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Dear Peter,

**THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY:
CHAPTER 6: SUSTAINABILITY AND SETTLEMENTS**

I have confirmed my comments on the Sustainability Strategy to the first three sections of Chapter 6: Sustainability and Settlements, since my interests are primarily with regard creating more sustainable patterns of urban development.

The first three sections of this chapter spell out the vision, objectives, actions underway, strategies and indicators. It would, however, be useful to develop a spatial development strategy based on sustainable development principles in this chapter of the Sustainability Strategy. This would be useful to plan for more sustainable patterns of urban development, pulling together the main strands in the first three sections of the chapter.

I am, however, impressed by the action taken to date tackle this issue, especially the work on Liveable Neighbourhoods and the emerging work on revitalising the suburbs. This places Western Australia amongst the leaders in the field.

I hope these comments are helpful to your task of taking forward the strategy.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bach

SECURING MORE SUSTAINABLE PATTERNS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT: COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 6 OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

In land-use and transport planning terms the main challenge is to develop more sustainability patterns of urban development through:

- better planned extensions to existing urban areas;
- restructuring in areas of decline, such as country towns and declining urban areas;
- increasing the sustainability of existing urban areas as the opportunities arise, through more intensive reuse of land in areas where existing or proposed public transport will support it and be supported by it; and
- supporting land-use change with appropriate transport investment.

This could be secured by:

- A statewide strategy with planning policies to which local authority land-use plans must conform-eg making Liveable Neighbourhoods Code mandatory;
- Encouragement to achieve good practice through demonstration projects; and
- Intervention by the State Government to decide major planning applications where local planning authorities propose to allow developments which conflict with State planning policy – ie to ensure major new developments help implement the strategy for securing sustainable patterns of urban development.

Questions:

Do you have statewide planning and transport policies and proposals for tackling each type of sustainability issue? Is this the “statewide development framework”?

If so, can the State Government through its planning and transport powers secure its aims through ensuring compliance of local plans and through direct intervention? Can it intervene to secure compliance with the Liveable Neighbourhoods Code?

Chapter 6: Sustainability and settlements

The strategy is presented under the headings of:

Managing urban and regional growth through:

- shaping and managing the growth of expanding urban areas;
- reusing previously-developed land by developed land before using Greenfield site;
- making more efficient use of land by developing at higher densities in appropriate locations; and

- phasing the release of land to ensure that more sustainable locations, such as areas with highest levels of access to public transport and local services are developed first.

revitalising declining centres and suburbs through:

- making strategic choices about which centres should be the focus for regeneration and suburban revitalisation;
- developing a strategy for reviving the suburbs focused on existing town and district centres; and
- demonstration projects for community revitalisation

integrating land use and balanced transport

Comment:

Need for Framework for Chapter 6

The main elements-managing growth, using growth to regenerate centres and create more sustainable suburbs, and integrating land use and transport – all there. The chapter would, however, be more effective if this three-pronged strategy for securing more sustainable patterns of urban development. The current chapter needs as integrating device for presenting a more integrated approach to sustainable urban development.

In terms of new initiatives, the following seem essential to improve effective implantation:

- **to develop a statewide strategy and policies** for securing more sustainable patterns of urban development through:
 - urban growth management
 - reviving the suburbs,
 - regenerating town centres and
 - strengthening country towns;

to ensure that the transport strategy is an integral part of the statewide strategy

Securing the above as an integrated policy package would go beyond anything that has been achieved so far in the United Kingdom. In England we have strong sectoral planning policies for location of development and integrated land-use planning (PPG3), housing (PPG3), and for town centres (PPG6), but theses are not a substitute for an integrated strategy at regional or, in particular, sub-regional level for securing more sustainable patterns of urban development.

To support the main planning policy guidance notes (PPGs) we are developing good practice guidance for each PPG. This too has tended to be sectoral, although we did attempt to pull together the elements of sustainable urban development on “Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice” (DETR, 1998). Nevertheless, there is still a need for a more coherent and developed statement of how to plan for more sustainable patterns of urban development – practice has moved on a lot since 1998.

We are now developing new legislation which require regions to prepare regional spatial strategies, with an express statutory duty to secure sustainable development. These will be statutory plans for the region which also provide the sub-regional strategies, to which local development documents (formally called local plans) must conform. They too must seek to achieve sustainable development. The regional spatial strategy has to provide a coherent vision of sustainable urban development for the region. That is the next step.

A statewide spatial development strategy and sub-regional strategies

This could well be the next step for Western Australia – a statewide strategy with sub-regional strategies that exemplify/articulate how particular sub-regions should develop in line with the sustainable urban development principles/policies of the statewide strategy. This would need to be fully integrated with the statewide and sub-regional transport strategies to demonstrate that transport investment underpins the spatial development strategy.

In “In short...” sections on pages 135, 138 and 141-142 contain many of the elements of such a strategy – it now needs a framework which translates the aims, objectives, strategies and actions into a spatial strategy.

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