

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.

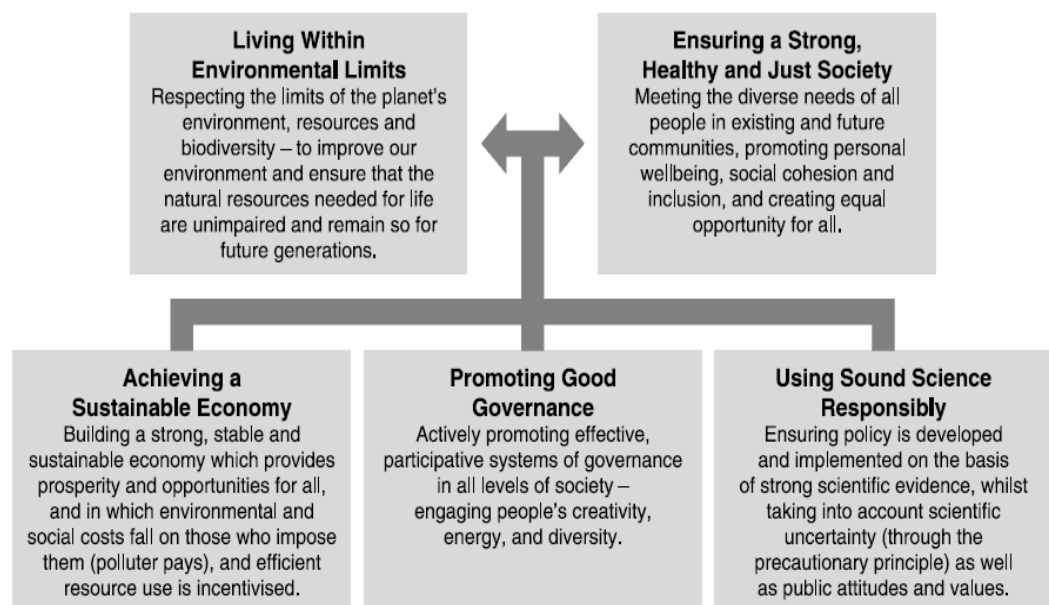
29 Dr Alaric Maude, *Exhibit no. 2, Using Goals in Environmental Management: The Swedish System of Environmental Objectives*, p. 170.

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.

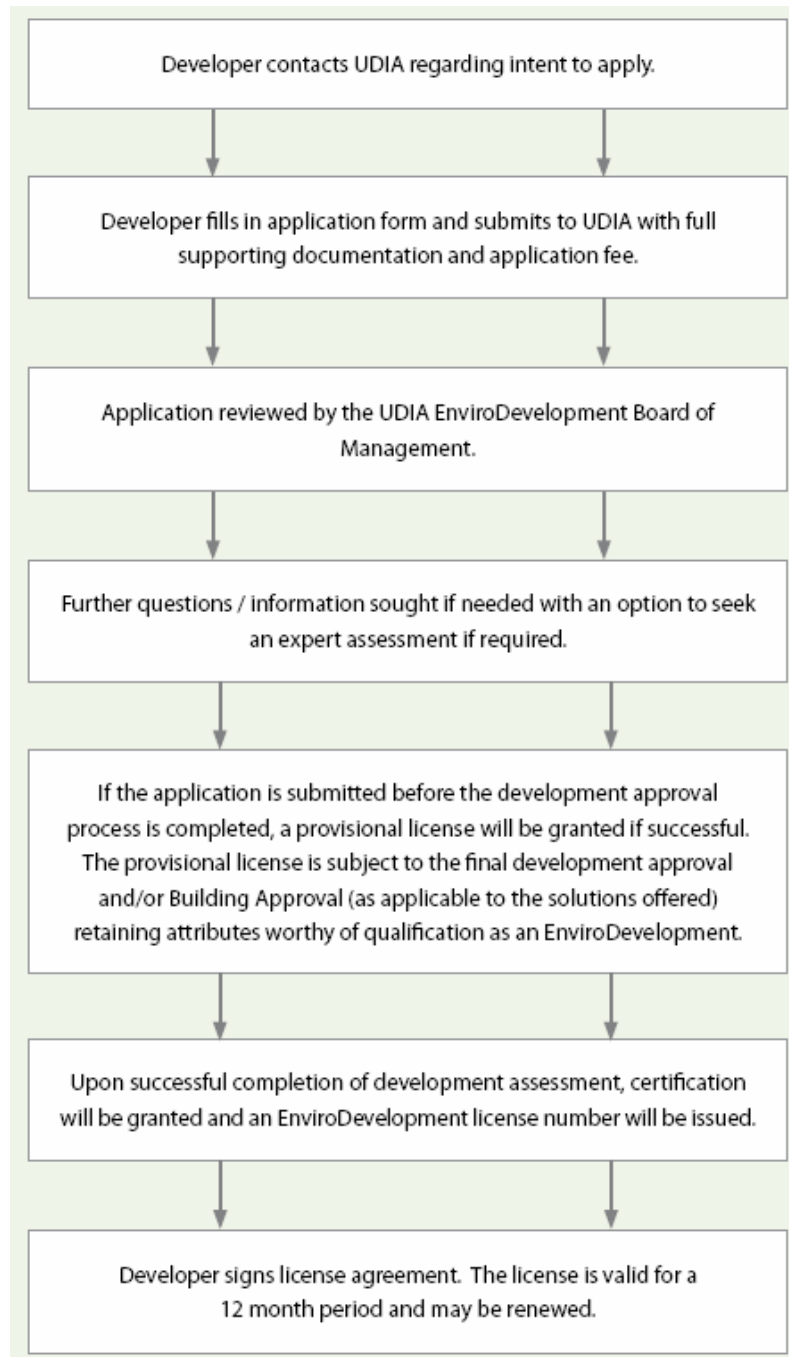
62 Dr Tanya Plant, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 October 2006, p. 28.

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/HopefortheFuture.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.

