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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

**Submission to the Standing Committee on
Environment and Heritage**

SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2025

**From the
International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives –
Australia/ New Zealand (ICLEI-A/NZ)**

October 2003

I C L E I

**International Council for
Local Environmental Initiatives**

Introduction

Creating a sustainable future for Australia is a complex issue that encompasses environmental, social and economic factors. These factors require careful consideration and many of the associated issues have been identified in the discussion paper *Sustainable Cities 2025*.

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is grateful for the opportunity to respond to this important enquiry and would be pleased to provide further information to the enquiry process at an appropriate time.

Sustainable Cities 2025 pinpoints the key need to 'identify current and future patterns of settlement, the sustainability issues associated with these settlement patterns, and how government policy might ensure that developed areas retain an Australian lifestyle without diminishing the future value of Australian eco-systems'.

Federal and State Governments are responsible for developing a range of policies that are enacted by corporate and community sectors. One party, which has enormous direct control over its own operations and influence on the community sector, is local government.

ICLEI plays a significant role in supporting local government worldwide by building their capacity to implement positive environmental initiatives that are consistent with, and support the implementation of, policies at state and federal levels.

ICLEI is an international non-profit local government association, founded in 1990. With the global headquarters based in Toronto, ICLEI in the Asia Pacific region has offices in Tokyo, Seoul and Melbourne. Our Melbourne office of 23 staff is responsible for the Australia and New Zealand region and is hosted by the City of Melbourne.

ICLEI conducts three Campaigns: Local Action 21, Cities for Climate Protection™ and The Water Campaign™. The Australian Cities for Climate Protection™ Program is the largest local greenhouse program in the world. Our Campaigns are based on best practice international models and have been successfully applied to the Australian situation.

ICLEI and local councils have demonstrated the value of these Programs with quantifiable outputs and outcomes. ICLEI's methodologies ensure that councils across Australia can approach the fundamental issues of sustainable development with a unifying consistency. Many local governments are already engaging with the issues raised by *Sustainable Cities 2025* and the success of CCPT™ and the Water Campaign™ is testament to the approaches being undertaken (see Attachment One for campaign-specific information).

With the majority of the Australian population living in urban 'built' areas, the future sustainability and functionality of those areas is of paramount importance. The challenge is to establish an equitable and sustainable balance between our built areas and our areas of natural heritage.

Local government can influence and control the varied aspects of urban planning, from waste collection and watering systems for parks and sportsgrounds to the development of new housing estates. Australia's built areas require intelligent forethought and planning to achieve the goal of a sustainable city. Local government is capable of enormous positive input into these issues through both a single council approach and a collective regional approach. Through ICLEI programs, local governments have been able to address many of the issues of relevance to this enquiry.

Blueprint for the Future

ICLEI believes that the framework for sustainable development in local government is Local Agenda 21. Over the next decade there will be a need to interact with policy development and to accelerate, broaden and deepen the activity underway in Local Agenda 21. These interactions by local government will form the basis of Local Action 21.

Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002, ICLEI has developed and is implementing sustainability-orientated programs under the umbrella of Local Action 21. In Australia, ICLEI's Sustainability Assessment Tools, Green Purchasing pilot Program and overall approach to ESD are the commencement of these intervention based approaches.

ICLEI already has underway two established Campaigns, CCPT[™] and the Water Campaign[™] that are demonstrating a model for long term capacity building approaches with local government.

A key question for consideration in relation to this inquiry is identifying what role local government can play in developing more sustainable cities.

Local government play an essential role as

- Practitioners in their own corporate operations, as they directly consume energy, manage large workforces and operate many buildings and facilities;
- Educators for own municipalities and communities, as they interact with their ratepayers on regulatory and voluntary measures in many areas such as environmental, health and local development matters;
- Facilitators of partnerships across sectors and regions, as they work with all sectors of their community including local businesses and manufacturers, and can leverage their own investments by other resources, including voluntary effort;
- As service deliverers for municipalities, especially in critical sustainability issues such as waste management; and
- As advocates for sustainable development, as demonstrated by the large and growing constituency of support with CCPT[™].

ICLEI supports local government in these functions by providing the Campaign Frameworks for implementation.

Relationship to State and Federal Governments

The State and Federal spheres of government play a fundamental role in supporting local government with a particular focus on key strategic actions as follows:

- Revisiting financial arrangements such as taxation as it impacts on and can effect actions by local government;
- Coordination across government departments to reduce both duplication and different messages to local governments;
- Inclusive consultation approaches with local government, especially in the earliest possible stages of policy development;
- Alignments of policies across spheres of government, ensuring that long-term planning is co-ordinated;

- Joint sustainable purchasing approaches, especially utilising the public sector's overlap on key product areas to move the market forward; and
- Appropriate resourcing where local governments take up program implementation.

Relationship to Sustainable City Priorities

The *Sustainable Cities 2005* discussion paper identified a number of sectors of key importance in achieving sustainability including bushland protection, energy efficiency, water management and waste reduction. It also identified solution-based approaches such as transport networks, eco efficiency principles in building and appropriate urban planning.

A national map of issues and approaches must also develop a process to prioritise their development and implementation.

Through ICLEI's programs, local governments are already addressing and achieving tangible results in the following areas:

1. Greenhouse gas reduction through CCPTM[™] is providing a way forward and impacting on:
 - Efficient use of energy and increasing renewable energy resources use;
 - Management strategies to minimise waste;
 - Development of sustainable transport alternatives;
 - Establishing eco-efficiency principles; and
 - Developing urban plans that accommodate commercial and residential requirements.

ICLEI believes that CCPTM[™] provides an avenue for local govt to engage more fully in complementary issues to greenhouse such as those listed above. Many councils, upon completing the program have expressed a desire for ICLEI to provide continued opportunities for greenhouse gas abatement. This kind of development is only possible with the receipt of relative funding and support from both state and federal governments.

2. Water resource management through the Water Campaign[™] is providing local government with an avenue to integrate sustainable water quality and conservation management practices.

3. Creation of a Biodiversity Campaign

One area of concern identified both by local governments and *Sustainable Cities 2005* is the need to 'preserve bushland, significant heritage and urban green zones'. This need is the basis of reasoning for the development of a scoping process to create a Biodiversity Program by ICLEI.

ICLEI has been conducting research into this area over the past 12 months with the aim of developing a milestone-based program that will allow local governments to deliver tangible results in the sustainable management and enhancement of bushland and related areas.

Local government and ICLEI have proven that tangible results can be achieved by applying a global consciousness to a local area. Councils and ICLEI are eager to tackle the issue of biodiversity and partnership with the Australian Government would be our desired approach to proceeding.

Recommendations:

ICLEI recommends that the Sustainable Cities Enquiry consider;

- The need to develop mechanisms that can include the views of local governments to all relevant policy considerations early in the policy formulation process;
- The policy development context in relation to building on local government efforts in any current and future policy considerations;
- The integral role of capacity building programs in supporting local government engagement;
- The need to not “reinvent” programs and to build on and support, in a financial and policy context, programs that local government have embraced such as CCPT™ and the Water Campaign™;
- Discussing further with ICLEI how its current programs can facilitate local government engagement in a sustainable cities policy and program; and
- Discussing with ICLEI how a biodiversity program, with a performance based milestone framework, can be established in Australia within the next 12 months.

Attachment One

Introduction to ICLEI's Innovative Approach

Our approach has enabled a key and important criteria identified in your discussion paper- the need for consistent national approaches, with a one size DOES NOT fit all approach.

Any approach the Australian government decides to promote we believe should have the following as a fundamental basis.

ICLEI strives to provide cities participating in our campaigns and programs with substantial assistance and capacity building tools in achieving their goals. Technical tools and information, training workshops, networking opportunities, media and promotion, and overall assistance have been designed to link the global issues with daily operations such as energy costs, traffic congestion, waste management, water conservation and community liveability. ICLEI provides a 'whole of council' approach. It is the comprehensive approach that primarily motivates local leaders to participate in our Campaigns.

ICLEI's Campaigns are based on capacity-building principles that marshal Local Government's efforts

i) Building capacity

There are a number of basic premises that drive the concepts behind our Campaigns. One of these fundamental areas is that by building the capacity of local government, they can more effectively engage, respond and support national government's efforts to deal with environmental problems.

Our Campaigns are designed so that local governments work on areas that they can control within their own operations or influence the behavior of their community first, prior to tackling the issue on a larger regional scale. The process ensures that council attempts 'to get their own house into order' and lead by example, which makes significant differences before working with other councils, agencies, partners and stakeholders.

ICLEI's aim is to ensure that the local government sector plays its role fully in issues such as climate change. We believe that we have received strong endorsement of this approach in the international greenhouse debate, where it is recognised that the local government sector are playing a leading role in setting significant targets and implementing practical action.

ii) Performance based Milestone approach

ICLEI Campaigns follow a performance-based approach.

It begins with a council commitment and in order to become a participant, the elected members of council must adopt a Local Government Resolution to ensure political commitment is established at the commencement of the program. Once it has become a Campaign participant, the council proceeds to undertake and complete the five performance milestones. They are:

- Conduct an inventory;
- Establish a goal;
- Develop the Local Action Plan;
- Implement policies, plans and measures; and
- Monitor and verify results.

The five milestones are intended to be a flexible framework that can accommodate varying levels of analysis, effort, and availability of data. The key point is that the local government gains an understanding of how municipal decisions effect daily operational decisions while aiming to also enhance community quality of life.

iii) Inventory process

The Campaign methodology provides a simple, standardised process for monitoring, measuring, and reporting performance. ICLEI currently makes use of software for CCP™ and the Water Campaign™ that considerably eases the analytical work involved and permits quantitative comparisons among different cities within individual countries and across the globe.

Employing this methodology, cities across the globe have gained a new perspective on how daily municipal decisions affect local and global issues. In CCP™ case inventorying, energy use, and identifying sources of greenhouse gas emissions has linked what were thought to be unrelated items and provided a mechanism for integrated and strategic approaches to a broad range of issues; from local air quality and global climate change to effective municipal budget management and local economic development. With the knowledge gained, CCP™ participants have used their Local Action Plans to direct urban planning, transportation choices, and development decisions to positively affect local and global environmental quality.

iv) Value adding via ICLEI methods

ICLEI provides a full capacity-building approach across council. This method has been extremely successful in the Australian context. It includes a well tested and strategic Milestone Framework and quantification methodology combined with technical support and training workshops, political and media support, access to a range of resource materials and multiple networking opportunities across local government and other partners.

It also specifically provides:

- Multi-level political support, especially for elected officials;
- Support for senior management: our work with the Local Government Managers' Association (Aust/NZ) also ensures practical action;
- Support for Council officers and managers through networking opportunities, training and the provision of an on-line tool for inventories;
- Development of case studies of direct use to Councils; and
- Involvement of partners at all appropriate levels.

v) ICLEI's Quantification Methodology

ICLEI has been at the forefront of quantifying the multiple benefits that accrue from action at the local level. ICLEI's approach has been to ensure a thorough and transparent accounting system to quantify these benefits. In CCP™ to date it has focussed on the greenhouse gas reductions and financial investment made by councils as 2 key indicators for progress. Greenhouse abatement is a key indicator of the value of supporting Local government to reduce their emissions and financial savings also provide a strong indicator to the ongoing commitment made by councils.

ICLEI's Programs

As identified in the discussion paper, ICLEI agrees with the use of international best practice examples acting as a basis for any approach in Australia. Our modification of the internationally renowned Cities for Climate Protection™ Program for Australian conditions has thrust this program back into the international spotlight as Australia's program has become the largest and most successful.

Cities for Climate Protection™: Local Government taking action on greenhouse

There is a simple philosophy behind CCP™ - when communities and local government work together, the seemingly insurmountable task of cutting greenhouse gas emissions is achievable. It is a sensible approach, as when viewed in its entirety the greenhouse effect is daunting. Emission rates are rising, as are the number of headlines linking weather catastrophes to the greenhouse effect.

But what local governments in the Cities for Climate Protection™ (CCP™) Campaign are demonstrating is that "what's good for the climate is good for our city". CCP™ councils have discovered that addressing climate change makes good economic, environmental and political sense. In joining CCP™, councils have been able to show leadership on environmental issues while also addressing a range of economic and liveability issues that commonly appear on local government agendas.

Local Government has a significant role to play in greenhouse gas abatement

- As advocates for the development and implementation of appropriate goal-setting and strategic action;
- Implementation of direct actions such as increasing sustainable transport and utilising renewable energy sources in council run facilities;
- Implementation of management strategies such as incorporating eco-efficiency principles into new and redeveloped council buildings; and
- Direct influence over commercial sectors such as in setting laws pertaining to the development of new urban areas.

This international program is delivering action in Australia, Asia, Europe and America. In Australia, CCP™ is delivered through an unique partnership between ICLEI and the Australian Government through the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), a partnership based on two organisations bringing to CCP™ different and complementary strengths.

By Oct 2003, 180 local governments, representing 72% of this country's population were committed to achieving sustainable, long-term reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions through their participation in CCP™ Australia.

Operating in Australia for 6 years this mature program is demonstrating more than ever how councils can find innovative solutions to greenhouse problems. They are joining forces with local industry, forming partnerships with fellow councils, and undertaking initiatives to empower and influence their local communities.

The average reduction goal set by Australian councils is for 20% cut in emissions. Once a reduction goal is set, councils start to look and find areas for savings from simple corporate

measures like turning on the energy saving features at computers, switching cars to lower greenhouse emitting fuels sources, to broader higher greenhouse abatement actions that influence the whole municipality. Cities for Climate Protection™ (CCP™) Australia is the only local government program delivered by a Local Government Association that can demonstrate greenhouse gas abatement by its participant councils.

The Water Campaign™

Currently, ICLEI has 181 councils across Australia engaged in the CCP™ Program. This is proving to be a powerful recruitment tool as councils who have experienced the performance based milestone approach of CCP™ are now engaging in ICLEI's Water Campaign™.

The Water Campaign™ has the same performance based approach that ICLEI have used successfully with local governments in the CCP™ Campaign.

In participating in the Water Campaign™, Councils commit to progress through five Milestones, which will lead towards the sustainable management of our freshwater resources.

ICLEI's aim is to ensure that the local government sector plays its role fully in the water issue. We believe that we have received strong endorsement of this approach in the greenhouse debate, where it is recognised that local governments are playing a leading role in setting significant targets and implementing practical action.

Local Government has a significant role to play in local water action

Local Governments have an active role in local water action through:

- Implementation of direct actions in water consumption, such as more effective management of open space and recreation centres;
- Implementation of direct actions in water quality, such as retrofits to swimming pools, street-cleaning and depots and stormwater litter traps;
- Implementation of direct actions in local water management, such as drainage management incorporating water sensitive urban design and promoting water efficient technologies in buildings and open space;
- Indirect influence with local communities in water consumption, such as land use policies that encourage water sensitive urban design;
- Indirect influence with local communities in water quality, such as encouragement of sediment traps at construction sites and appropriate use and disposal of chemicals; and
- Significant influence in catchment management authorities and other regional approaches to water management, by bringing practical experience, political mandates and budgetary and policy responsibilities to the region.

Local governments have direct control over a large range of practical actions that are often highly visible to the community (such as watering of public open space) and therefore important in on-going educational activities.

As well, through policies and local partnerships, Councils have enormous influence in their local communities. If we are to ensure that the infrastructure that is built over the coming years is as sustainable as possible, then we will need to use the leverage of Council policies and Council's roles in actual implementation of these policies on the ground. This is also a great opportunity to develop long-term educational perspectives that are based in real action and involvement.

Actions in sustainable water management undertaken by councils allow them to take their place with other local governments, the private sector and community organisations, regional authorities and State and Federal bodies with demonstrated credibility. They also bring practical implementation approaches, real budgets, policy mechanisms and developed community consultation and involvement systems.

New Programs at ICLEI

Through their work with ICLEI, many local governments have identified a need to develop sustainable environmental business practices. They have also recognised that these need to be implemented not only in their own sphere of operations but in their sphere of influence within the wider community.

As such, over the past twelve months ICLEI has developed a range of programs of direct relevance to *Sustainable Cities 2025*. Local government participation is as important to these programs as it has been in CCPTTM and the Water CampaignTM and is proving to be just as effective. The following indicate the breath of interest by local government in challenging specific areas of interest applicable to Sustainable Cities.

Local Action 21: Local Action 21 was launched in 2002 at the WSSD Johannesburg Local Government Session; a four-day event that was attended by over 500 mayors and representatives from around the world. The attendees sought to establish a global action plan for sustainable development and ICLEI, as a key facilitator, has responded by developing several new programs for councils to undertake. The response to the Triple Bottom Line and Green Purchasing Pilot Program has demonstrated that Australian local government councils are enthusiastic about plotting a way forward to a sustainable future.

Triple Bottom Line Assessment Tool: The Triple Bottom Line approach seeks to integrate economic, social and environmental considerations to deliver sustainability.

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) services provided by ICLEI A/NZ are designed to build the capacity of local governments to achieve their sustainability goals through the application of TBL planning, decision-making and reporting methodologies.

ICLEI A/NZ works with local governments in the development of TBL decision making tools and reporting mechanisms, as well as offering training packages to support the implementation of the tools within councils.

To date, ICLEI has worked closely in the development of decision-making tools to support sustainability assessments in council reports with the Cities of Melbourne, Coffs Harbour and Wyndham. ICLEI has developed a TBL Best Practice in Local Government Report for Gosford City Council.

ICLEI and the City of Melbourne have also worked in partnership in the preparation of the TBL Toolkit. The Toolkit is currently being extended into a web portal to further facilitate information sharing between Australian and New Zealand local governments. The website will feature categorised tools, case studies, links and the new interactive TBL elements.

Green Purchasing Pilot Program: Green purchasing involves utilising products and services that have the lowest possible environmental impact during their lifecycle. Hundreds of local governments worldwide are implementing green purchasing policies in order to:

- Contribute towards improved environmental conditions;
- Influence the creation of sustainable markets and cleaner production processes; and
- Save money by engaging in smarter purchasing procedures.

The Green Purchasing Pilot Program commenced in October 2002 and is due for completion in December 2003. Ten local governments are participating in the Pilot Program. Through the Program the participating councils have engaged in:

- An analysis of council's current green purchasing policy, or guidance to establish a green purchasing policy;
- The ICLEI green purchasing process, its product assessment tools, and monitoring and quantification tools; and
- Tools to quantify the environmental benefits resulting from the implementation of green purchasing.

Leaders Managing for Sustainability: Leaders Managing for Sustainability is a twelve-month leadership program currently available to Victorian local government CEOs and middle managers and focussing on practical knowledge and integration tools to assist in the delivery of sustainable development in their respective councils. The two main themes that this Initiative is responding to are driven by the key challenges as articulated by the participants during the preliminary CEO interviews:

- How can a council structure its organisation to deliver on a sustainable development agenda?
- How can a council ensure that these changes are reflected in the annual budget?

The 12-month program includes:

- Interactive workshop forums, consisting of challenging and stimulating speakers at the forefront of environmental management and sustainable development, from national and international arenas, with follow-up workshops drawing out applicability and implications for the Local Government sector;
- Monthly individualised email bulletins;
- Participant project development; and
- Participant project presentations leading to a publication highlighting council outcomes.

Sustainable Transport Program: ICLEI has established a Sustainable Transport Unit that promotes the implementation of sustainable transport initiatives in CCP™ participant councils. The aim of the unit is to build the capacity of local government to implement sustainable transport by, providing practical examples and tools, demonstrating multiple benefits, and developing a forum to address implementation challenges.

Through a direct link to CCP™, local government are also implementing various approaches to Travel Demand Management (TDM). The CCP™ TDM Module assists Councils to identify suitable options that can be implemented in their own corporate operations and with their municipalities. TDM Strategies such as car pooling, trip planning and access guides, park and ride facilities, parking controls and pricing, cycling and pedestrian improvements, telecommuting and traffic calming are all being actively explored.

Alliances Initiative-international information exchange and co-operation: As part of CCPTM Plus, the Alliances Initiative is a mechanism that facilitates councils coming together as potential partners for information sharing, knowledge exchange and co-operative projects. Phase 1 of the initiative is underway and specifically focussed on Australia and New Zealand councils.

Alliances are delivered through Multilateral and Bilateral partnerships. The key difference being that multilateral alliances focus on specific topics and have multiple partners while bilateral alliances are similar in nature to a 'twinning' relationship with only two significant partners involved.