



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW INQUIRY

House Environment Committee to examine the future sustainability of Australian cities: *Discussion Paper kicks off inquiry, submissions sought*

As Australia moves to larger urban populations, the pressures on land, resource and waste management increase. To ensure that Australian cities of the future are clean, liveable and accessible places, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon Dr Kemp, today announced a new inquiry into *Sustainable Cities 2025*.

The inquiry will be conducted by the House of Representatives Committee on Environment and Heritage. The Environment Committee Chair, Mr Bruce Billson MP, says the inquiry will examine how cities of the future can meet the social, environmental and economic needs of Australia within the unique context of the Australian landscape.

"Integrating the built and natural environment in a sustainable manner requires planning and a clearly articulated strategy," Mr Billson said. "Identifying the issues and articulating a forward strategy for the nation is the target of this inquiry".

The *Sustainable Cities 2025* inquiry will look at issues and policies relating to:

- The environmental and social impacts of sprawling urban development;
- The major determinants of urban settlement patterns and desirable patterns of development for the growth of Australian cities;
- A 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement, with particular reference to eco-efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure;
- Measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion; and
- Mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform and promote ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement.

To stimulate public discussion and input into the inquiry, a **discussion paper** has been released outlining objectives the Committee may consider in developing a 'blueprint' for Australian sustainable cities. The discussion paper suggests that a sustainable city should:

- Preserve bushland, significant heritage and urban green zones;
- Ensure equitable access to and efficient use of energy, including renewable energy sources;
- Establish an integrated sustainable water and stormwater management system addressing capture, consumption, treatment and re-use opportunities;
- Manage and minimise domestic and industrial waste;
- Develop sustainable transport networks, nodal complementarity and logistics;
- Incorporate eco-efficiency principles into new buildings and housing; and
- Provide urban plans that accommodate lifestyle and business opportunities.

Submissions to the inquiry are being sought by Friday 31 October 2003. After submissions have been considered, roundtable forums will be held to collect further evidence.

For **media comment**, please contact:
Bruce Billson, House Environment Committee Chair, on (03) 9781 2333.

For **background information** and **copies of the discussion paper**, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/enviro