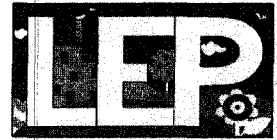


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3 April 2006

Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

**Submission - Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter**

I refer to the current inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Heritage in relation to a Sustainability Charter.

I have reviewed the discussion paper, and wish to make a submission to the inquiry. Four issues are of particular importance which should be considered in the context of the inquiry and the formulation of any Sustainability Charter. These issues are summarised below:

**Commonwealth Government role in land use**

There must be consideration given to clarification of the Commonwealth role in land use and natural resources policy, both very significant contributors to sustainability/unsustainability. The National Strategies for Ecologically Sustainable Development and Biodiversity provide a useful starting point. However, there is considerable overlap between State and Commonwealth responsibilities, and inconsistency between States.

It is proposed that there should be consideration given to developing a consistent national framework of land use regulation, which should all be based on sustainability principles.

**Land use implications of economic and tax policy**

A major contributing factor to sustainability is Commonwealth economic and tax policy. Part of any charter should be a provision requiring that the sustainability implications of policy be investigated and documented (eg tax incentives for car usage, or investment in transport, etc).

### **Proposed framework for charter**

Based on extensive strategic land use and environmental planning experience undertaken by our consultancy, we would propose an organisational structure for a sustainability charter which deals with the following issues. These are based on clusters of common issues and represent a much more relevant way of grouping of issues than are commonly used (eg in Commonwealth state of the environment reporting), especially insofar as they relate to administrative structures.

The proposed grouping is as follows:

- 1 Infrastructure and settlement structure
- 2 Biodiversity
- 3 Land and water
- 4 Development design
- 5 Organisation administration

### **Local government relevance**

It is proposed that the charter should have direct relevance at the local government level, since this is where many practical decisions relating to sustainability are made. In particular, a large number of local government authorities are leaders in implementing sustainability measures, and could provide considerable guidance in the development of the charter.

It is hoped that the the above matters are given due consideration in the consideration of a sustainability charter by the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6571 1208 or lep@calli.com.au if you require any further information or wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully

**Martin Fallding**  
**Principal, Land & Environment Planning**