

Congratulations on the Consultation Draft of the WA State Sustainability Strategy. I am impressed with its value as a vision and means of developing sustainability as a unifying principle, central to State policy, and support the overall strategy and many details.

I will not attempt to comment on the details but will merely comment on an issue that may have been overlooked and I submit is worthy of a specific subsection ie. State Government land sales.

I comment as a member of the public with an interest in community building and affordable housing and as a member of a community non-profit group ready to invest time and money in building sustainably at community level.

We would like to develop a community of 30 to 60 households (see attached briefing notes). We seek suitable medium density land at reasonable cost in order to build a mix of equity and rental residences (offering a supportive community with social and economic diversity) in the metro area and within sustainability principles.

A major difficulty is finding sufficient area of land for this number of households on which we will not be outbid by a property developer looking to develop a conventional (generally low density subdivision) in the belief that this is the means to maximise profit.

The government, as a major owner of suitable land, is in a position to counter this tendency in private development by selectively making its own land sales subject to a sustainability audit at the proposal stage and sustainability conditions on the sale. This I believe, will not reduce the financial returns to government but will require some in practice (not merely in principle) support by government and its agencies.

There appears to be significant residential land coming up for sale as a result of school amalgamations and, notwithstanding that they appear to me to be unsustainable, the resulting land freed up, with the right conditions, offers the opportunity for demonstration projects on sustainable communities all over the metro area.

Having briefly outlined what could be done, I give the following instance of how the Education Department is intent on selling off land this year in a way that is the antithesis of the draft strategy.

The Claremont proposal is at the stage of submissions for re-zoning by the owner (Ed Dept) to Claremont Town Council. The problem is the local community support for single residential lots and demolition of school (heritage?) has been translated via a focus group and consultant's report into Ed Dept proposal.

This will produce 18 single residential lots (despite Town planning policy for higher densities within 1 km of stations, which this is) 20% public open space (despite 10% being the prescribed minimum) and a large area sold to extend backyards - presumably because it has no easy street access (which would make it ideal for community housing with peripheral vehicle spaces).

Not a bad deal for the local residents, you might say, but it does nothing to further state govt's commitment to sustainable development, affordable housing or even maximising returns from sale of government land.

Looking at the draft plans, a modified proposal by our group would seek to acquire (on favourable terms but at market valuation) 7 of the planned 18 lots plus the area proposed to be sold off for backyards.

If that area can be rezoned R40, we can build over 30 units and guarantee to preserve the heritage school buildings which may be partly turned into units and part common house.

Additionally if the small community school currently on the site could get a small group of investors together, they could have enough land for the existing modern classrooms by buying a further 3 or 4 lots. The existing school hall, being on Public Open Space as planned, may be shared by school, village community and locals.

I trust this illustrates my recommendation - a sustainability audit of Education Department and other government land sales is urgently needed.

Regards
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The Village Community Association is a non profit organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act*. It has formal membership of five, who comprise the Planning Group, and a broader network of prospective residents. We are a mixed group of men and women, single, married, parents and children. Our ages are from 20+ to 65+ years and our financial positions range from the established professional or business person to the person with special need qualifying for rent assistance in affordable rental accommodation.

The Association seeks to build a strata title development with mixed private equity and rental units in the ratio of 2:1 plus shared common areas. We propose a community of thirty to sixty households giving a critical mass of numbers for our desired diversity and to allow for some members with special need housing. We are committed to being inclusive rather than exclusive and to encourage mutual support.

We have evidence of demand for such a planned community life style. There are retired persons who wish to live in community but not restricted to one age group as in a retirement village. There are single parents who wish to have a supportive network of friends around them and those with disabilities who wish to avoid isolation. Our incorporated body has agreed rules, decision making processes and conflict resolution procedures.

We are seeking urban land suitable for strata development, approximately size ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 square metres, zoned R40/60 and near to public transport.

Private equity will finance most of our proposed housing, but the rental units for affordable housing will require a financial structure which will allow payment for the land and building to be spread over years as has been successfully negotiated by certain Community Housing providers in Perth. Application for Ministry of Housing joint venture funds is anticipated.

This proposal is expected to prove attractive to residents who will achieve quality housing in a supportive community. The broader community is expected to similarly benefit by having the sense of community strengthened and diversity enriched.