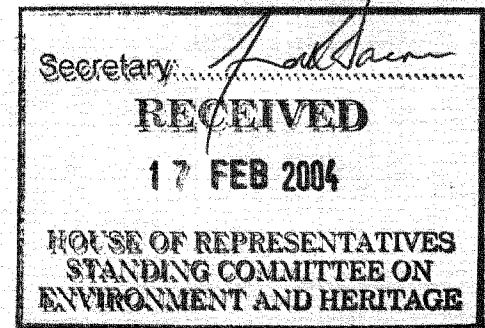




Our Ref: 200312040

Hon Bruce Billson MP
Committee Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Chairman

INQUIRY INTO SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2025

Thank you for your letter of 12 August 2003 inviting a submission from the Western Australian Government to the above Inquiry, which I am pleased to provide.

Cities have an enormous impact on the natural environment as a consequence of the effect of resource input, waste and emissions output, the clearing of bushland and the physical impact of construction and demolition. Cities are also where the majority of Australians live and the sustainability of a city to a large extent determines its inhabitants' opportunities to live a sustainable and satisfying life.

An inquiry into 'Sustainable Cities 2025' to develop a vision for sustainable cities and a more holistic national approach is supported by Western Australia. Although Australian cities occupy less than 1% of the Australian land mass, they produce some 80% of Australia's GNP and are responsible for a substantial proportion of Australia's 'ecological footprint'.

Western Australia welcomes this opportunity to work co-operatively with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories on such a significant issue. This initiative provides scope for considerable benefits including sharing of information and best practice, reducing duplication and overlap, realising economies of scale in research and economic advantages of harmonised regulations and standards.

Recognising that the Inquiry is seeking to provide a 'national map' of issues and approaches, rather than to set specific actions for particular areas, this response deals with:

Terms of Reference 1, 2, 3 and 4:

- by providing comment on the issues and questions raised in the Discussion Paper as a contribution toward debate on the 'blueprint for a sustainable city', (Attachment 1); and
- by providing details of Western Australian initiatives, such as the new MetroRail project, which the Committee may find are innovative models for consideration (Attachment 2); and

Terms of Reference 5:

- by highlighting those areas where the Commonwealth has a role to play in assisting States and Territories to achieve sustainability for their cities and settlements (Attachment 3).

Attachment 4 explains the abbreviations and acronyms used throughout the submission.

I look forward to working further with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories in converting the results of this Inquiry into practical solutions for the long-term sustainability of Australia's cities.

In particular, I urge the Commonwealth Government to consider a new flagship *Better Cities Program* providing funding, co-ordination and a focus on urban redevelopment as a practical means of assisting States and Territories. In this regard, I draw the Inquiry's attention to the Australian Urban and Regional Development Review 1995 publications, including the *Timetabling for Tomorrow: An Agenda for Public Transport in Australia* and *Investing in Infrastructure*.

I also commend to the Committee the *National Summit on the Future of Australian Towns and Cities* to be held in Canberra in June 2004. The objectives, content and outcomes of this Summit are directly relevant to the work of this Committee. It is being organised by the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council to address the future growth, liveability and sustainability of Australian towns and cities and to develop shared national strategies between all levels of Government, industry and the community.

Enclosed is a copy of the Western Australian Sustainability Strategy, 2003. This initiative outlines our approach to meeting the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity.

Yours sincerely



DR GEOFF GALLOP MLA
PREMIER

Encl.

13 FEB 2004