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The Secretary of the Committee
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via e-mail: environment.reps@aph.gov.au

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Dear Sir / Madam

CITY OF MELBOURNE SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO A SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

I am writing in response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter.

The City of Melbourne commends the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage for undertaking not only this most recent inquiry into a *Sustainability Charter* but also the previous inquiry and report into *Sustainable Cities*.

Council also welcomes the Standing Committee's recommendation for the Australian Government to take a leadership role on the matter, as the nature of the sustainability issues facing Australia require a coordinated, national, and whole of government response. A national sustainability charter is a very important step in the development of an effective, integrated response.

The City of Melbourne has displayed leadership in developing local responses to global sustainability issues. Specifically, Council has developed ambitious strategies targeting zero net greenhouse emissions, sustainable water management and sustainable waste management in the municipality by 2020. Accordingly, Council has established numerous programs to support the implementation of its strategies. Key among these programs has been the establishment of the *Sustainable Melbourne Fund*, a \$5 million fund which invests in projects that demonstrate positive social, environmental and economic benefits for the city.

Our approach has been guided by the *Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities* which were launched at the Johannesburg World Summit by Melbourne's Lord Mayor, John So. The City of Melbourne would like to submit these Principles for consideration as part of our submission. In essence the Melbourne Principles contend that the blueprint for sustainable cities must be visionary, participatory, encompass the unique characteristics of the city, encourage a triple bottom line

approach and be based on good governance. The Principles were an initiative of the United Nations Environment Program. They are an internationally recognised statement of principles for sustainable cities and should serve as a useful reference document for the *Charter*.

In closing I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry. If you wish to seek further clarification of any of the matters raised in the City of Melbourne's submission please do not hesitate to contact me on (03) 9658 8417 or via e-mail at johtun@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Tunney', written in a cursive style.

John Tunney

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CoM reference 3741419

Attachments:

The Melbourne Principle for Sustainable Cities

MELBOURNE PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

United Nations Environment Program

Melbourne (Australia)

April 3 – 5 2002



UNEP

Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
International Environmental
Technology Centre

VISION

To achieve the creation of environmentally healthy and sustainable cities.

Elaboration of Vision

Creation of vibrant cities where there is respect for one another and nature to the benefit of all, contributing to global sustainability.

PURPOSE

The *Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities* are intended to guide thinking on the sustainable development of cities.

The *Melbourne Principles* provide guidance and contribute to global initiatives such as the Agenda 21 and UNEP's Cities As Sustainable Ecosystems (CASE).

PREAMBLE

Cities are fundamental for economic opportunities and social interaction, as well as cultural and spiritual enrichment. Cities are also increasingly damaging the natural environment, unsustainably exploiting natural capital, undermining the social fabric and jeopardising long term prosperity on which these benefits depend.

These impacts are of global concern as more than 50% of the world's population live in cities, and the trend indicates that this proportion will increase.

The following ten *Principles for Sustainable Cities* were developed at an International Charette held in Melbourne (Australia) between 3 and 5 April 2002, organised by UNEP IETC and Environment Protection Authority Victoria.

PRINCIPLE 1

Provide a long term vision for cities based on sustainability.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 1

A farsighted vision that addresses the sustainability is the starting point for catalysing long term change towards this outcome.

The vision should express the shared aspirations of cities that wish to become more sustainable.

A sustainability vision will help align and motivate communities, governments, businesses and others around a common purpose, and provide a basis for developing a strategy, action program and processes to achieve that vision.

PRINCIPLE 2

Empower people and foster participation and inter-generational equity.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 2

People have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them, and they add value to the final outcome.

The journey towards sustainability needs the support of all, and attention needs to be given to empowering those whose voices are not always heard, such as the poor.

This approach also allow for the mobilisation of local resources as well as the early and active participation of *all* in long term planning and implementation.

Empowering people will provide access to local knowledge, which is important in identifying issues and yielding solutions.

Equity means equal opportunity in accessing both natural and human services, and ensuring that natural and human capital is not degraded for future generations.

PRINCIPLE 3

Recognise and build on the characteristics of cities including their human, cultural, historic and natural systems.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 3

Cities have specific human, cultural, historic and natural characteristic that provide insights on compatible and acceptable pathways to sustainability.

Building on existing characteristics facilitates the motivation and mobilisation of human and physical resources of cities to achieve sustainable development and regeneration.

PRINCIPLE 4

Build on the characteristics of ecosystems.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 4

Adopting features of natural ecosystems as a model for urban processes can assist cities become more sustainable.

The characteristics of ecosystems include diversity, adaptiveness, interconnectedness, resiliency, regenerative capacity and symbiosis.

PRINCIPLE 5

Achieve long term economic and social security.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 5

Long term economic and social security are pre-requisites for change, and are part of triple bottom line sustainability.

Unless ecological sustainable development is actively pursued, prosperity and social stability will be undermined.

PRINCIPLE 6

Expand and enable cooperative networks to work towards a common sustainable future.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 6

Strengthening existing networks, and the establishment of new cooperative networks both within cities and between cities will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and facilitate continual environmental improvement.

Inhabitants of cities are the key drivers to transforming them towards sustainability. This can be achieved effectively if the inhabitants of cities are well informed, can easily access knowledge and share learning.

There is also value in cities sharing with others their learning, pooling resources to develop sustainability tools and supporting and mentoring one another through inter-

city and regional networks. These will provide a vehicle for information exchange and collective effort.

PRINCIPLE 7

Enable communities to minimise their ecological footprint.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 7

Cities draw in a significant quantity of resources and have a significant impact on the environment, well beyond what they can handle within their borders. These unsustainable trends need to be substantially curbed and eventually reversed.

A convenient way to represent the impact of a city is to measure its ecological footprint. The ecological footprint of a city is a measure of the 'load' imposed by its population on nature. It represents the land area necessary to sustain current levels of resource consumption and waste discharged by that population.

Decisions, based on an understanding of their consequences on a city's ecological footprint, should aim to reduce it wherever practical, both within and outside its boundaries. This requires new ways of thinking and dealing with the metabolism of cities.

PRINCIPLE 8

Enable continual improvement, accountability and transparency.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 8

Good urban governance needs to be based on robust processes directed to achieving the transformation of cities to sustainability through continual improvement.

To manage the continual improvement cycle it is necessary to use relevant indicators to provide baselines allowing progress against milestones to be monitored and cities to benchmark themselves against one another. This facilitates accountability, and ensures effective implementation.

Transparency and openness to scrutiny are part of good environmental governance.

PRINCIPLE 9

Require effective demand management and appropriate use of environmentally sound technologies for cities.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 9

A range of approaches and tools can be used to assist cities adopt sustainable practices.

Demand management is a valuable strategy to support sustainable consumption. Part of this approach is to ensure that natural resources are accurately valued, so that the market can make rational economic and environmental decisions.

The adoptions and use of environmentally sound technologies has the potential to significantly improve environmental performance. These technologies protect the environment, are less polluting, use resources in a sustainable manner, recycle more of their wastes and products, and handle all residual wastes in a more environmentally acceptable way than the technologies for which they are substitutes.

Evaluation tools like life cycle assessment can be used to inform decisions, drive reduced impacts over the whole value chain and support businesses embracing product stewardship.

PRINCIPLE 10

Recognise the intrinsic value of biodiversity and natural ecosystems and their protection and restoration.

CLARIFICATION OF PRINCIPLE 10

Nature is something more than a commodity for the benefit of humans. We share the Earth with many other life-forms that have their own intrinsic value. They warrant our respect, whether or not they are of immediate benefit to us.

Just as humans have the ability to alter the habitat and threaten the viability of other species we can also protect biodiversity. Therefore we have a responsibility to act as custodians for nature.