner Knowledge and protocols in some instances.

The core components of the engagement process centred on a series of workshops. In the first instance these took the form of whole-of-region workshops. The precise detail on the conduct of these workshops has previously been described (see Low Choy et al, 2009 & 2010). The internal structure and conduct of the regional workshops and the follow-on sub-regional workshops were structured to acknowledge the four indigenous sub-regions of SEQ. These are in fact the recognised language groups for the *Goori/Murri Nation* (SEQ). These areas are depicted on Figure 3 and include:

- Northern Sub-region (focused on the Gubbi Gubbi tribe);
- Central Sub-region (focused on the Jagera tribe);
- Eastern Sub-region (focused on the Quandamooka tribe); and
- Southern Sub-region (focused on the Ngarangwal/Kombumerri tribe).

Given the regional scale nature of strategic planning activities in Queensland, it was imperative to establish whether the landscape values of the indigenous community were applicable at this scale and this necessitated the conduct of the initial workshops at this scale. Whilst this was a considerable challenge, the undertaking was a complete success (see Low Choy et al, 2009 & 2010). This was due to a number of factors. In the first instance, the project had the full support of the South East Queensland Traditional Owners Alliance (SEQTOA) Board which was comprised of representative from the majority of language groups in the region and who in effect acted as the gatekeepers for the project. SEQTOA was the peak body formed by Traditional Owner cultural groups in SEQ to represent and advance their interests in cultural and natural resource management. It was dissolved in 2011. As a regional scale organisation, SEQTOA's established networks amongst Traditional Owners and Non-Traditional Owners enabled them to serve as gatekeepers to the region's indigenous community during this research including the engagement of workshop participants.

Other gatekeeper functions were also provided through the inclusion of an Indigenous researcher on the project team. This initiative was undertaken with the motive of improving the research and planning capacity of the SEQ indigenous community and in recognition a number of other priority engagement element articulated by Smallacombe et al (2007: 78), namely: "supporting full and equal involvement of Indigenous people in research and other activity …." and "developing internal support mechanisms, such as an Aboriginal or Indigenous Forum and a mentor system". The independent advice provided by this researcher is also crucial to the successful and continued engagement process.

The crucial role that the region's Indigenous Elders played must also be acknowledged. Their advice on the workshop invitations and protocols, and their personal participation in the workshops on the day, all made an important contribution to the success of the workshops.

The follow-up personalised individual interviews were developed through a self-selected snowballing process. Once individuals understood the purpose of the workshops and intent of the of the project outcomes, and were confident and comfortable with the researchers, they volunteered themselves for the subsequent interview. Whilst time consuming, this is an extremely important phase of data collection in a project of this nature. Individuals are the personal custodians of Indigenous knowledge and they make the decision to share that knowledge and to give approval for its subsequent use. The knowledge gained through this process can be very rich and insightful.

Whilst all three principal elements of the engagement process – the regional and sub-regional workshops and the interviews – were discrete undertakings that are being conducted over an number of years, they were bound through a common research tool that emerged from the initial engagement workshop at the regional level. This took the form of an Indigenous Landscape Framework which was derived from workshop discussions that identified a range of landscape forms in which Indigenous values are associated. This included key landscape elements such as traditional boundaries, pathways, land and sea country (including totems, the bush calendar and food and medicine sources), women's and men's places, spiritual landscape and dreaming places, ceremonial areas, meeting and keeping places, battlefields, mission sites, habitation sites, healing places and water places. The construction of this Framework acknowledged that three layers of values can be recognised in Indigenous society as their values (including landscape values) can exist in a spiritual context, an historical context and a contemporary context.

The Framework served as a linking element throughout the subsequent research and as a structured and foundational basis for that research – one that subsequent participants could relate to even though individual

research activities were well separated in time. Due to the successful conduct of the initial workshop with over 60 Indigenous participants engaged including the Board of SEQTOA, and as the workshop outputs (including the Framework) were signed off by all participants and the Board, the researchers had the authority to proceed with the use of this Framework in their subsequent research activities.

In passing it is interesting to note that the values attached to these Framework elements are usually represented in a diverse range of forms which do not immediately lend themselves to incorporation into conventional land use and natural resource management planning processes. The current research is addressing some of the unique challenges of incorporating these values into conventional planning processes and practices.

SEQTOLSMA Sub-Regions

* Turbal and Eastern Yugambeh are part of South East Queensland regluon but have chosen not to be involved in the SEQTOLSMA planning process.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The imperative for serious and immediate attention to issues surrounding the acknowledgement, and more importantly, the incorporation of Indigenous values in planning practice has been aptly put by Behrendt (nd: 7) when she stated: "the inclusion of Aboriginal cultural values, values that still permeate our contemporary communities, would be important to include into urban planning processes ….. But this focus tends to bend too much towards the bureaucratic rhetoric of economic rationalism rather than the focus on the importance of strengthening community ties and facilitating community obligations …. This community focus that extends to facilitate the obligations would refocus community and urban planning". Whilst she was basically referring to the engagement of (inner) urban Indigenous communities, her advice has significance to regional scale planning and certainly to a highly urbanised region such as SEQ where it was previously noted was the home to almost one third of the State's Indigenous population.

Behrendt (nd: 7) provides a challenge to the planning and associated professions when she concludes: "Because these values of community, kinship, social responsibility (reciprocity), social interaction and the importance of place are inherent in Aboriginal culture but not unique to them, they echo sentiments of others who feel that these sorts of ideals should have more influence in alternative directions for urban planning. What Aboriginal participation and community values can offer is a way of underlining the importance of those principles playing a guiding role in thinking about how we build for future generations, a way that recognises the glory of the enterprise that built mansion, but recognises the significance and value of the foundation upon which it stands".

An examination of the various policy documents of this country's peak planning body – the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) can shed some light on the questions as to whether the profession (and hence its members) is positioned, equipped, and has the capacity, to engage with Indigenous communities, especially those in the majority locations of our urban centres and cities.

PIA has an established Indigenous Planning Working group which has been productive and has developed a Protocol for welcome to country and acknowledgment of traditional owners (PIA IPWG, 2009) and more recently a Discussion Paper to address the improvement of planner's understanding of Indigenous matters and to recommend reforms to PIAs education and accreditation policy in these respects (PIA IPWG, 2010). Whist this initiative has some way to go before final policies are developed, approved and disseminated to PIA members for implementation, it is an encouraging long overdue development towards the planning profession's contribution to reconciliation.

Of direct relevance to this project, and where there may be opportunities for its research outcomes (findings and experiences) to make a contribution to this ongoing work by PIA, can be gauged from one of the Discussion Paper's recommendations that dealt with formal planning education reform. One of the four areas deemed to require urgent attention included **Normative values and processes**, where it was concluded: "Current normative values and processes are, in certain situations, no longer relevant, and new values and processes of planning need to be devised that records, interprets and absorbs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's intrinsic knowledge of country and the environment" (PIA IPWG, 2010: 4).

A further recommendation with association to this research included: "PIA give consideration to amending its Code of Professional Conduct to include a clause encouraging members to use their best endeavours to take account of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections to country wherever possible" (PIA IPWG, 2010: 5).

A slightly different situation emerges with respect to the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) - the profession that undertakes regional scale planning from a whole-of-landscape perspective. Whilst a review of its policy documents has not revealed any specific policies or advice to its members regarding indigenous engagement, there was evidence of a good foundational base upon which this work could be completed. For example, AILAs principal policy document (commonly referred to as the Australian Landscape Principles) states that: "The Australian Landscape Principles articulate an *ethical decision-making framework for landscape planning, design and management within the built environment*" (AILA, nd: 4). Further, it has two existing principles which could be built upon to address Indigenous engagement (AILA, nd: 4). They include:

Value Our Landscape: "…. *every landscape embodies a range of complex, multidimensional and interdependent values - and these values must be comprehensively articulated before they can be accurately assessed* …."; and

Design with Respect: "*All values of landscape deserve respect, and should be given equal consideration when design/intervention is proposed*"

AILAs Education Policy however does contain specific recognition to "Indigenous people's cultural and spiritual relationships to country, landscape, and place" in terms of desired performance criteria for Educational Outcomes (see C-24a: History & Theory - *Performance Criteria*) (AILA, 2010: 4). Again this is a useful foundation to build upon.

In terms of transforming their Institute to more properly engage with Indigenous communities in their design and planning practices, it is recommended that AILA consider:
1. revising the Australian Landscape Principles to acknowledge design and planning with Indigenous communities;
2. development of a policy statement on Indigenous landscape values; and
3. establish a set of processes and procedures for Indigenous stakeholder engagement.

In terms of improving their education policy to these ends it is recommended that AILA consider developing policy guidance and educational/training modules to address:
1. cultural awareness training for students and its members;
2. understanding of traditional Indigenous knowledge (including intellectual property rights issues);
3. engagement of Indigenous communities (Principles, Processes and Procedures); and
4. review / revisit C-24a: History & Theory.

It is encouraging to note that AILA is moving to establish a Working Group to address these issues in the immediate aftermath of their recent National Conference (August 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

The research to date has moved ahead to critically address the research question: "*Can Indigenous landscape values be identified and represented in ways that respect Indigenous culture and represent their interest in conventional regional planning processes?* In doing so it has highlighted a useful way forward for successful Indigenous engagement in planning related research which may have potential utility to planning practice and possibly to the broader application of non-Indigenous values to planning as well.

The current research findings confirm the conclusions of Dietz et al, (2005) that values are an important influence on environmental concern, but that further research is needed before we can draw strong conclusions about how to change values, how those value changes influence behaviour, and about improving methods to deploy our values in collective decision making such as the planning process.

This research is continuing into its final phase and whilst this paper represents the first evaluation and reflection of its research methodology related to Indigenous engagement, initial lessons learnt have highlighted some potential challenges for the planning and associated professions as well as for professional education. Whist there are encouraging initial signs of the planning and related professions moving to address long overdue Indigenous engagement matters there is still yet some way to go. In this regard, the principal aspects for policy development and improvements to professional training and education centre on:

1. Cultural awareness training
2. Understanding of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (including intellectual property rights issues)
3. Engagement of Indigenous Communities (Principles, Processes and Procedures)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong interests in land, cultural heritage and natural resources. Custodial and spiritual relationships with the land and the sea form the roots of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and culture. The continuation of traditional connections to land and sea country is critical to the identity and stability of traditional owner communities throughout Queensland.

After many past false starts there are emerging encouraging signs that the planning and associated professions are on a positive pathway towards more effective engagement of Indigenous communities in their planning practices and in this manner make a further contribution to reconciliation.

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