



11 November 2003

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

ABN 55 370 219 287
City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603 Melbourne
Victoria 3001 Australia
Hotline 61 3 9658 9658
Facsimile 61 3 9654 4854
DX210487
enquiries@melbourne.vic.gov.au
www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam

CITY OF MELBOURNE SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2025

I am writing in response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025.

The attached submission is for the Committee's consideration. Council has structured its response according to the seven "visionary objectives" outlined in the discussion paper and the specific questions raised under each.

Sustainability is about managing and using resources in a way that does not prejudice the capacity to continue to do so in the future. The City of Melbourne is pursuing sustainability through the way the city is planned and developed, and in the way Council conducts its own operations. Our model of sustainability commits us to simultaneously pursue economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. The City of Melbourne encourages the Commonwealth to consider all three aspects of the triple bottom line approach in the promotion of sustainable cities.

The City of Melbourne has taken a lead role in developing local responses to global sustainability issues. Specifically, Melbourne was the first Council in Australia to achieve the fifth and final milestone of the *Cities for Climate Protection* program and is currently implementing a strategy to achieve zero net greenhouse emissions in the municipality by 2020. Similarly for water, the City of Melbourne has developed an ambitious sustainable water management strategy setting out the City's commitment to reduce water consumption by 12 percent by 2020 despite a projected 141 percent increase in population during this period. Our projected water savings have been pledged as future contributions to environmental flows.

Council has also adopted triple bottom line planning, reporting and decision making and have a number of key projects in that area. More recently, the City of Melbourne has launched the *Sustainable Melbourne Fund* of \$5 million to invest in projects which can demonstrate positive social, environmental and economic benefits to the city.

In addition to these programs Council has made significant contributions to the Commonwealth's *Local Leaders in Sustainability Forum* and is the Host City for the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives office in Australia/New Zealand. Additionally, Council was an active participant in the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa last year

At the World Summit the Lord Mayor John So launched the Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities. 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 developed in partnership with the UNEP and the Victorian EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) and were endorsed as a working framework for local government at the World Summit. Therefore, the document is an internationally recognised statement of principles for sustainable cities and a logical starting point for further work.

In closing I would like to thank you 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 8618 or via e-mail at johtun@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



John Tunney
Acting Manager
Environmentally Sustainable Development

Telephone 9658 8618
Facsimile 9650 3572
E-mail johtun@melbourne.vic.gov.au

CoM Reference 1325578

Attachments:

The Melbourne Principle for Sustainable Cities
Zero Net Emission by 2020 Strategy
Watermark – Sustainable Water Management Strategy

The City of Melbourne Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

Terms of Reference

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

The Committee will inquire into and report on issues and policies related to the development of sustainable cities to the year 2025, particularly:

- 1. The environmental and social impacts of sprawling urban development;*

The City of Melbourne is committed to a model of sustainability which simultaneously pursues economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. The City of Melbourne encourages the Commonwealth to consider all three aspects of the triple bottom line approach in the promotion of sustainable cities.

- 2. The major determinants of urban settlement patterns and desirable patterns of development for the growth of Australian cities;*
- 3. A 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement, with particular reference to eco-efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure;*

While a 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement is most welcome, it is important that it should be developed in a way that complements both existing and newly developing frameworks. Examples of successful frameworks include *Local Agenda 21*, *Local Action 21*, *Metropolis* as well as the work of organisations such as ICLEI (the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) and UNEP (the United Nations Environment Program).

The City of Melbourne would like to submit The Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities (attached) for consideration as part of our submission. These Principles were developed in partnership with the UNEP and the Victorian EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) and were endorsed as a working framework for local government at the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa last year. Therefore, the document is an internationally recognised statement of principles for sustainable cities and a logical starting point for further work.

4. *Measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion; and*
5. *Mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform and promote ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement.*

The Commonwealth has a number of powers that can be used to leverage more sustainable outcomes in urban areas and the issue of taxation structures, in particular, is likely to be raised by a number of parties. For example, in the promotion of green buildings, tax concessions such as accelerated depreciation for green design work may help to facilitate greater uptake of national programs (eg. those developed by the Australian Green Buildings Council).

Other mechanisms include: funding research institutions; giving high priority to sustainability and other non-financial criteria when purchasing, leasing and selling property; committing to international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol; instilling a cultural shift to achieve commitment to sustainability across all of government; sponsoring design competitions; publicising exemplary initiatives; education and public awareness campaigns; collating and disseminating information on initiatives from around the country (and overseas).

Sustainable Cities 2025: A Blueprint for the Future

There are several components to a sustainable city. The following are suggested as a set of visionary objectives for the Australian sustainable city.

The sustainable Australian city of the future should:

1. *Preserve bushland, significant heritage and urban green zones;*
2. *Ensure equitable access to and efficient use of energy, including renewable energy sources;*
3. *Establish an integrated sustainable water and stormwater management system addressing capture, consumption, treatment and re-use opportunities;*
4. *Manage and minimise domestic and industrial waste;*
5. *Develop sustainable transport networks, nodal complementarity and logistics;*
6. *Incorporate eco-efficiency principles into new buildings and housing; and*
7. *Provide urban plans that accommodate lifestyle and business opportunities.*

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

The City of Melbourne recommends the following:

- To objective one add: “and make productive use of arable land”;
- That ‘*commercial waste*’ be added to objective number four (or delete “*domestic and industrial*”, so that all types of waste are covered);
- Consider less jargonistic wording for “*nodal complementarity*”;
- Objective six should apply to “new developments” rather than “*new buildings and housing*” and
- The meaning of the concept of ‘lifestyle’ should be explored further as it has significant implications for the sustainability of cities.

1. Preserve bushland, significant heritage and urban green zones.

Although the emphasis of this section is strongly focused on the urban fringe, it is important to note that the inner city has a unique and often unrecognised set of issues in its impact on bio-diversity. For example, a number of threatened species are now only found in inner urban areas. These include the Growling Grass Frog and the Sydney Bell Frog. Inner urban areas also deal with pest and wildlife issues such as foxes, possums and seagulls. On the other hand, the demand that cities create for resources, such as seafood, has impacts a long distance from the city itself. The 'ecological footprint' of a city is very large.

Questions for Consideration

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?

The term 'green zone' needs to be defined clearly. Green 'zones' may accommodate a variety of uses including open space which is reserved primarily for recreational purposes. The application of 'green zones/green wedges' must be balanced with the application of urban consolidation strategies/policies in order to limit effectively urban sprawl and provide planning options for future generations.

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

The City of Melbourne suggests that the following factors be taken into account;

- Alterations to the proportions of bushland and urban green zones should to be considered in relation to land use. For example, if a 'sustainable city' needs to recycle water from stormwater, space will be required to filter and store the water. It cannot be assumed that the local park will be available for this purpose; and
- Public spaces become even more important for recreational purposes as cities become increasingly consolidated. The link between health, well being and the provision of open space is now better understood and is an essential component of a city's social sustainability.

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?

The City of Melbourne believes that is both important and possible to provide for both objectives in urban contexts.

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

The City of Melbourne supports the use of partnerships between land-holders and developers to preserve vegetation. Schemes such as Land for Wildlife, the Trust for Nature and Conservation Covenants should be assessed fully for their ability to provide both long term protection and ongoing management of remnant vegetation. The City of Melbourne supports such schemes in principle and any partnerships that result in effective conservation of biodiversity.

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

The City of Melbourne contends that a most effective way of preserving heritage sites is to create a contemporary purpose or context for them. Heritage controls need to be focussed on facilitating developments that preserve and recognise the value of the site, rather than merely restrict development.

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

It is suggested that

- Green zones should become a central feature of new developments that assist in the marketing of the development itself; and
- More rigorous assessment is required to identify areas of high natural value and the land required for the public purpose of a more sustainable future. Sufficient resources and appropriate mechanisms should be allocated to ensure that such places are managed for the purposes they were intended.

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

Questions for Consideration

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

The City of Melbourne contends that local energy generation can be enhanced by encouraging and facilitating local/community initiatives, supporting small scale R&D businesses, innovative alternative energy solutions and innovative business models.

While Council would support a shift to a distributed energy generation model it concedes that large-scale generation will remain a significant source of energy for our city for some time into the future. Therefore, the City of Melbourne would assert that, in addition to developing alternative models for energy generation and distribution, resources would need to be allocated to making the existing large-scale generators and distribution systems more efficient to minimise energy losses in transmission and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with power generation.

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

The following techniques are suggested:

- Although taxation incentives and policy settings could be examined, it is also important that consumer demand is stimulated and that market mechanisms be explored. The simple, yet effective system used by the German government has stimulated dramatic growth in the renewable energy market and is recommended as a model for the Commonwealth to explore;
- While it is possible to find alternatives to price signals, it is important that real market costs (including the externalities) associated with current modes of electricity generation are recognised and better reflected in pricing structures. The Commonwealth could also address the availability of new technologies to improve emissions associated with conventional electricity generation in Australia;
- Local governments have demonstrated an important role in promoting sustainable energy futures for cities. Programs such as the *Cities for Climate Protection* have shown how local governments can deliver energy reduction and greenhouse abatement projects whilst also influencing the broader community to do the same. These programs are an important way of delivering successful outcomes to meet the agenda for a sustainable energy future by 2025;

However, if this impetus is to be maintained support from other levels of government must be continued. The local government experience also shows that greenhouse abatement in the community requires accurate and meaningful annual consumption data to allow for the precise establishment of targets and monitoring programs. The cooperation of other tiers of government and energy retailers is necessary but not always forthcoming.

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

Cost and convenience are significant barriers to the uptake of renewable energy. For example, the *Greenpower* program seeks to maximise convenience but it is not administered as well as it could be and involves an increased cost. Solar hot water heaters and photovoltaic panels also involve an upfront cost that hinders uptake. The City of Melbourne (with SEAV) is currently investigating other possible business models such as renewable energy infrastructure being leased by residents and businesses from an energy retailer. An exploration of such models on a national scale would be most useful.

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

There is no doubt that transmission losses can be minimised by localising generation plants. However, a crucial question relates to how localised power generation should be structured to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits (ie. Small, localised plants versus single dwelling generation). Clearly, greater research into the triple bottom line costs and benefits of the two approaches is needed.

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

The City of Melbourne's view is that both economic and social costs and benefits are associated with both centralised and de-centralised forms of generation. Self sufficiency in 'reliable' energy generation is of much greater concern in the USA and Canada than it is in Australia due to the higher cost of energy and interruptions to supply experienced in recent years. Some local governments in North America have adopted targets for "local energy generation" for this reason.

A city such as Melbourne does not experience the same concern due to the abundant supply of brown coal in the nearby LaTrobe Valley. While self sufficiency would result in job creation in a new sector, it would clearly impact on the regional economy of the LaTrobe Valley and social dislocation. Expected population growth and the anticipated carbon constrained economy of the future will necessitate significant modernisation in the LaTrobe Valley to produce lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The City of Melbourne is currently progressing a strategy to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2020. This strategy involves a mix of solutions including the modernisation of the brown coal industry and the increasing development of renewable energy. A summary of the strategy is attached and full documentation is available on the City of Melbourne website www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

Should higher efficiency standards be mandated for all new dwellings, appliances and business operations? How can residential and commercial developments incorporate renewable energy generation into planning and construction?

The City of Melbourne supports models that result in higher standards and better environmental outcomes. A mix of targeted regulation and market mechanisms is favoured. The current review of the Building Code of Australia and the establishment of the Australian Green Buildings Council should help to progress this. However, regulation should generally

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

set standards without being too prescriptive, and allow the market to respond. Worst practices should be outlawed. The City of Melbourne's discussions with developers suggest that many are interested in green building development but are reluctant to set higher standards for themselves, fearing disadvantage. Developers prefer to wait for higher standards to be established so that all competitors face the same set of regulations. The Commonwealth could easily explore the creation of a commercial advantage for such developers.

There are a number of rating tools / standards currently in existence or under development. Anecdotal evidence from developers suggests that they would find it useful if there were a single standard or rating system for example the Australian Green Buildings Council's *Greenstar*.

Sustainable building practices would be more widespread if support such as green loans were common-place, and the philosophy of sustainable living was embedded in the land use planning processes.

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

Public transport is still under-utilised in Australian cities. Mandating the use of renewable energy by public transport operators would result in increased fares that would further discourage people from using public transport. The City of Melbourne would support schemes that increase public transport patronage as a first step.

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

Questions for Consideration

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

Cities need to address fundamental concepts such as water consumption, stormwater and wastewater practices and work toward integrating them into a holistic management framework. To date, most Australian local governments have not truly addressed the issue of water consumption in a methodical and consistent way. Support of programs, such as ICLEI's *Water Campaign* and its implementation, would be a good starting point for Commonwealth involvement.

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

The modification of existing systems may be preferable to abandonment. With support, cities can lead by example and provide demonstrations and case studies for others to follow. Programs that support innovation should be encouraged.

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

Although there is some evidence to the contrary¹ it is widely believed that the 'payback' periods for water saving infrastructure in commercial environments are usually long and therefore not considered financially viable. However, commercial enterprises may respond to programs based on recognition and publicity regarding performance. Programs such as the Green Buildings Council's *Greenstar* rating tool, for example, allow developers to use a rating competitively.

The City of Melbourne recommends the following:

- An investigation into alternative business models for ownership of infrastructure such as leasing in which the resident does not pay the total cost of infrastructure upfront (eg. For larger tanks or more elaborate recycling technologies);
- Clarification regarding the re-use of domestic greywater and the appropriate permission required (eg. EPA , Council and Health);

¹ Yarra Valley Water's savewater!TM Efficiency Service has identified a number of projects which would deliver savings in the order of 20 to 25 percent with payback periods of 18 month to two years.

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

- Derivation and dissemination of information and case studies on the financial savings gained from water efficient practices;
- Better communication on why water needs to be conserved (eg. linking total water savings to the improvement of environmental flows will help residents see the environmental impact of their efforts);
- Support of changes to planning and building systems to provide policy direction and certainty to proponents on performance levels in water conservation;
- Support for the removal of barriers in planning and building systems to facilitate the uptake of technologies and infrastructure;
- Support for manufacturing industry (rainwater tanks, plumbers, shower rose manufacturers) to further develop and promote their technologies; and
- The development of national grants for leadership and demonstration projects.

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

Further clarification and information are required about the implementation of water efficiency and re-use provisions where they have been successful.

Facilitation of closer relationships is needed between those that can supply water for re-use and those who would like to receive it (eg. matching of supply and demand within cities).

New developments utilising “third pipe” infrastructure need to be evaluated.

4. Manage and minimise domestic and industrial waste.

Questions for Consideration

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

The Commonwealth can set an example in waste minimisation – both by limiting waste from its own operations and actively promoting and using viable end markets for recycled products. Other factors include:

- Thoughtful use of regulation – eg. limiting the types of items that go to landfill (certainly green organics and wood products should be excluded) and sensible packaging regulation; and
- Education, beginning at schools, to make waste minimisation and recycling normal everyday practices at home, in the workplace and in public places.

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?

Cities can respond to these circumstances by:

- City generated waste levies funding rural landfill rehabilitation; and
- Offset programs such as Greenfleet.

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

Australians are known as excellent recyclers – taking it to the next step involves avoiding and recovering waste before the need for recycling through:

- A greater commitment to product stewardship/life cycle product management on behalf of producers (eg. producers taking back product packaging at the end of a products useful life) and;
- Addressing a culture of consumerism.

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

The City of Melbourne assumes that this question refers to non-hazardous, non-prescribed waste. The development of concepts such product stewardship, dematerialisation and ‘cradle to cradle’ thinking is an essential evolution for industry. That is, creating a management system or a city in which waste does not exist – it merely becomes raw material for another

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

process or another business. Perhaps incentives could be developed for businesses and industrial processes that demonstrate such thinking in practice.

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

The positive economic impacts involve the view that waste is a cost to businesses and local governments. Measures that reduce waste will also reduce costs. The current practice, at least in Victoria, has been described as low in technology, low in cost and low in outcomes. The installation of newer technologies and higher standards in waste management may require a short term injection of funds. However, the long term value of ongoing waste reduction would be returned many times over through improved business competitiveness.

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

The City of Melbourne suggests the following:

- Developing codes of conduct with industry peak bodies that involve waste reduction followed by mandating the code once it is broadly accepted; and
- Mandating requirements for certification such as *ISO14001*, *Waste Wise Business*, *Cleaner Production*, *EcoBuy* etc. Industry bodies should promote and encourage certification to such environmental programs.

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

Larger corporations concern themselves with such issues and devote resources to them. Many of them commence from a perspective of eco-efficiency (eg. *Interface*) and saving on costs through energy, waste and water reduction. Others focus on a social agenda due to specific problems they have faced (eg. Shell, WMC). Although it is difficult to determine a single set of motivations and programs, numerous case studies have been completed. Many local governments undertaking work on sustainability programs seek to engage businesses in community partnerships. The City of Melbourne is developing projects under the United Nations Global Compact that may serve as a model for other cities in the pursuit of partnerships between government, business and the community. Further information about this program can be provided on request.

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

Questions for Consideration

What initiatives can assist in the reduction of automobile dependence?

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Use market mechanisms to make public transport more attractive and private vehicle use less attractive for users (eg reduce the cost of public transport to users).
- That there will be a need for a broad scale cultural change through (eg. workplace initiatives such as *Travel Smart*);
- Tax concessions could be awarded for not owning a car. Existing structures that encourage the ownership of large cars should be removed. The City of Melbourne supports new transport technologies and alternative fuels. Support and incentives for using alternative fuels and technologies requires an examination of barriers and innovative incentives (eg. Tax concessions currently exist for imported 4WD but not imported hybrid cars).
- Shopping centres etc charge for car parking. This and other revenue from motorists should be used to fund alternative modes of transport;
- Support a reduction in the provision of parking at both ends of the journey. Currently, car usage is a far more convenient mode of transport than its alternatives. A 'carrot and stick' approach is warranted to shift to a better balance. This applies also to the use of roads. Road authorities need to appreciate the need for streets to be valuable open spaces rather than 'traffic sewers', with an appropriate mix of trams, buses, bikes and pedestrians as well as cars; and
- Make public transport attractive. For example, tram works must not compromise the design of streets. Address the perception (and to some extent the fact) that public transport is unsafe and inconvenient outside peak hours.

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

The City of Melbourne suggests:

- A mix of uses in close proximity to allow for alternative modes of transport such as cycling or walking to be attractive;
- Higher densities to be encouraged in appropriate locations to provide concentrated demand for public transport infrastructure; and

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

- That the provision of cheap, reliable public transport infrastructure should be a priority at early planning/development stages.

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

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Financial support through funding and tax incentives; and
- Reprioritising support for ecologically sustainable industry sectors.

What are the needs of transport systems for them to be equitable, accessible and economically viable? Is a more decentralised nodal type of transport network appropriate for commuter and traveller needs?

- The City of Melbourne is of the view that commuter/traveller needs must be more thoroughly examined and their preferences better understood before a detailed response to this issue is given.

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

Questions for Consideration

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

The City of Melbourne suggests that:

- Basic national standards, that outlaw worst practice and set reasonable minimum standards, need to be regulated through building legislation (ie. The Building Code of Australia);
- Economic incentives, such as tax concessions, could be provided for those achieving higher standards;
- Education and marketing of the benefits (economic and otherwise) of ecologically sustainable design and construction to be provided to the relevant industry sectors; and
- Research and promotion of the potential national productivity benefits that could be realised from healthier buildings that have incorporated ecologically sustainable design and construction.

How can eco-efficiency innovations be promoted to achieve a market value in both commercial and residential buildings?

The following approaches are recommended:

- 'Leading by example' type of promotion to be encouraged and facilitated at all government levels; and
- The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments can lead by example themselves by procuring more sustainable buildings and requiring minimum standards in buildings departments occupy. The significant buying power of the Commonwealth alone would help to drive innovation and 'kick-start' innovations.

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

- A reluctance to accommodate and fear of new practices;
- Inability to source products easily and locally; and
- Increased costs associated with all stages of design and development and uncertainty that the market will 'pay'.

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025

Additionally, the City of Melbourne proposes that alternative models for housing delivery be investigated as the current system of land subdivision/house and land package is not consistently delivering eco-efficient housing developments. This model could include, among other things, guidance on housing densities, urban design standards, ESD housing design standards. The model could also address issues such as reliance on private vehicles, the relationships between private gardens and open space, overlooking and solar access.

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

The City of Melbourne recommends the following:

- Legislative/statutory/regulatory requirements at Federal (eg. Building Code of Australia), State and Local Government level;
- Require vendors to provide sustainability information to purchasers – especially where housing is bought ‘off the plan’;
- Tax breaks and other financial support;
- Expand the Green Star rating system to residential and other building types;
- Cultural (or market) shifts are warranted, such as the expectation and desire to use lifts rather than stairs and the value ascribed to imported products (which consume energy in transport and are detrimental to Australia’s economy); and
- Terms and conditions be imposed on government sale of land, so that the community gains maximum value from the disposal of public land – not merely the maximum price.

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

Success has not been even across this sector. The energy rating system for white goods is considered to be widely successful. Similar rating tools need to be developed, however, for other types of hardware and products as well as other performance parameters for sustainability. The City of Melbourne recommends that the Commonwealth investigate RMIT’s Centre for Design’s *EcoSpecifier* tool as a model that can be expanded.

7. Develop urban plans that accommodate lifestyle and business opportunities

Questions for Consideration

What planning models and zones can we use to accommodate the different lifestyle needs and preferences of Australians in cities?

The City of Melbourne recommends that the following factors be considered:

- The term 'lifestyle' is a very subjective and needs to be defined clearly. A first step may be to review current planning provisions to determine how effective (or ineffective) they may be in accommodating different lifestyles (ie. a mix of uses). The provisions could then be revised or developed as required.
- We need a greater range of models than is permitted by current controls. For example *Rescode* (in Victoria) places heavy emphasis on issues such as overlooking and privacy. For some Australians, other issues will be more important. Lessons can still be learned from experiences overseas (eg. Dutch models)

Are urban hubs and communities concentrated around public transit nodes an appropriate future model to suit Australian lifestyle needs?

In broad terms, this is a sensible model that would add to the range of living options available to Australians. Their success will rely on them being well conceived, well designed and well implemented. However, research is required to determine the 'lifestyle needs' of our current and future population. Is there a difference between expectations of lifestyle and the demands of becoming a sustainable city? Does living 'within our means' necessitate a compromise in lifestyle? The City of Melbourne maintains that sustainable development enables an enhanced lifestyle achieved through efficiencies, better business models, improved technologies as well as a shift in the way we think.

How do we transform existing suburban and inner city developments into more sustainable forms of community living?

First and foremost, we must understand the communities living in those urban areas. Then we must learn to understand how these communities would envision 'sustainable community living' – the concept must be defined both from top down and bottom up to determine any disparities between the two approaches. The process of transformation should then involve the community in question as much as possible – ie. all of the stakeholders including business operators and not just the residents.

How do we ensure that further urban expansion occurs as planned community developments?

The City of Melbourne suggests that:

- A clear strategic vision is required together with a planning framework designed to facilitate the achievement of this vision.
- Planning officers need to understand the significance of ESD issues and be able to reconcile them with other criteria. For example, planning officers may reject an environmentally responsible proposal on the basis that it does not fit with a long established 'neighbourhood character'. In order to reconcile what appear to be competing objectives, planners need appropriate and consistent policies to refer to.

Are there dangers in developing decentralised cities with multiple urban hubs and how do we address these issues?

The requirement for new infrastructure (health, education etc) in such 'hubs' may be extreme if they are intended to 'duplicate' the role of the CBD. This cost would be felt by all levels of government.

Sustainable Cities 2025: Case Studies

Need to be clearer about the purpose of case studies, & how they will be used. They tend to be useful to:

- Illustrate points (This involves references to case studies being integrated into the relevant text rather than (or in addition to) being appended at the end.)
- Promote an argument (Images help here.)
- Test assertions (This involves rigour. There must be no fear of criticising the project being interrogated.)

In addition to case studies, other devices to achieve similar ends include:

- ideas competitions, design competitions,
- making better use of our design work (much of which never gets built), including student projects & research,
- comparative analysis,
- analogies from other fields & lessons from history.