



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strategic Planning for Sustainable Cities: public hearing on building designs and development

Canberra, Thursday 11 March 2004

The need for a national urban policy and more sustainable building designs will be the topic discussed at a public hearing in Canberra on Thursday, 11 March 2004. The public hearing is the fifth for the House of Representatives Environment Committee inquiry into sustainable cities.

As Australia moves to larger urban populations, the pressures on land, resource and waste management increase. To ensure that Australian cities of the future are clean, liveable and accessible places, the House of Representatives Environment and Heritage Committee is conducting an inquiry into *Sustainable Cities 2025*. The inquiry began late last year with the issuing of a 20-page discussion paper.

The *Sustainable Cities 2025* inquiry is looking at issues and policies relating to the impacts of sprawling urban development, measures to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continuing urban expansion and mechanisms for the Commonwealth to bring about urban development reform. The inquiry is also looking to develop a 'blueprint' for ecologically sustainable patterns of city settlement, with particular reference to eco-efficiency and equity in the provision of services and infrastructure.

The Environment Committee Chair, Mr Bruce Billson MP, says the inquiry will examine how cities of the future can meet the social, environmental and economic needs of Australia within the unique context of the Australian landscape.

"Integrating the built and natural environment in a sustainable manner requires planning and a clearly articulated strategy" Mr Billson said. "Identifying the issues and articulating a forward strategy for the nation is the target of this inquiry".

Appearing before the committee on Thursday are representatives of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) and the Property Council of Australia (PCA).

The RAIA is one of 96 member associations of the International Union of Architects and is represented on the International Practice Commission. The RAIA seeks to advance the professional development of the architectural profession and to progress good building design in relation to sustainability, quality of life and protection of the environment. The RAIA identifies in its submission 39 issues critical to the development of a sustainable Australian city. The issues range from air pollution to urban renewal and natural capital.

Nearly 2000 companies are members of the PCA, ranging from Australia's largest institutions to private investors. More than 40,000 individuals participate in PCA activities each year. The PCA presented two commissioned reports to the committee, "Recapitalising Australia's Cities" and "Funding Urban Public Infrastructure". The reports advocate the need for new systems of governance and funding to ensure the development of sustainable Australian cities.

PUBLIC HEARING

Venue: Committee Room 1R4
Parliament House, Canberra

11.00 a.m. Royal Australian Institute of Architects [submission 159]

11:40 a.m. Property Council of Australia

For **media comment**, contact: Bruce Billson, House Environment Committee Chair, on (02) 6277 4879.

For **background information, including submissions, and copies of the discussion paper**, please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ

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