The small town of Lawton is suffering under the weight of financial realities. With the recent highway bypass, visitors and revenue have decreased. In an urgent attempt to lead the town back to prosperity, Mayor Alexandra Wiley used her weekly column in the Lawton local newspaper to propose an “exciting” and “grand-scale” idea to make Lawton “a truly great town.” She contends that “we want tourists and, to be blunt, we need their money” and that the time is now right to build “a spectacular piece of modern architecture” in the mould of many “Big” attractions dotted around Australia. While she is inspiring in her praise of the idea, her tone is also shaded by defensiveness of her anticipated doubters. In response to her town-wide appeal, Ian Warwick, President of the Lawton-based ‘Lawton Progress Association’ fired back with these very same doubts in the newspaper’s next edition. His letter contended that there are many alternative options to heal the town’s problems, and that any solution should “consider what gives value to our lives.” The newspaper’s cartoonist offered a light-hearted visual perspective, portraying Lawton’s “Great Watermelon” as a modern and popular attraction.

Wiley’s column appealed to her town-wide audience on essentially three fronts: the population’s pride in Lawton, the desire to preserve their “vivace, wholesome Australian lifestyle” and, most critically, the need to create more revenue for the town. She acknowledges easily on that the bypass has led to a “resultant peace” and a respite from the traffic’s “dust from the road invading our rooms.” She concludes that “there is no going back to the way things were to clarify her position on the bypass, but launches often into emphasizing the raw
problems that have arisen as a result. The residents are
positioned to weigh up the advantages, with the "downside"
causing them to be open to considering new options to
preserve and enrich their lives. Wiley positions her audience
to fear not moving forward with her plan, by threatening
Lauton becoming a "backwater" and a "ghost town",
terms that conjure up images of that can inspire fear and
a desire to act. Wiley wants to rekindle her audience's
pride in their home, reminding them of its "beautiful," "historic"
"verdant" and "comfortable" features. But to "protect our
lifestyle" will come with a cost, one that she proposes
to the town so they might because they too "deserve a
share of that prosperity." Her audience is positioned to
feel protective of their town and inspired to take action.

Wiley's proposal is built around the pride her neighbors
have in Lauton's natural history and features. The
"landmark" she suggests, potentially "sculpted to a height of 20
metres or more" would not only reflect the town's values,
but create much needed commerce. She fills her audience,
local farmers and small business owners, with pride for the
"crisp," "most succulent," and "luscious" produce they have
always delivered. She promises to "showcase" it. Furthermore,
she promises that her attraction would lead to instant
revenue streams and business opportunities: "candy, toys, cards and gifts" not to mention "buyers for their
produce... young people to have jobs... and our hospital and
nursing home to be viable." Wiley undermines the
"naysayers" with appeals to her audience's desire to be
recognized and to further the prosperity that the town
has lost since the advent of the bypass. She inspires their
commercial economic by asking them to "imagine the events,
we could hold," positioning her audience to feel energized,
respected and cared for by their mayor.

Ian Warwick is far less impressed, however. His letter juxtaposes the bombastic proposal of the mayor with the cultural revenue opportunities of his association preference. While he agrees that something needs to be done, he asks, "Can't we be different?" in coming up with a solution that better fits the quiet, cultural values of his Lawton. He portrays the mayor's attractor as "ugly" and a potential "monstrosity" underlying her proposal as simplistic, derivative and with the sole potential of "destroying its beauty." Warwick and his cronies long for a Lawton that is a hub of intellectual pursuits, where young people would be "employed as catalogue designers, gallery guides or story-tellers." His Lawton is juxtaposed with his portrayal of the mayor's as "overrun," "defaced by vandals," where "our air will be polluted." Warwick positions his audience to raise their expectations of what Lawton is now, and to push back against a council who would undermine the "cultural focus" he feels is at the core of Lawton. Throughout his letter he juxtaposes a blind pursuit of cash with a more pragmatic, values-based approach, appealing to his audience's core beliefs rather than their hip pockets.

The newspaper's cartoonist offered his contribution, which tended to sit between those of Wiley and Warwick. He presents a future where the "Giant Watermelon of Lawton is popular, demonstrated by all the traffic seemingly choosing to stop by, rather than use the bypass. However, the architecture, so lauded by Wiley, is shown to stand in complete contrast with the rest..."
of Lauton. Furthermore, the "grand scale" that Wiley promised has certainly come to pass, fulfilling her promise to "tower over the trees" and local church, but the cartoonist suggests it in fact overwhelms the town, casting a shadow over the nearby buildings. The audience is left to ponder whether the rise in popularity of Lauton as a tourist spot is worth the sheer size and presence of the attraction, with even the population increase by one to show its large role in the town.

The issue of increasing a small town's presence and popularity to raise commerce is juxtaposed with the desire to keep a-town traditional values throughout all three texts. Wiley uses a strategy based around appealing to her constituents' emotions of pride in all they have to showcase to the world and the desire to monetize it. Curiously, Warwick focuses his strategy around inspiring value-based contemplation over attention-grabbing solutions. Wiley does offer some evidence to support her contention, which Warwick seems unable to rebut other than to promote fear of too many visitors. Striking the right balance will be the pathway to capturing the hearts and minds of the people of Lauton.