

Who Cares? Australian Planners and Ethics

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Planning deals with choices and politics deals with choices, while ethics, on the other hand, deals with choices.

(Hallett, 1967, cited in Wachs, 1985: xvi)

I know that having my personal ethics are at least helped along, if not generated by, my passion for what I do.... I really do think that a lot of planners don't realise what they are actually there for. They have some perverted description in their own minds about what the role of planning is. So, unless you have a firm understanding of the role that you have, I really think that you can't have a set of ethics because your ethics are based on what you are supposed to be doing and if you don't know what you are supposed to be doing, how on earth can you have a set of ethics for it?

Male planner, Local Government, Western Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Introduction

Many planners, it seems, complete their courses and enter a profession confused about its aims and values. Many see planning as a profession in crisis. Australian critiques of planning, while not as vehement or common as those in North America and Britain, certainly identify room for improvement. In 1994, Alexander Cuthbert, Head of the School of Town Planning at the University of New South Wales, identified "the continuing crisis in planning practice" as a major concern (Cuthbert, 1994a: 207). Further, it is apparent from the literature that the last ten years have seen "comparative chaos within planning practice" (Cuthbert, 1994b: 49). The social theory that has informed planning is now seen to be "practice-irrelevant theory." A decade ago, Brian McLoughlin and Mike Berry argued that, "As elsewhere in the English-speaking world, there is in Australian planning and education a great deal of confusion surrounding the chronic crisis of identity" (1989: 9).ⁱ

Analysts of North American and British planning have had a field day examining the profession's identity crisis, lack of direction, and lack of influence. This

characterisation is also remarkably consistent with descriptions in the American literature on the role of the planner and the crisis in the planning profession, described as being “under assault” (Beauregard, n.d.: 3; see also Livingston, 1980). As one American environmentalist, also a postgraduate student in planning explained, “This profession is very pragmatic, unpolitical in every way. This makes the mindset hard to change” (Wheeler, *pers. comm.*, 1994).

The views of those reporting their findings in professional journals are summarised in Figure One below.

Figure One: A Summary of Analyses of Planning Identity, Values and Direction

- Marcuse, 1976: “guild loyalty”;
- Rodriguez, 1993: 153: planning educators have to take new risks;
- Blakely and Sharpe, 1993: 140-141: lack of vision in planning schools; planners should be more than “just mechanics”;
- Levy, 1992: 82: “The planner has become a broken field runner dodging the barriers and traps placed on the course by citizens;” There is a division between educators and practicing alumni; planning education needs to focus more on strategic and long-range thinking;
- Galloway, 1992: 230: schools are threatened and practice is imperiled; planners have a poor public image; professional organisations need a better understanding of planning education;
- Dalton, 1993: 149: a new set of principles must guide the profession if it is to be relevant and have a future in a changing world scene;
- Friedmann, 1989: 337: the profession is “a rudderless ship”;
- Innes, 1995: 187: widespread disillusionment with the paradigm of institutional rationality;
- Harper and Stein, 1992: 106: the need for a reunion of critical theory and planning theory; citing Friedmann [1987] about planning being in crisis;
- McClendon, 1993: 140: planning needs a vision of itself before it embarks on fashioning visions for communities;
- McClendon, 1989: planning at the crossroads; nothing less than the future of the profession may be at stake; cannot return to failed utopian policies and practices of the past;
- Thomas and Healey, 1991: immobilised professionals, cynical and in a policy malaise, practicing a profession that increasingly does not measure up to the purposes that first attracted them to planning; lack of ethical moorings; growing crisis of legitimacy and ethics;
- Udy, 1994: profession in a make-or-break situation; unconscious of its peril;
- Brooks, 1993: 144: “It may be time to call off the search for a defining paradigm”;
- Beauregard, 1991: 189-190: planning currently suspended between a modernist sensibility whose validity is problematic and a post-modern reality posing serious challenges for planning’s underlying assumptions”; erosion of the arrogance of the planner’s “totalizing discourse”;
- Beauregard, 1989: 391: “Planning theorists tend to carry on a dialogue among themselves, reflecting in their insularity the ambiguous and the peripheral social position of planning...”;
- Wachs, 1989: planners constantly trapped between two competing models of their role as ‘scientists’ and ‘advocates’; two choices are inherently in conflict with one another;
- Klosterman, 1983: planners have failed to develop acceptable procedures for combining the empirical and normative aspects of their practice;
- Howe and Kaufman, 1979: 248: “Planning has been struggling over the question of its proper stance as a public profession in a democratic society for many years”;
- Howe and Kaufman, 1981: 274: the standard image of value-free planners is that their professional neutrality “serves as a block preventing them from expressing their values in their work”; and
- Hemmens, 1988: 85: “The profession has suffered a major loss in public interest and appreciation”; present confusion about planning education.

These points of dissatisfaction and confusion regarding the planning profession are echoed by Australian planners and have serious implications for the ethics of planners. As the planner from Western Australia noted (with frustration) in the opening quotation, "...if you don't know what you are supposed to be doing, how on earth can you have a set of ethics for it?"

In this chapter we will examine the ethical dimensions of what Hendler (1995: 3-4) has described as the three areas of theoretical interest to planning:

- ◆ Theories *of* planning - the processes of planning and how planners work (the internal machinations), and;
- ◆ Theories *for* planning - the wider role planning plays in society and the conceptualisations it can hold of itself which help make sense of it as a profession, and;
- ◆ Theories *in* planning - the ideas developed outside of planning which planners may use in their theorising.

In the language of moral philosophy, ethical theories *for* and *in* planning relate to 'metaethical' questions (such as those concerning planning's roles and responsibilities in the protection of the environment, for example), while theories *of* planning refer to largely 'day-to-day' ethical questions (such as the ethical questions related to conflict of interest or bribe taking).

We hope to weave within and around these different threads of ethical theory, using (in that metaethical sense of planning ethics) environmental ethics and concepts of "Nature" as a focus and as a gauge for the "ethical literacy" of contemporary Australian planners. We have a particular interest in the metaethical dilemmas raised by normative planning – theories *for* and *in* planning ethics – and ethical questions like "is Nature a stakeholder?", "who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of Nature?", "what is right or good where the planet is concerned?" and "what happens when 'responsibility to Nature' and the 'public interest' diverge or conflict?"

We argue in this chapter that there are problems with the ethical literacy and action of Australian planners and that those very same planners admit to those problems. Confusion abounds in the application of normative values to planning, particularly in environments that still treat planning as a technocratic exercise. As the words of the planners we have spoken to indicate, this is simply not what planning is. All that the

technocratic and utilitarian approaches to planning denies – that planning is a politicised profession, that there are personal values involved, that planners are in some manner accountable to communities – are ethical dilemmas arising for planners in the 1990s.

Sources and Acknowledgments

This chapter presents points of interest -- or “food for thought” -- from two studies into planning ethics in Australia: doctoral research conducted by Wendy Sarkissianⁱⁱ and completed in 1996 and doctoral research by Andrea Cookⁱⁱⁱ which is in progress. The purpose is to illustrate how planners and educators are dealing with (or not dealing with) the confusions of the field in the very real world of planning practice. We focus, as mentioned, particularly on the new “normative” world of planning that is recognising, critiquing, debating and *applying* metaethical values related to environment (or Nature^{iv}), heritage, democracy, participation, communication and social justice, to name just a few.

In this chapter, *planning ethics* embodies both the personal realm involved in ethical decision-making to realise a good life as an individual and the professional realm of making ethical decisions based on the society’s priorities. Both realms involve *action*.^v As this chapter focuses, to some degree, on *environmental ethics*^{vi} as a measure of ethical literacy, a definition of environmental ethics is taken from Martin and Beatley: “the most fundamental aspects of the relationship between humanity, other life forms, and the Environment or Nature, as well as the moral obligations of humanity to the earth community” (Martin and Beatley, 1993b: 117).

We have consciously presented the ‘voices’ of actual Australian planners interviewed in the course of both studies reported in this chapter. In many respects, this is a shared project with planners and non-planners from around the country. Their perspectives on ethics are key to the discussion. The contributions of these planners and non-planners is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

The “Ethical Literacy” of Australian Planners – General Issues

The interviews, workshops, surveys and scenario exercises conducted with Australian planners by Cook (1998) and Sarkissian (1994-5) revealed several issues of deep concern to planning practitioners. The themes identified to date are offered in this chapter as “food for thought” for planners, educators and those who work with planners (community and elected representatives, for example). Ethical ‘red flags’? To be certain. And hopefully, too, a call for reflection and care among planners and their non-planning colleagues alike regarding potential areas for ethical dilemma. Perhaps the realisation, for example, that there is strong potential for ethical conflict in the nexus between professional responsibility and the demands of operating in a political environment will enlighten not only planners but also their political colleagues. Tread delicately here: care is needed in this nexus.

The following themes, then, are presented as a *sampling* of ways in which planners are conceptualising the ethics of the work they do. They provide a broader context to our exploration of how planners deal with and respond to the ethics of caring and responsibility for Nature, presented in the next section.

Broadly speaking, planners interviewed in both studies, while perhaps aware of particular ethical issues, often expressed confusion and frustration in their articulation of planning ethics and their application of ethics in practice. A range of issues may account for this:

- ◆ a general confusion between values and ethics; and/or
- ◆ a confusion due to competing sets of ethical demands (i.e., personal ethics vs. professional ethics or planning ethics vs. the corporate ethics of the organisations they work for, and so forth) and/or
- ◆ the pressures of working in political environments with many stakeholders applying pressure to an individual planner’s ethics; and/or
- ◆ a lack of guidance from the profession regarding professional ethics (including a general impression that tools such as the Royal Australian Planning Institute’s Code of Conduct are of little help);^{viii} and/or
- ◆ a lack of training and discussion opportunities around the issue of “planning ethics”; and/or
- ◆ a feeling of not having ownership or control over values and ethics.

One planner, discussing recent government inquiries into ethics in Western Australia, captured many of these confusions responding to Cook's question about whether such inquiries had heightened the interest in planning ethics:

You have to bear in mind that there have been a number of heads rolled, if you like, in a number of Councils. It's primarily been the principal planners, the managers of planning or the directors of planning, who are the ones to go. Why is that? That is, going back to what I said before, that if any avenue is subject to breaches of ethics, it's often a planning area because it is so subjective in its decision making. There are cases in several WA Councils so there is a heightened awareness of the need for ethics within planning areas.

The heightened awareness almost went to an extreme level where it was difficult to operate. To give some examples of that, if I go down to the pub and there is a developer there and we are having a chat and he buys me a beer, under the current system, that is not allowed. However, from a social perspective and particularly in a small place like this, it is important in terms of being part of the community and in terms of developing relationships within the community as a Shire employee... it would be the height of rudeness for me to refuse that guy's beer. It's culturally unacceptable in a place like this.

So it has been taken to the other extreme and to an unrealistic level. Again, *at what point will someone's decision making be compromised through that action?* And I can tell you, someone buying me a lunch or a glass of beer is not going to compromise my decision-making! At the end of the day, each individual has to make their own decision about that, though, where that boundary, for them, lies.

Male local government planner, Western Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Another planner illustrated his feelings about not being the one to control planning values or ethics with the following statement:

In my area I do a lot of application process and I don't have a lot of opportunity to focus on things like the environment. You basically have to assess if it appropriate development based on particular design elements rather than looking at it in that broad context.

So I guess, in many ways, the values on the broader planning principles are prescribed to me, if you like. They are handed over to me. So how do we deal with questions of fairness and environment and all that sort of stuff if we have a much narrower field that we are touching?

Male local government planner, Tasmania
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Revealed here is an emerging picture of professional inaction with respect to ethics; an inaction deeply influenced by feeling paralysed by the complexity of professional issues. At the same time, however, some planners are also expressing great interest in ethics and a great hope for professional debate and guidance in that regard:

I value the importance of discussion and debate in the profession. And I think that professional institutes and other aligned bodies should be doing that and I don't think there is enough discussion and debate. Even in this office there isn't enough discussion and debate about things that are happening in planning. I value that because I think, as I get older, I am becoming a bit more entrenched in my views.

Female consultant planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

I look at it as 'have I done such extreme environmental damage, having done this, that my grandchildren are going to be disadvantaged because I've done it?' . . . Or have I caused some major blunder that is going to live in South Australia for the rest of its history? *Q: And you haven't done anything like that?...* History will only tell. It's a bit like farmers. They cleared the land for what they thought were for all the right reasons, hopefully, and not for ulterior motives...or it may have been to make lots of money rather than consider the environment...I hope it was that they did not know the ramifications of what they were doing at that time. We have learnt since then. . . And even I am learning all the time, and if I could go back, maybe I wouldn't do it.

Female State government planner, South Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

A number of planners expressed alarm at what they see as the increasing influence of the market in planning and the actual 'privatisation' of planning in some States^{viii}. One described the ethical dangers of the growing emphasis on 'chasing development' thus:

Some would say we should focus on the competition between regions for investment and that sort of thing. But unless you have a plan that talks about long term sustainability and heritage and so on, where the hell are you going? You are just being opportunistic and chasing developers. The way that that is done is not particularly ethical. . . . That's the way that governments and major corporations behave. And that is the way planning now has to behave in order to deliver. But I see it as a way that is simply wrong. It's obviously done with "commercial confidence", behind closed doors and without accountability or evaluation.

Male local government planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Working in political environments and for elected representatives was one area where planners' actual experiences of ethical dilemmas were evident. In several cases, planners had been pressured to take actions, such as changing a recommendation in a report to Council. In all cases where it occurred, it caused serious ethical discomfort for the planner:

I was preparing a report to Council and I was pulled into my Director's office where there was the ward councillor - of the ward where this development was proposed - and the ward councillor had been faxed a copy of my draft report. He had made very good notes on it. Among the notes was a proposed change to my recommendation. I was sat down by my Director and this councillor and was asked to change my recommendation. And, whereas there were good notes on the body of the report that I was happy to include . . . if the recommendation was changed, there was no way I was going to have my name put to it. I felt that strongly about it that I was willing to resign over it.

I see that as a key principle to my ethics...there has to be accurate information flow from the officers to the whole of Council. If they then want to change recommendations, they can go for their life! It's being done, then, in an open forum and not behind closed doors.

Male local government planner, Western Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

In the broad sense, then, planners see the contexts of their work as environments and situations with the potential for breaches of the day-to-day ethics in activities such as writing professional reports. They also express confusion and a lack of control over the metaethical issues of the planning field. We will now turn to the metaethical issue of Nature and environmental ethics to explore, in greater detail, planners' ethics in application.

A Case in Point . . . “Nature” and Environmental Ethics as a Focus

Values are a difficult one . . . I guess I value, first and foremost, the importance of looking after the environment. That is the key thing from my point of view. It is crucial to humankind. I guess every step I could take to making sure that sustainable development is achieved. You can prompt me if you like but that's kind of how I see it....

Male local government planner, Tasmania
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

If we all thought like you, the planet wouldn't be in such a foul mess. Unfortunately, nobody earns money by saying 'no' and after all money is our god.

Male landscape architect, New South Wales
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

We now turn to the “case study” issue of the importance of *environmental ethics* in Australian planning practice and education. Sarkissian's study of planners and others associated with the land professions revealed strong views about environmental ethics which read like the views of a group who do not have a high opinion of their profession -- and its environmental stance. The “non-planners” (members of other professions and community representatives) -- who clearly understood well how their colleagues operated -- echoed the opinions of the planning practitioners.^{ix}

North American Research into Teaching Environmental Ethics in Planning Schools

Research by two American researchers, Evelyn Martin and Timothy Beatley, provided the basis for Sarkissian's cross-cultural comparisons of planning education (Martin and Beatley, 1993b). Their article begins with a comprehensive summary of issues in environmental ethics related to planning practice. It then summarises their 1991 study of the teaching of environmental ethics in North American planning schools. They analysed a mail-back questionnaire returned by 73 per cent of planning schools (81 out of 111 in total). Their questionnaire focused on program orientation, instruction and related activities. This was the first (and to our knowledge the only)

systematic study of the teaching of environmental ethics in schools of planning (Martin and Beatley, 1993b). Their aim was “to evaluate the extent to which North American planning curricula are contributing to the understanding and nurturing of fundamentally new ethical relationships between people and the environment”. The methodology was based on a self-complete questionnaire survey of Heads of planning programs. Of 111 planning schools (members of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning) who offered planning courses in 1991, a total of 81 (73 per cent) responded. The questionnaire focused on program orientation, instruction and related activities. The study revealed the following features of planning education in North America in 1991:

- Few planning programs seemed to see the need to examine extensively the ethical foundations of land planning;
- The most frequently covered topics tended to represent more traditional anthropocentric and utilitarian perspectives;^x
- More recent theories and approaches were less frequently addressed;
- Emerging interest in environmental ethics appeared strong, especially on the part of students; and
- Sustainability concepts were receiving only modest attention (p. 124).

This study identified the need for planning programs to incorporate topics of environmental ethics more explicitly and directly into their curricula. Planning education needed to address the environmental challenges facing communities, engage in ethical debate, and establish a normative foundation to guide planning practice. The authors also argued that “it is critical that environmental ethics not be tucked away in just one subject, but that it permeate the curriculum”.^{xi} Commitment to environmental ethics must be broader than that of self-selected faculty members, and must not be cursory or haphazard. Planning educators should aim to become better at applying theory to practice and linking professional beliefs with personal and institutional behaviour

Martin and Beatley distinguished between ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ environmental ethics topics. Core topics were defined as “inherently ethical ones, by their very nature dealing with fundamental and moral issues about relationships and obligations.” Non-core topics, by contrast, could be taught from an ethical perspective, but they could

also be taught from a technical or amoral (or aethical) perspective (see also Beatley, 1989 and 1995).^{xii}

The North American study revealed weak commitment to environmental ethics in planning schools, with conservative and traditional topics favoured and little evidence of currency in approaches, except in the case of a few schools (Canadian schools were emphasised). Student interest in environmental ethics was, however, seen as strong, and stronger than educator interest.

The North American research findings correlate in many ways with the results of Sarkissian's study. Take, for example, this comment from a young female architect in Melbourne. In reply to the question about how an ethic of caring for Nature might be implemented, she commented, "The practice of bulldozing development sites both of natural vegetation and existing buildings (environmental ethics of permanence, recycling) for economic expediency might not be the norm, might not be legal". The 'norm' was seen as "approval at all costs", as a male planner in State Government in Brisbane put it. A young female planner in Darwin echoed comments heard many times, particularly in Queensland and the Northern Territory. She claimed that, while many planners are aware of the need for an ethic of caring for Nature, "they also have to pay their bills at the end of the week [and] so are forced to compromise their ethics".

At a workshop on environmental ethics in planning in Cairns, Queensland in September 1994, a young male planner claimed that consideration of environmental ethics for planners was "not practically valuable". (He also argued forcefully, despite strong opposition from his colleagues, that Global Warming was caused by a hole in the ozone layer!). This man and his Far North Queensland colleagues saw the workshop information as 'esoteric' and not practical. Most of the participants agreed that consultants choosing to take a stand on environmental matters (as a matter of principle) could risk offending a client and losing a job. One said simply, "You have to represent the client". When there was talk of "intrinsic value", the planners explained that costs would have to be passed on to shareholders. Echoing the call for 'practical' guidance, workshop participants agreed that taking a stand on ethical issues related to the environment would be "easier if there are policies, guidelines and expertise in Council".

In general, most of the planners in the Sarkissian study expressed concern about the role of the profession and their inability to make a difference in environmental matters A palpable frustration and impotence characterised their words. A male ‘non-planner’ in Melbourne expressed his concern with a classic humanist position:

I think that the fundamental relationship between earth and human must be constantly repeated. We are utterly dependent on every other naturally occurring thing for our own survival. We will die if we don’t face this. We can not ignore the warnings any more.

Male non-planner, Victoria
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

Some sought simple solutions: guidelines in simple language, regulations, codes of conduct or precise direction to professionals.

The *prevailing* ethos communicated by members of the planning profession and those who know them should ring alarm bells. Utilitarianism and pragmatism are at the core. Typically, planners are engaged in a rushed process where environmental matters or ethics are concerned, as illustrated by this story from a planner interviewed in Victoria:

As an example of that, and this is a very topical example, later this afternoon we are dealing with an illegally constructed dam. It’s huge, monstrous, and is right on the road. I personally hold the view that it is monstrous - it should never have been built. But, when you look at it and go through all the evaluation of the variables and look at the site and constraints on the site and so forth, you know that, at the end of the day, you’re not going to get the thing filled in and beautiful, pristine gum trees planted on the site. So you will try to compromise...and while I might personally feel that the dam should never have been put there, professionally I recognise that I won’t get far if I barrel in. Sometimes you have to make trade-offs to get an outcome that is expedient.

Male local government planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Selected scenarios dramatically illustrate the conflict between utilitarian values (particularly those conveyed through ethical ‘rules’ related to professional conduct and employer allegiance) and environmental ethics. As part of Cook’s study (1998), interview participants, planners not participating in interviews and a group of students undertook a scenario exercise to assess whether the actions of the planner were ethical or not and whether or not they would behave in the same manner in such a scenario. Scenario 1 was specifically designed to assess the reaction to a conflict between the metaethical environmental ethics of planners and the utilitarian ethics of professional conduct. It specifically involves the issue of “leaking” information.

Scenario 1: *An environmental planner is fairly certain that his director has purposely left out certain findings from a draft report regarding the regeneration of native grasslands because the director felt it presented a point of view that the State government does not support. The environmental planner feels that these findings should not be kept from the public and, without authorisation, gives the findings to an environmental group which is strongly in favour of native grassland regeneration.*

	<i>Interview Participants</i>		<i>Non-Participants</i>		<i>Students</i>		<i>Total Responses</i>	
	No.	% ^{xiii}	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Clearly Ethical</i>	1	3.8	2	11.8	6	31.6	9	14.5
<i>Probably Ethical</i>	7	26.9	5	29.4	5	26.3	17	27.4
<i>Probably Unethical</i>	9	34.6	3	17.6	6	31.6	18	29.0
<i>Clearly Unethical</i>	9	34.6	6	35.3	1	5.3	16	25.8
<i>Not Sure</i>	0	0	1	5.9	1	5.3	2	3.2
<i>No Response</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	26	99.9	17	100.0	19	100.1	62	99.9

Source: self-complete scenario survey of Australian planning practitioners and students. Cook: 1998

TABLE ONE:
ENVIRONMENTAL SCENARIO RESPONSES -
ASSESSMENT OF ETHICAL ACTION

Table One, then, indicates that a majority of planners in practice (63 per cent) assessed the actions of the planner in the scenario as clearly or probably *unethical*. This is in juxtaposition with the student sample, the majority of whom (58 per cent) saw the action as clearly or probably *ethical*. Table Two, below, is a self-analysis of planners' own likely response to the scenario:

	<i>Interview Participants</i>		<i>Non-Participants</i>		<i>Students</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Do It</i>	0	0	1	5.9	3	15.8	4	6.5
<i>Probably Do It</i>	5	19.2	0	0	6	31.6	11	17.7
<i>Probably Not Do It</i>	6	23.1	5	29.4	5	26.3	16	25.8
<i>Not Do It</i>	14	53.8	6	35.3	3	15.8	23	37.1
<i>Not Sure</i>	1	3.8	4	23.5	2	10.5	7	11.3
<i>No Response</i>	0	0	1	5.9	0	0	1	1.6
<i>Total</i>	26	99.9	17	100.0	19	100.0	62	100.0

Source: self-complete scenario survey of Australian planning practitioners and students. Cook, 1998

TABLE TWO:
ENVIRONMENTAL SCENARIO RESPONSES -
ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSE

These responses indicate quite strongly that utilitarian values win out in ethical dilemmas despite planners' strong self-identification with environmental values, as illustrated in the responses to the following 'attitude statement':

Statement 1: Preserving clean air and water should be high priority issues even if this means that economic development in the community may be slowed.

	<i>Interview Participants</i>		<i>Non-Participants</i>		<i>Students</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	9	34.6	4	23.5	3	15.8	16	25.8
<i>Agree</i>	13	50.0	8	47.1	8	42.1	29	46.8
<i>Slightly Agree</i>	2	7.7	5	29.4	6	31.6	13	21.0
<i>Slightly Disagree</i>	2	7.7	0	0	1	5.3	3	4.8
<i>Disagree</i>	0	0	0	0	1	5.3	1	1.6
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>No Response</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	26	100.0	17	100.0	19	100.1	62	100.0

Source: self-complete scenario survey of Australian planning practitioners and students. Cook, 1998.

TABLE THREE :
ENVIRONMENTAL 'ATTITUDE STATEMENT' RESPONSES

When Tables One and Three are compared, we see that, while 72.6 per cent of the scenario exercise participants either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with a statement that the environment should have priority over other considerations in some cases (and only 6.2 per cent even 'slightly disagree' or 'disagree'), 53.2 per cent of those surveyed thought it 'unethical' or 'probably unethical' to leak information to an environmental group even when suspecting that the organisation has not given full professional advice on an environmental issue. Further, 62.9 per cent reported that they would not do what the planner in the scenario had done, indicating that some planners would not pursue a course of action that they have assessed as 'ethical' or 'probably ethical'.

While the scenario exercise (which was adapted from a similar exercise with a large number of participants conducted in the United States by Howe and Kaufman [1985]), has comparative purposes beyond the scope of this chapter, some basic comparison is interesting. Briefly, in the US study, 31 per cent of respondents thought the actions of the planner in the scenario were clearly or probably ethical, 59 per cent found it clearly or probably unethical and 10 per cent were unsure. A later study of Swedish planners (using the same scenario question revealed that 23 per cent of respondents found the action clearly or probably ethical, 62 per cent found it probably or clearly

unethical and 15 per cent were unsure. The responses are summarised in Table Four below.

	<i>US Sample 1979 (n= 616)</i>	<i>Swedish Sample 1990 (n=47)</i>	<i>Australian Sample 1998</i>		
	(%)	(%)	<i>Practitioner Sample (n=43) (%)</i>	<i>Student Sample (n=19) (%)</i>	<i>Total Sample (n= 62) (%)</i>
<i>Total Responses: Ethical</i>	31	23	35	58	42
<i>Total Responses: Unethical</i>	59	62	63	37	55
<i>Unsure</i>	10	15	2	5	3
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: Howe and Kaufman, 1985; Kahkee and Dalgren, 1990 and Cook, 1998.

TABLE FOUR:
ENVIRONMENTAL "LEAKING INFORMATION" SCENARIO
RESPONSES - COMPARISON

A first analysis of the Australian responses reported in Tables One to Four above reveals that organisational values and the utilitarian 'rules' are learned on the job and are likely to be informed by professions and work environments rather than by personal values. Students in the scenarios, for example, prioritise metaethical environmental values above the organisational conduct values more often than do practitioners, despite similarities in attitudes about the environment. In fact, practitioners seem to hold stronger attitudes about the environment than do the students. This nexus between metaethical values and the 'rules of the job' proves to be a real source of dilemma for many planners in reference to many normative issues, including caring for Nature:

[Ethics] comes up in relation to conservation issues as well. For example, we had a situation where there was a site with Powerful Owls on it and we went to great lengths to save these two Powerful Owls. It consumed a great deal of my own time in trying to sort out what to do about these Owls. . . . And you might think that the organisation also ascribes to those views but then you go out and find different...that they are more concerned that you could have done eight other things in the time you spent.

Male local government planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Exploring this issue further, respondents in both studies described planning solutions as ‘imposed’ and often not open to full and thorough investigation. An atomistic approach characterised planning practice, with segregation of expertise and lack of accountability. Several respondents spoke of the lack of a holistic vision, a comprehensive approach. There was a strong call for more “global solutions” and ways of working where all impacts were considered. By the way planners and non-planners discussed how they wished things could be, they described their current reality. In a better world, one male State government planner in Brisbane explained, planners “might not be so willing to approve at all costs and might be more willing to refuse on the basis of unsustainable development”. A younger Brisbane colleague, working in local government, agreed, saying that a more ethical approach “would place far more emphasis on development versus nature and strive to find the middle ground”.

These planners sounded as though they were talking about some utopian situation which they themselves could not imagine participating in during their lifetimes. A quality emerged from their comments: “if only”. “If only we were more powerful; if only the developers did not have us in their pay; if only we could find simple ‘technical ‘ solutions to these problems”. Several planners in Sarkissian's study complained that the survey asked questions many respondents had been silently asking themselves for a long time but nevertheless found provocative. Some really grappled with the question of how an ethic of caring for Nature could be nurtured. Some, like this Darwin architect, tried to find solutions within the “business as usual” paradigm of the development world:

Ethics are not brought about. They slowly develop as understanding and knowledge proliferates. This process has been going on for some time and while application of ethics by future planners may be of intellectual importance and future gain, those planners will only suffer mid life crises if the same knowledge and ideals do not permeate the general populace. The development of sticks and

carrots for developers will ultimately save the current generation of our planet,
while starry-eyed pimple faced students get blown away by concepts.

Male architect, Northern Territory
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

The questionnaire and scenario responses, conversations and interviews with planners by Cook during 1998 and the meetings, lectures and workshops conducted by Sarkissian during 1994 and 1995 reveal that currently, in Australian planning practice, environmental ethics (and practical implementation of issues such as Environmentally Sustainable Development or ESD) has certain general characteristics. It is a rushed, atomistic, technical, unaccountable, powerless process, relying on the direction of others, involving compromises which border on “selling out” and is characterised by a lack of concern for global issues and direct and indirect consequences and impacts.

Table Five below presents these views in an ordered way, according to responses to self-complete survey questions asked in Sarkissian’s research. We can see the relative weakness of planning practitioners’ interests in environmental ethics. Results for the “planning community” are compared with results from the “university community”.^{xiv} Looking at all samples in the whole table, we can see that weak or the largest proportion of all respondents reported very weak interest in environmental ethics. In general, distribution of responses was very similar for all groups and appears to indicate a common view about environmental ethics. The planning profession, however, comes across as lacking *strong* interest in ethical issues generally. As the comments above reveal, few planners are short of an opinion on the subject, but few have very good ideas about how to remedy the problems that they identify.

<i>INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS</i>	<i>The “Planning Community”</i>		<i>Planning Practitioners</i>		<i>Non-Planners</i>		<i>Total University Sample</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Very strong</i>	10	6.49	2	2.74	8	9.88	20	9.71
<i>Strong</i>	51	33.12	26	35.62	25	30.86	68	33.01
<i>Weak</i>	64	41.56	31	42.47	33	40.74	78	37.86
<i>Very weak</i>	18	11.69	8	10.96	10	12.35	17	8.25
<i>Don’t know or no response</i>	11	7.14	6	8.22	5	6.17	23	11.17
<i>Total</i>	154	100.00	73	100.01	81	100.00	206	100.00

Source: self-complete questionnaire survey of Australian planning practitioners, students, academics and others. Sarkissian, 1994-95.

TABLE FIVE:
INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

While, as one young female planning consultant in Darwin exclaimed, “We have to look at the big picture”, others, such as a young female planner in Sydney, suggested that there “might be a need to employ specialists associated within this area”. This raises the frightening concept of further atomisation or specialisation by means of 'subcontracting' ethical responsibilities.

The Need for A Response in Education

Both studies clearly show planners' concerns about the mired ethical terrain in practice. In response, all planners in Cook’s study reported that, yes, it was important to include ethics in the education of planners. Some were very passionate about the issue:

I think this is *fundamentally* important. Flipping through some notes of earlier this year--thoughts and so on--I have reflected on the information revolution and I made a note to myself that basically you don’t need any more information. At any given point you often don’t need any more information than what you’ve got. I wrote down that if the values are right, everything else will follow.

Male local government planner, Western Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

However, an unfortunate paradox emerges: the relatively low levels of interest in environmental ethics among planning practitioners appears to have an impact on the structure and content of course offerings, despite arguments to the contrary expressed

on behalf of Royal Australian Planning Institute (RAPI). These practitioners are on Course Advisory Boards, RAPI accreditation panels and they employ planning graduates. They *do* influence the course content of Australian planning schools. Their emphasis, according to many academics, is on teaching ‘useful’ subjects -- those subjects which help students get jobs and perform competently in the workplace (Hillier, *pers. comm.*, 17 June 1995). And, of course, planning educators have to take cognisance of this ‘reality’. As a senior male educator at the University of New England explained: “The programme is still dependent upon the legal/economic imperatives dictated by the demands of the profession, especially in local government”. This is the case not simply in local government, according to a young female planner working for the State government in Victoria. She expressed an often encountered disillusionment about how and where to teach ethics to planners:^{xv}

I’m a member of Royal Australian Planning Institute and sometimes I think it’s just a boy’s club for planning consultants. So, while I think there is a role for Royal Australian Planning Institute, I’m not sure how much credence I would give it...because I’m a treacherous left-wing cynic!

It’s not really something an employer, like this employer, would offer...that kind of professional development. They’re into training here but they’d be unlikely to send anyone on a course like that. It would have to be heavily disguised!

Female State government planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

A young male local government planner from remote Western Australia holds an equally cynical view of the ‘realities’ of education:

This will be highly contentious, but my concern is that, because the[Royal Australian Planning] Institute is dominated by the private sector planners, that has also flowed on to the educational institutions. They have to accredit the course and there is so much sensitivity to keeping the course bland, if you like, so as not to upset the private consultants who wield the power in planning, that these issues are overlooked.

You can imagine that private consultants don’t necessarily want planners who are going to challenge them too much.... It sounds awful, I know, but it is not in their interest to have planners who are very ethical....

Male local government planner, Western Australia
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

Interestingly, while some planning academics claimed that they had to package up ethics in ways that were palpable to their students (‘practical’ case studies and advice on how to manage problems seemed the common ideas), some planning practitioners remembered their university days clearly and were highly critical of the quality of their education. A general theme was that lecturers expected students to have no

minds of their own and therefore did not choose to challenge them, especially not in professional ethics or environmental ethics. This view accords with the inaccurate perceptions of educators about the environmental ethics interests of their students. One young female landscape architect in Darwin, educated in a Southern city, had this suggestion to improve ethical education. She recommended:

. . . that the students come to their own conclusions and seriously adopt those ethics and values and not just parrot back what they think their lecturers want to hear without having seriously investigated the consequences of neglect or having read some of the diverse philosophical literature.

Female landscape architect, Northern Territory
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

What Might an Educational Response Look Like?

Heightened awareness and education plays an important role. How do you deal with the conflict of your personal obligation to do what you can for your client in accordance with the 'instruction' and your own personal ethic? If you can convince a director of a client company, how does your director satisfy his (*sic.*) lawful obligation to maximise the economic return of shareholders and environmental ethics?

Female non-planner, Queensland
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

In Sarkissian's study, planners, educators and students were asked to identify core subjects and core environmental ethics theory which they had encountered either in their studies or in their professional work. They included:

- Obligations to future generations (intergenerational equity)
- Biodiversity and species preservation
- Aboriginal Land rights and issues
- Environmental justice
- Business and corporate environmental responsibilities
- spiritual perspectives
- Property rights concerning natural systems
- rights and basic interests of animals, plants and ecosystems
- green politics
- Utilitarian and economic rationales for environmental protection.

The last topic, utilitarianism, was emphasised in every interaction with planners during Sarkissian's research. Heads of Australian planning schools complained that the economic rationalists in the university hierarchy required them to take a heightened instrumental view of planning education. Educators claimed that the planning profession wanted them to turn out technically skilled operatives who understood the workings of the market and accepted the constraints of a

‘development’ paradigm. Students felt pressures to learn about topics that would skill them up to compete in a business environment.

Respondents' comments highlight the conflict between pragmatically approaching the issue of imparting ethics to planners and the serious weaknesses in that approach and the implications for the ethics of planning. Economic rationalism was identified a guiding force in modern Australian planning. Other professions, activists and other environmentalists struggle to keep their ethic of caring for Nature alive in the economic rationalist environment. A male community services worker in his late fifties, living in the isolated shipbuilding town of Whyalla in South Australia offered a stark reminder of the challenges identified by this research:

Economic rationalism being promoted now is reducing the allocation of resources for those who care for nature and overrides the high priority of real concern in the community, especially private and public sectors.

Those who foster the caring for nature mostly lack general support and struggle to survive while volunteering so much in time and money and skills.... ‘Greenies’ still seen as renegade in the economy of survival.

Male community worker, South Australia
(surveyed by Sarkissian, 1995)

Speaking specifically about ecologically sustainable development, a community health activist in Adelaide laid the problem at the door of capitalism, saying, “ESD has no chance in a capitalist economy. Over consumption is the cause of environmental degradation”.

Some Tentative Conclusions about Planning Practitioners and Environmental Ethics

This analysis has demonstrated that while practicing planners appear to be aware of (or have formally studied) more environmental ethics topics than their university counterparts have, they were generally less interested in environmental ethics and their interest was growing more slowly. This is what would be expected, given that planning school educators and Heads of Schools argued that innovation and change are impossible because of the restraints of the planning profession “out there”.

Planners had lower levels of awareness and interest than did non-planners in the sample of the wider “planning community”. Their interests and areas of recognition were generally those applied and pragmatic topics such as utilitarianism and

Aboriginal land rights (a regular concern of a practitioner – and, of necessity, a matter of ‘moral’ interest).

Practitioners, then, were generally disinterested. It is clear that the impetus for real reform is not likely to emerge from anywhere but the real ‘fringe’ of the planning profession itself -- and probably not from the Royal Australian Planning Institute.

Five Lessons Raised by These Studies

I’m probably a good example of why there needs to be a bit more [training] at the undergraduate level. I’d *like* to be articulate about the issue because for me this *is* an issue and I’d like to be able to express my thoughts on what ethics are and what my own personal position on issues is. It’s all very well to have a principle or an ethic but then to be able to identify that you are compromising it and then be able to take action are other steps altogether. I would have liked more training in those regards.

Male consultant planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

These two complementary studies, taken as a whole, offer five tentative lessons about ethics in planning practice and education in Australia.

Lesson 1: The crisis in the planning profession

In Australia and overseas, the planning profession is in great crisis about its identity-- a crisis of several decades’ duration. The global ecological crisis further confuses matters and raises anxieties in relation to “*what planners ought to do*”. The planning profession is confused about how to proceed. It lacks a sense of direction about ecological and other ethical issues.

This is exacerbated by the virtual silence of practitioners in planning debates, an issue highlighted by a female planning consultant in Melbourne:

There is a dearth of actual communication within the profession itself. Across various age groups, across interest areas. I would value that happening more. It’s a shame it’s not happening because there are different perspectives in looking at things. I pick up *Planning News*, which is my institute’s journal, and look at that and get *no* inspiration out of it. It worries me.

Female consultant planner, Victoria
(as interviewed by Cook, 1998)

The confusion continues unchecked because, for many planners, it is an entirely internalised confusion.

Lesson 2: The nature of planning practitioners and educators

Consistent with findings from North American research, it appears that the kinds of people who self-select into planning in Australia do not necessarily seek change actively. Rather, they are, in general, the sorts of people who support the *status quo* and value compliance. They are not likely, without support and encouragement, to embrace radical causes or lobby strongly for change, preferring methodically and slowly to effect small cultural changes within their individual organisations.

This reluctance will also affect how planners are educated about the ethical content of their work, particularly in the stickier “metaethical” realm of the normative nature of planning. It implies a need for educators to create learning situations to empower planners with respect to their professional stances and the importance of their personal values in their professional lives. The separation of personal and professional values in planning is regarded by many as tragedy that needs to be remedied in ethics education in planning and then replicated/reproduced in practice.

Lesson 3: The importance of education in ethics for professional planners

Professional and environmental ethics do not take a prominent place in the average planner’s agenda and, while recognition might exist, an *understanding* of ethics is unlikely to arise naturally in a professional planner’s life without some form of assistance. Thus, the importance of enhancing the study of planning *practice* with a focus on planning *education*. For example, all but one interviewee in the Cook study indicated a need to explore ethics as a topic in planning education.

There is a lack of awareness and/or lack of application of the RAPI Code of Conduct; practitioners reported it as too vague, too geared to private practice, inappropriate in certain situations and not useful in addressing the range of day-to-day normative ethical questions. Education includes not only professional training but also continuing professional development. Our studies indicate that bodies such as the Royal Australian Planning Institute could play a key role in ethics education for planners. RAPI needs to examine the issue of planning ethics with more creativity if it is to play a truly effective role in shaping them.

Many of those who teach planners in Australian educational institutions lack leadership abilities and expertise in and current knowledge about the normative dimensions of planning such as ecological processes and environmental philosophy. Discussion of professional ethics is all but absent in planning practice and education. Educators seem to ‘hide behind’ a facade of impartiality and objectivity. Yet this is a time when “an older ideal of the value-free planner or administrator has collapsed” and where “we increasingly recognize that all policy-making and administration is value laden, and that some of the values involved are moral values” (Howe: 1990, 1). In what could be seen as a cowardly response, Australian planning educators, who depend on practitioners for jobs for their graduates (and ultimately for their own jobs), tend to find in the conservatism and pragmatism of the profession excuses for not delivering up-to-date course content on ecological or environmental ethics or environmental matters to their students.

Lesson 4: An unwelcoming climate within universities and among practitioners

Current professional pressures severely limit opportunities to seek, nurture, support or embrace forces of change within planning schools and among practitioners. There is a hardening of positions, a battening down, a tightening, limiting ethos of doing more with less. In some universities and among some professionals, both studies found a “poverty consciousness” about ideas, particularly radical ideas. Planning schools have become, according to many practitioners and academics, *too* responsive to the practicalities of “the real world”. There is a vital need to engender a moral reasoning among planners by encouraging them to be “reflective practitioners”.^{xvi}

Lesson 5: The limits of tinkering with planning without a holistic approach to planning principles and ethical issues

Planners have expressed, in both studies, the confusion and ‘ad hoc’ nature of the professional response to ethical questions such as caring for Nature. For example, some old approaches have been coloured ‘green’ (such as AMCORD and the now-defunct federal “Better Cities” program^{xvii}) in an attempt to address ecological issues (or to convince themselves that they are addressing global ecological issues and the moral questions which underpin them). Some of these approaches have real value, but

often these projects are conceived without the holistic ethical shift necessary to bring about the paradigm shift called for in this chapter.^{xviii} In Australia, the few hopeful examples are still just that--and the principles they embody are not represented in the mainstream--certainly not in mainstream planning.

Important advances in thinking about ecological sustainability are not being embraced by planners, nor are they promoting innovative approaches. Even more importantly, critical ethical issues still remain unaddressed at the time of this writing.^{xix}

Conclusions

The two studies reported here reveal that the Australian planning profession lacks ethical leadership. With respect to moral leadership or leadership about ethics, the problem is much more serious. Practitioners are confused and torn by many forces. There is a sparseness of ethical discourse. No ethical community supports the young planning student or the practitioner.

An interview several years ago with the then National President of the Royal Australian Planning Institute provides an example. When asked how he attended to his ecological literacy, he replied: "I hire people to do that for me." Perhaps the operative model in Australian planning is simply *subcontracting*: Find another professional to do your thinking while you carry on with the mechanics. If the thinking that needs to be done is *philosophical* thinking, then perhaps it's better not to bother about it at all!^{xx}

NOTES

ⁱ See Colman, 1993 for a balanced and enlightened view *from practice*.

ⁱⁱ Sarkissian's study of Australian planners, conducted in 1994-5, was part of a much larger study into the environmental ethics of planners and planning educators and students and revealed that environmental ethics did not have primacy in professional discourse. Mirroring the lack of interest in environmental ethics in planning schools, Australian planning practitioners revealed low levels of ethical literacy and a lack of awareness of the ethical dimensions of human relationships with Nature (Sarkissian, 1996). Sarkissian argued that, while some planners may be *ecologically* literate, in the sense that they understand how ecosystems work, as a general rule Australian planning educators and planning students are unaware of the ethical dimensions of their relationships with Nature. One reason is that their profession's culture and activities mirror the wider society's basic anthropocentrism.

This chapter draws on that study and particularly on a survey which explored some of the foundational philosophical and ethical issues upon which planners' relationships with Nature are based. Thus, this chapter presents "Nature" as a case study issue, illustrative of the sort of normative crises that permeate planning ethics.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cook's study of Australian planners, currently underway, is interested in planners' *own* conceptualisations of ethics, their experiences of ethical dilemmas and their application of ethics in practice. The study is motivated by the academic and practical discussions surrounding ethics in planning (as illustrated by the list in Figure 1) and by the virtual absence of practitioners' voices in those debates. So, while the philosophy of planning ethics might have been implicit in planners' work from the start, the *explicit* and the *applied* debate regarding the ethics of planning only began in earnest in the late 1970s and has a largely been an academic debate.

^{iv} We have chosen to refer to all non-human life on this Earth as *Nature* and not as "the environment", "the biosphere," "the biota," or "the ecosphere". We acknowledge the writings of environmental philosophers, who argue that to call the non-human world "the environment" is to accord it the status of a commodity or resource, which has utilitarian value primarily for human use and enjoyment (see Naess, 1989; Devall and Sessions, 1985; Mathews, 1991; Titmuss, 1995: 27; Evernden, 1989 in Armstrong and Botzler, eds., 1993: 209).

Contemporary definitions of Nature, especially those which do not reflect the changed relationship with and re-enchantment of Nature influenced by developments in modern physics, quantum and chaos theory, and work by Morris Berman (1981) David Bohm (1973) and Rupert Sheldrake (1995) clearly see Nature as "a world apart from human influence" (Evernden, 1992: 21). We have chosen this orthography for the following reasons. First, we wish to acknowledge the power of the non-human world. For us, the natural world is alive, powerful and potent. Second, we wish to assign integrity and standing to the non-human natural world -- to convey a presence. Third, although we acknowledge that this is a problematic objective, we wish to personify Nature, to communicate our experience of Nature as a being, capable of self-organising activities and communication.

^v Elizabeth Howe provides an illuminating distinction to clarify planners' values and ethics and the potential difference between the two: "If principles are necessary for ethics to be effective, so is action. Three steps seem to be necessary for effective ethical behaviour. First, planners have to be able to see situations as posing ethical issues...the planner next must be able to make a decision about what he or she should do about it.... Finally, the planner must have both the will and the freedom or leverage to act on his or her decisions" (Howe, 1994: 10-11). The principles (or values) of the planner inform the first step in Howe's 'recipe' for ethical behaviour, while decision and **action** complete the recipe and translate values into ethics.

^{vi} *Environmental ethics* contrasts with *environmental matters*, a term which does not necessarily imply ethical principles or moral obligations (Martin and Beatley, 1993b: 121).

^{viii} In Australia, the Victorian Government's compulsory competitive tendering process in local government, for example, was cited by several interviewees as a move to the privatisation of planning (Cook, 1998).

^{ix} "Non-planners" in Sarkissian's Australian study were defined as those who are involved in the planning process, as community representatives, member of other professions, elected officials and other interested people. Included in my sample were members of the "land professions" (as defined by Beatley, 1994): architects, engineers, landscape architects, surveyors, and so forth). Sarkissian targeted three cities in northern Australia, conducted workshops for planning practitioners in Brisbane, Cairns, and Darwin and distributed questionnaires at planning and local government conferences in Adelaide, as well as direct mail to contacts within RAPI. In all, of 395 questionnaires distributed, 154 or 39 per cent, were returned, mainly from planners and other members of the land professions and community representatives in the targeted northern cities.

In the practitioners' sample, 5 per cent were builders or valuers and 23 per cent worked in community services or community development. In addition, 23 per cent were community members, advocates or elected members in local government. Most members of this group were aged between 30 and 54 (71 per cent), while a further 15 per cent were aged over sixty. The group was evenly divided between males and females. No tests of significance were possible because of the sampling procedure used.

^x One would expect this finding. With respect to utilitarianism, as Beatley points out, "Contemporary land-use policy has been driven largely by a utilitarian ethic. Utilitarianism holds that the morally correct action is one that will create the greatest aggregate level of social utility or benefits". Further, "Land is viewed by the utilitarian as essentially a means to an end; as an economic commodity; to be used to satisfy human preferences (often narrowly defined) and to optimize human welfare" (Beatley, 1994: 33; see also Harper and Stein, 1992: 105 on utilitarianism as "the underlying implicit normative ethical theory" of planning).

As to the *anthropocentrism* of Australian planning education, this is found even in the one school where environmental ethics is formally taught. As the lecturer in charge claims, "In the current moral and ideological climate . . . calls for an ethics-based planning system and for a change from human-centred governance to eco-governance are empty and dangerous." Such a proposal would depend on the acceptance of "the highly controversial notion of the intrinsic value of nature" (Cussen, 1996: 83-84).

Responding to the anthropocentrism in a critique of their article (see Lindsey, 1993), Martin and Beatley confront the problem directly, saying, "What is an unabashedly anthropocentric perspective, if not pedagogically compromising?" (1993a: 58). The same question could be asked of Dr. Cussen.

^{xi} Over half of the Heads surveyed saw environmental ethics as central, very important, or peripherally important to their school's mission, and only six per cent saw the subject as of absolutely no importance. Surprisingly, only 11 per cent of Heads said that environmental ethics was *central* to their mission. For most schools, environmental ethics was only somewhat or peripherally important, however.

^{xii} North American Heads indicated that they placed by far the greatest emphasis on Aldo Leopold's *Land Ethic* (42 per cent), with *biocentric and ecocentric views*, and *rights and basic interests of animals, plants and ecosystems* following closely. *Ecofeminism* was the least addressed core topic. Few syllabi included references to core topics, despite the fact that 42 per cent of Heads indicated explicit coverage of topics such as the *Land Ethic*. Programs seemed to be responding from a sense of ethics and environmental protection in general, rather than from a position on environmental *ethics* (Martin and Beatley, 1993b: 120-121).

Assessing coverage of *non-core* environmental ethics topics, Martin and Beatley found the greatest emphasis (73 per cent) placed on the *Tragedy of the Commons*, Garrett Hardin's classic statement (1968) that in a common (publicly owned resource), general public good does not follow from everyone serving their own perceived interest (see also Newman, 1991). This was followed by

utilitarian and economic rationales for environmental protection (70 per cent), and obligations to future generations/intergenerational equity (69 per cent).

^{xiii} Please note that the presentation of percentages in this and following tables from Cook's study is indicative only, as sample sizes are too small to convey statistical reliability. Total percentages do not total 100 per cent in all instances due to rounding.

^{xiv} In Sarkissian's 1994-95 university study, self-complete questionnaires were distributed to planning students and educators at fourteen universities where planning courses were offered. This yielded a sample of 205 members of the "university community". Of 840 questionnaires distributed, 205 were returned, yielding a response rate of 24.5 per cent. Of this total, 47 were educators and over three-quarters (158) were students. This represented 46.4 per cent of educators and 8.1 per cent of the students enrolled in those planning courses in 1994. In all, 54 per cent of respondents were male, and the men were generally older than women. The largest percentage of the total sample (46 per cent) was aged under 25: ages of the rest were fairly evenly distributed across the 25 to 60 age ranges.

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method was selected. The sample, while not representative or statistically valid, can nevertheless provide an indication of the views of Australian planning students and educators with respect to environmental ethics. As the sample was not a probability sample, tests of statistical significance could only be seen as diagnostic and suggestive. The sample was weighted as follows: total number of Australian planning students=1905.3; total number of planning educators=101.2; total number of students and educators=2006.5. The sample was weighted to reduce the representation of educators to 4.64 per cent (or 9.51 out of 205) and to increase the representation of students to 195.49 (or 95.36 per cent).

^{xv} Sarkissian's respondents working in State and local government echoed these views.

^{xvi} Donald Schön's *Reflective Practitioner* (1983) is a compelling study of how professional practices might respond to normative values. For an applied investigation, see Richmond's description of training undertaken with transportation planners at which Schön was a participant (1995).

^{xvii} For a description of the Better Cities program, see Campbell, 1993. AMCORD, the Australian Model Code for Residential Development, is described in B. Howe, 1993.

^{xviii} An example is the recently completed 'green' North Haven' housing development in suburban Adelaide. While pioneering energy-efficiency, drainage and water quality innovations, this residential development suffers from such serious micro-scale design flaws (in terms of dwelling livability) that it is unlikely to greatly influence housing planning and design. Nevertheless, it received a National RAPI Award for Planning Excellence.

With respect to planning *education*, David Orr makes the point that the imperative is not "to tinker with minutiae, but a call to deeper change" (1994: 5).

^{xix} An article in the *Australian Planner* argues that in Australia there is no accepted definition of *sustainable* development and that "the notion of sustainable development risks being meaningless." The concept is not making it into the mainstream. It revealed low levels of awareness of sustainable development issues in Australian local government, confirming my suspicions that the issue needs to be highlighted and monitored much more thoroughly than is currently the case (see Fowke and Prasad, 1996).

^{xx} This interview was strangely reminiscent of an interview conducted by Sarkissian in May 1994 with the then President of the Canadian Institute of Planners, John Livey. Confessing that the "eco-view" is largely ignored in Canadian planning, Livey also admitted, with respect to the national code of ethics for planners (Canadian Institute of Planners/Institut Canadien des Urbanistes, 1994a and 1994b), that, "There is nothing in there [in the Code] that gives primacy to the environment over social or equity issues". Furthermore, "people [i.e., planners] don't understand that their health, that their economy is going to be affected". Livey continued by saying that planners "don't have confidence to take the leap yet". Comparing the global ecological situation to a cholera outbreak in the nineteenth century, he explained that Canadian planners are still saying, "Prove it".

For Livey, the answer lies in more scientific and technical research. Basic research *to prove it is needed*. In order to sensitise planners to what it really going on, we would have to “show there’s a ‘ticking time bomb’”. Even with respect to the “oil catastrophe” or energy shortage, he argued that “people can’t believe that the crisis is real” (Livey, *pers. comm.*, 1994).

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