

Sustainability Forum

Planning Policy and Practice

Saturday November 30
Melbourne Hotel, Perth



Sustainability – The Way Forward

The Western Australian Government has embraced sustainability as a fundamental driver for a better future for all Western Australians.

While the State's economy is robust, the health of our natural environment is compromised by threats such as salinity, loss of biodiversity and climate change. There are also social problems such as isolation, homelessness, poverty and other forms of inequity.

Addressing these problems in an integrated way while finding opportunities to pursue new forms of development that don't compromise the health and well-being of Western Australia's environment and society is the challenge in creating a sustainable future.

The transition to a more sustainable future is a long-term agenda that requires rethinking the way Western Australians live, use resources, govern and do business.

Working Together

Sustainability is sometimes referred to as 'the triple bottom line': achieving economic, social and environmental goals together.

Adopting the principles of sustainability is a challenge for all the community and will not be achieved without the cooperation of everybody.

The Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Western Australian Planning Commission have been working together to entrench sustainability into Western Australian planning policy and practice. The aim is to go beyond just acknowledging the sustainability issue.

This is being achieved through aligning organisational policies and activities, integrating infrastructure priorities, budgets and strategic plans, and working together in a collaborative manner.

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A Sustainability Forum was hosted by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, in November 2002.

Its purpose was to devise ways of better incorporating sustainability principles into statutory town planning.

Stakeholders invited to the forum included the Planning Institute of Australia, the Housing Industry Association, representatives from the development industry and the community, and State and local government officials.

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The forum consisted of a series of presentations, followed by an interactive workshop that required participants to examine ways the planning system required changing and the idea of providing ‘developer incentives’ to encourage the adoption of sustainability principles into urban design.

Western Australian Planning Commission initiatives such as Liveable Neighbourhoods and Bush Forever were also cited as successful projects that have been developed incorporating sustainability principles and ideology.

Participants were asked to explore key policies and incentives that could be developed in promoting sustainable planning and urban design; taking into account best practice; industry controls; and planning creativity.

Participants also explored what initiatives could be introduced to engage the community about sustainable planning and assist local governments in supporting sustainable urban design, as well as discussing strategies in enabling developers and builders to embrace sustainable principles and practices.

Consensus was achieved on a number of items, including:

- development of a ‘sustainability scorecard’ system to determine planning options,
- one agency to manage environmental assessments against an across government agreed criteria,
- ‘fast tracking’ Metropolitan Region Scheme and Town Planning Scheme Amendment processes for developers who have demonstrated ‘triple bottom line’ and best practice objectives and plans,
- empowerment of community groups to be proactive in the creation of sustainable developments,
- development of synergies between various State Acts with sustainability, for example Heritage Act, Native Title, Waters & Rivers Act, etc,
- engaging local government to manage design guidelines,
- providing incentives for best practice projects,
- ‘demonstration’ projects,
- entrenching ‘cultural mapping’ in sustainability planning,
- conducting awards for sustainability projects and initiatives,
- developing partnerships with government to facilitate incentive schemes, and
- developing financial modelling systems.

Attached is a list of discussion topics and suggested ideas ’ from the forum These are currently being further developed and will be the subject of broader consultation.

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1. What key policies and processes could be introduced to promote sustainable outcomes e.g. integrated land use and transport?

Q1	Suggestions
1.	Refer scale development for environment assessment against agreed criteria to one agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare criteria
2.	Fast track MRS & TPS Amendment process for developers who are prepared to sign off on triple bottom line best practice development objectives and outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accreditation ▪ Take into account impact of development on other people
3.	Policies in regs etc for improved standard design eg sustainability criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to define infill/frontal development areas ▪ Regional variations – social, environment & economic
4.	Fast track environmental assessment on performance criteria
5.	Agreed process and pace of evolution of sustainability criteria <u>but</u> set priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership – government, local authority and industry, community
6.	Adopted by local authority explicit and consistent sustainability policies within TPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt Model Scheme Text – modify to sustainability policies ▪ Local Authority to adopt MST ▪ Closer nexus SPP & TPS
7.	Translation of state sustainability strategy into state planning strategy and key planning policies and strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole of government approach – integrate ▪ Link to “doing”
8.	Identify areas for improved land use and transport integration e.g. increased density <u>but</u> also use corridors as well as nodes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As part of sustainability scorecard ▪ Needs to relate to level of planning – local expert
9.	Financial concessions to developers e.g. reduced local authority rates, application fees or penalties
10.	Empowerment of community groups to be proactive in creation of sustainable developments
11.	Review and update all planning legislation and regulations which impedes sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify gaps ▪ Process improvement to be included ▪ Need to resolve conflicting objectives ▪ Recognise conflicts

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12.	Inter agency review of impediments to whole system re sustainability outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inter agency synergies ▪ As above re inconsistencies
13.	Sustainability from grass roots to inform key policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early community engagement ▪ Reduction in statutory advertising
14.	Establish clear relationship between land development and building i.e. state and local authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs incentives ▪ As long as approval not tied to building license
15.	Correlate R-Codes with statutes (policies)
16.	Land use to relate to resource availability
17.	Planning should develop comprehensive framework for site/local developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to define the area
18.	DPI to review policies re in-house green house emissions to set example for others e.g. car use/energy use
19.	Concentric circular planning

2. *What incentives could be usefully applied to promote sustainable planning and design?*

Q2	Suggestions
1.	Increase government rebate for solar panels (see 13)
2.	Reduce the cost of potable water if owners invest in grey water recycling
3.	Deem development approval granted after 60 days consideration where sustainability scorecard requirements met
4.	Bonus scheme (of some kind) for “sustainability” development proposals
5.	Disincentives applied to less/not sustainable proposals
6.	Local Government can retain commercial parking cash in lieu for use in/on approved alternative transport infrastructure including security e.g. on specific development
7.	Plot ratio bonus where developers provide/support social housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Should be any sustainability principle
8.	Fast track provision of public infrastructure (e.g. schools, buses) for sustainable housing developments
9.	Government rebates for grey water installation (where superficial aquifer is not competitive)
10.	Explicitly support infill and revitalisation i.e. promote integrated JV industry/government/local government/other stakeholders over time e.g. holding costs, land tax waived
11.	Streamlined TPS amendment in case of proposal which conforms to sustainability criteria
12.	Reduce parking for commercial and residential developments near public transport nodes/interchanges

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3. What controls could be beneficially applied to promote sustainable planning and design?

Q3	Suggestions
1.	Support State Planning Strategy and Policy Framework (inc MRS), only if integrated with the SSS
2.	TPS & Design Guidelines, only if integrated with the SSS and Model Scheme Text also integrated, only if SSS classified /defined more clearly, only if embracing principles (of SSS) as opposed to integrating, only if TPS, Model Scheme Text, SPS etc. all comprehensively reviewed.
3.	Explanation of the Strategies and Framework (i.e. 1 & 2) in plain English
4.	Synergy (meaning co-ordinated or linked in a planning sense) between this and other Acts e.g. Heritage Act, Native Title, EPA, Water Rivers Act, Heath Act (Grey Water)
5.	Link incentives and penalties, only if cost of appeals/delays are understood as penalties in their own right and there is more emphasis on the incentives
6.	Require community based sustainability groups to be set up to advise local councils on planning matters, only if education and resources provided.
7.	Town Planning Appeals Tribunal to be required to apply sustainability principle in all their decisions, only if assessment based. (The Tribunal will have to follow SSS the same as others so why single it out?)
8.	Redevelopment Authorities for all Strategic Regional Centres should co-ordinate sustainability development, and be renamed as Sustainable Development Authorities
9.	Require walking and cycling end of trip facilities (lockers & showers) in all new buildings providing signification employment
10.	Minimum requirements for percentage of solar orientation in all subdivisions to be set
11.	Minimum requirements for water sensitive design to be set
12.	Repeal Section 20(5) of Town Planning & Development Act (which allows WAPC to over-ride TPSs)
13.	Apply controls to government agencies to require them to make decisions within the statutory timeframe or else be deemed approved, as long as it meets agreed criteria

4. What are the key priority elements that would need to be included in demonstration projects to promote sustainable best practice?

Q4	Suggestions
1.	Force builders to build in sympathy with the existing topography Only if encourage developers included with builders
2.	Engage local government to be the design guidelines watchdog. Only if community voting rights – voluntary Only if consistency across local government Only if local government can do it properly/competence/resourced

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Q4	Suggestions
3.	Demonstrate and use leverage (funding) to achieve affordable energy (grey water, other wastes) efficiency (solar panels) to mainstream
4.	Show how affordable housing can be integrated into developments without affecting overall market for the development – use incentives, etc. Only if social housing (not “affordable”) Only if social and affordable housing Find ways to retrofit sustainability into existing housing – renovation – incentives etc.
5.	Make 80% solar lot orientation mandatory in planning requirements Only if green field sites Only if 80% is a target Only if block is square (only if) unless demonstrated that it is not possible
6.	Investigate ways to downsize road pavement widths (thermal heat sinks) Only if local roads and verges increase – for vegetation Only if bicycle ways created
7.	Mixture of housing types within the one development (depends on size of development) – e.g. mixed use – intra-generational mixed socio-economic/demographics Only if mixed use is home occupation
8.	Grey water parkland reticulation Only if not near a wetland Only if include water table control Only if not as good as the superficial aquifer
9.	Demonstrate alternative verge widths and verge treatments
10.	Star rating for sustainable house design Only if rigorous compliance assessment is achieved
11.	Have rainwater tanks Only if appropriately sized – difficult with small lots
12.	Provision for alternative modes of transport to the car (light rail e.g.)
13.	Pedestrian friendly street patterns and scapes
14.	Access to and provision of local shops and community facilities
15.	Demonstrate ways of creating safe public realms (e.g. design, passive surveillance, etc)
16.	Projects should be a consensus of partners and an opportunity to educate local government, community, developers, etc.
17.	Revitalisation partnerships to upgrade declining commercial centres
18.	Total water recycle management
19.	Ways of upgrading regional roads as activity networks – fronting land use functions eg Canning Highway
20.	Good solar passive and energy efficient housing
21.	Incorporate sustain ably mined and manufactured building materials and components into buildings.

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5. How can planning practice be more creative in embracing sustainable principles and practices?

Q5	Suggestions
1.	Planning should be performance based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes ▪ Not outputs
2.	Employ creative and visionary people as part of a team and actively and genuinely engage the community in the creative process Embed creative aspects in staff selection criteria with a high weighting
3.	Planners should not be provided with company cars (with compensating change in remuneration)
4.	Planning practice to engage in a multi-disciplinary approach if there is recognition of different approaches for different scale projects
5.	Change procedures so that bicycle and other non car modes of transport is always considered professionally in projects
6.	Provide education for all planners and the broader community on sustainability principles
7.	Demonstration projects that “go wrong” should <u>not</u> have to be rectified – encourage innovation and risk taking
8.	Provide incentives for best practice projects (especially time savings for developers) and development bonuses
9.	Creating a vision for planners and developers to aspire to in terms of sustainability
10.	Educate consumers on sustainability to make adoption demand driven (show them the crash test results – car safety)
11.	The planning agencies should see their clients as extending beyond their immediate customers/clients (i.e. embrace the sustainable strategy)
12.	Develop a hypothecated revenue source for promotion of sustainability (e.g. MRIT)
13.	Use new technology to simulate the experience of living in a sustainable environment (virtual reality)
14.	Provide land free of charge to those who will develop it according to sustainability principles ? If done in areas requiring re-vitalisation
15.	Allow more flexibility in planning schemes and building and R-Codes to encourage innovation
16.	Provide more setbacks in developments (not just for solar orientation) e.g. for noise or safety considerations
17.	Provide open space blocks between houses in new developments
18.	Encourage community feedback and input into planning practice at state and local levels including allowing third party appeals rights
19.	Showcase community-based sustainable programs and developments
20.	Establish world-best practice standards and guidelines relevant to local conditions
21.	Provide industry awards for sustainable projects/developments

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22.	Measured allocation risk for developers – don't ask developers to carry all the risk of new projects promoting sustainability
23.	Multiple use allowed for public open space (e.g. floodway is treated as park) ? ok if convert floodways to useable open space
24.	Review public open space requirements as need to be assessed as a site specific issue (i.e. pos may not be necessary in some areas)
25.	Planning practice needs to provide more support/assistance and flexibility to developers wishing incorporate sustainability principles
26.	Define pos more specifically account to use

6. What initiatives could be introduced to:

- a) *help engage the community in a 'sense of place' enhancement?*
- b) *Assist local government to support and promote sustainable planning and design?*

Q6 (a)	
Suggestions	
1.	Demonstration projects (good examples <u>plus</u> publicity) – DPI to contribute funds
2.	Associate celebrities with key projects ? define celebrities (<u>not</u> footy players)
3.	Strategic market/other research to find out what people want Add education and post-occupancy research
4.	Plan-making should include local/regional stories
5.	Vary engagement – techniques to 'hook' community
6.	Needs to be a specific strategy for indigenous stories (already are)
7.	Entrench cultural mapping in sustainability planning
8.	Assess positive/negative aspects of sense of place
9.	Expand/create local planning strategy beyond the basic to include qualitative issues such as 'sense of place' (NB: are other ways e.g. economic development officers)(already done)
10.	Local governments to work with commercial developer/shopping centres to promote 'sense of place'

Q 6 (b)	
Suggestions	
1.	DPI should jointly fund local transport plan (inc. walking and cycling)
2.	WA LGA and DPI need to work together (more) and synchronise practices. Add Review Local Government engineer specifications
3.	State government to mandate (metro) local government to accept certain percent of population growth
4.	Draw on collaborative resources (especially re smaller councils/shires) Add – councils to group and act collectively
5.	DPI to initiate and get started to help mentor/build capacity in local government (already do)
6.	DPI provide tools (e.g. standardised assessment methodology) (<u>not</u> prescriptive)

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Q 6 (b)	
Suggestions	
7.	Conduct awards for sustainability in local government (not by local government – independent assessment)
8.	Local Government representatives (staff) to be part of major DPI initiatives (on a rotational basis) (already are – to a degree)
9.	Create local communication/information centres to discuss ‘sense of place’ etc. (already there – issue is process)
10.	Incorporate ‘sustainability’ targets in performance contracts of DPI/Local Government
11.	Keep land in reserve without classification so can evolve as community views change (Already done)

7. What would enable developers and builders to embrace sustainable principles and practices?

Q7	Suggestions
1.	Well-documented information/education program (with single consistent message)
2.	Consistent agreed position across government on sustainability policies & processes
3.	Early consultation/partnership with builders and developers (new paradigm!)
4.	Financial modelling sustainability to assist builders and developers assessment of projects (R&D)
5.	Incentive options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range ▪ Rebates ▪ financial (\$ bonus?) ▪ recognition ▪ approval process fast-tracked ▪ government investment in infrastructure prioritised Will need accreditation process
6.	Partnership with governments to help support /facilitate incentives schemes
7.	Influence the attitude of market. (start in schools) Public education program needed so they "demand" sustainable practices from builders and developers.).
8.	Sustainability information/education to be required as part of school curriculum. Maybe in tandem with Road Safety program.?
9.	Government to take lead in sustainability re public education
10.	Housing and Works and Landcorp to ensure sustainable practise in its developments (“walking the talk”)
11.	Awards to acknowledge effective sustainable projects (independently judged)
12.	Accreditation (star rating?) for sustainable builder and developer, and design. (can be a public promotional tool)

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13.	Relevant demonstration project/housing/schools etc. (recognising evolutionary nature of this work)
14.	Credible research and development supported “locally” (particularly Regional WA where standards may need to vary according to local needs.)
15.	Give priority in tendering to consultants, designers, and developers who are accredited for sustainability and demonstrate good practice as part of projects (state & local government and infrastructure projects - schools, hospitals, offices, etc)
16.	Get educators involved in informing kids/students (bureaucracy and teachers)
17.	Informed and committed local government to promote the sustainability message and best practice to B & D's
18.	Flexibility needs to be built in to local government planning schemes (trade off/relaxation of strict application) i.e. discretion
19.	Regulate performance to meet sustainability standards
20.	Guarantee fast-tracking process (condensed process)
21.	Change FBT's to exclude company cars
22.	Educate/improve planning approval process
23.	Performance based approach not reflected in current planning process
24.	State should use “0” discount rate in project evaluation to avoid bias in future generations
25.	Advice and assessment of “sustainable” failures for info for builder and developer (ie., learning from mistakes)
26.	Builders and developers to get a block of land free if they establish a sustainable project/house (don't just talk about it – do something practical)

8. If a scorecard was developed:

- a) *What kind of development would it be applied?*
- b) *What are we measure?*
- c) *What would be critical to make it work?*

There was debate about the question and that there were 3 parts, so voting could not be completed for all the groups.

Q8	Suggestions
1.	a) all aspects of development: urban/industrial/infrastructure but specific scorecard to specific development e.g. residential and commercial and industrial
2.	a) meeting scorecard criteria as an incentive: for fast tracking sustainable developments/different treatment
	b) measure e.g. not for profit; intent; demonstration sustainability, community consultation
	c) recognise initiatives (govt): e.g. fast tracking series of scorecards through process/staged scoring

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Q8	Suggestions
3.	b) generic <u>plus</u> specific development issues measured through consultation. Measure local <u>plus</u> wider community views. Note issues!
4.	Scorecard to be grafted onto the existing statutory/legal system to be able to be implemented (e.g. EPA)
5.	Why do we want to have a scorecard? Is it a requirement or an incentive/encouragement tool/ awareness promotion tool? Note:
6.	a) One size fits all will not work: climate/settlement size variables are relevant
7.	c) scorecard could demonstrate minimum mandatory requirements; with incentives for exceeding sustainable minimums e.g. BCA (minimum) GreenSmart (incentive)
8.	Who would be regulator? Who would make decisions? Note subjectivity issues in delivering new R-Codes; and problems in re sourcing.
9.	Scorecard to simplify existing approval processes/timing; not add a layer of complication
10.	Would scorecards be done through accreditation? A quasi-independent body would be preferable to self regulation
11.	Scorecard needs to relate to relative rather than absolute standards. It should require an improvement to the existing situation: not a generic state-wide standard. Absolutes may not advance the agenda.
12.	c) Scorecard submission should be required as a mandatory part of submitting an application (amendment/development/subdivision)
13.	a) scorecard could relate to area/class of development/scale: but scorecard needs to be related to stage of development: and be nested (subdivision v building permit)
14.	Performance criteria need to relate to matters over which there are control For example it is difficult to impose new lot orientation requirements on redevelopment on existing subdivision
15.	c) if the current development approvals system is used, the scorecard is likely to lengthen the approvals process. 'Any grafting' onto the system is likely to lengthen time for approval.
16.	c) Resource and evaluation issues are critical (emphasize #8) Assessment fee?
17.	Scorecard should initially be voluntary for a trial period. Then review of pros and cons once trailed.
18.	b) how would weighting be applied/determined?
19.	Question the need for a scorecard. The system of assessment is not so 'stuffed' that we need one. Sustainability principles should be incorporated into existing processes and documents e.g. Liveable Neighbourhoods as an alternative
20.	Scorecard needs to be given to builders, developers, owners <u>before</u> design stage.
21.	b) Electricity and a car are basic emergency needs: sustainability measures should be basic survivability needs. Consider emergency situations in determining basic needs.