



Media Release

Thursday 14th April 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Your City's Future and Climate Change

On Wednesday 27th April, Dr Jason Byrne, senior lecturer at Griffith University, will talk about planning our cities and suburbs to adapt to climate change. Our guest speaker will focus on two trends in urban planning: urban consolidation and transit-oriented development.

Traditionally, urban areas in Australia have spread over large expanses. Greenfield development, where new suburbs are built on the outskirts of town, has created areas of car-reliant urban sprawl. Health implications include air pollution, reduced physical activity and increased risk of car injuries. People living in areas of urban sprawl are more vulnerable to rising fuel prices and shortages. While climate change related weather events are increasing in severity and frequency, compared to compact urban areas, urban sprawl suffers increasing numbers of extreme heat events, and worse impacts from severe rain events.

The process of urban consolidation is the opposite, aiming to increase development density in the existing urban area. Transit-oriented development, 'TOD', is also compact and hi-density. Its goal is creating liveable urban areas with access to rapid, frequent public transport. On the Gold Coast, TOD is currently being implemented by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Gold Coast City Council at Varsity Station Village, and at the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct. in a partnership between state and local government and Griffith University. The Department of Local Government and Planning, released a TOD Guide in January recommending public transport be available 10 minutes' walk from home, shops or work.

Jason will also introduce Ecological modernisation. With the recent Carbon Tax debate, it may be tempting to see environmental targets as costing the economy. Improvements in one may seem to come at the expense of the other, in a 'win-lose' outcome. Ecological modernisation provides a more optimistic view. It seeks to achieve 'win-win' outcomes for both the environment and the economy. Could development provide sustainable solutions instead of creating environmental and social problems? Is it possible to transform vicious circles into virtuous ones?

As well as teaching urban analysis and planning, Dr Byrne has authored or co-authored over 30 academic publications including an edited book, book chapters, journal articles, and encyclopedia entries. As a research assistant at the University of Southern California (USC) he studied the relationship between obesity and urban form. Jason co-authored a 2008 report, 'Planning for Parks and Greenspace in Transit Oriented Developments (TOD)', for the *Queensland Development Research Institute*, Nerang. He is currently researching urban greenspace and climate change adaptation in Hangzhou, China, and the Gold Coast.

Gecko presents a free guest speaker night on the 4th Wednesday of each month on topical environmental issues. For catering purposes and to prevent waste, RSVP by 3pm on the day before the event to speakers@gecko.org.au or call 5534 1412. For more information, visit www.gecko.org.au/guest-speaker

A gold coin donation is requested per glass of wine and nibbles. Alternatively, Gecko encourages the contribution of vegetarian/organic/environmentally-thoughtful food options at all of its events.

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Information for media:

Guest Speaker	Dr Jason Byrne	(07) 5552-7723
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