



Hornsby Shire Council's Submission – Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

Introduction

- Leadership is also essential in order to achieve the vision for a sustainable city.

Visionary objectives

The sustainable Australian city of the future should *also*:

- Integrate land use and transport (planning) development.
- Be planned and developed by decisions that are based on sustainable values.
- Provide urban plans that *enhance* human health, interactivity and relationships i.e. not just *accommodate* lifestyles.
- Provide urban plans that enable informed community action on sustainability i.e. provision of places and means to recycle, compost, grow food, commute by bicycle.
- Encourage vibrancy and self sufficiency in regional economies e.g. by creating regional employment/business centres and local production (food and industry).
- Provide urban plans that enable ongoing integration of community values at a local level into their development and refinement.

With these additional objectives incorporated, the Sustainable Cities objectives reflect the priorities for developing a sustainable future for the Hornsby Shire, developed by the Hornsby community through Council's Community Sustainability Indicators Project (CSIP). The community's priorities are expressed in the following eight key sustainability themes:

1. Planning and development decisions based on sustainable values.
2. Preserve and enhance bushland and biodiversity.
3. Reduce, reuse, recycle and reuse resources.
4. Environmentally friendly and integrated transport modes and networks.
5. Informed community action on sustainability.
6. Healthy and interactive community relationships.
7. A clean environment without pollution.
8. Vibrant and more self-sufficient regional economy.

Comments on objectives

1. Preserve bushland, significant heritage and urban green zones

Does the inclusion of green zones within city planning result in further urban sprawl, which has a greater detrimental effect for the environment by encroaching on more surrounding bushland?

- No – other factors are more significant.

Can green zones be multi-purpose – serving the recreational and social needs of city dwellers while also providing habitat and environmental benefits for native flora and fauna?

- Yes.
- Multi-purpose should also include space for food production, as well as recreation and biodiversity.

Is it appropriate to provide incentives to encourage partnership arrangements with land holders and developers to preserve remnant vegetation on private lands?

- Yes.

2. Ensure equitable access to and efficient use of energy, including renewable energy sources.

How might we implement a shift from the existing large-scale energy generation and distribution infrastructure towards an alternative model?

- Focus on community education.
- Promote the uptake of renewables in government sectors through alliances (e.g. ICLEI's Alliances Initiative).

How can the uptake of renewable energy for residential and commercial properties be promoted?

- Building codes, planning 'bonuses'.
- More incentive programs.
- Change in state planning instruments to make it mandatory (e.g. BASIX toolkit).
- Mandatory requirements under state environmental protection legislation.

What are the impediments to utilising renewable energy sources in residential, commercial and industrial areas and how might these be addressed?

- Poor and conflicting information.
- Subsidies for retrofit based on holistic view of benefits.
- Cost of renewables and the long payback periods.
- Limited application (site suitability for wind turbines etc).

Should renewable energy generation be promoted at the single dwelling level or across city regions?

- Both, depending on stage of developments (i.e. broad scale subdivisions or single constructions).

Are there economic, and hence social, implications of a city increasing its use of green power and developing new complexes which are predominantly self sufficient in terms of energy generation?

- Yes, and they need to be worked through from a policy level.
- Limited amount of green power available.

Should higher efficiency standards be mandated for all new dwellings, appliances and business operations?

- Yes (e.g. through BASIX).

How can residential and commercial developments incorporate renewable energy generation into planning and construction?

- Incentives, education and mandatory standards.

To what extent should public transport systems seek to change to renewable energy sources?

- What does the research say about the potential benefits?
- This should also relate to reducing the amount of energy needed to sustain our lifestyle in the first place, through measures such as allocating space to grow food and support for local employment and education opportunities.

3. Establish an integrated sustainable water and stormwater management system addressing capture, consumption, treatment and re-use opportunities.

Should cities of the future be looking to develop more localised small scale systems of urban water management? What scale of residential water management systems is most efficient and sustainable?

- Yes to both – but research is important here.

How do we transform existing developed city areas into more sustainable water management systems?

- By developing appropriately targeted plans on a catchment basis.

How do we encourage areas to abandon existing waste water systems, which may discharge to the ocean or other waterways, in favour of alternative waste water treatment methods?

- Change the economic incentives and structure of decision-making.

What incentives or market based instruments might be appropriate for residential and commercial enterprises to encourage responsible water consumption and re-use?

- Greater weighting in pricing of unit consumption.

Are more standards and guidelines needed for new development to minimise waste and stormwater and to maximise capture and re-use opportunities?

- Not if this simply represents a compromise approach (“window dressing”). Guidelines need to be well researched and robust over time.
- Overall, in considering the establishment of an Integrated Sustainable Water and Stormwater Management System, Council suggests that too many management systems have concentrated in the past on “compartmentalised” management of the water cycle. Council would therefore suggest that all future management systems be developed with the intent of integrating various “compartments” into one single water cycle management strategy. Whilst this is a far more difficult and complex methodology, any management systems endeavoring to do less will always be flawed in terms of the quality of output.

4. Manage and minimise domestic and industrial waste.

How does a sustainable city bring about attitudinal change and encourage its inhabitants to accept greater responsibility for waste minimisation and management?

- Package of education, incentives and penalties.
- Be developed in a way that enables informed community action on sustainability, i.e. provide places and means to live sustainably and minimise waste (grow food, compost, buy locally etc).

What types of industry are appropriately located within cities, and how do sustainable cities respond to production processes and waste treatments that exist to meet city consumption patterns but occur outside of city limits?

- Marry research with planning controls.

How can industry be encouraged to be more socially and environmentally responsible, and to work in partnerships with local communities?

- Stronger political leadership than we've seen so far.

5. Develop sustainable transport networks, nodal complementarity and logistics.

What initiatives can assist in the reduction of automobile dependence?

- Improving the relative attraction of more sustainable forms of transport.
- Lower public transport costs.
- Provide free, regular services on inner city routes e.g. city circle.
- Increase ease of linking transport types e.g. providing adequate storage and standing space for bicycles on trains, removing fees for bikes on trains.

What are the features needed in new settlement areas to encourage more diverse and sustainable transport networks?

- Put in the transport infrastructure first and develop the land use to complement.

What is the role of federal government in assisting metropolitan areas to restructure transport networks in line with more sustainable settlement patterns?

- Structured funding.
- This issue should also reflect links with health, both in terms of access to pedestrian routes and the negative impacts of automobile use on human health.
- Intracity commercial freight in Sydney Metropolitan region is virtually all (99%) diesel powered road freight. No use is made now of river and rail options.

6. Incorporate eco-efficiency principles into new buildings and housing

How can green construction and refurbishment techniques be integrated into standard building practices?

- Bonus in approval process – this could include shorter processing time.

What are the impediments to eco-efficiency principles being taken up across new housing developments and commercial areas?

- Poor and conflicting information.

What type of incentives or standards for new developments might be appropriate to encourage more sustainable residential complexes?

- Build into strata corporation requirements.
- Streamline development approval process.

Are existing building standards and product labeling sufficient to enable informed consumer choices and to ensure that the use of eco-efficiency materials and designs are maximised?

- No, essentially only limited to appliances.

7. Develop urban plans that accommodate lifestyle and business opportunities

With regard to the possible planning scenarios, Sydney has tried all of these to some degree and seems to shift between them as the political winds blow.

- Conduct ongoing consultation, set a framework for and support local government to work out how to accommodate the different lifestyle needs and preferences of Australians. This is as an alternative to these issues being addressed at a state or national level, which is likely to result in a more homogenous output. A local focus is more likely to achieve and encourage local character and a sense of place. Again, planning in its on the ground form should encourage and enable sustainable lifestyles, not just accommodate peoples' needs e.g. in the way cities are currently planned, people need to make a concerted effort to live more sustainably, it is near impossible.
- "Sustainable Urban Hub 2025": can the promotion of Hornsby as an urban hub model attract state and federal sponsorship and support?
 - Far enough from Sydney CBD, but not too far, with a good rail link.
 - More 'affordable' than the area between Hornsby and the CBD.
 - A logical employment centre for first home buyers, younger people on the Central Coast.
 - Relatively poor in terms of business accommodation, better quality hotels.
 - We've started work on establishing baseline indicators.
 - Have started to develop an Integrated Land-Use and Transport Plan (ILUTP) strategy which needs support from other tiers of government to become a reality.
 - Already have credentials in waste management, preserving bushland and heritage protection, water management, Cities for Climate protection energy efficiency initiatives etc.
 - A reasonable strong existing infrastructure on which to build.
 - 'Brownie points' for both parties in an increasingly marginal area.
 - Scope for a major 'green building' development with a guaranteed government department tenancy on Council owned land.
 - Opportunity to transform Hornsby's image to a desirable HO commercial location.

Please direct any queries on this submission to Adam Davis, Manager Environmental Health & Protection on 02 9847 6572.