The capacity to change: Partnering with local government to strengthen policy

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Setting the scene

- **Who** - LIUDD research programme
- **What** - WSUD in the NZ context
- **Why** - role of local government in implementing LIUDD
- **How** - working with local government to build the capacity to implement LIUDD
LIUDD research programme

- LIUDD - low impact urban design & development
- Embraces low impact design & strengthens connections with urban design & sustainable design
- Research by Landcare Research and the University of Auckland
- Funded by the Foundation of Research, Science & Technology
LIUDD research programme cont.

- Six year research programme
- Aim is to mainstream LIUDD by demonstrating technical & economic aspects of LID
- And more importantly...working with end-users to ensure uptake of research in policy and practice (capacity building)
- Local government (the regulator) is a key stakeholder in the uptake & is seen by many as a key impediment
WSUD in NZ context

- No central government policy or legislation
- Up to local government to decide on local solutions
- The Resource Management Act 1991 - limited focus on built environment
- Renewed interest in quality of urban places & spaces - NZ Urban Design Protocol
- Increasing awareness impact of urban development & growth
- No one clear driver for change
WSUD - Role of researchers

- Limited funds
- Can’t directly change policy, plans or practice
- Need to work smart
- Importance of relationships
- Recognise knowledge that exists in local government
- Facilitators of knowledge & networks
- Identifying what we can transfer from Australian research & practice
Local Government in New Zealand

- Resource Management Act 1991
  - Regional and district plans - sustainable management
- Local Government Act 2002
  - Identify social, economic, environmental & cultural outcomes sought by communities - sustainable development
- Little guidance from central government
- Under resourced - people and $
- Under pressure
- Lack of knowledge of LIUDD
- Issues with alignment of various policy & plans
- Seen as resistant to change
Our pragmatic approach to working with local government

- Ensure the policy framework is supportive of LIUDD
- Ensure organisational support for a change in approach
- Ensure access to knowledge
- And recognise that local government often understands the need to change but lacks the time to progress change - researchers can help with this!
A supportive policy framework

- Range of policy tools available
  - Resource Management Act 1991
  - Local Government Act 2002
  - Non-statutory ‘strategic influences’, including:
    - Codes of practice/engineering standards
    - Urban design guidelines
    - Structure plans
    - Catchment management plans
    - Growth strategies
    - Iwi management plans
    - Stormwater design guidelines
    - Streetscape guidelines
    - Asset management plans
Observations

- Complex framework:
  - The institutional framework around stormwater is complex - and probably not well understood
  - There is significant potential for confusion - planners vs engineers, public policy vs private requirements, regional council vs territorial local authority
  - There are as many non-statutory includes on stormwater as there are statutory
Observations

- **RMA & LGA**
  - **Sustainability alignment**
    - RMA: “sustainable management of natural resources”
    - LGA: “sustainable development of communities”
  - **Different focus**
    - RMA: substantially regulating private development
    - LGA: substantially providing for public infrastructure
  - **LGA flexibility**
    - LGA is significantly simpler/quicker/more flexible than the RMA.
    - In some situations, the process requirements around the RMA may actually be a barrier to effective stormwater policy/outcomes
RMA & LGA cont.

- **Opportunity for alignment**
  - Danger of silo management vs outcome management. Need for alignment between planners/engineers/regulators in developing coherent, consistent policy
  - Monitoring/reporting outcomes (e.g. SoE report and CO report)

- **Need for**
  - Better tools
  - More sharing of information
  - Better cross silo/cross organisation dialogue
A supportive policy framework

- Developed a policy mapping approach
- Work with partner councils to identify:
  - Driver/s for change
  - The range of policy tools available to them
  - Whether they support LIUDD & how they could be strengthened
  - And how can they can better integrated
- Working with Kapiti Coast District Council, Nelson City Council and Auckland Regional Council
WSUD - Drivers for change

- Flooding in urban areas
- Degradation of urban streams
- Recognition of sensitivity of estuaries & harbours as receiving environments
- Defer capital investment in water supply & stormwater infrastructure (pipes)
- Sustainability imperative in the Local Government Act 2002
- Better environmental outcomes
- Future proofing for climate change
Kapiti Coast District Council: A policy mapping example

Local Government Act

LTCCP - Development Principles
Development Contributions?
Bylaw - raintanks on new developments?

Strategic Influences
Subdivision & Development Principles and Requirements
Subdivision design guide
Streetscape guide
Medium density guide
Structure Plans
Master Planning

Resource Management Act

District Plan

PLAN CHANGE
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A supportive organisation

- Identify council’s who are progressive - what makes them tick & how can we transfer these lessons

- Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC)
  - Rapid growth
  - Need future investment in water supply (dam)
  - Committed to sustainable development - top down
  - What other ways are there of doing things?
  - Concern over draconian code of practice for subdivision
Lessons from KCDC

- Support from senior management
- Motivated staff
- Design and review process
- Know the development community
- An organisational culture that supports communication & integration
- Review, review, review
- No need to re-invent the wheel
- Consult
- Include in District Plan - need regulatory teeth
Knowledge

- Sharing what we know
  - Practitioner conferences - planners, surveyors, engineers
  - Case studies - including case study portal
  - Seminars for professional institutes
  - Knowledge networks - raintanks, Maori urban design practitioners, National Task Force
Local government working smarter - sharing resources, learning from each other
  - We have taken on a role of facilitating this
    - Field trips
    - Connecting councils

Integrating knowledge
  - Urban design training
    - Scoping out training needs & delivery approaches

Learning from local government
  - They have as much to teach us as we have to share with them
• Two years remaining for the research programme
• Continue to spread the word - advocate for change
• Develop the case study portal
• Develop guidance of policy tools & integration
• Develop guidance on governance mechanisms
• Develop a capacity building framework to support changing plans & practice
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