

## Queensland Plan Brisbane Summit Report

### Summary

- Representation: no apparent **LGBTI** or Indigenous contingent???? (**even though the Brisbane Summit Communique states there Indigenous and TSIs were represented, there was no mention of them in the outcomes**); Immigrant complaints that 'multiculturalism' was never mentioned (neither was 'Indigenous' in evidence); preponderance of growth-economics delegates; delegate selection process by (overwhelming presence of LNP) MPs not known.
- Information: deliberations not tied to CSIRO 2012 report "Our Future World" which was the recommended reading before the Summit; predictors and indicators not referred to systematically.
- Process: rushed; repeated attempts to identify most popular issues led to circular debates; no attempt to link cause and effect, or focus points to enablers. No scenario planning or skills of futurists employed.
- Result: incomplete and ill-defined outcomes taken as delegate endorsement.

### Recommendations:

- Continue planning: recall delegates, ensure representativeness by including some new delegates.
- Rectify the above process issues.
- Set achievable 5 year goals, outline realistic aims for 10 years, and indicate desired directions for 30 years

The two-day summit on October 9-10th was attended by approximately 800 delegates from around the state. The above issues were of concern to me by the end of the deliberations.

### Day 1

I attended at the invitation of my local state MP, Mark Steward (LNP), representing 13 residents around Brisbane (under the banner Equanimity Foundation) as one of three from the Sunnybank electorate. The 800+ (?) attendees were from a broad demographic (see [Queensland Plan Report](#)) and I was pleased to see the Opposition Leader, who spoke at the Opening. There was a genuine spirit of openness, cooperation and optimism, but by Day 2, delegates appeared to be having misgivings about the process.

Colmar Brunton, a social research, marketing and public education campaign firm, presented their analysis of the MacKay summit and subsequent submissions to the Plan to date. Their results, in summary, identified three main areas of consensus listed in order of the extent to which there was agreement as to how they were to be addressed (achieved);

- Grow and strengthen our regions

*Simon Cole*

October 17th, 2013

- Strengthen Queensland's economic direction
- Fit for purpose education

Twyfords, a two-man team of facilitators (backed up by a number of assistants), conducted the summit deliberations. Five main Focus areas were outlined and four Enablers (see the Report). There was no attempt to link the Enablers or develop them into methods to achieve the Focus points. Deliberations did not focus on the above three areas where consensus had converged. There was no attempt to define the terms of these areas.

These priorities, the Leaders' opening speeches, and the day's panel discussion indicate the absence of alternative economic perspectives. One panellist, Dr Geoff Garrett, mentioned a quote on sustainability, 'enough for all, forever', but this sat at odds with the general presumption of growth-dependent prosperity.

School children's postcard prizes were awarded (without explanation of criteria).

By the end of Day 1 it was clear the facilitators lacked skill (ours getting involved in the 'debate') and the process was too rushed and complex as the group sharing/cross-pollination broke down – some participants not following instructions and returning to brainstorming. The CSIRO report was not used to guide debate and the absence of expert information in the deliberations was disconcerting. There was no input from Futurists or scenario planners.

## Day 2

It was announced that we had endorsed the Focus areas (& Enablers?) the day before, when we hadn't even addressed the areas of divergence in a systematic way.

Delegates voted on a list of 39 Goals and Outcomes that had emerged from the previous day. The top three were;

- Education being valued as a lifelong experience (goal); Education that is flexible, affordable and accessible to all including rural, remote and disadvantaged (outcome) – 280 votes
- Connected to their communities (goal); Communities that are well planned, well connected and engender community spirit (outcome) - 229 votes
- Focussing on industry development and diversification (goal); Qld being recognised as internationally competitive with an increase in exports/business especially in agriculture and eco-tourism sectors (outcome) – 216 votes

Clearly the Brisbane Summit's delegates (some who had not attended the MacKay summit) had somewhat different priorities to all previous submissions. The proceedings were becoming directionless.

I (and I'm sure those I represented would have) often felt at odds with the assumptions of other delegates, i.e.

- economic growth more important than the environment
- global corporations are unstoppable
- some debt is good

*Simon Cole*

October 17th, 2013

- international competitiveness more important than state/national self-sufficiency

The Summit process didn't allow for out-of-the-box thinking. Although delegates were very receptive, ideas were being filtered and screened by the facilitators based on popularity. The habit was of competing ideas rather than knowledge-based analysis. For example, a random selection of delegates were given the opportunity to campaign on issues that saw nuclear energy and renewables proposed alongside each other, ad hoc.

At the Summit's close, there was no 'Plan' or even Statement, only the 'components of a plan' (in the words of the facilitators, Twyfords. Incredibly, the Premier then promised (with genuine sincerity, I believe) to introduce legislation based on the 'Plan', by which time it had become apparent that our attendance had been taken as endorsement of the open-ended result. The political convenience of this is inescapable.

To conclude, the Queensland 30-Year Plan is, like other plans around the country, a trend with some potential in that it attempts to go beyond the standard political framework. As such, in a spirit of cooperation, it may yet yield positive results. It is a process of collaboration we are not used to, therefore we cannot expect to be successful at the first attempt. This very ambitious Plan needs to be revisited (possibly through the Queensland Plan Alumni, which was proposed at the end of the Brisbane Summit) and reworked, taking the above recommendations into consideration.

*Simon Cole*