

Perspective on planning

Discussion on issues about property development and town planning

Dykstra assists Town of Bassendean in formulating application for underground power

Dykstra Planning was recently commissioned by the Town of Bassendean to assist the local authority in a comprehensive application to Western Power for an Underground Power Expression of Interest for the suburb of Ashfield, which predominantly remains serviced with overhead power connection.

The objective with this application is to promote selection of Ashfield by Western Power as an area worthy of additional funding for an underground power scheme.

This project is one example of Dykstra Planning's ability to undertake planning research projects to assist government in their strategic planning or to provide support for funding/grant applications.

In 1996, the Underground Power Program was established to contribute to the Government of Western Australia's long term goal of improving the energy security of the State's electrical distribution network after it was found that 80% of damage to power lines was caused by falling trees.

Security of supply

The May 1994 storms, which resulted in widespread blackouts across Perth, were a significant catalyst for this multi-million dollar initiative. The State Government concluded that placing power cables underground would give improved security of supply in severe weather conditions.

Subsequently, planning rules in WA were modified to require the installation of underground power for all new developments and subdivisions.

The Government of Western Australia has a long-term goal to have at least half the houses in Perth supplied by underground power by the end of 2010, with a corresponding improvement in regional areas of the State.

Dykstra Planning's recent involvement with the Town of Bassendean was to undertake specific research on the suburb of



Ashfield and formulate conclusions based on current and future zoning potential.

With these conclusions, Western Power will be able to understand the likely degree of future residential and commercial electricity capacities, and plan for upgrades. The application will be reviewed by Western Power and will include the supporting

research undertaken by Dykstra Planning to assist with selection.

The March 2010 storm in Perth yet again highlights the need for a comprehensive review of areas with overhead power connection. At the height of the storm more than 150,000 homes lost power due to fallen trees and broken lines.

Ongoing consultation leads to approval for Byford IGA redevelopment

The existing Byford Village Centre is set to undergo significant redevelopment, including construction of a new IGA, upgrades to speciality stores and extensive improvements to car parking arrangements.

Dykstra Planning's role in this project was to ensure the developer's critical timeframes could be met, having regard to:

- The expiry date of the original planning approval and opportunity to substantially commence development by this date;
- The progression of further strategic planning initiatives in Byford, including the Byford Town Centre Local Structure Plan and the need to demonstrate compatibility between the Byford Village Redevelopment and future planning in the Byford Centre.

- The need to address some 47 Conditions of Planning Approval, including issues relating to car parking, drainage, signage and landscaping, in order to secure a building licence.

- Separate approval being sought from the Western Australian Planning Commission for use of the adjoining railway reserve for car parking.

Through ongoing consultation with the Local Authority's Technical Officers, all Conditions of approval were addressed and Approvals gained.

Dykstra Planning looks forward to the commencement of works in the coming months to deliver a much needed commercial development to the Byford community.

From structure plan to sales in Hammond Park

In 2008 Dykstra Planning undertook a re-design of the Structure Plan for a small 21 lot residential estate on Barfield Road in Hammond Park.

It's always a rewarding part of the job when such plans become reality on the ground and even more so when as planners we stay involved and are instrumental in the implementation process.

After obtaining timely planning approvals for the Structure Plan and Subdivision Plan, Henry Dykstra was appointed by the landowners to manage the implementation of the project.

Following the appointment in March 2009, a project plan was prepared and scope of works provided to sub-consultants and subcontractors for tendering.

As with all subdivision projects, Henry carefully selected the sub-consultants and subcontracting team using the criteria of time, cost and quality of work. The weighting of these three selection criteria varies from project to project.

Some of the key project issues that



potentially threatened timely delivery of the project at Hammond Park included the design, approvals and construction of retaining walls, road upgrading requirements for Barfield Road, landscaping requirements and challenges relating to existing Telstra services traversing the property.

These issues were negotiated and overcome with no change to the budgeted cost of the project.

By the time construction commenced, all the lots within the estate had been pre-sold and the pressure was on to complete the project and achieve titles in early 2010. Construction was completed in January

2010, and all conditions of subdivision were given clearance in March 2010, with titles available shortly thereafter.

The Hammond Park project was one of approximately 20 subdivisions that Henry Dykstra manages at any point in time, with projects ranging from 2 – 3 lot survey-strata subdivisions through to more complex Hills rural residential estates and larger residential subdivisions of 100 lots or more.

Whether the project is big or small, Henry knows the importance of having a project plan and using the right people to deliver each project having due regard to time, cost and quality of work.

Record under-supply of housing presents new opportunities

Australia's critical housing shortage continues to worsen with the ANZ Bank, in its most recent Australian Property Outlook, stating that the shortage will become intractable.

To ensure landowners do not miss opportunities associated with this shortage, Dykstra Planning is helping clients discover that there may be potential for development and subdivision for alternative housing types where lot sizes and zoning may not permit conventional subdivision and development.

It is estimated that approximately 200,000 new dwellings are required each year to satisfy demand arising from population growth, demographic changes and immigration. Unfortunately, dwelling completions are estimated to fall to under 130,000 in 2009-2010.

Such an additional shortfall of 70,000 dwellings is likely to have a marked impact unless significant government policy and direct intervention is implemented.

The ANZ report predicts that the growing gap between housing demand and supply will "drive a structural deterioration in affordability (both purchase and rental) beyond anything we have ever seen".

In WA new dwelling approvals fell sharply last year and completions (19,000) in the current fiscal year are expected to fall well short of underlying housing demand.

With the continuing gap between demand and supply not only forecast to remain but to grow, developers and investors can be confident that this will continue to underpin property rents and prices in the foreseeable future.

With affordability likely to be the key housing issue of the decade and with decreasing household size there is a need for innovative housing responses.

The land area required for single bedroom dwellings is less than that required for traditional housing and in many instances it may be possible for landowners to retain their existing house and build one or more single bedroom dwellings, even where lot size would not enable traditional development and subdivision.

Dykstra Planning can explore all of the opportunities available to landowners in order to determine whether potential for additional housing and/or subdivision exists that at first may not have been apparent or considered.

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