

Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025 Submission by Laurel Smith 9 September 2003

Firstly, it must be said, if we do not embrace ecological sustainable development (ESD) immediately, future generations will curse us considerably as they will not have natural resources to utilise or natural vegetation to enjoy or receive medicinal benefits..... the list goes on. The world has been talking about ESD since 1992 (Rio Earth Summit) so lets start putting into practice, rather than philosophising about it!!

Overview:

1. Urban villages to prevent Urban sprawl;
2. Societal paradigm shift for new ways of living to embrace new growth;
3. ESD - lets do it!! It's not rocket science, and saves money too!;
4. Urban sprawl is not the answer, lets plan a better city - long live high density;
5. Leading by example - go Commonwealth, lead Australians down the path of ESD!

1. Urban villages to prevent Urban sprawl

Instead of going spatially outwards, how about we develop upwards (high rise living - refer Doncaster Hill Precinct, Melbourne, refer internet). The answer is urban villages located around major transport (rail and/or bus) and shopping hubs to provide high density accommodation (also adaptable for persons with disability and elderly) in a village atmosphere close to public transport and facilities such as shops and entertainment. (ESD - Environment - leaves pristine areas alone and concentrating urban growth close to public transport, less car usage: Social - providing a community village feel, providing alternative accommodation for persons with a disability and elderly/retired; Economic- initiating a vibrant economic centre)

2. Societal paradigm shift for new ways of living to embrace new growth

The Commonwealth needs to initiate a new change in terms of style of accommodation people want and need, to be a joint effort by all levels of government. Instead of the '¼ acre block of dirt' with one single dwelling on it... we need to promote other livable forms of residential development such as townhouses, duplexes, units blocks with communal recreational areas close to shops and public transport (mind you, the public transport has to be efficient, reliable and affordable!)

3. ESD - lets do it!! It's not rocket science, and saves money too!;

By giving developers incentives (ie higher densities), ESD can be embraced quite easily and painlessly. Many lessons can be learned from the Doncaster Hill precinct in Melbourne. Basically, if you want higher densities, then you have to address the sustainability code. Not only address the code, but create innovative solutions to energy efficiency, water re-use and on-site sewerage treatment etc. There are proven long term monetary benefits from installing energy saving and water saving devices. Not only fiscal benefits, but also reduced carbon dioxide emissions, less stress on water supply from Dams etc.

4. Urban sprawl is not the answer, lets plan a better city - long live high density;

Some cities have what you call an 'Urban Growth Boundary.' Most cities are in dire need of an urban grown boundary. This not only protects significant bushland but stimulates re-growth in otherwise older defunct areas. It essentially re-vitalises older suburbs by re-developing with higher densities to accommodate the increase in population.

5. Leading by example - go Commonwealth, lead Australians down the path of ESD!

Confucious say... something... and people will listen and follow. Same principle applies by government leading by example. There are numerous opportunities for government to do this. In particular, construction of government buildings, government low-cost housing, affordable housing multi-unit dwellings etc. These buildings can be ESD designed planned and constructed. If people can't copy, then it's too hard for them.

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