
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Sustainability for survival: creating a climate for change

Inquiry into a sustainability charter

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

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Foreword


Throughout industry and among community groups in Australia there is increasing awareness of the importance of advancing sustainability and as such, a desire to adopt more sustainable practices. In fact, there is a wealth of existing research, strategies and technologies in the area of sustainability and these are part of a host of measures contributing to its advancement in Australia. A national Sustainability Commission, Commissioner and Charter would help coordinate the use of existing sustainability measures and facilitate further development in this area.

Australian Government establishment of a national Sustainability Commission headed by a Commissioner would deliver a strong signal of the Commonwealth's commitment to take a leadership role on sustainability. This signal of commitment would be further strengthened by Australian Government support for a national Sustainability Charter. The Charter would help create a climate for change for a sustainable future and provide long term direction to Australians.

Change for sustainability comes with financial cost, but the cost of inaction is far greater. It will be an investment by us in the health of our environment, society and economy.

I am moved by the enthusiasm of everyday people, academics, industry representatives and others who participated in this inquiry. Your contributions are appreciated. I also thank my fellow committee members for their diligence and bipartisan commitment to help pave the way to protecting Australia's future.

Dr Mal Washer MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

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Deputy Chair Ms Jennie George MP

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Hon Duncan Kerr MP

Hon Warren Entsch MP (from 9/2/06)

Mr Stewart McArthur MP

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List of abbreviations

ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
Cities Programme	United Nations Global Cities Programme
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
IHA	International Hydropower Association
NCP	National Competition Policy
NSESD	National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development
SoE	State of the Environment
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UDIA	Urban Development Institute of Australia
UITP	International Association of Public Transport
UR-3R	Urban Resource - Reduction, Recovery, Recycling



List of recommendations

In its report, *Sustainable Cities*, tabled 12 September 2005, the Committee recommended that the Australian Government establish an Australian Sustainability Charter. While there is considerable support for the concept of a Sustainability Charter, there is also much debate about nearly all aspects of developing and implementing one. The Committee thought it would be useful to identify and flesh out some of the more contentious issues surrounding a Sustainability Charter and to make concrete recommendations. On 16 February 2006 it therefore resolved, under provisions of the House of Representatives standing order 215(c), to undertake an inquiry into a Sustainability Charter. Its recommendations follow.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that within the first six months of the 42nd Parliament, the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources introduce a Bill for an Act to establish a statutory national Sustainability Commission, headed by a Sustainability Commissioner.

In drafting this legislation, the Australian Government should seek input from the state and territory governments.

In the Committee's view, and drawing from some of the suggestions made in submissions, the legislation should outline the ongoing roles of the Commission and Commissioner.

The ongoing role of the Commission should involve:

- defining what sustainability means to Australia
- creating an aspirational Sustainability Charter with objectives and milestones
- creating a supplementary technical implementation agreement containing targets

- evaluating progress towards meeting national sustainability goals, objectives and targets and reporting on this to both Houses of Federal Parliament
- conducting inquiries into sustainability matters, recommending remedial measures for unsustainable practices and gaps in policies and acknowledging those that are sustainable
- reviewing (when necessary) national sustainability goals, objectives and targets
- building and strengthening partnerships with government, industry and the community (nationally and internationally)
- influencing and guiding government, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes
- collecting, maintaining and disseminating information on sustainability, including national performance statistics.

The Commissioner should:

- head the office of the national Sustainability Commission and chair the advisory committee
- be an independent statutory officer
- be appointed with support of the government and the parliament for a 10 year, non-renewable period
- be removed from office only by agreement of both Houses of Parliament on the grounds of misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental incapacity
- report annually to parliament
- seek input from bodies such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in defining scientifically sound targets
- have wide powers of access to people, places and papers in undertaking his/her duties
- represent Australia at international sustainability forums
- be bound by the functions and powers of the enabling legislation as well as meeting the obligations under the *Public Service Act 1999 (Commonwealth)*

- undertake and oversee (as appropriate) the duties of the Commission
- draw upon existing sustainability measures.

Further, the legislation should provide for:

- the establishment of an advisory committee, chaired by the Commissioner and comprised of government, industry and community sustainability champions
- informational and performance reporting against the Charter.

Recommendation 2

The Committee reiterates its recommendation in the *Sustainable Cities* report to establish a national Sustainability Charter.

The Charter should:

- be aspirational
- define sustainability in an Australian context
- contain clear and concise overarching objectives and timeframes.

The supplementary technical implementation agreement should:

- contain targets that are closely aligned with the the objectives of the Charter
- be used primarily by government and industry.

The scope of the Charter should, at a minimum, cover the following sustainability sectors:

- the built environment
- water
- energy
- transport
- ecological footprint
- economics
- waste
- social equity and health
- community engagement and education

and integrate their related components.

The process used for devising the Charter and supplementary technical implementation agreement should be transparent, participatory and inclusive.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the Australian Government take a leadership role in advancing sustainability outcomes, not only through the measures outlined in Recommendation 1, but also through:

- the use of monetary and non-monetary incentives for governments, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes
- assessing existing and future policy against the proposed Sustainability Charter.

Sustainability charter inquiry

Sustainability in Australia

- 1.1 Australia's national efforts towards advancing sustainability are embodied in the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSES D).¹ The Committee notes evidence received which argues that this strategy is one dimensional, whereas sustainability and sustainable development involve multiple, interdependent dimensions.² The NSES D is written for public policy and decision makers,³ but the evidence to this inquiry indicates that a collective government, industry and community endeavour is required.⁴ Finally, the strategy exists in the absence of a centralised administrative framework⁵ – an arrangement which, according to one submitter, creates little more than a 'wish list'.⁶

1 Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee 1992, *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development*, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 17 February 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/national/nsestd/strategy/intro.html#WIESD>.

2 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 2.

3 Department of the Environment and Water Resources 2007, *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development*, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 16 July 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/national/nsestd/index.html>.

4 Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 1.

5 Crowley, K & Coffey, B 2007, 'Tasmania Together and Growing Victoria Together: Can State Plans Deliver Environmental Sustainability?' *Public Administration Today*, Jan–Mar, p. 49.

6 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. iv. See also CRC Construction Innovation, *Submission no. 84*, p. 9; Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 28; Ms Di Jay, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 8.

- 1.2 During the inquiry it became apparent that there is greater industry and community awareness of environmental issues and a desire to adopt more sustainable practices. There is a wealth of existing research, strategies and technologies to support progress in this area. In the Committee's view, a Sustainability Charter has the potential to make a significant contribution towards advancing sustainability in Australia.

Background to and conduct of the inquiry

- 1.3 On 12 September 2005 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage tabled its *Sustainable Cities* report with 32 recommendations. As at 16 August 2007, the Committee still awaits a government response to this report.
- 1.4 While the primary aim of the *Sustainable Cities* report was to examine issues and policies related to the development of sustainable cities, the Committee identified the need for a national policy framework for broader sustainability governance. As a result, the first three of the Committee's recommendations were centred on ways of achieving a coordinated national approach to sustainability, underpinned by an overarching policy framework. The first of these proposed that the Australian Government establish a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed national Sustainability Charter:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- establish an Australian Sustainability Charter that sets key national targets across a number of areas, including water, transport, energy, building design and planning;
- encourage a Council of Australian Governments agreement to the charter and its key targets.⁷

7 Australia, Parliament 2005, *Sustainable Cities*, (M Washer, chair), Parl. Paper 215, Canberra.

- 1.5 The next recommendation in the *Sustainable Cities* report concerned evaluating new government policy proposals against the Charter, particularly their impact on urban areas:

The committee recommends that all new relevant Australian Government policy proposals be evaluated as to whether they would impact on urban sustainability and if so, be assessed against the Australian Sustainability Charter and the COAG agreed sustainability targets.⁸

- 1.6 The third recommendation in the *Sustainable Cities* report involved the establishment of a statutory national Sustainability Commission headed by a national Sustainability Commissioner to monitor funding and explore the concept of incentive payments:

The committee recommends that:

- the Australian Government establish an independent Australian Sustainability Commission headed by a National Sustainability Commissioner;
- task the Commission with monitoring the extent to which Commonwealth funds and State and Territory use of Commonwealth funds promotes the COAG agreed sustainability targets; and
- task the Commission with exploring the concept of incentive payments to the States and Territories for sustainability outcomes along the lines of the National Competition Council model.⁹

- 1.7 Following the tabling of *Sustainable Cities*, the Committee decided to explore in more detail some of the issues surrounding a Sustainability Charter. On 16 February 2006 it resolved, under provisions of the House of Representatives standing order 215(c), to conduct an inquiry into a sustainability charter.

- 1.8 While there is considerable support for the concept of a Sustainability Charter, there is also much debate about nearly all aspects of developing and implementing one. The Committee thought it would be useful to identify and flesh out some of the more contentious issues surrounding a Charter and to make concrete recommendations. To this end, it has made detailed recommendations, particularly concerning the establishment of a Sustainability Commission and the role of a Sustainability Commissioner.

8 Australia, Parliament 2005, *Sustainable Cities*, (M Washer, chair), Parl. Paper 215, Canberra.

9 Australia, Parliament 2005, *Sustainable Cities*, (M Washer, chair), Parl. Paper 215, Canberra.

- 1.9 While the Committee has given some broad guidance about the scope and elements that should be contained in the proposed Sustainability Charter, it has suggested that the determination of specific details and the setting of targets are tasks that belong to the proposed Sustainability Commission. Sustainability target setting is a highly technical process.¹⁰ The Committee strongly suggests that the Commission seek the assistance of bodies such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in undertaking these tasks.
- 1.10 As part of the sustainability charter inquiry, the Committee agreed to review the Auditor-General's report *Audit Report No. 22, 2005–2006, Cross Portfolio Audit of Green Office Procurement*, tabled in the House of Representatives in February 2006. This review provided a valuable snapshot, assessing the actions of Australian Government agencies and departments to minimise the negative impact of their operations.
- 1.11 The review began with the Committee holding a public hearing with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), where evidence was received about the Auditor-General's findings concerning significant shortcomings in the green procurement performance of Australian Government agencies and departments. As the lead agency responsible for green office procurement, the (then) Department of Environment and Heritage subsequently appeared before the Committee at a public hearing to provide evidence on aspects of the audit findings and action it had taken in response to relevant ANAO recommendations.
- 1.12 The Committee's review of the green office procurement audit report was tabled in the House of Representatives on 4 September 2006, focusing on some of the significant shortcomings identified by the ANAO. The Committee believes that these shortcomings reinforce the need for an Australian Sustainability Charter that provides comprehensive policy, targets and practical guidelines.
- 1.13 After conducting the green office procurement audit report review, the Committee shifted its focus to a series of themed roundtable discussions (and additional public hearings) on the broader inquiry. These themes began with general topics such as the need for, and the nature and scope of, a Sustainability Charter, then progressed to more specific topics such as the built environment and construction, measurement and reporting, energy, economics, waste, transport, social equity and health and community engagement and education.

10 CRC Construction Innovation, *Submission no. 84*, p. 6.

- 1.14 During this phase of the inquiry, the Committee took advantage of opportunities to conduct inspections on sites that put sustainability at the forefront of their operations. The Committee visited the following places:
- Szencorp's six Green Star rated building in South Melbourne, Victoria
 - Roaring 40s' Woolnorth Wind Farm in North West Tasmania
 - Hydro Tasmania's Power Station at Lake Margaret and its Hands On Energy Discovery Centre in Hobart, Tasmania
 - Water Corporation's Water Reclamation Plant and Seawater Desalination Plant in Kwinana, its Beenyup Waste Treatment Plant in Craige and its Gnangara Mound in Wanneroo, Western Australia
 - The City of Joondalup's Yellagonga Park in Joondalup and its Tamala Park Landfill Gas Recovery Plant in Mindarie, Western Australia.

The Committee is impressed with the various sustainability initiatives taken by these organisations

- 1.15 The Committee received 118 written submissions and 26 exhibits to the inquiry (see Appendices A and B, respectively). The Committee appreciates the contribution of all who had input into this inquiry.
- 1.16 The next chapter argues the need for defining sustainability in an Australian context. This is followed in Chapter 3 by an outline of the types of issues on the sustainability agenda that need to be considered when determining the nature, content and scope of the proposed Charter. Chapter 4 covers some of the existing international, national and sectoral sustainability strategies and the final chapter examines a broad enabling framework for the proposed national Sustainability Charter.

Defining sustainability

...before we can even start talking to people about sustainability, we need to be able to communicate what it is.¹

2.1 If Australians are to embrace a national Sustainability Charter, they first need to understand the concept (and reality) of sustainability. However, to date there is no single, universally accepted definition of sustainability or sustainable development and, as evident in this inquiry, any discussion about definition quickly generates debate.

2.2 The most frequently cited definition of sustainable development comes from the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, entitled *Our Common Future* (also known as the Brundtland Commission Report after its chair):

...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.²

2.3 Although this definition emphasises the long term and ethical aspects of sustainability, it does not clearly identify the necessity for a sustainable environment, just society and healthy economy. Many would argue that these features are the underlying principles of sustainable development and need to be articulated in any definition.

1 Ms Sharon Ede, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 5.

2 Dunphy, D, Benveniste, J, Griffiths, A & Sutton, P 2000, *Sustainability: The corporate challenge of the 21st century*, Allen & Unwin, New South Wales, Australia, p. 22.

- 2.4 Dunphy et al offer a broader definition of sustainable development that better conveys underpinning ecological, social and economic principles.

Sustainable development comprises types of economic and social development that protect and enhance the natural environment and social equity.³

- 2.5 This definition suggests that sustainable development is more a process than an outcome. In fact, one submitter to the Committee's inquiry into sustainable cities stated that the overriding concept of sustainability is:

...a journey, not a destination.⁴

- 2.6 Many submitters agreed with this notion.⁵ Their position, which could be partially attributed to the absence of a concrete definition of both sustainability and sustainable development, is primarily based on the view that a journey would facilitate a process of continual improvement and flexibility.⁶

- 2.7 A number of submitters, by contrast, argued that sustainability is a destination. One submitter uses an analogy of pregnancy to support this proposition.

In my view, *sustainable* is like *pregnant*: it's not possible to be a little bit pregnant, and a society is either sustainable or unsustainable.⁷

- 2.8 This is reinforced by another submitter who contends that the proposed Charter will be rendered meaningless if it is based on the premise that sustainability is a journey, as opposed to a destination, because it is not possible for a particular resource to be partially sustainable (as implied by the term 'journey').⁸ Moreover, one

3 Dunphy, D, Benveniste, J, Griffiths, A & Sutton, P 2000, *Sustainability: The corporate challenge of the 21st century*, Allen & Unwin, New South Wales, Australia, p. 23.

4 Mr Chris Davis, *Transcript of Evidence*, House Environment and Heritage Committee, Sustainable Cities inquiry, 29 April 2005, p. 36.

5 AusCID, *Submission no. 70*, p. 2; Mr Alan Parker, *Submission no. 23*, p. 7; Mr Ian Smart, *Submission no. 88*, p. 8.

6 Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission no. 94*, p. 2.

7 Mr Gordon Hocking, *Submission no. 13*, p. 1. See also Caloundra City Council, *Submission no. 98*, p. 3; Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 2; Szencorp Group, *Submission no. 108*, p. 1.

8 Ms Jill Curnow, *Submission no. 18*, p. 1.

submitter maintains that while sustainability is the destination, sustainable development is the journey.⁹

- 2.9 The Committee also received evidence that sustainability is both a journey *and* destination.¹⁰ Babcock and Brown, for instance, argued that the journey represents continuous action (surrounding the value of meeting human needs while reducing environmental and social impact), whereas the destination relates to an outcome of a biomimetic economy (where patterns of production and consumption replicate those of nature).¹¹
- 2.10 Other witnesses regarded the concept of sustainable development as an oxymoron¹² claiming that sustainability and development are incompatible because in order for society to live within sustainable means, development (in the form of production and consumption) must be decreased, not increased (as implied by the term ‘development’).¹³
- 2.11 The journey versus destination discussion provides a platform for further debate on what sustainability and sustainable development mean to Australians. It is clear that some form of definition is required, whether it be conclusive or visionary in nature, so that the proposed Charter and all levels of government as well as industry and the community are on the same path and headed in the same direction.
- 2.12 This viewpoint is supported by numerous submitters to the inquiry who argued that, as a starting point, the proposed Charter must clarify the meaning of sustainability.¹⁴ The process of clarification will involve looking at existing definitions, including those in the international arena, and identifying what the terms sustainability and sustainable development mean in an Australian context.¹⁵ Some submitters suggested that it may be necessary for Australia to

9 HATCH, *Submission no. 99*, p. 2.

10 Babcock & Brown, *Submission no 59*, p. 2.

11 Babcock & Brown, *Submission no. 59*, p. 2.

12 Dr Murray May, *Submission no. 16*, p. 1; Sustainable Population Australia Inc., *Submission no. 44*, p. 6.

13 Dr Ted Trainer, *Submission no. 30*, p. 6.

14 Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, *Submission no. 45*, p. 3; Dr Murray May, *Submission no. 16*, p. 1.

15 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 2; Australian Association for Environmental Education, *Submission no. 31*, p. 2; HATCH, *Submission no. 99*, p. 2.

develop a 'new' or different definition.¹⁶ This may, in fact, be an opportunity for Australia to demonstrate leadership in this area.

Australia's position

2.13 In response to the Brundtland report (see paragraph 2.2), Australia adopted the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). The COAG endorsed National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSES D) provides the following definition of ESD:

Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.¹⁷

2.14 The Committee has received evidence critical of the term ESD because it implies that ecological systems should sustain development.¹⁸ The term *ecological development* (where the environment, society and the economy fall under the term 'ecological') is offered as an alternative because it emphasises that development should sustain ecology.¹⁹ Moreover, it is argued that ESD is outdated, not easily accessible, nor displayed in a format comprehensible to the general public²⁰ and focuses too heavily on environmental impacts rather than the holistic function of the environment, society and the economy.²¹

16 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 2; HATCH, *Submission no. 99*, p. 2.

17 Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee 1992, *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development*, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 17 February 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/esd/national/nsestd/strategy/intro.html#WIESD>.

18 Ms Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, p. 2.

19 Ms Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, p. 2.

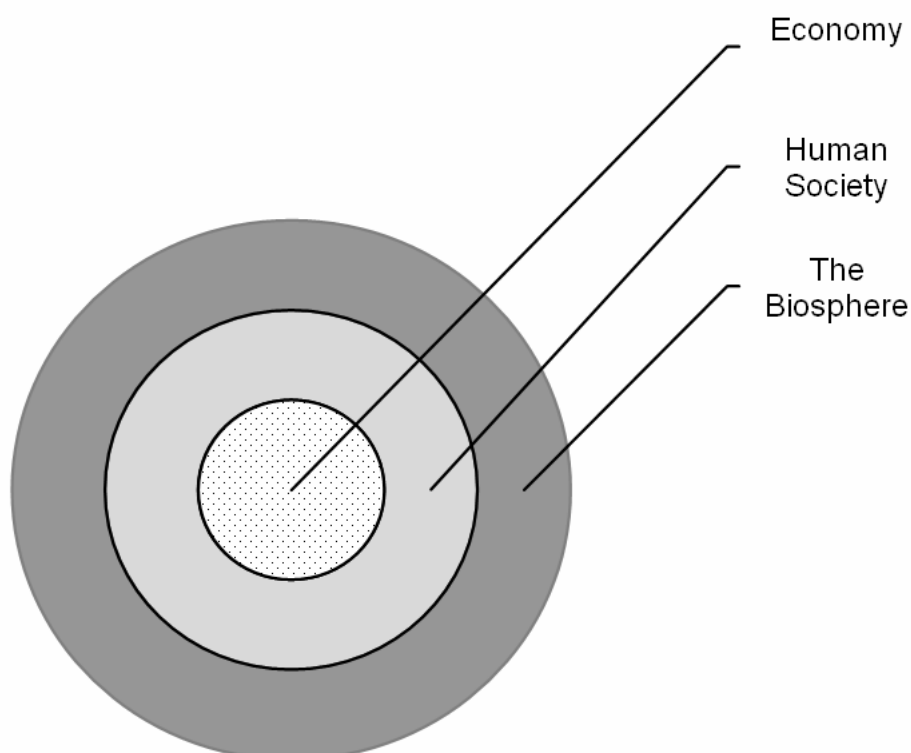
20 Associate Professor Terry Williamson and Mr Bruce Beauchamp, *Submission no. 96*, p. 3.

21 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 2.

Triple Bottom Line

2.15 It is generally agreed that the relationship between the environment, society and the economy – often referred to as the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) – is the underlying principle of sustainability.²² Various models of sustainability depict this perceived relationship. For example, some theorists believe the three dimensions are of equal importance; others contend that the environment and society play subsidiary roles to the economy; while others view the three elements concentrically where economics is subordinate to society which in turn is subordinate to the environment (see Figure 2.1, below).²³ A preferred model should be adopted when defining what sustainability and sustainable development mean to Australia.²⁴

Figure 2.1 Concentric model of sustainability



Source: Water Corporation, Submission no. 115, p. 3.

22 Australian Council of Recyclers Inc., Submission no. 81, p. 5.

23 Peet, J 2002, 'Sustainable Development: why is it so difficult?', *Pacific Ecologist*, vol. 4., Summer 2002-2003, pp. 16-20.

24 Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, Submission no. 45, p. 3.

- 2.16 Further to the TBL debate, some submitters argue the need for a fourth dimension of governance performance – a quadruple bottom line²⁵ – while another argues that the TBL is misleading altogether because its entities are means, not ends.²⁶ Here, it is advocated that the bottom line should encapsulate the continuation of human happiness, well-being and good health – the economy and social institutions are vehicles with which to achieve this end.²⁷

The Committee's position

- 2.17 In its previous report, *Sustainable Cities*, the Committee chose to refer to a 'vision for a sustainable city' rather than define sustainability. It then articulated a set of principles and practices, to be continually applied in the context of urban life in order to create sustainable cities.
- 2.18 The Committee now acknowledges that the scope of the proposed Sustainability Charter must extend beyond the urban environment in order to address the issue of what sustainability and sustainable development, in a holistic sense, mean to Australia.²⁸ This may result in a definitive or visionary statement – it may even be necessary to sub-define sustainability within the context of the various areas covered in the Charter.
- 2.19 In the Committee's view, Australians must begin a journey preceded by an agreed definition of sustainability and sustainable development, in order to reach an agreed destination. The important task of developing the definitions of sustainability and sustainable development should be one of the first tasks of the proposed Sustainability Commission.

25 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 3; EcoSTEPS, *Submission no. 25*, p. 3; Property Council of Australia, *Submission no. 107*, p. 1.

26 Professor Tony McMichael, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 2.

27 Professor Tony McMichael, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 2.

28 Ms Sophie Constance, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 11; Professor Daniella Tilbury, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 11.

The proposed Sustainability Charter

The Charter should identify urgent issues, set national objectives, and specify targets and milestones.¹

- 3.1 There is overwhelming support for the adoption of a Sustainability Charter outlining fundamental values and principles relating to sustainability. It should be seen as a live document open to further modification.
- 3.2 Over 85 percent of the evidence received by this inquiry expressed support for a national Sustainability Charter. In fact, it is advocated by one submitter that the Charter become Australia's second most important document after the Constitution.² It is believed that the proposed Charter carries the potential of being the first step to achieving coordinated and centralised leadership towards sustainability³ (see Chapter 5 for discussion on leadership) and this is important, given the compelling case for urgent action⁴ surrounding the diminishing capacity of the world to support current human behaviour and activity.⁵ The Committee acknowledges however, that the scope of the proposed Charter can and should extend beyond the realm of the environment.⁶

1 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. 12.

2 Sustainable Transport Coalition, Western Australia, *Submission no. 62*, p. 1.

3 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. 2.

4 Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, *Submission no. 28*, p. 2; Australian Centre for Environmental Education, *Submission no. 31*, p. 3; Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. 12; Australian Green Development Forum, *Submission no. 66*, p. 1; Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 5; Pittwater Sustainability Working Group, *Submission no. 37*, pp. 1-2.

5 Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials, *Submission no. 101*, p. 7.

6 Ms Kirsten Davies, *Submission no. 11*, p. 1.

The sustainability agenda

- 3.3 The Committee initially set out to investigate sustainability in the areas of the built environment, water, energy, transport, and ecological footprint but later broadened the scope of its investigation to include the areas of economics, waste, social equity and health and community engagement and education.
- 3.4 The Committee notes that the above mentioned key sectors identified as belonging to the sustainability agenda do not operate in silos.⁷ For example, it is widely accepted that carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the transport sector are linked to adverse health effects.⁸ The proposed Charter must integrate the inter-related components of all sectors on the sustainability agenda. However, for ease of reading the Committee summarises the evidence received on the key identified sectors of the sustainability agenda under discrete headings (below).

Built environment and construction

- 3.5 A wide range of professions within the building industry contributed to the inquiry from the areas of planning, to products and building. Overall, the evidence received indicates industry support for the concept of a Sustainability Charter. Here, the proposed Charter is viewed as an ideal vehicle for advancing sustainability⁹ providing neither industry or consumers are burdened with disproportionate and/or unnecessary additional expense.¹⁰
- 3.6 The Committee has heard that the industry currently operates amidst an extensive suite of sustainability rules applied at the local, state and federal levels of government and reservations are held that the Charter may result in additional regulation that may impact on housing affordability.¹¹ While this is a valid point, during the course of the inquiry the Committee received evidence that despite the plethora of regulations, there is room for improvement in Australia – in fact, the country is said to be operating below the world average in this sector.¹² According to one witness, the

7 Australian Association for Environmental Education, *Submission no. 31*, p. 2.

8 Bus Industry Confederation, *Submission no. 85*, p. 21.

9 Built Environment Australia, *Submission no. 27*, p. 3.

10 Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 2.

11 Housing Industry Association, *Submission no. 111*, p. 3.

12 Ms Caroline Pidcock, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2007, p. 23.

Charter has the potential to consolidate and rationalise the multitude of existing regulations.¹³

- 3.7 To improve regulations without jeopardising housing affordability, the Committee has been told that a fair, consistent and performance-based approach should be adopted for drafting the Charter, with the use of cost benefit analysis, regulation impact statements, rewards and full lifecycle assessment principles.¹⁴ Above all, it is contended that any changes to the industry required by the Charter should demonstrate net public benefit.¹⁵

Water

- 3.8 Water is undoubtedly a major topic on the sustainability agenda. During the course of the inquiry, the Committee heard that the water industry faces many sustainability challenges including:

- drought
- population growth
- potential climate change threats
- waterways maintenance
- wastewater discharge reduction
- electrical energy reduction.¹⁶

- 3.9 According to the Water Services Association of Australia, responding to these challenges primarily lies in conserving and diversifying supplies to remove, or at least reduce reliance on reservoirs through stormwater harvesting, water trading, recycling and desalination.¹⁷ The Committee has been made aware that technology overcoming these water challenges exists, but government leadership and community support are required before its use can be expanded and further innovation enabled.¹⁸

13 Mr Peter Verwer, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2007, p. 31.

14 Building Products Innovation Council, *Submission no. 78*, p. 1; Housing Industry Association, *Submission no. 111*, pp. 3-5; Dr Tanya Plant, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 25.

15 Housing Industry Association, *Submission no. 111*, pp. 3, 4, 5.

16 Water Services Association of Australia 2006, 'Issues relating to sustainability in urban water management', *powerpoint slides for private briefing*, Canberra, s. 5. Permission was obtained from the author.

17 Water Services Association of Australia, *private briefing*, 30 November 2006. Permission was obtained from the author.

18 Water Services Association of Australia, 'Refilling the Glass: Exploring the issues surrounding water recycling in Australia', November 2006, pp. 7, 17, 29.

- 3.10 It is advocated that the proposed Charter has the potential to ease conflict between the states and territories over water resource issues such as policy and allocation, but must address the issues of scale and locality.¹⁹ Moreover, it is contended that the Charter would provide an opportunity to guide the management of water resources.²⁰

Energy

- 3.11 With annual growth energy consumption estimates of between 2.5 and 3 per cent and a strong reliance on non-renewable, CO₂ emitting forms of energy, this sector is important to the sustainability agenda.²¹ Representatives from the energy industry in Australia claim that sustainable energy technologies and resources exist, but a market driver to guide their use and further development does not.²²
- 3.12 Highlighted to the Committee is an example of this relating to biomass, a potential renewable energy source that is difficult to promote in a market dominated by the economically cheaper non-renewable black coal.²³ It is argued that if producing black coal was fully costed (ie, inclusive of externalities), the monetary price would likely increase, thereby shifting the marketplace to a more level playing field and in turn, affording renewable energy entrepreneurs an opportunity to compete.²⁴
- 3.13 Government policy frameworks, facilitated by the creation and implementation of a Sustainability Charter, are viewed as key factors for driving 'green' energy investments.²⁵ It is suggested that the Charter encourage a suite of (internationally aligned) energy technology options and policies that create a transition path towards them²⁶ with pragmatic standards and regulations with straight forward compliance.²⁷ Moreover, the evidence articulates that the proposed Charter should provide incentives for companies producing renewable energy and reducing

19 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, pp. E1, E2.

20 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. E3.

21 Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 27.

22 Mr Ian Smart; *Submission no. 88*, pp. 3–5; Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 31.

23 Mr Andrew Helps, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 33.

24 Mr Andrew Helps, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 33.

25 Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32; Mr Mark Latham, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32; Mr Mark Lister, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32.

26 Mrs Corinna Woolford, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, pp. 33–4.

27 Mr Mark Bezzina, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 36.

energy consumption²⁸ and include the direct and indirect impact of the built environment and transport on energy use.²⁹

Transport

- 3.14 During the inquiry the transport industry expressed support for a national Sustainability Charter primarily because it could overcome the current decentralised and unsustainable approach to the provision of transport services.³⁰ Others suggested that the proposed Charter offers an opportunity to facilitate more sustainable forms of transport, as well as land use strategies that reduce the need for travel, particularly by private vehicle and aircraft which are significant air polluters and contributors to CO₂ emissions.³¹
- 3.15 According to one submitter, the challenge for the transport industry lies in persuading government and business to adopt sustainable transportation systems because these are generally not perceived as viable alternatives to the current systems.³² However, as indicated by the Bus Industry Confederation, greater reliance on improved public transport has many benefits including reduced traffic congestion, road trauma, CO₂ emissions and air pollution, and increased accessibility for the young, low income earners, women, the elderly and people with disability.³³ This industry views national government leadership and social acceptance of change as integral to the success of sustainability in the transport sector.³⁴

28 Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32.

29 Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, *Submission no. 28*, p. 3; LPG Australia, *Submission no. 39*, p. 2.

30 Bus Industry Confederation, *Submission no. 85*, p. 6.

31 Dr Murray May, *Submission no. 16*, p. 4; Bus Industry Confederation, *Submission no. 85*, pp. 21, 23.

32 International Association of Public Transport, *Submission no. 2*, p. 2.

33 Bus Industry Confederation, *Submission no. 85*, pp. 19, 22–3.

34 Mr Michael Apps, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 October 2006, p. 15; Mr Murray May, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 October 2006, p. 11; Mr Peter Moore, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 October 2006, p. 10.

Ecological footprint

- 3.16 The Committee received evidence in support of and against the incorporation of the concept of the ecological footprint within the Charter. Essentially the ecological footprint is a consumption based metric used to determine the level of human demand on the regenerative capacity of the earth, and whether this demand is within the earth's biological limits.³⁵ In other words, it is a measurement of the unsustainability of populations from governments, to industry and the community.³⁶ It is claimed that the measure is most effective when it is supported by actions to redress the balance between the use of natural resources and their availability.³⁷
- 3.17 Numerous submitters have argued that the ecological footprint should be part of the proposed Sustainability Charter.³⁸ They support the use of this tool primarily because of its broad, versatile and global application which facilitates a shared (consumer and producer) responsibility focus that can be used as a basis for developing quantitative measures in the proposed Sustainability Charter.³⁹ Further benefits of the ecological footprint are described as including scientific credibility, conceptual simplicity, popularity and communicative and educational effectiveness.⁴⁰ As taken from a quote contained in one submission: the ecological footprint 'personalises sustainability'.⁴¹
- 3.18 In contrast, some of the evidence to this inquiry has highlighted limitations to the ecological footprint. For instance, it is argued that the method generally does not offer causes, solutions or projections, nor is it precise⁴² and some means of footprint reduction are viewed as socially unjust, potentially supporting unsustainable, inefficient and immoral practices.⁴³ Moreover, it is claimed that its quantitative nature and ecological focused scope provide no indication of the quality of the environment, nor that of the social and economic elements of

35 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. C2; Dr Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, p. 1.

36 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. C2; Integrated Sustainability Analysis Group, *Submission no. 47*, p. 1.

37 Nillumbik Shire Council, *Submission no. 56*, p. 2.

38 Dr Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, pp. 4-5; Integrated Sustainability Analysis Group, *Submission no. 47*, p. 1; Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 2.

39 EcoSTEPS; *Submission no. 25*, p. 2; Integrated Sustainability Analysis Group, *Submission no. 47*, p. 3.

40 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. C2; Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 2.

41 Dr Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, p. 5.

42 Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, pp. 2-3.

43 Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 3.

sustainability.⁴⁴ However, the Committee received evidence that new techniques overcoming some of these problems are under development.⁴⁵

Economics

- 3.19 Government policy concerning economic growth is said to involve increasing both the country's population size and its per capita consumption demands⁴⁶ through free market forces and a global economy.⁴⁷ One submitter believes our consumer capitalist society encourages affluent lifestyles that are based on the notion that resource use, production and consumption are limitless.⁴⁸
- 3.20 By contrast, another submitter claimed scientific theory dictates that there are indeed limits to growth and we are rapidly exceeding them.⁴⁹ Therefore, it is said that the assumption that a healthy economy is a growing economy must be challenged.⁵⁰ The evidence argues that government economic policy must realise that the long term environmental (and social) cost of inaction will be far greater to the economy than the cost of immediate action.⁵¹
- 3.21 According to a witness to the inquiry, the proposed Charter provides an opportunity to correctly align economic signals to encourage competitive neutrality.⁵² The Committee has been urged to encourage consideration of ways to create a sustainable economy largely by decoupling the environment and the economy through schemes such as emissions trading or carbon tax;⁵³ introducing price signals and financial incentives for sustainable behaviour and technology; and ensuring that the cost of externalities is accounted for.⁵⁴ Submitters have also argued a case for a

44 ARUP, *Submission no. 73*, p. C2; Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 3; Dr Alaric Maude, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 27.

45 Dr Christopher Dey, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 8.

46 Sustainable Population Australia, *Submission no. 22*, p. 2.

47 Dr Murray May, *Submission no. 16*, p. 2.

48 Dr Ted Trainer, *Submission no. 30*, p. 3.

49 Dr Ted Trainer, *Submission no. 30*, p. 1.

50 Uniting Care NSW.ACT, *Submission no. 34*, p. 2.

51 Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 6; Mr Mark Lister, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32.

52 Mr Andre Kaspura, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 3.

53 Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, p. 2; Mr Graeme Jessup, *Submission no. 53*, p. 3.

54 Mr Mark Lister, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 32.

‘One Planet Economy’ (ie, biophysical budgets, representing each form of critical natural capital).⁵⁵

Waste

- 3.22 The importance of solid waste management and national resource recovery to the sustainability agenda became apparent during the inquiry. The Australian Council of Recyclers claims that each Australian is estimated to generate 1.6 tonnes of waste per year and that society needs to transform from being ‘throw away’ oriented, to ‘recycling and resource recovery’ oriented through the principles of biomimicry.⁵⁶
- 3.23 GRD Limited advocates that mechanical biological treatment of waste is environmentally superior to landfill, providing sustainability outcomes in a multitude of areas, such as the built environment, water, energy and the ecological footprint.⁵⁷ The Urban Resource - Reduction, Recovery, Recycling (UR-3R) Urban Waste Management Facility at Eastern Creek, Sydney is a proven example of this, converting about 10 per cent of the State’s urban waste into useful resources such as renewable energy and organic growth media.⁵⁸ Moreover, some businesses are internally applying biomimetic principles by recycling and remanufacturing throughout their entire production process, including putting sustainability at the forefront of their procurement choices.⁵⁹
- 3.24 It is advocated that a Sustainability Charter, accompanied by a government-led public awareness campaign, would provide an opportunity for a much needed coordinated approach to maximising resource recovery and improving resource efficiency.⁶⁰ Key suggestions for inclusions on waste in the proposed Charter are transitional step targets and measurement tools, market based instruments such as a cap and trade incentive scheme, meaningful landfill taxes and decreased taxes on residues for biodegradable material.⁶¹

55 Professor Graham Harris, Professor Manfred Lenzen & Mr Richard Sanders, *Submission no. 95*, pp. 1–2. See also Ms Sharon Ede, *Submission no. 68*, pp. 1, 4.

56 Australian Council of Recyclers, *Submission no. 81*, p. 4.

57 GRD Ltd, *Submission no. 55*, pp. 2, 5.

58 GRD Ltd, *Submission no. 55*, p. 2.

59 Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Ltd, *Submission no. 83*, p. 2; Mr Ramsay Moodie, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 32.

60 Australian Council of Recyclers, *Submission no. 81*, p. 6; GRD Ltd, *Submission no. 55*, p. 12.

61 Australian Council of Recyclers, *Submission no. 81*, p. 11; GRD Ltd, *Submission no. 55*, p. 12.

Social equity and health

- 3.25 Throughout the evidence in this inquiry, social equity and health are argued as being important, if not central to the sustainability agenda.⁶² In this sector, concern lies in the perception that the discussion surrounding sustainability is preoccupied with continuing and improving economic systems when it should instead be with continuing and improving life-support systems.⁶³
- 3.26 Social equity and health concern quality of life. This sector has tangible aspects relating to physical health and well-being including clean air and water, safe urban environment, suitable housing, access to public amenities and employment and educational opportunities.⁶⁴ It also has intangible aspects relating to mental health and spiritual well-being, including cultural and social opportunities.⁶⁵
- 3.27 Cultural well-being encourages a long concept of time perspective, which is an appropriate mindset for devising the proposed Sustainability Charter because, as suggested by one witness, it works beyond the short term annual reporting and parliamentary timeframes.⁶⁶ It is also argued that important to the success of the Charter is collaboration of 'ordinary' people – including those with disability and the elderly – in its creation to ensure the diverse range of welfare needs of current and future generations is covered.⁶⁷ One witness proposes that population reduction, or at least control, is also critical to the sustainability challenge.⁶⁸

62 City of Joondalup, *Submission no. 15*, p. 1; Earth Charter Australia, *Submission no. 12*, p. 5; Sustainable Population Australia, *Submission no. 22*, p. 2; Sydney West Area Health Service, *Submission no. 79*, p. 1; Vinyl Council of Australia, *Submission no. 29*, p. 1, among others.

63 Professor Anthony Capon on behalf of Professor Anthony McMichael, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 2; Dr John Coulter, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 14.

64 Professor Anthony Capon, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 4.

65 Mr Peter Phillips, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 5.

66 Mr Peter Phillips, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, pp. 6, 8.

67 Mr Dougie Herd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 10.

68 Dr John Coulter, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 12.

Community engagement and education

- 3.28 One witness contends that given no country is sustainable, there is an absence of sustainability curriculum content to utilise, which essentially makes sustainability an ongoing 'learn by doing' process.⁶⁹ A submitter proposes that as a first step, a concerted effort to educate the community at large is required.⁷⁰
- 3.29 A key problem concerning education for sustainability and community engagement is claimed to relate to communication.⁷¹ Several witnesses to the inquiry express concern about increasing levels of messages aimed at raising awareness on issues on the sustainability agenda that do not provide a connection between knowing and doing, nor target the needs of different demographics and contexts.⁷² A further problem is said to relate to the perceived absence of government leadership, where it is suggested that any positive steps taken by the community towards sustainability can feel insignificant when government agencies are not seen to be doing the same.⁷³
- 3.30 In this sense, the Committee believes that the proposed Sustainability Charter is critical because it carries the potential to create an opportunity for education on the concept and importance of sustainability. Further, in the Committee's view, the Charter will also provide clear direction to government, industry and the community concerning Australia's desired future and facilitate coordinated, collective ways of achieving it. As one witness contends, the Charter will create a much needed public policy context conducive to education for sustainability and community engagement.⁷⁴

69 Professor Daniella Tilbury, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, pp. 1-2.

70 Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 5.

71 Ms Sophie Constance, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 8.

72 Mr Grahame Collier, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 12; Ms Sophie Constance, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 11; Professor Daniella Tilbury, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 11.

73 Professor Daniella Tilbury, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 10.

74 Mr Grahame Collier, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 9.

The Committee's position

- 3.31 The Committee acknowledges that the scope of sustainability is broad, perhaps even broader than the areas investigated, and certainly more detailed and complex. It also recognises the interdependency of the areas on the sustainability agenda.
- 3.32 While the Committee is not in a position to determine the scope of the sustainability agenda it believes that the proposed Sustainability Commission, if supported by an appropriate framework (see Chapter 5), would have the (collaborative) expertise to do so. At a minimum, the proposed Charter could cover the areas investigated by the Committee and integrate the inter-related components.

Aspirations versus targets

- 3.33 In its *Discussion Paper*, the Committee considered the use of aspirational statements, set targets, or both in the proposed Sustainability Charter. It has been suggested that the Charter be an aspirational head document, accompanied by a separate, more detailed supplementary document containing implementation strategies with measurable targets.⁷⁵
- 3.34 Generally the evidence indicates that if Australians are to engage in the transition towards sustainability, the Charter needs to be aspirational.⁷⁶ As suggested by one submitter, it is likely that Australians will be responsive to a pictorial and/or textual document that clearly and succinctly provides the overall direction required for advancing sustainability.⁷⁷ At most, it should state what sustainability means to Australia, with visionary overarching objectives (and milestones) covering the issues on the sustainability agenda that are significant to this country, yet be consistent with international initiatives.

75 EcoSTEPS, *Submission no. 25*, p. 2; Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 2; Associate Professor Terry Williamson and Mr Bruce Beauchamp, *Submission no. 96*, p. 5.

76 City of Joondalup, *Submission no. 15*, p. 1; EcoSTEPS, *Submission no. 25*, p. 2; Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 2; Sutherland Shire Council, *Submission no. 46*, p. 2.

77 Mr Graeme Jessup, *Submission no. 53*, p. 2.

3.35 However, on its own an aspirational Sustainability Charter is not viewed by some as being a sufficient mechanism to provide unequivocal, concrete direction to the government, industry and community.⁷⁸ According to one submitter, an aspirational Charter may not instigate appropriate action, nor provide a baseline for measuring progress.⁷⁹ Key, scientifically credible, long term, measurable and achievable national targets (linked to the Charter's aims and objectives) are said to more likely result in tangible sustainability outcomes.⁸⁰ According to some of the evidence, these targets will only be useful if linked to regulation and funded policies and programs.⁸¹

The Committee's position

- 3.36 The Committee believes that the proposed Sustainability Charter should be aspirational. People should be encouraged to use it through incentives, rather than through regulation. It should pictorially and/or textually and concisely illustrate what sustainability means to Australia, with visionary overarching objectives (and milestones) covering the issues on the sustainability agenda that are significant to this country.
- 3.37 Supplementary, but no less important to the Charter, the Committee proposes that a technical implementation agreement containing key, meaningful, long term, measurable and achievable national targets be produced collaboratively. This supplement should be closely aligned with the objectives of the Charter and used primarily by government and industry to advance tangible sustainability outcomes through self-initiated strategies, tactics and tools, under the guidance of the Sustainability Commission.

78 Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 1; Sutherland Shire Council, *Submission no. 46*, p. 2.

79 Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 1.

80 City of Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, p. 1.

81 Dr Gabrielle Kuiper, *Submission no. 92*, p. 1.

Existing sustainability strategies

Let us use what other people have already done.¹

- 4.1 There is an abundance of existing research, technologies and strategies in the area of sustainability² and incorporating the use of these, including those at an international level, with the proposed Sustainability Charter has been encouraged throughout the evidence received for this inquiry. The Committee sees the proposed Sustainability Commission as an ideal vehicle for assessing, selecting, coordinating and advancing the use of existing measures.
- 4.2 Of particular relevance to this inquiry are the existing sustainability strategies at broad levels – international, national, sectoral. In this chapter, the Committee outlines and discusses some of the broad existing sustainability strategies that were referred to during the inquiry.

International sustainability strategies

- 4.3 It is the Committee's view that the proposed Australian Sustainability Charter be consistent with international best practice (with sufficient flexibility to provide for Australian conditions). Two initiatives intended for international uptake are the *Earth Charter* and the United Nations *Global Compact*, both of which place strong emphasis on the social dimension of the TBL.

1 Ms Karen Hitchiner, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 36.

2 Mr John Ashe, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 17.

Earth Charter

- 4.4 In the evidence received for this inquiry, repeated reference is made to the value of adopting the *Earth Charter* as the Australian Sustainability Charter, or at least using it during the preparatory stages.³ The *Earth Charter* is a global consensus statement of aspirational principles (for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society) that was finalised in 2000 by the Earth Charter Commission, and is voluntarily endorsed by thousands of organisations and individuals worldwide.⁴
- 4.5 The *Earth Charter* addresses the meaning of sustainability and the vision, challenge and execution of sustainable development and is used as a basis for peace negotiations, a governance tool, a community development aid and an educational framework.⁵ It seeks to provide an ethical foundation for a world community.⁶
- 4.6 The various principles contained in the *Earth Charter* appear under four discrete headings:
- respect and care for the community of life
 - ecological integrity
 - social and economic justice
 - democracy, non-violence and peace
- and are heavily focused on the social aspect of sustainability and its interdependency with environmental and economic protection.⁷
- 4.7 The challenge with the principles in the *Earth Charter* lies in formulating applicable measurable targets. For example, the Committee understands the difficulty in measuring the principle concerning the need to recognise that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.⁸ It is argued that this should not deter their usage in the proposed Australian Sustainability Charter and that tools are available

3 Earth Charter Australia, *Submission no. 12*, p. 3; EcoSTEPS, *Submission no. 25*, p. 3.

4 The Earth Charter Initiative 2006, The Earth Charter International, Sweden, viewed 13 June 2007, <http://www.earthcharter.org/>

5 The Earth Charter Initiative 2006, The Earth Charter International, Sweden, viewed 13 June 2007, <http://www.earthcharter.org/>

6 The Earth Charter International 2007, *The Earth Charter*, brochure, p. 3.

7 The Earth Charter International 2007, *The Earth Charter*, brochure, pp. 1-4.

8 The Earth Charter International 2007, *The Earth Charter*, brochure, p. 5, principle 16f.

that can provide a measure of the social aspects of sustainability (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).⁹

United Nations Global Compact

4.8 The *Global Compact* is a United Nations initiative (established in the 1990s) aimed at bringing worldwide companies together voluntarily with labour and civil society to create a more sustainable and inclusive global economy through the environmental and social principles outlined in Figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1 The Global Compact's ten principles

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour Standards

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Adapted from: United Nations Global Compact n.d., United Nations, viewed 27 June 2007, <http://www.globalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/TheTenPrinciples/index.html>

4.9 The *Global Compact* network aims to universally mainstream the above listed principles and catalyse supporting actions through Policy Dialogues, Learning, Country/Regional Networks, and Partnership Projects.¹⁰ It relies on public accountability, transparency and the good will of companies, labour and civil society to initiate and collectively take action in pursuing the principles, and provides participants with an

9 Earth Charter Australia, *Submission no. 12*, p. 4.

10 United Nations Global Compact n.d., United Nations, viewed 27 June 2007, <http://www.globalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/TheTenPrinciples/index.html>

opportunity to demonstrate leadership; problem solve; manage risks; share information; improve productivity and reputation; and leverage various United Nations' resources.¹¹

- 4.10 An author argues that the principles of the *Global Compact* are focused on the social dimension of sustainability which makes it difficult to identify measurable targets, let alone calculate and monitor progress.¹² Further, another author claims it is primarily geared at gaining participation from the corporate sector and such involvement is not universal at this point.¹³

The Committee's position

- 4.11 The comprehensiveness of the *Earth Charter* document, including its social based principles and its international focus, makes it a valuable resource for use during the preparation of the proposed Australian Sustainability Charter. The Committee believes that although the principles of the *Earth Charter* are relevant to Australia, this country has its own unique issues and needs that may require different levels of emphasis than given in the *Earth Charter*. Australia would benefit greatly from having its own sustainability charter, tailored to address the country's specific needs but still aligned with the broader international context. The Committee has a similar viewpoint concerning the *Global Compact*, adding that sustainability efforts must not only be made by industry, but by governments and communities.

National sustainability strategies

- 4.12 Various countries have created their own sustainability strategies. These strategies tend to place strong emphasis on the environment dimension of the TBL with a vision for future survival. Two national strategies frequently noted throughout the evidence to this inquiry belong to Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has also recently devised a proposed national vision for sustainability in Australia.

11 United Nations Global Compact n.d., United Nations, viewed 27 June 2007, <http://www.globalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/TheTenPrinciples/index.html>

12 O'Brien, T 2007, 'Governance and international relations', *New Zealand International Review*, vol. 32, no. 3, p. 20.

13 Kuruvilla, S & Verma, A 2006, 'International labor standards, soft regulation, and national government roles', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 48, no. 1, p. 51.

Sweden's environmental quality objectives

- 4.13 Sustainable development (as an objective, method and approach) is an underlying aim of Swedish Government policy, and this commitment (with indicators) is demonstrated in a document entitled *Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development*.¹⁴ The strategy aims to integrate the TBL dimensions of sustainable development to fulfil Sweden's associated long term international commitment with the United Nations and to coordinate such efforts at a national level.¹⁵ Interministerial coordination of the strategy is performed by the Unit for Sustainable Development within the Ministry of Sustainable Development, and implementation of the strategy is facilitated by the Council for Sustainable Development under the National Board of Building, Planning and Housing.¹⁶
- 4.14 The evidence to the Committee's sustainability charter inquiry frequently refers to and provides strong support for Sweden's approach to advancing sustainability, primarily its environmental quality objectives.¹⁷ They are an example of the government's efforts to create sustainability policy as part of its overarching sustainable development strategy.
- 4.15 Sweden's environmental quality objectives were adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 1999 and revised and readopted in 2005 for attainment within one generation – 2020 (2050 in the case of the first objective).¹⁸ These broad objectives, depicted pictorially and textually (see Figure 4.2 below) cover different environmental areas each with time specific interim target/s and statements outlining the reason/s for and intended outcome of action, progress criteria and the responsible authority. Indicators are used to track progress. An example relating to the first objective – *Reduced Climate Impact*, is illustrated at Figure 4.3 (below).

14 Swedish Government, *Government Communication 2006/06:126, Strategic Challenges – A Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy of Sustainable Development*, p. 6.

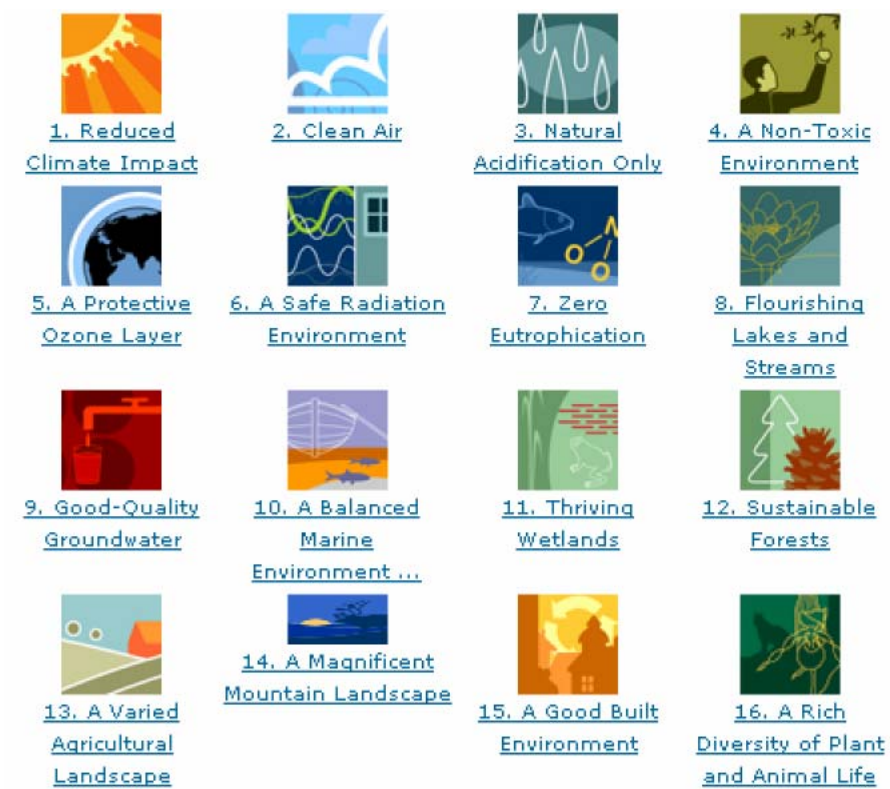
15 Swedish Government, *Government Communication 2006/06:126, Strategic Challenges – A Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy of Sustainable Development*, p. 6.

16 Swedish Government, *Government Communication 2006/06:126, Strategic Challenges – A Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy of Sustainable Development*, pp. 7–8.

17 See submissions 10, 13, 15, 20, 21, 44, 67, 80, 91 and 112 (among others).

18 Sveriges miljomal 2006, Swedish Parliament, viewed 5 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/background.php>


Figure 4.2 Sweden's 16 environmental quality objectives



Source: Sveriges miljömal 2006, Swedish Parliament, viewed 5 June 2007,
<http://www.miljomal.nu/english/objectives.php>

Figure 4.3 Sweden's *Reduced Climate Impact* environmental quality objective

Reduced Climate Impact

 The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change provides for the stabilization of concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at levels which ensure that human activities do not have a harmful impact on the climate system. This goal must be achieved in such a way and at such a pace that biological diversity is preserved, food production is assured and other goals of sustainable development are not jeopardized. Sweden, together with other countries, must assume responsibility for achieving this global objective.



The outcome within a generation for this environmental quality objective should include the following:

- The measures focus on stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level lower than 550 ppm (parts per million) and ensuring that there is no increase in the concentrations of other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The action taken by all countries is crucial to achievement of the objective.

Progress towards the objective

See the [Environmental Objectives page](#) for an explanation of the progress indicator smiley.

Interim targets

Interim target 1, 2008-2012

As an average for the period 2008–12, Swedish emissions of greenhouse gases will be at least 4% lower than in 1990. Emissions are to be calculated as carbon dioxide equivalents and are to include the six greenhouse gases listed in the Kyoto Protocol and defined by the IPCC. In assessing progress towards the target, no allowance is to be made for uptake by carbon sinks or for flexible mechanisms.

Source: Sveriges miljömal 2006, Swedish Parliament, viewed 5 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/obj1.php>

Authority Responsible for Objective



- 4.16 Consultation and cooperation concerning the implementation of the environmental quality objectives is undertaken by the Swedish Government established Environmental Objectives Council, supported by the Environmental Objectives Secretariat of the Swedish Environment Protection Agency.¹⁹ The Council is comprised of representatives from government agencies, county administrative boards, local authorities, non-government organisations and industry who have varying degrees of responsibility for one or more of the environmental quality objectives and broader inter-related issues – land use planning and wise management of

¹⁹ Sveriges miljömal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 6 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/authorities.php>

land, water and buildings; the cultural environment; and human health.²⁰ Specifically, the role of the Environmental Objectives Council involves:²¹

- monitoring and evaluating progress towards the environmental quality objectives
- reporting progress annually to the Swedish Government, with proposed measures for further action (where necessary)
- collating the information gathered by responsible authorities
- coordinating regional application of the environmental quality objectives
- allocating funding for monitoring and reporting at both national and international levels.

4.17 Primarily the overall goal of Sweden's approach is to solve the current major environmental problems within one generation through:²²

- promoting human health
- safeguarding biodiversity and the natural environment
- preserving the cultural environment and cultural heritage
- maintaining long term ecosystem productivity
- ensuring wise management of natural resources

which requires wholehearted, shared commitment from responsible authorities, industry and the community.²³

4.18 Numerous submissions favour Sweden's approach to advancing sustainability. It is considered that the use of directive language, particularly against the progress criteria (ie, '...this goal *must* be achieved...') clearly indicates that Sweden's position on meeting the objectives is not optional.²⁴ Further, it is claimed that the approach recognises the importance of spatial relationships to cater for diversity in

20 Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 6 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/broader.php>; Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 6 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/authorities.php>

21 Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 6 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/authorities.php>

22 Sveriges miljomal 2006, Swedish Parliament, viewed 5 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/background.php>

23 Sveriges miljomal 2006, Swedish Parliament, viewed 5 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/background.php>

24 Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 6.

different areas; and the ecosystem based structure of and multiple measurement methods for the environmental quality objectives provide for the interdependency of the areas on the sustainability agenda.²⁵

- 4.19 Despite the popularity of Sweden's approach and positive changes in the environment in some areas, overall progress towards meeting its environmental quality objectives has been slow. It is forecast that half of the 16 objectives will be difficult to achieve by the attainment date unless further wide-ranging national action, including greater industry and community involvement, combined with increasingly intense international efforts, is made.²⁶ It is also recognised that ecosystems take a long time to recover from the impacts of human activity, so the effects of safeguarding the environment may take a while to show.²⁷
- 4.20 Critics argue that slow progress is rather, attributed to some of the objectives being imprecise and difficult to evaluate and the absence of mechanisms for identifying goal conflicts and prioritising between different objectives.²⁸ As a result, it is contended that the objectives do not sufficiently guide action.²⁹ Overcoming these shortcomings is claimed to necessitate further research on the operational effectiveness of particular objectives and the system as whole with a view to making revisions.³⁰

25 Dr Chloe Mason, *Submission no. 91*, p. 6; Dr Alaric Maude, *Submission no. 21*, p. 1.

26 Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 8 June 2007, http://miljomal.nu/las_mer/infomaterial/pressmeddelande/press/070607e.php

27 Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 8 June 2007, http://miljomal.nu/las_mer/infomaterial/pressmeddelande/press/060607e.php

28 Dr Alaric Maude, *Exhibit no. 2, Using Goals in Environmental Management: The Swedish System of Environmental Objectives*, pp. 176–9.

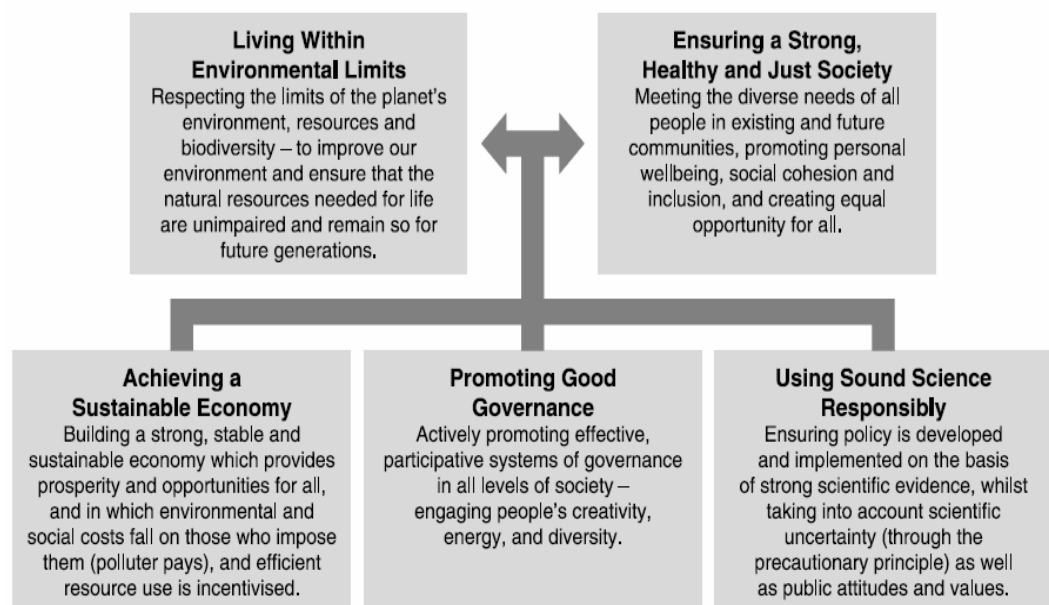
29 Dr Alaric Maude, *Exhibit no. 2, Using Goals in Environmental Management: The Swedish System of Environmental Objectives*, p. 170.

30 Dr Alaric Maude, *Exhibit no. 2, Using Goals in Environmental Management: The Swedish System of Environmental Objectives*, p. 179.

The United Kingdom's sustainable development strategy

4.21 In 2005 the United Kingdom launched a revised version of its 1999 sustainable development strategy entitled *Securing the Future*, containing the five guiding principles illustrated below in Figure 4.4.³¹ It is one of four strategies within the United Kingdom's sustainability framework and is applicable to the United Kingdom Government; Scottish Executive; Welsh Assembly Government; and the Northern Ireland Administration.³²

Figure 4.4 The United Kingdom's principles of sustainable development



Source: Jones, B 2006, 'Trying harder: Developing a new sustainable strategy for the UK', *Natural Resources Forum*, vol. 30, p. 126.

4.22 Sustainable development in the United Kingdom is currently led by its Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs but is a cross government priority. Strategic themes concern consumption and production; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; sustainable communities; and climate change and energy.³³ Behavioural

31 Sustainable Development Unit 2005, United Kingdom Government, viewed 4 July 2007, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>

32 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2006, Informal response to the House Environment Committee's Discussion Paper, p. 1; Sustainable Development Unit 2006, United Kingdom Government, viewed 4 July 2007, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/principles.htm>

33 Sustainable Development Unit 2007, United Kingdom Government, viewed 4 July 2007, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/priority/index.htm>

change has been identified as a cross cutting priority area.³⁴ These priority areas are linked to national targets set every two to three years through a spending review process and a set of indicators (using a traffic light system to illustrate progress). These indicators serve as an effective communication tool and lead to further government action where required.³⁵

- 4.23 All new United Kingdom regulations are subject to a mandatory appraisal system called the Regulatory Impact Assessment to analyse the likely (environmental, social and economic) impacts of policy changes and the range of options for their implementation.³⁶ Scrutiny of the government's sustainable development performance is undertaken in three ways – through the independent Sustainable Development Commission advisory body; a cross-party parliamentary Environmental and Audit Committee; and the National Audit Office and Audit Commission (and equivalent bodies in Scotland and Wales).³⁷
- 4.24 It is maintained that the revised strategy has overcome many of the barriers of the 1999 strategy – mainly insufficient monitoring and superseded commitments that made it unclear whether the strategy had influenced policy outcomes above what would have occurred in any case.³⁸ Despite the current extensive range of sustainable development institutions and knowledge for sustainability policy integration, gaps are claimed to exist between stated intentions and actions, highlighting the importance of strong and continued government support for achieving positive outcomes.³⁹

34 Sustainable Development Unit 2007, United Kingdom Government, viewed 4 July 2007, <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/priority/index.htm>

35 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2006, Informal response to the House Environment Committee's Discussion Paper, p. 2.

36 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2006, Informal response to the House Environment Committee's Discussion Paper, p. 3; Jones, B 2006, 'Trying harder: Developing a new sustainable strategy for the UK', *Natural Resources Forum*, vol. 30, p. 125; Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform 2007, United Kingdom Government, viewed 5 July 2007, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/ria/overview/index.asp#whatisria>

37 Jones, B 2006, 'Trying harder: Developing a new sustainable strategy for the UK', *Natural Resources Forum*, vol. 30, p. 125.

38 Jones, B 2006, 'Trying harder: Developing a new sustainable strategy for the UK', *Natural Resources Forum*, vol. 30, p. 125.

39 Ross, A 2005, 'National institutions for sustainable development: the challenge of long-term policy integration', *Australasian Journal of Natural Resources Law and Policy*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 130, 135.

National Agenda for a Sustainable Australia

4.25 The ACF has recently devised a vision for a sustainable future in its *National Agenda for a Sustainable Australia* for which it seeks government support. This agenda contains government targeted policies and measures for achieving this vision under the following six areas:⁴⁰

- cut greenhouse pollution to avoid dangerous climate change
- restore our rivers and secure our urban water supplies
- build smart, sustainable cities and towns
- protect and strengthen the natural environment
- secure a sustainable future for Northern Australia, and the Asia Pacific
- show real leadership and promote a bi-partisan commitment to environmental reform.

4.26 This initiative is an example of a non-government organisation's appeal for political-led action in response to what it perceives is an impending environmental crisis. It includes a policy recommendation for the establishment of an Australian Sustainability Charter with targets for implementation by a well resourced Sustainability Commission.⁴¹

The Committee's position

4.27 The Committee sees the value of using Sweden's approach to sustainability in the preparation of the proposed Australian Sustainability Charter. The use of clear and succinct expression and illustrations for its environmental objectives is in principle, likely to provide for the needs of a wide audience. The Committee notes that the Swedish model acknowledges the significance of urban environments through its broader issue of 'land use planning and wise management of land, water and buildings' (see paragraph 4.16).⁴² However, given that urban environments generate disproportionate impacts than do natural environments, the Committee feels that the Australian Sustainability

40 The Australian Conservation Foundation n.d., Melbourne, viewed 11 June 2007, http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=215

41 The Australian Conservation Foundation n.d., Melbourne, viewed 11 June 2007, http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=1238

42 Sveriges miljomal 2007, Swedish Parliament, viewed 6 June 2007, <http://www.miljomal.nu/english/broader.php>

Charter should have stronger emphasis (than the Swedish model) on the former.⁴³

- 4.28 The proposed Australian Sustainability Commission should endeavour to learn from the Swedish and United Kingdom experiences. The Committee particularly favours the United Kingdom's efforts to improve its delivery mechanisms through a review process and to coordinate departmental policies through the establishment of a strong institutional framework with inter-agency policy initiatives. It also supports the United Kingdom's recognition that behavioural change is critical to the move towards sustainability.
- 4.29 The Swedish (and United Kingdom) target areas more overtly encompass the TBL dimensions of sustainability than the ACF's. For instance, the Swedish and ACF models each contain an objective concerning urban environments covering town planning and building issues but the Swedish model extends its coverage to include areas of waste, landfill, noise, cultural heritage, gravel and health. The Committee acknowledges that the ACF's national agenda has an added dimension – it seeks to acquire government support and leadership, while Sweden (and the United Kingdom) already have this. Therefore, while the intent is similar, the approaches are different. Nonetheless the Committee believes the ACF model, while more descriptive and environmentally focused, considers issues important to an Australian context and should be used as a reference in the process of drafting the national Sustainability Charter.

Sectoral sustainability strategies

- 4.30 The extent to which industry and non-government organisations are increasingly recognising the importance of sustainability became evident during the inquiry. Numerous existing sector specific strategies, including the Western Australian Government's, were presented to the Committee – some of which are outlined below (in random order).

43 City of Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, p. 3.

Sea Change Sustainability Charter

4.31 An area on the sustainability agenda of concern to the Committee is the impact of the movement of people to the coast. Hence, it commends the National Sea Change Taskforce for taking the initiative to create and adopt (in 2006) the *Sea Change Sustainability Charter*.⁴⁴ This charter seeks to address the sustainability issues surrounding 'sea change' growth by primarily focusing on ways of enhancing cross-jurisdictional coordination of planning and management of coastal growth between all levels of government.⁴⁵

4.32 The *Sea Change Sustainability Charter* is comprised of a set of principles applicable to the needs of the coastal environment:⁴⁶

- across government commitment
- focus on sustainability
- inclusive governance structures
- coordinated approach.

Each principle contains implementation strategies that extend to cover issues of governance; community well-being; the economy and tourism; the environment; and infrastructure.⁴⁷

National Action Plan for Urban Communities

4.33 The Committee received a copy of the draft *National Action Plan for Sustainable Communities* devised in 2006 by the Sustainable Communities Roundtable (a collaboration of the Planning Institute of Australia, Inter-governmental Planning Officials Group, Property Council of Australia and the Royal Architects Institute of Australia).⁴⁸ The summary version of this national program, called the *National Action Plan for Urban Communities*, aims to foster sustainable urban communities through the following seven interdependent propositions:

- a shared vision

44 National Sea Change Taskforce, *Submission no. 42*, p. 3.

45 National Sea Change Taskforce, *Submission no. 42*, p. 3.

46 National Sea Change Taskforce 2006, *Sea change sustainability charter*, p. 4.

47 National Sea Change Taskforce 2006, *Sea change sustainability charter*, pp. 4–5.

48 Planning Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 87*, p. 8; Property Council of Australia, *Submission no. 107*, p. 1.

- national plan of action
- urban action plans
- sustainable communities commission
- national sustainable communities fund
- performance indicators
- sustainable regulation

that interrelate at four key levels – governance and direction; policy recommendations; review and funding; and action mechanism.⁴⁹

- 4.34 Within this urban environment scope, the plan offers a framework similar to that of the Committee’s proposed national Sustainability Commission, Commissioner and Charter. For instance, it calls for the establishment of a national plan of action, measurable performance indicators, a sustainable communities commission and commissioners, funding arrangements, regulation, etc.

The Burra Charter: The Australian ICOMOS Charter for places of Cultural Significance 1999

- 4.35 The Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites adopted what it calls the *Burra Charter* in 1979 (with revisions in 1981, 1988 and 1999) as a guide for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance.⁵⁰ Culture is an important element of the social aspect of sustainability because it enriches people’s lives, providing a sense of connection to community and landscape to past and current experiences and also discourages the unnecessary use of new resources.⁵¹
- 4.36 The *Burra Charter* contains principles, processes and practices that can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance (ie, natural, indigenous and historic places) by owners, managers and custodians.⁵² This sector maintains that cultural heritage conservation should be a desired sustainability outcome in its own right.⁵³

49 Planning Institute of Australia, *Exhibit no. 1, A National Action Plan for Urban Australia*, p. 1.

50 Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Exhibit no. 16*, p. 1.

51 Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Submission no. 48*, p. 3; Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Exhibit no. 16*, p. 1.

52 Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Exhibit no. 16*, p. 1.

53 Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Submission no. 48*, p. 2.

Enduring Value: the Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development

4.37 The Australian minerals industry has developed a sector specific practical agreement and guide for advancing sustainable development called *Enduring Value*.⁵⁴ It is designed to translate sustainable development principles (and elements) into practices to ensure the industry operates in a financially viable, yet environmentally sound and socially responsible way.⁵⁵ *Enduring Value* is aligned with the following sector specific international principles:⁵⁶

- implement and maintain ethical business practices and sound systems of corporate governance
- integrate sustainable development considerations within the corporate decision making process
- uphold fundamental human rights and respect cultures, customs and values in dealings with employees and others who are affected by our activities
- implement risk management strategies based on valid data and sound science
- seek continual improvement of our health and safety performance
- seek continual improvement of our environmental performance
- contribute to conservation of biodiversity and integrated approaches to land use planning
- facilitate and encourage responsible product design, use, re-use, recycling and disposal of our products
- contribute to the social, economic and institutional development of the communities in which we operate
- implement effective and transparent engagement, communication and independently verified reporting arrangements with our stakeholders.

54 Ms Melanie Stutsel, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 34.

55 Minerals Council of Australia, *Exhibit no. 4, The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development, Guidance for implementation*, p. 3.

56 Minerals Council of Australia, *Exhibit no. 4, The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development, Guidance for implementation*, p. 7.

- 4.38 Signatories (including contractors engaged by them) to *Enduring Value* must implement principles, publicly report site level performance and assess the systems used to manage key operational risks.⁵⁷ Governance is formally performed by the Minerals Council of Australia Secretariat and informally by the community through *Enduring Value's* performance reporting transparency provisions.⁵⁸

EnviroDevelopment Standards

- 4.39 The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA), Queensland, has collaboratively developed a voluntary, incentive based certification framework called *EnviroDevelopment* to encourage sustainability in the development industry including residential, retail, commercial and industrial areas.⁵⁹ *EnviroDevelopment* spans six separate elements – ecosystems, waste, energy, materials, water and community – starting from the conceptual stages of the development process.⁶⁰
- 4.40 According to the UDIA, addressing such issues at an early stage increases opportunities for improving long term outcomes.⁶¹ The UDIA also suggests that the potential for these types of voluntary systems is limited only by the incentives that government is willing to provide for their uptake.⁶² Further, it is claimed that government investment in such schemes is a viable use of public money, particularly when compared to the costs involved in the regulation and enforcement alternative (discussed further in the next chapter).⁶³
- 4.41 To be recognised as achieving the outcomes under one or more of the six elements, developments must be certified accordingly by the UDIA under the *EnviroDevelopment* system.⁶⁴ The certification process is illustrated below in Figure 4.5. Moreover, *EnviroDevelopment* accredited developments have the benefit of displaying one or more of the six certification logos (against the element/s to which it has qualified),

57 Minerals Council of Australia, *Exhibit no. 4, The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development, Guidance for implementation*, p. 12.

58 Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission no. 94*, p. 4.

59 Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), *Submission no. 49*, p. 2; Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), *Exhibit no. 10*, p. 2.

60 Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), *Exhibit no. 10*, p. 2.

61 Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), *Exhibit no. 10*, p. 2.

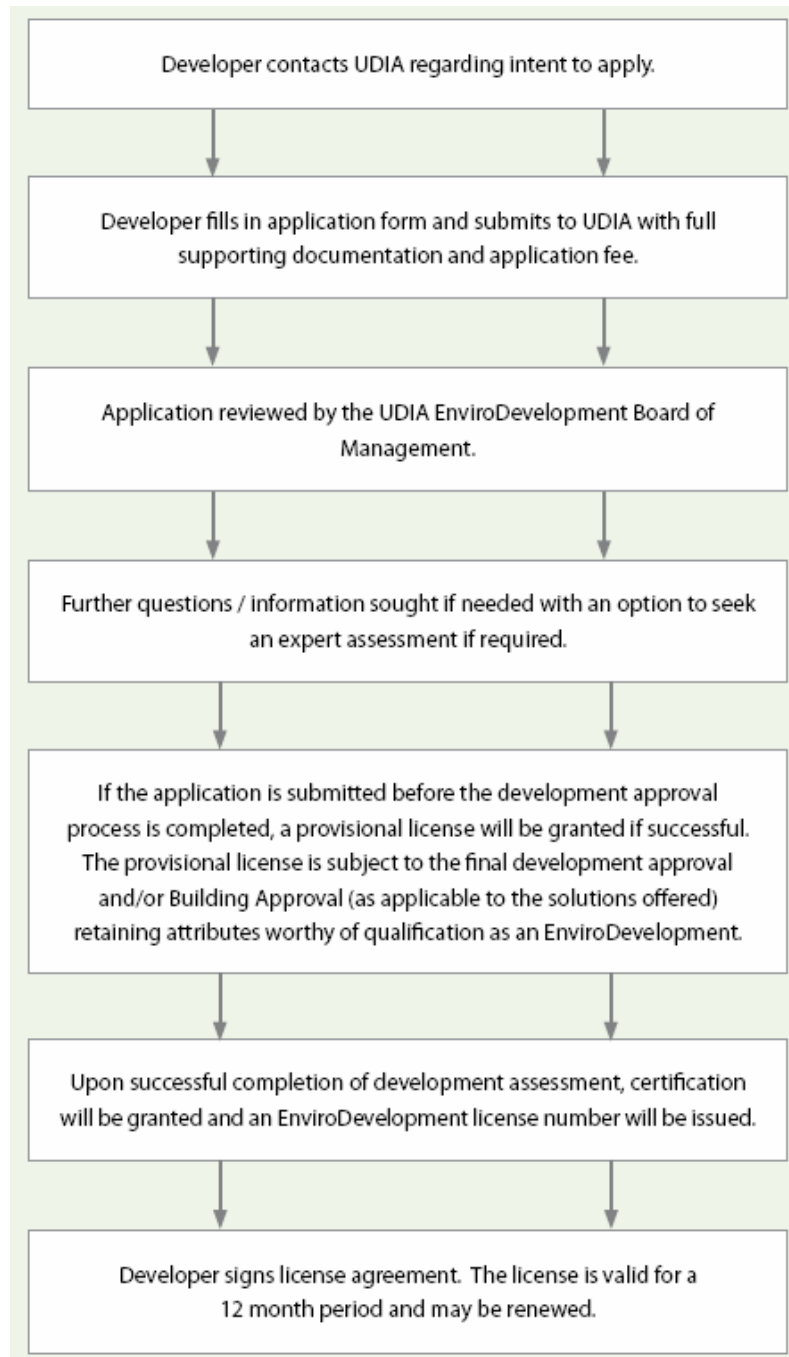
62 Dr Tanya Plant, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 28.

63 Dr Tanya Plant, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 28.

64 Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland) n.d., *EnviroDevelopment: Living for the Future*, factsheet, viewed 23 June 2007, http://www.envirodevelopment.com.au/_dbase_upl/EnviroFact_Generic.pdf

thereby indicating their sustainability credentials to consumers.⁶⁵ The branding icons for each element are illustrated overleaf in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.5 EnviroDevelopment certification process



Source: Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), Exhibit no. 10, p. 3.

65 Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), Exhibit no. 10, pp. 6-7.

Figure 4.6 EnviroDevelopment branding certification icons



Source: Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland) n.d., *EnviroDevelopment: Living for the Future*, factsheet, viewed 23 June 2007, http://www.envirodevelopment.com.au/_dbase_upl/EnviroFact_Generic.pdf

International Hydropower Association's Sustainability Guidelines

4.42 In 2004 the International Hydropower Association (IHA) released a set of generic *Sustainability Guidelines* to foster consideration of sustainability in the assessment, operation and management of both new and existing hydropower projects and facilities to avoid, mitigate or compensate for detrimental social and environmental impacts and maximise positive outcomes.⁶⁶ These guidelines span the following six elements:⁶⁷

- IHA policy
- the role of governments
- decision making processes
- hydropower – environmental aspects of sustainability
- hydropower – social aspects of sustainability
- hydropower – economic aspects of sustainability.

4.43 The *Sustainability Guidelines* are supported by a document entitled *Sustainability Assessment Protocol* that primarily aims to assist IHA

66 International Hydropower Association 2004, *Sustainability Guidelines*, IHA, Australia, p. 2; International Hydropower Association 2006, *Sustainability Assessment Protocol*, IHA, Australia, p. 2.

67 International Hydropower Association 2004, *Sustainability Guidelines*, IHA, Australia, p. 2.

members with performance assessment against the criteria of the above mentioned elements.⁶⁸ Training is provided on the use of the protocol.⁶⁹

The International Association of Public Transport

4.44 In 2003 the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) launched its performance based *Charter on Sustainable Development* with the overall aim of promoting the contribution of public transport to sustainable communities by integrating sustainable development into an organisation's culture and practices.⁷⁰ Members of the UITP can become full (or pledge) signatories to the charter, having to fulfil (or commit to fulfilling) the following concrete set of criteria over a period of time with regular reporting and auditing:⁷¹

- recognising the social, environmental and economic principles of sustainable development as an organisational strategic objective
- creating a system of regular reporting, internal and/or external, on the implementation of sustainable development principles in the organisation and its activities.

4.45 The MTR Corporation Ltd in Hong Kong is an example of a UITP charter signatory in action.⁷² According to the UITP, it provides one of the most efficient collective transport systems worldwide and with a net attributable profit of HK\$4.212 billion in 2002, has demonstrated that sustainable transport can be operationally and financially viable.⁷³

68 International Hydropower Association 2006, *Sustainability Assessment Protocol*, IHA, Australia, p. 2.

69 Mr Andrew Scanlon, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 April 2007, p. 37.

70 The International Association of Public Transport, *Submission no. 2*, p. 2.

71 International Association of Public Transport n.d., Belgium, *UITP Charter on Sustainable Development*, viewed 3 July 2007, <http://www.uitp.com/project/pics/susdev/2004/SD-Guidelines-EN.pdf>, pp. 1-3.

72 The International Association of Public Transport, *Submission no. 2*, p. 2.

73 The International Association of Public Transport, *Submission no. 2*, p. 2.

Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy

- 4.46 In 2003 the government of Western Australia introduced a sustainability initiative entitled *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, the first at an Australian state level.⁷⁴ The aspirational strategy acknowledges that progressing sustainability is a challenge requiring integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity using a (global) process involving planned action through partnerships, as well as some learning by doing.⁷⁵
- 4.47 The *State Sustainability Strategy* contains 11 (foundation and process) principles, 6 visions for Western Australia and 6 goals for government outlined below.⁷⁶
- Principles
 - ⇒ long term economic health
 - ⇒ equity and human rights
 - ⇒ biodiversity and ecological integrity
 - ⇒ settlement efficiency and quality of life
 - ⇒ community, regions, 'sense of place' and heritage
 - ⇒ net benefit from development
 - ⇒ common good from planning
 - ⇒ integration of the triple bottom line
 - ⇒ accountability, transparency and engagement
 - ⇒ precaution
 - ⇒ hope, vision, symbolic and iterative change
 - Visions
 - ⇒ governance
 - ⇒ global contributions

74 Government of Western Australia 2003, *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, Perth, viewed 12 July 2007, <http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/docs/Final%20Strategy/SSSFinal.pdf>, p. 3.

75 Government of Western Australia 2003, *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, Perth, viewed 12 July 2007, <http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/docs/Final%20Strategy/SSSFinal.pdf>, p. 3.

76 Government of Western Australia 2003, *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, Perth, viewed 12 July 2007, <http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/docs/Final%20Strategy/SSSFinal.pdf>, pp. 30–3.

- ⇒ natural resources
- ⇒ settlements
- ⇒ community
- ⇒ business

- Goals

1. Ensure that the way we govern is driving the transition to a sustainable future
2. Play our part in solving the global challenges of sustainability
3. Value and protect our environment and ensure the sustainable management and use of natural resources
4. Plan and provide settlements that reduce the ecological footprint and enhance quality of life at the same time
5. Support communities to fully participate in achieving a sustainable future
6. Assist business to benefit from and contribute to sustainability.

4.48 With these principles, visions and goals come 336 actions for achievement over a 5 to 10 year period in 42 areas of government and across 36 agencies.⁷⁷ The strategy is currently overseen and coordinated by the Sustainability Policy Unit within the Department of Environment and Conservation which involves assisting agencies in their efforts to address the actions and driving whole of government sustainability initiatives.⁷⁸

77 Government of Western Australia 2003, *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, Perth, viewed 12 July 2007, <http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/docs/Final%20Strategy/SSFinal.pdf>, p. 5.

78 Government of Western Australia 2004, *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy: Year One Progress Report 2004*, Perth, viewed 12 July 2007, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/_view/publications/documents/HopetheFuture.pdf, pp. 2-3.

The Committee's position

- 4.49 The Committee notes a common theme among some of these initiatives, primarily the *Sea Change Sustainability Charter*,⁷⁹ *National Action Plan for Urban Communities*⁸⁰ and *Sustainability Guidelines*.⁸¹ They contain provisions for the establishment of a sustainability governance framework (within their specific sector) which may reflect an absence of and need for inter-jurisdictional government leadership.
- 4.50 The Committee believes that it is necessary to have sector and spatial specific principles and implementation strategies aligned with the proposed national Sustainability Charter and strongly supports initiatives such as the ones outlined above. Coordinated and concerted action is required to ensure the advancement of sustainability in Australia. These strategies can contribute towards this and should be integrated into relevant policy, in collaboration with the proposed Sustainability Commission, to meet the overall goals and objectives of the national Sustainability Charter.
- 4.51 The Committee's recommendation for the establishment of an all-encompassing national sustainability Commission, Commissioner and Charter would supersede some of the governance proposals outlined above, particularly the call for a sustainable communities commission in the *National Action Plan for Urban Communities*. However, the local elements of this plan as well as the expertise and enthusiasm of this sector (and others) would contribute to advancing sustainability.
- 4.52 The Committee also sees the potential of using the voluntary based accreditation approach of *EnviroDevelopment* in conjunction with the proposed Sustainability Charter. Initiatives like these encourage sustainable development and standardise the benchmark for sustainability, thereby creating a fairer operating environment for producers and easier decision making process for consumers.
- 4.53 The Committee commends the Western Australian Government for introducing a *State Sustainability Strategy* and for being the first to do so. Officers involved in implementing this strategy informed the Committee of what they believe are its key challenges – mass principles and elitist language,⁸² and insufficient integration of the strategy with the long term

79 See subheading: *Sea Change Sustainability Charter*, p. 38.

80 See subheading: *National Action Plan for Urban Communities*, p. 38.

81 See subheading: *International Hydropower Association's Sustainability Guidelines*, p. 43.

82 Mr Terry Lewis, *Transcript of Evidence*, 18 April 2007, pp. 45, 51.

strategic management of government and industry, as well as with the community.⁸³

4.54 Moreover, some of the evidence expresses reservations with the approach taken by Western Australia. The evidence indicates that the *State Sustainability Strategy* could be improved if it: was broadened;⁸⁴ was made more unequivocal;⁸⁵ integrated the dimensions of the TBL;⁸⁶ emphasised our dependence on ecological processes;⁸⁷ and focused more on long term aspirations.⁸⁸ Further, one witness favours the strategy and the collaborative way in which it was created but contends that it has 'died from bureaucratic inertia'.⁸⁹ This reinforces the Committee's belief that the Charter itself should be accessible (physically and linguistically) to all Australians and integrated with government policy within a strong institutional framework, including a Sustainability Commission and Commissioner.

83 Mr Terry Lewis, *Transcript of Evidence*, 18 April 2007, pp. 45-6, 48; Mr Kim Taylor, *Transcript of Evidence*, 18 April 2007, p. 49.

84 Urban Development Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 49*, p. 1.

85 Sustainable Population Australia, *Submission no. 44*, p. 9.

86 City of Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, p. 3.

87 Mr Gordon Hocking, *Submission no. 13*, p. 1.

88 Dr Elizabeth Karol, *Submission no. 20*, p. 1.

89 Dr David Worth, *Transcript of Evidence*, 18 April 2007, p. 21.

A national framework for sustainability

...the situation is begging for a national framework. We are hopeful that this committee and your inquiry can help us down this path.¹

You cannot have the charter stand alone. It has to be linked to an effective framework where there is a high degree of buy-in to those results...²

...an Australian Sustainability Charter that exists in the absence of a proactive and effectively resourced Commission is little more than a 'wish-list'.³

...there is a clear role for a single Sustainability Commission to coordinate the establishment, measurement and reporting of sustainability in Australia.⁴

- 5.1 In this concluding chapter, the Committee shifts focus to a broad enabling framework for the proposed national Sustainability Charter. Providing a framework that includes a Sustainability Commission and Commissioner is critical to the success of the Charter.

1 Mr Ric Brazzale, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 28.

2 Ms Di Jay, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 8.

3 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. iv.

4 CRC Construction Innovation, *Submission no. 84*, p. 9.

The Sustainability Commission and Commissioner

- 5.2 The Committee supports the creation of a statutory national Sustainability Commission, led by a Sustainability Commissioner and sees this as a key step towards advancing Australia's progress towards sustainability.

Commission

- 5.3 The key advantage of the proposed Sustainability Commission being independent of government is to facilitate objectivity and longevity.⁵ The statutory New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment could be a useful model for creating the legal framework for the proposed Australian national Sustainability Commission.⁶ Although the scope of its work is limited to the environment, it has successfully influenced government policy making⁷ and improved environmental sustainability outcomes since its conception in 1986. The enabling legislation for the proposed Australian Sustainability Commission would need to be carefully drafted and enacted by the Australian Government with input from the state and territory governments, perhaps through COAG.⁸
- 5.4 There is a small portion of evidence to the inquiry that is sceptical about the establishment of a statutory national Sustainability Commission. These reservations lie in the perception that an independent institution and process will both increase the number of 'competing bureaucracies' working to their own agendas; and duplicate existing sustainability schemes.⁹ Others argue that sustainability must be an overarching requirement of reform and that the Charter, Commission and Commissioner will only add value if they coordinate the integration of sustainability with mainstream policy using existing regulatory arrangements.¹⁰

5 Professor David Hood, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 14.

6 Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4; Dr Gabrielle Kuiper, *Submission no. 92*, p. 2; Professor David Hood, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 14.

7 Dr Gabrielle Kuiper, *Submission no. 92*, p. 2.

8 Australian Capital Territory Government, *Submission no. 113*, p. 4.

9 Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 9; Housing Industry Association, *Submission no. 111*, p. 3; Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission no. 94*, p. 1.

10 Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 9; Housing Industry Association, *Submission no. 111*, p. 3.

- 5.5 Some submissions made suggestions about the structure and other aspects of the Commission which the Committee considers would go some way towards allaying the concerns described above. These, and some of the Committee's suggestions include:
- the Commission be small, nimble and highly specialised¹¹
 - an advisory committee be established, comprised of sustainability champions from government, industry (including academia) and the community, headed by the Commissioner and featuring designated taskforces
 - existing measures be used where possible, including government agencies.¹²
- 5.6 The Committee feels that this inter-jurisdictional, cross-sectoral partnership approach will provide a much needed link between the Commission and government, industry and the community to facilitate both specialised information sharing and ongoing cooperative action towards meeting the goals of the Charter.
- 5.7 An example of an effective partnership model for promoting sustainability in urban environments is the United Nations Global Cities Programme (Cities Program) public-private collaborative *Melbourne Model*. The *Melbourne Model* seeks to harness significant, perhaps under-utilised local resources and expertise across all sectors of urban society by engaging them in outcome-oriented taskforces on provincial urban-focused sustainability issues.¹³ Participating cities select a United Nations *Global Compact* issue of local relevance (in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption) and develop solutions using applied methodologies and practices through facilitated workshops.¹⁴ The All Sector Taskforce model/*Melbourne Model* and its phases of engagement are illustrated below in Figure 5.1.

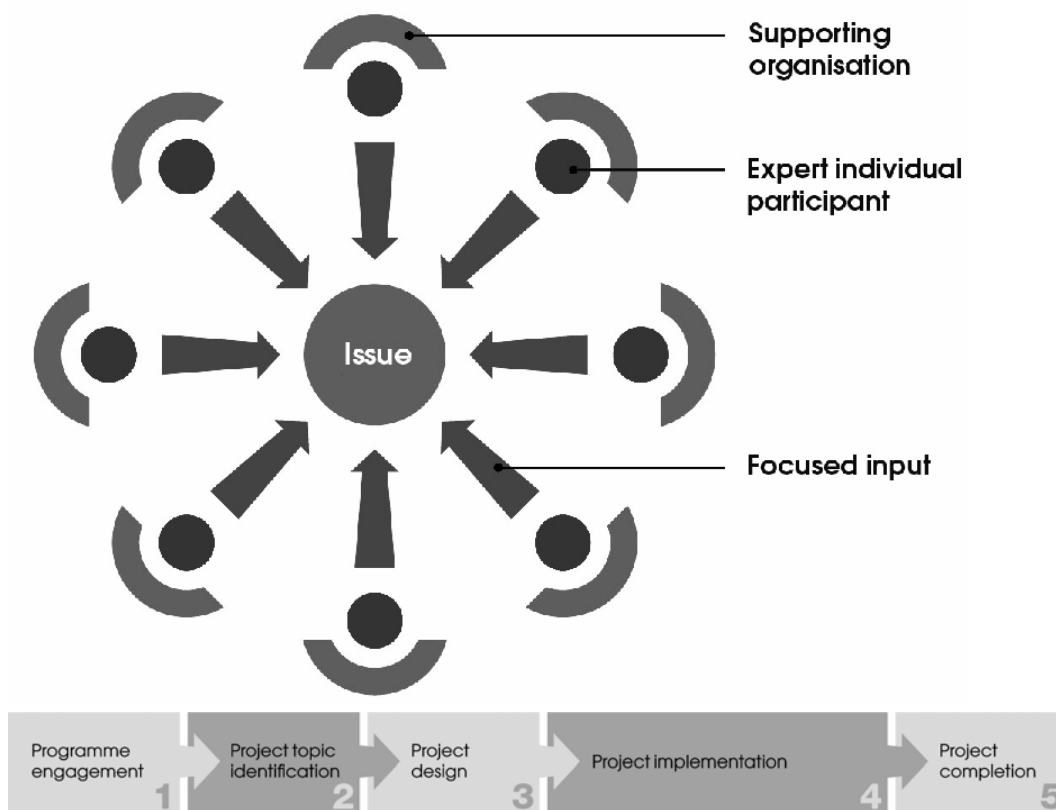
11 Ms Di Jay, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 22.

12 For example, the Department of the Environment and Water Resources (including the Australian Greenhouse Office); Australian Bureau of Statistics; Auditor General's Office, CSIRO, etc.

13 United Nations Global Cities Programme n.d, *Membership brochure*, brochure, p. 2.

14 United Nations Global Cities Programme n.d, *Membership brochure*, brochure, pp. 2-3.

Figure 5.1 All Sector Taskforce model of optimal stakeholder focus and five phases of engagement



Source: United Nations Global Cities Programme n.d, *Membership brochure, brochure*, p. 3.

- 5.8 The Cities Programme is claimed to be centred more on achieving positive outcomes through local capacity building than on ways of building alliances – it focuses on solutions, not only the partnerships.¹⁵ Further, it addresses provincial issues by utilising local resources with current global thinking, practice, strategies and initiatives.¹⁶ The Committee considers that the *Melbourne Model* could be well utilised by the proposed Sustainability Commission in working with its stakeholders to achieve some of the goals of the Charter.
- 5.9 The Committee sees the initial role of the Commission involving (collaboratively) defining sustainability and sustainable development; and devising the Charter and supplementary implementation agreement, drawing upon existing sustainability measures to coordinate a national approach. The evidence strongly indicates that involving a wide range of stakeholders in the process of creating the Charter (and supplement) is necessary¹⁷ and will provide a comprehensive scope and collective

15 United Nations Global Cities Programme n.d, *Membership brochure, brochure*, p. 3.

16 United Nations Global Cities Programme n.d, *Membership brochure, brochure*, p. 3.

17 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. 13; Australian Green Development Forum, *Submission no 66*, p. 2; Bus Industry Confederation, *Submission no. 84*, p. 6; City of

identification with and pursuance of its objectives. Moreover, the Committee is of the opinion that a collaborative development process will encourage a focus that looks beyond parliamentary timeframes.

5.10 In the Committee's view, and drawing from some of the suggestions made in submissions, the ongoing role of the Commission should involve:

- evaluating progress towards meeting national sustainability goals, objectives and targets and reporting on this to both Houses of Federal Parliament¹⁸
- conducting inquiries into sustainability matters,¹⁹ recommending remedial measures for unsustainable practices and gaps in policies and acknowledging those that are sustainable
- reviewing (when necessary) national sustainability goals, objectives and targets
- building and strengthening partnerships with government, industry and the community (nationally and internationally)
- influencing and guiding government, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes²⁰
- collecting, maintaining and disseminating information on sustainability, including national performance statistics.²¹

Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, p. 1; Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, *Submission no. 82*, p. 3; Land and Environment Planning, *Submission no. 5*, p. 2; Dr Alaric Maude, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 12; Professor Anthony Capon, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 3.

18 Caloundra City Council, *Submission no. 98*, p. 1. This may overlap with some areas of the work of the Australian National Audit Office.

19 Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4; Dr Gabrielle Kuiper, *Submission no. 92*, p. 2.

20 Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, *Submission no. 82*, p. 2.

21 The Australian Bureau of Statistics could assist with this, see Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, *Submission no. 82*, p. 4.

Commissioner

5.11 Likewise, the Committee considers that the Commissioner should:

- head the office of the national Sustainability Commission and advisory committee
- be an independent statutory officer
- be appointed with support of the government and the parliament for a 10 year, non-renewable period
- be removed from office only by agreement of both Houses of Parliament on the grounds of misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental incapacity
- report annually to parliament
- seek input from bodies such as the CSIRO in defining scientifically sound targets
- have wide powers of access to people, places and papers in undertaking his/her duties
- represent Australia at international sustainability forums
- be bound by the functions and powers of the enabling legislation as well as meeting the obligations under the *Public Service Act 1999 (Commonwealth)*
- undertake and oversee (as appropriate) the duties of the Commission (see previous paragraph).
- draw upon existing sustainability measures.

Regulation versus voluntary schemes

5.12 In moving towards more sustainable outcomes, the Committee considered differing viewpoints on whether regulation or voluntary commitment would be the way to proceed. The Committee sees this as a matter that the Commission would need to further consider.

5.13 The UDIA (Queensland) acknowledges that while there may be a place for regulation in eliminating unsustainable practices, it is not the most effective means:

...greater sustainability outcomes can be achieved through reward for innovation and early adoption.²²

The implications of having more than minimum regulation are said to include the creation of a tedious, restrictive, costly and confusing operating environment with generally no offer of rewards to high performers which may dampen enthusiasm.²³

- 5.14 In contrast, there is a view that regulation is required for advancing sustainability outcomes:

Without a regulation, boards of directors are not going to respond...a very clear regulated outcome is absolutely essential.²⁴

Regulation is seen as having the potential to create a sense of urgency.²⁵ Moreover, it is claimed that minimum outcome (as opposed to action) oriented regulation can be used to deliver improved sustainability outcomes because it indicates 'where/what' without specifying 'how', thereby, providing flexibility for varied contexts and potentially enabling sustainable innovations to flourish.²⁶

- 5.15 The Committee is concerned that outcome based regulation may place strain on sectors that perhaps lack the resources to innovate. In such cases, the advice of the Sustainability Commission could be sought for guidance on how to best proceed.

Leadership

We need greater leadership so that government is out ahead of the market, ahead of business and pushing harder and faster for change to happen.²⁷

- 5.16 Many submitters identified strong leadership and a whole of government commitment as vital to the success of the proposed Sustainability Charter²⁸ and the Committee supports this viewpoint. Australian Government

22 Urban Development Institute of Australia, Queensland, *Submission no. 49*, p. 2.

23 Urban Development Institute of Australia, Queensland, *Submission no. 49*, p. 2.

24 Ms Fiona Wain, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 9.

25 Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, p. 7.

26 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, p. 13; Mr Mathew Munro, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 9; Ms Melanie Stutsel, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 33; See also Ecos 2006, 'Going the corporate mile', vol. 131, June-July, p. 25.

27 Ms Di Jay, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 13.

28 City of Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, p. 1; Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 3; Vinyl Council of Australia Victoria; *Submission no. 29*, p. 1; Mr Paul Graham, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 16.

leadership is required initially to establish a legislative framework for the proposed Charter, Commission and Commissioner. A continuation of this strength of leadership is required by all levels of government for realigning existing and aligning future regulation, policies and programs with the Charter.²⁹ As one witness contended, with this comes the potential of elevating sustainability to a comparable policy position of national security.³⁰

- 5.17 Not to be underestimated is the leadership strength of industry. The Committee has heard that in terms of leadership in the sustainability challenge, the market is ahead of government.³¹ For example, one submitter claims that the finance sector is said to have foreshadowed litigation relating to latent climate change liability and as a result, seeks to minimise the carbon exposure risk in investment opportunities.³²
- 5.18 It is contended that if the Australian Government creates a framework for sustainability that sets the direction and pace of change through regulation, policies and programs, the market will follow³³ and bring with it the advantage of economy of scale.³⁴ Further, it is argued that Australia is in a unique position to become a 'sustainability superpower',³⁵ with its current economic stability, innovative approach to technology and concerned and educated community.³⁶ Further, the Committee has heard that advancing a sustainable future presents not only an opportunity for Australia to lead on the world stage, but to also build its next global (economic) competitive edge.³⁷

29 City of Joondalup, *Submission no. 15*, p. 2; Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Limited, *Submission no. 83*, p. 2; Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 2; Mr Matthew Trigg, *Submission no. 76*, p. 3; Mr Paul Honeybone, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 4.

30 Professor Brendan Mackey, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 October 2006, p. 3.

31 Ms Di Jay, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 13; Mr Paul Honeybone, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 12.

32 Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, pp. 8–9.

33 Ms Sue Holliday, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 September 2006, p. 12.

34 Mr Mark Bezzina, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, pp. 19–20; Mr Peter Szental, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 October 2006, p. 38.

35 Mr Cameron Hoffmann, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 20.

36 Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, p. 8;

37 Ms Kirsten Davies, *Submission no. 11*, p. 3; Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, p. 8.

Incentives

- 5.19 Incentives are potentially a useful tool for encouraging sustainable behaviour. The Committee's *Discussion Paper* (p. 16) considered the idea of applying the (former) incentive payments component of the National Competition Policy (NCP) to the proposed Charter to encourage sustainable outcomes. The NCP recognises that competitive markets generally enhance Australia's economic performance by providing strong incentives for efficiency, innovation and price competition.³⁸ Financial transfer incentives known as 'competition payments' were previously made under this policy (by the Australian Government to the state and territory governments) for implementation of agreed competition policy reforms and were seen as effective in achieving a number of reform outcomes.³⁹
- 5.20 In the Committee's view, applying the (former) financial incentive transfer system of the NCP to the sustainability agenda (ie, rewarding state and territory governments for advancing sustainability outcomes through the provision of Australian Government funded 'sustainability payments') is an option worth exploring. However, a submitter expresses concern that the one dimensional nature of the NCP may not provide for the multi dimensional nature of sustainability.⁴⁰ The City of Melbourne goes as far as suggesting that the broad nature of a potential National Sustainability Policy could supersede the NCP.⁴¹ As indicated by another submitter, given the economic focus of the NCP, a conflict exists between the principles of it and sustainability,⁴² so it is suggested that any increases in productivity must include a measure of the social and environmental impacts and strive for resource efficiency.⁴³
- 5.21 The Committee has heard that another potential gap with applying the (former) financial incentive transfer system of the NCP model to a sustainability context is the absence of mechanisms for directly rewarding

38 National Competition Council n.d., Melbourne, viewed 15 May 2007, <http://www.ncc.gov.au/articleZone.asp?articleZoneID=136>; Productivity Commission 2005, *Review of National Competition Policy Reforms: Productivity Commission Inquiry Report no. 33*, Canberra, p. xiv.

39 Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 10; Productivity Commission 2005, *Review of National Competition Policy Reforms: Productivity Commission Inquiry Report no. 33*, Canberra, p. xiv.

40 Mr Dennis Clarke, *Submission no. 58*, p. 1.

41 City of Melbourne, *Submission no. 67*, pp. 4, 6.

42 Mr Dennis Clarke, *Submission no. 58*, p. 1.

43 Australian Conservation Foundation, *Submission no. 93*, pp. 42-3.

non-government contributors to sustainability.⁴⁴ The Committee feels this is significant given that advancing sustainability requires the collective effort of government, industry and the community. Combating this problem may require the use of a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives to governments, industry and the community.⁴⁵ A range of sustainability incentives suggested by submitters include:

- government investment in public private partnerships for programs and innovations aligned with the Charter and early adoption of these⁴⁶
- government initiation funding to assist industry to adjust,⁴⁷ perhaps through a certification system⁴⁸
- subsidies for individuals to reduce the costs of their efforts to improve sustainability outcomes⁴⁹
- rewarding governments based on meeting milestones (ensuring that this money is filtered through to the areas responsible for, or able to make significant sustainability contributions)⁵⁰
- introducing sustainability tax reform benefits, potentially harnessing the motivational power of tax avoidance⁵¹
- granting national awards for excellence in the area of sustainability.⁵²

5.22 Further criticism in the evidence concerning the application of the (former) incentive payments aspect of the NCP model to the sustainability agenda surrounds the topic of good governance. One submitter believes that good (public) governance requires programs that optimise long term economic and social conditions for citizens which extend well beyond further rounds of NCP payments,⁵³ although the evidence does acknowledge the need for some form of funding to governments for administrative and

44 WaRDS Association, *Submission no. 3*, p. 6.

45 City of Joondalup, *Submission no. 15*, p. 3; Urban Development Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 49*, p. 2; WaRDS association, *Submission no. 3*, p. 6.

46 Association of Consulting Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 100*, p. 6; Urban Development Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 49*, p. 2.

47 Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4.

48 Urban Development Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 49*, p. 2.

49 Real Estate Institute of Australia, *Submission no. 33*, p. 5.

50 City of Sydney, *Submission no. 112*, pp. 3, 7; Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, *Submission no. 106*, pp. 2, 4.

51 Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials in Construction, *Submission no. 101*, p. 12; Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4.

52 Keep Australia Beautiful, *Submission no. 57*, p. 1; Ms Lyndall McCormack, *Submission no. 17*, p. 2.

53 Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 11.

adjustment costs.⁵⁴ Moreover, it is claimed that policy should drive funding, not the reverse (as would be the case with 'sustainability payments').⁵⁵

- 5.23 Government funding, as opposed to rewarding, now appears to be preferred policy given the withdrawal of (National Competition Council assessed) 'incentive payments' and the introduction of (COAG Reform Council) 'fair sharing' outcome payments.⁵⁶ Such funding is provided on a case by case basis to ensure fair sharing of the costs and benefits of specific reforms on the National Reform Agenda.⁵⁷ The Committee sees the value in the Australian Government (in collaboration with the state and territory governments) exploring the merits and limitations of 'incentive payments' versus 'fair sharing' payments in relation to the proposed Charter.

Measurement

...sound numerical measures, that are independently verifiable, are the only way to ensure that real progress is made.⁵⁸

- 5.24 The Committee identified in Chapter 3 that sustainability targets are essential for achieving positive outcomes because they provide unequivocal, concrete direction. As stated in one submission, the targets should be measurable with baseline values so that progress towards meeting them can be determined.⁵⁹ The Committee reiterates its view that the highly technical process of identifying sustainability targets (to be contained in the supplement to the proposed Charter) should be done collaboratively by the Commission.
- 5.25 Without knowledge of these targets, it is difficult for the Committee to suggest what measurement tools may be effective. However, it has been made aware that discrete measurement tools are required for the different target areas of the proposed Sustainability Charter and variable conditions

54 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 24; Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 11.

55 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 24; Engineers Australia, *Submission no. 43*, p. 11.

56 Council of Australian Governments 2007, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, viewed 18 May 2007, <http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/130407/index.htm#mental>.

57 Council of Australian Governments 2007, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, viewed 18 May 2007, <http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/130407/index.htm#mental>.

58 Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 2.

59 Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District), *Submission no. 10*, p. 2.

and needs between jurisdictions, industries and communities.⁶⁰ This could present a challenge with the consistency and in turn, integrity of the results. However, the Committee has been informed of the existence of robust and reliable methods for applying the numerous available metrics.⁶¹

- 5.26 The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) came under scrutiny in the evidence to this inquiry. It is argued that sustainability requires a shift away from GDP because this type of metric does not consider externalities, often resulting in outcomes where social and environmental negatives are calculated as economic positives.⁶² For example, a witness argued hypothetically that the GDP may fall if diabetes is eliminated (through healthier lifestyles), indicating a lower performance from an economic lens (given less expenditure on health services), while failing to consider higher performance from a social lens (given increased quality of life).⁶³ The development of a Genuine Progress Indicator is offered as an alternative to GDP because it is claimed to provide a true picture of economic health through calculating the social and environmental costs and benefits.⁶⁴ Some submitters contended that any measurement and reporting system must be holistic, employing full lifecycle assessment principles.⁶⁵

Reporting

- 5.27 The Committee has received evidence that two overriding types of reporting are required to support the national Sustainability Charter – informational and performance.⁶⁶ The former contains benchmarking data on sustainability for the use of decision makers in formulating policies and strategies, while the latter serves an accountability function of entities

60 Australian Territory Government, *Submission no. 113*, p. 3; Mr Grahame Collier, *Transcript of Evidence*, 24 May 2007, p. 12.

61 Dr Christopher Dey, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 11.

62 Uniting Care (NSW.ACT), *Submission no. 34*, pp. 2-3; Environment Business Australia, *Submission no. 72*, p. 8; Dr John Coulter, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 12.

63 Dr John Coulter, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 November 2006, p. 12.

64 Earth Charter Australia, *Submission no. 12*, p. 4; EcoSTEPS, *Submission no. 25*, p. 5; Professor Graham Harris, Professor Manfred Lenzen & Mr Richard Sanders, *Submission no. 95*, p. 4; Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4.

65 Building Products Innovation Council, *Submission no. 78*, p. 1; Mr Matthew Trigg, *Submission no. 76*, p. 4.

66 Ms Janice Loftus, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 3.

responsible for implementing the Charter, including the proposed Sustainability Commissioner.⁶⁷ Aspects of each can overlap.

Informational

- 5.28 One submission indicates that the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth) enabled and Australian Government resourced State of the Environment (SoE) five yearly report is primarily an example of informational reporting.⁶⁸ It is claimed that the SoE facilitates decision making for adaptive strategies in a range of environment and heritage areas by identifying associated conditions, trends and pressures.⁶⁹ For instance, the 2006 SoE report indicated the continuing trend of people relocating to the coast, risking further damage to the natural and cultural values of these areas.⁷⁰ According to the Australian State of the Environment Committee, such information enables decision makers to explore, devise and implement a range of adaptive responses, ideally through appropriately scaled and targeted investment, governance and regulation.⁷¹
- 5.29 Generally the evidence to the inquiry supports integrating SoE reporting with the proposed Sustainability Charter.⁷² It is suggested that low level integration could involve using the information contained in the SoE report for Sustainability Charter reporting, to the extent of their common goals, resulting in two separate reports but avoiding data collection duplication in areas that overlap.⁷³ By contrast, high level integration is claimed to entail fully aligning the scope of the SoE reporting process with

67 Ms Janice Loftus, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, pp. 3-4.

68 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 18.

69 Department of the Environment and Water Resources 2007, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 24 May 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/index.html>; Department of the Environment and Water Resources 2006, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 24 May 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2006/publications/beeton-speech.html>

70 Department of the Environment and Water Resources 2006, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 24 May 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2006/publications/beeton-speech.html>

71 Department of the Environment and Water Resources 2006, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 24 May 2007, <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2006/publications/beeton-speech.html>

72 For example, Australian Association for Environmental Education, *Submission no. 31*, p. 2; City of Joondalup, *Submission no. 15*, p. 3; CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 17; Graham Harris, Professor Manfred Lenzen & Mr Richard Sanders, *Submission no. 95*, p. 6; Hydro Tasmania, *Submission no. 24*, p. 4; Dr Elizabeth Karol, *Submission no. 20*, p. 1; Mr James Lillis, *Submission no. 32*, p. 3; Minerals Council of Australia, *Submission no. 94*, p. 5; Mr Matthew Trigg, *Submission no. 76*, p. 4.

73 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 17.

that of the Sustainability Charter, thus facilitating a single inclusive reporting framework using a common data set.⁷⁴

- 5.30 Joint submitters (CPA Australia and Ms Loftus) draw the Committee's attention to some of the implications of low level integration of SoE and Sustainability Charter reporting. For instance, they argue that different objectives within the common goals of the two processes and the varied data collection processes used for uncommon goals can create inconsistencies, conflicting accountabilities and potential trade-offs in decision making.⁷⁵ Likewise, their submission contends that high level integration may not accommodate the varied focus of SoE and Sustainability Charter reporting.⁷⁶
- 5.31 It is advocated that medium level integration is preferred given the informational focus of the SoE report and performance focus envisaged for the Charter.⁷⁷ The Committee has heard that this level of integration may involve feeding the data from the SoE information system into the reporting process for the Charter, to the extent of their common purpose/focus.⁷⁸ Thus, according to this evidence, medium integration of SoE and Sustainability Charter reporting would involve extending the scope of the SoE reporting process.⁷⁹

Performance

- 5.32 It is envisaged that performance assessment against the proposed Sustainability Charter would be a key focus of the Commission. Many small, medium and large organisations, predominantly in the private sector, are already voluntarily engaged with the sustainability reporting agenda. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – a large multi-stakeholder international network geared at developing ways of (globally applicable) organisational reporting on economic, environmental and social performance⁸⁰ – is a testament to this, with nearly 1000 organisations in over 60 countries having declared their use of the GRI Reporting Framework.⁸¹ According to the Centre for Public Agency Sustainability

74 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 17.

75 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, pp. 17–18.

76 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, p. 18.

77 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, pp. 16, 18.

78 CPA Australia and Ms Janice Loftus, *Submission no. 104*, pp. 17–18.

79 Ms Georgina Legoe, *Submission no. 75*, p. 2; Sydney West Area Health Service, *Submission no. 79*, p. 2.

80 Global Reporting Initiative n.d., The Netherlands, viewed 30 May 2007, <http://www.globalreporting.org/AboutGRI/WhatWeDo/>

81 Global Reporting Initiative n.d., The Netherlands, viewed 30 May 2007, <http://www.globalreporting.org/AboutGRI/WhatWeDo/>

Reporting, the attraction to sustainability reporting in the private sector includes:⁸²

- increased knowledge of environmental and social impacts
- improved management of staff performance, attraction and retention
- improved reputation and competitive advantage
- increased opportunity for information sharing and stakeholder engagement.

5.33 The Committee has heard that Australian Government departments and agencies are required under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to report on their sustainability performance as part of their annual reporting and some federal agencies produce additional stand-alone reports on their sustainability performance using the GRI Reporting Framework.⁸³ Further to the above mentioned benefits of sustainability reporting, the evidence indicates that public sector agencies may be driven by the:⁸⁴

- magnitude of impact
- opportunity to demonstrate leadership
- ability to demonstrate the level of fulfilment of sustainability vision and policy and to identify challenges and opportunities.

5.34 It has been suggested to the Committee that the reporting principles in the GRI Reporting Framework could be used to upgrade SoE reporting to include all dimensions of sustainability, drawing on three types of information – context, policy and agency, as illustrated in Figure 5.2 (below).⁸⁵

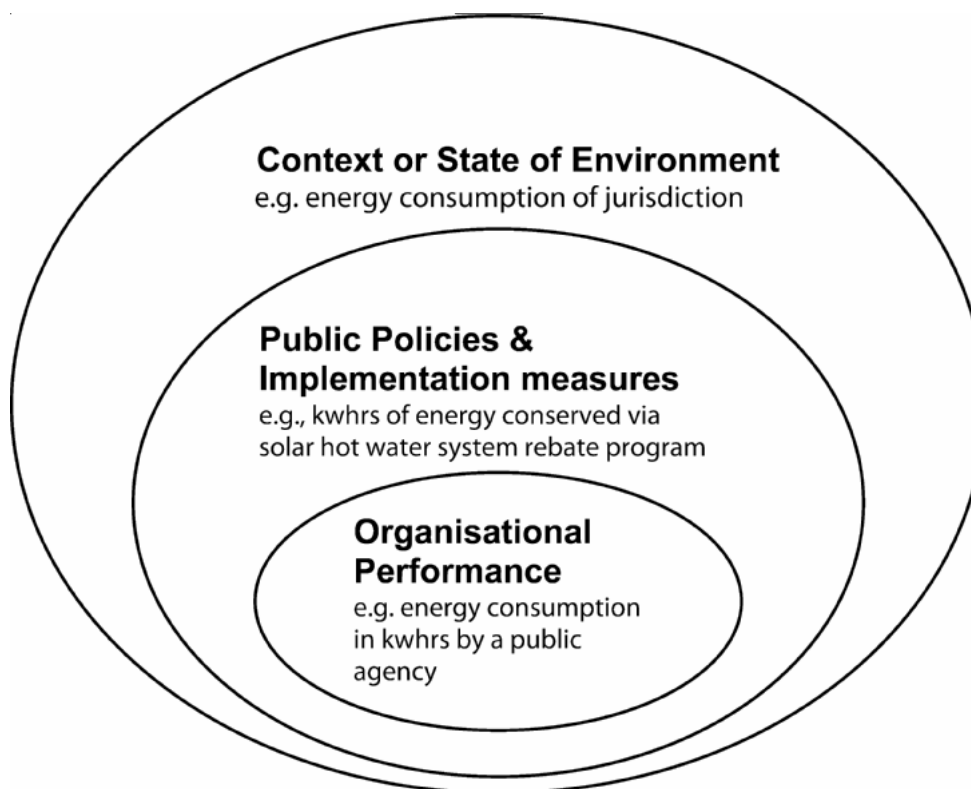
82 The Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, *Submission no. 45*, p. 9.

83 The Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, *Submission no. 45*, pp. 5-6.

84 The Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, *Submission no. 45*, p. 10.

85 Global Reporting Initiative 2005, *Sector Supplement for Public Agencies: Pilot version 1.1*, Global Reporting Initiative, The Netherlands, viewed 30 May 2007, http://www.globalreporting.org/NR/rdonlyres/D7030C20-69C0-4FA3-B08B-9668A7658F9A/0/SS_PublicAgency_ENG.pdf, p. 10; The Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting, *Submission no. 45*, pp. 4, 13.

Figure 5.2 Types of information required for public agency sustainability reporting



Source: Global Reporting Initiative 2005, *Sector Supplement for Public Agencies: Pilot version 1.1*, Global Reporting Initiative, The Netherlands, viewed 30 May 2007, http://www.globalreporting.org/NR/rdonlyres/D7030C20-69C0-4FA3-B08B-9668A7658F9A/0/SS_PublicAgency_ENG.pdf, p. 10.

- 5.35 Given the performance focus of the GRI Reporting Framework, the Committee sees the value in the proposed Sustainability Commission further exploring its application to the proposed Charter. Medium level integration of SoE reporting with the Charter could also be considered by the Commission, in collaboration with the Department of the Environment and Water Resources.
- 5.36 In addition to assessing and reporting on the sustainability performance within the private and public sectors, the effectiveness of the full range of intended activities of the Commission will require examination. For example, there need also be review/s on organisations audited by the Commission to assess compliance with such findings and investigate disputed matters.
- 5.37 The Committee sees the value of reviews of compliance with the findings of the Commission's audits and also for investigating disputed matters. The Parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

provides this type of scrutiny for the work undertaken by the ANAO.⁸⁶ For instance, it examines all reports of the Auditor-General primarily to assess whether or not audited agencies have responded appropriately to the Auditor General's more significant findings.⁸⁷

- 5.38 A statutory federal parliamentary committee on sustainability may not be the answer to independent compliance reviews given possible jurisdictional implications, but it is one avenue worth considering by the Australian Government (in collaboration with the state and territory governments) when drafting such provisions in the enabling legislation for the proposed Sustainability Commission. Alternatively, an internal auditing process could be explored.
- 5.39 The New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has an internal Environmental Management Auditor who measures the effectiveness of the Commissioner's reports about six months after tabling through a qualitative outcome evaluation process.⁸⁸ Some investigations are revisited between two to four years later for a full outcome evaluation.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment conducts 10 year evaluations of its overall work.⁹⁰ Although these short and long term focused evaluations are not performed independent of the Commissioner, they have served the system well over the past 20 years and are options worth considering by the Australian Government (in collaboration with the state and territory governments) when drafting such provisions in the enabling legislation for the proposed Sustainability Commission.

86 Australian National Audit Office 2006, *The role of the Auditor-General and my relationship with the Parliament*, briefing to the House of Representatives staff, Canberra, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/The_role_of_the_Auditor_General_and_my_relationship_with_the_Parliament.pdf, p. 5.

87 Australian National Audit Office 2006, *The role of the Auditor-General and my relationship with the Parliament*, briefing to the House of Representatives staff, Canberra, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/The_role_of_the_Auditor_General_and_my_relationship_with_the_Parliament.pdf, p. 5.

88 New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2006, *Statement of Intent*, New Zealand, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.pce.govt.nz/reports/allreports/soi_06.pdf, pp. 8-9.

89 New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2006, *Statement of Intent*, New Zealand, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.pce.govt.nz/reports/allreports/soi_06.pdf, p. 8.

90 New Zealand Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2006, *Statement of Intent*, New Zealand, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.pce.govt.nz/reports/allreports/soi_06.pdf, p. 8.

5.40 Finally, the Committee received a suggestion for the inclusion of provisions for independent auditing of the financial and non-financial performance of the proposed Sustainability Commission.⁹¹ The Auditor-General undertakes performance and financial statements audits of Commonwealth entities⁹² and the Committee sees this process as being sufficient for the purpose of public accountability of the proposed Sustainability Commission.

Recommendation 1

5.41 **The Committee recommends that within the first six months of the 42nd Parliament, the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources introduce a Bill for an Act to establish a statutory national Sustainability Commission, headed by a Sustainability Commissioner.**

In drafting this legislation, the Australian Government should seek input from the state and territory governments.

In the Committee's view, and drawing from some of the suggestions made in submissions, the legislation should outline the ongoing roles of the Commission and Commissioner.

The ongoing role of the Commission should involve:

- **defining what sustainability means to Australia**
- **creating an aspirational Sustainability Charter with objectives and milestones**
- **creating a supplementary technical implementation agreement containing targets**
- **evaluating progress towards meeting national sustainability goals, objectives and targets and reporting on this to both Houses of Federal Parliament**
- **conducting inquiries into sustainability matters, recommending remedial measures for unsustainable practices and gaps in policies and acknowledging those that are sustainable**

91 Green Building Council of Australia, *Submission no. 105*, p. 4.

92 Australian National Audit Office 2006, *The role of the Auditor-General and my relationship with the Parliament*, briefing to the House of Representatives staff, Canberra, viewed 7 May 2007, http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/The_role_of_the_Auditor_General_and_my_relationship_with_the_Parliament.pdf, p. 3.

- reviewing (when necessary) national sustainability goals, objectives and targets
- building and strengthening partnerships with government, industry and the community (nationally and internationally)
- influencing and guiding government, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes
- collecting, maintaining and disseminating information on sustainability, including national performance statistics.

The Commissioner should:

- head the office of the national Sustainability Commission and chair the advisory committee
- be an independent statutory officer
- be appointed with support of the government and the parliament for a 10 year, non-renewable period
- be removed from office only by agreement of both Houses of Parliament on the grounds of misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental incapacity
- report annually to parliament
- seek input from bodies such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in defining scientifically sound targets
- have wide powers of access to people, places and papers in undertaking his/her duties
- represent Australia at international sustainability forums
- be bound by the functions and powers of the enabling legislation as well as meeting the obligations under the *Public Service Act 1999 (Commonwealth)*
- undertake and oversee (as appropriate) the duties of the Commission
- draw upon existing sustainability measures.

Further, the legislation should provide for:

- the establishment of an advisory committee, chaired by the Commissioner and comprised of government, industry and community sustainability champions
- informational and performance reporting against the Charter.

Recommendation 2

5.42 The Committee reiterates its recommendation in the *Sustainable Cities* report to establish a national Sustainability Charter.

The Charter should:

- be aspirational
- define sustainability in an Australian context
- contain clear and concise overarching objectives and timeframes.

The supplementary technical implementation agreement should:

- contain targets that are closely aligned with the the objectives of the Charter
- be used primarily by government and industry.

The scope of the Charter should, at a minimum, cover the following sustainability sectors:

- the built environment
- water
- energy
- transport
- ecological footprint
- economics
- waste
- social equity and health

- **community engagement and education**

and integrate their related components.

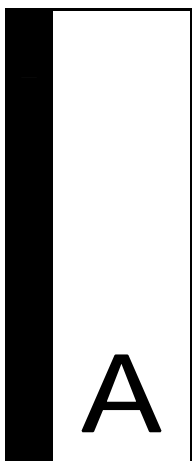
The process used for devising the Charter and supplementary technical implementation agreement should be transparent, participatory and inclusive.

Recommendation 3

5.43 **The Committee recommends the Australian Government take a leadership role in advancing sustainability outcomes, not only through the measures outlined in Recommendation 1, but also through:**

- **the use of monetary and non-monetary incentives for governments, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes**
- **assessing existing and future policy against the proposed Sustainability Charter.**

Dr Mal Washer MP
Chair
16 August 2007



Appendix A—List of submissions

Submission No.	Submitter
1	The Australian National University
2	International Association of Public Transport
3	WaRDS Association
4	International Centre for the Environment
5	Land and Environment Planning
6	Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League Inc.
7	Mr Tom McNeilly
8	Ms Wendy Gleen
9	Dr J G Mosley
10	Save Our Suburbs (Ryde District)
11	Ms Kirsten Davies
12	Earth Charter Australia
13	Mr Gordon Hocking
14	Ms Susan Cunningham
15	City of Joondalup
16	Dr Murray May
17	Ms Lyndall McCormack
18	Ms Jill Curnow
19	National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
20	Dr Elizabeth Karol
21	Dr Alaric Maude
22	Sustainable Population Australia
23	Alan Parker Design
24	Hydro Tasmania
25	EcoSTEPS
26	Birds Australia

List of submissions (cont.)

Submission No.	Submitter
27	Australian Council of Building Design Professions Ltd
28	Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy
29	Vinyl Council of Australia
30	Dr Ted Trainer
31	Australian Association for Environmental Education
32	Mr James Lillis
33	Real Estate Institute of Australia
34	Uniting Care NSW.ACT
35	Clean Up Australia Ltd
36	Mr Peter Allen
37	Pittwater Sustainability Working Group
38	Council of Mayors (SEQ)
39	LPG Australia
40	Mr Ziggy Kapera
41	Disability Council of NSW
42	National Sea Change Task Force
43	Engineers Australia
44	Sustainable Population Australia Inc.
45	Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting
46	Sutherland Shire Council
47	Dr Christopher Dey
48	Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites
49	Urban Development Institute of Australia
50	Dr Jane Lennon
51	Mr Daryl Cox
52	Keep Australia Beautiful
53	Mr Graeme Jessup
54	Ms Marie Jones
55	GRD Ltd
56	Nillumbik Shire Council
57	Ms Maree Ellis
58	Mr Dennis Clarke
59	Babcock and Brown Environmental Investments Ltd
60	Maroochy Shire Council
61	CSIRO
62	Sustainable Transport Coalition of WA
63	Professor Anthony McMichael
64	Mr Alan Jones
65	Mr Matt Mushalik
66	Australian Green Development Forum

List of submissions (cont.)

Submission No.	Submitter
67	City of Melbourne
68	Ms Sharon Ede
69	Northern Territory Government
70	Australian Council for Infrastructure Development Limited
71	Eco-Society.Org (formerly Eco Society and Sustainnovation)
72	Environment Business Australia
73	ARUP
74	Blue Mountains Commuter & Transport Users Association Inc.
75	Ms Georgina Legoe
76	Mr Matthew Trigg
77	Pine Rivers Shire Council
78	Building Products Innovation Council
79	Sydney West Area Health Service
80	Doctors for the Environment Australia
81	Australian Council of Recyclers Inc.
82	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
83	Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Ltd
84	CRC Construction Innovation
85	Bus Industry Confederation
86	TTF Australia
87	Planning Institute of Australia
88	Mr Ian Smart
89	Manly Council
90	Mr Garry Stevenson
91	Dr Chloe Mason
92	Dr Gabrielle Kuiper
93	Australian Conservation Foundation
94	Minerals Council of Australia
95	Prof Graham Harris, Prof Manfred Lenzen and Mr Richard Sanders
96	Prof Terry Williamson and Mr Bruce Beauchampe
97	Save Our Suburbs (NSW)
98	Caloundra City Council
99	Hatch Associates
100	Association of Consulting Engineers Australia
101	The Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials In Construction
102	The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
103	Prof Anthony Capon
104	CPA Australia and University of Sydney
105	Green Building Council of Australia Ltd
106	Council of Capital City Lord Mayors

List of submissions (cont.)

Submission No.	Submitter
107	Property Council of Australia
108	Szencorp Group
109	Australian Building Codes Board
110	People's Environment Protection Alliance Inc.
111	Housing Industry Association Ltd (ACT)
112	City of Sydney
113	ACT Government
114	Sustainable Transport Coalition of WA (supplementary to submission no. 62)
115	Water Corporation
116	Australian Association for Environmental Education (supplementary to submission no. 31)
117	EcoSTEPS (supplementary to submission no. 25)
118	WaRDS Association (supplementary to submission no. 3)



Appendix B—List of exhibits

Exhibit No.	Provider	Title
1	Planning Institute of Australia	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on Friday 8 September 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Sustainable Communities: A national plan of action</i>, prepared by the Centre for International Economics for the Sustainable Communities Roundtable, June 2006.▪ <i>Sustainable Communities: A National Action Plan for Urban Australia</i>, prepared by the Sustainable Communities Roundtable.
2	Dr Alaric Maude	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 8 September 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Using Goals in Environmental Management: The Swedish System of Environmental Objectives</i>, article by Karin Edvardsson in <i>Environmental Management</i>, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 170–80, 2004.▪ <i>de Facto: Environmental Objectives and Fundamental Principles</i>, document by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2001.▪ Environmental Quality Objectives Portal Publications, Swedish Parliament website, August 2006.
3	CSIRO	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 8 September 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Elements of an Urban Sustainability Framework and Extended Urban Metabolism of Human Settlements</i>.
4	Minerals Council of Australia	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 8 September 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Enduring Value: The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development</i>, prepared by the Minerals Council of Australia, 2005.▪ <i>Enduring Value: The Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development, Guidance for implementation</i>, prepared by the Minerals Council of Australia, 2005.

List of exhibits (cont.)

Exhibit No.	Provider	Title
5	Australian National Audit Office	<p>Presentation tabled at a public hearing in Canberra on 30 March 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Green Office Procurement: Key findings and recommendations presented to the House of Representatives Environment Committee.</i>
6	ACEA Sustainability Working Group	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Melbourne on 5 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sustainability Management: Project Sustainability Management Guidelines</i>, International Federation of Consulting Engineers, 2004. ▪ <i>ACEA Background Information: overview of the ACEA, our member firms and the industry.</i>
7	Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Melbourne on 5 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Australia Emerging Carbon Markets: A commercial Reality</i>, media release, Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, 2006. ▪ <i>Carbon Markets Report 2006: A Comprehensive Assessment of Australian and International Greenhouse Abatement Markets</i>, Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, 2006. ▪ <i>Eco Generation</i>, Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy, issue 36, 2006. ▪ <i>State Summary</i>, Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy.
8	Australian Council of Building Design Professions LTD	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Melbourne on 5 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>BDP Environment Design Guide: News</i>, Australian Council of Building Design Professions, August 2006.
9	Hatch Associates	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Sydney on 6 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability diagram.
10	Urban Development Institute of Australia	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Sydney on 6 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>EnviroDevelopment Standards: Living for the future, today</i>, Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), version 1.1, 2006.
11	Mr Alan Parker	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The risk management of oil dependence and climate change</i>, Thinking on Two Wheels Cycling Conference, 2006, p. 15–16, 20. ▪ Metropolitan journey to work charts.
12	International Association of Public Transport	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Energy Crisis? Climate Change? – Breathe Easy</i>, policy statement of the International Association of Public Transport.

List of exhibits (cont.)

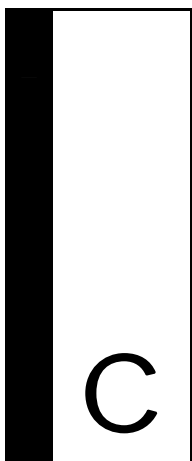
Exhibit No.	Provider	Title
13	Prof Brendan Mackey	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Earth Charter: A declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century</i>, the Earth Charter International Commission.
14	Dr Murray May	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Technical paper: Aviation meets ecology - redesigning policy and practice for air transport and tourism</i>, article by Dr Murray May in <i>Transport Engineering in Australia</i>, vol. 10, no. 2, 2006.
15	Prof Anthony Capon	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Urbanism, Environment and Health: Fenner Conference 2006</i>, program and abstracts of the Australian Academy of Science for the conference, 25–26 May 2006. ▪ <i>Health Environments</i>, 11 essays edited by Chris Johnson and supported by Lend Lease and the NSW Urban Taskforce, 2006. ▪ <i>Our Cities are Killing Us</i>, newspaper article by Julie Robotham and Sherrill Nixon, <i>News Review</i>, Sydney Morning Herald, August 12–13, 2006.
16	Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Burra Charter</i>, the Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999.
17	Sustainable Population Australia	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 19 October 2006: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Unholy Trinity set to drag us into abyss</i>, newspaper article by Ian Dunlop, Sydney Morning Herald, October 16, 2006. ▪ <i>To Those who Shape Australia's Destiny</i>, newspaper article by the Town and Country Planning Association of South Australia (Inc.), The Australian, May 21, 1971.
18	Hydro Tasmania	Material tabled at a public hearing in Tasmania on 13 April 2007: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sustainability Assessment Protocol</i>, of the International Hydropower Association, July 2006. ▪ <i>Sustainability Guidelines</i>, of the International Hydropower Association, February 2004.

List of exhibits (cont.)

Exhibit No.	Provider	Title
19	Sustainable Living Tasmania	<p>Material tabled at a public hearing in Tasmania on 13 April 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Tasmania Together 2020</i>, recommendations by the Tasmania Together Progress Board to Parliament, 2006. ▪ <i>Solutions for sustainable communities</i>, brochure by Sustainable Living Tasmania on Tasmania's environmental home expo, 19–20 November 2005. ▪ <i>Environment Challenge</i>, enrolment form by the Tasmanian Government and Sustainable Living Tasmania. ▪ <i>Practical pathways to sustainable communities</i>, brochure by Sustainable Living Tasmania.
20	Sustainable Transport Coalition of WA	<p>Material tabled at a public hearing in Perth on 18 April 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Oil: Living with less</i>, policy statement by the Sustainable Transport Coalition, 2004. ▪ <i>Celebrating, Educating, Promoting</i>, brochure on the Sustainable Transport Coalition.
21	Water Corporation	<p>Material tabled at a public hearing in Perth on 18 April 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Driving Sustainability: Principles-based Governance of a Large Water Utility</i>, paper by Water Corporation. ▪ <i>Application of Sustainability in the Infrastructure Planning Process</i>, paper by Water Corporation. ▪ <i>Business Principles Wheel (environmental, social and economy)</i>, diagram.
22	City of Joondalup	<p>Material tabled at a public hearing in Perth on 18 April 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Strategic Plan 2003–2008</i>, annual performance report—2005–06 of the City of Joondalup. ▪ <i>Strategic Plan 2003–2008</i>, City of Joondalup. ▪ <i>Cities for Climate Protection Program</i>, milestone 5 report by the City of Joondalup, 2006.
23	Water Corporation	<p>Material tabled at a public hearing in Perth on 18 April 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Business Principles Wheel (governance, ethical and stakeholder)</i>, diagram.
24	Eco-Society.Org	<p>Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 24 May 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Track 3: Moral Responsibility and Sustainable Development</i>, paper by CCM Societal Business from the 13th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference. ▪ <i>How about a different 'rights' tune</i>, paper by CCM Societal Business 2006.

List of exhibits (cont.)

Exhibit No.	Provider	Title
25	Ms Sharon Ede	Material tabled at a roundtable discussion in Canberra on 24 May 2007: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Switzerland's ecological footprint: a contribution to the sustainability debate</i>, paper by the Swiss Confederation, 2006.▪ <i>South Australia's Ecological Footprint</i>, booklet by the Government of South Australia, 2006.▪ <i>Living Planet Report 2006</i>, report by the World Wildlife Fund International, 2006.
26	Prof Anthony Capon	<i>Cities, Sustainability and Health</i> : NSW Public Health Bulletin, vol. 18, no. 3–4, 2007.



Appendix C—List of roundtable discussions and public hearings

Canberra

Thursday, 30 March 2006—public hearing

- Australian National Audit Office

Thursday, 1 June 2006—public hearing

- Department of the Environment and Heritage

Friday, 8 September 2006—roundtable discussion

- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Council for Infrastructure Development Limited
- Australian Local Government Association
- CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- Engineers Australia
- Environment Business Australia
- Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
- Maude, Dr Alaric
- McMichael, Prof Anthony
- Minerals Council of Australia
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Real Estate Institute of Australia
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects

Thursday, 19 October 2006—roundtable discussion

- Adelaide City Council
- Bus Industry Confederation
- International Association of Public Transport
- Mackey, Prof Brendan
- May, Dr Murray
- Parker, Mr Alan
- Standards Australia

Thursday, 2 November 2006—roundtable discussion

- Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites
- Capon, Prof Anthony
- Disability Council of New South Wales
- Doctors for the Environment Australia Inc.
- Sustainable Population Australia
- Sydney West Area Health Service

Thursday, 24 May 2007—roundtable discussion

- Australian Association for Environmental Education
- Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability
- Eco Society.Org
- EcoSTEPS Pty Limited
- Ede, Ms Sharon
- Ways and Realistic Development to Sustainability Association

Melbourne

Thursday, 5 October 2006—roundtable discussion

- ARUP
- Association of Consulting Engineers Australia Sustainability Working Group
- Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy
- Building Products Innovation Council
- Built Environment Australia
- Carbon Partners
- Centre for Public Agency Sustainability Reporting
- Hydro Tasmania
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas Australia
- Standards Australia
- Szencorp Group

Sydney

Friday, 6 October 2006—roundtable discussion

- Australian Council of Recyclers
- Australian Green Development Forum
- Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council
- Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation
- Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Limited
- Hatch Associates
- Housing Industry Association
- Integrated Sustainability Analysis Group
- Loftus, Ms Janice
- Property Council of Australia
- Urban Development Institute of Australia

Tasmania

Friday, 13 April 2007—public hearing

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainable Materials in Construction
- Harris, Prof Graham; Lenzen, Prof Manfred; and Sanders, Mr Richard
- Hydro Tasmania
- Sustainable Living Tasmania

Perth

Wednesday, 18 April 2007—public hearing

- City of Joondalup
- Global Renewables Limited
- Karol, Dr Elizabeth
- Sustainable Transport Coalition of Western Australia
- Water Corporation
- Western Australian Government