

Green building transition pathways in Brisbane

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The building sector plays an important role in today`s public and scientific debate on climate change and energy transitions. About one-third of the global final energy is consumed in buildings (IEA, 2013). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) continually discuss the significance of buildings in the context of climate protection and energy efficiency. It is widely accepted that cities play a vital role as seedbeds and learning arenas for low-carbon energy transitions and addressing climate change. The case-study of Brisbane provides rare insights into the challenges and barriers of “urban greening” pathways in the building sector.

Based on expert interviews and secondary data analysis this paper provides an overview of different developments in Brisbane`s building sector, which is characterized by ambivalence. Since the mid-2000s, “green” office buildings become increasingly common in Brisbane. While there has been a significant shift towards “greener” office buildings, there has been comparably little momentum in the residential sector. As yet, a broad market uptake has not occurred for “green” homes which focus on the efficiency of energy, water, and environmental friendly materials.

The paper looks at both building sectors (office and residential) by focusing on the historical developments, political framework conditions, driving and opponent actors which interplay in Brisbane`s urban context.

Bio

Sebastian Fastenrath is a research fellow and PhD candidate at the Institute of Geography at the University of Cologne working on the international research project GreenRegio. He is particularly interested in urban and regional sustainability transitions, socio-technological change, urban regeneration and governance processes. In his research, he has been focusing on the case studies Freiburg (Germany) and Brisbane (Australia). Sebastian studied Geography, Sociology, and Political Sciences at the University of Cologne, Germany and finished his degree (MSc equivalent) in 2011.