



PART OF A MASTER PLAN

Purpose-built communities are growing in popularity as more people seek to maximise their access to amenities while maintaining a safe and secure in a environment for their families

Masterplanned communities have been an attraction to would-be residents for nearly a century thanks to the pre-planned mix of homes, recreational, cultural and retail amenities, and sense of community.

Australia's earliest foray into masterplanned communities was the Sydney suburb of Castlecrag, designed in 1925 by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, according to Victorian real estate expert Darren Mehl.

In Queensland, the first resort-style masterplanned community, Sanctuary Cove on the Gold Coast, welcomed residents in 1986.

Dr John Sturgeon, discipline leader and course

co-ordinator, real estate and development, at The University of Queensland's UQ Business School, said the attraction for would-be residents was the opportunity to parachute into the desirable environment, lifestyle and amenities only offered by other exclusive, tightly held and accordingly, expensive residential enclaves that had grown organically over time.

He said generally, a masterplanned community would enjoy the synergies of integration and accessibility; a variety of housing options, styles and densities; public and private transport options; education, health and community services; and

Continued next page

Long-term vision for development

Continued from previous page

recreational, sporting and open-space facilities.

"There are different types of developers out there," he said.

"Some are in and out of ad hoc developments that are in response to smaller development opportunities that arise.

"Other developers are invested for the long-term outcomes with multi-decade involvement.

"The considerations of these two extremes are also different. While they both have investors, shareholders and banks to satisfy, their approach and commitment is varied.

"Decisions made by speculative investors are short term and are often not made with the future in mind. The longer-term investors generally make decisions considering the legacy issues of their decisions as they will still be around to see the outcome."

Dr Sturgeon said there were a number of benefits new masterplanned communities provided, to the resident, developer and government.

"A well planned, co-ordinated and sequenced development provides the opportunity for efficient and effective deployment critical supporting infrastructure such as transport, education, health and other community services," he said.

"Ad hoc development on the other hand is typified by lacking services and causes strain on limited community resources and infrastructure often resulting in substandard provision and poor amenities for residents.

The results of urban areas expanding over the years can be varied.

"Organically, our urban areas grow and develop in response to the economic stimuli of supply and demand," Dr Sturgeon said.

"If left to market forces, the urban growth patterns can become unbalanced resulting in inefficient transport and community services.

"This results in traffic congestion, inefficient land use and poor distribution of services.

"Masterplanned communities are designed to grow in a sequenced and co-ordinated way that allows efficient use of resources and infrastructure."

He said masterplanned communities in Springfield, southwest of Brisbane, and Robina on the Gold Coast, were good examples of new communities.

Robina started in 1980 and is still going strong 40 years later, Dr Sturgeon said.

Standouts were a population of more than 25,000, road and rail transport integration with the Gold Coast rail line extension, education thanks to Bond University, Robina Hospital for health, Robina Stadium for sport and a retail and community hub with the town centre.

Springfield started in 1995 and is now home to more than 35,000 people with the Springfield rail line offering road and rail transport integration. The Orion Shopping Centre offers a town centre, the Mater Hospital and Aveo aged care provide health services and Education City has study options.

The design of land communities has also changed over time.

"The biggest change has been a change from traditional house and land style developments to the offering of a range of housing types, styles, sizes and price points," Dr Sturgeon said.

"Residential options now range from high-density student accommodation through to luxury detached houses and everything in-between.

"The increased integration of open green space and sustainable building technologies has resulted in improved and innovative housing outcomes with easy access to transport, retail, health and community facilities and infrastructure."