

19 August 2010

Ms Sara Stace
Major Cities Unit
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email: ourcities@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Ms Stace,

RE: GBCA SUBMISSION TO THE AUSTRALIAN URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the draft framework for an urban design protocol for Australian cities. The GBCA supports the draft framework and applauds the Major Cities Unit for the work which has gone into this initiative.

Australia is faced with significant long-term challenges including population growth and demographic change, housing affordability, transport congestion, energy and resource limitations and climate change. The GBCA recognises the importance of good urban design in creating a more productive, sustainable and liveable Australia.

The GBCA is Australia's leading authority on green building, established in 2002 to develop a sustainable property industry in Australia and drive the adoption of green building practices. The GBCA promotes green building programs, technologies, design practices and processes, and operates Australia's only national voluntary comprehensive environmental rating system for buildings - Green Star.

The GBCA has more than 930 member organisations, including government departments, which work together to support the Council and its activities. The GBCA is also a founding member of the World Green Building Council, which was established to provide a federated 'union' of national green building councils with a common goal to support the sustainable transformation of the global property industry; there are now 86 such councils worldwide.

Green Star – Communities

As you will be aware, in 2009 the GBCA commenced work, in consultation with government and industry, on the development of a rating tool for sustainable development projects on a community scale.

We are continuing to build support and commitment for the project across all levels of government and industry. In 2010, we announced a national sponsorship agreement with every state and territory Government Land Organisation, and in 2011, we announced a sponsorship agreement with the Major Cities Unit. We believe these partnerships will secure the tool's position as a national benchmark for government and industry projects and as an important resource that will help to inform the development of an urban design protocol for Australia.

The first step in developing the Green Star – Communities rating tool was to develop a national framework consisting of five best practice principles:

1. Enhance liveability
2. Create opportunities for economic prosperity
3. Foster environmental responsibility
4. Embrace design excellence
5. Demonstrate visionary leadership and strong governance

The close alignment of the Green Star Communities principles with the five goals outlined in the Australian Urban Design Protocol highlights how government and industry are already taking a coordinated approach to creating more sustainable communities and that this partnership should be reinforced wherever possible. Green Star Communities will be a vehicle for building support for the protocol within industry.

The GBCA is now working on Stage 2 of the Green Star Communities project; establishing best practice benchmarks and developing credits. The Australian Urban Design Protocol will be referenced in the design category of the Green Star Communities rating tool.

Working together to deliver better outcomes

The key objective of the Green Star rating tools is to create a common language for green buildings, and with the Green Star – Communities tool, a common language that can form the basis for the sustainable design of projects on a precinct, community or city scale. The GBCA supports the aim of the Australian Urban Design Protocol to create a common language for urban design and we believe the continuing collaboration of government and industry will deliver the best outcomes.

The GBCA is working directly with the Major Cities Unit to develop a tool kit for best practice, case studies and additional resources that will support a framework for the practice and delivery of urban design. The GBCA also supports continued funding for the development of relevant materials that will encourage best practice and continuous improvement in this area.

The GBCA brings a wealth of knowledge and research gained from extensive consultation with stakeholders in industry and all levels of government. The GBCA has been a strong supporter of the Australian Government's involvement in developing a national urban policy and we anticipate the delivery of the Australian Urban Design Protocol will lead to a number of the objectives of the National Urban Policy being realised.

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council's Call to Action

In March 2011, the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) called for a streamlined, coordinated approach to urban management policy. Bold leadership is required to foster greater consistency and alignment across the policy and planning initiatives affecting our built environment. ASBEC strongly urges the Australian Government to appoint a Minister for Cities and Urban Development to deliver integrated building, precinct and city policy and programs.

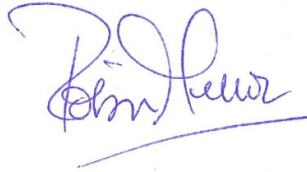
ASBEC identified nearly 40 Australian Government programs, strategies and incentives which impact on the built environment. This highlights how important it will be for the Australian Urban Design Protocol to collaborate with existing programs and measures in order to achieve the best outcomes.

We look forward to continuing to work together with the Australian Government and other stakeholders to establish a common language for the urban design and to help deliver world class urban design and architecture.

Yours sincerely,



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