

**CONVIVIALITY BY DESIGN:
GASTRONOMIC STRATEGIES FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIES
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“Without communal eating, no human group can hold together” (Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein, 1977)

Sharing food together allows for a daily physical and social re-creation of the self that is also fundamental to the sense of human connection to others. The physical design of cities can determine the richness of experiences of food and eating; working for or against the expression of conviviality by the way space is shaped and urban development approached.

Opportunities for conviviality in the city rely upon an extended set of “gastronomic” possibilities. And these possibilities can be widely conceived in city planning and design. They relate as much to kitchen layout as to market gardening, to the psychology of the cafe as to policy for metropolitan growth.

Planners and designers often unwittingly close off convivial options and choices for others without understanding how this has occurred or even why these choices were important in the first place. In this paper some residential development aspects of design for conviviality are considered primarily because the way housing is organised is central to any improvement.

Perhaps of equal importance, at this critical stage in the growth of Australian cities, is the notion that decisions about the future should be based on a wider design sense than in the past. If cities are to be reshaped at an increasing rate and scale, intervention and innovation should be informed by a fuller basis of understanding about city form. This is especially true for such overlooked or marginalised areas of design as is the subject of this paper.

The purpose of this piece is to explore some of these overlooked design issues. A few only of the many possible connections are therefore made here about the gastronomic consequences of urban policy for housing, and about the food related aspects of the design of residential

areas. Examples from Australia's urban past and from European experience are used to illustrate some of the values brought to bear, trade-offs which will need to be made and winners and losers who may be created, in striving for more gastronomically informed development choices. Finally some design proposals are suggested for a richer, more convivial urban life and form.

A “Gastro-Urban” Vision?

The language of “visions” and “futures”, “strategic frameworks” and “action plans” has perhaps been overworked in recent times. Faced with yet another set of prescriptions for a better future, the reader can be forgiven for a certain weariness. It is with these reservations in mind that a strategic approach is applied to gastronomic planning.

An important design dimension for convivial cities is the outward expansion and increasing redevelopment of housing. Some difficult issues arise in undertaking urban development to improve, rather than diminish the conviviality of urban life. Gastronomic possibilities are not fixed or predetermined. Through design and development actions, planners can help shape the world to improve on the present position, but to do this requires conscious strategies for change.

These strategies would rely on creating a vision or visions of a "gastro-urban" future, not a static state of “foodie” perfection, but a recognition that the kinds of urban changes that bring general benefits can be made gastronomically useful too.

Gastronomic Maps

One way of approaching extended gastronomic possibilities is through perceptions of city space. Urban designer Kevin Lynch developed a language or codification of city elements to help explain how people perceive and use the space around them. This code was, for Lynch, a sort of map of physical features encountered in everyday life that could, for example, identify important paths, say the usual journey from home to work. On the way there might be landmarks acting as punctuation points for the journey, and nodes, that is, places with a greater than normal intensity of physical features or activities. All these elements acted together to provide a kind of structure or framework for daily experience.

Everyone has a kind of gastronomic map in their head as a part of this bigger conception of space. This map shows personal and cultural paths, marker points, landmarks, nodes and boundaries that reflect, define and reinforce food sensibilities. Each is held more or less

consciously, marking space or territory that is both physically experienced through the senses and mentally constructed and refined through that imaginative and symbolic inner life carried around by each person and ordering their relationship to the world.

Gastronomic maps are important to the ways people understand, use and enjoy cities everyday; from a regional to a purely local and immediate scale. Each private journey; to the bakery, the cafe, the grocery, the market, the bar, the restaurant and so on, and the thoughts that surround them, seem intrinsically personal but they are repeated endlessly by others in the process of inventing and defining their own gastronomic maps of the city.

Privileged Space

And this reinforces the point about gastronomic possibilities. The middle class, inner urban dweller's gastronomic map relies on, and is enriched by, a privileged relationship to the social and physical arrangement of city space. Proximity to the cafes, restaurants and markets of the centre, and the densities of people the centre attracts, allows for more chance encounters and a diversity of food and conversation. If the process of sharing food and drink excites the intellect, as well as satisfying the cravings of the body, it is little wonder that cafes have often been the sites of polemical debate and political agitation.

In the dualist conceptions of space that underscore much thinking about cities the centre is masculine, strong, aggressive, outer, competitive, intellectual, and public, while the suburbs are feminine, passive, inner, nurturing, unthinking and private. This polarising of city and suburbs as male and female is a myth but it also a prescription. And if central public space is essentially a male preserve then the dimensions of gastronomic privilege become even more complex.

Do those in the outer suburbs or on the fringe of the city have access to the diversity of experiences the privileged can expect as normal parts of their day? It might seem that most outer suburbs don't have the same kind of food choices available to inner areas nor the aids to mobility in the form of frequent cheap transport that underpin access to them. Yet, people living near the centre of town are a shrinking minority.

Food and the doughnut effect

In Australian cities, outer areas house the majority of the population and are growing fast while people are leaching away from inner and middle suburbs. This "doughnut" effect may mean that more and more people are having less and less gastronomic richness in their lives.

And this is, in part, the result of an historic tendency to suburbanisation, characterised by exclusionary zoning of residential areas, that is very deeply embedded in our housing culture.

Looking back, there were good reasons to avoid the old world city forms; where the development of overcrowded, slum ridden, unhealthy inner areas were a potent motivating force for migration to suburban paradise.

In the new world, suburban houses, as far as could be afforded, were spread out at lowish densities. Australian cities, especially those of the “new urban frontier”, typically by-passed terrace housing or tenements as dominant housing forms, instead expanding outwards in waves of detached single family cottages (Frost 1991) which represented the overwhelming preferences of their occupants. The earliest Australian cities like Sydney replicated the slum inducing old world city form at the centre, but still mirrored the new frontier form in the much greater expanse of the suburbs.

Avoiding conviviality by design

One result is that many parts of Australian cities do not have the population densities or the design arrangements to support corner delicatessens and local cafes. Argument continues as to whether Australians really want, or have the cultural inclination for, such essentially urban artifacts as the cafe in a suburban context; especially if the cafe represents the very aspects of political and social subversion constituted by the city, from which suburban family housing is designed and located to protect women and children. If suburban preferences are part of a dichotomous tradition of thinking about urban form, here the innocent country is favourably compared with the corrupting city.

The domestic sphere of kitchen and home also express an uneasy relationship to conviviality. Most Australian suburban kitchens, the heart of the private sphere, are designed as small work stations abutting the “real” living areas of the house which have more favoured size, orientation and light.

This separation of cooking and eating reinforces the notion of the cook as a servant rather than a diner (Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein, 1977) and this reflects women’s domestic role. In the kitchen women play out a paradox, their labour mystified as love, and their sense of self - and self denial - expressed through food preparation.

Meanwhile much food consumption occurs outside the home in controlled for profit spaces; food courts and fast food chains which commercialise conviviality, but also lighten the

second shift. These dining places fit well within the context of suburban planning and the values that shape it.

Regional shopping centres are designed to avoid a convivial sense of urbanity. A common planning assumption, and much of the reality, is that most people drive to huge regional centres set in a sea of car-park; to consume in indoor, privatised shopping malls which are dead out of hours and on weekends.

It is easy to find things to criticise about 'lock up' malls. Urban designers have concentrated on their problems in achieving human scale, their lack of truly public space and the poor relationship of an alienated interior to the exterior urban world. Such shopping centres essentially lack conviviality, and this is at once a result of, and at the same time a motivation for, the gastronomic meanness expressed in food court design.

Food courts are the subject of severe regulation of meal choices and seating arrangements to standardise, universalise and, as far as possible, speed up the experience for the consumer. The most fundamental change in food court design over recent years has been a move from four to two person tables (Sheringham, 1991) thus minimising the possibility of dining and therefore perhaps conversing with other people the diner doesn't know.

Food courts ignore the outside world and the seasons. Regionalism in food and its setting is parodied, and authenticity which stems from location and relationship to production is generally excluded. Such dining experiences are the antithesis of the festive dining of Italian towns described by Field (1989). Here dinners occur in enclosing but not closed public spaces that grew out of the production they celebrate and the civic engagement of the citizens that they reaffirm.

Fast food outlets share with food courts a standardising, speed driven approach. There are always new products but they are always the same. Continual rejigging gives a new appearance to a narrow range of basic, disturbingly un-foodlike, materials produced by agribusiness (Finkelstein, 1990)

Food chains again rely on car access but unlike the centre based court they tend to deny even the need for some intensity of other activity as a context for their operation. In this they could be considered somewhat anti-urban in nature and therefore perhaps very appropriate to the suburban environment. "Car cuisine" (Symons, 1992) allows the stomach to be "filled up" in the same way as the car. (Hillier, 1991)

The person whose food choices are confined to these kinds of dining experiences might well be considered to possess a very impoverished gastronomic map of the city. But such a conclusion would be wrong.

From a convivial point of view this depiction tends to imply that the food related aspects of life are generally good near the urban centre of town and conversely bad at the suburban margins, and, in any case, spring from cultural not planning arrangements. Many urban critics have taken the view that outer suburbs are untenable in their current form.

Conviviality and suburban Australia

Outer and fringe suburbs have often been characterised as a social and emotional desert of isolation and inequity. Opinion seems to be that there is a need to reorder the existing outer suburbs and the planned new fringes of Australian cities; with the former characterised as an current blight and the later as a potential problem.

For some this means seeking to replicate the character of inner areas in outer areas with a tighter form of development characterised by a more diverse and dense mixture of houses, jobs, and services. Lately this has taken the form of a longing for a kind of "urban village" which is intended to replicate a somewhat fantasised past.

The green variation or "eco-village" is at once less explicitly backward glancing and more radical than the urban village. It would be "a start in providing something which is more holistic, less car dependent and more oriented to the urban commons than standard low density, privatised suburbia" (Newman, 1992)

On the other hand, conceptions of the urban village are viewed by some as a "tragic-even deliberate misinterpretation of village life" (Troy, 1992) which deny the ill effects of gentrification. Why is it then that such notions appeal to such a diverse range of interests ?

One constant element in this longing for the "village" is perhaps a desire for a place which provides a community focus; a square, a green, a centre point that defines the community to itself and others. This has distinct gastronomic connections.

The Inevitable European Example

Before the physical connection of housing and trade was broken in the modern city, people lived as near as they could to the centre (Frost.1991). For the merchant and artisan classes

this meant houses with trade conducted on the lower floors, living space above and storage in the attics. Often, the food market was literally on the central square because the mediaeval town grew out of a market (at what would now be called a key transport interchange). City government came to be located in buildings above the market hall, as this was enclosed and grew in size and magnificence. The church, providing an ecclesiastic counterpoint to secular authority, would generally have an equally dominant position; sometimes on a nearby square of its own. (Girouard, 1985)

Despite regional differences there tended to be a number of excellent design features common to all market halls and the urban areas around them which are no longer achieved as widespread urban patterns. Having separated out the activities modern cities have also lost the design elements that reinforced their connection. So, mostly there are not houses over shops, arcaded edges to streets, human scaled enclosed squares, lively centres based on food trading and a close physical proximity of market, city government and housing.

It wasn't perfect then by any means. If it is accepted that food and dining was then, and continues to be, symbolic of a city's sense of itself, then the exclusion of women and the lower orders from municipal banqueting in the civic rooms above the market hall (and in most other public venues) is an important symbolic and physical exclusion from the city's heart. This private appropriation of central space still sends the same kinds of messages to the excluded. The history of the transmogrification of coffee houses (no women but an unusual degree of mixing of classes) to private clubs is such an example.

Despite this, mediaeval city design achieved a series of good "outdoor rooms" providing a sense of enclosure for public space that promoted diversity of interaction. Even more fundamentally, physical design contributed to gastronomic maps which gave food a central place and which reflected the spatial intertwining of basic elements; the bodily, political and spiritual dimensions of life.

Perhaps it is this quality, or sense of connection, in design and the activities design supports, that people crave to be reflected in Australian city form?

Food and "sprawl"

A growing band of critics think governments should somehow stop new suburbs on the fringes of Australian cities from continuing to extend any further out. Although recent housing preference studies (see, for example, Hassan, Stevens and Boehm, 1991) reinforce

the message that many people like living in these kinds of places, the constant references to fringe expansion as the pejorative “sprawl” are one indicator of the critical mood.

Some of the most trenchant criticism comes from an environmental perspective. Newman suggests that ecological thinking in the urban context “ requires looking at how the city sprawls like a cancer and builds in car dependence like an addiction” (cited in Green Left Weekly, 1992)

All the same it would be foolish to ignore that a major attracting power of the “new urban frontier” cities was in the way that they leapfrogged over much denser old world city form. The low density settlement patterns of Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth didn't just appeal because they were healthier. They also provided a chance for the twin benefits of city and country, a detached house with a big garden, to be available to the swelling middle class, and increasingly to the working class, as public transport expanded its range and incomes rose (Frost, 1991)

The appeal of fringe locations to lower income households is still a strong force in new house construction. Redevelopment has failed to match either environmental quality (as defined by the resident in preference studies) or the entry price of housing on the fringe. Many house buyers can still only afford, and in any case prefer, such places despite the dreams of policy makers.

Still, from a variety of perspectives; environmental, social justice, gastronomic and economic there has been a convergence of opinion that there must be a halt to city expansion. It is suggested that a line be drawn around existing built up areas to try to dissuade any potential new settlers. If more people *are* allowed to settle on the fringes they should be made to pay for all the infrastructure required to support that development, unlike the waves of new settlers of the past. Policy makers are now grappling with the housing cost problems this approach raises for poorer households.

It is also these fringe dwellers, the argument runs, who are undermining the quality of life by overloading environmental supports and wrecking gastronomic resources with their demands for housing on valuable agricultural land.

In this regard it needs to be remembered that even if the states had the power to stop immigration, or the Commonwealth a like desire at a national level, there is still the demographic paradox to consider. The increasing tendency to live alone in Australian cities is

reflected in a household formation rate which was by the 1980's running at something like twice the rate of population growth (Planning Review, 1991)

Whether caused by preference, or by force of circumstance, the growth of smaller, older households is one of the most profound changes in urban living arrangements over the last few years and looks set to continue for some time to come.

Gastronomy and the ironies of redevelopment

This alteration in the structure of households is gastronomically important because it means there will be a need to build many more houses and these houses might have to be built over vital food producing areas which there are good reasons to protect. The desire to avoid these incursions adds yet another dimension to the calls for increased housing redevelopment in existing areas. However, given decreasing household size, redevelopment is unlikely to effectively stem population decline. And that makes it incumbent to look at new area design as well as to redevelopment for gastronomic improvements.

In most Australian capitals there is a concerted push to raise the rate of redevelopment. In theory, the attempt to build substantially more houses at somewhat higher densities in existing areas to better fit population changes should also act to improve overall gastronomic possibilities for more people.

But once again, there is a need to look at what can realistically be achieved and at what might be lost. Not only are big increases in population and housing densities generally inimical to widely held cultural values, they may also undermine some areas of gastronomic diversity and richness which already exist. The demise of suburban market gardens is one expression. Another is associated with the ethnic composition of neighbourhoods.

In older areas near Adelaide's city centre, there are still substantial populations of aging migrant families who maintain very productive gardens around the dwellings they purchased before the tide of gentrification engulfed the inner suburbs. In these areas too, ethnically diverse grocery requirements have likewise brought interesting goods to local shops. These shops are often congregated in centres strung out along old, narrow arterial roads with height-to-width ratios that horrify traffic engineers but please pedestrians. Road hierarchy and centre design expertise now demands avoidance of planning such things into newer areas.

In Adelaide, and no doubt in other cities, Italian immigrants have been particularly notable for the productiveness of their private space and thus a direct connection to at least some of

the food they consume. But these outcrops are likely to disappear altogether under the weight of redevelopment. In the process of gentrification elderly Italian householders may well follow their adult children (who perhaps no longer share this cultural approach) to the more affordable outer suburbs. There is a consequent loss to cultural and gastronomic diversity nearer the centre and only the chance of its improvement nearer the edges. And that pattern will no doubt recur with other migrant communities in Adelaide and other places.

Productive Suburbia

So building on what already exists can be somewhat problematic. But so too is the way governments and the land development and housing industry are choosing to slow down outward expansion. While the city is no longer allowed to grow unchecked, the form of development may well be worsening problems of lack of gastronomic diversity. New approaches to housing are not making the suburbs urban and at the same time they risk losing the benefits the suburbs confer.

Raising densities at the fringes is generally achieved by increasing the numbers of miniaturised versions of the traditional detached cottage. And these houses may well give residents the worst of both worlds. Among other things, they are often set back and separated to a degree which destroys a good sense of enclosure. Car parking requirements which lead to garages on the frontage in particular tend to make a sensitive zone of transition between the public and private realm impossible. Where houses end up totally inward facing, the front becomes the back and the public space of the street is undermined.

Fringe suburbs are equally not dense enough for urbanity which would require a substantially greater mass of population to support street life, cafes, diversity of food retailing, and easy access to busy centres close by. At the same time their smaller block size lessens the household's chance to have a garden sufficiently extensive to grow vegetables and thus provide themselves with gastronomically "correct" fresh seasonal food.

But again, although most people want a garden, (Hassan et al, 1991) growing your own vegetables may still be considered a public statement of personal adversity. It is tempting to conclude that most gardens still tend to be unproductive because their purpose is, as far as can be afforded, to signify wealth through leisure.

It may be that growing poverty, environmental consciousness and gastronomic sensibility are increasing suburban garden productivity. Trends to density increases of the kinds now occurring in fringe developments might retard these changes.

There are some positive developments associated with the edges of the metropolitan area in most capital cities. While not urban in the sense described above they have some good gastronomic characteristics. One of these is the growth of somewhat anarchic markets at outer suburban and fringe locations.

At the same time, some (but not all) inner area markets are developing where retailing apes the forms and appearances of the past. These "festival market concepts" may well emerge from the same wellspring as the desire for a return to "urban village" living. Their design is certainly used to reinforce that notion; mystifying complex and increasingly inequitable economic and social relationships around consumption as a direct exchange between producer and buyer that in reality has mostly disappeared.

Fringe produce markets are economically subversive insofar as they by-pass the production, exchange and consumption arrangements of conglomerate food suppliers, wholesalers and retailers. Food purchased here is probably also going to be fresher, cheaper and economically more supportive of small scale growers. It will certainly be enriching the "maps" of the buyers and sellers.

People living near the edges of the cities are also closer to desirable gastronomic places in their region. It might be assumed that most people living in new or outer areas are too poor to enjoy the benefits of wineries, restaurants, orchards, herb farms and specialist fruit nurseries. That's why they have to live in these distant locations. But, once again, the traditional notion of the disadvantaged fringe is inaccurate. Some new housing areas are dominated by comfortable second and third time buyers who have consciously traded up to these locations; others house the very poorest buyers in the community. Generalisation distorts the picture. What is known from preference studies is that many people see fringe areas as attractive *because* of the surrounding environment.

Gastronomic Resources

It has almost become a truism that the most valuable, productive and beautiful rural land is being lost to urban sprawl. The growth of cities is undermining small market gardeners, orchardists and viticulturalists, and a beloved landscape, by making their land more valuable for houses than for food and wine production.

In effect, pushing producers further out hastens the decline of the small scale, diverse, responsive grower, who supplies favourite restaurants and market stalls. In any case, these

growers are increasingly squeezed by the big time "anti-gastronomer" producers who deny location and the seasons in their push to universalise, blunt and brutalise food sensibilities to increase profits.

In South Australia at least, the gastronomic story is complicated by the question of water supply. River water quality is going to decline further because of pollution up stream. As this happens Adelaide will rely even more on another water source, run off from the water catchment area in the Adelaide Hills.

The Adelaide Hills are not only crucial to reasonable metropolitan drinking water, they are also one of South Australia's best places to live, grow food and produce wine. Hills dwellers and producers already pose a significant threat to water quality through polluting land uses in environmentally sensitive areas (Planning Review, 1991)

Pressure for further human activity is intensifying. People like the beauty of the region and want to live there. There is a burgeoning "high altitude" wine region and wine industry, as well as tourism around good restaurants with overnight accommodation. All of this is fine for middle class gastronomic "maps" but are these enriched at an unacceptable environmental price?

One environmental argument runs that the Adelaide Hills should be protected from more development in order to increase their appeal to green or "anti-tourists". But as the numbers of these individuals grows there is an increasing likelihood that they too by sheer volume will strain the resources of the areas they prefer however small scale and obscure their accommodation.

Some environmentalists are now asking for 'hard zoning' of such areas. While flexible zoning would still "allow the occasional deli in a residential neighbourhood....in some areas hard zoning would prohibit all development" (Conservation Council of South Australia, 1991)

This position has implications for the future of food related activity in the urban periphery. It is clear that "hard zoning" means no more new houses. In effect access to a favoured food region would be increasingly restricted to the affluent as prohibitions on further development would force up the price of existing housing. New houses would go instead to areas to the north and south of the city.

It is less clear what would happen to current or future horticulture or vine planting. Existing or potential producers would certainly have to be moved to less sensitive places like the northern Adelaide plains if the hills are to go back to bushland altogether.

This could be a problem too of course. A current idea is to use one of the northern plains aquifers to store stormwater for domestic use. This underground supply is at present one water source for the region's market gardeners. Any potentially damaging activity in the aquifer or incursion on this supply by other producers and residents would be strenuously resisted. And what of the probable need in the longer term for land for housing in such areas?

So places like the northern Adelaide Plains or the Piccadilly Valley, currently given over to horticulture, are not just idyllic rural paradises for gastronomy, but also increasingly, battle grounds of opposing interest and concerns about food in urban development.

A “gastro-urban” vision revisited

Is there then a way to house everybody well, protect the environment and increase the gastronomic possibilities of life at the same time? The notion of a “gastro-urban” vision of conviviality, and strategies to support that vision, is intended to provide a way to achieve multiple benefits all round.

Fundamentally that vision would promote convivial design in order to allow for the greatest amount of gastronomic richness for the most people in urban Australia. Some of the design elements that contribute to rich gastronomic maps; now available only to the few would be extended to the many. Existing areas, and developments and design features within them, which contribute to diversity would be protected and nurtured.

Residential design would no longer be required to provide an escape from the real conditions of the city by insulating housing from all aspects of urbanity. At the same time there would not be an attempt to make all areas equally urban. The virtues of suburban life (gardens, markets, the country close by) would be celebrated and enriched not replaced.

The design, location and density of new infill and fringe housing would carefully nurture any existing food choices and diversity, and retard any growth into valued "gastronomic areas".

Strategies to achieve this vision would include selective increases in the density of houses to reap the gastronomic benefits of proximity; that of street life, cafes, taverns and local shops, liveliness and conviviality. The spaces between the houses, especially in that critical area

between the front of the houses and the street, would become “outdoor rooms” with arcaded edges and comfortable height-to-width ratios to support pedestrians.

Perhaps the urban village idea could be explored to good effect in this context; taking into account the criticisms of Troy and others. And maybe ways could be found to make gardens, street and park planting more productive. This might refer to the “fruit trees“ pattern and others proposed by the designer Christopher Alexander and his colleagues (A Pattern Language.1977)

More environmentally conscious infrastructure for water and sewerage (although not discussed here) would be linked into such changes.

Suburban public space would be clawed back from attempts to privatise it for profit, as in the configuration of the regional shopping centre. Real rather than “pastiche” markets would be supported.

Long term strategies would reorganise urban form through scattered, widespread redevelopment but infill need not occur in disregard of housing preferences and valued existing character. The new urban architectural "typology" proposed by Myers (1992) is a recent example of the difficulties to be faced in trying to impose change both quickly and at a grand scale without sufficient regard for the cultural context.

One implication of such an approach for gastronomic benefit would be to mitigate the force of gentrification by identifying and seeking to protect, by public intervention if necessary, the ethnic character and associated gastronomic diversity of older areas.

It should be possible to work from our suburban cultural base rather than in opposition to it in achieving richer residential design. In the shorter term, much of the policy direction for redevelopment in Australian cities: of areas around centres, along transport corridors, in inner city and coastal locations makes good sense. It is simply that more attention should be paid to building in conviviality.

Gastronomy as Public Policy

Gastronomic benefits are essentially political matters. Strategies suggested here would rely heavily on public understanding of the issues and political commitment to intervention for their success. It would be comforting to think that the privatising fervour of the 1980s is receding; that there is growing support again for the notion of the public good (which has

historically informed urban development policy) and consequently a renewed willingness to spend publicly on housing, employment and services to enhance cities.

Public housing has taken many of the most innovative steps in urban development over the history of urban expansion (Freestone, 1991) and possibilities for further innovation are now possible through, for instance, more extensive joint venturing and model project building. At the same time, there are ominous noises at Federal level, from both major parties, about the potential introduction of housing allowances, foreshadowing even more massive reductions in the funding for public housing.

Conclusion

As the sharpness of the ill effects on urban Australia of environmental damage and social dislocation grow (and as the associated gastronomic ramifications of city development make their way into the debate) it can be hoped that action to improve city form will become more attractive to the public and private sector and better thought out than it is at present. Contemplation of recent events in Los Angeles might help push this thinking along. And improved planning for conviviality would fit well within this context.

To succeed “gastronomically”, residential planning must by implication make space which is more responsive to and expressive of human values and needs. A city which expresses its conviviality through design is also one which is less alienated, offering a more authentic, life affirming and stimulating set of experiences to its residents.

One part of getting Australian urban space more right for more people in future relies on seeing that apparently disparate elements of design and urban form, only a few of which have been considered here, are closely connected to enriching the gastronomic and thus the human possibilities of life.

Finally, the more that is understood about how city design can inform and define these possibilities, the more chance there is to reshape cities to reap gastronomic benefits for all.

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