

Environment and Heritage Committee,
House of Representatives,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

SUBMISSION TO THE ENQUIRY INTO A SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER. (Revised)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Sustainability Charter enquiry.

My comments relate to the Built Environment.

Ecologically Sustainable Development, the key to which is "integrating environment and development considerations in decision making", is, from my experience, a matter which has been taken over by the Green element of the community to the point where logical and practical discussions and decisions are no longer possible.

The Discussion Paper makes no reference to the Urban Fringe. That sensitive border between urban and non-urban areas where unnecessary friction is constant. It is here that the green element make their emotional pleas about the environment, sustainability, ecology, global warming, El Nino, Save the Whale and any other extraneous subject which will distract from the real need of an harmonious integration at the edge of the built environment.

Key in any discussion relating to fringe activity is that fringe landowners are not given any say, or if they are, no notice is taken of what they say or of their ownership rights. This comes particularly from Planning Staff at both Council and State Government levels. Elected representatives are no better.

A fringe broadacre landowner is despised even though he pays the rates. Planning staff engage in any practice to deter any landowner seeking to modify their plans for an area. They have been known to frustrate well intentioned submissions by preparing biased and prejudiced cases, by appointing biased and prejudiced people to chair enquiries, by allowing conflict of interest personnel to vote, by seeking to circumvent official procedures, by refusing to release critical data.

Environmental excuses are conjured to invoke phoney restrictions upon landowners. Neighbours are given official encouragement to "dob" in landowners whose absolute observance of environmental laws and regulations are not exemplary. Also not content with imposing unrealistic environmental regulations upon landowners, punitive strategies for green wedge land include provisions for policing "culture" by community representatives. Environmental police are employed.

The stigma of being an urban fringe landowner does not reside with those who do the planning or those who enjoy most the benefits of the urban fringe. It extends to those in media who benefit from increasing readership through perpetuating the myth that all

landowners are bent upon destroying native flora and fauna for the sole purpose of lining their pockets with ill-gotten gains.

Try standing for Local Government and threatening thuggery is a propellant saturated torch just waiting the merest spark to deter any conscientious citizen seeking to contribute to the community's welfare.

Germane to the whole problem in Victoria is the Melbourne 2030 Strategy which is a corridor scheme, that is driving up the cost of housing, clogging up freeways, destroying leafy green suburbs, extending living upwards rather than letting people have their own back yards with all its attendant benefits, applying conservation restrictions on land which generations ago lost any environmental aspect worth retaining.

What is more in declaring vast areas Green Wedge, the Government has wiped out landowner's significant rights and entitlements without any compensation whatsoever. The restrictions on the usage of the land has decimated its value. Estates have been annihilated. It is outright robbery by Government on a grand scale of which any totalitarian state would be proud.

Sustainability is a fancy term employed by people more concerned with destroying a free society. For the following generations to survive with a free and reasonable quality of life, more dams will have to be built, more electricity generation capacity developed etc. and compensation paid to landowners when a Government usurps their properties by placing restrictions on their land usage.

The "Enquiry's" priority must be with development, as without development sustainability is meaningless.

Daryl Cox,

12th May 2006.