

I returned from Asia 2 years ago having led major studies on urban development and redevelopment in Asia for a decade. These studies included projects for Hong Kong Government Planning Department, finding sites and designing new cities with the aim of making these cities greener while still providing residential, commercial and industrial amenities for millions of people. I led the environmental component in dozens of such studies. I believe that this work provides me with some insight into issues facing Australia's major cities.

I was conscious on returning of the poor degree of planning and control in Australia for air pollution and noise particularly from transport systems. Low density development is already plagued by far higher noise and traffic related air pollution than necessary. These issues need to be addressed now or they will become too expensive to correct.

People do not use greener public transport systems unless they are frequent, well networked, cheap and totally dependable. This has been difficult to provide in Australia in the past due to low density development. This is changing and the time to decide the appropriate density levels of development for economic functioning of public transportation is now.

Consequently, I was delighted to see this discussion paper.

A friend and professional transport planner has been lecturing in Asia and Europe on the determination of optimal densities for cities to ensure reasonable air quality and noise conditions while providing sufficient densities for economic transport systems. We both agree that inner Paris is about the right density despite its age.

However, having worked intensively on minimising noise and air pollution in developments despite their density, I know that both macro and micro planning is necessary to solve many challenges. The choice of public transport systems is critical and can be very "green". I was delighted to see pedestrian and cycle paths, and travellers mentioned in the discussion paper.

Australia is well advanced in the technologies associated with storm water and its reuse. Too much paving leads to far more polluted storm water and drainage difficulties.

Indeed, the right questions are being asked. Just do not forget noise and air pollution when planning sustainable cities!

Regards,

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Secretary: *John Sawe*
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