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A STUDY OF QUEENSLAND'S REGIONAL COORDINATION COUNCILS,
THEIR FORMATION AND OPERATIONS, AN EVALUATION OF
THE PERFORMANCE, AND THE REASONS FOR THEIR
TERMINATION IN 1977

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in January, 1980.

as partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the research Degree of Master of Economics (Regional Planning) in
the Department of Economics at
the James Cook University of North Queensland.

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R.D. O'Sullivan

5.2.80
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Mr. G. Sanderson, the former Regional Coordinator (Northern), and his deputy Mr. K. Burnett, for their references to official publications.

In this thesis, the topic, the methods of analysis, and the conclusions are believed to be original research work.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

R. O'Sullivan
January, 1980.

ABSTRACT

In 1971 the Queensland Parliament passed legislation to form regional coordination councils under the administration of the Coordinator General's Department. The Government kept final executive power over the councils through the use of Orders in Council to create and terminate the councils and their regions.

When the Councils were created there were many unanswered questions and differences of opinion regarding the aims and practice of regional coordination, its relationship to planning, its compatability with different models of planning, and the administrative structures and strategies that were necessary to implement regional coordination.

Queensland's units of local government, the local authorities, were apprehensive that the regional councils would take over some of their powers and functions. The local authorities obtained exclusive and complete equal representation on the councils after the first appointment of members in September, 1973.

There was some confusion until 1974, even amongst senior politicians, whether the councils would prepare any regional or strategic plans. The weight of opinion generally seemed to be that the Coordinator General's Department would do the planning and the regional coordination councils would assist by giving advice. This approach required the councils to accept the consequential style of planning decision making which was centralised and required extensive data gathering studies. It was not the existing and accepted relationship in local planning matters between the local authorities and state departments. Neither was the Department's approach consistent with the principles of

administration required to implement coordination between and within state and local government. In brief, the Department appeared to not have a strategy to make regional coordination work. The limited membership of the councils was another basic constraint not conducive to regional coordination.

The meetings of the Northern Regional Coordination Council were taken as a case study of the coordinating activities. The Council met three to four times each year between 1973 and 1977. Its members agreed that it worked well as a discussion forum for local authority matters, but they were unable to see any direct benefits for the region. There was no common objective for the Department and the Council to work on and no coordination in planning between the local authorities.

Dissatisfaction arose within the Councils in 1975 and 1976.

After June 1976 the Federal Government's Grants Commission no longer required regional organizations of local authorities.

The Coordinator General, who promoted the idea of regional coordination, retired in December 1976.

The Councils were terminated suddenly from July 1977. The Premier, as Minister in charge, introduced legislation in 1978 which repealed large pieces of the 1971 legislation including the whole of regional coordination.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1971 the Queensland Parliament passed the State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works and Environmental Control Act which expanded the role of the State's Coordinator General's Department and provided for the establishment of Regional Coordination Councils.

1.1 Purpose of Study

The intention in this study is to describe the formation and the operations of the Regional Coordination Councils, evaluate their performance and explain why they were disbanded in 1977.

1.2 Main Events

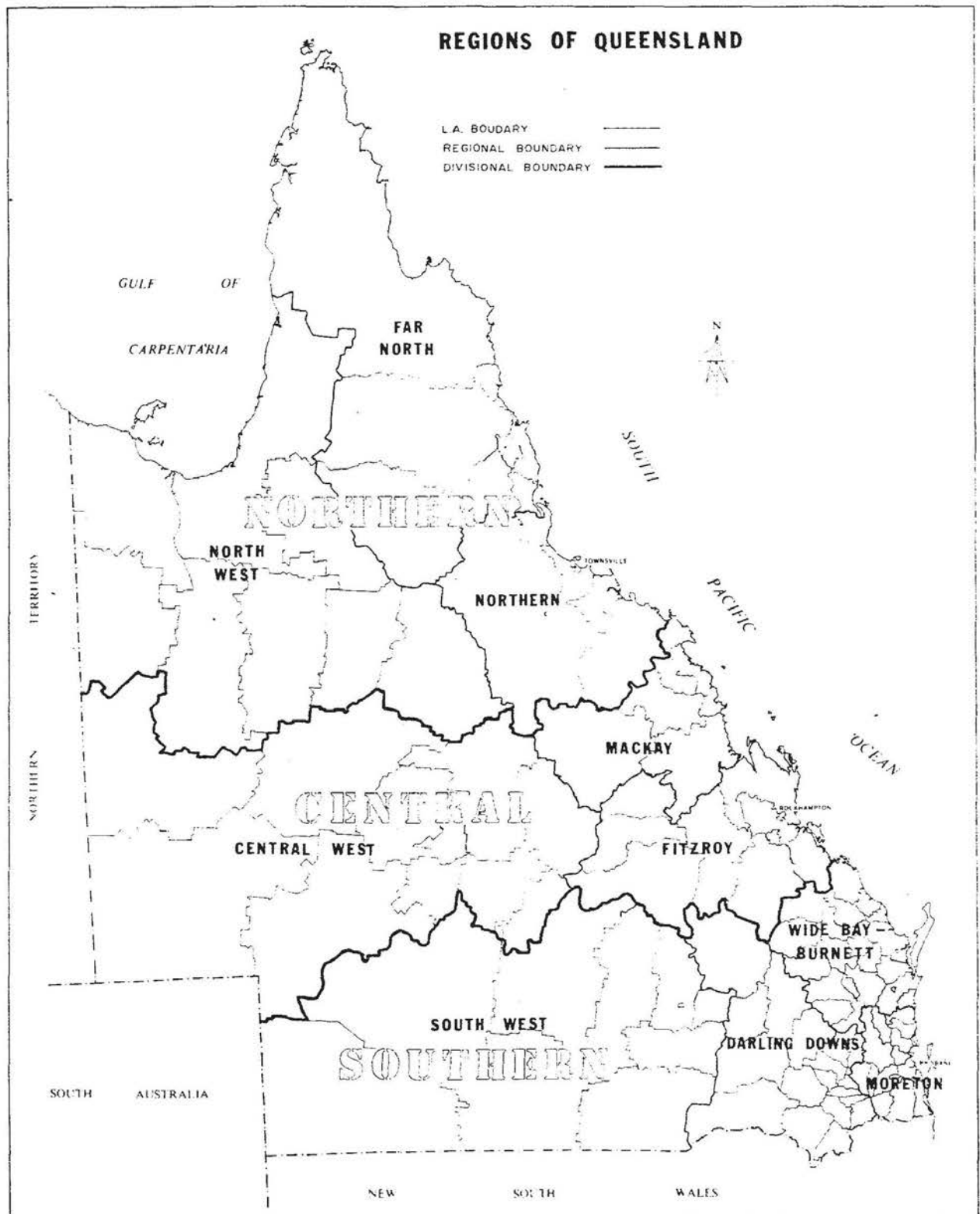
In 1973, the ten regions of the State (See Figure 1.1) were gazetted and members were appointed to a Regional Coordination Council in each region. The Councils held their first meetings in late 1973 and early 1974.

Throughout 1975 and 1976 some Councils expressed dissatisfaction with their lack of influence on government policy. The Councils and senior departmental staff in the regions were surprised by a notice in the Gazette early in 1977 that the Councils and the regions were to be terminated from 1 July, 1977. Regional Councils in North Queensland passed resolutions at their final meetings which affirmed their belief in the value of regional councils. Finally, in 1978 Parliament completely removed the concepts of regional coordination and regions from the Act.

1.3 Administrative Decentralization

Queensland has been the most decentralized state even though the proportion of the population in the Brisbane/Gold Coast/Sunshine Coast urban areas, in the south east corner of the state, has been rising.

Figure 1.1: Ten Regions and three Divisions
of Queensland.



Proposed Regions and Divisions defined by the Co-Ordinator General's Department.

The state government's engineering construction departments, the Public Works, Main Roads and Railway Departments, established permanent headquarters in Brisbane and permanent divisional offices in Rockhampton and Townsville, 700 kilometres and 1500 kilometres north of Brisbane.

Since the mid 1960's, major resource development and growing populations in the north created difficulties for government administration and a need for regional advice to Cabinet. There was some justification for a Department of Cabinet Review, with specialists based in the regions and responsibility to report to the whole Cabinet on matters with regional significance. The Department of the Coordinator General almost achieved this arrangement in 1973 when it placed three Regional Coordinators at the head of ten Regional Coordination Councils comprising local authority chairmen. The difference was the Councils had no specialist advice and the information went through the Coordinator General and the Premier and not directly to the whole Cabinet. This was in accordance with the established practice of individual Ministerial responsibility for the administration of any Act.

1.4 Support for Regional Coordination in Queensland

There was general support for regional planning and coordination because it introduced a range of points of view into the physical planning decisions of public bodies.

The Moreton Regional Organization was established in the early 1960's by the local authorities in the Brisbane area.

The three political parties, National and Liberal (the coalition government) and Labor supported the principles behind regional coordination councils in the main legislation of 1971 and the amendments in 1973 and 1974.

The Regional Coordination Councils had the potential to integrate the individual plans of local authorities, state departments and other local bodies (such as Harbour Boards, Electricity

Authorities, Project Boards, River Trusts) so that problems of physical integration, programming and budgeting could be discussed and resolved in a cooperative manner.

The physical infrastructure investment of the Federal Departments was not affected by the State legislation but the Councils were in a good position to advise both governments of the regional implications of Federal works.

When Part 5 of the Act, Regional Coordination was repealed in 1978, the government speakers expressed their belief in the desirability of regional planning and coordination but did not debate their reasons for terminating the councils and the regions.

The leader of the Labor opposition promised to reintroduce the Councils while touring northern country electorates in 1978. The Thuringowa Shire Council, adjacent to Townsville, wrote to the Coordinator General in August 1979 and requested the reactivation of the Northern Regional Council.

1.5 Approach to Study

The approach to the study is set out in Figure 1.2. Two sources of information were available and evaluated separately to determine how the councils worked and the reasons for their termination. These sources were:

- (i) written material comprising the minutes of the meetings of the Northern and Far Northern Regional Coordination Councils, the parliamentary debate in Hansard, departmental publications, journals and papers.
- (ii) Interviews with former Councillors of the Northern Regional Coordination Council.

The interviews were structured with a set of questions based on issues and problems researched from the written material. The questions were designed to discover information and were not

expected to give "yes/no" answers. The answers to each question were subjectively compared to form a judgement of the "most likely" answer to each question. The judgements were then integrated with the conclusions from the research of written material to form a rounded assessment of the most significant features of the Councils.

The Northern Regional Coordination Council was adopted as a case study because it's former members were the most accessible. It was the first Council created and therefore a good starting point in the evolution of the Council's operations. Each Council member was the chairman of one of the seven local authorities in the Northern Region. The Regional Coordinator (Northern) was the chairman of the Northern Regional Coordination Council and two other similar Councils in the Northern Division.

1.6 Outline of Study

Section 2 describes the various interpretations of regional planning and coordination as they affect government administration, physical projects, public investment, economic development and regional delineation. The section concludes with some general weaknesses in regional planning and coordination.

Section 3 looks at other regional organizations which coordinate the planning or implementation of physical works or government policy at a scale above the local government level. Examples are taken from Australian Government Administration, Britain, Canada and Victoria. The example from Victoria is investigated in greater detail because its operations more closely approximate the intentions for regional planning and coordination in Queensland.

Section 4 explains the history of Queensland's Department of the Coordinator General and the legislation which established the Regional Coordination Councils. It also explains why and how the Councils were formed.

Figure 1.2: Outline of Study

1. Introduction

↓

2. Describe the different interpretations of regional coordination and planning

↓

3. Outline the methods and success of regional coordination outside Queensland

↓

4. Describe the legislation, support for, and organization of Queensland's Regional Coordination Councils

↓

5. Analyse the business of the Northern Regional Coordination Council

↓

6. Research the issues and the problems in the operation of the Regional Coordination Councils and form preliminary conclusions

↓

7. Derive questions for interviews with former members of the Northern Regional Coordination Council and synthesise their answers

↓

8. Summarise the operations of the Council's and conclude with the reasons for their termination

Section 5 systematically evaluates the business of the Northern Regional Coordination Council as a case study of the performance of the Councils.

Section 6 brings out the issues and problems in the regional coordination councils.

The issues and problems provide the basis for the questions in Section 7.

Section 7 begins with the questions used in the interviews of former Councillors. The interviewees are not identified but their individual answers are given in Appendix 7.1.

The individual answers are subjectively integrated to give points of consensus where they were found.

Section 8 summarises the operations of the Councils and concludes with the reasons for their termination.

2.0 REGIONAL COORDINATION PROCESS

Introduction

In this section the more general relationship between administration, planning and coordination will be looked at to identify whether coordination is really planning, part of it, or a separate process that can be carried out independent of planning.

This question is important to the study because the Queensland experience was that the Regional Coordination Councils did not consider any plans. Skeates (1979, 20), the Director of Planning in the Department of the Coordinator General said,

*"the role of the Coordinator General is
that of coordinator, not planner."*

The statement indicated that in 1979 the Department kept coordination a separate activity to planning and that the Department had relinquished the aim in its 1972 Report of comprehensive regional planning.

Hawkins (1979, 19) described the main concern in coordination as facilitating communication to improve coordination between loosely connected autonomous organizations.

Coordination is part of the process of government in the areas of public planning and public administration.

2.1 Public Planning and Administrative Coordination

2.1.1 Public Planning

Faludi ("Reader in Planning Theory", 1973) described the rational comprehensive and the disjointed incrementalism models. The first described how public planning could be carried out and was sometimes regarded as a desirable model of planning to aim for. The second described the actual method used in public planning.

The rational comprehensive method was the rational model of decision making applied in public planning to public problems (Gillingwater {1975, 19}). It was an attempt at societal guidance and the coordination of organizational activity to achieve that guidance. Every component of an issue was included in the planning process.

The rational comprehensive model was also called scientific management. It had:

- (i) a clearly defined problem.
- (ii) goals were defined and set (representing the consensus goals of society).
- (iii) all possible alternative courses of action or strategies were identified.
- (iv) the alternative courses of action were systematically and rigorously evaluated against the goals.
- (v) an optimal course of action was chosen which agreed with the preferences of the decision makers.

The disjointed incrementalism model asserted that the process of analysis and evaluation in society was taking place in a multitude of centres at any time. Plans were developed by looking forward from the present, rather than working back from the future. There was a practical benefit for decision makers because there were less alternatives to consider when working forward than in working back.

The rational comprehensive model in public planning required total intervention in society and total centralised control.

The disjointed incrementalism model was closer to budgetary planning in federal governments such as Australia.

Budgetary planning was the administration of public planning in its minimum form. It was almost solely concerned with the coordination of limited forms of public expenditure.

2.1.2 Bureaucratic Efficiency and Administrative Coordination

Bureaucratic efficiency was an administrative style which minimized the time to reach a decision or to process an application. The administration was based on a vertical organizational structure and resulted in a pure hierarchy. This hierarchy corresponded to a structure of rational authority.

Administrative coordination was the antithesis of bureaucratic efficiency. The organizing criterion was not the minimization of processing time but the maximization of information diffusion and coordination of action. It was concerned therefore with liaison between departments and agencies, with the comprehensive coordination of interdepartmental and interagency decisions, and with ensuring that functions were not duplicated unnecessarily or left out.

It was concerned therefore with administrative equity.

The administrative style which corresponded to this maximizing criterion was based on a horizontal organizational structure. This administrative style required a loose knit format, little or no hierarchy, and a high degree of accessibility to agencies with an interest in the decision area. Any division of labour was based on pools of competence. It corresponded to the democratic model of the structure of authority with full participation.

Conflict

There was a conflict in aiming for bureaucratic efficiency and administrative coordination simultaneously. Any attempt to strengthen one weakened the other. On the one hand there was a need for departments and agencies to discharge their functions as

efficiently as possible, while on the other hand there was a need for these functions to be coordinated. It was a problem of the level of efficiency limiting the degree of coordination and the level of coordination limiting the degree of efficiency. The result in practice was a trade off between efficiency and equity (Gillingwater {1975, 108}).

Summary

In public planning, two alternative models were possible:

- (i) the rational comprehensive model of planning with total intervention in society and total control, and with a hierarchical structure of rational authority
- (ii) the disjointed incrementalism model with independent functional planning and incremental change, a horizontal organizational structure and with maximum liaison between agencies.

In the first arrangement, rational comprehensive planning, coordination was linked to the action or implementation stage rather than the planning stage. In the second, coordination occurred when decisions were being made and while actions were carried out.

2.1.3 Application in Queensland

The situation in Queensland in 1971, when Departments had their own independent functions and their budgets grew incrementally, suggested that public planning should follow the second arrangement more closely than the first. The Departments were organized in a horizontal fashion below Cabinet with no Department receiving or giving functional decisions to another. The local authorities were free to spend their budget without interference from the Government, provided their administration remained competent.

2.2 Projects

Plans described the ways and means to accomplish an objective in the future with a given and limited amount of resources. This was the most common example of planning since it covered so much human planning activity, such as household and private project planning. The definition also described planning by government departments which had autonomous control of their budgets and projects. It particularly described the traditional approach by government departments and local authorities towards physical development project where the objective, the resources used in construction, and the project control were all under the one head of management.

Departures from autonomous control became necessary when

- (i) the politics of the public interest required the managers of physical projects to consult with other interested parties.
For example, statutory planning schemes were intended to facilitate the development and use of land in the public interest. Project developers were sometimes required to prepare formal assessments of the external effects of their projects, in the public interest.

- (ii) the successful planning of projects required that the plans of other projects be considered simultaneously.

This situation occurred when the principal project had to link in place and in time with one or more other projects under separate management. Suboptimal linkages led to extra costs from unused capital or overcapitalization. The potential for this type of problem arose for example in the construction of a large residential development with housing, schools, main road access, sewerage, trunk lines, etc.

- (iii) the government was concerned that the policies and programs of its individual departments were not making use of its resources in a way which furthered the government's interests. The government wanted to examine and alter the priorities and objectives in individual departments to get better value from the use of the resources.
- (iv) projects required specialised inputs, or interection was necessary between specialisations in a cooperative rather than coercive way.

Need for coordination

The four instances above of departures from autonomous project control illustrated the potential complexity of project management caused by an ever increasing range of matters to be considered for the public interest and the efficient use of resources.

A resolution of the complex physical economic and political issues required the integration of a project plan with other project plans, government policies, regulations and specialised inputs. The result was coordination between the project and its externalities. The projects varied in meaning from a building to a governments five year program of public works.

Coordination was therefore a process of conceptual integration of separate projects where the coordinators needed a knowledge of the critical features of each project plan. The aim of the coordination was to convert the project plan to project reality. In all project development, except where there was autonomous control, coordination was a necessary process situated partly in the planning process and partly in the implementation process. It was always in the planning process because coordination affected the objectives, ways and means, and the resources to be used.

Coordination was needed in the implementation process if it revised or further developed the projects linkages in time and place with other projects or plans.

At the regional level of planning, coordination was more important because there were more externalities to consider, and political policies overtook government regulations in importance.

As another matter of government policy a coordinating body became a necessary link between the implementors in local government/state government departments and the policy originators and funding allocators in local/state government.

2.3 Public Investment

According to Wilson (1969, 16) the planning of regional public investment provided the following benefits:

- (i) it facilitated the making of choices.
- (ii) it ensured that complementary projects were reasonably consistent in timing and amount.
- (iii) it allowed some assessment of probable demands on the construction industry.
- (iv) the development plan became a coordinating instrument for cooperation between the public agencies.

He made a point that it was impossible to prepare indicative plans for industry in a region unless there were detailed indicative plans for that industry in the nation. Without a centralised coordination of industry plans a regional development plan relied on initiatives for development from fairly independent public agencies. Without a central plan, the development plan of a regional planning and coordination authority was a set of reasonably consistent, mutually supported public policies which created an environment favourable to expansion.

In this situation, a regional development plan was an aggregation to the regional level of many separate local plans, as opposed to a disaggregation of a centralised national or state plan to the regional level.

2.4 Economic Development

Harris (1972, 18) described why national economic development plans had different national and regional impacts to local regional plans. Each type of plan required regional coordination to overcome problems of equity and growth.

(i) Centralised planning, at the national level, expanded the sectors of the economy and the regions which made the maximum contribution to the growth of the nation as a whole. These regions were called growth poles. Industry was encouraged at the most advantageous sites, irrespective of the region in which these sites were found. Some regions were sharing in growth and others weren't. The result was a conflict of interests between the goals of economic growth and equity. The goal of economic and political stability was also receding in greater regional economic disparity. The economic plans needed coordination with physical plans and political effects.

To allow the regional aspects of national economic planning to form part of a coordinated plan, and to enable the planners to give these aspects due consideration, a regional information program was also needed with a flow of this information between the regional and central administrators. This created an awareness of regional and national needs and encouraged local planning agencies.

(ii) Where the objectives of growth, stability and equity had a local regional bias, with the effects of particular planning policies being considered only, at the regional level, the pattern of growth amongst all the regions was adversely affected by the lack of coordination of the policies and programs of every region. A simple example was the case of two regions that competed to produce a commodity and then oversupplied the market.

(iii) The greatest impact of a regional plan occurred in the urban areas of the region and this necessitated the coordination of economic planning with physical planning.

Stilwell (1972, 16) defined four objectives which governments had when they intervened in the free market with regional economic policies. These objectives were basically efficiency and equity objectives:

Efficiency

- (i) Major objective of preventing resource underutilization.
- (ii) Securing optimal allocation of resources between sectors.
- (iii) achievement of a satisfactory rate of resource growth.

Equity

- (iv) establishment of reasonable equity in the distribution of income.

He too saw conflicts between national and regional objectives which required tradeoffs, in the form of regional policy, between interregional equity and aggregate efficiency.

Harris (1979a, 84) saw the objectives of regional policy, at the level of regions within the Australian states, as the following:

- (i) arrest of decline in the population of country towns.
- (ii) avoidance of congestion costs and other external diseconomies from metropolitan expansion.
- (iii) the rational development of the states resources.
- (iv) the preservation of defined parts of the state's heritage.

Developing Countries

Friedmann (1964, 489) thought the main concerns of regional planning were

- (i) an information base.
- (ii) a statement of goals for the economy.
- (iii) institutional means for effective coordination of action programmes on an areal basis.

In these three points he indicated that even centrally planned economies cannot avoid the diversification of authority to commence public works and that areal coordination was necessary.

Both intra-regional and interregional coordination were necessary in developing countries which had a national policy of regional development.

These countries had new planning problems which required,

- (i) the adjustment of national policies according to unique problems of different regions.
- (ii) the integration of national programmes within individual regions.

Summary

Regional plans were important for a government overseeing economic development across the totality of regions in both centrally planned and free enterprise countries. In each case, economic growth and equity goals were in conflict. There was a need for coordination between and within regions by people making plans for economic development at the national and regional level.

In a centrally planned economy the goal of growth tended to override the goal of equity and in a free enterprise economy the goal of equity overtook the goal of growth, where other factors were assumed to be fixed.

Some tradeoffs were necessary and these required coordination of the objectives, policies and plans of those involved. It was assumed that the coordinators needed an extensive information

base but this was probably only correct in centrally planned economies where the coordinators were responsible to a national and not a regional administration.

2.5 Efficiency and Change

Four basic processes in regional definition and regional identity were described by Paddison:

(i) Functional regionalism - where local authorities had a mutual arrangement to provide some function more efficiently.

(ii) Administrative regionalism - the departmental responsibilities were decentralised to increase the efficiency of delivery.

(iii) Coordinative regionalism - where the three levels of government were brought together to give efficiency in the greater coordination of government objectives and equity in the assessment of interregional disparities and needs.

(iv) Cooperative regionalism - where there was cooperation between the three levels of government in the administration of a service or program.

Response to change

Chan (1969, 36) thought the distinction between regional, area and local authority plans was immaterial. For the regional plan to succeed, in its continuously updated form, there must be consistency, at least in outline form, between the regional plan, the sector plans and the project investment in the local authority area.

This was coordination of project investment and revision of plans, based on five year programs of regional development with annual reviews. The regions size did not matter all that much provided the coordinating unit could handle its task of communicating change and establishing revised priorities with local and state government.

2.6 Delineation of regions

The Department of the Coordinator General (1973a, 18) described various criteria which it used to define the ten regions in Queensland. However it did not state whether the criteria were applied as homogeneity or polarization criteria or how one regional delineation was found to be better than another.

The Department altered its initial outline of regional boundaries in response to local authority representation so that the number of regions was reduced from 11 to 10 (Journals of the Legislative Assembly, 21/11/73, p. 602).

Compromise

The difficulties in defining regional boundaries were outlined by Kuklinski (——, 10). The region's size was a compromise between the necessity to use the regional disaggregation of national plans to raise the efficiency of overall economic and social planning and the necessity to use regional aggregation of local plans in order to solve at the regional level, problems that could not be solved at the local level. The compromise led to a number of regions that were too many for a regional disaggregation of national plans and too few for the regional aggregation of local plans. This problem occurred in most cases of regional planning and coordination.

Comprehensive and rational method

Friedmann (1964, 519) had a radical approach which first looked for the basic values in the areal division of government powers. He saw a need to find:

- (i) the instrumental and ultimate values which the areal division of powers was to achieve.
- (ii) criteria for dividing government powers on an areal basis so that both values were achieved.

Australian experience

The approach in Australia was to define regions as areas intermediate in size between local government areas and the state. Each region was permanently formed from an amalgamation of whole local authority areas.

Many regions in Australia had very small urban populations. The federal government in 1973 defined 68 regions of which only 37 had urban centres with populations of 20,000 people. At the 1976 census there were only 18 centres with more than 50,000 population.

Queensland has the most decentralised urban structure, with 10 urban centres with populations over 20,000. These contain 65% of Queensland population. Five regions in the Queensland system of 10 regions had urban centres with more than 50,000 population. These cities were Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Toowoomba and Rockhampton. Three other regions had centres with rapidly growing populations between 20,000 and 50,000. These centres were Cairns, Mackay and Bundaberg/Maryborough. Mt. Isa had a fairly static population of 25,000 and was the urban centre for the North West Region. The remaining two regions, Central West and South West had very small urban centres.

2.7 Weaknesses

Understanding

The many different interpretations of the purpose of regional planning and coordination were probably the greatest weakness.

Weak political support

The various interpretations resulted in tentative political support for the regional planning and coordinating institutions. Government departments had interests fairly opposed to intervention and review by a regional coordinating body. The result was that regional coordinating and planning bodies were generally given non-permanent status, very little resources and a narrow advisory role to a higher level of

government. Local authorities were wary in case this advice was used to their disadvantage by the central or state government.

Judgement criteria

The political nature of public investment was a feature of planning and coordination that gave the regional institutions a fairly short life. Economic theory did not provide easy solutions to these investment problems. Regional investment decisions were not easily evaluated with economic criteria and political judgement was the only acceptable method. The long term nature of the decision and the subjective assessment of external benefits, costs and interest rates ruled out cost/benefit analysis and present value methods as legitimate public decision making tools. These tools were really only useful to compare investments in the same place over an almost identical time period.

Professional weaknesses

Seven weaknesses of regional planning were identified by Kuklinski (1969, 14),:

- (i) Regional planners were not integrating the politicians policies in the plans.
- (ii) the various groups of planners had not integrated their expertise to frame a common approach to regional needs and investment.
- (iii) there was no popular participation.
- (iv) the regional plans lacked alternative solutions to choices in objectives, strategies and means of implementation.
- (v) the plans had a physical bias and lacked an integration of social, economic and cultural policies.
- (vi) the size of a region was a compromise between central government, which required a few large regions, and local government which required many small regions. Each level of government was attempting to minimise the dispersal of its influence.

(vii) the investment decision was rarely within the regional planning machinery. In most countries the regional office had only an advisory role.

The first two weaknesses have been the most relevant in Queensland. The first was a common weakness especially where plans began with a statement of unassailable goals which were less specific than political party policies. The second was evident in the Submission to the Premier (1969) by the various professional associations involved in land development in Queensland (see Section 4.2.2). The various types of planners had no interaction because the government departments were restricted to sector planning, and local authorities to land use planning. There was no formal institution to bridge the gap between these planners and bring about intra-regional coordination.

The remaining weaknesses were not so important as to prejudice the value of regional planning. Popular participation only affected plans in cases where the public demanded involvement. The lack of choice and the physical bias was caused by the practical difficulties in preparing a wholistic view of the social and economic systems and by the public reluctance to allow non-elected officials to make social policy decisions. The size of the region and the advisory role of regional planning authorities were compromises to the interests of local government and sectoral departments of the higher government.

Two more weaknesses which had relevance in non-centrally planned countries were

- (i) the lack of communication and coordination between the planners and those who would implement parts of the plan.

- (ii) the administrative aspects of planning were generally regarded by planners as less important than the preparation of the plan.

3.0 ORGANIZATIONS FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION

Introduction

Regional coordinating bodies

Regional coordination occurred in two distinct types of organizations in Australia, regional planning/development authorities and regional councils.

The regional planning authorities were usually imposed by state government to achieve stronger land use controls in areas of rapid growth where local government was pressured by development. Local government generally regarded the regional planning authorities as potentially another level of government that would absorb some of their power and functions. Regional councils were part of state government decentralization policy to encourage industry and people away from the metropolitan capitals, particularly Sydney and Melbourne. The federal government used regional councils in the mid 1970's for its policy of allocating funds directly to regions and bypassing the state governments.

Delegation of authority

Harris (1976, 101) described two processes in the growth of regional organizations in Australia and the coordination required.

Where the organization was formed by local government, with power flowing upward, the organization was called a local regional organization.

State regional organizations were formed with powers handed over by state government.

(i) local regional organizations were in a position to regionalise some local government functions and this required policy coordination among contiguous local authorities. The Regional Planning Authority in the Tamar Region of Tasmania did this in 1969 (Duffy {1979, 185}). Another example was the regional organization of local authorities in the Moreton region of Queensland, formed in 1963 to consider and coordinate physical planning and to pressure government. Where state and federal policies specifically affected local authorities and the region, local regional organizations were supposed to be in a better position to coordinate the different policies.

(ii) state regional organizations looked to state government for their authority and power. The first regional organizations, created in the capital cities, were exclusively concerned with a single function such as electricity, harbours, water, sewerage.

After 1950, the regional planning authorities and regional councils appeared. The first of these was the Cumberland County Council which has been described by D. Winston in "Sydney's Great Experiment". They were based on British post-war principles of physical planning and social welfare.

The state governments did not develop multi-function regional authorities and they remained committed to centralised decision making with some decentralised administrative and advisory functions.

Both local authorities and state government viewed regional organizations with suspicion. The local authorities were careful in case the state was attempting to widen its power, for example in land use planning, or trying to transition an amalgamation of local authorities.

The state governments had to consider the possibility that regional organizations would challenge their policies. For this reason members of these organizations were appointed for a fixed term rather than elected from within the region.

Power (1974, 268) described the Queensland system of Regional Coordination Councils as resembling, in a limited way, the French prefectoral system. In France, a senior field administrator of the central government was granted authority to coordinate the activities of all other government actors in his region, whether they were field administrators of the central government or members of local authorities.

The Queensland arrangement with a Regional Coordinator presiding over Regional Councils was a decentralisation of the departments resources to improve the advice to the Department. To the local authorities, the Regional Coordinator may have represented a centralisation of resources and functions in the region that could lead to local authorities losing some of their customary powers to the Regional Coordinator.

3.1 Australian Federal Government

The Australian Federal Government set up a task force in 1975 to make proposals for the regional administration of federal government. In the terms of reference the Task Force was

"to take account of, amongst other things and wherever possible, the integration and/or coordination of the regional Australian administration with State and local government administration".

In the investigations the task force visited three areas in Australia and one of these was Townsville, Queensland.

The task force decided that the use of federal government officers from state branches in a senior coordinating level with state government officers was a possibility worth exploring. The task force suggested the assistance given by the federal officers should be limited in extent and was likely to require special agreement between interested governments. It decided that the central role of the Prime Minister, both in general matters relating to administration and in the assessment of important issues, required a new coordinating secretariat established as a separate and distinct entity within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The task force visited Townsville and recommended that the heads of Australian Government offices in the region meet regularly, as an interdepartmental body. This body was to elect a chairman on a rotational basis, convey resolutions to the coordinating secretariat, and report to the secretariat on issues in the region. This interdepartmental body appears not to have been formed.

The task force seemed to disregard its second term of reference, to look at the coordination of the federal administration with state and local administration in the region.

Regional bodies

The federal government set up two forms of regional bodies throughout Australia in the early 1970's. The first was the Regional Organization of Councils under the Grants Commission Act. The R.O.C. were to assist in the distribution of federal grant to local authorities (see Appendix 7.2). The second was the Regional Councils for Social Development under the Australian Assistance Plan.

The two regional bodies had different structure and function but shared a common regional focus and sometimes had cross representation.

They had no decision making power. They were a point of access for the federal government to local government and community interests.

The Regional Organization of Councils and Queensland's Regional Coordinating Councils used the regions in Figure 1.1. They shared the same membership and a meeting of one body was followed by a meeting of the other.

3.2 Britain

In the mid 1970's the Kilbrandon Commission (Craven {1975, 3}) investigated regional devolution and social policy in Britain. Its investigations showed that there was no consensus for reducing the organizational gap between central and local government.

Many local government people believed that a regional government would eventually remove powers from them in a number of fields and make the process of intergovernmental coordination much more difficult.

At the national level it was argued that central government would have immense problems in performing its strategic policy role if deprived of executive responsibility in various areas of policy.

A suggestion for regional executive responsibility was put forward by the team which produced the strategic plan for East Anglia (Craven {1975, 30}). They said there was a need for a regional institution to undertake a comprehensive examination of the regions needs and to coordinate the activities of all executive agencies so that these needs were met. The body was to represent the major executive agencies in the region.

There was a problem that advisory bodies had no executive power of their own (Senior {1975, 141}) and no control over the executive actions of their constituent local authorities; they could not even produce strategic plans conceived in the interest of the whole region. Both local and central government often ignored the advice of these advisory bodies.

Ad hoc regional authorities set up by central government to handle specific functions too difficult for local government, created further problems.

They were independent of each other in the same region and above local government. The statutory duties imposed on the special function authorities caused them to insist that future urban development followed the directions that maximised the cost effectiveness of their own services regardless of other considerations.

Structure planning had mixed success (Senior {1975, 148}). An area suitable for structure planning comprised social, economic and physical systems, including the transportation system. This area was always greater than a single local government area and

it was unlikely that local authorities would subordinate their sectional interests in a joint local authority planning scheme. The shortest time spent in preparing a structure plan was seven years. The plan was effectively out of date when it was completed and only a hindrance in an area under pressure of growth.

3.3 Canada

In 1969 the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion was established to treat the regional development problems as interdependent aspects of the overall problem of growth and structural change in the economy generally (O.E.C.D. {1976, 181}). The aim was to improve the economic position in the slow growth regions without an unacceptable reduction in the national economic growth. The policy produced slow results. The wide variety of programs presented coordination problems and overlap with provincial programs. The federal governments regional policy objectives and instruments were reviewed in 1973.

The strategy changes following the review were:

- (i) General Development Agreements were prepared between the federal government and participating provinces, with a ten year time run and annual reviews. The G.D.A. described the objectives, the type of activity to be coordinated, and the supports and mechanisms for joint decisions.
- (ii) Subsidiary Agreements to the G.D.A. coordinated federal and provincial support for specific development. The Agreements established planning, resource management, and general infrastructure.
- (iii) there was a program to provide regional development incentives to industry.

In the organization arrangement, regional offices of the federal Department analysed regional economic and social circumstances and identified development opportunities jointly with the provincial government. Departmental reviews showed that

regional policies did not modify trends determined by market forces which favoured certain regions. The policies were not formally evaluated because objective targets were not expressed in the policies.

3.4 Victoria

Introduction

Regionalism in Victoria had its beginnings in 1944 at a conference between State Premiers and the Prime Minister. They agreed that each state would define regions and form regional committees to oversee and recommend on regional planning and development issues. The Committees were administered by a Central Planning Authority, but neither had any real statutory planning power.

Victoria, as the smallest mainland state, provided its state administrators with the opportunity to exercise functions which would be gladly handed over to local authorities in the larger states such as Queensland.

The state government had many special purpose bodies carrying out engineering and capital works functions. Consequently local government did not control anything of great financial importance. The local authority members had less community support than in Queensland because they were not elected by the full adult population. Consequently, local government in Victoria was in a weaker position relative to the state government than it was in Queensland. This partly explains why regional bodies have survived in Victoria and not in Queensland.

3.4.1 Regional Planning Legislation

Victoria introduced many changes to its planning legislation and organizations after the mid 1960's. These changes were in the top structure of planning, in policy and coordination functions. The procedures for preparing detailed statutory town planning or land use zoning schemes remained unaltered. The

changes in the legislation and the planning organizations reflected evolving notions of what regional planning was required to provide. Victoria did not force its regional planning authorities to work under one state-wide piece of legislation. The Government legislated specifically for individual regional planning authorities in some cases and did not attempt to bring existing planning authorities under new legislation.

The major planning organizations for coordination purposes were the Town and Country Planning Board and the State Coordination Council (both had state wide functions) and the regional planning authorities such as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

History

The difficulties in coordinating local government units in Melbourne led to reports in 1874 and 1886 in favour of a metropolitan wide service authority. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was formed in 1890. The Board gradually received town planning functions and in 1954 was made responsible for preparing and implementing a town planning scheme.

In 1944 the Town and Country Planning Act was passed and this gave the Town and Country Planning Board, created in 1946, administrative authority over all municipal planning schemes.

Present Legislation

In 1966 the Town and Country Planning Board and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works reviewed planning policy at the direction of the Minister for local government. The review resulted in more amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act in 1968.

These required the Board to:

- (i) promote and coordinate planning in the State.
- (ii) prepare and issue planning policy statements.

- (iii) convene the State Planning Council with the function of coordinating the planning of future works by State instrumentalities and semi government authorities, and acting as adviser to the Board on planning policy.
- (iv) establish regional planning authorities.

3.4.2 Coordination of planning

The Board coordinated planning at the State level by issuing statements of planning policy. Ten statements were issued in 1977.

An example was a policy for Highway Areas. This policy sought to protect the serviceability and amenity of highways and adjacent lands by coordinating highway and land use planning. The policy statement was adopted by the Town and Country Planning Board after conferences with the State Planning Council and the regional planning authorities.

3.4.3 State Planning Council

The Council was formed in 1968. Its members were the heads of 12 government departments and semi government bodies concerned with planning, and the Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Board.

While the government was trying to decentralise its administration, the Council attempted to rationalise the boundaries of regions used by government departments and instrumentalities and divided the state into 10 regions. The state government had a policy to restrain the expansion of Melbourne and encouraged the growth of country areas. After 1972 all departments were required to draw up a five year program to decentralise their own administration as much as possible. This was the time when Albury/Wodonga and Geelong were promoted as growth centres.

The Council did not attempt to plan on behalf of government departments. Instead it was a body where representatives could discuss planning proposals and participate in broad state

planning policy. Plans and policies were coordinated to prevent conflict and overlapping. It established similar coordinating groups in Albury/Wodonga, Geelong and Milton-Sunbury.

Review

The government decided to revise the upper level of planning administration to bring the agencies involved in planning and conservation closer together. A working party was established consisting of representatives of the Premier's Department, Treasury, Department of Public Works, the Ministries of Conservation and Planning, the Town and Country Planning Board and a number of members of the State Planning Council.

The State Coordination Council Act 1975 established the State Coordination Council and ended the State Planning Council which had been established by the Town and Country Planning Act in 1968.

3.4.4 State Coordination Council

The new Council had wider responsibilities and membership and was directly responsible, through the Premier, to Cabinet. The Council had 37 members and met in whole to consider major policy issues, projects involving the use of significant or scarce resources and broad scale coordination. The Council was divided into four constituent groups for other matters. There was a Policy and Priority Review Group which was the core or executive of the Council, a Natural Resources Group, a Social Resources Group, and a Works, Services and Development Group.

The State Coordination Council had wider functions and duties than the former State Planning Council. These included advice on and review of proposals, policies, objectives and priorities. The review function was consistent with the upgraded responsibility to Cabinet, through the Premier.

Regional Coordinating Groups and special task groups could be established by the Council as required. These groups were to coordinate development proposals at the regional and project level.

The regional coordinating groups in Albury/Wodonga, Geelong and Melton Sunbury (established under the dissolved State Planning Council) were continued and a new group was established in Western Port. The group members supplied specialist advice to regional planning authorities, assisted in coordinating local works and services and reviewed the interaction or programs in the region.

The State Coordination Council was serviced by a permanent administrative staff and temporary specialist staff to carry out technical and research projects on its behalf.

Logan (1976, 11) raised the following criticisms of the State Coordination Council,:

- (i) the membership of 37 seemed too large.
- (ii) the relationship of the Council to the Minister for Planning was not clear.
- (iii) the regional planning authorities and local government were not represented on the State Coordination Council or the regional coordinating groups.

3.4.5 Regional Planning Authorities

The act provided that Regional Planning Authorities were established by Order of the Governor in Council for a specified area beyond the boundaries of any one municipal district. The R.P.A. prepared a planning scheme and enforced it if required. It could also be the sole authority responsible for any interim development order.

The R.P.A. was required to submit its planning scheme to the Board for approval. The R.P.A. could levy a special rate on all rateable property in the planning area and borrow money under the Local Government Act.

Membership consisted of councillors representing every local authority in the specified area and persons approved by a majority of the councillors. The regional planning authorities operated as joint local authorities with the single function of preparing a town planning scheme under the policies laid down by the Town and Country Planning Board.

Authorities created

With the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works providing the statutory regional planning authority for Melbourne, the first new authorities set up under the Act were for Western Port and Geelong. These three regional planning authorities covered about 80% of the population of the State.

In 1973 the Loddon/Campaspe R.P.A. was established for the region centred on Bendigo. This authority received technical and administrative services from the Town and Country Planning Board. The East Gippsland R.P.A. was similarly established but was without statutory planning powers.

Recent trends

The Upper Yarra Valley/Dandenongs Ranges R.P.A. was established by a special Act in 1976. Membership comprised 2 councillors from each local authority in the Authority's area and 1 member from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Ministry of Conservation and the Forests Commission.

The Authority was not concerned with detailed statutory town planning schemes which were left to the local authorities.

In the legislation, the Authority's main function was to prepare a regional strategy plan.

- (i) The Authority was required to have regard to any approved statements of planning policy affecting the region.
- (ii) It was also required to consult with agencies to ensure the implementation of the plan and the coordination of their proposals in the plan.
- (iii) To assist the Authority, government departments and other authorities were required to provide details of their proposed works.

The legislation gave the Authority the power to require local authorities to make interim development orders to control land use while the plan was being prepared. The local authorities were required to prepare planning schemes to give effect to the regional strategy plan. Government departments, public authorities and local authorities were required to conform to the regional strategy plan in their works programs.

3.4.6 Ministry of Planning

The Ministry for Planning Act and the Development Areas Act, passed in 1973, affected the Town and Country Planning Board. The Ministry took over the function of forming and servicing regional planning authorities, the Victorian Urban Land Council and various ad hoc Committees.

The Development Areas Act provided for the Town and Country Planning Board to report on any area suitable for accelerated development or needing controls on development.

3.4.7 Conclusion Policy

Victoria's planning system has been based on a principle of Government handing down policy directives to be implemented by regional planning authorities and local authorities. The directives come from the Town and Country Planning Board.

Coordination

Since 1975 the State Coordination Council has given advice on and reviewed planning proposals, policies, objectives and priorities. In this way it has possibly duplicated the policy making role of the Town and Country Planning Board. The Council has mechanisms for coordination at two levels of planning and implementation. The Council itself can review and coordinate departmental policies and given advice to Cabinet that policies be implemented. In the regions the Council localises its functions through regional coordinating groups of state officials.

Regional Planning

The first three regional planning authorities set up before 1970 represented an amalgamation of local authority power in what was virtually a joint local authority with the single purpose of preparing a planning scheme guided by State planning policy. Since then there has been a down flow of power to the latest regional planning authorities. They were given state department representatives and statutory requirements for state departments and others to assist in preparing and implementing the regional plan. Recent legislation has therefore increased the coordination element in regional planning.

The state wide public authorities in Victoria were vital to the success of regional planning and coordination because they were in a much more positive role in project planning and development than the local authorities.

The latest regional planning authorities with their strategic planning function, were meant to coordinate development with help from the regional coordination groups established by the State Coordination Councils.

Current problems

The main problem for the Town and Country Planning Board has been the unwillingness of local authorities to join the regional planning authorities (Moir {1976,2}). They were reluctant to contribute financially and feared that the local authorities might be losing their local planning powers.

The first three regional planning authorities established under the Act, Western Port, Geelong and Loddon Compaspe retained only local authority representatives even though the Act provided for other members.

The Town and Country Planning Board was concerned that membership of these authorities was not supplemented by people with special knowledge or experience of the region.

Legislation was passed in 1976 to establish the Upper Yarra Valley/Dandenong Ranges Regional Planning Authority with eight local authority members and seven members representing state departments and other interests.

The Town and Country Planning Act since 1968 brought confusion because early regional planning authorities were given the same powers as local authorities, to prepare, submit, enforce and carry out a planning scheme or schemes.

The Board was concerned since 1976 to ensure that future regional planning legislation differentiated between the strategic planning role of a regional planning authority and the local planning role of a local authority. The Board wanted a three tier arrangement of state planning policy, regional strategic plans, and detailed local planning schemes. The state government did not amend the Town Country Planning Act to introduce strategy planning by the regional authorities in the Melbourne, Western Port, Geelong and Loddon Compaspe areas.

The Western Port Regional Coordinating Group took responsibility to ensure that the planning and development of the Western Port Catchment were within the environmental

guidelines established by the Ministry for Conservation. The Group also advised the State Coordination Council on broad, priorities of works. The Group took up the gap between the limited responsibilities of the Western Port Regional Planning Authority (to prepare planning schemes) and the new regional strategy approach in the recent regional planning legislation for Upper Yarra/Dandenongs Valley.

4.0 QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION

The State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act of 1971 consolidated and repealed Acts dating from 1938. The long title of the Act provided "for state and regional planning and development through a coordinated system of public works organization, for environmental controls and for related purposes".

4.1 History of department and legislation to 1970

The evolution of the role of the Coordinator General goes back to 1923 when the Australian Loan Council was set up to avoid competition between governments and semi government authorities when they were raising loans (Wheeler {1978, 9}). Since then the Loan Council has fixed the interest rates and terms for borrowing and the order in which the Commonwealth, State and local bodies could enter the financial market.

Queensland has been the only state where the capital expenditure of all state instrumentalities and local government was not coordinated primarily by Treasury (Wiltshire {1976, 131}). The Queensland Treasury had the responsibility for collecting and allocating funds but not for establishing priorities in physical construction programs.

4.1.1 Legislation

The position of Coordinator General was created in 1938 in the State Development and Public Works Organization Act. The first Coordinator General was previously the Main Road Chairman from 1920 and Main Roads Commissioner from 1925. As Commissioner he was responsible to the Minister for Public Works. During the 1930's he was chairman of the special purpose boards for major engineering and building projects. His experience in coordinating

the works projects for different government departments and in cost sharing the main roads program with local authorities, became the building block for the extensive state wide powers given to the Coordinator General in the 1938 Act.

In the Parliamentary debate preceding the passing of the 1938 Act, instances were given where local authorities obtained approval to undertake works but failed to proceed and then tied up government subsidy funds.

The main features of the 1938 Act were:

- (i) the Minister (the Premier) could direct the Coordinator General to prepare a plan of works for the state.
- (ii) the Coordinator General could investigate, design and construct major projects.
- (iii) State government departments and local bodies were required to cooperate with the Coordinator General and supply whatever information or statistics and attend conferences as he required.
- (iv) the Coordinator General could recommend to the Minister that certain work be done by a specific authority.
- (v) there was a provision for Works Boards to carry out specific works as corporate bodies.

The senior staff who investigated and supervised works projects were engineers drawn from the Main Roads Department and this staffing pattern existed through the 1970's.

4.1.2 Works program

The Act of 1938 and its amendments made the Coordinator General responsible for coordinating the financial and physical aspects of development initiated by state government departments and local bodies. He was required to submit a state program of works to the Minister for approval by the Governor in Council.

Any departments or local bodies that wanted to raise loans, subsidies or grants for development projects, submitted their proposals to the Coordinator General. He assessed the proposals and formed the capital works program in the State's submission to the Australian Loan Council each year. When the Loan Council decided the terms and amounts for funding, the Coordinator General adjusted the States works program and submitted it to the Premier.

4.1.3 Transition from works to planning and coordination

In the 1950's the state government departments and local bodies improved their ability to investigate, plan and carry out works. There was less need to involve the Coordinator General in engineering construction work (Young {1976, 12}). The works program increased in size and the coordination of government departments and local bodies in projects became more complex. Projects required more specialised programming and organizational ability than existed in each department or local body.

In the 1960's there was further growth in physical development and a reaction of environmental concern from community groups. Land use controversies such as beach mining, logging natural forests, freeways, pollution and urbanization in coastal fringes became political issues and were used in the 1969 State elections.

4.1.4 New functions

In January 1969 a new Coordinator General was appointed and a general review of the role of the department began.

There was uncoordinated legislation to control activities affecting natural resources. Some of the legislation was binding on the Crown but mostly it wasn't. Town planning schemes did not control the state or federal governments. In the lead up to the 1969 general election the government parties promised new planning and environment control legislation.

4.1.5 Environmental Control

The State Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1938-1970 extended the departments role by providing for an Environmental Control Council of 20 State department representatives with the Coordinator General as chairman. The Council was to coordinate the work of various government organizations in the State on environmental matters, review the state of the environment, comment on environmental matters referred to it, advise the government on policy and disseminate information on environmental control (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 14}).

4.1.6 Administrative changes

The Queensland Year Book 1973 explained the administrative changes in the Coordinator Generals Department in 1969-70 when the Department,:

- (i) assembled a multi-disciplinary team in engineering, architecture, physical planning, geography and economics.
- (ii) transferred the design and construction section to the Main Roads Department.
- (iii) delegated authority to construct certain major works to the controllers of those works.
- (iv) transferred the Beach Protection Authority and administration of the Beach Protection Act 1968 to the Harbours and Marine Department.
- (v) commissioned studies of the Mackay and the Moreton Regions, Gladstone infrastructure and Brisbane airport.
- (vi) reviewed the Act to include provision for a new section on regional coordination and planned development.
- (vii) created the Environmental Control Council.

At the end of 1970, the Coordinator General's Department had the role of coordinating the public works programs and environmental matters of the state government departments, and

sometimes planning and constructing special projects. There was still no resource planning at a state or regional level. The only planning was in the sectoral programs of the State Government and the statutory zoning schemes of local authorities (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 9}).

4.2 Support for regional coordination

4.2.1 Within the Department

In the late 1960's there was rapid growth in physical development and the lack of a formal administrative method for assessing future requirements for public works became a problem.

Construction resources were in strong demand and the public works program required extensive capital and human resources and long planning times. Departments and local authorities were competing with each other for scarce resources.

Consequently the Department's role was extended past the coordination of the annual public works programs to:

- (i) anticipating the future works programs of departments and local authorities from some prior knowledge, and integrating the infrastructure requirements
- (ii) handing over the findings to implementing departments for consideration before
- (iii) final appraisal by the Coordinator General in his original role of coordinating the State's works program.

This approach required the Department to coordinate the public works for more than 1 year ahead. The Department saw the likelihood of a wastage of resources if the sector plans of the departments were not coordinated and integrated in place and time with the plans of local government, local bodies and private organizations. The department proposed that the existing coordination at state level be decentralized to the regional level but it did not propose that executive decisions be made in the region.

The Mackay Regional Study was an example of the coordination the Department was looking for.

Mackay Regional Study

The Mackay Regional Study, completed by consultants in February 1972, cost \$134,000 and verified the Department's expectation that coordination between the three levels of government in regional planning was possible. The study was a major exercise before the regional coordination councils were created in 1973 (see Appendix 4.6).

The study was commissioned jointly by the Departments of the Coordinator General and Main Roads. Its purpose (Grigg {1972, 33}) was to provide a firm basis for the budgeting, planning and implementation of public works for the next 20 years. The Departments wanted the study for an overall view of the region, to determine the total pattern of public works and the relative priorities of their components.

Grigg commented that the most significant development from the study was the way that many government departments, State and Federal, came together and made a coordinated effort to assist the consultants by providing data and expertise. However, Grigg did not mention any local government involvement.

4.2.2 Support from professional organizations

In 1966 a Town Planning Liaison Committee was formed with one representative from each of the six societies comprising surveyors, engineers, architects, planners, valuers and lawyers. Over the next two years, the Committee prepared a Submission to the Queensland Premier on Planning in the State and presented it in January, 1969.

The Liaison Committee said it was desirable to retain local authority responsibility for town planning, with Government giving a positive lead and guidance to those schemes. The Committee wanted planning to cover the following:

- (i) enhancement and preservation of the environment
- (ii) the beneficial exploitation of resources

- (iii) guidance to private enterprise and government bodies in the development of the State.

The Submission argued that

" as well as the Local Authorities, Departments such as the Coordinator General, Works, Lands, Main Roads, Irrigation and Water Supply, Local Government, and Harbours and Marine are taking the initiative in their own planning. Many planning decisions have far reaching effects outside the sphere in which the Department is active and no guidance or coordination is available on a regular basis".

The Submission recommended an independent Committee of Enquiry of Government members and representatives of interested professional bodies to investigate whether the Government should:

- (i) form a State Planning Authority and
- (ii) introduce a Regional and Town Planning Act to consolidate existing legislation and provide for proper planning procedures.

4.2.3 Political support

Queensland's three major political parties were in favour of more state government involvement in urban development and the use of natural resources, for different reasons. The public supported "planning" even though its meaning was not well understood. Public support was possibly a reaction of frustration by interest groups familiar with the complexity of land use administration and the unsatisfactory procedures in the Local Government Court and Mining Warden Court for resolving land use issues.

The Labor Party consistently supported central government planning, the comprehensive rational type. The Brisbane metropolitan area with half the state's population was dominated in environmental decision making by the Labor Party administration in Brisbane City Council. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane successfully

brought the local authorities surrounding Brisbane together in a committee of contiguous shires in 1963. The committee prepared a report of a suggested regional planning structure in 1964.

The Liberal members representing state electorates in the Brisbane area tried to contain the power of the Brisbane City Council in town planning and general land use matters. A government commitment to regional planning offered a way of restraining the influence of the Brisbane City Council in the region.

The National Party was interested in maintaining the viability of country electorates in the face of falling rural populations and at that time was not attempting to win city electorates. The Party supported decentralisation, the main theme of regional planning in Australia until the mid 1970's.

Power (1974, 269) described the National Party politicians:

"the decentralisers of the National Party were hardnosed and experienced in the ways of using the machinery of government to offset, at least in part, the historic and accumulating advantages of metropolitan areas. It is only in recent years that they have come to see senior administrators (and their staff) as valuable resources to be decentralised. It is no accident that most of the running in regionalisation in the Australian states has been made by the National Party which is dominant in Queensland and next strongest in New South Wales."

The leaders of the National Party in Queensland were pragmatically interested in developing the state's resource wealth with private investment. This required a mechanism in the public service to advise the government on its involvement and responsibility in private development, particularly where there was large investment in public infrastructure (see Reports of the Coordinator General from 1969 to 1972).

Policy

The governments policy at the state election in 1969 and repeated at the opening of Parliament after the elections was that a system of regional planning would be introduced (Premier in Hansard, 27 October 1971, page 1498).

Investigation

The Coordinator General was asked to examine the state and regional planning methods used in other states and in other countries. Young {1975, 3}, one of the three Regional Coordinators from 1973 to 1977 described the investigation,:

"politically there is antagonism in Queensland to more statutory authorities. In Queensland, local authorities have many functions and in general they have proved competent in carrying out these functions. It was considered that if some framework could be developed whereby the local authorities themselves by cooperation, could coordinate planning in each region there would be a better chance of implementing regional planning recommendations. After a lot of consideration it was decided to set up Coordination Councils advisory to the Coordinator General. The aim of these councils would be the improvement of the region by cooperative coordinated planning".

The result of the investigation was a Bill which introduced the concepts of regions, regional coordination and planned development. The Minister for Survey and Valuation, Mr. Lickiss, was probably the main political supporter of more planning. He became one of three honorary fellows of the Royal Australian Planning Institute in Queensland. In 1971, he was a councillor of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies, based in Canberra, and had contact with people at the Australian National University who were preparing the Federal Labor Party's urban and regional policies (Hansard {15/3/73, 2987}). He spoke first in support of the Premier who introduced the Bill in October, 1971.

4.3 Principal legislation

The State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971

The Act consolidated the functions of the Coordinator General in one Act and created new functions for regional coordination and planned development. He could order local authorities to carry out works or charge local authorities the cost of any works carried out by him on their behalf. This revival of a previously forgotten and unused power brought a strong reaction from the Local Government Association (Wiltshire {1976, 140-141}).

Purpose of the Act

The long title of the Act called for state and regional planning and development through a coordinated system of public works. This was important in understanding the absence of any Part in the Act that dealt specifically with regional or state planning. Such a Part was unnecessary until coordination became effective at the regional level.

The Bill was introduced by the Premier in October 1971 and assented in December 1971 in the last days before Parliament closed prior to the 1972 elections. The Act was divided into eight parts, Preliminary, Administrative, Programme of Works, Environmental Coordination, Regional Coordination, Planned Development, Finance Provisions and Miscellaneous Provisions. The legislation is summarised in Appendix 4.1.

4.4 Amendments to the Act

The amended sections are described in Appendices 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.

4.4.1

The first amendment in 1973 provided for the variation and termination of regions, making of regulations, termination of regional coordination councils, appointment of regional coordinators prior to the declaration of a region, appointment of members of a regional coordination council for a lesser term than 3 years, and the appointment of executive and advisory committees to regional coordination councils.

4.4.2

The second amendment in 1974, specified that each local authority nominate one elected member to the Council. The Council itself could nominate new members to represent other local interests. These legislative changes were not in line with thinking in the local authorities, the Regional Coordination Councils or the Local Government Association (Hansard {27/8/74, p. 358}).

4.4.3

The third amending Act in 1975 repealed parts of Sections 112 and 113 with no effect on regional coordination.

4.4.4

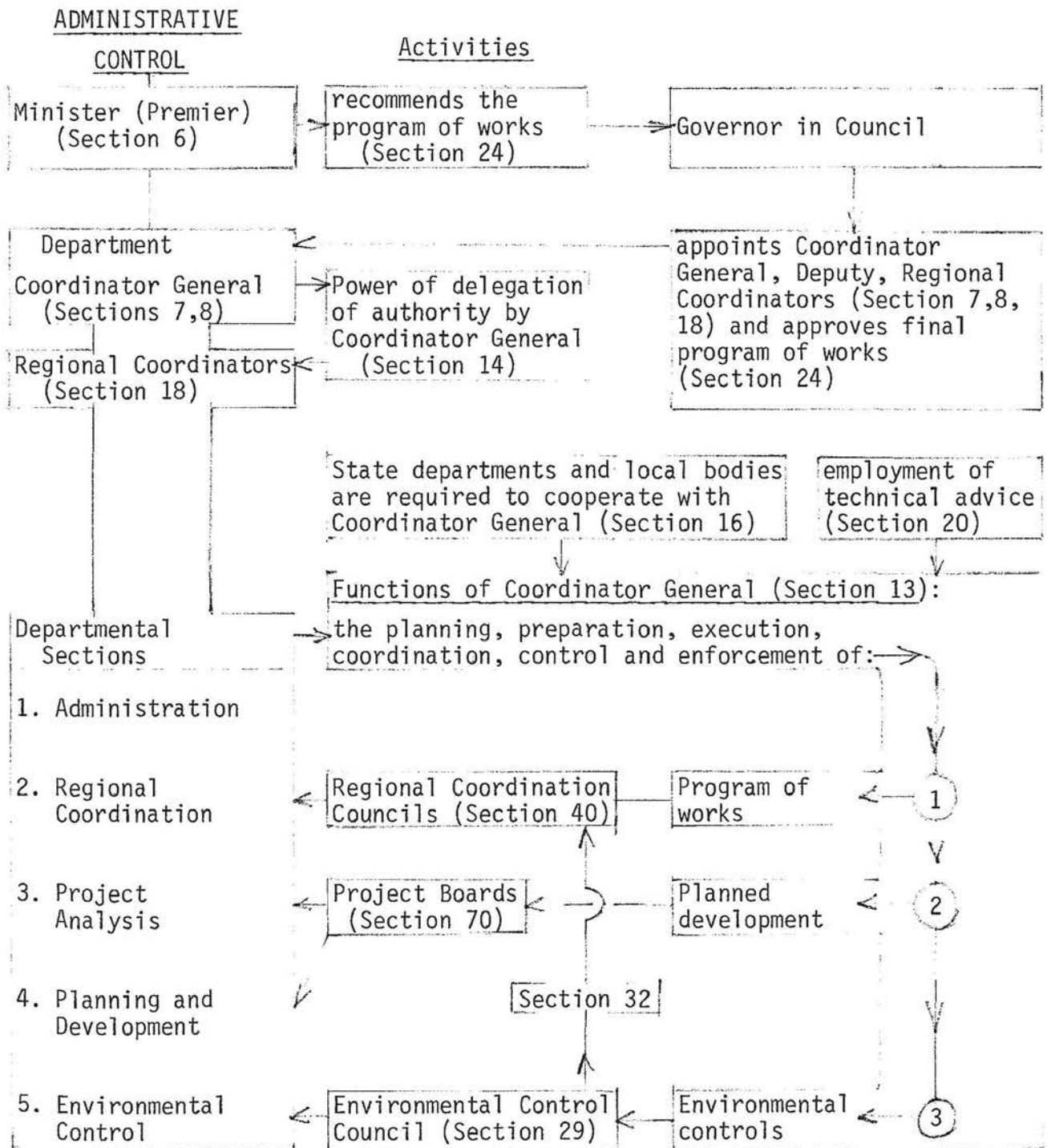
The fourth amending legislation in 1978 repealed Regional Coordination, Part 5, and almost completely removed Environmental Coordination, Part 4, from the Act. The short title of the Act was changed to the State Development and Public Works Organization Act 1971-1978, the same title it had in 1938.

The long title of the Act was

"An Act to provide for State Planning and Development through a coordinated system of Public Works Organization, for Environmental Coordination and for related purposes".

This removed the reference to Regional Planning and Development, substituted Environmental Coordination for Environmental Controls, and reestablished the Department as strictly a coordinating body.

Figure 4.1: Statutory basis for regional coordination.



4.5 Gazette Notices

4.5.1 Regulations

The Regulations made under the Act were gazetted on 7 July 1973 after the first amendment to the Act in 1973 and after the declaration of the Northern Region in June 1973.

In the Regulations, Clause 11 required that a Notice of Intent to Declare, Vary or Terminate a Region be published in the Gazette and displayed at the office of the Coordinator General and each local authority. Any resident of Queensland could make submissions to the Coordinator General in response to the Notice and the Minister was to consider the submissions before making a recommendation to the Governor in Council.

Clause 12 set out the procedural matters for conducting a Council meeting and provided for people to be invited to give their opinion at a Council meeting.

4.5.2 Declaration of Regions (Section 38(1) of the Act)

The Northern Region, based on the City of Townsville, was the first region declared in June 1973 (see Appendix 4.5). The following 9 regions were similarly declared in October 1973: Far North, North West, Fitzroy, Central West, Mackay, Moreton, Wide Bay-Burnett, Darling Downs and South West. The ten Regions covered the whole of the State seaward to the Barrier Reef. The ten Regions and the three Divisions of the State are shown on Figure 1.1.

4.5.3 Establishment of Regional Coordination Councils

The first appointments to the Councils were the Regional Coordinator (Northern) and the Northern Regional Coordination Council members in August 1973 and September 1973 respectively (see Appendix 4.6). The members in the second term of the Councils were appointed in June 1976.

4.5.4 Termination of Regions

The Order in Council which created the regions was revoked from 1 July 1977 (see Appendix 4.7).

No evidence was found in this study that the Regions were created or terminated in accordance with Clause 11 of the Regulations to the Act (see Section 4.5.1).

4.5.5 Termination of Regional Coordination Councils

The ten Regional Coordination Councils were declared terminated from 1 July 1977 in the gazette of 26 March 1977. This was provided for in Section 40 (5) of the Act. The Coordinator General's delegate, the Regional Coordinator, the chairman of the Council (Section 40(3)) did not lose his position when a Council was terminated (New Section 39).

4.6 Functions and Organizations of the Department and the Councils

4.6.1 The Departments Functions

The Coordinator General's Department differentiated between regional planning and regional coordination. It considered regional planning to be a response to land use conflicts and regional coordination a response to efficiency (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 20}). The new Coordinator General, after leaving the position of Main Roads Commissioner at the end of 1968, proposed that his Department would exercise guidelines over local and functional planning through comprehensive planning. He described this as working from the whole to the part rather than in the opposite direction (see Section 4.6.3).

The Department's publications expressed rational comprehensive theories of planning that had been developed outside Australia (see Section 2.1) and suggested government controls, including fiscal controls, to implement a regional plan (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 8}). Gillingwater {1975, 79} explained, *"all contemporary United Kingdom transport studies and plans have without exception, adopted the rational comprehensive model as a basic organizing methodology"*.

This was probably an important factor in the evolution of the Councils in Queensland because the Coordinator General had been the Main Roads Commissioner and many of his senior staff (including the Director of Planning and the Southern Regional Coordinator) had been employed in that Department (Hansard {15/9/76, page 488}).

With its new staff the Department began a program of regional data collection and commissioned consultants to prepare reports. Very few senior staff had a planning qualification. They adopted the early British physical planning approach of "survey-analysis-plan" which was rational decision making (see Section 6.4.3(V) and Mr. Lickiss' comment in Section 4.7.3). In centralised planning, planning precedes works coordination. The planning exercise worked from the whole to the part starting with

broad objectives, then working to strategies and policies, to action plans, and finally to programs coordinated in time and place. The inappropriateness of rational comprehensive planning theories, both in Queensland and in coordination, was developed in Section 2.1.2. Planning from the whole to the part was also inconsistent with the aim expressed in the long title to the Act to provide for planning by coordinating the parts to form a whole.

Efficiency objective. The Department's introduced regional coordination to ensure efficiency in the use of resources, particularly those required in the public works program (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 127}), through greater discussion of priorities and improved phasing and integration of physical projects.

Equity objective. There was concern in the Department (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 20}), that,

"where the plans of an organization influencing social, environmental or economic activity fail to take into account the plans of other decision making units, uncoordinated development is likely to occur and the ultimate result is the waste of resources. For example private industry may establish in an area and necessitate the provision of substantial infrastructure, the public sector will be unaware of the need to provide these services until the supply situation deteriorates suddenly and sharply".

Contrary to planning theory, the Department believed that planning simultaneously promoted efficiency and equity (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973a, 4}).

4.6.2 Functions of the Councils

The Act gave the Councils very wide functions but no resources or powers of decision. The functions, set out in Section 47, were to "promote, review, recommend, collect and disseminate in respect of their area". Their function, put most simply, was to help the Department in its activities (see Appendix 4.1). These functions directed the Council's role to planned development and planned regional development. In the Act, "development" was defined to mean the

use of land or water and included the construction, undertaking, carrying out, establishment, maintenance, operation, management and control of any works.

The intention in the Act was that the Councils would consider physical matters of planned development within the region. Similarly, the functions of the Coordinator General in Section 13 (2) were to do all things necessary to secure a program of works, planned developments and environmental controls.

The Councils and the Coordinator General were authorised in Section 28 (iii) to consider

"the development of the State on an equitable basis, adequate and proper consideration being given to matters of environment, social considerations and regional potential".

These considerations were to be made with a view to their effect on the State's program of works (Section 28).

Forum for discussion

The Coordinator General's address to the inaugural meeting of the Northern Regional Coordination Council in November 1973 referred to the Council as

"a forum where matters of regional interest can be studied and discussed" (Section 6.3.4 (iii)).

Regional Planning

In a Departmental publication (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973b, 7}), the Councils were to

"facilitate coordinated decision making and where necessary initiate and supervise regional studies and the formulation of regional plans".

This function was not included in the Act. Other references to regional or strategic planning are in Sections 4.6.3, 4.7.1, 4.7.3 of this study. The same publication on page 21 said "the actual coordination of regional matters is a matter for Regional Coordination Councils" but the Councils were not given any authority.

4.6.3 1972 Report by the Coordinator General to Parliament

Part of this report explained the Coordinator General's attitude towards regional coordination and planning and how the Department thought the Councils would become involved. The efficiency objective was referred to in Section 4.6.1. Some of the relevant passages from the Report are repeated below:

"The Regional Coordination Council will be expected to set guidelines for the Shire and City Councils in its Region whose work would be carried out by technical working committees, drawing members from within the Region.

In the past planning has tended to develop outwards from local area plans. The planning method adopted concentrated on separating activities into mutually exclusive areas or zones. This method fails to appreciate many interrelationships and dependencies and also tends to be wasteful of resources. Under the recent planning provisions it is hoped to reverse this process of planning by working from the whole to the part. Overall plans are proposed as guidelines within which local authority plans may best be formulated and implemented.

The concept of planning which has been adopted here sees as paramount importance the coordination of the activities of all organizations involved in planning rather than planning through a single organization. Planning will be undertaken by local and functional government organization as it has been done in the past, but now a mechanism will exist for taking an overview of the planning process based on regional divisions".

The second paragraph indicates that the Coordinator General wanted local authority statutory planning schemes placed under the supervision of overall plans. The first paragraph states that the overall plans (guidelines) would be proposed by technical working committees with members drawn from within the Region.

- 4.6.4 Coordination in the Departmental Organization
Three diagrams, Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 show :
- (i) the statutory basis for regional coordination
 - (ii) the five main sections in the Department (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973b, 3})
 - (iii) the regional coordination flow chart (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973b, 8}).

The Councils provided a mechanism for assembling and coordinating data within the regions but they could only give advice or recommendations, and not decisions, to the Coordinator General.

The Department saw regional coordination as an essential policy in development mainly because of the benefits from increased efficiency (Co. Gen. Dept. {1973b,7}). See also Sections 4.6.1, 4.6.3.

The Department thought "the different units and levels of government can come together at this (regional) level to resolve their difficulties" (Young {1976, 15}).

Since the Regional Councils could not make decisions the greater efficiency must have been expected within the Department in Brisbane. Consequently the Councils were an advisory side branch of the decision making process and not within the spine of decision making (see Figure 4.1 and Section 6.4.3 (v)).

The Councils were not included with the Regional Coordinators in the organization chart of the five sections in the Department (see Figure 4.2).

Areal organization

The Coordinator General subdivided Queensland into 3 Divisions and further subdivided the Divisions into the 10 Regions in Figure 1.1. The assignment of the three Regional Coordinators (Southern, Central and Northern) to Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville respectively, corresponded with the established bases of authority of engineering staff in public works programs, particularly in the Main Roads and Public Works Departments, and in the reorganization of the electricity authorities in the early 1970's.

Figure 4.2: Five Sections in the Coordinator General's Department.

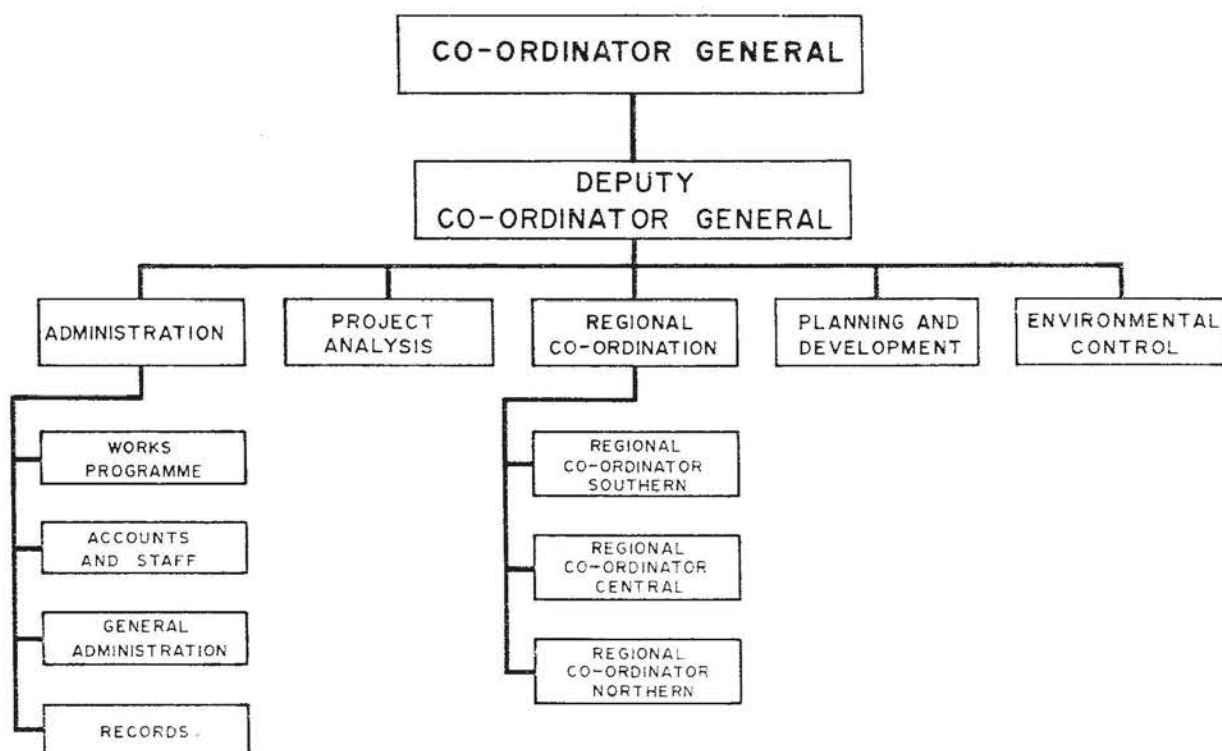
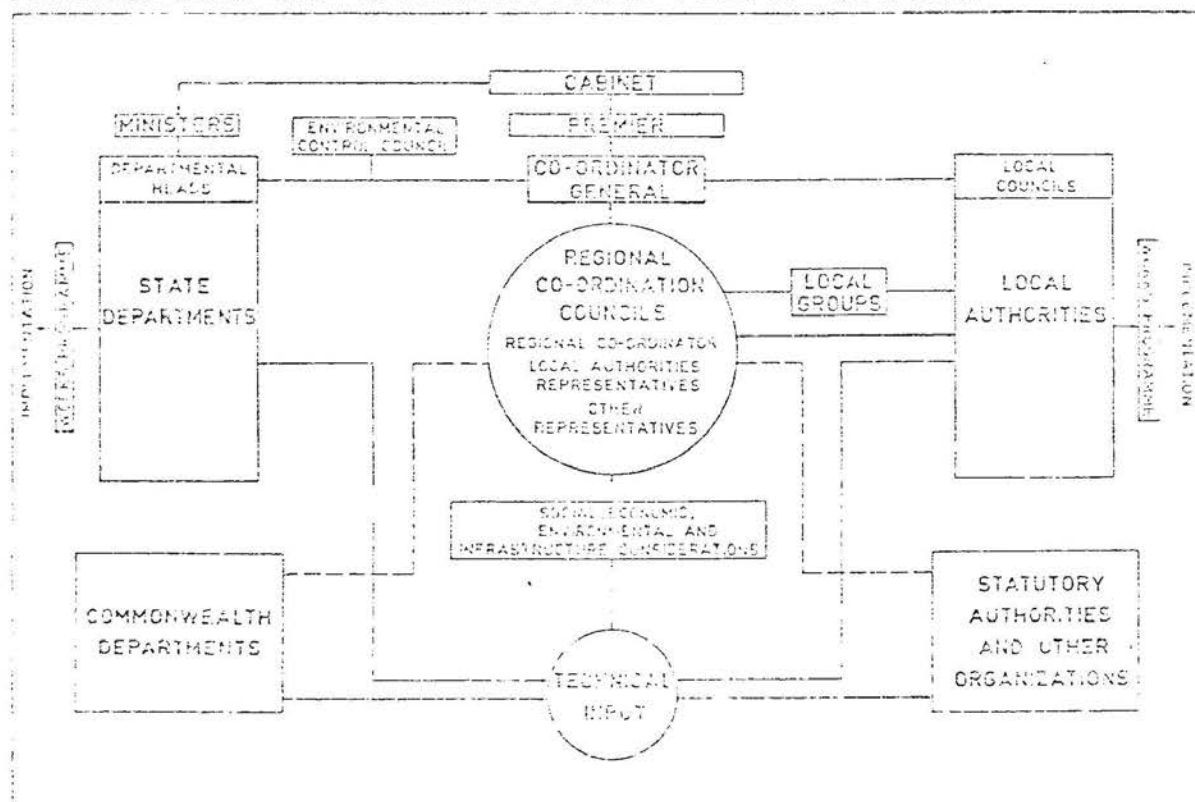


Figure 4.3:

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATION FLOW CHART



4.6.5 Political links

The Regional Coordination Councils were an institution lying between two levels of authority, the state government which created them and local government which provided the Council's membership. The chairman, the Regional Coordinator, was a senior public servant and each member was the senior elected member in each local authority in the region. The Regional Coordinator was an employee of the Coordinator General's Department which was primarily concerned with preparing an ongoing state plan of public works.

The Premier administered the Coordinator General's Department and the legislation which created the Councils. The Minister for Local Government, a senior minister, was responsible for the local authorities.

The Regional Coordinator was the connecting link between the Council members and the Coordinator General's Department.

4.6.6 Membership and links with local bodies

The Department intended that the members of the Council be drawn from local authorities, professional societies, universities and government departments. Before the Councils were constituted, the regional coordinators discussed membership with every local authority that wished to discuss the matter.

The general conclusion to these discussions was that each local authority would nominate one elected member to the Council and that there could not be any other members. This was the format on which all the Councils were constituted. Some attempts were later made by the Far Northern Regional Coordination Council to enlarge its membership but this was resisted by the Coordinator General (see Section 6.3 for details).

The Councils did incorporate representatives of outside groups into their Advisory Committees, without voting rights.

4.6.7 Links with state departments and other authorities

The first function of a regional coordination council was, to promote the coordination of state departments and local bodies in planned development (Section 47(a) in the Act).

The Act required local bodies and state government departments to cooperate with the Coordinator General but there was no provision in the legislation that any other department be represented on the Councils. The reaction of the local authorities and their Association to the powers of the Coordinator General in Part 6 (Section 5.5 and Division 2) of the Act resulted in the exclusion of other government departments and local bodies from the Councils.

Figure 4.3, regional coordination flow chart shows a direct link from the Councils to the local authorities and to the Department. The chart shows a weak direct link to statutory authorities and other organizations and even to the Commonwealth Government Departments.

A surprising feature of the chart is the absence of any direct link with state departments. Any contact with state departments was made by intermediate technical staff, possibly staff of the Coordinator Generals Department or its consultants.

4.6.8 Links with other Councils

There was no provision in the Act or any suggestion in the Departmental literature that a Council consult with another Council. The Act, in Section 47, restricted the Council's functions to the area for which it was established.

4.6.9 Links with Project Boards and the Environmental Control Council

It was noted in Section 4.6.7 that the Councils were to promote the coordination of state departments and local bodies in planned development. The term "planned development" was not defined in the Act or the Departments publications. The use of the

term "development" is explained in Section 4.6.2. Planned Development was the title given to Part 6, the longest part of the Act. Division 4 in Part 6 provided for the setting up of Project Boards. Division 4 is almost identical to Part 5, Regional Coordination, except that the powers, functions and duties of each Project Board were to be defined in an Order in Council.

In the 1974 amending legislation, regional coordination councils had a representative of every local authority in the region whereas a Project Board had a more limited area and did not necessarily include a representative of a local authority.

"Planned development" apparently referred to project development planned by the Department's Project Analysis Section and the Planning and Development Section. There was no requirement in the legislation for Project Boards to liaise with a Regional Coordination Council. The result was the Department could be fully aware of what a Project Board was doing but the Council may not.

In Section 32 of the 1974 amendment to the Act the Environmental Control Council was to coordinate the work of the Regional Coordination Councils with other bodies in environmental matters.

4.6.10 Summary

The Regional Coordination Councils were formal links between the Coordinator General and the local authorities. They were chaired and serviced by the Regional Coordinator. The Councils were not another form of government because they had no resources or decision making powers.

The members of the Council did not formally represent their local authority's interests but they were the contacts for an exchange of information between local authorities and the Department. The isolation of the Councils from other government

bodies was shown by only one reference in the Act to Regional Coordination Councils outside Part 5, Regional Coordination. That reference was to the Environmental Control Council.

The Coordinator General's Department seemed to be an organization with a wide horizontal and narrow vertical structure as noted by Wheeler {1978, 12}. This was the desired structure for a coordinating body according to Gillingwater (see Section 2.1.2).

4.7 Debate in Parliament

This subsection covers the debate from 1971 to 1974. The 1978 debate is included in Section 6 because it relates to the issues and problems behind the termination of the Councils.

Exclusion from Local Government Act

The reason for not including regional councils in the Local Government Act was given by Mr. Lickiss:

"amending the Local Government Act to provide for regional planning would not mean that all areas of Queensland over which the Government has sovereign responsibility would be covered".

At this time the state government was in conflict with the federal government over sovereign rights to the continental sea shelf. The state government also wanted to include all islands in local authority areas. The declaration of the regions in the Gazette (Appendix 4.5) clearly showed the governments claim that all submerged lands as far as the outer Barrier Reef were within the State of Queensland. This was a claim that could not be exercised under the Local Government Act because local authorities areas could only comprise land above high water mark.

Bias in debate

Wiltshire {1976, 139} commented the standard of debate was poor and much of the speaking time was used to promote local matters. The debate did however give an indication of the expectations of the policy makers and the constraints on the councils operations.

Main discussion

The most frequently discussed matters affecting regional coordination were:

- (i) the need for cooperation and coordination of effort by state departments and local bodies in works programming.

- (ii) membership of the Councils.
- (iii) functions of the Councils.

Headings

The debate is categorized under three headings: objectives, constraints, and methods in regional coordination.

4.7.1 Objectives in regional coordination

1971 Debate - the Principal Bill was introduced by the Premier.

He said the government wanted:

"a wisely planned works program to attract private capital so that optimum and balanced development of the state followed".

The government intended to use regional planning and coordination to introduce a works program that would encourage specific development, when and where the government thought it was warranted.

The legislation for regional coordination, described as experimental, was designed,

- (i) to involve local bodies in regional coordination, to establish priorities and to coordinate and integrate regional activities, particularly in relation to resource development. The legislation was designed on the basis of a spirit of cooperation and coordination of effort between all sections of the community and all levels of government (Premier in Hansard, 27/10/71, 1499).
- (ii) to allow local authorities to get together and also to permit the government to set up a regional planning authority (Mr. Hinze in Hansard 9/11/71, pages 1618 and 1619).

In the legislation the government thought it had avoided the difficulty that had arisen "with centralised planning in other states where the separation of planning from the availability of funds generally resulted in plans being shelved."

The government was putting responsibilities for planning, coordination and recommendations for funding together in the duties of the

Coordinator General's Department. Neither the government nor the opposition wanted the councils to become a new form of regional government with decision making and executive powers.

Government and opposition members were divided within themselves whether the Council's membership should represent more than the local authorities in a region. The Premier was in favour of enlarged membership and said "membership will be composed of persons who are directly involved within the various regions". The Minister for Local Government, Mr. Hinze, and Mr. Lickiss who spoke first in support of the Premier, gave assurances that "Local government representatives will be on the regional planning authorities".

Other government and opposition members wanted local authorities, regional electricity boards and harbour boards represented on the Council. The opposition moved an amendment to this effect which failed because the government wanted administrative flexibility.

Government and opposition members agreed with the purpose of the Bill, to allow local authorities to get together and to introduce regional planning by the Department. Even senior government ministers seemed unsure in the debate whether the Regional Coordination Councils were regional advisory councils, a term Mr. Lickiss used until 1974, or regional planning authorities, the term used by Mr. Hinze. The Leader of the Opposition thought the Councils would prepare regional plans to be implemented by the Project Boards in Part 6 of the Act.

1973 Debate

The Premier (Hansard 15/3/73, 2961) described the functions of the Councils in Section 47 of the Act and included an extra function,

"to prepare strategic plans for regions development".

This function was never included in the Act but it may have been part of the governments intentions for the future role of the Councils.

4.7.2 Constraints in regional coordination

1971 Debate - Principal Bill

Whether the government ever intended to give the Councils a regional planning role is not clear. There was some inconsistency between the government decision not to fund the Councils and the Premier's statement "the separation of planning from the availability of funds generally has resulted in plans being shelved".

He made this statement when he described centralised planning in other states but his statement also described a constraint which prevented the Councils from planning. Mr. Hinze described the Councils as regional planning authorities and the Premier said the councils would prepare regional strategy plans. Mr. Lickiss indicated the planning would be done by the Coordinator General (see Section 4.7.3).

1973, 1974 Debate - Amending Bills

The debate in 1973 and 1974 reflected the pressure put on the state government by local authorities that wanted to assert local authority control of the Councils and block a possible loss of power to government nominees.

Mr. Lickiss, who assisted the Premier with the legislation, said

"the aim of the Bill (in 1974) was to promote cooperation and coordination between local and state government and any additions to the regional advisory councils should be done with the good wishes of the sitting membership of local authority representatives".

The Premier said discussions with local authorities showed membership drawn from electricity authorities and harbour boards was not wanted.

Mr. Lickiss said the Grants Commission preferred to deal with Councils composed of only local authority representatives.

The 1974 amendment permitted a local authority to replace its nominee if it wanted to. Speakers in the debate suggested this amendment forced individual Council members to consult with their local authority before giving an opinion in the Council (In practice however the local authorities received an agenda sufficiently in advance of the meetings).

Mr. Lickiss said the Councils should hold the initiative for nominating new members or excluding anybody from the Council.

4.7.3 Methods in regional coordination

1971 Debate

The broad methodology was described by the Premier,:

- (i) the Queensland legislation for regional planning and coordination provided for the merging of community knowledge with the works program of the State, something other states lacked.
- (ii) the purpose of the Act was to get everybody to work together through the Coordinator General within the finance available.
- (iii) the whole business of planning revolved around the initial collection of data and information and that was provided for in the Bill.
- (iv) the governments responsibility was to govern and having taken all the views into consideration, to accept the responsibility of determining issues in the interests of the common good.

Mr. Lickiss said

"all we are doing here is instituting a system of regional planning that will be undertaken by the Coordinator General".

1973 Debate

In March 1973 the Premier said *"the Northern Regional Coordination Council was to have at least 1 representative from each local authority and representatives from other local bodies and groups with regional interest. The expected total membership was 15, giving the local authorities a majority".*

However when this Council was constituted in the following September, its total membership was one representative from each of the seven local authorities in the region (see Appendix 4.6).

1974 Debate

The Premier said,

- (i) *"the arrangement of one member from each local authority was successful and endorsed by local authorities and their Association and included in the amendment to the legislation.*
- (ii) *discussions showed that members from electricity authorities and harbour boards, were not wanted.*
- (iii) *the Regional Coordination Councils were advisory and provided a forum for discussion of regional issues. Actual implementation of regional development policies was the responsibility of state government and individual local authorities in cooperation."*

Mr. Lickiss added,

"since the establishment of the Regional Coordination Councils, comprising one representative from each local authority within the region, there has been no apparent request for the composition of the regional advisory councils to be varied". He stressed the importance of linkages in government administration for planning and coordination:
"This government, in terms of planning at the micro level, has established a very strong linkage between local government and the state government through the Department of Local Government. At the macro-level, where regional strategies are developed, this linkage is reinforced by virtue of the regional advisory councils having local government representation, through the Coordinator General's Department, with the Premier as Minister for State Development".

(Hansard 17/9/74, 838).

5.0 BUSINESS OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COORDINATION COUNCIL

Introduction

The minutes of the meetings of the Northern Regional Coordination Council provided the information used in this section. The Council held its first meeting in November, 1973. There were three meetings in 1974, four in 1975, two in 1976 and the last in May 1977.

Each member of the Council was the chairman of one of the seven local authorities in the Northern Region. The Chairman of the Council was the Coordinator General's delegate, the Regional Coordinator (Northern) (see Appendix 4.6).

The Council always met in Townsville and had the assistance of the Department's staff based in a Townsville office. Most meetings lasted 2 to 3 hours. The longest, 5 hours, was in February, 1976 when the Coordinator General spoke on the role and functions of Regional Coordination Councils.

5.1 Analysis of Council Business

5.1.1 Method

The Councils business was analysed in terms of its substance and procedures. The substance of the business was the content matter. The procedure was the treatment given to each item of business. This framework for analysis has been developed in Table 5.1 where the functions of the Council, in Section 47 of the Act, were disaggregated into their substantial and procedural parts.

The substance of the Council's business was broken into four types. Type 1 was to promote coordination (S. 47(a)), Type 2 was to review needs (S. 47 (b)), Type 3 was to review plans (S. 47(c)), and Type 4 was to inform (S. 47(e)).

The procedure in the Council's business was disaggregated into three conventional stages in organizational analysis, input, processing and output. The input stage described an item of business, what Type it was and how it became Council business. The procedural stage described the discussion and intermediate treatment of the business. The Output stage described the decision that disposed the business.

The output stage was important in an assessment of the success or otherwise of the Council. It was necessary that the required output in the Council's functions be compared with the actual output so that an objective assessment could be made of the Council's management of its activities.

Because the Council had no direct links with government departments or power over local authorities it could only make a recommendation to the Coordinator General (S. 47(d)), or a decision to disseminate information (S. 47(e)).

Benefits and Impediments

The analysis identified the benefits at the output stage.

A benefit was either a recommendation to the Coordinator General or the dissemination of information.

An impediment that prevented the successful completion of the processing or output stages was also identified.

5.1.2 Table of business topics

Table 5.2 summarised the business topics and their frequency in discussion between 1973 and 1977. The table indicated when new items of business were first discussed in the Council.

For instance, the role of the Council was not discussed until the fifth meeting in April 1975.

The five most frequently discussed topics were then further analysed in the format described in Section 5.1.1. These topics were:

1. Water Supply Advisory Committee
2. Regional Library Service
3. Council Membership
4. Transport
5. Councillors Dissatisfaction

Only the first and fourth had any bearing on the State's Program of Works.

Table 5.1: Two way division of Council functions
(from Section 47 of the Act)

Substantive Type	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Procedural Stage	Promote Coordination	Review needs	Review plans	Inform
	<u>S. 47(a)</u>	<u>S. 47(b)</u>	<u>S. 47(c)</u>	<u>S. 47(e)</u>
<u>Input</u>	promote the coordination of the objectives, policies, organizations, of all state departments and local bodies concerned with planned development	continuously collect data of the state of development	review submissions to Council concerning planned development	collect information concerning planned regional development
<u>processing</u>	<u>No subsection</u>	<u>S. 47(b)</u>	<u>S. 47(c)</u>	
	integrate inputs, examine inefficiencies and possibly look at ways to restructure inputs to improve efficiency	review the state of development	review and investigate submission	
<u>output</u>	<u>47(d)(i-v)</u>	<u>47(d)(i-v)</u>	<u>47(d)(i-v)</u>	<u>47(e)</u>
	promote coordination of the inputs by a recommendation to the Coordinator General	make recommendation to Coordinator General	make recommendation to Coordinator General concerning planned regional development	disseminate information to state departments, local bodies and others

Topic	1973 Nov	1974 Feb Jul Dec	1975 Apr Jun Jul Oct	1976 Feb Sept May	1977 May	Total	Function Type No.	Outcome of business
Amendment to Act	x		x		x	3	-	recommended to Co. Gen.
Membership	x*	x x	x			5	Séc.40 of Act	recommended to Co. Gen.
Water Supply	x*	x x	x x		x x x	8	2	recommended to Co. Gen.
Staff assistance	x		x		x	3	-	discussed.
Grants Commission	x*	x			x	3	-	recommended to Co. Gen.
Cyclone Study		x*	x			2	-	supported.
Northern Region Report		x*	x	x		3	4	discussed with advisor.
Main Roads work by L.A.			x x	x		3	1	Advisory Committee; referred to Co. Gen.
T'ville Economic Study		x*		x		2	-	discussed with advisor.
T'ville Development Study			x*		x x	3	-	noted but no Council involvement.
Tourism		x*	x			2	-	discussed in secret.
Beach Protection		x*				1	-	discussed.
Primary Industry Study			x*			1	-	noted.
Flooding		x*			x x	3	2	recommended to Co. Gen.
Land development conditions			x x			2	1	discussed.
Transport			x x		x x x	5	4,2	recommended to Co. Gen.
Regional Library			x x	x	x x x	6	-	discussed with advisor; L.A.'s collected data; Recommendation for study
Locust Control			x*			1	-	discussed.
members expenses			x*			1	-	discussed.
Area improvement			x x			2	-	discussed.
Bowen coal export			x			1	2	recommended to Co. Gen.
National Estate			x*	x x x		4	1,4	advisor; L.A.'s provide data; Recommendation for study.
Councillors dissatisfaction			x	x x x		4	1	discussed.
works subsidies				x x		2	1,4	advisor; L.A.'s informed; recommended to Co. Gen.
Envir. Impact Manual				x*	x	2	4	Procedural Manual received and discussed.
Aust. Assistance Plan					x	1	-	discussed.
Access to studies					x	1	-	discussed with Co. Gen.
termination of N.R.C.C.					x	1	-	discussed.

Table 5.2:
Business of Northern Regional
Coordination Council.

5.2 Water Supply Advisory Committee

Section 47A of the Act provided for the appointment of Advisory Committees and Executive Committees.

Input Stage

The Water Supply Advisory Committee was appointed at the inaugural meeting of the Council's first term in November 1973. The Chairman tabled a Chairman's Minute of the joint Commonwealth/State Burdekin Project Committee, which had its first meeting in September 1973. He then moved that the Council establish the Water Supply Advisory Committee which would assist the Burdekin Project Committee by determining the urban water supply needs of Townsville. This was a Type 2 function.

Before the Committee was formed there was a discussion in favour of limited use of local authority staff to assist the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee comprised the Mayor of Townsville and the Chairman of the Thuringowa Shire.

At the second meeting of the Council on 4 February 1974 the Mayor of Townsville moved that the Advisory Committee be enlarged to include another Townsville alderman. This motion failed and it was decided instead that experts could be invited, with no voting power, to assist the Committee.

Processing Stage

At the third Council meeting in July 1974 the Advisory Committee produced a report that was passed onto the Burdekin Project Committee's consultants.

The Advisory Committee met again in August 1974 and recommended the development of a daily water consumption model for Townsville City and the urban part of Thuringowa Shire by James Cook University. The University was commissioned by the Coordinator General to prepare a mathematical model as a student research project.

Output Stage

A progress report of the Townsville Daily Water Consumption Model was tabled at the 8th meeting of the Council February 1976. The model was completed and was to be further developed in 1976 as a research project. Council discussed the lack of consultation by the Department and its consultants with the local authorities, particularly on regional matters outside Townsville that affected the study.

The Chairman replied that consultation with local authorities would occur as soon as possible and that Townsville's water supply was being considered because the area was the biggest buyer of water.

Reconstitution of Water Supply Advisory Committee

The inaugural meeting of the second term of the Council was held in September 1976 after the general local authority elections (see Appendix 4.6). The Water Supply Advisory Committee was reconstituted since its former members were no longer members of the Council. The Chairman said the Committee had been instrumental in producing estimates of future urban water consumption for the Townsville urban area and asked members to give their comments on the functioning of Advisory Committees in general. Members responded favourably.

The Chairman suggested that Advisory Committees be chaired by a Local Authority representative with secretarial assistance from the Secretary of the Council.

The Chairman said it appeared to him that excellent cooperation would be received from other State departments.

One member suggested that special purpose Advisory Committees comprise Council members, representatives of state departments, industry leaders and individuals with special knowledge in the field. The Chairman said he would be prepared to consult in future with other local authorities having a broader interest in the future water supply for the region and he suggested this could be done through an expanded Water Supply Advisory Committee.

The Council heard a paper from a staff member of the Forward Planning Branch of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. He outlined the Burdekin Basin's potential for water resource development. The Council decided to reconstitute the Water Supply Advisory Committee with all the members of the Council and a representative of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.

Final business of Water Supply Advisory Committee

At its final meeting in May 1977 the Committee considered the draft report "Water Supply for Urban Growth" which formed a chapter in the main report of the Burdekin Project Committee. The Committee was severely restricted because it was not given access to the main report. The Chairman asked the Council to express its interest in the Burdekin. The Committee urged the Queensland Government to take into account the essential nature of urban water supply and its high priority when considering future water resource development in the Basin.

The Chairman said that with the termination of the Regional Councils, standing committees would end. No reply had been received from the Coordinator General to a letter from Ayr Shire urging that the Water Supply Advisory Committee be continued.

Summary

The apparent lack of feedback from the Burdekin Project Committee to the Advisory Committee indicated that the Advisory Committee's report was accepted but not very significant. The Advisory Committees work had much less regional significance than the Burdekin Project Committee Study. That Study considered agricultural and urban water needs, electricity generation and covered a far greater proportion of the Region.

Benefits

The Advisory Committee produced a report based on local authority information and gave its assessment of future urban

water needs to the Burdekin Project Committee. These two steps were successful outcomes to Type 2 and Type 4 functions respectively.

Impediments

No impediments arose in the completion of the Advisory Committee's report.

The impediments in the Committee's second task, a review of a chapter in the Burdekin Project Committee Study were:

- (i) the Department's decision not to make the full report available to the Council and
- (ii) the termination of the Council before it could make a recommendation to the Coordinator General.

5.3 Regional Library Service

The topic, Regional Library Service, did not appear to be within the meaning of development, planned development or the functions of the Council (see Section 4.6.2 and Table 5.1).

Initiative

The Bowen Shire Council contacted the Townsville City Council for assistance with its library service because the State Library was unable to operate its Country Extension Service after the 1974 Brisbane flood. Townsville City Council informed the Regional Coordinator, and the State Librarian was invited to discuss the development of a Northern Region Library at the fourth Council meeting in December 1974.

Input Stage

The State Librarian spoke to Councillors about the development of a Regional Library and the history of the North West Regional Library Service. The meeting decided that each Local Authority would prepare a report on the library service in its Area for submission to the Regional Coordinator and discussion at the next meeting. The State Librarian agreed to prepare a paper on regional libraries, to include indicative costing, for the Council.

Processing Stage

At the fifth Council meeting in April 1975 the Chairman presented a tabulation of the information on library services submitted by each Local Authority. The Chairman asked members to consider whether the Council should request the State Librarian to conduct a formal investigation of the Northern Region's Library facilities and the possibility of establishing a regional library.

The Council decided to forward the Local Authority library submissions to the State Librarian with a request that he conduct such surveys as required to assess the viability or otherwise of a Regional Library Service.

The Council decided at its meeting in July 1975 to leave the matter since the State Librarian was to present a report on the existing state of Local Authority libraries in August 1975. The Coordinator General's Department would then look into the matter.

The State Librarian's preliminary report on the Feasibility of Establishing a Northern Regional Library Service was discussed at the Council meeting in February 1976. The Chairman said the report gave an inventory of the population and the library resources of the Region and explored the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a regional library service. He stressed the concept of a regional library service containing a stock of books and technical facilities rather than an actual library building. He said it could be arranged that a staff member of the State Library visit individual Local Authorities in May to provide further information. The Council decided that the Report be agreed to in principle. The Report proposed a Regional Library Board and a per capita subsidy to Local Authorities to help them with the service.

Members of the Council showed varied support for a Regional Library at the second last Council meeting in September 1976. The Council decided to ask the State Librarian for a further report on budgeting implications for local authorities. It was agreed that after the State Librarian had provided this information the Secretary of the Council would consult with the Local Authority Clerks to form a corporate regional view to be forwarded to the State Librarian. The State Librarian would convene any joint Local Authority meeting which was required.

The Chairman reported at the final Council meeting in May 1977 that the State Librarian had advised him verbally that the requested information on costs was not available.

The Chairman asked members to indicate their Local Authority's policy regarding a possible regional library:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| <u>Bowen</u> | - would go along with the majority |
| <u>Ayr</u> | - would reconsider the regional library proposal when the civic centre was developed. |
| <u>Thuringowa</u> | - would accept Townsville's decision. |
| <u>Hinchinbrook</u> | - would not participate. |
| <u>Dalrymple</u> | - in favour and would participate. |
| <u>Charters Towers</u> | - not in favour, because it had the highest per capita stock of books |
| <u>Townsville</u> | - in favour of the proposal in principle, but the responses of the other local authorities made it a doubtful proposition. |

The Chairman said the matter was now left to the individual local authorities to pursue as opportunities arose.

Output Stage

The Council was unable to make a recommendation to the Coordinator General.

Summary

The Regional Library proposal was initiated in late 1974 by Bowen Shire and Townsville City Councils. Both remained in favour of the idea until May 1977 when the Council was terminated. The mixed reactions of other members showed that the proposal lacked sufficient local authority support.

The Library proposal did not require capital works and could not be described as "development" or "planned development". Therefore it seems the Council went outside its function when it considered the matter in the expectation that Federal Government funds would be made available for regional libraries.

Benefits

There were no benefits in the form of a recommendation. The local authorities and the State Library did become better informed on the existing service in each local authority area. The local authorities were visited by Library staff and presumably were placed in a better position to improve their service. The State Library would have realised its management problem in not being able to provide costing information.

Impediments

The Council seemed reluctant or unable to define, for discussion purposes, the nature of the problems in the existing service and what should be investigate. The Councillors seemed unaware of any need to assess the service or to advise the State Librarian of matters he should consider in his regional investigation.

The Council did not complete the processing stage to put itself in a position where it could make a worthwhile recommendation to the Coordinator General in the output stage. Instead, it passed the problem of defining the Region's library needs onto the State Librarian, a person who could hardly be expected to understand regional circumstances. The Council expected the State Librarian to provide accurate costs for a service but it avoided giving him any idea of what it wanted in a service.

5.4 Council Membership

Until 1974 the Act provided for the Council to consist of a Chairman (the Coordinator General or his delegate) and four or more other members. The actual appointments are shown in Appendix 4.6. The complete representation of all local authorities and the exclusion of all other appointees, such as departmental officers, was a response by the Government to pressure from local authorities and the Local Government Association.

The Coordinator General's Department wanted much wider representation of interests (S. 47(a) of the Act and Section 4.6.6 of this study).

Input

The Chairman asked Councillors for their views about extra representation on the Council at the first meeting in November 1973.

Processing

The Townsville City Council representative asked for membership in proportion to population in each local authority area. This was opposed because Townsville had more than half the population in the Region.

Output

The Council decided "that local authority representation on the Northern Regional Coordination Council should be mandatory", and "at this stage, other bodies be not given representation". This decision set the pattern for exclusive membership of the Council by local authority members until the Council was terminated in July 1977. The decision was repeated a year later in December 1974 when the Council discussed the 1974 amendments to the Act. The Council considered the new Section 40A and rejected a suggestion for class membership by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of North Queensland.

Nearly two years later, in September 1976 at the inaugural meeting of the second term of the Council, the Chairman again raised the matter of Council membership for representatives of State Government departments, and local organizations with regional interests. He said the Local Government Association was still of the opinion that the Council should only comprise members of local authorities.

The Council again decided it should be constituted only with local authority members.

Summary

The Council was singularly concerned with voting rights and local authority control. The Council did not have a function, in Section 47 of the Act, to advise the Coordinator General on any matter of Council membership. However, in the 1974 amendment to the Act, in Section 40A(2) the Council could recommend to the Minister that a person of a "class" be appointed as a member of the Council.

After this amendment the Council decided on two occasions, in December 1974 and September 1976, to restrict membership to one elected member from each local authority in the Region. In doing this the Council conformed with the Local Government Association.

Benefits

There were no apparent benefits in the Council's decisions. Wider membership might have improved the likelihood of a better comprehension of regional problems and opportunities.

Impediments

The discussion never moved very far in the processing stage. The Council restricted its discussion of wider membership with an overriding concern for the advancement of local government interests and the protection of these interests from the general powers given to the Coordinator General in the Act. Possibly the major impediment was the local authorities fear that the Government would use a Council constituted with members sympathetic or loyal to the Government to advance regional policies which were not in the interests of local government.

5.5 Transport

The Council considered three separate transport matters,:

- (i) Townsville Transport Study of urban roads.
- (ii) an export port at Bowen and a rail link to ship coal from the Bowen Basin field.
- (iii) cattle trucking sidings on the Greenvale railway line.

5.5.1 Townsville Transport Study

Input Stage

A representative from the Transport Planning and Development Branch of the Department of Transport in Brisbane addressed the Council in December 1974. He was invited after Townsville City Council had written to the Regional Coordinator on the subject.

Processing Stage

The representative explained two funding arrangements and the Council had a short general discussion on transport with only superficial reference to the Region.

Output Stage

The Council decided to request the Coordinator General to study the needs of the Northern Regions transport system and asked him to discuss the matter with the Commissioner for Transport.

Feedback

At the next Council meeting in April 1975, the Chairman said that the Department of Transport could not undertake a formal study and preferred to wait until the results of the Townsville Development strategy study and the Commonwealth survey of private transport companies were available. The Council decided to reconsider the matter of a transport study after the completion of the Townsville Development Strategy Study.

Further Inputs

The Council meeting in February 1976 discussed the results from a recent Regional Transport Seminar held in Townsville. The seminar represented road, rail, sea and air transport industries.

Processing

The Chairman said rail freight rates in North Queensland were under consideration and the Queensland Commissioner for Transport was commissioning a Townsville Transport Study. The Study would include an investigation of the public bus needs in the Townsville urban area.

The Chairman tabled a report, the Townsville Development Strategy Study. The Study used the projections of population and workforce in the Townsville Economic Structure Study completed in December 1974. The Study was supervised by a Steering Committee of representatives of the Federal Cities Commission, Departments of Coordinator General and Local Government, and Townsville and Thuringowa Local Authorities.

The Townsville Development Strategy Study recommended:

- (i) a study of the public transport needs of Townsville and the methods for financing the capital and operating expenses of the services.
- (ii) a review of the 1966 Townsville Transportation Study to reconsider road traffic trends.

The Chairman said copies of the Strategy Study Report were forwarded to the Townsville Harbour Board and Departments of Harbours and Marine and Railways so they could report on the future rail needs of the Port of Townsville and adjacent industrial areas.

Output

There was no output from the discussion. The Townsville Development Strategy Study did not provide a transportation strategy and was really a residential land use proposal. The Council did not have a role in the Strategy Study. Regional Transport was not discussed again at a Council meeting. The Townsville Transport Study was completed in mid 1979, two years after the dissolution of the Council.

5.5.2 Railway - Bowen coal export

Input

At the meeting in April 1975, the member from Bowen raised the need for the development of a rail link from the northern extremity of the Bowen Basin coal fields to the Abbott Point port at Bowen. This was a Type 2 function.

Processing

He suggested this rail link was a prerequisite to the development of a steel works and heavy industry in the Northern Region and this gave the proposal regional significance. There was a long discussion of points for and against the proposal and an alternative route to parallel an existing railway to Mackay.

Output

The Council supported in principle the establishment of a coal export outlet at Abbott Point. The Chairman reminded members that their statement of support was only an advice to the Coordinator General.

5.5.3 Greenvale Railway siding

This was a Type 2 function, reviewing a need for development.

Input

At the September 1976 meeting, the member from Dalrymple Shire raised the need for cattle trucking facilities on the Greenvale railway line.

Processing

He said the railway cattle siding was required to bring cattle direct from Greenvale to Townsville and avoid the long route through Charters Towers. The Shire Council and other bodies had urged the Railway Department to consider this need but "only recently had the Railway Department undertaken a detailed study of the feasibility of such a project".

The Secretary to the Council then presented some cost/benefit figures for the proposed siding, based on his own inquiries. The Chairman said advice from the Council could be channelled through the Coordinator General to the Commissioner for Transport and this might result in the case being reopened by the Railway Department.

Output

The Council recommended the Chairman approach the Coordinator General and the Commissioner for Transport to reopen the matter.

The Chairman was apparently successful. At the last meeting in May 1977 he referred to the Councils involvement in bringing about the construction of cattle trucking yards adjacent to the Greenvale rail line.

Summary

(i) Regional Transport

The Council requested the Coordinator General in December 1974 to study the needs of the Northern Region transport system and to discuss the matter with the Commissioner for Transport. This was a Type 2 function. A member criticised the lack of direction

and conclusions from transport seminars but the Council did not respond to the Chairmans invitation to say what should be considered (meeting Oct., 1975). The Council did not have any direct involvement in the Townsville Transport Study between 1976 and 1979.

Benefits

There was no benefit in a recommendation to the Coordinator General. The Council members presumably benefited from the information passed on to them in verbal addresses by experts and from an examination of the papers which passed to the Council.

Impediment

The Council seemed to be unaware of any regional transport issues and could not advise the Coordinator General on points which needed to be studied.

(ii) Bowen Coal Export

The Council supported in principle the development of railway and port facilities for the export of coal from Abbott Point. The regional significance of the proposal was the potential for heavy industry based on coal energy. The proposal and the expected coal field development were explained in detail by the Bowen representative and the Chairman. This was a review of needs, a Type 2 function.

Benefits

The Council was able to pass successfully through the input and processing stages to produce a recommendation to the Coordinator General that was supported with relevant information.

Impediments

No impediments.

(iii) Greenvale Railway Siding

This piece of business provided the only example where the Council's initiative and recommendation produced a concrete result.

Benefit

There were two benefits. The Council made a recommendation on a Type 2 function and the recommendation resulted in a physical benefit to the Region.

Impediment

There were no impediments.

5.6 Councillors dissatisfaction

Input Stage

The member from Ayr asked, at the meeting in April 1975, for time to discuss the broader operations of the Council and the possibility of allowing local authority clerks to speak at Council meetings.

The Chairman replied the issue was already under discussion. Presumably he was referring to the F.N.R.C.C. (see Section 6.3). He asked that discussion be left until after the end of the first term of the Council in June 1976. The member from Ayr said the matter should be discussed much earlier. The Chairman asked that the matter be left with him, as it was desirable to act uniformly with all Councils. He said the Council would be advised on the subject.

Processing Stage

At the next meeting, the sixth, in July 1975 the Chairman asked members to complete a questionnaire concerning the functions and activities of the Council. He said the completed questionnaires would be synthesised to provide a consensus of opinion. The consensus would be given to members and used in a report on the progress of each Council to be prepared by the Department.

The member from Ayr restated his opinion that the clerks of the local authorities should be able to enter discussion of Council business without voting power and certainly before members of outside organizations were invited to advise.

The performance of the Council was openly discussed at the next meeting in October 1975. All local authorities in the Region except Bowen had returned their questionnaire.

The following points were made by members from,

- (i) Ayr: The Council would not succeed unless it made decisions concerning the Region. There was a danger that members would become puppets. The Councils were aimed at satisfying the curiosity of local authorities, but the future of the Councils was now uncertain. Ayr Shire Council might withdraw from the Council. The Chairman was receiving directions from Brisbane which were not helping the Council. Closer communication with the Queensland Government was needed because the Council was not being heard in the right circles, for example in Treasury. Insufficient value was attached to the opinion of the Council.
- (ii) Thuringowa: Believed in the potential of the Councils but felt the Northern R.C.C. was not achieving anything. The views of the Council were disregarded in the Government. The Council had no power to achieve anything for the Region.
- (iii) Hinchinbrook: The Council had failed to define regional needs, objectives and strategies. The Council was initially regarded as a step in the decentralisation of the decision making process. Too much was being planned in the Northern Regional Office, without informing the Council. The Northern R.C.C. would not be successful until regional needs and priorities were investigated and funds were made available to achieve regional objectives. The Act was not structured to provide those functions which the Council sought.
- (iv) Dalrymple: The views of the Council were ignored if they disagreed with the Coordinator General. The Council was established by a higher authority. The only successful regional bodies were established from below. Local authorities suspected the Councils were

an attempt to widen the power of the State Government. The State Government was frightened that the Councils would become strong enough to challenge its authority. The State Government must either give more authority and finance to the Councils or allow local authorities to contribute to such a fund themselves. The Councils could be of great use in hastening loan raising, overcoming delays in administration, or in tendering. The Council was supposed to legitimize, at grass roots level, plans developed by the Department and therefore the Council was only giving its approval. Most initiatives had come downwards.

- (v) Bowen: Questioned whether it was practical to implement regionalism.
- (vi) Charters Towers: Councillors were mostly to blame if the Council failed. Primary aim of the Council was the support of the region's primary and secondary industries. The Council had to decide what a local authority should forego to meet a regional objective. The Council should look at regional rather than local authority problems.
- (vii) Townsville: The Council was not working at all because the legislation did not provide for Council funds. Decision making occurred in Brisbane. The failures of the Council were not caused by Councillors. There was distrust between all levels of government over the Councils. Councillors should show more initiative in suggesting regional projects to the Council. Members could not identify any direct action from their recommendations.
- (viii) Chairman: The functions of the Council were purely advisory. Many recommendations were not possible under the structure of the Act. The Act did not provide for

the Council to be funded or to be given any powers normally associated with Local Government. Many functions of the Department did not relate directly to activities of the Council. The necessary preliminary studies for regional strategic plans were advancing. Public announcements on policy changes were handled by the Government and would not be attributed to initiatives from Councils, even where such initiatives had played an important part."

The Coordinator General was at the next Council meeting in February 1976. He addressed the meeting on the role and functions of the Councils. The contents of the address were very similar to an address to the Far Northern R.C.C. (see Section 6.3.4). He particularly referred to the following matters raised at the previous meeting of the Northern R.C.C. in October 1975,:

- (i) "Council's recommendations were not resulting in direct action" (from Townsville).
- (ii) "there are problems in the processes of Government administration, for example, loans raising and submissions to the Grants Commission" (from Dalrymple Shire).

The Coordinator General assured Councillors that while direct requests to him from the Council cannot necessarily be approved, they were not neglected. He said his powers were in the Act and did not extend to reviewing the requirements of the autonomous state departments, the Loan Council or the Commonwealth Government.

Councillors replied to his address with the following points:

- (i) Ayr: Ayr Shire Council was considering whether to attend future Council meetings. The Ayr Shire Council would only regard the Council as successful if its activities strengthened the Ayr Shire Council.

- (ii) Charters Towers: Wanted more communication between the Regional Coordination Councils to gain assistance and ideas when formulating plans and generally running local authorities.

The Chairman said that the Northern R.C.C. was the first Council formed and had received more information than most other Councils.

Output Stage

At the final meeting of the Council in May 1977, the Council decided there was value in continuing a regional organization of local government and proposed to recommend to their respective local authorities that an appropriate body be established.

Summary

In the Act, the Council was to assist the Coordinator General in coordinating the activities of state departments and local bodies. The members wanted the Council to promote their local authority interests and to assist them in the running of the local authorities.

Benefits

There was no benefit in the completion of a function, since the Council did not make a functional recommendation to the Coordinator General. There was a benefit to the local authorities because they were able to come to the conclusion in the output stage that a regional organization of local government was desirable for the purpose of coordinating their own objectives.

Impediment

The major impediment which prevented the Council making a recommendation was the reluctance of the members to accept an advisory role to the Coordinator General. They wanted decision making power and to see that they were achieving something. They were not prepared to advise unless the Government did something with their advice. The Councillors were in effect trying to introduce an executive level above local government that would pressure the Government.

5.7 Summary

The Council had four types of functions in Section 47 of the Act, to coordinate, to review needs and plans and to inform. These four types of functions were set out in Table 5.1. A summary of the Council's main business is in Table 5.3.

5.7.1 Impressions of the Council's business

Table 5.2 showed the 28 business topics identified from the Minutes of the Council meetings between November 1973 and May 1977. Some problems in the Council's business were:

- (i) There was no consideration of a Type 3 function, to review plans, or any kind.
- (ii) fifteen, or 50%, of the topics were not Council's functions.
- (iii) only seven, or 25%, of the topics that were Council functions were finalised with a recommendation to the Coordinator General.
- (iv) half the topics ended with no formal consensus of opinion.
- (v) the Chairman initiated 14 of the 28 topics.
- (vi) the Council did not discuss problems of coordination between local authorities.

5.7.2 Initiatives from Councillors

The Councillors' view was that most initiatives came from the Department. The most important topics introduced by Councillors were, the Role and Function of the Council, Transport, Works Program, and Regional Library. Only Transport produced any physical result from the Council's initiative, a cattle siding built on the Greenvale Railway.

The remaining topics were studies or discussions with the purpose of increasing awareness and coordination in studies, but there was no evidence of any physical development which received the benefit.

Table 5.3: Summary of benefits and impediments in main CouncilBusiness

Topic and Type of Function	Procedural Stage			Benefit	Impediment
	Input	Processing	Output		
1. Water Supply Advisory Committee (Type 2 function)	Nov 73 Feb 74	Jul 74 Aug 74	Aug 74	Recommendations to Co. Gen. to prepare a study.	No impediments, but the study had low regional significance because it was restricted to Townsville.
2. Regional Library Service (Not a function)	Dec 74	Apr 75 Jul 75 Feb 76 Sep 76	Nil	Nil	No consensus for a recommendation to Co. Gen. Detailed costing not available from State Librarian.
3. Membership (Sec. 40A(2) recommendation)	Nov 73 Dec 74 Sep 76		Nov 73 Dec 74 Sep 76	Recommendations to Co. Gen.	No impediments, general support for recommendation.
4. Transport (a) Regional Transport	Dec 74 Apr 75 Feb 76	- - -	Nil Nil Nil	Nil	Matter deferred until Townsville Strategy Study completed in 1976.
(b) Bowen Coal Export	Apr 75	Apr 75	Apr 75	Recommendation to Co. Gen.	No impediments.
(c) Greenvale railway siding (Type 2/4 functions)	?	Sep 76	Sep 76	Recommendation to Co. Gen.	No impediments.
5. Dissatisfaction with role and function (Type 1 function).	Apr 75 Jul 75	Oct 75 Feb 76	Nil to Co. G.	Nil	Councillors objectives were contrary to the intentions of the Act and there was no provision in the Act for a recommendation by Council.

5.7.3 Works program

There was no discussion of the local authorities' works programs but there was an explanation of the financial aspects of the capital works program from the Department.

5.7.4 Description of recommendations and reports

1. Recommendations to the Coordinator General concerning submissions related to regional development, for:
 1. a coal export port for Bowen (April 75)
 2. the establishment of cattle trucking facilities on the Greenvale railway line (Sept. 76).

2. Recommendations to the Coordinator General concerning research projects, for a:
 1. Study of the effects of cyclones by James Cook University (Feb. 74)
 2. model of Townsville's urban water supply needs, by James Cook University (Dec. 74)
 3. study of Northern Region Transport System (Dec. 74)
 4. Regional Library Service (April 75)
 5. Study of National Estate materials (April 75)
 6. Herbert River Flood Study (May 77)

3. Reports, or their preparation, noted in the Council Minutes. These reports were prepared by state or federal departments.
 1. Burdekin Basin Reappraisal Study (Nov. 73)
 2. Northern Region - Basic Investigation of Prospects and Problems (Feb. 74)
 3. Townsville Economic Structure Study (July 74)
 4. Townsville Development Programme Study (July 74), later titled Townsville Development Strategy Study.

5. Confidential Report by Director-General of Tourist Services (July 74)
6. Department of Primary Industry's input/output study of Northern Region (July 74)
7. Bowen Basin Coal Export (April 75)
8. Report on Cyclone Tracy (July 75)
9. Report on performance of Regional Coordination Councils (Oct. 75)
10. National Estate Study - Northern Region (Oct. 75)
11. Feasibility of establishing a Northern Regional Library Service (Feb. 76)
12. Tin Dredging - Atherton Tablelands (Feb. 76)
13. Ingham Caneland Drainage Study (Feb. 76)
14. Herbert River Pollution (Oct. 75)
15. Ingham Water Supply - Review (May 77)
16. Herbert River Flood Management (May 77).

6.0 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE COUNCILS

Introduction

In Queensland, in recent years, local authorities were encouraged to assume more responsibility for their town planning schemes and to adopt land use policy plans. The state government produced studies of population forecasts, economic development, coastal management and land use strategy plans, to provide consistent guidelines for other government organizations to follow (Section 4.6.2, 4.6.3).

6.1 Policy

It was noted in Section 4.6.3 that there was no strategy to implement planning through the coordination of activities between and within levels of government. The connection between local authority plans and state government guideline studies was not made explicit in any legislation, as it had been in Victoria, and this was a major unresolved issue in policy coordination (Skeates {1979, 20}). The situation where local authority town plans and land use policy plans had no influence over state department sector plans, also created problems for works infrastructure planning and town planning.

The government wanted to integrate the works programs of local bodies and state departments in place and in time, and with the available funds, to produce regional and state programs of capital works (see Section 4.7.3). This approach, of working from the part to the whole was the method generally used in non-centrally planned countries such as Australia and America.

6.1.1 Problems within the Department

The approach above conflicted with the Departments scientific management methods after 1968 which required comprehensive rational decision making, working from the whole to the part, and centralised planning (see Sections 2.1, 4.6).

Centralised Planning

There was an unclarified problem in the understanding of the differences between centralised and non-centralised planning and the corresponding different meaning for coordination. It affected such a basic matter as whether the Department should be advising the Council for the benefit of the individual local authorities or whether the Council should coordinate the works of the region's local bodies, etc, and advise the Department.

Centralised planning was not politically acceptable even though the public service had a high growth rate and the government decision making at any policy level was highly centralised in Brisbane. The pattern in decision making was to assemble and integrate ideas and plans from throughout the State and make a decision in Brisbane. This was coordination as it was practised when the Regional Coordination Councils were created.

The Councils were supposed to improve the coordination of local ideas and plans and the advice given to the Coordinator General.

Problems in Implementation

The Coordinator General's Report does not illustrate how the planning decisions and the resulting conflicts of interest would be resolved as the decisions were passed from the technical working committees to the Council and then onto the local authorities. Neither does the Report say how the State departments were expected to respond to these guidelines.

The third paragraph stresses the importance of the coordination of the activities of all organizations involved in planning. The Report does not indicate how the state departments with their functional planning staff based in Brisbane, could be involved on the technical working committees. Neither does the Report state that overall plans are proposed as guidelines for both state departments and local authorities.

Strategic Plans

The Report said that in addition to the functions in Section 47 of the Act, the Councils "will prepare strategic plans for the Regions development", but it did not explain why this function was not included in the Act. There was a similar reference to regional planning in Sections 4.6.2 and other references in Sections 4.7.1(iii), 4.7.3, 6.5.1. Clearly, the Departments expectations for the Councils could not be realised because the legislation did not authorise the Councils to prepare overall or strategic plans. As a second point, there was nothing in the legislation to bind an organization to the Councils' guidelines to any degree at all.

No administrative strategy

The Report contained many aims but there was no strategy to implement planning through the coordination of activities between and within levels of government.

No study was made of possible organisational strategies for making the Councils work to satisfy the expectations of the Department and the Councillors. The basic conflict was the Departments planning approach did not match either the political realities, which were historically against centralised planning, or the type of administration needed in coordination (see Section 2.1).

6.1.2 Problems within the Councils

There was no political support for the Councils to be made into a level of government above local authorities. The state government required that public announcements on policy changes were made by the government and would not attribute any changes to the Regional Coordination Councils.

As a group of Shire Chairmen and Mayors, the Councillors expected the government to act on their recommendations. Some major weaknesses within the Councils were:

- (i) the Councils did not coordinate local physical plans or ideas and pass on their conclusions to the Coordinator General
- (ii) the staff of the Department did not consult the Councils when they were working on major development strategies.

6.1.3 Criticism from Local Government Association

The report of the executive of the Queensland Local Government Association to the 1976 annual conference stated, :
"the Executive is aware that a number of Regional Coordination Councils have been reconstituted (for their second three year term) and with the exception of one and possibly two Regions, the Executive is not aware of any useful purpose being served by such Councils"

(see also Hansard 10/10/78, p. 2136).

The Association's 1977 Report stated

"the Executive endorses its views expressed in the Executive Report to the 1976 Conference but does feel that in some areas of the State, such as Moreton and Far North, there is a need for regional consultation on a modified form to that presently existing".

This statement was made after the gazettal of the notice to terminate all the Councils from 1 July 1977. The Association

was historically a lobby for the local authorities to the government. The regional coordination councils duplicated this role as they grew more experienced and this was possibly resented by the Association. The Councils also received status through their involvement with the Grants Commission (Appendix 7.2).

6.1.4 Processes between Councils and government

The flow of information in both directions was under the control of the Regional Coordinator, yet nobody was really in charge because the Regional Coordinator was only responsible to the Coordinator General and the members were occupied in local authority business except for the 3 or 4 days per year of Council meetings.

The Regional Coordinator's job was difficult because he had to operate within the processes of three fairly autonomous groups, his own department, other departments and local authorities. The Regional Coordination Councils were the meeting point of the state bureaucracy, concerned with public works spending, and local authority representatives trying to influence the bureaucracy's thinking.

Hawkins {1979, 19} said regional planning policies were *"either going to be the result of the implementation of national objectives through local administration, or local policies being implemented through higher levels of administration"*. This proposition is difficult to apply to Queensland, because Queensland had no planning objectives, other than efficiency in public works spending (see Section 4.2.1). The local authorities would certainly have objected if the State attempted to enforce its plans on local authorities. Equally, the state government would not and could not implement local policies unless local authorities accepted the costs. The focus on the future in public works coordination further added to the uncertainty and political nature of coordination in the physical development programs of state and local government.

6.2 Moreton Region - Strategy Plan

The activities of the Moreton Regional Coordination Council were described by its Regional Coordinator, Young {1976, 12}. The region contained more than 1 million people, half the state population. More technical expertise and funds were applied for studies in this region than in any other. The Council seemed to have a problem, shared with other Councils, that the Department initiated the planning studies in the name of the Council without its involvement. For example, in response to the initiative of the Federal Governments Cities Commission, the Coordinator General's Department brought the suggestion of a regional growth strategy study to the Council. The Council then recommended to the Coordinator General that it be carried out. Other studies carried out in the name of the Council were an employment base study and a coastal management investigation. This Council like the others, had no funds to authorize or initiate studies or plans.

6.2.1 Problems

Problems in the Council were searched from Questions in State Parliament.

The problem of lack of cooperation between the department with its planning studies and the local authorities with their town planning schemes was raised by the Premier in the 1978 debate and by Skeates {1979, 20}. Two examples below illustrates the lack of cooperation.

(i) Lack of acceptance of guidelines by local government

In response to a question upon notice in Parliament the Premier {Hansard 16/4/75, 724} said, *"the Coastal Management Investigations and the Growth Strategy Investigation will only make recommendations so as to achieve consistent land*

use planning across local authority boundaries. The investigations are advisory and local authorities may accept the recommendations in future reviews of their town plans if they so desire".

Later members of the Steering Committee of the Moreton Regional Growth Strategy met with the Minister and the Director of Local Government to request a deferral of the preparation of town plans in the region until the Strategy Study was completed. It was decided in view of the uncertainty as to the date of completion of the Strategy study, the preparation of the town plans should proceed (Parliament {10/10/75, 1057}). The draft reports of the investigation were completed at that time but the Local Government Department was not ready to accept the land use recommendations.

(ii) Lack of consultation by the
Department with the Council

A second problem was the bypassing of the Council by the Department when the final recommendations in the Moreton Region Growth Strategy Study were released. The Premier was asked in Parliament {15/9/76, 471} if the government intended to give legislative standing to the final recommendations of the study. He replied,

"copies have been distributed to all concerned government departments, to all local authorities in the region, and to the Moreton Regional Coordination Council, inviting their comments. At the same time an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives of Coordinator General's

Department, Treasury, Land Administration Commission, Local Government, Main Roads, Primary Industries, Railways, Transport, and Mapping and Surveying Departments, has been established to consider the project teams suggestions on further actions and to prepare further advice for the consideration of Cabinet. No further action is envisaged until this advice is received".

When it reviewed the study, the interdepartmental committee took over the Council's functions, in Section 47 of the Act. Section 47A of the Act made it possible for the interdepartmental committee to be an advisory committee of the Council but the Act was not used for that purpose.

The Premier {9/11/76, 1373} said the cost of the Moreton Regional Growth Strategy Investigation to the Queensland Government was \$196,756. Local authorities and other bodies did not contribute and there was a further cost carried by the Federal Government.

6.2.2 Summary

The government thought the Moreton Investigations would "only make recommendations that gave consistent land use planning across local authority boundaries". The study was not used to coordinate town plans because the Department of Local Government refused to defer the preparation of town plans until the studies were completed.

The Council was bypassed when the Moreton Region Growth Strategy was reviewed by an inter-departmental committee. The Councils coordinating function was downgraded by the government's limited expectations of the Moreton Region Growth Strategy, the

monopolisation of the study by the Department and the non-involvement of the Council in the coordination and review of the Study.

6.3 Far Northern Region - Dissatisfaction

Members from both the Far Northern and the Northern Regional Coordination Councils wanted changes in the Councils in late 1974 and early 1975. This was a period when the Federal Minister for Urban and Regional Development was promoting an expansion of local government functions throughout Australia and promising more direct financial aid to local government. The Queensland Government saw the Federal interest in local government as an interference in its own legislated bodies (Hansard 27/8/74, p. 357).

The Far Northern Council's proceedings gave a picture of the tension which arose with the Department and the arguments relied on by both sides. The Department placed itself in a difficult position because it tried to adopt a consistent state wide policy in the face of conflicting pressures from local authorities.

6.3.1 Recommendation for more members

Section 40A(2), an amendment to the Act in September 1974 allowed a Council to recommend the appointment of new members. At the third Council meeting in December 1974 the member from Johnstone Shire said the Council should be expanded and given more power. The chairman replied the Department was adopting an open attitude on the matter of Regional Coordination Councils and would be making an assessment of the behaviour and performance of councils when their term expired in June 1976. He said the presentation of advice to the Coordinator General was a very important function of the Councils.

The next meeting of the Council in April 1975 carried a motion that a representative of the Cairns Harbour Board and a representative of the local Development Bureau be admitted as members of the Council. The Chairman advised the Council at its next meeting in June 1975 that the Coordinator General was still considering the matter of including the two additional members on the Council.

6.3.2 Coordinator General's refusal

The Coordinator General's reply was received at the Council meeting in July 1975. He said the Councils would not be altered but the matter would be reconsidered again after June 1976. His reason was that the Councils had decided at their inaugural meeting to have membership restricted to local authority representatives and, in his opinion, this decision should stay.

6.3.3 Dissatisfaction

The member from Cardwell submitted that the Council be expanded by adding a representative from the Interim Council for Social Development. The following matters then occurred:

- (i) the member from Johnstone said -
 - (a) he questioned the worth and authority of the Councils and the local authorities,
 - (b) the Far Northern R.C.C. was disadvantaged by the Coordinator General's state wide policy of not allowing any alterations to the membership of an individual council.
 - (c) the issue was whether the Far Northern R.C.C. was worth anything and, whether the wishes of the Council were paramount. His conclusion was that Department and Government policy would be paramount against the interests of a particular region. This would not change until the Act had been altered and the Councils given some autonomy.
- (ii) the Chairman said a questionnaire of the functions of the Council would be circulated.
- (iii) there was a motion of dissent from the Coordinator General's ruling to not allow an expansion of membership.

- (iv) The Chairman said the powers of the F.N.R.C.C. were 'to recommend' as set out in Section 47(d) of the Act. (But the Chairman could equally have referred to Section 40A(2) of the Act which allowed the Council to recommend the appointment of new members).
- (v) The meeting carried a motion setting aside the Chairmans ruling to not accept the motion in (iii) above.
- (vi) The meeting carried a motion that the three nominees for Council membership be advised of the Coordinator General's decision, and Councils view, and that the nominees be invited to future meetings as observers and to speak if required.

6.3.4 Explanation by Coordinator General

The Coordinator General attended the next Council meeting in February 1976 and spoke on the role and functions of Regional Coordination Councils.

He said,

- (i) the Local Government Association was still of the opinion that Council membership be restricted to local authority members, and the Association did not wish to depart from this State wide policy
- (ii) more tangible regional cooperation was possible through a Joint Local Authority (provided for in the Local Government Act) or a Project Board in the case of major state government involvement (Part 6 of the Act).
- (iii) his expectations of the Councils when he presided over the inaugural meeting of the Northern Regional Coordination Council in Townsville were:

"These Councils will not have executive powers but will provide a forum where matters of regional interest can be studied and discussed. Thus they cannot be, as it has been claimed by some, a fourth tier of government inserted between State and Local Government. Through the Coordinator General's Department, which at present will provide a Chairman and secretarial/technical support, there will be links with Government and Government instrumentalities which should enable better communications and better access to planning data".

The Chairman said all local authorities in the Region except Johnstone and Herberton had completed the questionnaire on the performance of the F.N.R.C.C. and a consensus had been sent to the Coordinator General in the form of a departmental report.

6.3.5 Renewed dissatisfaction

The inaugural meeting of the second term of the Council in July 1976 reaffirmed its view that the representatives of the Cairns Harbour Board and the Development Bureau be recommended for appointment as members of the Council. The meeting also decided to refer the matter back to the Local Government Association for further discussion. The Coordinator General advised the Council that it would take a change of opinion of the Local Government Association to widen membership of the Councils.

The member from Johnstone maintained that Councillors should be able to nominate who they wanted as members of the Council. He said almost all the inputs to the Council were from Departmental staff and he hoped that members of the Council would provide more inputs.

The Chairman replied that the Council had identified problems in trade and industry and the Council would have a better chance of success if members reported back to their local authorities and Department staff were invited to Council meetings for specific issues or purposes.

At the final Council meeting in May 1977 the resignation of the Coordinator General Sir Charles Barton in December 1976, was noted.

Points made in discussion by members were:-

- (i) the views of the members were not asked for.
- (ii) there was dissatisfaction at the abrupt method of ending the Council.
- (iii) the F.N.R.C.C. had been successful and had not formed a fourth level of government.
- (iv) there was good regional cooperation.
- (v) members objected to the termination of the Council.
- (vi) Etheridge Shire Council had supported the abolition of the F.N.R.C.C.

The member from Johnstone said regionalism in Queensland was a reaction to the Commonwealth proposal to set up regions. Regionalism had failed because people who did not want a regional system had the system forced on them. He added that one benefit from the Far Northern Regional Coordination Council was local authorities had learnt to cooperate with each other and as a region.

6.3.6 Summary

(1) From December 1974 the Council members wanted to increase the membership but this was always opposed by the Coordinator General. The Coordinator General's attitude was inflexible since he insisted on having a consistent state wide policy that conformed with the policy of the Local Government Association. The Association maintained during the life of the Act that only local authorities should be represented on the Councils.

(2) The Council wanted the Act changed to give the Council more autonomy.

(3) The Councillors disagreed with the Chairman, the Regional Coordinator, and passed a motion of dissent with the Coordinator General's ruling that Council membership could not be altered.

(4) Councillors complained that almost all inputs to the Council business came from the Department.

6.4 Northern Region - Council business

Problems arose for the Council in the exercise of its functions in the Act, and in the relationship the Council had with the Department. The government's policy was for the Councils to advise the Coordinator General in matters related directly and indirectly to his program of works. This policy, and the absence of funding and authority for the Councils, meant that in practice the Councils were used as a regional extension to the Departments state wide data bank.

The problems were difficult to fix technically because the Council and the Department did not have a common identifiable objective. The flow of information between local authorities and the Department through the Council was based on cooperation and could not be improved by further policy or legislation without introducing controls over the already apprehensive local authorities.

6.4.1 Problems within the Councils activities

The problems in the Council's business were summarised in Section 5.7 and Table 5.2.

6.4.2 Problems with the legislation

Problems in the legislation were raised when the Coordinator General met the Council to discuss the members grievances:

- (i) Councillors wanted the Act amended to give the Councils executive powers and funds for achieving regional objectives.
- (ii) the Council wanted closer links with the Government so that its advice would be better heard.
- (iii) the Coordinator General said public announcements on policy changes would not be made by the Council and his powers did not extend to reviewing the requirements of the autonomous state departments.

- (iv) Coordination between the departments, through the Council, was impossible at a more detailed level than sector planning, unless the legislation was altered to require the departments to cooperate in sharing planning information.

6.4.3 Problems in cooperation and coordination

The Department and the Councillors tended to separately maximise their self interests and exploit their positions of advantage by not cooperating with each other to share information or admit non local authority members.

Another problem was ineffectual discussions brought on through poor coordination of the inputs to the Councils business and the absence of any coordination between the Council and other organizations, with the exception of the Coordinator General's Department.

These problems are detailed below.

Cooperation

(i) the Department did not involve the Council in the preparation or review of the regional studies prepared by government departments or consultants. The Council was denied its function to coordinate and review physical plans (Type 1 and Type 3 functions in Table 5.1).

The Council claimed it had insufficient consultation with the Department and its consultants during the preparation of the Study for the Burdekin Basin Committee. The Council was given access to only one chapter in the Study when it was completed. Other studies not seen by the Council during their preparation were the Townsville Economic Structure Study, the Townsville Development Strategy Study, an input-output study of the Northern Region by the Department of Primary Industries and the review of the Townsville Transportation Study.

The Department withheld the conclusions and recommendations in its report of the 1976 questionnaire survey of Councillors attitudes to the performance of the Councils.

(ii) the Councillors did not cooperate with the governments original intention to have more than local authority representation on the Councils. The Council's decision to restrict membership to elected local authority representatives was successfully achieved within the Act, but the decision was not based on cooperation towards the Department or the government.

(iii) the Councillors gave recommendations to the Coordinator General in only 25% of the Council business. Most recommendations contained nothing specific that gave guidelines for him to act on.

(iv) Councillors complained their views were too often ignored by the Department and the Government and they could not see any direct action from their advice.

(v) the purely advisory role was unsatisfactory to Councillors and some were unsure whether they were supposed to advise the Coordinator General or their local authority. The Department expected the Councillors, the most senior elected members of each local authority to advise public servants who could ignore the advice if they wished.

The Coordinator General said (Townsville Daily Bulletin, 19/2/76)

"regional councils were set up to give information and advice to professional planners from those who knew the regions and their particular problems well".

This passive role was not spelt out in the legislation and it was not consistent with the background of the Councillors. They asked for more authority and funding for the Council when their advice was not acted on.

Coordination

(vi) The Council Chairman, the Regional Coordinator, was criticised by Councillors for receiving too many instructions from Brisbane and for finalising matters before the Council had a chance to consider them.

(vii) Council time was wasted through poor coordination of the functions of the Council with the content matter of addresses by speakers from other departments.

There were instances where the Council was used as a public relations forum by departments to discuss matters not in the council's functions. For example, Grants Commission, cyclone study, beach protection, locust control, area improvement, national estate and Australian Assistance Plan, Transport and Regional Library Service.

These topics were relevant to local authority functions in some cases but all were unrelated to the functions of the Regional Council. In these situations the Council became a briefing session of higher government programs for the information of local authorities.

The Department used the Council to obtain information of Federal Government programs (Hansard 11/10/78, 2159).

The topics distracted the Council from considering regional matters related to planned development and the capital works program.

(viii) There was no discussion of the regional coordination of local works programs of local authorities or of state or federal departments.

6.4.4 Summary

The main problems were the lack of recommendations from the Council to the Coordinator General, the lack of discussion

of local works programs and the discussion topics that were unrelated to the Council's functions. The Councillors were not satisfied with their relationship with the Department. They claimed their advice was ignored and decisions were made in the Department before matters were referred to the Council.

6.5 Parliamentary Debate

1974 Debate

During the whole debate on regional coordination between 1971 and 1978 very little was said about how to involve state departments, except the Coordinator General's Department, in regional coordination. The separate departments had their own sector plans and operated fairly independently of each other.

6.5.1 1974 Debate

The Leader of the Opposition referred to complaints in the Minutes of the Moreton Regional Coordination Council that state government departments were acquiring land and preparing developments which were in conflict with Redcliffe City Council attitudes. He spoke of the absence of consultation with local authorities before Cabinet decided in May 1974 to construct Wivenhoe Dam, a major source in the region's water supply.

6.5.2 1977 Questions upon Notice

According to Mr. Prest, in a question in March 1977, the Coordinator General told the Fitzroy Regional Coordination Council he preferred to deal with Councils separately rather than collectively.

6.5.3 1978 Debate

One year after the termination of the Councils, the debate did not provide any explicit reasons for the governments decision to remove regional coordination councils from the Act. The Environmental Control Council was also dropped from the legislation.

The Premier said, when he introduced the amendments to delete Part 5, Regional Coordination,:

"The Councils have been tried over the last few years as an additional administrative arrangement and have been found

deficient. They developed into a rigid structure imposed on local authorities. The Local Government Association expressed concern with their operation and the lack of results being achieved by them. Any benefits which were being achieved were greatly outweighed by the costs involved in their operation.

The composition of the regional coordination councils where the chairman was a public servant and the members were elected representatives of local government, was considered undesirable. The role of the regional coordination councils with their area wide meetings, overlapped to some extent the role of the Local Government Association, with its district meetings.

The responsibility for the organisation of local authorities into regional groupings if they so desire is considered to be a local authority matter.

The amendments proposed in the Bill are in keeping with the aims of the Coordinating and Review Committee in seeking to streamline the efficiency of government and to minimise unnecessary bureaucratic organisations".

The opposition did not oppose the amendment to remove regional coordination from the Act. The opposition gave instances of,:

- (i) protests from the Councils in north Queensland at the inactivity of the state government on recommendations made by those Councils and
- (ii) criticism of the Department from the Fitzroy Regional Coordination Council.

The Premier replied (Hansard 10/10/78, 2136),

"In 1971 the government considered that regional coordination councils would provide a means whereby local authorities could advise the Government on regional planning matters. However my government considers that they have failed in this objective. Total expenditure involved in running the regional coordination councils was about \$250,000 a year. It is difficult to justify that expenditure for the very limited success obtained. The Local Government Association of Queensland has been critical of the councils since their inception".

The opposition members said, without giving examples, the main reason the government acted against the Councils was they became a threat to the supremacy of the state government.

A former Councillor , Mr. Hooper, supported the amendment (Hansard 11/10/78, 2159):

"the North Queensland Regional Council resisted the imposition of the Act upon it. It tried very hard to make the Act work. However, eventually it became a matter of each council going along to the regional coordination council and pushing its own barrow. No funding was provided by the government and after three or four years it became obvious that the scheme would not work in the way it was envisaged and that therefore there was no longer a necessity for regional coordination councils. My council and others in North Queensland did not accept the contention that they served a good purpose. We acknowledged that the Government, through the Councils, would be able to keep a close watch on some of the activities of Mr. Whitlam and Mr. Uren in the Federal Labor Government".

The Premier agreed with Mr. Hoopers comment. Later he said, *"local authorities often opposed the recommendations of the coordination council for the area. That is one of the reasons why the Bill (the 1978 amendment) has been introduced."*

The opposition member from Mackay, Mr. Casey, closely involved in the debate since 1971, said he had not heard of any case where a Regional Coordination Council imposed its will on a local authority.

The member for Port Curtis, Mr. Prest, a former member of Fitzroy Regional Coordination Council put the blame on local authority representatives in his region who were biased towards the interest of their local authority. He thought there should have been more finance and a longer trial and the Council would then have worked for the benefit of local authorities (Hansard 11/10/78, 2161).

6.5.4 Reasons for terminating the Councils

In Questions upon Notice in September 1978 the Premier said the principal reasons for the termination of the regional coordination councils were costs of operation compared with benefits being achieved, a reorganisation of the Coordinator General's Department's activities, and the fact that they duplicated the functions already carried out by the Local Government Association.

6.5.5 Conclusions in issues and problems

From the debate, the issues which affected regional coordination were,

- (i) Local authorities feared the imposition of a regional planning body would reduce their freedom to act in their own interests. Consequently the local authorities fought to obtain absolute control through their membership.
- (ii) the functions of the Councils were not well understood in Parliament. Different speakers thought they were either coordinating, or advisory or planning Councils. The Premier said the Councils were "advisory only and a discussion forum" and later "the Councils were to prepare strategic plans for the region's development". Mr. Lickiss said "regional planning will be undertaken by the Coordinator General".
- (iii) the government compromised its original objective for a wider representation of local interests on the Council by giving in to the local authorities demands for absolute control. This was justified by the Government as being acceptable to the local authorities and the Federal Grants Commission.

The Council's capacity to initiate and work on regional matters was severely reduced by the absence of other regionally based interests including other state departments involved in public works.

The governments aim to have "cooperation and coordination of effort by state departments and local bodies in works programming" could not be achieved within the limited membership of the Councils. The composition of the Councils was unsatisfactory for the objective of giving regional advice to the government.

- (iv) The composition of the Councils, with a chairman from the public service and elected representatives from local authorities, produced conflict. The members did not like being asked to ratify proposals from public servants.
The members expressed dissatisfaction with the Department because it ignored their advice and gave too much direction, through the Regional Coordinator, to the Councils business.
- (v) the Local Government Association thought the Councils duplicated its functions.
- (vi) the members acted for the interests of their own local authorities and did not discuss matters that were regionally significant for the Department's public works program.

6.6 Synthesis of Problems in Regional Coordination Councils Outline

The problems in the Regional Coordination Councils as they were found in Sections 6.1-6.5 are grouped under four headings below and detailed in Sections 6.6.1-6.6.4.

1. Lack of a strategy for cooperation and coordination
The Councils had no power of authority and the success of the Councils was expected to come mainly from cooperation between state and local bodies.
2. Confusion and breakdown in the Council's functions
The functions of the Councils were not well understood and there was very little effort given to concentrating the Councils business on planned development and the States program of works.
3. Conflict over membership of the Councils
The local authorities, as a group, opposed the idea of wider representation of regionally based bodies on the Councils.
4. Dissatisfaction with the Councils business
The Councillors complained the Department attempted to influence the affairs of the Council too much.

6.6.1 Lack of strategy for cooperation and coordination Strategy

(i) A major problem was the absence of a working strategy to process and implement the regional coordination of public works and planned development through the Councils. The government thought the Councils would work from a basis of cooperation and coordination between local bodies and state departments but it did not develop a strategy with means and skills to make cooperation and coordination a reality. For an example of a strategy see Sections 3.3 and 3.4.5 (i)-(iii).

(ii) Because it did not develop a strategy, the Department's traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical approach imposed centralised planning methods on the Councils. The Department retained the top position with the power of decision and the information from the research studies. This was inconsistent with the administration style needed in coordination (See Section 2.1).

(iii) The Department's approach was inconsistent with the historical political relationship between the State and local government in Queensland which favoured a clear separation of responsibilities and local accountability for local authority activities.

(iv) The Department's emphasis on preparing data gathering research studies was done at the expense of a firm approach to planning. The preoccupation with data collecting studies indicated the Department lacked a conceptual model and method for the regional coordination of planned development and public works.

Cooperation

(v) The Coordinator General had no power to influence other Departments to cooperate with the Council.

(vi) The Government compromised its original objective of achieving cooperation and coordination between state departments and local bodies when it gave in to the Local Government Association's demand for exclusive local authority representation on the Councils.

(vii) The local authorities did not cooperate with the government's original wish for wider regional representation.

(viii) The Councils refused to extend cooperation to other state departments and local bodies by denying them Council membership and the opportunity for discussions and the framing of advice to the Coordinator General.

(ix) The Department and other departments did not consult the Councils during the preparation of the regional research studies or give them the opportunity to review the studies.

Coordination

(x) There was poor coordination between the Councils discussion material, introduced by invited speakers, and the Councils statutory functions. This resulted in Council discussions which had very little application to the Councils purpose.

6.6.2 Confusion and breakdown in the Councils' functions

(i) The functions of the Councils were not understood in the same practical terms by state politicians, local authority politicians and the Department.

There was a lack of even a broad consistent understanding of how the Councils were to help in planned development and the public works program.

(ii) The physical aspects of the public works program were not coordinated or even discussed in the Northern and Far Northern Regional Coordination Councils.

(iii) Some state and local politicians thought the Councils would help to obtain consistent land use planning across local authority boundaries.

(iv) The Councils did not coordinate research for, or review, regional plans. The Moreton Region Growth Strategy was the only regional plan and it was not reviewed by the Council.

(v) Half the business of the Northern Regional Coordination Council seemed to be outside its functions.

(vi) The Council members used the Councils to advance their own local authority interests to the Government.

(vii) The Local Government Association thought the Councils duplicated its functions. This was likely since the Association insisted on exclusive local authority representation on the Council.

(viii) The members of the Council were elected local authority representatives and dissatisfied with their role as advisors to the planners in the Department.

6.6.3 Conflict over membership of the Councils

The wide powers given to the Coordinator General to direct local authorities to carry out or pay for unwanted capital works resulted in a defensive reaction by the local authorities and the Local Government Association.

The local authorities and the Association demanded exclusive representation for local authorities on the Councils. They rationalised their claim with the argument that

- (i) the Council should not take away the functions of local government.
- (ii) the Council should not be a new level of government between the local authorities and the State.

Three problems arose with exclusive local authority representation:

- (i) the government could not get the advice through the Council, from the state departments with regional interests and other local bodies, that it sought when it created the legislation.
- (ii) the state wide policy of exclusive local authority representation placed the Coordinator General in serious conflict with the Far Northern Regional Coordination Council. The Coordinator General was in the paradoxical situation of denying the

Council the use of recent legislation that would bring the Council's membership closer to the Government's original intentions.

- (iii) By adopting a state-wide policy, the opportunity was lost to experiment with a more heterogeneous Council.

6.6.4 Dissatisfaction with the Council's business

- (i) The Local Government Association said it was not aware of any useful purpose being served by Councils.
- (ii) Problems arose when the Chairman disallowed discussion until he clarified his handling of the matter with his head office.
- (iii) The Councillors wanted more autonomy and funding.
- (iv) The Councillors were not satisfied to pass their ideas through the Department. They wanted more direct links to other departments, particularly Treasury.
- (v) Councillors were dissatisfied with the Departments control of the agenda and input material at Council meetings. Many were dissatisfied with the local inputs to discussions at meetings.
- (vi) Councillors complained that the Department ignored their advice.
- (vii) There were complaints that the regional system had been imposed against local opinion.

6.7 Performance of the Councils in their statutory functions

In Section 5.7 it was noted that fairly poor attention was given by the Northern Regional Coordination Council to its functions in Section 47 of the Act. To obtain a view of the general performance of all the Councils towards their functions the nine functions in Sections 47(a), (b), (c), (d)(i)-(v), (e) of the Act were compared with the problems experienced in the Councils in Section 6.6.

The assessment of the Councils' performance of their functions provided a measure of the benefits from the Councils and reasons for their termination in Section 6.8.

6.7.1 Section 47(a): *Promote the coordination of the objectives, policies, organizations and operations of all departments and local bodies, etc.*

The Councils could not carry out this function because their members came only from the local authorities (Section 6.6.3(i), 6.6.2(ii) and (iv), 6.6.1(x)). Except in a very few cases the Councils did not form Advisory Committees with other representatives as allowed in Section 47A of the Act.

The Councils enquired into the objectives, policies, organizations, and operations of some departments when speakers were invited to Council meetings. After meeting the speakers, the Councillors were in a better position to advise their local authorities. No other local bodies were involved in coordination and there was no coordination of departmental activities. The local authorities benefitted from a better understanding of the nature of government programs. There was no coordination. The Coordinator General had no power to call representatives of departments or local bodies to Council meetings (Section 6.6.1(v)).

6.7.2 Section 47(b): continuously review the state of development.

The Councils had no staff to continuously review the state of development and relied on the knowledge of Councillors in their capacity as local authority chairmen to draw attention to development in their areas (Section 6.6.2(vii)). This function was the most productive in the cases of the Northern and Far Northern Councils (See 6.7.5 below).

6.7.3 Section 47(c): Review and investigate submissions made to the Council concerning planned development.

The Councils did not appear to carry out this function because there was no evidence that they received any submissions concerning planned development (Section 6.6.1 (ix), 6.6.2 (ii)).

6.7.4 Section 47(d)(i): recommend to the Coordinator General concerning planned regional development.

The Councils did not make recommendations because they did not receive or investigate any proposals (Section 6.6.2(iv)).

6.7.5 Section 47(d)(ii): recommend to the Coordinator General concerning submissions related to regional development.

The Councils made some submissions as a result of the local authority initiatives in 6.7.2 above. These recommendations were requests for Departmental support for specific developments and usually required an approach by the Department to other departments. The Northern Council made two recommendations (see Section 5.7.4).

6.7.6 Section 47(d)(iii): recommend to the Coordinator General concerning research projects.

This was a more common function of the Councils, but the initiative for these studies usually came from the Chairman.

The funds for the studies came from the Department and no research budgets were put before the Councils. Consequently the Councils had a passive role in research. The Northern Council supported six research studies (see Section 5.7.4) but it did not give any terms of reference or direction.

6.7.7 Section 47(d)(iv): *recommend to the Coordinator General concerning matters referred by the Minister.*
None to consider.

6.7.8 Section 47(d)(v): *recommend to the Coordinator General concerning matters for the Environmental Control Council.*
None.

6.7.9 Section 47(e): *Collect and disseminate information concerning planned regional development.*
None (see Section 6.6.2(ii)).

6.7.10 Summary
The Councils generally carried out only 3 of the ten functions in Section 47 of the Act. There were
 (a) to continuously review the state of development.
 (b) recommend to the Coordinator General concerning submissions relating to regional development.
 (c) recommend to the Coordinator General concerning research projects.

The most successful functions were (a) and (b) because they were based on the Councillors' local knowledge. The most important function, in Section 47(a), was not generally carried out because representatives of other departments and local bodies were not members or advisors of the Council.

The review of plans in planned development was another important function the Councils had no opportunity to exercise.

6.8 Reasons for the termination of the Councils

Figure 6.1 describes the reasons which apparently led to the termination of the Councils.

The first, and a sufficient reason, was the fairly ineffective performance of their functions, summarised in Section 6.7.10, and the likelihood that this standard of performance would continue in the circumstances. Briefly, the Councils failed to give advice. The circumstances which appeared to prevent the Councils carrying out their functions are described below in Section 6.8.1. There were two key elements, the lack of a departmental strategy to make regional coordination work and the preoccupation of the Councillors with local authority interests.

The second reason was the lack of cooperation and coordination between the Department and the Council, and this culminated with the Councils criticising the Department on various points.

The third reason was the dissatisfaction in some Councils and the continuing criticism from the Local Government Association.

6.8.1 Ineffective performance of the Councils

Lack of a strategy or objective

The Department and the Councillors had little common working ground because there was no strategy or common objective to draw their working activities together (except the objective of efficiency in the capital works program but this was not used).

Effect of membership on communication

The local authorities demanded exclusive membership of the Councils in return for their involvement in regional coordination. When the department accepted this tradeoff it effectively removed all avenues for contact, between departments and local bodies through the Councils.

Departmental approach

The Department pursued its "survey/analysis/plan" approach at the "survey" stage by commissioning extensive and expensive consultants reports to obtain the information for its data base. There was very little the Councils were given to do in this exercise except wait until at least 1975 for the first completed reports.

Councillors approach

In the meantime the Councils promoted local authority viewpoints to the Government as best they could through the Coordinator General. The Councils could not give the regionally based advice the Government originally wanted because the membership of the Council was totally biased towards local authority objectives.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the Councils to the Coordinator General were very vague and generalised. The recommendations in almost every instance failed to strike into regional problems or opportunities with a relevance to planned development or the public works program. This lack of incisiveness and direction was reinforced by the absence of any worthwhile inputs from other state government departments and local bodies.

Lack of coordination

The Department's studies were not used in the Councils to coordinate planned development or the public works program. Neither were they used to integrate contiguous town planning schemes or to remove planning inconsistencies across local authority boundaries.

Ineffective Discussions

The lack of a strategy for making the Councils work resulted in the vacuum being filled by a fairly useless round of

visiting government speakers promoting their home programs through the Council to the local authorities. These discussions were ineffectual in terms of the Councils main purpose and were directed towards local authority interests. Throughout all this there was no discussion of development plans or the works programs of local authorities or state/federal departments.

6.8.2 Barriers to cooperation and coordination

The important functions of promoting the coordination of the objectives, policies, etc., of state departments and other local bodies was not possible because the Councillors would only have their representatives as advisors. This was the same relationship the Coordinator General wanted with the Council.

Another important function, reviewing plans for planned development was not exercised because the Department would not release its plans and studies for review by the Councils.

6.8.3 Dissatisfaction

By early 1976 there was dissatisfaction in the Councils and more criticism of the Councils by the Local Government Association. The Local Government Association said the Councils were duplicating its District meetings of local authorities and were not doing anything more useful.

6.8.4 Summary

A chart of the reasons in the Government decision to terminate the Councils is shown on Figure 6.1.

The three principal reasons for the termination of the Regional Coordination Councils appear to have been:

- (i) The Coordinator General was not receiving sufficient benefits in the information and recommendations from the Councils to justify the expenses in the bureaucracy. This evaluation was made at the time when all government bodies were cutting costs and planning units were regarded as the most expendable.

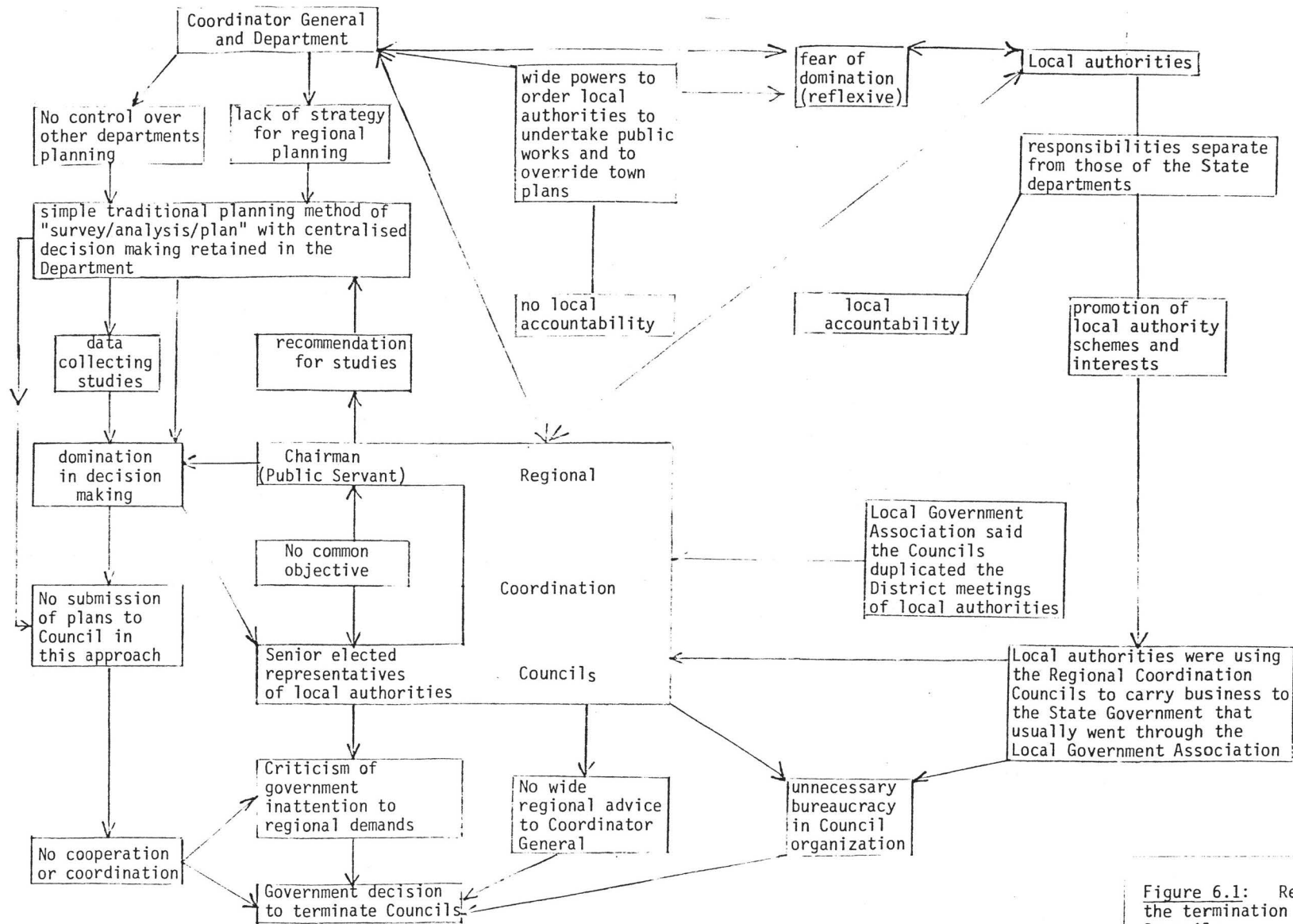


Figure 6.1: Reasons for the termination of the Councils.

The information and recommendations from the Council lacked value because the input material to the Council did not specifically relate to planned development or the public works program.

- (ii) As the Councils gained more experience in regional matters they became more critical of the Department for not acting on their advice.
This situation did not contain the spirit of cooperation which the Government required in the Regional Coordination Councils. The Councils' criticism was a potential political force if the spirit of cooperation was replaced by demands for more government attention to regional needs.
- (iii) the Local Government Association was opposed to the purpose of the Councils. In their view the Councils had become an alternative voice and organisation of local government.
When the Government terminated the Councils it acted quickly and secretly. The Regional Coordinators were unaware that the Councils were to be terminated until the Notice appeared in the Gazette. The Councillors were disappointed and claimed the Councils were disbanded because they gave opinions the Government did not want to hear or have publicised.

7.0 QUESTIONS AND INTERVIEWS

The questions below were prepared for interviews with former members of the Northern Regional Coordination Council, to discover their understanding of the formation, performance and termination of the Council.

7.1 Questions

1. Did the Coordinator General's Department receive any benefits from the Councils?
2. Was the Department criticised by the Council and for what reasons?
3. Why did the Local Government Association oppose the setting up and the continuation of the Councils?
4. Why did the Department introduce the Councils?
5. What was the reaction of the local authorities to the Councils?
6. What were the functions of the Council?
7. Why did the local authorities want exclusive membership of the Councils?
8. Did the Department have a method for making regional coordination work through the Councils?
9. What made the local authorities agree to be involved in the Councils?

10. Was there a common objective for the Councillors and the Department to work on? What was it?
11. What benefits went to the region as a result of the Council?
12. What reasons were there for terminating the Councils?

7.2 Interviews

The interviews provided a second opinion to the conclusions reached indepentently in Section 6.8. The questions were put to six former Councillors and two Shire Clerks where the Councillors could not be contacted. The responses from each of the 8 interviews are shown in Appendix 7.1. The answers are given under the heading of each question.

7.3 Subjective integration of answers

7.3.1

The interviewees were not aware of any direct benefits to the Department. It was clear they thought the Regional Coordinator was placed in the Northern region to provide information about the governments loan and subsidy programs and to transmit local authority priorities to the government through the Coordinator General.

7.3.2

There was no criticism of the Department by the Northern Council. Some interviewees criticised the formality in the conduct of the meetings while others praised the Chairman for his competency, but there was no criticism of the Department or its officers during the life of the Council.

Only one interviewee said the Council itself had criticised the Department.

7.3.3

There was general agreement that the Local Government Association opposed the Councils. There were three reasons for this opposition:

- (i) The majority of local authority aldermen came from small rural areas and were politically opposed to the Federal Labor Party's policy of promoting regional councils. The smaller local authorities regarded the regional councils as a possible threat to their power and performance.
- (ii) The Local Government Association was bypassed when the local authorities submitted their claims to the Grant's Commission through the Regional Coordination Councils with the encouragement of the Coordinator General's Department and the Federal Government. (the interviewees drew little distinction between the Regional Coordination Councils set up under state legislation and the Regional Organization of Councils as they were called by the Grant's Commission).
- (iii) The Councils duplicated the District Conferences of the Local Government Association. The local authority Chairmen preferred the Council meetings because they offered more direct contact with the Government.

7.3.4

The Department introduced the Councils for two reasons:

- (i) the Councils were set up after the election of the Federal Labor Government and in response to that Government's legislation which required regional organizations representing local authorities, for the Grants Commission's purposes (see Appendix 7.2). Most interviewees seemed unaware that the Queensland Government passed the legislation for regional coordination councils in November 1971, a year before the election of the Federal Labor Government and two years before the Councils were created.
- (ii) the state government wanted closer contact with the local authorities and more familiarity with their problems. The interviewees did not refer to the Council's functions in the Act or to the Act itself.

7.3.5

There was no explicit condemnation of the Councils. Most Councillors expressed their appreciation of the Northern Regional Coordinator's efforts to present their problems and interests to the Coordinator General and the Government.

7.3.6

The Council's functions in order of unanimity were:

- (i) discussing and processing submissions by the local authorities to the Grants Commission,
- (ii) submissions to the Department on behalf of local authorities,
- (iii) discussion of planning reports and
- (iv) cooperation between local authorities.

7.3.7

The interviewees were very certain that only the local authorities should have been represented in the Councils. They gave the reason that the Council would otherwise have been dominated by representatives from Townsville or by State government interests. They were all in favour of involving outside interests in ad-hoc committees when their opinion or knowledge was required.

7.3.8

The answers indicated there was no explicit method for coordination in the Northern Region. One answer showed that the Department encouraged the local authorities to carry out forward planning, but for fairly pragmatic reasons this did not succeed.

7.3.9

The local authorities agreed to be involved in the Council because its association with the Coordinator General's Department offered a direct link to government knowledge and decisions and the opportunity to present local authority projects to the Government.

7.3.10

There was no common objective for the Councillors and the Department to work on. The urban and rural local authorities had different problems and objectives and, with one exception, neither had a common objective with the Department.

7.3.11

There were no benefits to the Region from the Council itself. The Regional Coordinator assisted the local authorities with their Grants Commission applications and improved their communication with the Coordinator General's Department.

7.3.12

The reasons given for terminating the Councils were all external to the functions or the business of the Northern Council:

- (i) The most common reason was the Councils were no longer necessary after the removal of the Federal Labor Government. This view complemented previous answers in Sections 7.3.4. that the Councils were set up in response to the regionalism policy of the Federal Labor Government and in particular to the implementation of this policy through grants to regional organizations.
- (ii) the councils in the southern and central divisions of the state were overcritical of the Department and the Government.
- (iii) the regional councils were regarded as unproductive by the Local Government Association and southern local authorities. The Councils were regarded as an instrument of the state government that could be used to limit the effectiveness and influence of local authorities.

7.4

Main points

Some clear points which came from the interviews were:

- (i) there were no known benefits to either the Northern Region or the Department as a direct result of the Council.
- (ii) the Northern Council did not criticise the Department or receive criticism of itself from the Department.

- (iii) the Local Government Association and most local authorities opposed the continuation of the councils.
- (iv) the councils served the requirement of the Grants Commission for regional organizations of local authorities. The Councils were terminated when this requirement no longer applied.
- (v) the councillors were unfamiliar with the Council's functions in the Act.
- (vi) there was no explicit method to make regional coordination work through the Council. Neither was there a common objective for the Council and the Department to work on.
- (vii) the Local authorities used the Council and the Regional Coordinator to promote individual local authority interests to the government.
- (viii) the Councils were terminated for three reasons. They were no longer needed for Grants Commission purposes; the councils outside North Queensland were too critical of the Government and the Department; and the Local Government Association and small local authorities regarded the councils as unproductive and likely to work against the interests of the Association and local government.

The three reasons in (viii) agree fairly closely with those found in Section 6.8.5.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This section summarises the situation leading to the constitution of the Regional Coordination Councils, their operations and the reasons for their termination.

8.1 Summary of aims and events in the Regional Coordination Councils

From discussion it appears that the driving force behind the regional coordination councils was Sir Charles Barton, the Coordinator General from January 1969 to December 1976. His period in office coincided exactly with the publication of information from the Department in favour of regional planning and coordination. The notice of termination of the Councils appeared three months after his retirement.

8.1.1 Pressure for regional coordination

During the 1960's there were two pressures on the Queensland government to do more for regional planning. Community groups and professional institutions were dissatisfied with the impact of some development projects on the environment and they wanted the government to create a state planning authority (see Section 4.2). The second pressure was a pragmatic need the government had for comprehensive advice that would enable it to make decisions in the complex field of public policy and administration for the large resource development projects it was expecting.

The Premier (the Minister for State Development) and the Coordinator General attended the Northern Development Conferences with other state and federal ministers to discuss resource development and infrastructural financing and development (see 1969 Report of Coordinator General).

8.1.2 Reorganization of the Department

The 1970 Report of the Coordinator General said the Department was to be an administrative unit to coordinate aims and to facilitate the cooperative effort of State Government Departments. Regional planning staff were engaged and studies were made for a new definition of regions.

8.1.3 New legislation

The Coordinator General made a submission to the government on ways to satisfy its need for high level planning advice and to meet its earlier election promise to introduce new planning legislation. In November 1971, in the last few weeks of Parliament before the general elections of May 1972, the Government expanded the Act which created the Coordinator General by including regional coordination (with regional councils) and planned development (with state development areas and project boards). The Coordinator General's Report of 1972 emphasized that the legislation was framed broadly to supply the means for comprehensive planning.

8.1.4 Problems with Council membership

After the passing of the Act, Mr. Lickiss M.L.A. and Department officers discussed the Department's⁹ proposed regional boundaries and council membership rules with the local authorities. The local authorities and the Local Government Association were concerned that the wide powers of the Coordinator General would downgrade local government. The local authorities agreed to be involved in the Councils but wanted exclusive membership. This requirement and some minor regional boundary changes were accepted by the government.

8.1.5 Premiers ideas not incorporated

In February 1973 the Premier said in a press statement that the Northern Regional Coordination Council (the first Council) would have a membership of 15, giving the local authorities a majority of membership (actually a minority since there were only 7 local authorities in the Region). His press statement said the functions of the Councils included "to prepare strategic plans for the regions development". This function was not

included in the Act of 1971 or the amendments to the Act a month after his press statement in March 1973, and its omission was not reported in the debate on the Act. In the debate of the Act in 1971 and its amendments in 1973 and 1974, the opposition focussed on environmental problems in the south east corner of the state and not on the problems of regional coordination.

8.1.6 Timing of the Regional Councils and the Grants Commission

The Northern Region was gazetted in June 1973. The Regulations to the Act were gazetted in July 1973 and these included some formal public procedures to be followed before the regions were gazetted. It is not known whether the regulations were ever used in the declaration of the remaining 9 regions in October 1973.

The appointments of the Regional Coordinator (Northern) and the seven members of the Northern Regional Coordination Council (the first) were made in August and September 1973, respectively. These members were the mayors or Shire Chairmen of the seven local authorities in the Northern Region. The Northern Council held its first meeting in November 1973 and the other 9 Councils held their initial meetings in early 1974.

These events were closely linked in time with the election of the Federal Labor Government in December 1972, the passing of the Federal Government's Grants Commission Act in June 1973 and its proclamation in September 1973 (see last paragraph in Section 4.2.3 for a possible source of Federal policy). The Grants Commission was given power to inquire into and report upon "applications for financial assistance by States and by approved regional organizations of local government bodies". There was a very strong financial inducement for the Queensland government to comply with the Grants Commissions requirement for a regional council of local authorities. So Mr. Lickiss said, in September 1974 in the debate of the 1974 amendment to the Act, "it is obvious that if membership is kept to local government representation the regional advisory councils as such will also be acting in that capacity in relation to the Grants Commission".

In an earlier debate in August 1974 Mr. Lickiss said, after a comment on the exclusive membership of the Councils by local authorities,

"I think the Grants Commission would like it this way because it could then deal quite conveniently with local government representation.

It appears now that the government was heavily influenced by the Grants Commission when it formed the Councils and appointed the members. Another possible factor was the Federal Labor Government's intention that local authorities be given a say at the Loan Council, because this would also require regional representation.

8.1.7 Business of the Northern Regional Coordination Council

The business of the Northern Regional Coordination Council was analysed in Section 5 and summarised in Section 5.7. The Council did not initiate or review any strategic or regional plans and half its business topics were unrelated to its functions in the Act. Only a quarter of the Council's business topics, that fell within the Council's functions, were followed by a recommendation to the Coordinator General. Most topics were simply discussed without a resolution.

Discussion of the Grants Commission was a very minor part of the Council's minutes.

Councillors expressed their dissatisfaction with the operations of the Northern Council through 1975 and 1976 (see Section 5.6 and Table 5.2). There was greater dissatisfaction in the minutes of the Far Northern Regional Council and there were reports in Hansard of dissatisfaction in Councils in the Central Division of the state.

The Council minutes do not support the majority response to the questionnaire (Section 7 and Appendix 7.1) that the Councils in North Queensland did not criticise the Department.

8.1.8 Councillors opinions

The response to the interviews (Appendix 7.1) indicated that the termination of the Councils coincided with the removal of the Federal Labor Government and was a result of anti-Labor and anti-centralist feeling in the small local authorities. The interviewees said the regional councils were associated with the Federal Labor Government and were disliked in the emotional anti-centralist feeling that existed then. The interviewees seemed to discount the fact that the Councils were created by state legislation.

The depth of this feeling was shown at the Federal elections in early 1976 when only one Federal Labor politician was elected in Queensland.

8.1.9 Demise of regionalism in federal policy

With the removal of the Federal Labor Government in November 1975 the Grants Commission ceased its inquiries into submissions from local authorities. The Federal Liberal/Country Party Government passed a new Act to repeal the sections of the Grants Commission Act that referred to regional organizations (see Appendix 7.2). The Federal Government policy from December 1975 was that "regions will not be used by the Commonwealth as centralist instruments to bypass the states".

8.1.10 State Grants Commission

After the Premiers Conference in June 1976, Queensland and other state governments entered into an arrangement with the Federal Grants Commission to establish Grants Commissions in the states to distribute financial grants to local authorities.

The Queensland Parliament passed the Local Government Grants Commission Act in 1976. The Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland, was constituted with representatives from local government and from the Local Government Association.

It held its first inquiries and received submissions from local authorities between May and June 1977.

The first Chairman of the Commission was Sir Charles Barton, the former Coordinator General from 1969 to December 1976.

8.1.11 Reconstitution of the Councils

The first term of the Councils expired on 30 June 1976 (see Appendix 4.6). The reasons for reconstituting the Councils from July 1976 after the Grants Commission issued its third and final report "Grants to Local Authorities to June 1976" are considered below.

Reasons for the second term appointment

The Councils were reconstituted until July 1977 for three reasons:

- (i) The Queensland and Federal Governments were still working out new agreements for the method to be used to distribute grants to local authorities and were operating in the meantime with existing administrative arrangements, which included the Councils.
- (ii) The Coordinator General had been the initiator of regional coordination and by deferring the termination of the Councils until shortly after his retirement it was less obvious where the real decision came from.
- (iii) The Queensland Grants Commission commenced its work in May 1977.

The preceding arguments reasonably support the view that an important reason for the Councils' existence was lost when they were no longer required for the distribution of grants to local authorities. This occurred after the third and last distribution of grants to local authorities under the Grants Commission Act 1973, in June 1976.

8.1.12 Policy of new Coordinator General

The new Coordinator General was quoted in a question in Parliament (Hansard 17 March 1977, p. 2454) as saying to a meeting of the Fitzroy Regional Council on 2 March that he would prefer to deal with local authorities separately rather than collectively. The Premier in his reply said the question of the future of the regional coordination councils was receiving consideration by the government.

A source with a close working involvement with the Councils said the new Coordinator General was required by the Government to recall the Regional Coordinators and agree to the termination of the Councils as a condition of his appointment in January 1977. There was also a noticeable downturn in the work communications from the office of the Department, immediately after the retirement of Sir Charles Barton.

The same source believed the decision to terminate the Councils came from the Premier. He thought the reason for the termination of the Councils was the complaint from members of local authorities that they did not like having the Coordinator General imposed between them and their political contacts in the Government in Brisbane.

They complained to this effect to powerful politicians such as the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and the Treasurer. The Chairman of the Local Government Association brought feeling against the regional council concept to the Local Government Minister.

The Councils and the regions were terminated from July 1977 by a notice in the Gazette (see Appendix 4.7)

Summary

The life of the Regional Coordination Councils coincided with the Grants Commission requirement for regional organizations of local government units (Sections 8.1.6, 8.1.9, 8.1.10). The state government acknowledged that membership of the Councils was arranged to satisfy the Grants Commission's needs.

8.2 Termination of the Councils

8.2.1 Evidence from written research

The research up to Section 6.8.5 produced three reasons for the termination of the Councils:

- (i) the lack of value in the recommendations from the Council to the Coordinator General. The Councils didn't justify their expense.
- (ii) Some Councils were criticising the Coordinator General's Department and the Government.
- (iii) The Local Government Association was opposed to the Councils.

8.2.2 Evidence from interviews

The interviews (Sections 7.3.4, 7.3.12) with former Councillors supported the statement (Section 8.1.11) that the Councils were terminated when they were no longer needed for the Grants Commission. The interviews (Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.10, 7.3.11, 7.3.3, 7.3.9) supported the first and third reasons in Section 8.2.1 above but left some doubt about the second reason (Sections 7.3.2, 7.3.5). The interviews also gave some understanding of the possible causes for the impression in Section 5.7 that the Councils business had very little to do with its functions in the Act (Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.4(ii), 7.3.6, 7.3.8, 7.3.10).

8.2.3 Conclusion

The reasons for the termination of the Regional Coordination Councils in their probable order of importance were:

- (i) The decision of the Federal Government not to use regional organizations of local authorities for the purposes of the Grants Commission after June 1976.

The relationship between the Regional Coordination Councils and the Grants Commission was explained in Section 8.1.

(ii) The Councils did not justify their expense

The interviews showed there were no known benefits to either the Northern Region or the Department as a direct result of the Council. This conclusion may be generalised to the other Councils because the Council in the Northern Region was regarded as one of the more successful.

The interviews also showed four reasons why the business of the Northern Council failed to bear much resemblance to the functions of the Councils in the Act:

The councillors were unfamiliar with the functions in the Act; there was no explicit method or strategy to make regional coordination work through the Council; there was no common objective for the Council and the Coordinator Generals Department to work on; and the local authorities used the Council and the Regional Coordinator to promote individual local authority interests to the government.

It was noted in Section 6.1.1 that the Departments approach towards planning did not match the politically acceptable norms in Queensland. The result was the Department concentrated on its studies while the Councillors concentrated on their local authority proposals. Each was trying to achieve regional planning but from different directions. The Department was working from the whole to the part (Section 4.6) while the Councillors were pushing their individual projects through the Regional Coordinator, to the Department for a regional solution of their needs. There were no benefits from a joint cooperative exercise between local authorities and the Department, through the Councils, because they were working in opposite directions (see Section 6.1.4).

A very general outline of the administration needed to get benefits from coordination was given in Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

(iii) The Local Government Association was opposed to the Councils.

The reasons for the Association's opposition were:

The Councils were duplicating its function of making representations to the state government and the Grants Commission; the Councils were making the District Conferences of the Association less useful; the numerous smaller local authorities were voicing their opposition to the regional councils through the Association; the regional councils might downgrade the local authorities if they ever received any funds or executive power.

Criticism

No firm conclusion could be drawn to the seriousness of any criticism of the Department by Council. There was general agreement amongst all those interviewed that the Councils and local authorities in North Queensland did not criticise the Department. They also thought there was too much criticism of the Department from southern and central Councils and local authorities. The minutes of the meetings of the Northern and Far Northern Councils (Sections 5.6, 6.3) do however show considerable criticism of the Department because it was not carrying out the wishes of the Councils. The Coordinator General made a special visit to both Councils to resolve the issue in February 1976, and the matter was discussed in Parliament (Section 6.5.4).

Basic deficiency in the Councils

An important point found in the study was the Department omitted to develop a strategy to make regional coordination work in the Councils (Section 4.6.3). In the absence of this strategy, the membership and the business of the Councils evolved to satisfy the needs of the local authorities and to gain the financial benefits from the Grants Commission.

The restricted membership of the Councils meant they could not carry out their most important functions in Section 47 of the Act. They became a forum for discussion of local authority matters

because they were isolated from state departments and other local bodies. There was wide support for the expected benefits from regional coordination but apparently there was no strategy or objective to achieve a coordination of planning activities either between or within different levels of government. The objective of "efficiency in the use of resources in the public works program" was a possible unifying motive which could have brought the Department and the Councillors into a more direct and practical working relationship within the Council (see Section 4.6.4).

Recommendation

A requirement before regional councils are again created should be more local research into the objectives of regional coordination and planning and the strategies and institutions needed to bring the objectives into operation.

The difficulty in Queensland has been the lack of a common understanding of what coordination can achieve.

The state's administration is historically not designed for coordination. The administration has a vertical organizational structure with centralised decision making within each department. The departments have separate functions which they jealously guard and they are formally coordinated at Cabinet and through inter-departmental committees. Coordination at regional level where physical, administrative and financial matters become more connected, requires that information be shared between agencies so that their separate actions can be integrated to produce the desired results more efficiently. The Regional Coordination Councils were deficient as information sharing devices because their membership was restricted to the local authorities and the Coordinator General's Department.

The State Government, through its Department of the Coordinator General had not convinced the local authorities that coordination would be anything but an intrusion into local authority responsibilities.

APPENDIX 4.1: SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL LEGISLATION OF 1971

Part 1. Preliminary

Section 4: Repealed the Act of 1938 and its amendments to 1970.

Section 5: Defined "local body" to mean a local authority, a person or body appointed or constituted under any Act to perform a financial or other function for the local public, and a local body in the Local Bodies Loans Guarantee Acts. "Development" was defined as the use of land or water and included physical matters affecting works on land or in water.

Part 2. Administration

Section 12: The Coordinator General represented the Crown and exercised all the powers, privileges, rights and remedies of the Crown.

Section 13: The Coordinator General's functions were to undertake and commission such investigations, prepare such plans, devise such ways and means, give such directions, and take such steps and measures, as he thought necessary or desirable to secure the proper planning, preparation, execution, coordination, control and enforcement of a programme of works, planned developments and environmental controls for the State.

Section 16: It was the duty of local bodies and state government departments to cooperate with the Coordinator General.

Section 20: The Coordinator General could employ technical advisers.

Part 3. Program of works

Section 22: The Coordinator General could plan and carry out part or all the program of works for the whole or part of the State.

Section 27: Applications by a local body for money or a loan guarantee from Treasury to carry out proposed works, were submitted to the Coordinator General for his recommendation.

Section 28: The objectives of the comprehensive program of works were the development of the state on an equitable basis with concern for employment, the environment, social conditions, regional potential, establishment of a policy of coordinated relationship among state departments and local bodies, and cooperation and assistance from private industry to improve employment.

Part 4. Environmental Coordination

Sections 29 and 32: The purpose of the Environmental Control Council, representing 20 state departments, was to coordinate the environmental work of state departments, local authorities and others, carry out research, provide information and advise the government.

Part 5. Regional Coordination

Section 38: The State could be partially or wholly divided into regions by Order in Council.

Section 39: Regional Coordinators received their powers, functions and duties from the Coordinator General.

Section 40: Regional Coordination Councils were established for a region when the members were appointed in the Gazette. The Chairman of the Council was the Coordinator General or his delegate.

Section 41: Regional Coordination Council members were appointed for three years.

Section 42: The Coordinator General could give technical and administrative assistance to a Regional Coordination Council.

Section 47: The functions of a Regional Coordination Council were to:

- (a) promote the coordination of state departments and local bodies in planned development.
- (b),(c) review the state of development and investigate submissions for planned development.
- (d) recommend to the Coordinator General concerning planned regional development, research, matters referred by the Minister, matters for the Environmental Control Council and
- (e) collect and distribute information concerning planned regional development, in respect of the area for which it was established.

Part 6. Planned Development

Planned Development was the longest part in the Act and contained 44 sections in 5 Divisions. It gave very wide and general powers to the Coordinator General to carry out works and put him in a position of potential conflict with the interests of local authorities.

Division 1

Sections 48, 49: Provided for the declaration, variation and cessation of state development areas.

Sections 50-52: Provided for the preparation, execution or abrogation of a development scheme.

Sections 53,54: Provided for the acquisition and disposal of land.

Section 55: Allowed an approved development scheme to replace existing land use controls. (such as town planning schemes and policies).

Division 2: allowed the Minister to order, on the Coordinator General's recommendation, that particular works be undertaken by or on behalf of local bodies. If a local body did not carry out the order, the Minister could direct the Coordinator General or a Project Board to carry out the works at the expense of the local body. The local body could borrow money to carry out the order or it could make representations against the order through the Minister. The Governor in Council could appoint an Inquiry to make a recommendation on the issue to him.

Division 3: allowed the Coordinator General to undertake works approved by Order in Council.

Division 4: provided for the establishment and membership of a Project Board for any works. The sections in this Division were almost identical with those for the Regional Coordination Councils in Part 5. The exception was that Project Boards had the power and duties given in Order in Council and were able to raise loans (Section 77).

Division 5: gave the Coordinator General special powers incidental to planned development to allow him to take and sell land, transfer works, undertake private works, occupy and do things on land, and alter water surface levels.

Part 7. Finance Provisions

Sections 92-101: dealt with the raising of finance for works on behalf of the Coordinator General and Project Boards.

Part 8. Miscellaneous Provisions

This part contained three Divisions, the specific powers and duties of the Coordinator General, his legal liability, and the enforcement of the Act. It did not contain anything relating to regional coordination other than Section 122, the making of Regulations.

APPENDIX 4.2: SUMMARY OF AMENDING LEGISLATION OF 1973

Section 38: An Order in Council could declare, vary or revoke a region in the procedure prescribed in the Regulations.

Section 39: Regions were assigned to appointed regional coordinators. This section replaced the previous Section 39 where regional coordinators were appointed to specific regions.

Section 40: The Governor in Council could declare by notice in the Gazette that a Regional Coordination Council ceased to exist.

Section 41: Members of Councils could be appointed for less than 3 years.

Section 47A: This was a new section that allowed a Council to appoint executive committees and advisory committees. The Advisory Committee could include non-members of the Council.

APPENDIX 4.3: SUMMARY OF AMENDING LEGISLATION OF 1974

Section 32: The Regional Coordination Councils were included in the list of bodies whose activities in environmental matters were to be coordinated by the Environmental Control Council.

Section 40: was expanded by the following:

- (a) local authorities could nominate one of their members for appointment to the Regional Coordination Council.
- (b) The Council could recommend that a person of a class specified by it be appointed to the Council.
- (c) The Minister was to give the local authorities the date by which they were to nominate one of their members to the Council.
- (d) a member of a local authority who was nominated by the local authority after the due date, was appointed as a member of the Council.

Section 41: The term of appointment of a class member or a member who was a late appointee was limited by the term for which the Council was constituted.

Section 42: A local authority representative had membership of the Council only while he had membership of the local authority. Members of the Council, other than the Chairman, could appoint a delegate. A local authority could replace a representative if it was not satisfied with him.

Section 43: A local authority could nominate a local authority member to fill a vacancy on the Council.

Section 44: The Council could appoint a member to preside at a meeting if the Chairman was absent.

Sections 29-37: were repealed and replaced by a new Section 29,

- (a) the Coordinator General was to coordinate state departments and local bodies in ensuring that proper account was taken of both the beneficial and detrimental environmental effects in the physical, biological or social systems,
- (b) the major environmental effects and the policies and administrative arrangements approved by the Minister were both to be taken into account by any approving authority when it considered a development application or the undertaking of works.

Sections 38 to 47A: The whole of Part 5, Regional Coordination was repealed and not replaced.

Section 122: was repealed so that it was no longer necessary that Regulations be published in the Gazette or laid in the Legislative Assembly for possible disallowance.

APPENDIX 4.5: DECLARATION OF THE NORTHERN REGION

State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1973

ORDER IN COUNCIL

At the Executive Building, Brisbane, the twenty-eighth day of June, 1973

Present :

His Excellency the Governor in Council

WHEREAS by the *State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1973*, it is amongst other things provided that the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council made on the recommendation of the Minister, declare any part of the State or of any area over which the State claims jurisdiction to be a region for the purposes of the said Act: And whereas the Honourable the Premier the Minister of the Crown charged with the administration of the said Act, has recommended that the part of the State or area as aforesaid described in Schedule "A" hereto and delineated on the plan contained in Schedule "B" hereto (hereinafter referred to as the "Northern Region") be declared a region for the purposes of the said Act: Now, therefore, His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council and in pursuance of the provisions of the said Act doth hereby declare the Northern Region to be a region, for the purposes of the said Act.

And the Honourable the Premier is to give the necessary directions herein accordingly.

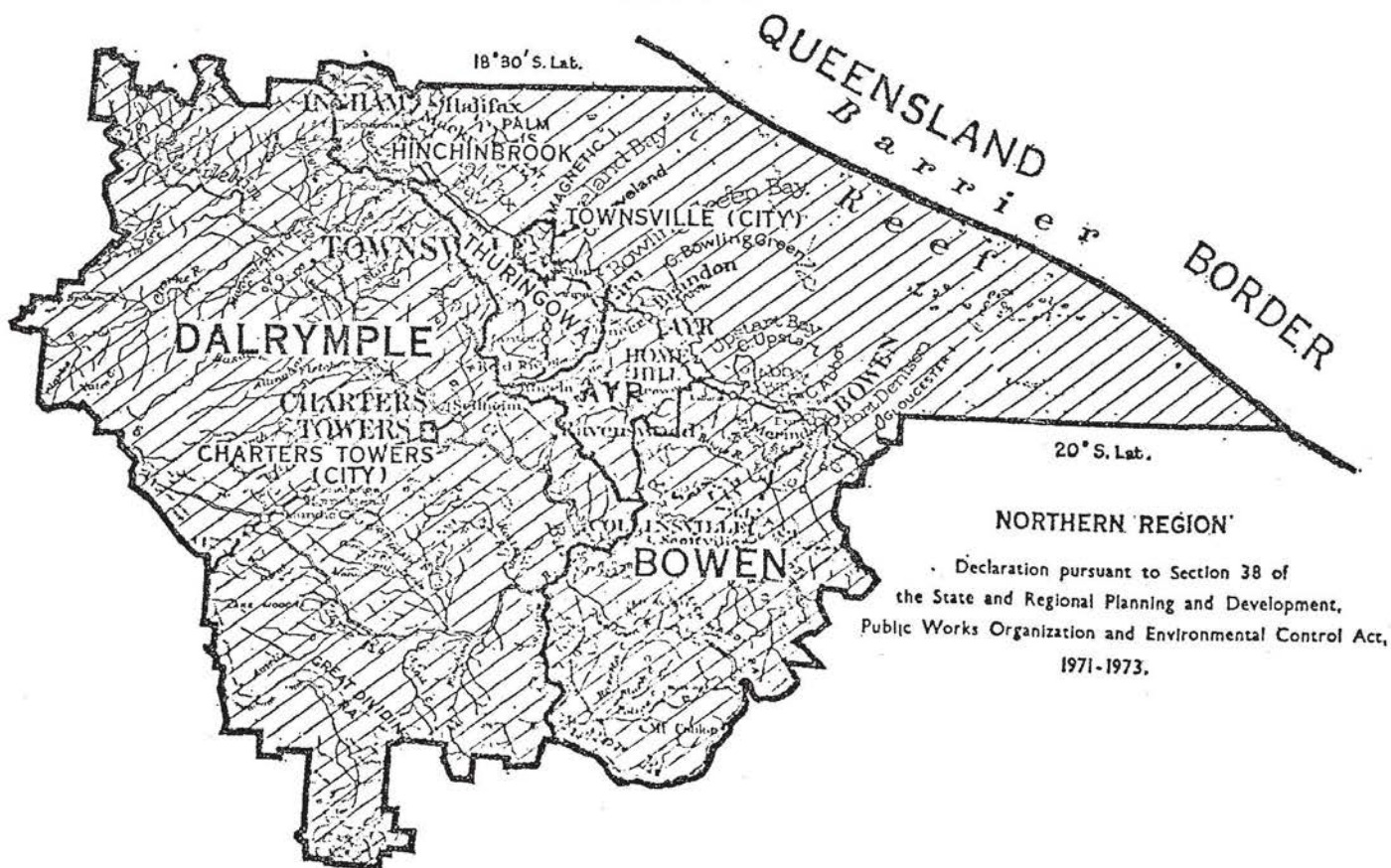
J. W. J. GRIFFIN, Acting Clerk of the Council.

SCHEDULE "A"

The following Local Authority areas constituted under the *Local Government Act 1936-1973*, together with the area extending eastward from high-water mark to the Queensland Border between 18° 30' South Latitude and 20° South Latitude as delineated on the plan contained in Schedule "B".

The Shire of Ayr
The Shire of Bowen
The City of Charters Towers
The Shire of Dalrymple
The Shire of Hinchinbrook
The Shire of Thuringowa
The City of Townsville

SCHEDULE "B"



Co-ordinator-General's Department,
Brisbane, 16th August, 1973.

HIS Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, in pursuance of the provisions of the *Public Service Act 1922-1968*, and upon the recommendation of the Public Service Board, has approved that

GLENWYN COLIN SANDERSON, B.E.(Civil), B.A., M.I.E. Aust., M.I.C.E., Senior Engineer (Civil), Department of Electricity Supply, Brisbane,

be appointed Regional Co-ordinator (Northern), Co-ordinator-General's Department, Townsville.

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J. BJELKE-PETERSEN, Premier.

Co-ordinator-General's Department,
Brisbane, 13th September, 1973.

HIS Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Premier and in pursuance of the provisions of the *State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1973*, doth hereby appoint

RICHARD WILLOUGHBY ROSSITER;

STANLEY CLIFFORD YARDLEY;

THOMAS HARRIS ARTHUR TITLEY;

PETER ADAM BLACK;

ALFRED JOHN ANDREWS;

WILLIAM CHARLES DE COURCEY;

MAXWELL DAVID HOOPER,

to be members of the Northern Regional Co-ordination Council in respect of the area known as the Northern Region. The term of appointment shall be until 30th June, 1976.

J. BJELKE-PETERSEN.

Gov. Gaz., 15th September, 1973, No. 13, page 271

Co-ordinator-General's Department,
Brisbane, 24th June, 1976.

THE Deputy Governor, for and on behalf of His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Premier and in pursuance of the provisions of the *State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974*, doth hereby make appointments to the respective Regional Co-ordination Councils as outlined hereunder:—

NORTHERN REGION

Far North Regional Co-ordination Council

DAVID THOMAS DE JARLAIS;

GORDON ALBERT KATTENBERG;

JAMES PATRICK BYRNE;

GRAHAM D'ARCY GALLOP;

JOHN EDWARD PICKERING;

ONSLOW RUTHERFORD ANDREWS, M.B.E.;

BERNARD VYNE DALEY;

STANLEY JOHN COLLINS;

ROY DICKSON;

VERNON GOOD ATKINSON;

CEDRIC DAVIES;

GEORGE KENNETH ALLEY;

KENNETH PERCIVAL HALL BROWN.

Northern Regional Co-ordination Council

THOMAS HARRIS ARTHUR TITLEY;

PERCY JOHN ROBERT TUCKER;

FREDERICK JOHN MILLS;

STANLEY CLIFFORD YARDLEY;

PETER ADAM BLACK;

WILLIAM OVEREND GARBUTT, O.B.E.;

DANIEL THOMAS JAMES GLEESON.

The term of appointment shall be for three years expiring on 30th June, 1979.

J. BJELKE-PETERSEN.

TERMINATION OF REGIONS AND REGIONAL COORDINATION
COUNCILS IN 1977

Co-ordinator-General's Department,
Brisbane, 24th March, 1977.

HIS Excellency the Administrator of the Government, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, in pursuance of the provisions of the *State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974*, doth hereby declare terminated with effect on and from 1st July, 1977, the following Regional Co-ordination Councils:—

NORTHERN REGION

Far North Regional Co-ordination Council;
Northern Regional Co-ordination Council;
North West Regional Co-ordination Council.

CENTRAL REGION

Fitzroy Regional Co-ordination Council;
Central West Regional Co-ordination Council;
Mackay Regional Co-ordination Council.

SOUTHERN REGION

Moreton Regional Co-ordination Council;
Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Co-ordination Council;
Darling Downs Regional Co-ordination Council;
South West Regional Co-ordination Council.

J. BJELKE-PETERSEN.

*State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works
Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974*

ORDER IN COUNCIL

At the Executive Building, Brisbane, the ninth day of
June, 1977

Present:

His Excellency the Governor in Council

HIS Excellency the Governor acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Premier and in pursuance of the provisions of the *State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act 1971-1974* doth hereby revoke, as from the first day of July, 1977,

- (a) the Order in Council of the twenty-eighth day of June, 1973, relating to the Declaration of the Northern Region pursuant to section 38 of the said Act and published in the *Gazette* of the thirtieth day of June, 1973; and,
- (b) the Orders in Council of the fourth day of October, 1973, relating to the Declaration of Regions pursuant to section 38 of the said Act and published in the *Gazette* of the sixth day of October, 1973.

And the Honourable the Premier is to give the necessary directions herein accordingly.

KEITH SPANN, Clerk of the Council.

APPENDIX 7.1: INTERVIEWS

Individual answers to the questionnaire:

- 1: *Did the Coordinator General's Department receive any benefits from the Council?*

Answers

- (i) Not known.
- (ii) No. The Council worked reasonably well when it settled down.
- (iii) Couldn't think of any benefits.
- (iv) Don't know.
- (v) The benefits for the Department were the Regional Coordinator's personal contact with the local authorities and greater movement of planning of the local authorities works program. The Regional Coordinator could make on site visits to inspect local authority problems and proposals.
- (vi) The Regional Coordinator was able to make a better assessment of disaster damage and the amount of assistance needed by local authorities to carry out reconstruction after a disaster.
The Regional Coordinator could explain at a personal level aspects of loan programs to the local authorities. The Department was better able to assess the local authorities future or forward programs.
- (vii) Not known; but there was quite a lot of input to the investigations such as the Transportation Study and the Water Resources Study.
- (viii) Failed to see any benefits.

2. *Was the Department criticised by the Council and for what reasons?*

(i) The Chairman should not have been a public servant. He was under the direction of the Department and insisted on running the meeting in an officious manner. The Chairman was making reports and presenting them to the Council as his decisions. He did not allow discussion of his decisions.

The Department did not present any long range plans for the Council to discuss.

The Councillors were stifled by the Northern and Central Regional Coordinators because they conducted the meetings according to official procedures and formal controls on debate.

(ii) The Department was criticised in the southern regions and this upset the Government.

The Regional Coordinator worked hard and was always well prepared.

The Councils propositions were sound and there was no bad feedback from the Department.

(iii) No. The Regional Coordinator had his topics well prepared and researched.

(iv) The Chairman, a public servant was imposed on the Councillors by the Department.

There was no antagonism towards the Chairman. Each local authority clerk was able to sit alongside the Councillor and discuss matters in an informed way without actually voting.

(v) Not enough time for proper discussion of cases.

The meetings were run on "top executive" lines which encouraged the Councillors to promote the interests of their individual local authorities.

The area of debate was too limited.

The Councillors were impatient with the Department's lack of acknowledgement of their ideas.

- (vi) More criticism came from Councillors who weren't really familiar with the aims of the Department and feared the effect of the Departments activities on their own local authorities.
Some members resisted having the Department's Regional Coordinator as Chairman.
The Regional Coordinator was a "live wire" with the ability to get the best out of people.
- (vii) The Councillors appreciated what the Department was doing and did not criticise it. The Regional Coordinator was dedicated to achieving something in the job he occupied.
- (viii) Yes. The Department was not prepared to put up any money for programs suggested by the Council. Having an employee of the Department as Chairman, created a "big brother" impression at meetings.

3: *Why did the Local Government Association oppose the setting up and the continuation of the Councils?*

Answers

- (i) Unaware that the Local Government Association opposed the Councils.
- (ii) The Local Government Association did discuss a subject in opposition to the Councils at its Mt. Isa Conference.
The Local Government Association Conference coordinated the quarterly or half yearly Conferences of the Western, Far Northern, Northern, etc, Districts.
The Association may have regarded the Regional Coordination Councils as a duplication of its District Conferences.
- (iii) -
- (iv) The majority of local authorities in the Local Government Association are small rural shires. Politically, they were opposed to the Federal Labor Government and did not like its policy of regional councils.

The Association processed the first applications from Local Authorities to the Federal Grants Commission. After that the Coordinator General's Department processed the applications.

The Association may have been antagonistic towards regionalism because it was interfering in what the Association thought it could do.

- (v) The Association feared the abolition of the local authorities and their replacement by regional councils.
- (vi) There was not much discussion of the Councils within the Association.
- (vii) The dissatisfaction of some local authorities in the south may have been due to the quality of the regional coordinators and/or the quality of the local authority representatives who failed to see the advantages in the Councils.
- (viii) The Association thought the state government was trying to downgrade the local authorities by allowing the Department to make decisions for the local authorities. Can't get people to think regionally.

4: *Why did the Department introduce the Councils?*

Answers

- (i) To prepare information to go to the Grants Commission. There was confusion as to what the Council was meant to be discussing when the Councillors went to a Regional Coordination Council meeting and later, on the same day, to a Regional Organization of Councils meeting.
- (ii) The State Government wanted closer liaison with the Chairmen of the local authorities and more familiarity with their problems.

The Councils were doing a better job than the District Conferences of the Local Government Association in contacting the Government. The District Conference resolutions had to go through the Local Government Association and its executive where there was delay, and alterations were made to the resolutions. The District Conferences had lower ranking alderman and discussion always focussed on some local authority's individual problem.

- (iii) The concept of regional coordination was promoted by the Coordinator General and he made a condition in his appointment that the Government agree to the setting up of regional coordination councils.
- (iv) The regional councils were set up in response to the Federal Labor Governments regionalism policy. The Councils were brought into operation after the election of the Whitlam Government.
- (v) The Department hoped to have better relations with the local authorities by having it's representative, the Regional Coordinator, in closer contact with them. The North Queensland Local Government Association wanted more northern autonomy in local government and this was an incentive for establishing the Northern Regional Council.
- (vi) The Regional Coordination Councils and the Regional Organization of Councils with common boundaries were established simultaneously as a result of the Federal Governments requirement for regions for the Grants Commission. The Regional Councils, the Regional Coordinator and Federal Government officers helped the local authorities put their cases together to the Grants Commission. Otherwise the local authorities would have been floundering.
- (vii) The Councils were basically a forum for discussion.
- (viii) The Coordinator General, Sir Charles Barton, persuaded the government. He didn't like the lack of a common plan across adjoining local authorities.

- 5: *What was the reaction of the local authorities to the Councils?*

Answers

- (i) Councillors were unhappy that they could not do more than recommend to the Coordinator General's Department. Councillors were glad to have a direct link into the Department. This line of communication was quicker and more direct than the previous channels which relied on memos to Brisbane, personal contact with visiting Ministers and special trips by Councillors to Brisbane. There was a problem with a fixed agenda for meetings because it left no opportunity for the casual introduction and general discussion of regional matters. The local authority clerks were needed for advice but the Chairman insisted they sit at the back of the room and only talk to Councillors through the permission of the Chairman.
- (ii) The Councillors were happy with the matters discussed and the local authorities reacted favourably to the Council. The Chairman helped get the best out of the members. The Councillors did not lobby each other and so there was a fair discussion of any matters brought up. The Chairman was strong and guided the Council but he wasn't overbearing.
- (iii) -
- (iv) -
- (v) The local authorities appreciated the closer contact with the Department through personal contact with the Regional Coordinator. Some local authorities complained they weren't getting their fair share of financial assistance from the Department's recommendations. Some local authorities were reluctant to take the first step to be involved in the Councils and this was generally due to their opposition to change.

- (vi) -
- (vii) The local authorities in North Queensland were very satisfied.
- (viii) The local authorities reacted by trying to get something for themselves individually. The Council was used to put pressure on the government.

6: *What were the functions of the Council?*

Answers

- (i) To let the local authorities go to the Coordinator General with their shopping list.
- (ii) to put submissions to the government.
- (iii) to work in with the Grants Commission.
- (iv) The Council's main business topics were the Grants Commission submissions and the planning reports prepared by the Cities Commission for Townsville as the next growth centre.
- (v) Grants Commission work was an important part of the Councils business.
- (vi) The aim was to get a greater degree of cooperation between the local authorities to overcome their tendency to push individual self interests in their dealings with the government.
The idea of plant pools of specialised equipment was hoped for by local authorities to get economies of scale through cooperation; but local authorities don't like change and move more by evolution than by revolution.
- (vii) The function of the Council was to provide a discussion forum for topics such as urban water supply, public transport, libraries, growth centres and strategy plans.
- (viii) Never found out. Supposed to make submissions to the Government.

7: *Why did the local authorities want exclusive membership of the Council?*

- (i) Without exclusive membership the local authorities may have been outvoted.
Representation from Harbour Boards, regional electricity authorities, state departments, etc., would increase the representation of the biggest urban area.
The Townsville representative tried to get more representation, on a population basis, at the Council's first meeting. This proposal was put down and everyone was careful to retain an even spread of voting power across the local authorities in the region.
- (ii) The Council could coopt the services of other bodies but didn't want them as members. The local authority representatives would have lost their identity. Some Councillors had membership of other bodies such as harbour boards, regional electricity authorities, etc., and could speak on matters that related to those bodies. The Council would be unmanageable for its purpose if there was more membership.
- (iii) -
- (iv) The Councillors did not want members who were unaccountable to the electors or nominated members from government put there to protect that government's interests.
- (v) -
- (vi) Didn't want the Council snowed under with appointed people for at least the first two terms of the Council. The elected persons should sit on the Council.
- (vii) The Council's function was purely a local authority function, not a general public forum. The Regional Coordinator went along with this idea and was prepared to accept the majority decision. He wasn't dictatorial and came up with good suggestions. Other public bodies, police, development bureau, bus companies, etc., were involved in the transport study.

(viii) No advantage in having a greater number of members.

8: *Did the Department have a method for making regional coordination work through the Councils?*

Answers

(i) Not known.

(ii) The Regional Coordinator issued some guidelines and redirected the discussion if it strayed from the point. There weren't any explicit criteria to decide whether a discussion was relevant to regional coordination.

(iii) -

(iv) It was hard to keep to a particular topic and the discussion wandered as it does in any local authority meeting.

(v) The Regional Coordinator could determine the type of claim that local authorities should make to the Government departments for financial assistance.

(vi) The Regional Coordinator took the local authorities into the Governments confidence in what was happening in the region.

One single thing that made the Council work was the initiative of the Regional Coordinator.

The method was to allow the Councils business to progress in an incremental way.

The Department tried to get the local authorities to work more on forward planning. The local authorities found it hard to do this because rising costs and emergencies altered the plans.

Local people are sometimes disappointed when a particular project in forward planning does not eventuate and this is another reason for local authority members not wanting forward planning.

(vii) The Council covered a wide geographical area and the local authorities had their own ideas. The local authorities

made their input to the research studies but the Council didn't last long enough to get seriously involved in regional matters.

(viii) No.

9: *What made the local authorities agree to be involved in the Councils?*

Answers

- (i) The local authorities wanted to bring their projects to the Governments notice.
- (ii) The resolutions of the Local Government District Conferences got lost in the State Conference and the Association's Executive. The Council provided a quicker and more direct communication link to the Government.
- (iii) -
- (iv) The executive of the Local Government Association was unable to handle the work load in the Grants Commission submissions.
- (v) The status of the Coordinator General's Department gave the Council an importance that the local authorities wanted to take advantage of. The Council was a way of getting closer to the Government through the Coordinator General.
- (vi) The local authorities did not give any great thought to the reason for their involvement on the Council. The local authorities accepted the Council as something that was thrust on them.
- (vii) The local authorities had sufficient foresight to believe there would be something good from the Council.
- (viii) Thought there was to be some extra money. As the Grants Commission improved, the local authorities got more interested in the Council.

- 10: *Was there a common objective for the Councillors and the Department to work? What was it?*

Answers

- (i) Not that was known.
- (ii) No common objective. All the interests weren't common. The towns and shires had different problems, for example the shires had thousands of miles of roads but the towns usually had less than hundred miles of road.
- Three common interests were tourism, National Trust projects and the pooling of plant machinery.
- The Council discussed tourism in secret because it wanted to avoid local criticism.
- (iii) -
- (iv) The local authorities were so different in their urban and rural functions that there was nothing they could work on in common. The pooling of plant was not feasible in Queensland because it required the transportation of machinery over long distances.
- (v) The objective of Councillors was to improve their local authority and their region and to do this they were better off working together.
- (vi) The meetings were finished with set deadlines and there was not much time for the analysis of reports.
- To achieve more the Council would have had to meet more often.
- There were no examples of a common objective except perhaps between Townsville and Thuringowa local authorities.
- Plant pooling was a possible common objective, but amendments to the Act would have been necessary.

(vii) The common objective was basically the objectives of the community. The Council was a good forum for discussion of local authority matters within their own particular region.

The Council tried to see what could be achieved that was beneficial to the community.

(viii) No. Nothing came out of the Council.

11: *What benefits went to the region as a result of the Council?*

(i) The benefits were only just starting. There are examples of studies and actions progressing now that were initiated by the Council and presented to the Government. The local authorities had a link to the Government. Without the Council, the local authority aldermen had to approach Ministers when they were visiting the area. For example, by calling at the Minister's hotel and presenting him with their ideas and documents.

(ii) Not known, except for some Grants Commission assistance.

(iii) Couldn't think of any benefits.

(iv) The only benefits were from the Grants Commission submissions and the planning reports prepared jointly by the Coordinator Generals Department and the Cities Commission.

The local authorities were too different to have a composite idea of what was good for the whole region.

(v) The Regional Coordinator was feeding the local authorities needs into the Department on a daily basis. The volume of work done, at the Departments direction, by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission was important to the local authority.

The Regional Coordinator looked into the ills of an area and attempted to sort these out.

- (vi) There were various studies but the Council did not last long enough for any action to eventuate. The most tangible gain was the ability of the local authorities to deal directly with the Coordinator General and receive assistance in the formation of Grants Commission cases.
- The local authorities had better contact with a very important department for local government. They were informed about the forward loan program and received advice directly from the planning level of capital works. The people at that level in the Department made the recommendations to Treasury and that was important in reconstruction after natural disasters.
- The Regional Coordinator often knew of likely new major developments in an area before the local authority. It was not always the case that a developer approached the local authority, but through talks with the Regional Coordinator the local authority was aware of the situation.
- (vii) The Council was a forum for discussion of matters in the region.
- (viii) Minimal. Some studies have been useful in the region's development because they provided information. Examples were the Water Committee's study in the Burdekin Appraisal and the urban passenger study for Townsville. The studies will be of further benefit in the long run. The Townsville Development Strategy Study provided useful information about flooding on the Bohle Plains. The Council gave support to Federal studies of the region. There were no single handed victories for the Council. It was hard to say the Council achieved anything and this was the main criticism. The Councillors complained about coming to meetings and getting nowhere. The present Coordinator General opposed the idea of the Councils and everyone said there were no benefits.

12: *What reasons were there for terminating the Councils?*

Answers

- (i) The Councils were dropped as part of the cost cutting policy of the Government from 1976.
The Federal Grants Commission stopped using the Councils. The State's Grants Commission did not use the Councils.
- (ii) Some Councils in the south overstepped the mark
(No details given).
The southern local authorities and the Local Government Association were opposed to the Councils.
The termination was a shock. Councillors thought they were just getting on their feet, members were keeping to the subject and researching their information before meetings, and everyone was participating.
- (iii) With the end of the Whitlam Government in Canberra, the Federal Grants Commission worked directly through the States and the Queensland Grants Commission did not use regions.
(The Coordinator General retired and became the first Chairman of the Grants Commission of Queensland).
The State Government became opposed to regionalism because it was opposed to the Federal Labor Governments policy to centralise control over local authorities in Canberra through financial controls and special purpose grants.
- (iv) The Councils were terminated with the end of the Whitlam Government and the ending of the Federal Grants Commission's direct involvement with local government.
- (v) Not sure. The Council was a place of opportunism rather than cooperation for some local authorities.
The Councils were not serving their initial purpose to form submissions to the Grants Commission.

- (vi) The State saw the Regional Coordination Councils as ultimately a threat to itself. Possibly the local authorities thought they could be replaced by regional councils.
- (vii) No firm idea for the Councils' termination but there was too much dissention from other regions. The Central Regional Coordination Council gave the Coordinator General a hard time. It was quite likely that the majority of the Councils, except those in North Queensland, were criticising the Department.
- (viii) There was no short term need for the Councils. There was a lack of money from the government and a lack of enthusiasm from Councillors. The Councillors held meetings separate to the formal Council meetings and without the Regional Coordinator as Chairman. These unofficial meetings were eventually used to pressure the government.

APPENDIX 7.2: THE GRANTS COMMISSION AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Queensland Government made its first application to the Commonwealth Government for a special grant of financial assistance under Section 96 of the Australian Constitution in September 1971. The application was referred to the Grants Commission for inquiry in accordance with Section 9 of the Commonwealth Grants Commission Act. The application referred to rising costs and falling rural revenues in the States development. It followed a special per capita grant to New South Wales and Victoria, the "standard" states for the Commissions purposes. Queensland has applied in each subsequent year for special assistance for the state as a whole.

1973 Reorganization

After the election of the Federal Labor Government in December 1972 the Commonwealth Grants Commission Act 1933 was repealed and replaced by the Grants Commission Act 1973. The Act was assented to in June 1973 and proclaimed in September 1973.

The functions of the new Commission in relation to the States remained essentially the same but the Commission's functions were expanded to allow it to hold an inquiry into applications by approved regional organizations of local governing bodies for financial assistance.

Section 18 of the Act stated:

"An approved regional organization may apply in accordance with this section for the grant, under section 96 of the Constitution, of financial assistance to a State for the purposes of the organization or of all or any of the local governing bodies that the organization is representing or on behalf of which the organization is acting".

Section 6 explained the assistance was to enable regional disparities in local government revenue and costs to be remedied.

In 1974 applications by approved regional organizations on behalf of 806 local government bodies were received and reported in the Grants Commission First Report 1974 on Financial Assistance for Local Government. Similar inquiries and reports followed in 1975 and 1976.

Changes in 1976

The Liberal/Country Party coalition replaced the Labor Government in December 1975 and became the caretaker government with no power to change government policy until after an election. Its election policy included:

"Artificial regions will not be forced on local authorities from Canberra. Local bodies will be free to establish formal or informal groupings from time to time for particular functional purposes, but regions will not be used by the Commonwealth as centralist instruments to by-pass the States, to amalgamate areas or to impose Commonwealth policies".

Subsequently the Commonwealth Grants Commission Act 1976 was passed to give effect to the new Governments policy. Sections 6 and 18 of the 1973 Act were repealed. The Act deleted all references to "approved regional organizations" and introduced a new definition of a grant of assistance to a State for local government purposes. It required that a fixed percentage of personal income tax be distributed through the States to local government.

After the June 1976 Premiers Conference, agreement was reached on the principal elements of a new scheme of general revenue assistance for local government. The States agreed that State Grants Commissions be established by legislation as independent bodies and that their reports be public documents. Because there could be difficulties in establishing the State bodies in the first year it was agreed that any state could operate on a less formal basis under administrative arrangements until December 1978.

Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland

The Queensland Government decided in July 1976 to form an Interim Committee to recommend the first distribution of the general equalisation grant to local authorities. The Local Government Grants Commission Act (of 1976) was proclaimed in December 1977. Before the Act was proclaimed the Local Government Grants Commission, Queensland was constituted and held inquiries throughout the State from May to June 1977. The former Coordinator General, Sir Charles Barton (retired December 1976) was the Commission's Chairman.

The Commission issued its first report on assistance to local authorities in August 1977. The report did not express a need for regional organizations of local authorities.

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