

Cities Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
1 National Circuit,
BARTON ACT 2600

Via email: cities@pmc.gov.au

24 June 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION ON SMART CITIES PLAN

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) commends the Turnbull Government for renewing the discussion on our cities, on its commitment that priority will be placed on investments that improve environmental outcomes, and the promise to encourage the use of rating tool systems such as Green Star as a means to define best practice outcomes and verify performance.

Since its inception in 2002, the GBCA has worked towards inspiring, influencing and empowering the property and construction industry by driving the adoption of sustainable building and community practices. To effectively respond to rapid changes facing our cities in the context of globalisation, resilience and adaptation, technological advances and shifting social demands, the mandate of the GBCA extended and evolved beyond green buildings to address the broader challenge of catalysing a sustainable cities movement.

The GBCA appreciates the opportunity to provide comment as part of the public consultation on the Smart Cities Plan. Comments from the GBCA are outlined below.

1. *Green Star – Communities can provide a critical set of investment metrics for City Deals.*

The Green Star – Communities rating tool is currently influencing the design and delivery of over 50 large-scale community developments around the country – from Barangaroo South in Sydney, which will house 23,000 workers each day, to Aura on the Sunshine Coast, which will be home to 50,000 people, to Brisbane Airport, Curtin University and Tonsley, in South Australia. More information about Green Star – Communities is found at Appendix A.

Green Star – Communities can provide a pathway to fundamentally assist government with the implementation of City Deals. The five overarching principles of Green Star – Communities can provide practical, high-level planning direction for City Deals in its pursuit of nationally and locally informed objectives such as increased economic growth, job creation, housing affordability and environmental outcomes.

Additionally, the credits in the rating tool provide guidance and best practice benchmarks that have been developed after extensive collaboration with industry, academia and government – including every government land organisation in the country as well as being benchmarked globally. The rating tool has been tested on a number of projects, and is now being applied to a number of iconic projects around Australia, including the Fisherman's Bend urban renewal project in Victoria, which will deliver housing for 60,000 people.

Due to the holistic nature of its credits, the GBCA believes the Green Star – Communities rating system can serve as a critical set of investment metrics for City Deals. Following, you will find the identified purpose of each of the five categories in Green Star – Communities, and how they align with the City Deals model.

Category	Utility as a metric for City Deals
Liveability	Recognises developments that deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe, accessible and culturally-rich communities • healthy and active lifestyles • high level of amenity, activity and inclusiveness
Economic Prosperity	Recognises developments that promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prosperity and productivity • affordable living and housing • investment in education and skills development • facilitation of community-capacity building • greater productivity via emerging opportunities in the digital economy
Environment	Recognises developments that promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced negative impacts on sensitive ecosystems and the natural environment (land, water and atmosphere) • resource management and efficiency by promoting infrastructure, transport, and buildings • reduced ecological footprints
Innovation	Recognises developments that encourage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spread of innovative practices, processes and strategies that promote sustainable communities and cities
Governance	Recognises developers and developments that demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sectoral leadership by establishing and maintaining strong governance practices • engagement, transparency, and community and industry capacity building.

2. A Smart City needs to be sustainable through the pursuit of ‘smart growth’ principles.

A smart city needs to be a sustainable city, and indeed ‘smart’ must be embraced as a means to catalyse and accelerate many sustainable city-building opportunities. Smart cities encompass the principles of ‘smart growth’, so that the communities we build are sustainable. This includes:

1. Provide a mix of land uses
2. Take advantage of compact building design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighbourhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

A distinguishable feature of Green Star – Communities is that it encourages smart growth principles within community - and precinct-scale development - a scale that has been unprecedented in Australia. At such a scale, we would be able to drive targeted investment that is efficient, manageable, and has a positive impact on people’s lives.

3. Infrastructure Financing Unit should prioritise investments with integrated sustainable outcomes.

We applaud the Australian Government's commitment to establish an Infrastructure Financing Unit, and strongly recommend that it have a core performance area of sustainable infrastructure financing. This means prioritising investment that leverages value and opportunity across boundaries and individual sites, and works to break down regulatory barriers to energy and water systems that reduce our carbon liability, and support our net-zero aspirations. The Government should play a key role in helping co-fund pilot projects that have the vision and support to break down these barriers, and advance leadership projects that serve as 'learning laboratories', and are built on strong collaborative relationships between public, private and non-profit sectors.

4. A 'people-oriented' approach to technological solutions is fundamental to optimum, sustainable outcomes.

With respect to the smart technology pillar of the Plan, while the GBCA supports the application of technology and harnessing of data to facilitate more sustainable decisions, it is important that the Government does not lose sight of the fact that cities are built for people by people, and that a 'people-oriented' approach to technology solutions is fundamental.

The Plan's statement that "We need to encourage a technology-first approach" is at odds with the latest approach to the smart cities agenda. In fact, a technology first approach has not worked, as evidenced in many markets around the world. As government and technology providers around the world transition to a more people-oriented approach to smart cities, greater benefits are being realised to enhance prosperity, wellbeing and sustainability. Examples of this include the Obama Administration's Smart Cities Initiative which provided national funding to pilot projects that facilitated the participation of citizens and community organisations in smart cities investments.

Realising the vision of the plan

The GBCA commends the Australian Government on the *Smart Cities Plan* as it has significant potential to drive investment in projects that can improve the sustainability of our cities. As the Plan notes, focus on strategic investment comes at a critical time when infrastructure is needed to maintain productivity and output growth to ensure a globally competitive economy. Taking a 'smart' approach that is people-focused will present great opportunities.

While infrastructure is a key economic investment, the GBCA believes that a city cannot be 'smart' if it is not sustainable, thus the Plan must also capitalise on the opportunity for long term investment in sustainability. Accordingly, Green Star – Communities provides a holistic framework that would enable the balanced integration of social, environmental and economic objectives into the implementation of City Deals.

The GBCA will continue to work closely with its key industry partners on the City Deals model, such as the Property Council of Australia, and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how Green Star – Communities can help to inform City Deals and contribute to better outcomes for Australia's cities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Luke Farr, Manager – Advocacy on 02 8239 6200, or via email at luke.farr@gbca.org.au, for further information or to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,



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APPENDIX A

About Green Star – Communities

Developed in 2009, Green Star – Communities responded to the need for a rating tool for sustainable projects on a community scale; examining issues of economic, social and environmental importance. Green Star – Communities was developed in consultation with industry and all levels of government including the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, all state government land organisations and several local councils. The first step was to develop a national framework consisting of five best practice principles:

- Enhance liveability
- Create opportunities for economic prosperity
- Foster environmental responsibility
- Embrace design excellence
- Demonstrate visionary leadership and strong governance.

Since the rating tool was launched in 2012, 12 precinct and community-scale projects have achieved Green Star – Communities certification, and the GBCA is working with more than 50 projects across Australia. Certified projects to date include:

- Alkimos Beach, WA, by Lendlease
- Aurora, VIC, by Lendlease
- Brisbane Airport, QLD, by Brisbane Airport Corporation
- Caloundra South on the Sunshine Coast, QLD, by Stockland
- Curtin Master Plan, WA, by Curtin University
- Ecco Ripley, QLD, by Sekisui House Australia
- Fairwater, NSW, by Frasers Property Group
- Darling Harbour Regeneration Project, NSW, by Lendlease
- Barangaroo South, NSW, by Lendlease
- Googong Township, NSW, by Googong Township Pty
- Tonsley, SA, by Renewal SA
- Burwood East, Vic, by Frasers Property Group