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Council SA

National Urban Policy
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11 March 2011

To whom it may concern

Re: Discussion Paper: National Urban Policy

Conservation SA welcomes the *Discussion Paper: National Urban Policy* and the opportunity to provide comment. Planning is one of the strongest tools we have to create the future for Australia that we want and we commend the *Discussion Paper* for initiating a discussion about integrated Australia-wide approach to urban planning for the future.

Urban planning is a highly contested arena of the 21st century. Planning decisions often seem to be unduly influenced by those wishing to develop outer-urban greenfield sites, destroying biodiversity, natural ecosystems or prime agricultural land and increasing energy dependency, risk of poverty, commute times, obesity and social isolation. Others are working to halt the expansion of our cities' physical footprints, reduce energy consumption, build more efficient transport systems, facilitate the localised production of food, and build liveable urban environments that positively impact on a range of social issues.

Most disturbingly, plans such as the South Australian Government's *30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* talk about building sustainable cities and Transport Orientated Developments while facilitating broad-scale developments in areas of high conservation value and prime farming land.

The urban form of Australian cities today is not sustainable. Expanding low density suburbs have high environmental, economic and social costs; they lock in the waste of water, energy and natural resources and are progressively destroying biodiversity.

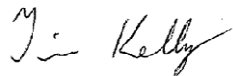
Conservation SA envisages a future where our planning and development creates cities that are largely self-sufficient, with small physical and

ecological footprints. This means tackling urban sprawl head-on and creating healthy human-scale urban environments with abundant localised food production, water harvesting and energy generation.

To reach a sustainable future for Australia we must address the issues of the past, and reinvent planning in the future.

Please find attached comments on your discussion paper.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tim Kelly
Chief Executive



Conservation Council SA

Response to National Urban Policy Discussion Paper

10 March 2011

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Our aspirations

1. What is your vision for Australian cities? What should our cities look like in 2030 or even 2050?

- Conservation SA envisages a future where our planning and development creates cities that are largely self-sufficient, with small physical and ecological footprints. This means tackling urban sprawl and car dominance head-on, and creating healthy human-scale urban environments, with abundant localised food production, water harvesting and energy generation.

5. How do we better plan for and protect the infrastructure corridors, strategic sites and buffers we need for the future operation of our cities?

- Biodiversity is an asset that is at high risk from cities, both through greenfield development and infill, but also importantly transport and infrastructure corridors. Therefore, integral to this process must be accounting for natural systems that require similar corridors and buffers, and which occupy strategic sites in, around and near our cities.
- Infrastructure planning should be integrated with environment and conservation plans in order to limit the negative impact of cities on biodiversity, better protects natural system, and work to increase the functioning of environmental corridors and buffers rather than decrease them.
- Plans for infrastructure corridors, strategic sites and buffers must take into account natural systems that may be affected.
- The direct impact of infrastructure projects on ecosystems must be taken into account in the very early planning stages to avoid unnecessary and avoidable negative impacts. Expertise must be sought in this process, as perceived impacts on paper may be very different to the impacts on the ground. Roads, for example, can seem minor in terms of disruption but they often have enormous and cumulative consequences for species that can become disconnected from other populations resulting in decreasing genetic diversity and less viable populations.
- Often mutually beneficial solutions can be found, but cases of this are rare when ecosystem requirements are thought of at the last minute. Unfortunately this is generally the way infrastructure projects in Australia are planned.
- Our experience is that the later ecosystem needs are addressed in the planning process the more likely it is that they are sacrificed for infrastructure needs, even though there may be solutions which could have been applied to achieve positive outcomes in both areas. Often this is because work that mitigates negative ecosystem impacts are simply not budgeted for.
- Mutually beneficial solutions which also have positive conservation outcomes should be explored and encouraged from the outset of

planning. Achieving this will require a *change in attitude in the way that infrastructure projects are planned and administered in Australia and will require commitment and leadership.*

- Despite the existence of the EPBC Act (1999) which requires the protection of important conservation assets, ecosystems are at high risk of destruction during infrastructure projects because once they have been destroyed they cannot be recovered, making them highly susceptible to industry and government departments who are willing to destroy now and face the 'consequences' later. Better planning which respects conservation assets is vital if infrastructure projects are to be constructive rather than destructive.
- Planning for conservation requirements during this stage will also create an environment where planning can leverage support from conservation portfolios and facilitate mutually beneficial outcomes. Ecosystems also require corridors, strategic sites and buffers, and there are parts of government working to achieve these outcomes. This work should be integrated in order to achieve mutually positive benefits as efficiently as possible.
- Often corridors that connect conservation areas are along old infrastructure routes, such as old railway lines and are therefore areas of very high strategic importance for biodiversity. Cross-portfolio planning and accounting for conservation uses would increase outcomes in this area.
- Strategic sites should be investigated in a comprehensive manner and include the state and federal environment departments, Natural Resource Management Boards, environmental NGOs and community members, so that they can be created and located to minimise negative impacts and improve biodiversity outcomes.
- All planning for infrastructure must account for the requirements and intent to protect Australia's biodiversity in line with the *EPBC Act (1999)*.

6. What do you consider to be the most significant transport issues affecting our cities, and what approaches would you encourage governments to pursue?

- Low density suburbs increase the costs of transport infrastructure as more railways, roads, and fuel is required to travel from point A to point B. Poor public transport in the outer suburbs of our cities means people have no choice but to depend on cars.
- The over-dominance of car dependency is a serious transport issue which will only become more obvious as peak oil looms closer and oil price shocks increase.
- Car dependence also brings with it consequences such as communities divided and dislocated by roads and individuals afflicted with rising rates of asthma and obesity – both linked to car use.
- The combination of car dependence, urban sprawl and peak oil/energy poverty provide the looming spectre of rich communities

concentrating in inner-city TODs and poor communities isolated in outer-suburbia with associated social implications such as poverty, unemployment and lack of access to services.

- It is vital that all levels of government work together make the shift away from car-dominated urban environments.
- All levels of government must work together to actively encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Public transport should be affordable, regular and easy.
- Walking and cycling should be safe and separated from car traffic.
- The Federal Government should invest a substantial proportion of the Building Australia Fund (BAF) to be invested in public and active transport infrastructure high-speed rail and efficient dedicated busways (such as the Adelaide to Tea Tree Plaza Auburn Busway) , instead of the current preference for new highways and freeways. BAF funding should be based on sustainable land-use development and integrated public transport planning.
- The government should encourage and facilitate the switching of road freight to rail. This will require further investment in rail infrastructure across rural and regional Australia and investment in transitional arrangements for road freight industry employees.

7. How do we best integrate and leverage continuing investment in infrastructure by all levels of government, especially for transport, water, sewerage and energy supply?

- Urban planning has a great advantage in that it has real, measurable and significant impacts on a range of portfolios. The greatest disadvantage is that decision-making in the area has often been disproportionately weighted by the interests of developers and this has disrupted its value-adding potential for other sectors of government.
- Prioritising investments in projects that have positive impacts across a range of portfolios rather than negative is the best method of integrating and leveraging investment. This requires looking at urban planning as a tool for implementing our collective aspirations and government agendas. Importantly, urban planning should not be seen as a tool for facilitating the development industry. This is not a chicken and egg situation. Decisions must be made without those who have a vested financial interest in the outcome having a greater say than other Australians. This is the single most important thing that a national urban planning agenda at a national level can do to facilitate better leveraging support and investment by other levels of government.
- The list of areas which urban planning could contribute to mutually beneficial outcomes is almost endless.
- Examples include: increasing biodiversity assets; increasing exercise rates; decreasing crime; increasing public transport use; decreasing

social isolation; increasing localised food production; decreasing road freight; decreasing greenhouse gas emissions; decreasing energy consumption; increasing renewable energy production; decreasing infiltration of weeds into conservation areas; decreasing waste production; and, improving recycling rates.

- Unfortunately the dominance of developers in urban planning decision-making has undermined many of the opportunities to leverage support and funding from other departments.

8. What is the role for pricing reform (such as water, roads or carbon pricing) in meeting the challenges of Australian cities?

- Establishing a price on carbon (ideally through a tax) is one way to drive a change in behaviour, and it is important that it is designed in a way that does not make voluntary action meaningless.
- Other complementary measures are also vital however, such as greenhouse emission reduction targets of 40-50% of 1990 levels by 2020, ambitious targets for renewable energy, and changes to our carbon accounting methodology so that double-counting is no longer possible.
- In support of achieving such targets it is critical that greater responsibility is taken during the process of urban planning and development. It is not acceptable to continue to increase greenhouse gas emissions and energy use through the construction and continuing impact of urban development, we actually need to be striving for carbon neutrality and much greater use of renewable energy via both building specific and community based renewable energy systems.
- Water should be priced to discourage waste and misuse, to encourage local harvesting, management and recycling in a greenhouse friendly way. We suggest a tiered water pricing system should apply for commercial and domestic use that reflects the true value of water and equitably reduces usage whilst incorporating a standard for renewable energy such as 100% GreenPower.
- State and federal government subsidies that promote increased private car use and support fossil fuelled vehicles are perverse and should be abolished. The Fringe Benefits Tax should be scrapped and the Diesel Fuel Rebate phased out. The money should be re-directed into public transport initiatives.
- Registration and stamp duty costs should be made substantially lower for highly fuel-efficient vehicles (including efficient hybrid and electric vehicles) within the existing registration categories.

10. What opportunities do you see for governments to achieve better outcomes for urban communities, by leveraging their investments in other activities such as health and education?

- The opportunities in this area are extensive, but success has been limited in the past partly because urban plans often do not deliver on the principles and rhetoric that accompany them. For example the *30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* included a lot of talk about Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) with associated public transport and cycling benefits, but delivered mainly unsustainable greenfield developments in areas of high biodiversity conservation value and prime agricultural land. This approach will increase social isolation and reliance on cars, both of which have proven negative health outcomes.
- Plans like this undermine the opportunity to leverage investment from almost all other areas of government. In fact, it puts these plans in *direct opposition* to the stated policies and desired outcomes of other areas of government.
- Removing developer dominance from decision-making in urban planning is vital if any integration is to be successful. Development companies are profit-driven and this often undermines good health and education outcomes.
- Better public participation in planning and decision-making and limiting the influence of developers is therefore vital to better urban environments which promote healthy lifestyles.
- Some areas that investments could be leveraged include:
 - Cycling: improving safety for cyclists will improve cycling rates;
 - Walking: stopping the disconnection of communities by roads;
 - Car dominance: positive health outcomes in terms of fitness and asthma;
 - Parks: trees and parks have a positive impact on crime rates and mental health, they are vital to higher density living, and can be used as water filters and storage;
 - Work/life balance: shorter commute time means more time with family and friends;
 - Biodiversity: an understanding of the intrinsic value of other species, as well as places to recreate, relax and learn;

11. What performance targets should governments set for our public transport systems? How would these be applied, and what would their effect be?

The first step to establishing such targets is to define the measures and indicators that would reveal the true performance of transport systems.

Components of such measures include:

- number of people moved
- flexibility of the transport system
- fuel used and greenhouse gas emissions per person
- load up and drop off efficiency
- appeal of the system
- Infrastructure footprint required
- Assessment of how all indicators combine.

For example continuing urban expansion that is dependent on road transport uses far more fuel per person and requires significant car parking.

An efficient dedicated busway however can pick up passengers around a community and move vast amounts of people in a very fuel efficient and time efficient manner whilst maintaining a high level of flexibility.

Efficient rail services supported by localised passenger pick up services can also be designed to support community hubs to move large numbers of people in a fuel efficient manner.

It is therefore essential to identify the standard that the best transport systems achieve and set this as a minimum standard in measures of fuel per person, persons and kilometres moved per hour and transport footprint required per 1000 people.

12. How can governments best use their leverage to foster more innovation and support the economy of our cities? How will this enhance our competitive advantage in a global context?

- There are a myriad of ways to foster innovation and support our cities.
- Cities that create ways to facilitate transitions to the realities of climate change, peak oil and water scarcity, that become more self-sufficient, reduce their environmental impact and become more self-sufficient will be less susceptible to global financial pressures. These cities will also foster innovations and technologies that will be highly exportable as cities around the world start to face the requirement to adapt to a new climate and energy future.
- Water-proofing our cities makes them more viable, and as water becomes a limited resource internationally, will become technology that can be exported.
- Making our food close to our cities makes them more efficient and decreases the cost of living.
- Government support of creative and small-scale ways to reduce our ecological footprint is important. Cities can be great consumers of energy, but they can also be great creators of energy. Food waste, for example can contribute energy to the grid while decreasing waste.
- There is much made of our agricultural export capacity having a positive impact on GDP, yet greenfield developments are often on our most productive agricultural land. Protecting our most productive agricultural land rather than relying on marginal agricultural land which requires large amounts of additives and pumping of water to make it viable will make us less vulnerable globally, especially as water and additives such as phosphorus become even more scarce.

Advancing our sustainability

13. How can we best protect and enhance land and habitats in and around our cities where they are ecologically sensitive, of heritage value, or highly productive agriculturally?

Ecosystems:

- The value of biodiversity extends beyond the intrinsic value of the conservation of species and the need to maintain ecosystem services. It also provides us with the resources for major activities such as tourism and recreation, nature conservation, pastoralism, agriculture, horticulture and forestry, which all benefit from healthy ecosystems.
- It is vital to recognise that many biodiversity assets are not replaceable and that urban planning strategies are an important mechanism for ensuring better protection. Many of our ecological systems are on the verge of functionality, and must be protected from development.
- The will and investment to achieve genuine integrated planning should be favoured over other options such as offset schemes. Further loss of ecological function in the landscape cannot be sustained even in the short-term. Decision-making must be made in the context and awareness that many biodiversity assets are not replaceable.
- Ecological sustainability should be given the same priority as economic development and social issues in planning considerations and development processes, and achieving biodiversity resilience must be an integral driver in state-wide, regional, local and land-use planning and development assessment in Australia.
- All infrastructure plans should describe in more detail how nature corridors will be implemented in a way that delivers landscape scale change to protect biodiversity and prevent further species loss.
- Climate change mitigation strategies should seek to build biodiversity resilience where possible and minimise risk.
- Natural resource accounting principles, where healthy natural environments are ascribed a value for their ecosystem services and public amenity benefits. These values should be applied in the development process.
- Protecting and restoring remnant vegetation including waterways as green space and strips in urban areas should be encouraged.
- Action must be taken to ensure entire swathes of native vegetation cannot be cleared at anytime, including the subdivision stage.
- Developments proposing to remove significant native vegetation should not be allowed.
- Developers should be required to demonstrate that all avenues have been explored to retain native vegetation on site.
- Protecting and restoring remnant vegetation including waterways as green space and strips in urban areas should be planned for and encouraged.

- Necessary inputs into ecological systems, such as water, must be protected.
- Hazardous inputs into ecological systems, such as backyard weed escapes and dumping of waste, should be actively discouraged through good planning.

Coastal areas:

- The allowance for the movement of coastal ecosystems should be made a strategic priority. Coastal infrastructure and settlements need to allow for retreat of ecosystems such as mangroves and samphire areas of the coastline so that these are not squeezed out of existence between urban development and rising seas. Many Australians would not want settlements and infrastructure hard against the ocean, with little room for natural integrity, to become the common situation.
- The impact of sea-level rise on infrastructure and housing must be factored into plans to develop coastal regions. Plans to develop low-lying areas that are particularly susceptible are of major concern.
- A long-term acquisition strategy is needed for inappropriately-developed land in low-lying or sensitive coastal areas.

Heritage value:

- Policies should be guided by the principal that heritage places are essential to the identity of the nation and its communities.
- The public are central to the heritage process and must be consulted in order to identify heritage sites. This is particularly important because ideas about heritage sites change with new land uses (for example, old factories can be viewed as heritage sites) and in line with community expectations. Surveys are a good way to identify local heritage sites.
- Maintaining the principles of heritage conservation is important. Heritage buildings should retain their setting and adjacent developments should respect and complement the character of the conservation.

Agricultural productivity:

- Planning policy must prevent any further subdivision or development of prime agricultural land close to urban centres.
- There should be a stop to urban expansion in our most productive agricultural regions and ecologically significant areas .
- Such areas close to Adelaide have already been sanctioned for low-density, car-dependant developments in Gawler, Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula.
- The result will be to decrease food production, increase our reliance on fertilisers and pumped water in marginal food production areas, increase our dependence on oil-based transport systems and make our cities less sustainable.

- Such short-sighted developments should be stopped immediately and the impacts of peak-oil and climate change on the viability of agricultural land should be properly accounted for.

14. How do you think we can best support more efficient use of resources (such as water, energy and food) in our cities?

- It is the planning decisions of our past have lead to the relatively inefficient use of resources in our cities and planning decisions are also therefore the key to turning this around.

Water:

- The intrinsic value of water for non-human use must be recognised and reflected in greater protection of water resources. Water must be priced to discourage waste and misuse.
- Decentralised water solutions such as stormwater harvesting and wastewater recycling are vastly preferable to solutions that require energy-intensive desalination or water pumping.
- Integrated water and wastewater management systems can be achieved at a local scale. It is essential to make optimum use of opportunities to utilise locally harvested rainwater, stormwater and recycled water to meet community needs including for irrigation of open space and local food production.
The collection and natural detention systems to treat stormwater locally can provide opportunities to support biodiversity and amenity of sustainable cities and urban areas prior to storage in local aquifers (where feasible) to be recovered for use when required.
Such systems that optimise the use of ecosystem services do however require sufficient open space that also protects biodiversity.
- Watercourses require protection from efforts to interfere with natural flows, and those that have already been degraded need restoration plans to be put in place.
- Targets, policies and programs focusing on water must address and respond to climate change.
- Mandating rainwater tanks in all new housing developments has happened in some regions. This should be expanded nationally and also extended to include commercial and industrial premises.
- Planning on a broader scale is vital if we are to feasibly harvest, filter and reuse our stormwater. The cross benefits of this, for example in terms of green space in densely populated areas, should also be taken into account.

Energy:

- Our current energy infrastructure has to manage the very high demand and peak demand of our very energy-inefficient lifestyles.

- Significant emissions cuts are required now and therefore all urban planning should support a pathway for very significant greenhouse reductions.
- The urban planning strategy should help to facilitate a reduction in dirty energy and include preventing new coal fired power stations, planning to close the existing coal fired power stations, providing additional support for large scale renewables, and providing additional support to enhance the transmission grid to link low emissions electricity to customers (such as from solar, wind, wave and hot rocks).
- Utilising planning as a tool to improve outcomes can be achieved through modifying building codes to ensure our buildings are energy efficient, appropriately orientated, insulated, with climate modifying features such as eaves, pergolas and verandas, and that they have suitable cross ventilation and light coloured roofs to minimise air-conditioning requirements.
- Further investment is required by the state and federal governments to commercialise renewable energies that can provide base load energy, such as geothermal, bioenergy and solar thermal.
- Retrofitting energy-guzzling appliances like electric hot water heaters and mandating their replacement with solar hot water heaters or heat pumps is an example of how to encourage a reduction in greenhouse emissions.

Waste:

- Where feasible all regions should be supported to establish material recycling facilities (MRFs) at all transfer stations and landfill sites to pre-sort all commercial and industrial, for reuse and recycling.
- Increased community involvement could help to reduce illegal dumping and build resilience into the recycling industry if value-added activities were conducted in Australia rather than offshore.

15. How can we best plan and build our cities and infrastructure to achieve a lower ecological footprint?

- Overall, compact, well planned cities and towns lead to lower greenhouse emissions, less air pollution and less destruction of urban and peri-urban biodiversity. They also lead to better public transport, less congestion, less commuting time, lower transport costs, better health and more time spent with family and friends.
- Australia's current ecological footprint is too high and central to the urban planning strategy must be solid measures to decrease our ecological footprint.
- Without considerable intervention, Australia's population growth expectations will continue to increase this footprint. Population growth and urban planning policies must not cause increased consumption that depletes our ecosystems and natural resources and quality of life.

- We should aim for a progressive reduction in the urban footprint by site acquisitions and higher rise developments in selected areas, both to actively increase residential density and to protect and restore valuable natural resources within metropolitan and peri-urban regions.
- Zoning policies should encourage mix-used developments and redevelopments, including the re-use of commercial and industrial buildings for residential accommodation where appropriate.
- Increased residential densities should be facilitated by providing financial and planning incentives for group planning title developments.
- Urban growth boundaries should be maintained and target a progressive reduction in the urban footprint by site acquisitions and higher rise developments in selected areas, both to actively increase residential density and to protect and restore valuable natural resource assets within the metropolitan and peri-urban region.
- Transport plans should facilitate safe and efficient cycling and walking.
- Investment in rail freight should replace the building of new roads.
- All new developments should include high-quality, efficient public transport.
- The plan should address the need for agricultural land adjacent to urban centres, and rail infrastructure to convey food to populations in a future where road freight is no longer feasible.

17. How can we ensure that climate change risk is taken into consideration in the design, construction and operation of cities, infrastructure and buildings?

Likely climate change:

- Climate change will reshape our society in fundamental ways. We must face this reality, as we find that global growth in emissions is tracking against worst-case projections, and compounding this, the climate system's response seems to be more dramatic than previously expected.
- Climate scientists (Anderson & Bows, 2011, p 41) are now saying that: "There is now little to no chance of maintaining the rise in global mean surface temperature at below 2°C, despite repeated high-level statements to the contrary. Moreover, the impacts associated with 2°C have been revised upwards sufficiently so that 2°C now more appropriately represents the threshold between dangerous and extremely dangerous climate change" (emphasis added).
- As noted by CSIRO scientist Mark Stafford Smith et al (2011, p 196), "with weakening prospects of prompt mitigation, it is increasingly likely that the world will experience 4°C and more of global warming" (emphasis added).
- This represents *extremely dangerous climate change*.
- Anderson and Bows observe that "while the rhetoric of policy is to reduce emissions in line with avoiding dangerous climate change, most

policy advice is to accept a high probability of extremely dangerous climate change rather than propose radical and immediate emission reductions”.

Planning for likely climate change:

- When climate change projections are used for planning decisions, they must be those that accord with our current emissions trajectory, not simply the median emissions storyline that is frequently used.
- Legislation and policy should be evaluated against whether it would help or hinder adaptation and mitigation for climate change and the impacts of dwindling fossil fuel availability.
- *Planning must focus on reducing the carbon emissions of our society, not just slowing the growth of emissions.*
- Planning must focus both on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Peak Oil:

- There is no mention of risks associated with peak oil in the discussion paper. While this looming issue has been known for decades, governments at all levels have not adequately confronted the issue to take necessary action.
- As convenor of the UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security Jeremy Leggett says: "We are asleep at the wheel here: choosing to ignore a threat to the global economy that is quite as bad as the credit crunch, quite possibly worse."
- Professor Peter Newman has been writing about peak oil and its effect on Australian cities for decades. In his 2007 article *Beyond Peak Oil: Will Our Cities Collapse?*, he describes possible scenarios for how cities will respond. The three he considers most likely are that:
 - cities with high per capita fuel use collapse;
 - cities become divided: people with the means take over the inner-urban area well served by infrastructure, while the outer suburbs become ghettos for increasingly desperate societies also at risk of collapse; or
 - cities restructure themselves so they are no longer reliant on oil, and the benefits are shared by all.
- As a highly car-dependant nation, Australia is at increased risk of the first scenario and particularly needs to heed these warnings.
- Of the second scenario, Newman notes (p 21): "There are many signs of this possibility occurring. The wealthy are moving to central locations and especially to transit oriented developments (TOD). The poor are increasingly having to pay a higher and higher proportion of their income on transport". This has been well documented by Jago Dodson and Neil Sipe in their 2008 book *Shocking the Suburbs: Oil Vulnerability in the Australian City*.

- The social impact of this is significant and needs to be factored in if urban planning wishes to leverage funding and support from other sectors.
- To achieve the third scenario, Newman advises practical measures with strong relevance to infrastructure include: reducing car dependence via massive investment in public transport, *particularly in the middle and outer suburbs*; rebuilding peri-urban agriculture; and facilitating a return to localism.
- Planning in this area must highlight peak oil alongside climate change as one of the great transformational challenges to prepare for, and it must ensure that the infrastructure that we are planning now is future-proofed for a world with greatly reduced access to oil.
- Conservation SA strongly recommends a Oil Vulnerability Assessment for Australia and a Peak Oil Action Plan that addresses the challenges, opportunities, impacts, costs and responses to Peak Oil across all sectors of society.
- A Transport Master Plan should also be developed, integrated and implemented in a timely manner with the proposed Oil Vulnerability Assessment and Peak Oil Action Plan, and other planning and climate change policies and plans.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) hubs complying with world's best practice in energy, water and resource efficiency, should include a minimum 15% affordable housing and be planned along all major transport routes, particularly rail and tram corridors
- Investment in infrastructure for public and active transport and high-speed rail should take precedence over new highways and freeways, which ultimately compound urban congestion problems and increase unsustainable car dependence.
- All levels of government must work together to provide the adequate infrastructure to support safe walking, cycling and public transport use, and promote the shift away from car-dominated urban environments. Such infrastructure would include cycling infrastructure paths, overpasses and underpasses away from traffic to reduce the risks to cyclists.
- National urban policy must address the need for agricultural land adjacent to urban centres, and rail infrastructure to convey food to populations in a future where road freight is no longer feasible.

Enhancing our liveability

18. What do you think of the concept of more compact development using a variety of building types (such as townhouses and apartments) rather than primarily expanding on the urban fringes?

- It is vital to move towards more compact developments rather than expanding on the urban fringe.

- We need to contain sprawl and reverse our trend towards car orientated development. This is discussed earlier, but compact developments should incorporate multi-use buildings that make best use of the day and night (eg. apartments and flats above retail spaces), as well as including effective public transport, safe cycling paths, and green space.

19. What is the best way to balance density with urban amenity and renewal?

- Good public participation is the only solution to finding this balance.
- Each community has to be seen as separate and yet integrated. Collectively we need to change the way we live while also maintaining the values and identity of our communities. Talking to people is the key to finding how this will work in each community.
- Clearly planning for liveability is vital, for example compact developments that do not provide green spaces are unlikely to be supported.
- The evidence suggests that urban plans that do not effectively consult with communities they affect will be met with opposition, almost irrespective of their proposals.

20. What do you think about the suggestion that transport, housing and social infrastructure should be concentrated in and around activity centres and along transport corridors so that jobs and services are located near where people live? How could this be done most effectively?

- Ideally, TODs help to redirect growth away from the unsustainable greenfield sites on the urban fringe by focusing development along dedicated rail or light rail corridors. This enables significant urban regeneration to occur, reduces car dependence, and maximises public transport usage.
- The critical mass of population enables a healthy and diverse mix of housing styles, land uses (residential, commercial and retail) and a vibrant and energetic cultural life to develop and add value to previously rundown precincts.
- TODs complying with world's best practice in energy, water and resource efficiency, should include a minimum 15% affordable housing and be planned along all major transport routes, particularly rail and tram corridors.
- See also earlier questions.

22. What actions, incentives and disincentives do we need to reduce people's dependency on private motor vehicles in urban areas?

- Investment in infrastructure for public and active transport and high-speed rail should take precedence over new highways and freeways, which ultimately compound urban congestion problems and increase unsustainable car dependence.
- Housing developments with heavy reliance on private vehicles for regular commuting continue to be designed (such as at Buckland Park and the Mount Barker expansion in South Australia). All new developments should be designed with adequate low emission and efficient public transport systems at their core.
- Funding to keep public transport fares as low as possible should be increased and the government should continue purchasing new rolling stock and equipment.
- Creative mechanisms to reduce congestion on existing roads should be examined, such as congestion pricing, car pooling, bus and transit lanes and encouraging flexible work times to help distribute the peak hour rush.
- Rail electrification and extension of the tram network both need to be high priorities.
- Passenger rail should be reintroduced to regional areas where feasible.
- The aviation industry will be particularly hard-hit by the decline in affordable oil, as alternative fuels and technologies cannot be used as they can for other vehicle types. Continued investment in aviation infrastructure should be subject to rigorous feasibility and cost-benefit analysis based on realistic climate change and peak oil scenarios.

23. How can active transport (walking and cycling) and public transport be most effectively used to meet the transport challenges of our cities?

- State and local governments should work together to develop an integrated network of bike paths and walkways *separated* from motorised traffic throughout existing urban areas and incorporated into the planning of new and redeveloped urban areas.
- Secure, undercover bike parking facilities and bicycle security at public transport stations/terminuses, within the CBD and at suburban hubs should also be provided.
- All levels of government must work together to provide the adequate infrastructure to support safe walking, cycling and public transport use, and promote the shift away from car-dominated urban environments. Such infrastructure would include cycling infrastructure paths, overpasses and underpasses away from traffic to reduce the risks to cyclists.

24. What characteristics of the urban environment can encourage people to walk or cycle more?

- Green spaces and parks, especially when large and connective, encourage people to walk and cycle.
- The needs of walkers and cyclists must be integrated at the planning stage, including for their safe movement over roads.
- Standards for cycling routes are urgently required to ensure new urban areas support cycling as a viable alternative and safe transport system, in addition to the scenic cycling routes that are often inefficient in a transport sense.
- Cycle lanes need investment to ensure they do not cut out at the most dangerous parts of roads
- Cycle lanes and footpaths must be separate from motorised traffic.
- Free Bike schemes should be expanded.
- Street reconfiguration, paving design, street furniture and traffic calming devices that do not interfere with pedestrians should be introduced to provide more pedestrian-friendly environments.

Improving the governance and planning of cities

25. How could the planning arrangements (across all three levels of government) operate differently to improve outcomes for Australia's cities?

- Planning reforms designed to streamline the planning system must not reduce the current level of protection for native vegetation and significant trees as part of our biodiverse environment.
- Streamlining governance should not be used as an excuse for fast-tracking bad development. Governance should be a mechanism for encouraging good development and *stopping* bad development.

Natural Management Resource Boards:

- Natural Resource Management Boards have vital information to contribute to this conversation, especially in relation to water, conservation and biodiversity.

Better Public Participation:

- Development is central to urban planning and it means that big bucks with vested interests are highly involved in the decision-making process. Often community are side-lined in the decision-making process, or their views not taken seriously.
- It is important to be clear that decisions about urban planning rest in the hands of the public and government. While developers have an interest in urban planning, their views are no more important than any other stakeholder.
- Involving the public in decisions that affect their lives is a core role of democratic government.
- Engagement with the public must be well planned, meaningful and must be a tool for people to actually make a contribution rather than being a tokenistic process which checks boxes but has no real impact.

- Engagement must start *before* decisions and plans have been made.
- The International Association for Public Participation have best practice approaches to public participation which provide methods for good public participation in this area.