

Submission to

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage
Parliament House
Canberra A.C.T. 2600

Inquiry into sustainable city's 2025

Terms of Reference
Issue number

1. Environmental and social impacts of sprawling urban development.

There are two main environments that need to be identified and the requirements addressed.

The first environment.

The physical environment of air, sea, land, water, vegetation and fauna.

The second environment

The social environment in which people live work and play.

A person's need to maintain personal space in these activities has to be acknowledged even though the amount and type of space has not been identified.

Are there any studies that indicate positive or negative impacts on personal behaviour and attitude of sprawling urban development, or of the alternative of more high-rise more concentrated less personal space availability to residents.

2. The major determinant of urban settlement patterns and desirable patterns of development for the growth of Australian cities;

The major determinant of urban settlement in the City of Melbourne has been the selection of areas most easily supplied with the services needed to support urban settlement. These services are water, electricity, gas, telephone, transport of goods, services and people, waste disposal and ease of construction of infrastructure.

A more desirable patterns of development for the growth of Australian cities would involve the implementation of a system where by the need for people to travel as much or as far for their employment will be minimized; this could be facilitated by the perhaps more home-based business or employment nodes away from the City CBD.

Australian cities of the future will require energy-efficient flexibility of destination, timely and safe transport systems.

3. A "blueprint" for ecologically sustainable patterns of development with particular reference to eco- efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure;

To achieve equity in the provision of service, recognition / acceptance of the fact that the provision of environmental amenities has a dollar cost.

The current planning approach to preserving and providing the community with the well-managed environmental amenities is not sustainable.

The expectation that a planning scheme direction to a landowner/manager that he or she must provide for the community's benefit a particular environmental outcome, solely at the managers expense is not equitable or sustainable .

Any good or service supplied without remuneration constitutes theft.

If the community deem that a particular environmental amenity warrants special attention; through a planning scheme direction; for that direction to be equitable and achieve its maximum effect then the funding base must be much broader, this may be achieved by having some broader community input.

4. Measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion;

- There is a need to reduce the impact of transport of people and goods economically socially and environmentally.
- Does our society in understand the social costs of high-density living?
- What data is available that can demonstrate the effects of being brought up in a low, medium or highly residential density amenity?
- The current and former Australian way of life has produced a high degree of self-reliance with strong sporting prowess.
- Countries with a history of high-density residential living have not achieved so highly in these areas; but perhaps more so academically, but with a lower rating than Australia's in the physical, hand eye coordination sports.
- This inquiry must identify and quantify the negative and positive social aspects of high density living.
- The economic and an environmental costs of a low medium and high-density living also need to be identified and quantified, not just in dollar terms but principally focusing on the social effects of each approach.
- Our people their attitudes, health and behaviour are this country's most valuable resource.
- This inquiry must list all of the positive and negative factors involved in this equation; these factors after community consultation as to their applicability must then be, with community consultation be prioritised.

5. Mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform and promote ecologically sustainable patterns of settlement.

Our people will need to recognise, understand, accept responsibility for, be prepared to change their comfort zone settings to accommodate and assist implement these newly identified and prioritised factors involved in achieving sustainable city's 2025.



The sustainable Australian City of the future should:

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

The provision of environmental amenity has a significant dollar cost, this fact needs to be accepted by the community and a willingness to pay for this service provision implemented.

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

Unfortunately the current fad of chasing wind power is not the long-term answer for future energy needs; visually and noise intrusive, and unable to deliver the quantities of energy required on a reliable basis's.

3. Establish an integrated sustainable water and stormwater management system addressing capture, consumption, treatment and reuse opportunities;

Laudable goal

4. Manage and minimise domestic and industrial waste;

Who will manage government or private?

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

Sounds great will require significant funding.

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

Is happening needs more encouragement.

7. Provide urban plans that accommodate lifestyle and business opportunities.

Must attempt to reduce personal work related transport needs.

Questions for consideration

1. Does the inclusion of green zones within city planning resulting further urban sprawl, which has a greater detrimental effect for the environment by encroaching on more surrounding bushland?

The provision of green zones within city planning means that the existing infrastructure is under-utilised and similar infrastructure has to be provided at more remote locations which are in the process of being developed.

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

An increase in the proportion of bushland and urban green zones exacerbates the situation as in outlined in question one.

3. 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 former?

- The answer it's probably yes but the question remains as to who will pay for the provision and maintenance of these green area's, which are in effect the provision of a public good.
- For these green zones to be able to achieve these objectives will require realistic levels of funding. The Victorian state government at the present time is slashing by up to a as much as 90 percent the funding of a local state park. No reasons have been given as yet. The provision of environmental amenity in these forms has a substantial dollar cost, more so if the service provision is to be of a reasonable standard. The general public don't have much idea of the cost of maintaining state parks; private green area's, environmental amenity generally, why? all government funded roadwork's have a display board detailing the cost. The cost of providing and maintaining environmental amenity, state parks is hidden almost as though the government are ashamed of the small budget allocated to these tasks.

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

The preservation of remnant vegetation anywhere is usually as a result of a community decision implemented for a perceived public good. A transparent and acceptable formula needs to be developed that can distinguish the private and public good contribution and the remuneration package structured accordingly.

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

If the community makes the decision that these sites should be preserved then the community has the responsibility for the ongoing sustainable funding for the provision and preservation of these sites.

6. How to ensure that public green zones are integrated into new developments?

If a community so desires that a particular area become a public green zone then that community has the responsibility to find a suitable

sustainable funding mechanism for the provision and maintenance of that public facility.

Questions for consideration

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

Any shift away from large-scale energy generation and distribution will require an ability to generate energy at more fragmented and smaller sites much closer to the point of use. This new approach will require new technologies that are not as visually or noise intrusive as the current models of wind generators are.

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

The consumer must be able to recognise and measure the benefits from the use of any service.

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

Reliability and adequacy of supply, cost; wind generation does not operate in the absence of wind; solar power does not operate in the absence of sunlight.

4. Should renewable energy generation be promoted that the single dwelling level or cross city regions?

The answer to this will depend upon the technology that is employed for the generation. There will still be a need for a power distribution system to cater for street and road lighting and most likely economies of scale will still apply in the generation of power.

5. Are there economic, 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?

The current investment in generating capacity will become obsolete, and new investment will have to be funded to bring on stream these new complexes which are predominantly self-sufficient in terms of energy generation.

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

Incentives should be provided that will assist in the uptake of technologies that can deliver greater efficiencies in energy use.

7. How can residential and commercial development incorporate renewable energy generation into planning and construction?

Appropriate technologies and will have to be identified before incorporation of renewable energy generation into planning and construction.

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

All high quantity energy uses a should seek to change to renewable energy sources as quickly as practicable.

1. Should cities of the future be looking to develop more localised smaller scale systems of urban water management?

The choice of the most effective urban water management system must take into account the social economic and environmental factors of that management system. And acceptable measure and balance between these factors will need to be developed.

2. What residential water management systems are most efficient and sustainable?

Maximisation of use efficiency and re-use.

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

Encourage the maximisation of use efficiency and re-use.

4. How do we encourage areas to abandon existing wastewater systems, which may discharge into the ocean or otherwise, in favour of alternative waste water treatment methods?

Provide incentives for acceptable change.

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

As we are a market-based economy, influenced by price, impacted upon by supply and demand; price and supply signals in conjunction with recognition, possibly in a form of discounts for responsible water consumption and reuse.

- 6. Are more standards and guidelines needed for new developments to minimise waste and stormwater and to maximise capture and reuse opportunities?**

Yes

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

Ongoing education along with the carrot and stick approach.

- 2. 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?**

For an industry to be labelled as appropriate to be with located within a city it will need to have a positive rating in the following areas; visually, noise, odour, no off-site impacts. Where an activity is considered UN suitable in a city, but is indispensable to that city, then that city should compensate the area where the activity is situated.

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

Education and price signals.

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

Education and price signals

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

The rate of change must be economically, technologically able to be implemented.

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

Ensuring sustainable cities will require participation from all sectors; the responsibility is not just that of industry.

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

The inference here is that industry is the problem, rather than attempt to identify scapegoats; we should be promoting cooperative attempts to deal with the issues.

1. What initiatives can assist in the reduction of automobile dependence?

Public transport will lead to be more reliable have greater flexibility, have a much greater socially acceptability factor. Car and minibus pooling should be encouraged, along with the search for more acceptable energy forms.

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

There is little benefit in changing to electric cars or buses while the generation of electricity is by the use of fossil fuels i.e. brown or black coal.

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

A reduction in the need for personal transport; and promotion of group transport. Some radical thinking.

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

Provide incentives for integrated research and development programs to develop more suitable transport networks.

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

All costs must be visible; systems must be flexible enough to be able to deliver service to changing demands. If a system is of a mass public transport system, it must appeal to the masses.

6. Is a more decentralised nodal type of transport network appropriate for commuter and travel the needs?

The transport network has to satisfy many differing demands, and the decentralized nodal type approach will be appropriate for a sector of the transport industry.

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

Planning schemes zone land for particular uses, the transport requirements of these uses will vary with market acceptance of their

product and in the way they do business. Industry must respond to market signals and as transport is one of industry's inputs, the transport industry must be flexible enough to be able to respond effectively to these changing demands.

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

By the provision of suitable education and products.

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

Knowledge is power, a consumer with the knowledge will seek these eco-efficiency innovations and the market will respond accordingly.

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

A lack of understanding by the consumer of the value of the use of these principles.

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

Consumer knowledge as to the level of performance of present products i.e. the star rating. Commitment to the fact that we have to continue to improve.

5. 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?

No

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

The design and construction type of the built environment plays a major role in shaping the sociological attitudes of its residents. People need to feel good about themselves, about their environment social physical economic. Rightly or wrongly people are the drivers, they need a sound economic base from which they can fund the provision and high-quality management of natural environment.

Not all of the needs of future residents have been identified or addressed by planning schemes put in place in the past.

The lifestyle needs and preferences of Australians are very diverse, planning schemes need to be flexible enough to cater for this diversity.

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

This will be an integral part of the much larger transport system.

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

Michael Mobbs [www.sustainablehouse.com.au] from Sydney has demonstrated how it can be done with a private dwelling. There are probably others who have achieved much in this regard, but their efforts and achievements are unknown and unrecognised.

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

With a clear statement as to the vision and goals, that have been developed as a result of a rigorous research effort that has identified the sociological needs of the community, the economic needs of the community and the environmental needs, coupled with an implementation process that will provide the incentive to deliver the stated goals.

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

There are some examples of this approach in Europe, possibly we could learn from their experiences. This is not to suggest that these results are directly transplantable to the Australian situation, but could alert us as to the possible positive and negative aspects of this approach.

Urban rural interface conflicts need to be minimised.

The increased length of the urban rural interface boundaries that would occur under this proposal will certainly enhance the likelihood of an increase in these interface conflicts.

The most effective way to minimise the likelihood of an event has to be to limit the opportunity for that event to occur.

So if we have minimal urban rural interface boundaries, then we have taken a positive step to minimise these conflicts.

There is also the possibility of unproductive competition between the multiple urban hubs in an endeavour to attract industries and employment opportunities.

The prime hub will always be that which has access to the seaport and international air terminal.

The transport requirements of these major infrastructure assets, to and from the multiple urban hubs would need to be carefully considered.

6. What community, commercial and bio diversity needs should be addressed in developing new urban centres?

Planners need to have an understanding of the effects of child rearing in a high-density high-rise environment, and also the effects of child rearing with a greater access to private open space.

From a sociological perspective what is the optimum?

Perhaps the optimum can't be delivered for children, adults or adolescents, but at least the community should be aware of the trade-offs that are being made.

Commercial activities will require access to all major infrastructure, and an ability to achieve the necessary economies of scale to enable them to be competitive in the world trade environment.

Sustainable commercial activities are indispensable in this equation because without them we do not have the employment, taxes being payed, from which the funding for the provision and management of environmental amenity can only come.

Quality provision and management of environmental amenity has a dollar cost, the community at this point time is largely unaware of this fact.

When major roadwork's are undertaken a billboard goes up detailing the costs involved, no such billboards are ever displayed on public parks, this has contributed to the misunderstanding by the general public that there is no or little cost involved in providing environmental amenity.

This incorrect perception is also held in relation to decisions made by the community in relation to the preservation of native habitat on private lands.

As the community has made the decision to attempt to preserve this native habitat then the community has an obligation to fund such preservation.

It is inequitable, unsustainable and impossible to achieve good management of this habitat using the current methods.