

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Promoting community participation in NSW planning

Dr Dallas Rogers from the School of Social Sciences and Psychology and a research team\* have received funding from The University of Sydney's Henry Halloran Trust Blue Sky Project to investigate community engagement in civic and political planning processes in NSW. The aim of the research is to better understand how communities participate in city planning.

'The process of planning in Australia relates to the regulatory practices surrounding infrastructure and land use in any given community', Dr Rogers says. 'In practice, this can involve everything from surveys, area mapping, and law reviews, to far-reaching investigations into environmental sustainability and infrastructure longevity.'

Recent attempts by the NSW government to involve local citizenries in the planning of their cities have had mixed results. This study will examine the current system, the structural barriers to public participation, and the ways local communities currently participate in planning matters. The latter includes collecting data about the citizen participation processes that originate from and take place outside the formal structures of the planning system.

An internet survey of a representative sample of the NSW population will be used to determine current levels of planning knowledge and engagement within the community. Focus groups with local community activists from rural, peri-urban, and urban areas of NSW will help identify the efficacy of current community engagement in planning matters. An investigative panel will then be convened to examine the findings of the surveys and focus groups. It is feasible that state and local governments could use these findings to redesign their community engagement strategies.



If Australians have a better understanding of and access to effective community participation tools, they will have greater control over how Australian cities and communities are planned into the future

**Project Title:** Agonistic community engagement in planning: Understanding community knowledge, community demand and structural constraints

**Funding has been set at:** \$45,085

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