

# MINUTES

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## COMMUNITY FOCUS COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY 14 AUGUST 2018

7.12PM

GEELONG WEST TOWN HALL  
PAKINGTON STREET  
GEELONG WEST

**COUNCIL:**

Cr B Harwood (Kardinia Ward)  
Mayor

Cr S Asher (Bellarine Ward)  
Cr J Mason (Bellarine Ward)  
Cr T Sullivan (Bellarine Ward)  
Cr E Kontelj (Brownbill Ward)  
Cr S Mansfield (Brownbill Ward)  
Cr P Murrhy (Brownbill Ward)  
Cr R Nelson (Kardinia Ward)  
Cr P Murnane (Kardinia Ward)  
Cr A Aitken (Windermere Ward)  
Cr K Grzybek (Windermere Ward)

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**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY FOCUS COUNCIL MEETING  
OF THE GREATER GEELONG CITY COUNCIL  
HELD AT THE GEELONG WEST TOWN HALL  
PAKINGTON STREET, GEELONG WEST  
TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST 2018  
COMMENCING AT 7.25PM**

**PRESENT:** Cr B Harwood (Mayor), Crs A Aitken, S Asher, K Grzybek, E Kontelj, S Mansfield, J Mason, P Murnane, P Murrhy, R Nelson, T Sullivan

**Also present:** M Cutter (Chief Executive Officer), J Van Slageren (Acting Director Manager Planning and Development), B Luxford (Director Investment & Attraction), G Wilson-Browne (Director City Services), F Gray (Acting Director Community Life), P Anderson (Director Finance & Strategy), A Keen (Executive Manager People and Organisation Development), R Leonard (Executive Manager Governance & Legal Services)

**OPENING:** The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.25pm.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Council acknowledged Wadawurrung Traditional Owners of this land and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.

**APOLOGIES:** Nil.

**WELCOME:**

The Mayor welcomed a group of twelve delegates from Coffs Harbour City Council which included the Mayor, four Councillors and seven staff. The delegation are in Geelong on a two day study tour looking at a variety of projects, in particular the Geelong Waterfront Precinct, Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, Geelong Art Gallery, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Central Geelong Revitalisation, including Laneway Activation and Green Spine.

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:**

**Cr Asher moved, Cr Murnane seconded -**

**That the Minutes of the Community Focus Council Meeting held on 10 July 2018 be confirmed.**

**Carried.**

**DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** Nil.

Cr Grzybek declared a Direct Interest in Agenda Item 6, Building Better Bike Connections - Western Link, in that she is an employee of TAC.

### **3. PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT - ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) LOCAL POLICY**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Source:</b>          | <b>Planning and Development - Planning Strategy</b>                        |
| <b>Acting Director:</b> | <b>Joanne van Slageren</b>   |
| <b>Index Reference:</b> | <b>Subject: Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Local Policy</b> |
| <b>Portfolio:</b>       | <b>Sustainable Development</b>   |

#### **Purpose**

To request endorsement from Council to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment to introduce an environmentally sustainable development local planning policy into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

#### **Background**

A proposed Local Planning Policy (Attachment 2) has been prepared to encourage environmentally sustainable development (ESD) outcomes to be achieved in a manner that will ensure new developments achieve best practice and ensure more developments achieve above mandatory building standards.

The introduction of a local planning policy follows an 18 month Council led ESD pilot program which that the internal referral process did not impact timeframes for the assessment of applications. Attachment 3 includes a report of the pilot program. The policy builds on a significant body of work undertaken at the local and state level to improve the integration of ESD into the planning system. To date, similar ESD policies have been successfully implemented by ten Victorian councils, with another seven in train.

#### **Key Issues**

- The proposed local policy will require that multi-unit, mixed use and commercial development include an ESD assessment as part of the planning permit process.
- The proposed local policy will ensure that development achieves best practice in environmental sustainability, from the design stage through to construction and operation.
- Assessment of medium to large scale and complex applications will be undertaken by an ESD officer and small applications will be assessed by the statutory planners.
- The proposal strongly aligns with the Council Plan, the Clever and Creative Vision, Environmental Management Strategy, and the Low Carbon Growth Plan for Geelong. There are clear positive economic, social and environmental benefits to be gained through improved sustainable development outcomes in planning.

**Cr Mason moved, Cr Asher seconded -**

**That Council resolve to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit an amendment to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme to include an Environmentally Sustainable Development Local Planning Policy and consequential changes to the municipal strategic statement.**

**Carried.**

## **Attachment 1**

### ***Policy/Legal/Statutory Implications***

The report proposes the introduction of new policy into the planning scheme via a planning scheme amendment process. Attachment 2 includes a summary of the proposed policy and application and a copy of the draft policy provisions.

### ***Financial Implications***

The implementation of the local policy can be managed with existing resources. Not all applications that trigger an ESD assessment will need to be referred to an ESD Officer. However, this will mean that statutory planners will require extra training to be able to assess Sustainable Design Assessments that are submitted with planning applications.

### ***Community Engagement***

Over the past 18 month trial period, the concept of ESD has been introduced to the community. An ESD Officer has been available from the pre-application stage, and through the planning application process. The ESD Officer has been available to provide free advice, with some applicants using the service multiple times before submitting an application.

An amendment under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 will include public consultation.

### ***Social Equity Considerations***

A local ESD policy will facilitate sustainable built form outcomes which will provide affordable living outcomes over the life of the building for commercial and residential occupiers. As ongoing servicing costs will be reduced, it will have a positive community benefit

### ***Alignment to Council Plan***

Council Plan 2018-2022, continues our commitment to make the city a more sustainable place to live and work.

The strategic priorities for planned sustainable development include having planning controls in place to require a mandatory sustainable design assessment for all new developments.

### ***Environmental Implications***

Currently, residential and non-residential buildings making up more than two-thirds of the total annual carbon emissions in the Geelong region. Aside from this, the construction of buildings, including demolition waste, contributes to 40% of all materials sent to landfill. During operation buildings use large amounts of potable water for non-drinking purposes.

The amendment is expected to have a positive effect on environmental outcomes as it requires new developments to achieve best practice ESD outcomes. It provides a framework for early consideration of environmental sustainability at the building design stage ensuring that developments are above minimum standards and achieve best practice outcomes by introducing objectives for the above mentioned ESD principles.

The Low Carbon Growth Plan for Geelong identifies the significant carbon emission reduction benefit from focusing on reducing energy costs (heating and cooling) from residential and commercial buildings.

## Attachment 2

### Proposed Draft Planning Policy

The ESD policy will introduce objectives for the following ESD principles to ensure that developments achieve best practice in development applications:

Energy Performance

Water Resources

Indoor Environment Quality

Stormwater Management

Transport

Waste Management

Urban Ecology

The proposed policy will apply in instances when a planning permit application is already required by the planning scheme. The proposal will ensure that development achieves best practice in environmental sustainability, from the design stage through to construction and operation. This will ensure that a greater number of proposed developments will incorporate ESD measures beyond minimum standards, to the benefit of the wider community of Greater Geelong.

Advice from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is that the policy must be practically identical to the ESD policies recently introduced by the Cities of Darebin and Manningham in Amendment GC42. The only variation should be the specific planning triggers that are set, with the rest of the policy and objectives remaining the same.

A copy of the proposed policy – *Clause 22.68 ESD local planning policy* follows this summary introduction.

### Application requirements

Table 1 outlines the two types of ESD reports that applicants will be required to submit alongside their planning applications. The level of assessment necessary is determined by the size of the proposed development:

- For small-to-medium developments a **Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA)** is a simple sustainability assessment of a proposed design at the planning stage. An SDA can be prepared by the applicant. Submitting a Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) report, will satisfy the application requirements for a SDA;
- For large developments a **Sustainable Management Plan (SMP)** is a detailed assessment of a proposed design at the planning stage. An SMP requires more information about performance outcomes and how a higher level of sustainability will be achieved, and usually requires engaging a consultant.

The key tool used to assess the sustainability performance of a development is BESS, which is a free online tool developed specifically for Victorian local governments. It provides a sustainability rating for residential, non-residential and mixed-use developments. Alternatively, Green Star rating is a more complex tool and also provides holistic ratings.

The outcomes of the Sustainable Design Assessment Pilot program are highlighted in the *Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) – Pilot Assessment report – attachment 3*.

The outcomes of the pilot, the identified potential environmental benefits, and an analysis of permit statistics of Greater Geelong determined the recommended threshold triggers for the ESD Policy, outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Proposed ESD Application Triggers and Application Requirements**

| TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT   | APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS  | Example tools                        |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Accommodation/Mixed Use with residential component of:</b>   |   |                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2-9 dwellings</li> <li>▪ Developments of a building for accommodation other than dwellings with gross floor area of 100m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>  | Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA)                             | BESS<br>STORM                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 or more new dwellings;</li> <li>▪ Development of a building for accommodation other than dwellings with a gross floor area of more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>   | Sustainability Management Plan (SMP)<br>Green Travel Plan (GTP) | Green Star<br>MUSIC<br>STORM         |
| <b>Non-Residential:</b>   |   |                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of a non-residential building with a gross floor area of 300m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup>; or</li> <li>▪ Alterations and additions creating between 300m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup> of additional gross floor area (excluding outbuildings).</li> </ul> | Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA)                             | BESS<br>MUSIC<br>STORM               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of a non-residential building with a gross floor area of more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>; or</li> <li>▪ Alterations and additions more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>  | Sustainability Management Plan (SMP)<br>Green Travel Plan (GTP) | BESS<br>Green Star<br>MUSIC<br>STORM |

The SDA or SMP will be assessed as part of the planning permit application and conditions will be included on resulting planning permits to give effect to the recommendations of the ESD assessment.

The policy is worded to allow flexibility in meeting the objectives of the policy, and a fit-for-purpose solution will be sought in each individual application.

### **Interaction with the Building Legislation**

Concerns about the potential for overlap and conflict of an ESD planning policy with the National Construction Code (NCC) has been deliberated at length in the previous Group Council Amendments. The findings of the most recent GC42 panel states:

- *The policy does not overlap or contravene the role of the NCC because the NCC only seeks to achieve minimum compliance, whereas considering and incorporating ESD at the planning stage allows an opportunity to exceed minimum compliance through using basic passive design principles which is best done at project conception.*
- *The NCC does not cover passive design, water use reduction (except for class 1 buildings), stormwater pollution, materials and waste which all need to be considered to create a sustainable building.*

### **Interaction with subdivision**

The City has been collaborating with eight other regional councils on an ESD Subdivision Policy proof of concept study for regional Victoria. The key findings of the work showed there are clear social, economic and environmental benefits associated with ESD in regional subdivisions. These benefits differ across Victoria's climate regions, as does the nature and capacity of councils and the residential development industry. While the period of analysis was 30 years, the life of a residential subdivision is much more enduring and so subdivision-wide sustainability measures warrant greater consideration.

It is not proposed to include a sustainable subdivision local policy at this time. There is further opportunity for work collaboratively with government and industry to build awareness of the benefits of ESD, strengthen policy and guidelines, use voluntary tools and assessments and undertake demonstration projects.

The *Environmentally Sustainable Design for Subdivisions in Regional Victoria* report is available at [www.geelongaustralia.com.au/strategicplanning](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/strategicplanning).

## **DRAFT LOCAL POLICY**

### **22 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES**

#### **22.## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Proposed c##

This policy applies throughout the City of Greater Geelong to residential and non-residential development that requires a planning permit in accordance with the thresholds in Table 1 of this Policy.

##### **22.##-1 Policy Basis**

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Proposed C##

This policy builds on and implements the sustainability objectives and strategies expressed in Clause 21.02 of the Municipal Strategic Statement relating to environmentally sustainable development (ESD).

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to delivering environmentally sustainable development that responds to climate change. Critical to achieving this commitment is for development to incorporate appropriate environmental design standards.

This policy provides a framework for early consideration of environmental sustainability at the building design stage in order to achieve the following efficiencies and benefits:

- Easier compliance with building requirements through passive design;
- Reduction of costs over the life of the building;
- Improved affordability over the longer term through reduced running costs;
- Improved amenity and liveability;
- More environmentally sustainable urban form; and
- Integrated water management.

If Environmentally Sustainable Development is not considered at the time of planning approval, the ability to achieve environmentally sustainable development may be compromised by the time these matters are considered as part of a building approval. In addition, there may be difficulties or extra costs associated with retrofitting the development to implement environmentally sustainable design principles.

This policy does not prescribe performance outcomes. The policy enables the provision of information and provides decision guidelines which will assist in the assessment of whether development meets environmentally sustainable design principles.

This policy complements a range of non-statutory measures aimed at encouraging environmentally sustainable development. These measures include educating residents and applicants, assisting applicants to use Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) tools, leading by example with Council projects, promotion of exemplary private projects and promotion of the use of materials with favourable life cycle impacts.

##### **22.##-2 Objectives**

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Proposed C##

The overarching objective is that development should achieve best practice in environmentally sustainable development from the design stage through to construction and operation.

In the context of this policy best practice ESD is defined as a combination of commercially proven techniques, methodologies and systems, appropriate to the scale of development and site specific opportunities and constraints, which are demonstrated and locally available and have already led to optimum ESD outcomes. Best practice in the built environment encompasses the full life of the build.

It is a policy objective to encourage innovative technology, design and processes in all development, which positively influence the sustainability of buildings.

The following objectives should be satisfied where applicable:

**Energy performance**

- To improve the efficient use of energy, by ensuring development demonstrates design potential for ESD initiatives at the planning stage.
- To reduce total operating greenhouse gas emissions.
- To reduce energy peak demand through particular design measures (eg, appropriate building orientation, shading to glazed surfaces, optimise glazing to exposed surfaces, space allocation for solar panels and external heating and cooling systems).

**Water resources**

- To improve water efficiency.
- To reduce total operating potable water use.
- To encourage the collection and reuse of stormwater.
- To encourage the appropriate use of alternative water sources (eg. greywater).

**Indoor environment quality**

- To achieve a healthy indoor environment quality for the wellbeing of building occupants, including the provision of fresh air intake, cross ventilation, and natural daylight.
- To achieve thermal comfort levels with minimised need for mechanical heating, ventilation and cooling.
- To reduce indoor air pollutants by encouraging use of materials with low toxicity chemicals.
- To reduce reliance on mechanical heating, ventilation, cooling and lighting systems.
- To minimise noise levels and noise transfer within and between buildings and associated external areas.

**Stormwater management**

- To reduce the impact of stormwater run-off.
- To improve the water quality of stormwater run-off.
- To achieve best practice stormwater quality outcomes.
- To incorporate the use of water sensitive urban design, including stormwater re-use.

**Transport**

- To ensure that the built environment is designed to promote the use of walking, cycling and public transport, in that order.
- To minimise car dependency.
- To promote the use of low emissions vehicle technologies and supporting infrastructure.

### **Waste management**

- To ensure waste avoidance, reuse and recycling during the design, construction and operation stages of development.
- To ensure durability and long term reusability of building materials.
- To ensure sufficient space is allocated for future change in waste management needs, including (where possible) composting and green waste facilities.

### **Urban ecology**

- To protect and enhance biodiversity within the municipality.
- To provide environmentally sustainable landscapes and natural habitats, and minimise the urban heat island effect.
- To encourage the retention of significant trees.
- To encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation.
- To encourage the provision of space for productive gardens, particularly in larger residential developments.

### **22.##-3 Policy**

DD/MM/YYYY  
Proposed C##

It is policy to ensure innovative technology, design and processes positively influence the sustainability of all development.

It is policy that applications for the types of development listed in Table 1 be accompanied by information which demonstrates how relevant policy objectives will be achieved.

It is policy that applications for larger non-residential developments (as specified in Table 1) be accompanied by a Green Travel Plan.

### **22.##-4 Application Requirements**

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Proposed C##

An application must be accompanied by either a Sustainable Design Assessment or a Sustainability Management Plan as specified in Table 1, as appropriate.

A Sustainable Design Assessment will usually not need to be prepared by a suitably qualified professional. It should:

- Provide a simple assessment of the development. It may use relevant tools from the examples listed in the table or an alternative assessment approach to the satisfaction of the responsible authority; and
- Identify environmentally sustainable development measures proposed in response to policy objectives, having regard to the site's opportunities and constraints.

A Sustainability Management Plan should:

- Provide a detailed assessment of the development. It may use relevant tools from the examples listed in the table or an alternative assessment approach to the satisfaction of the responsible authority; and
- Identify achievable environmental performance outcomes having regard to the objectives of this policy (as appropriate); and
- Demonstrate that the building has the design potential to achieve the relevant environmental performance outcomes, having regard to the site's opportunities and constraints; and
- Document the means by which the performance outcomes can be achieved.

Various assessment tools have been listed in Table 1 which may be used to assess how the proposed development addresses the objectives of this policy, as appropriate.

**Table 1 – ESD Application Requirements**

| <b>TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT</b>  | <b>APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>                                 | <b>Example tools</b>                 |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Accommodation/Mixed Use with residential component of:</b>   |   |                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2-9 dwellings</li> <li>▪ Developments of a building for accommodation other than dwellings with gross floor area of 100m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>  | Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA)                             | BESS<br>STORM                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 or more new dwellings;</li> <li>▪ Development of a building for accommodation other than dwellings with a gross floor area of more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>   | Sustainability Management Plan (SMP)<br>Green Travel Plan (GTP) | Green Star<br>MUSIC<br>STORM         |
| <b>Non-Residential:</b>   |   |                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of a non-residential building with a gross floor area of 300m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup>; or</li> <li>▪ Alterations and additions creating between 300m<sup>2</sup> to 1500m<sup>2</sup> of additional gross floor area (excluding outbuildings).</li> </ul> | Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA)                             | BESS<br>MUSIC<br>STORM               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of a non-residential building with a gross floor area of more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>; or</li> <li>▪ Alterations and additions more than 1500m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>  | Sustainability Management Plan (SMP)<br>Green Travel Plan (GTP) | BESS<br>Green Star<br>MUSIC<br>STORM |

*Note 1: Development (in Table 1) has the same meaning as in Section 3 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, but does not include subdivision. To remove any doubt, development also includes alteration and additions. In the case of alterations and additions, the requirements of the Policy apply only to the alterations and additions.*

*Note 2: Mixed Use developments are required to provide the information applicable to each use component of the development.*

**22. ##-5 Decision Guidelines**

DD/MM/YYYY  
Proposed C##

In determining an application, the Responsible Authority will consider as appropriate:

- The extent to which the development meets the objectives and requirements of this policy from the design stage through to construction and operation.
- Whether the proposed environmentally sustainable development performance standards are functional and effective to minimise environmental impact.
- Whether the proposed environmentally sustainable development initiatives are reasonable having regard to the type and scale of the development and any site constraints.
- Whether an appropriate assessment method has been used.
- Whether an ESD plan or framework has previously been approved by the responsible authority (whether under a planning control or otherwise)

**22.##-6 Reference Documents**

DD/MM/YYYY  
Proposed C##

*BESS (Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard) [www.bess.net.au](http://www.bess.net.au),  
Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), 2015  
Green Star, Green Building Council of Australia, [www.gbca.com.au](http://www.gbca.com.au)  
Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (Nat HERS), Department of Climate  
Change and Energy Efficiency, [www.nathers.gov.au](http://www.nathers.gov.au)  
STORM, Melbourne Water, [www.storm.melbournewater.com.au](http://www.storm.melbournewater.com.au)  
Urban Stormwater Best Practice Guidelines, CSIRO, 2006*

*Note: The above reference documents and websites may be amended from time to time. It is intended that these documents and websites (or amended versions) are relevant reference documents to this policy.*

**22.##-7 Commencement**

DD/MM/YYYY  
Proposed C##

The ESD Application requirements in Table 1 do not apply to applications received by the responsible authority before the gazettal date of this clause.

**22.##-8 Expiry**

DD/MM/YYYY  
Proposed C##

This policy will expire on xxxxx, or earlier if it is superseded by an equivalent provision of the Victoria Planning Scheme.

THE CITY OF  
GREATER GEELONG

# ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

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PILOT ASSESSMENT

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**Council acknowledges Wadawurrung, Traditional Owners of this land, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of the Greater Geelong community today.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The planning process can influence initial site layout, orientation, internal layouts and site development in a manner that will ensure that environmentally sustainable design is achieved in all urban development. The introduction of a local Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) policy will ensure Council achieves the above mandatory building standards target, as well as sustainable development that responds to climate change, as outlined in the Council Plan 2018-2022, the Environmental Management Strategy and the Clever and Creative Vision.

We acknowledge that the City is not directly responsible for community emissions but can play leading role in enabling positive change. One way this can be done is through local planning controls (Zero Carbon Emission Strategy 2017-2020).

An amendment to the Local Planning Scheme will ensure best practice Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) initiatives are considered from the design stage of a building, throughout its construction and ongoing management. Benefit Cost Analyses (BCA) done by pitt&sherry (2013) as well as AECOM (2018), show that the benefit of implementing ESD interventions can outweigh the cost. This is particularly the case when orientation of the development is unable to achieve passive solar gain, achieved by having the living spaces and private open space orientated to the north and implementing best practice sustainable design principles.

Ten Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) member councils have introduced a local 'Environmentally Sustainable Development' policy since 2015, requiring either a Sustainability Design Assessment or a Sustainability Management Plan to accompany planning applications, demonstrating how best practice sustainability outcomes will be achieved in their development. With the City being an active member of CASBE, we have the opportunity to share resources and build on the work that has already been done.

Over the past 18 months, the City ran a voluntary Sustainable Design Assessment pilot program. Assessments were carried out at no cost to the applicant by an ESD Officer. The officer was available for pre-application appointments, providing recommendations to improve ESD credentials of planning applications that triggered a referral, and the ESD Officer was also available for internal referrals.

Triggers for a referral for an ESD assessment were:

- residential developments with three or more new dwellings
- commercial developments with a floor area over 100 square metres.

During the pilot phase, 85 planning applications were assessed by referral, 71 pre-application appointments were scheduled and 24 internal referrals were received directly from planners. Planning applications were assessed using the 'Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process' (SDAPP) Framework and provided to the applicant within the two week planning timeline. Across all assessments, recommendations regularly included: layout changes to make use of the northern orientation; revision of external shading to windows and doors on the north and west elevations; inclusion of external clothes drying space; and, adequate space for recycling, green waste bins and space allocated for onsite composting.

Although the majority of assessments did not result in changed plans being submitted, it is unknown whether internal revisions were made during the building process. Recommendations regularly included: use of efficient fixtures and fittings; thermally efficient and eco-friendly building materials; and, heat-pump technology heating and cooling, and hot water systems.

Over the pilot period there were several applications that were impacted by the availability of the ESD Officer, which are highlighted in this report. However, with the majority of assessments showing no ESD changes to the plans, as the uptake was completely voluntary, an Amendment to the Local Planning Scheme will provide statutory weight, setting policy objectives and application requirements for medium and large scale residential, mixed-use and non-residential developments.

Overall the proposed Amendment to the Local Planning Scheme will assist in achieving Council's commitment to *assess planning applications to ensure they meet best practice environmental standards and increasing the number of residential and commercial buildings achieving above mandatory standards* (Environmental Management Strategy 2014-2017).

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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**The purpose of this report is to provide the justification for a new Local Planning Policy for Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) that is proposed to be introduced into the Geelong Planning Scheme via a Planning Scheme Amendment.**

This report sets out the background to this policy and the supporting work, including:

- Assessment of the local pilot program
- Proposed application triggers and permit data activity
- Resource implications
- Implications for the Local Planning Policy Framework

The planning system can promote achieving higher than minimum standards implementing local planning requirements. In 2009, the 'Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment' (CASBE) formed, an association of Victorian rural and urban councils. As member the City of Greater Geelong is committed to the creation of a sustainable built environment and focused on applying environmentally sustainable development (ESD) principles to the built environment through the statutory planning system.

In 2013, six metropolitan CASBE member councils prepared an amendment to the planning scheme to introduce local ESD policies. The Environmentally Efficient Design Advisory Committee was appointed by the Minister for Planning on 15 June 2013 to review and oversee the amendment process and the submissions received. In their final report, the panel noted (p.50):

*"The Committee acknowledges that the Amendment Councils have developed these policies in response to a lack of Statewide approach and are to be commended for their vision and commitments" and goes on to note "even if a Statewide policy is introduced, local policies may still be appropriate where municipalities seek to 'raise the bar higher' either in specific locations, or where the community has higher sustainability expectations".*

The Committee was supportive of the policy subject to some minor changes. The local planning scheme amendments were approved by the Minister in late 2015. Since this time four more councils have introduced Amendments to the Planning Scheme and a number of additional councils, including Greater Bendigo City Council are now pursuing a similar amendment to implement a local ESD policy.

The City has committed to delivering environmentally sustainable development that responds to climate change, setting out a number of objectives and targets in the Environmental Management Strategy, Clever and Creative Vision, and the recently released Council Plan 2018-2022. These include increasing the number of residential and commercial buildings achieving above mandatory standards set out in the National Construction Code (NCC), and creating well connected and sustainable high amenity neighbourhoods. The introduction of ESD assessment at the planning stage is an effective method to achieve the objectives and targets set out by the City.

With the City adopting the Sustainable Buildings Policy in 2017, the City of Greater Geelong is already leading the way by improving sustainability throughout the full life cycle of all types of Council buildings from concept right through to decommissioning.

The City's 'Smarter Homes, Smarter Living' program has been educating home buyers and builders on the benefits sustainable development can have on reducing running costs of power, water and gas. The City has also partnered with a community group to deliver a local Sustainable House Day event for the past nine years, showcasing sustainably built and renovated homes in the Geelong region and educating the public about the benefits of environmentally sustainable design.

The need for greater statutory weight for ESD principles has been highlighted during the voluntary pilot program, with the majority of assessed applications not taking on any of the voluntary recommendations. The proposed Amendment will ensure that a higher percentage of new residential and commercial developments achieve above mandatory standards, by requiring best-practice ESD outcomes to be considered early in the planning stages.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Climate change, population growth, liveability and the local economic models have been identified by Council as key drivers affecting the City's future. Residential and non-residential buildings making up more than two-thirds of the total annual carbon emissions in the Geelong Region. High demand for housing is generating significant development activity. Sustainable design principles are essential to the City of Greater Geelong being a carbon-neutral city region by 2050.

There is currently limited ability within the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme to require a planning permit application to consider and implement ESD principles in the development.

Over the past 18 month period the Statutory Planning and Planning Strategy units ran a free sustainable design assessment (SDA) pilot program. The purpose of the pilot was to the understanding of internal and external stakeholders of ESD principles and benefits, as well as to get a better understanding of resourcing requirements for an ESD Officer. Feedback received to the program has been very positive.

With the endorsement of the *Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future* in 2017, the City is committed to a series of aspirations, including:

- Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment; and,
- Development and implementation of sustainable solutions.

We acknowledge that the City is not directly responsible for community emissions but can play leading role in enabling positive change. One way this can be done is through local planning controls (Zero Carbon Emission Strategy 2017-2020).

The local policy will provide require ESD assessment for medium and large scale residential, mixed-use and non-residential developments, as opposed to the voluntary approach taken during the pilot. This will ensure that development achieves best practices for the following ESD principles:

- Energy Efficiency;
- Water Resources;

- Indoor Environment Quality;
- Stormwater Management;
- Transport;
- Waste Management; and
- Urban Ecology.

The City of Greater Geelong is a member of the 'Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment' (CASBE). Formed in 2009, CASBE is an alliance of councils committed to the creation of a sustainable built environment and focused on applying sustainable design principles to the built environment through the statutory planning system. As a CASBE member we have the opportunity to share resources and build on the work that has already been done.

Encouraging development that achieves best practice environmental design standards will be critical to the City of Greater Geelong achieving its commitment to delivering environmentally sustainable development that responds to climate change and delivering on the strategic objectives outlined in the Municipal Strategic Statement, the Environmental Management Strategy, the Council Plan and as part of its commitment to become UNESCO City of Design.

### POLICY SUPPORT

#### MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

Clause 21.02 City of Greater Geelong Sustainable Growth Framework states that:

*"All actions and development undertaken in the City of Greater Geelong meets the needs of the present community, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

#### COUNCIL PLAN 2018-2022

Released in May 2018, the Draft Council Plan 2018-2022 highlights planned sustainable development, which entails using sustainable design principles to guide development. A key priority is improving environmental performance of new developments, using planning controls, with the measure of success including planning controls in place that require a sustainable design assessment for all new developments.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Council adopted the Environmental Management Strategy in October 2014. Under the Strategic Priority “Sustainable Urban & Rural Development”, the Strategy identifies the following priority actions:

- Increase the number of programs and activities that promote residential and commercial buildings achieving above mandatory standards;
- Assess planning applications to ensure they meet best practice environmental standards;
- Enhance sustainability standards of Council buildings and urban development;
- Implement Sustainability Guidelines in the Armstrong Creek Town Centre Precinct Structure Plan and review the ability for these types of guidelines to be used more broadly across the municipality;
- Encourage the use of appropriate tools to assist with planning decision making e.g. Green Star Communities guidelines; and,

- Increase the take up of One Planet Living program or similar best practice program by developers and architects of new developments in the region.

## UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

In November 2017, Geelong joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), being designated a UNESCO City of Design. The City of Greater Geelong has to demonstrate its commitment to the UCCN Mission Statement which aims to:

*“Strengthen cooperation with and among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development as regards economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.”*

There are policy implications of being a member of the Network. The City has committed to using the membership to drive policies, strategies and activities towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11. This goal aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

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## 3 THE PILOT PROGRAM

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**In June 2016, a voluntary Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA) pilot program was introduced. An assessment was carried out at no cost to the applicant by an Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Officer employed by Council. The ESD Officer was available for pre-application appointments, assessing applications that triggered a referral as well as being available as an additional resource for planners.**

Being available for pre-application meetings meant that the ESD Officer was able to introduce ESD concepts and language prior to plans being submitted. The ESD Officer was available to provide free advice, with several applicants using the service multiple times before submitting an application.

The Officer assessed planning applications of medium to large residential, mixed-use and non-residential developments to identify opportunities to improve the ESD credentials and made recommendations on how these improvements could be achieved. Applicants were encouraged to implement some or all of the recommendations. The processing of applications that triggered an ESD assessment were not delayed by the ESD Officer assessing the plans.

### CASE STUDIES

During the pilot phase, 85 planning applications that triggered a referral to the ESD Officer were assessed, 71 pre-application appointments were scheduled and 24 internal referrals were received directly from planners. Planning applications were assessed using the 'Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process' (SDAPP) Framework and provided to the applicant within the two week planning timeline. Across all assessments, recommendations regularly included:

- layout changes to make use of the northern orientation; revision of external shading to windows and doors on the north and west elevations
- inclusion of external clothes drying space
- adequate space for recycling, green waste bins and space allocated for onsite composting

Although the majority of assessments did not result in changed plans being submitted, it is unknown whether internal revisions were made during the building process.

Recommendations regularly included:

- upgrading insulation
- use of efficient fixtures and fittings
- thermally efficient and eco-friendly building materials
- heat-pump technology heating and cooling, and hot water systems

With the majority of assessments showing no ESD changes to the plans, and with the uptake being completely voluntary, an amendment to the Local Planning Scheme will provide statutory weight, set policy objectives and application requirements for residential, mixed-use and non-residential developments.

### Multi-Unit Development on James Street, Belmont

This application for was a multi-unit development in Belmont. Although this application only consisted of two new dwellings, an ESD assessment was triggered as it also consisted of a three lot subdivision. This application was reviewed by the ESD Officer.

ESD recommendations included redesigning dwelling two to achieve northern orientation of the ground floor living space and to review shading to the north and west elevations to protect from the high summer sun. The Request for Further information included requesting a redesign of dwelling two to improve energy efficiency objectives as per Clause 55.03-5 of the planning scheme.

Revised plans were submitted with significant changes to the layout of dwelling two to ensure that the living space had northern orientation. Energy efficiency, including northern orientation of the main living spaces is already a requirement of the Planning Scheme under Clause 55.03-5.

This case study shows the benefit that a mandatory local ESD Policy could have. Other than changes to the placement of windows to allow for access to solar gain, as stipulated in Clause 55.03-5, no other ESD recommendations were considered, as they were completely voluntary to implement. Large amounts of unshaded north and west facing glazing, not addressed by the clause on energy efficiency, significantly compromises the Internal Environment Quality and the Energy Efficiency of this development.

### **Three Dwellings on Francis Street, Belmont**

This was an application for three dwellings on Francis Street, Belmont. This application triggered a referral for an ESD assessment and was reviewed by the ESD Officer.

ESD recommendations included shading to the north and west windows and doors to enhance sun protection, the inclusion of highlight window on the northern wall of dwelling two to allow the main living area to utilise the northern orientation, and double glazing.

New plans were submitted which included an eave on the northern orientation to improve shading, the inclusion of a highlight window for the main living space of dwelling two, and double glazing was added to all habitable windows.

The applicant for this planned development is one that regularly submits planning applications. Many applications by this applicant triggered a referral for an ESD assessment during the Pilot period. There were also several pre-application appointments with this applicant and the applicant showed a good understanding of the importance of including ESD principles at the early stages of a development. However, the applicant also acknowledged that often plans reflected the demands of the client, rather than incorporating best practice sustainable design.

### **Eleven Dwellings on Donaghy Street, Geelong West**

An application for 11 townhouses in Geelong West was made to council in September 2016. This application triggered a referral for an ESD assessment and a Sustainable Design Assessment (SDA) was completed by the ESD Officer and provided to the applicant within the two week planning time frame.

The SDA included recommendations: layout changes to access north light in the main living areas and enhanced shading to west facing windows, as the development was not adequately protected from heat loading. Lack of energy efficiency and poor internal amenity due to the western orientation of the main living spaces was also noted in the planner's request for further information, as this is a requirement under Clause 55.03-5. The permit was refused on the basis of being insufficiently responsive to objectives of Clause 55, including 55.03-5.

Although the refusal was upheld by VCAT, it was noted that not all new developments will be able to make use of the ideal northern orientation requirement as part of Clause 55.03-5 in the Planning Scheme.

As shown in the Benefit Cost Analyses (pitt&sherry 2013 and AECOM 2018), the benefit of implementing ESD interventions outweighs the cost when the orientation of a development is unable to achieve passive solar gain. This can be achieved by having the living space orientated to the north, and implementing best practice sustainable design principles.

Had an ESD policy been in place at the time of this application, a Sustainable Management Plan (SMP) would have been required with this application. Had a SMP been included with this application, the designer would have been able to address issues related to the internal amenity of this development.

### **Apartments on Bellerine Street, Geelong**

This application was considered by the Minister for Planning. A referral was made to the City's ESD Officer to review the Sustainable Management Plan (SMP) that was submitted with this application.

The SMP specifically mentioned that there are no rating tools to benchmark ESD performance provided by the City of Greater Geelong, which led to the consulting firm providing a self-assessment. The SMP made no reference to the SDAPP framework, which has been provided on the City's website throughout the pilot period.

The ESD outcomes of this development generally lacked ambition and did not meet best practice:

- SMP set a 60% recycling target, best practice is a minimum of 70%
- Development aimed for a NatHERS rating of 6.1 overall, with several apartments achieving ratings as low as 5.2. Best practice is to aim for at least 1 star above minimum requirements
- Bicycle storage was provided in line with minimum requirements, best practice is one space per dwelling.

## Large Non-Residential in Armstrong Creek

As part of the Armstrong Creek Town Centre Precinct Structure Plan a Sustainability Management Plan (SMP), which details strategies of how development will minimise resource use and waste must accompany applications for:

- Multi-unit residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings,
- Non-residential development comprising more than 500 square metres of gross floor area

- Service stations

This application triggered a referral to the ESD Officer. Although the SMP was detailed and multiple targets exceeded best practice, several targets highlighted in the SMP did not translate to the plans. The availability of the ESD Officer to provide advice to the planner ensured that this was picked up on early and included in the request for further information.

# 4 EVALUATION

The sustainable design assessment pilot shows the scope of the potential impact of a local ESD policy. Having an ESD Officer assess 85 planning applications that triggered a referral, as well as being available for pre-applications and internal referrals, shows that adding statutory weight to ESD principles could significantly improve the built environment in the Geelong Region.

The majority of the sustainable design assessments completed during the pilot program did not result in amended plans being submitted. The scope of the pilot did not allow for follow up of applications in order to determine whether suggested internal revisions were implemented during the building process.

A survey accompanied the sustainable design assessment outcomes throughout the pilot program. Responses to the survey were limited, however, two thirds of respondents found the ESD assessment process worthwhile and two thirds of respondents agreed that their knowledge of ESD improved after participating in the pilot program.

## WHAT WILL THE POLICY DO?

The proposed ESD planning policy provides objectives and application requirements to guide the achievement of best practice ESD across the seven categories listed above, and will only apply to new development that meet the policy trigger thresholds. The local policy will ensure that best practice ESD initiatives are considered at the time of planning to maximise integrated design outcomes and minimise costs associated with retrofit and poor design.

Whilst the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) recognises the importance of ESD at a high level, it fails to provide specific guidelines on its implementation. Councils are left to utilise voluntary measures to negotiate with developers on each individual permit application, which has led to poor outcomes and an inconsistent approach across councils.

Until such time that a comprehensive approach is implemented by the State Government, there is a clear push for councils to implement ESD local planning policies. The proposed policy is virtually identical to those

already introduced by other Councils and tested through the planning panel processes.

## APPLICATION TRIGGERS FOR ESD ASSESSMENT

As part of the pilot program the trigger for a sustainable design assessment for residential developments was set to 3+ new dwellings. Several Councils that have implemented a local ESD Policy have set the trigger to 2+ new dwellings. Reducing the trigger for residential to 2+ new dwellings would increase the impact of the ESD assessment by 80% to 215 permit application. This will ensure that we achieve our commitment to delivering environmentally sustainable development that responds to climate change.

Permit statistics from the 2017 calendar year have been analysed to determine approximately how many applications per year would trigger an ESD assessment based on various application types. Table 1 and 2 identify the number of permits that would have triggered an ESD assessment with the trigger for residential applications set to 3+ new dwellings (table 1) and to 2+ new dwellings (table 2).

The floor area trigger for new developments has been set at the same level as the Sustainable Building Policy, which applies to council buildings.

Table 1 – Permit statistics from the 2017 calendar year (trigger 3+ residential)

| Trigger  | Permit Numbers | Application Requirement |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>   |                |                         |
| 3-9 dwellings (including mixed use under 1500m <sup>2</sup> )                            | 60             | SDA                     |
| 10 or more dwellings (including mixed use development over 1500m <sup>2</sup> )          | 16             | SMP                     |
| <b>Non-residential</b>   |                |                         |
| development / alterations of floor areas between 300m <sup>2</sup> - 1,500m <sup>2</sup> | 35             | SDA                     |
| development / alterations of floor areas above 1,500m <sup>2</sup>                       | 10             | SMP & GTP               |

Table 2 – Permit statistics from the 2017 calendar year (trigger 2+ residential)

| Trigger   | Permit Numbers | Application Requirement |
|---|----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |                |                         |
| 2-9 dwellings (including mixed use under 1500m <sup>2</sup> )                           | 154            | SDA                     |
| 10 or more dwellings (including mixed use development over 1500m <sup>2</sup> )         | 16             | SMP                     |
| <b>Non-residential</b>  |                |                         |
| development / alterations of floor areas between 300m <sup>2</sup> - 1500m <sup>2</sup> | 35             | SDA                     |
| development / alterations of floor areas above 1,500m <sup>2</sup>                      | 10             | SMP & GTP               |

Setting the trigger at 2+ new residential developments is consistent with the majority of pre-existing ESD local planning policies and brings the number of permits that trigger an ESD assessment in line with Councils that already have a local policy in place.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In order to manage the additional work that the proposed triggers (Table 2) will generate, it is estimated that the ESD Officer role will require a 0.6 EFT staffing resource, which is an additional 0.2 EFT compared to the Pilot period.

The ESD Officer needs to be suitably qualified and have the skills required to undertake larger and more complex assessments.

The prevailing experience of Councils with ESD planning policies is that Sustainable Design Assessments (SDAs) can be reviewed by Statutory Planners. The ESD officer would ideally devote time to building capacity within the Statutory Planning unit so that the planners will be able to assess simple SDAs.

During the pilot, the ESD Officer position was delivered through existing resources in the Future Proofing Geelong unit. A realignment of existing resources within the Planning Strategy (Future Proofing Geelong) and the Environment unit will ensure that we have an ESD officer available to assess applications and provide training and support.

Additional training will be provided to the Statutory Planning team. CASBE provides different levels of training to support the use of the BESS tool.

## THE BESS TOOL

The Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) tool, developed by CASBE, enables developers to show how a proposed development demonstrates sustainable design, at the planning permit stage. The BESS tool is recommended in the Sustainable Buildings Policy, as well as the Council Plan for all new small council developments.

As a CASBE member, the City is a subscriber to the BESS tool. The tool is then made available for free to applicants to use when submitting a planning application.

Although applicants can use other tools to demonstrate how their planned development meets best practice sustainable design principles.

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# ESD IN THE SUBDIVISION PROCESS

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In February 2017 the CEO committed the City to the collaborative council sustainability fund partnership program ESD Subdivision Policy proof of concept study for regional Victoria.

The participating Councils include Greater Geelong, City of Ballarat, city of Bendigo, greater Shepparton, city of Wodonga, city of Wangaratta, Baw Baw Shire and Moorabool Shire. To deliver the project Aecom were engaged to deliver the Proof of Concept and a Cost Benefit analysis.

The goals of the project included:

- Defining 'best practice' ESD with respect to greenfield subdivision and determine how it should be measured.
- Establishing how 'best practice' ESD subdivisions are feasible in regional Victoria.
- Recommending a suite of tools and a model for collaborative implementation, with transferability across the State.

## WHAT ARE ESD SUBDIVISIONS?

ESD subdivisions are located and designed to use resources more effectively and to improve quality of life. They aim to use resources so that the needs of today's communities are met, while ensuring that these same resources remain available to meet the needs of future generations.

Five core principles were identified including optimise site potential, reduce footprint, create places for people, enhance ecology and adaptable and encourages innovation.

The benefits of ESD include:

- By planning and designing for a hotter, drier climate, with intense and more frequent extreme weather events, the impacts of climate change can be reduced, improving amenity and liveability
- Designing for more efficient resource use can reduce costs and increase comfort, over the building's life
- Considering community connectedness can improve quality of life, health and well-being
- Passive design can make compliance with building requirements easier

Greenfield developments in particular present a major opportunity to create a more resilient and sustainable system which is relevant to growth area planning in Geelong.

## KEY FINDINGS

The key findings showed there are clear social, economic and environmental benefits associated with ESD in regional subdivisions. These benefits differ across Victoria's climate regions, as does the nature and capacity of Councils and the residential development industry. While the period of analysis was 30 years, the life of a residential subdivision is much more enduring and so subdivision-wide sustainability measures warrant greater consideration. Some of the low-cost / low regrets interventions included:

- subdivision has appropriate solar orientation, for both public areas and dwellings
- reduction in impervious surfaces throughout the subdivision reduction in construction waste
- recycled materials (where these are readily available)
- diversity of dwellings within the subdivision
- installation of footpaths on both sides
- installation of separated bicycle paths (or shared footpath / bicycle paths)
- continual shading of footpaths and roads
- installation of footpaths to provide connection to amenities and neighbouring areas
- more diversity in street / road design 'shared zone')
- provision to connect with local public transport
- use of drought tolerant and indigenous plants
- increased canopy cover
- retention of mature trees
- use of low-energy street lighting
- wider nature strips

As an example of a cost benefit analysis at a dwelling level for annual household energy use looking at the 'best' compared to 'worst' orientation resulted in a \$300 saving. This shows the benefits of getting lot and dwelling orientation right.

## THE OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING ESD

The main options to bridge the disconnect between the subdivision and the housing being built are both statutory and non-statutory. A single statutory mechanism would not fully address this disconnect nor build community and industry understanding and support. A combination of measures and approaches is required and they will also need to be tailored to local conditions, and target the subdivision, the builders, the building and its owners and operation. This could include:

- Strengthening Clause 56 and State Policy
- Developing a specific local policy
- Enhancing the IDM and SIG - to incorporate other aspects of subdivisions and to trigger the consideration of the IDM
- Non-statutory measures such as education, information, tools and incentives.
- Advocating for increased energy efficiency requirements in the National Construction Code (NCC)

## NEXT STEPS

In order to progress the findings from the project a number of actions were identified:

*Short term: Model taken up by early adopters (a range of defined elements and tools)*

- Raises awareness of benefits of ESD
- Build a peer-to-peer knowledge network
- Engage with industry and community
- Begin with voluntary tools and assessments
- Demonstrate through council owned buildings and assets

*Medium term: Testing and refining model*

- Refine tools
- Continue all of the above

*Longer term: Regulating, replicating and advocating for larger scale changes*

- Regulate and create certainty
- Scale up and replicate across councils through proven methods, guidance and leadership.
- Model is refined enough to allow for flexibility to accommodate different contexts
- Mainstream better ESD in all dwellings and subdivisions

It is not proposed to include a sustainable subdivision local policy at this time. There is further opportunity for work collaboratively with government and industry to build awareness of the benefits of ESD, strengthen policy and guidelines, use voluntary tools and assessments and undertake demonstration projects.

The Environmentally Sustainable Design for Subdivisions in Regional Victoria report is available at [www.geelongaustralia.com.au/strategicplanning](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/strategicplanning)



Source: Based on the journey of CASBE

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## 5 CONCLUSION

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It is recommended that the City request a s20(4) amendment to introduce an Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) local policy to the planning scheme.

With the recent release of the Council Plan 2018-2022, the City of Greater Geelong continues its commitment to make the City a more sustainable place to live and work. The strategic priorities for planned sustainable development include having planning controls in place to require a mandatory sustainable design assessment for all new developments. This priority is reinforced by the outcomes of the 18-month Sustainable Design Assessment pilot program run by the City, which highlighted the need to add statutory weight for Environmentally Sustainable Development principles.

Early consideration of environmental sustainability at the concept and design stage is key to achieving these outcomes. The benefits of incorporating ESD at the design stage include:

- Lower energy bills;
- Lower water consumption;
- Cleaner air;
- Reduction of waste during construction and life of the building;
- Lower waste disposal costs;
- Encouraging active and public transport; and
- Being able to market a building that meets or exceeds current best practice.

Having an ESD Officer available from the pre-application stage through the planning permit application to provide

ESD advice to applicants and stat planners during the sustainable design assessment (SDA) pilot program has been valuable to get the language and understanding around best-practice ESD outcomes more common place.

The case studies highlighted that statutory weight through a planning scheme amendment could have significant impact on the number of planning applications achieving above mandatory minimum standards set out in the National Construction Code (NCC) and the State Planning Framework. It will also facilitate in creating high amenity neighbourhoods that are well connected and sustainable.

Having become a financial member of Council Alliance for a Sustainably Built Environment (CASBE) gives the City the opportunity to share resources and build on the work that has already been done. Being a CASBE member will give the City access to information critical for progressing an amendment, as well as gaining access to the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) tool, which is recommended in the City's Sustainable Building Policy.

The proposed policy is consistent with other gazetted policies, which have been tested in planning panels. It provides policy objectives and application requirements for residential, mixed use and non-residential development and recognises the importance of considering ESD at the time of planning approval for new developments

Overall, the ESD Local Planning Policy will increase the number of residential and commercial buildings achieving above mandatory standards set out in the National Construction Code (NCC), and create well connected and sustainable high amenity neighbourhoods.

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