

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

Submission from Mornington Peninsula Shire

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?

Possibly, if the retention of green zones within the urban boundary limits the availability of land then obviously the pressure for fringe expansion will arise sooner – but;

- this pressure will arise in any case - and is possibly better managed by considering more land efficient development (aka higher densities).
- even if fringe expansion is necessary this land may well have lesser environmental value than the "green zone" areas - and so there is net environmental gain from retaining significant green areas within the urban fabric.
- In terms of liveability - green zones within the urban fabric add to accessible recreational opportunities - although there are often "demand management" issues.

What are the possible impacts of either increasing or limiting the proportion of bushland and urban green zones?

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, this is possible. An example might be a cemetery.

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

Yes. The Mornington Peninsula Shire currently has a 'Land Sustainability Rate' which offers a rate reduction incentive for improvements to rural land. (see brochure)

How do we ensure that preserved sites of built heritage are culturally valued and appropriately integrated into planned developments?

- For the preservation of bushland there is a "Trust for Nature" scheme under which landowners enter into a covenant with the Trust for the protection of the covenanted area. Once the covenant is in place the property is re-valued having regard to the covenant and the valuation would be reduced, with a lesser liability to pay rates.

- The Shire also has a 'Land Sustainability Rate' scheme under which there is a rate rebate for the unimproved section of the land which qualifies for the rebate.
- For listed heritage properties the Shire has introduced its heritage rate rebate scheme under which owners of heritage places which are subject to heritage controls qualify for a rebate based on the value of the heritage place.
- In terms of the built heritage, items of heritage value are identified through a professionally conducted heritage study. The study follows a public process designed to identify items of cultural significance through community groups and individuals. After due process specified heritage places are listed and protected in the planning scheme. Once a heritage place has been listed as one of heritage significance, any alterations to the heritage place need a heritage permit from the Shire. The Shire, as the need arises, provides expert advice through its heritage adviser. In addition to this the Shire are considering scenarios for direct financial assistance for restoration/preservation works.
- As a point of interest the Federal Government has set up a 'Heritage Incentives and Innovative Approaches Taskforce' whose initial report should shortly be available.

How do we ensure that public green zones are integrated into new developments?

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?

- By the Shire taking every opportunity to embed small (decentralized) generation capacity when performing building and plant upgrades, and promoting the advantages in cost/emissions/efficiency to the public.
- By building awareness of technologies into the Planning departments, or have a sustainability-focused planner be referred planning submissions as they go through the shire offices to identify opportunities and bring them to the attention of the developer (especially combinations of projects which are located close together).

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

- Consider planning regulations that require an alternate/renewable/sustainable energy assessment of any new project or development.
- Develop program(s) to bring groups of shops, offices, or homes together to promote and educate renewable energy.

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

Most renewable energy technologies are still relatively expensive. By facilitating pooling of funding to install systems which all participants will gain some benefit from, the various technologies will gain development “miles”, will be more visible to the wider community, and real reductions in greenhouse emissions will begin to happen.

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

This would depend on the technology in question. Solar hot water certainly, but Photovoltaic electricity maybe not yet. The embodied energy in production of PV modules is high and it would not be energy efficient if the production of these cells cost more than the energy savings they provide. Also, the enabling equipment is expensive. What needs to be ensured is that the resources required to make these small systems are offset completely by the emissions reductions they give.

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?

Increased use of green power will lead to a sustaining market for the various technologies that are currently more expensive than traditional energy production.

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

Yes. The technologies and knowledge are already widespread for ways to make all dwellings and commercial operations more energy efficient. Financial incentives are a good way to introduce new mandatory requirements.

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

- A small area of a new development site can be set aside for the installation of a plant room. This can be used for combined heat/power equipment.
- The roofing areas of a new development can be required to be aligned for PV, solar hot water systems and and/or rainwater collection.
- Roof space could be considered communal, in terms of obtaining advantage from energy production /reduction technologies.

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

If investment in extending the system and increasing its effectiveness might have greater advantages in displaced private transport initially, then unless it is a cost advantage or at least cost neutral it would be hard to justify an immediate push to renewable energy powered public transport. However, the same ideas apply to the development of other renewable energy technologies, in terms of needing a leader to provide the market into which the technologies might grow and develop.

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?

A Sustainable Water Management system for an urban area must be designed and tailored to the unique geographical, economic and cultural features of every city. Therefore small, localised systems may be the best solution for some cities, where other cities may do better with a more traditional system - or combination of both. The scale of a system should also be developed with consideration of the on-going maintenance and management requirements. An example is the Water Sensitive Urban Design system developed at Lynbrook in Cranbourne, Victoria. A visual site inspection will suggest that the system is not performing, as it does not appear to be maintained to the required level. This can be overcome with proper planning at the design stage.

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

The Association of Bayside Municipalities is currently working on a 'Clean Stormwater' project which has developed planning tools to enable new developments and infill developments handle their stormwater appropriately. Some of the engineering solutions provided do require ongoing maintenance, however increasing development is incrementally adding to the amount of stormwater being generated and greater regulation is required to minimise the impacts. More information on 'Clean Stormwater' can be found on the Associations website www.abmonline.asn.au

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?

- There is a school of thought that believes that actions and behaviours affect values and attitudes, not just the other way around.
- It may not always be necessary to work to change attitudes. If you manage to change behaviours, the attitudinal change may take care of itself.
- To change behaviours you need to provide some form of catalyst to break habits. This might be done with education/information.

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?

- Industry which supports cleaner production methods will be more acceptable within cities. Restrictions should be placed on those industries classified offensive industries - these need to be located with the required buffer zones.

- It can be valuable to locate different industries within the same region - as waste products can be used as inputs by other companies.

What strategies are appropriate to encourage eco-efficiency and the reduction of domestic waste?

Depending on the situation:

- Promotion, information dissemination, training
- Infrastructure that encourages 'greener' living
- Financial incentives/disincentives for people doing the right/wrong thing

What strategies are appropriate to encourage eco-efficiency and the reduction of industrial waste?

- As above (possibly more emphasis on the third)
- Also emphasise the business advantage: promote as a green business, possible cost cuts for making production more efficient, etc.

What is the role of industry in ensuring sustainable cities, and what incentives or standards are appropriate to achieve this?

Market Based Instruments have worked in other industrialised countries to control emissions - there may be scope to apply here.

Are there economic impacts for a sustainable city in dictating higher environmental standards and waste treatment?

Some initiatives may involve long term payback timelines. However, this shouldn't be a financial deficit in the end and would eventually mean economic benefits for cleaner living and decreased consumption. There should be a focus on sustainable investment portfolios to increase the communities' expectation that industry will be both environmentally and socially responsible.

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

What initiatives can assist in the reduction of automobile dependence?

- Travel demand management measures (eg priority lanes for high occupancy vehicles, car pooling).
- Priority for on road public transport vehicles to provide a time and cost advantage over private vehicles.
- Greater service frequencies for public transport.
- Mixed use urban design to encourage less vehicle trips.
- Development of more local and major activity centres or nodes, supported by public transport. Government services could be provided from these activity centres.
- Road use charges (eg: congestion charge).
- Fuel pricing policies.
- Parking policies.

- Fringe benefits tax changes.
- Implementing trip reduction ordinances as part of planning permit approvals.
- Work from home or in small business precinct centres.
- Provision of better communications infrastructure.

Should new transport technologies such as electric cars and buses be promoted as alternative to conventional fuels?

Preference to less polluting sources such as hydrogen fuel cells rather than electricity supplied by power stations.

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

- Open and linked street network (many intersections).
- Provide public transport early in the development before each household has purchased a second or third vehicle.
- Increased housing densities and dwelling types to encourage a cross section of people living in the area.
- Appropriate pedestrian and cycling access to local facilities eg: shops, school, services.
- Overlooking of pedestrian paths to improve security perceptions.
- Mixed use of housing and businesses – greater move to 24/7 to encourage security and economic vitality of the area. Locate public transport nodes in these centres.

What are the needs of transport systems for them to be equitable, accessible and economically viable?

- All Australian public transport services need continued government subsidies to provide an acceptable level of service.
- Reliability, level of service frequency, security and cost are the key criteria for the decision to use public transport. Each of these must be improved to change perceptions of public transport.
- Higher residential densities and mixed use may lead to increased patronage levels.
- Real time travel information is essential to customers.
- A real time advantage over private vehicle use must be realised.
- Secure car parking and drop off areas at public transport nodes must be available.
- Public transport services must be accessible to all people whatever their level of physical disability.
- Public transport services must be affordable, particularly for any ‘captured’ market segment.

Is a more decentralised nodal type of transport network appropriate for commuter and traveller needs?

- Many vehicle trips are destined for major activity centres. Public transport around these activity centres needs to be upgraded.
- Most of the public transport subsidy is being enjoyed by relatively wealthy people who can afford to live in the transport-rich inner suburbs, while those young home buyers living in outer areas pay high fares to travel on a poor and infrequent service.

What are the transport logistic needs of industry and how can these be managed in a sustainable city?

- Freight trips must become more efficient (eg pick up on the return journey).
- Transportation of bulk goods to use rail networks.
- Possible redistribution of goods to smaller ports – infrastructure may need to be improved at these ports and access via road and rail improved.