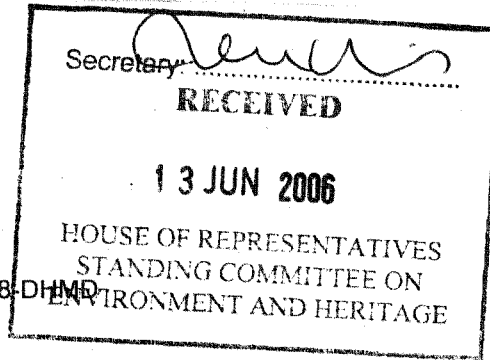


Manly Council



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The Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter Submission

Thank you for granting Manly Council an extension for contributing to the Sustainability Charter's development. The Inquiry's Discussion Paper has been considered by both Council staff and the Manly Sustainability Strategy Management Group having Council and community representation. A National Sustainability Charter has significant merit in principle, and Council is keen to see a Charter that results in action, as well as 'words'.

Whilst in no particular order, Council wishes to make the following response to the Discussion Paper:

1. Strong Focus on the Integration of Ecologically Sustainable Development through Internationally Developed Tools.

Through the United Nation's Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities, and indeed the internationally accepted Earth Charter, there has been an identification for the true integration of social environment, natural environment and the economic environment. Nationally, we still seem to exhibit a 'silo' affect with each of these three key areas.

2. Improved Benchmarking and Reporting

There is a need to make State of Environment reporting (at all levels of government) more directly relevant to sustainability outcomes. There is a need for repeatable comparisons from one SoE report to another. It is very clear that trends cannot be tracked in any meaningful way from 1996 to 2001 and there are some concerns in the community that the national 2006 SoE is going the same way.

3. A 'Living', Sustainable Document

Manly Council strongly supports the need for a living, sustainable document with transparent mechanisms and timelines for review and updating. Indeed, Manly's own Sustainability Strategy has a three year review provision identified, and Council is currently undertaking its second such three year review.

PS2875:SRKF

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www.smokefreezones.com.au

4. Support for Recommendations 1-3 of the Sustainable Cities Paper.

Manly Council supports recommendations 1 to 3 of the Sustainable Cities Paper, including:

1. the establishment of an Australian Sustainability Charter,
2. a review of Government policy proposals against sustainability; and
3. the establishment of the Australian Sustainability Commission.

With relation to Recommendations 1 and 2, Local Government plays a very important role in implementing sustainable outcomes, which reinforces the need for local government representation in the development and adoption of a Charter, as occurred with the National Strategy for ESD. Further, the Federal Government, and in turn the State Governments and Local Governments should be encouraged to also adopt and commit to the goals and objectives of the Sustainability Charter.

5. Support for the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target

Manly Council supports alternative energy sources. Council believes that the alternative energy sector is struggling in part because of lack of real targets or government support for them, as suggested by the very substantial increases in uptake once EU countries introduced targets and incentives.

6. Sustainability Impact Clause for submissions to Federal Cabinet and to Parliament.

Similar to the use of an Economic Impact Clause, many local governments are identifying a Sustainability Impact Clause when submitting reports to Council. New policy should also be assessed for its sustainability impacts before it is adopted.

7. Biodiversity Conservation

The theme areas don't seem to address biodiversity conservation, which was identified in the 1996 National SoE report as "*perhaps our most serious environmental problem*", and is becoming increasingly important in urban areas as pressures increase.

8. Independent Committee must prepare National State of Environment Report

Ideally, the Australian Sustainability Commission must be responsible for developing the National State of Environment Report every five years as it is an independent body.

9. Strong Links between Social Wellbeing and Environmental Outcomes

Council considers that sustainability is better conveyed when linked with social wellbeing, in addition to identifying ways that individuals and organisations can be involved with living more sustainably. The focus of the Discussion Paper is very much slanted towards the environment, and a link to the benefits of social wellbeing will demonstrate the further benefits of sustainability.

Thank you for allowing Manly Council the opportunity to make submission to the process. Should you require further information regarding this matter, please contact Council's Branch Manager Natural Resources, Skye Rose on telephone (02) 9976 1602.

Yours faithfully,



Anthony Hewton

Divisional Manager, Corporate Planning and Strategy