

The jobs column

While demand for town planners is far outstripping supply, enabling experienced men to command high salaries, there is considerable uncertainty within the profession whether the bubble will burst — and if so when.

Mr John de Monchaux, who recently returned from America to head the Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill planning group, is firmly on the side of the optimists when he comments:

"I see no likelihood whatever of a slackening in demand. One has only to look at the spread and complexity of new environmental legislation around the world to realise that these requirements can only be met by an army of people trained in the physical and human environment."

At the other end of the spectrum, however, is Mr George Clark, director of, Urban Systems Corporation, who suggests that the great upsurge of publicly commissioned private planning work — which commenced with the Whitlam Government's election and which is basic to the planning boom — is already beginning to plateau.

His caution is matched by Mr Graham O'Loghlin, of consulting engineer Kinnaid Hill de Rohan and Young (which recently expanded strongly into planning as a joint venture partner in Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill), who says there is a "definite element of fashion" in the current upsurge.

It could take ten years, Mr O'Loghlin suggests, but as the basic systems and management patterns for coping with Australia's urban needs are developed, so the demand for planning services will flatten.

Not taking any really firm line is a recent report on training needs in the pro-

A weekly column covering trends in executive, professional, academic and Public Service appointment.

ners with multi-disciplined backgrounds, capable of administering and managing an established, if flexible, urban system.

If the urban management role does expand at the rate being forecast, it is likely to increase the dominance of the public planning authorities in the planning employment market.

Consulting planners estimate that about 65 per cent of all qualified people are in federal, State or local government employ.

The possibility of an even greater public planning workforce does worry the consultants.

But for planners as a whole, stepped-up government involvement has already been highly beneficial. It is in this quarter that the remuneration pace is being set, forcing consultants and private developers to bid high for the limited pool of talent.

Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill, for example, is advertising for an unspecified number of senior urban planners at salaries "probably in the range of \$12,000 to \$15,000" — and other planning groups believe that even in this bracket it will be hard pressed to fill the posts.

They say top men are commanding up to \$20,000 a year and that, indeed, they could obtain still more abroad since the shortage exists worldwide.

This means that senior urban planners are now matching the salaries earned by architects, and are often earning marginally (a thousand or so) more.

the critical shortage of mature, experienced senior men and the desperation of the multiplicity of new public planning bodies for any sort of assistance than a genuine shortage of inexperienced planners.

He warns that in planning "many are called but few chosen" and that, with evidence that there could be a decline, particularly in the amount of Federal Government work being farmed out to private consultants, there is a danger that there could be too many planners — the situation geologists were in a few years ago.

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profession, carried out for the Institute of Urban Studies, which concluded that the extent of future demand is complicated by uncertainties about the long-term future of federal initiatives in urban planning.

The report suggested tentatively, however, that once the various planning and development authorities are established and rolling, they will probably tend to develop their own momentum despite fluctuating fortunes at the political level.

This idea appears to be supported by the Federal Government's Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD), which sees the long-term future as strongest for those plan-

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they are also ahead of engineers of a comparable standard, by an even greater margin.

A similar pattern exists at the bottom rungs of the planning ladder, despite a concerted effort by the universities to increase output, and despite the strong emphasis on experience by most of the consulting groups seeking planners.

Mr Clarke of Urban Systems Corporation says a young planner with a good bachelor degree and a master's in city and regional planning could command \$10,000 to \$11,000 a year at the moment — a premium of \$2-\$3,000 over a comparable engineer.

Mr Clarke, however, says that this reflects more

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of the
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see John de Monchaux's ad. over >



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Llewelyn-Davies Associates, urban planning consultants of New York and London, and Kinnaid Hill deRohan and Young Pty. Ltd., consulting engineers, have formed a joint practice in the fields of urban planning and design, health services planning and hospital design. The two firms currently have in hand a number of major planning assignments in Australia and abroad, including preparation of the Structure Plan for the Albury/Wodonga Growth Centre.

The firms require senior urban planners for their offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. They are seeking experienced professionals with tertiary qualifications in urban planning and backgrounds in architecture, economics, engineering, surveying, sociology or other related disciplines. These people would be expected to assume positions of responsibility in major projects or studies. Salaries will be negotiable and will probably be in the range of \$12,000-\$15,000. Telephone Mr John deMonchaux in Sydney (02) 231 5111 or send applications in writing to:

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