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# ***Save Our Brisbane Suburbs***

Part of the Australia wide *Save Our Suburbs* network

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## **LAP ... or LOP ...**

### **... a challenge for concerned residents and local governance in Brisbane**

Brisbane's character is under threat ... not necessarily in a negative sense but it is under threat. If you enjoy the "timber and tin", the trees, the pockets of bushland, the visits of wild animals and birds, the neighbours, the quiet and a sense of community, then you will be aware of the many threats to this character. While some people enjoy and value these "character" attributes, others value "development", conversion of large house lots to multiple small lot housing, flats or town houses, conversion of the pockets of bushland into housing, removal of the trees and "character" hosing, less visits by the wild things and more by the neighbour's cat or dog, neighbours who change houses so frequently you don't know who they are or who enjoy different things like loud music or cars parked on the footpath. These "character" attributes are all attributable to, controlled or pre-determined by planning decisions.

LAP or Local Area Plans, a concept introduced by the current BCC administration, aimed to provide a more local planning process. Previous planning addressed the whole city. As each development occurred local issues arose but could not be addressed other than on a case by case basis so LAP looked like a "good thing". However as more areas have had an LAP, it appears that increasingly, each new LAP produces the same characteristics as others. It appears the LAP concept no longer reflects the "local" but in fact, reflects city-wide policy.

Another concept is needed. Local "ownership" is closely linked to successful community partnerships based on increased responsibility through increased control ie ownership.

LOP or Locally Owned Plans could provide a means for those sufficiently concerned to take increased responsibility for and control of their local area. Whether BCC would allow it is a test for moving beyond "Have your say" rhetoric and community development alluded to by BCC but rarely obvious in LAPs. While an LOP would involve more time dedicated to the local community by residents, the benefits offer increased security for a chosen range of "character" attributes, a potentially stronger political process based on partnerships rather than adversarial and legal processes as at present, and perhaps most importantly, a sharing of the character that local people value. Interestingly, recent efforts to promote local history groups suggest that there is a desire to document where we were. Is "where to next" the next step?

In most local areas, there are usually a number of local issues which current development applications, projects or reviews of the town plan or LAP exclude. Examples include protection and promotion of character housing (the BCC definition excludes interesting 1950s and 1960s developmental housing suburbs), tree removal, and BCC promotion of small lot housing necessitating demolition, removal or surrounding of larger houses. Directly related to these are increases in traffic and inappropriate and unsafe speed limits, lack of local community facilities and parks, lack of preservation of bushland and local waterways, most often issues for which BCC itself is responsible and for which the community, not developers, pays through rates .

**If you are concerned about even some of these issues (or you have some others), please contact us ... but also please talk to your friends and neighbours ...**

**... your own LOP is urgently needed.**