

WATERVIEW HEIGHTS NSW 2460

10 April 2008

Garnaut Review Secretariat  
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Level 2, 1 Treasury Place  
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Dear Sir

**Comment on Issues Paper – Forum 5 (Transport, Planning & the Built Environment)**

The Federal Government should firstly be congratulated for putting climate change firmly on the national agenda and moving forward with actions towards mitigating and adapting to the climate change challenge Australia faces both now and into the future. Let's hope it's not too late.

**Introduction of a carbon price, especially on high-emission transport options, will provide incentive for consumers to reduce transport-related emissions.**

I have to agree with the comment provided to the forum (as stated in Section 3.3.1) that the lack of a carbon price, and consumer payment for the impact of transport options chosen, will reduce incentive for consumers to reduce transport-related emissions. This is more relevant where consumers have access to a multi-mode public transport system (including a system of bikeways and pedestrian routes) typically associated with Australian metropolitan centres.

Indeed, the same principle of increasing user costs as a method of reducing consumption applies for all types of energy consumption which are at the heart of the current debate on how best to ameliorate our impact on climate change. Even the Reserve Bank Governor, Mr Glenn Stevens, has warned of increasing energy costs for consumers as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 5 April 2008 (Article – *Getting use to being greener, poorer*). Another example was reported on the same day in the same paper when Richard Corkish, the Head of Renewable Energy Engineering at the University of NSW, was seeking greater government support for the installation of solar photovoltaic cells. That article stated that renewable energy costs more than traditional power.

**Renewable energy sources must be promoted over high emission sources even if the renewable sources are currently more costly.**

The issue of raw cost is, I consider, another key element in the current debate on how Australia acts to the climate emergency. Renewable energy may well cost more right now but it is contributing to saving the planet. High emission sources of power such a coal-generated electricity may be cheaper in the present but has, and will, cost the earth and society a whole lot more in the future. I for one would rather pay more for renewable energy now and know that I'd played my part in leaving the globe in a reasonable condition for future generations. Our household pays an additional premium for 100% accredited green power through Country Energy. The whole of society should be paying. Society will be paying a whole lot more if we don't act now.

**Next time the government, or indeed the Garnaut Review, gets comment from a climate change sceptic, or a politician raises concern about the economic cost simply ask the question – “What will be the cost to future generations if we do nothing now?”** No amount of money will fix the problem when the ‘tipping points’ are surpassed. I think a bit of perspective and fore thinking will go a long way to reducing the number of laggards in society and making them active participants in contributing to a better future for all.

**The federal government should lean on (and if necessary legislate) State governments to reduce registration fees for fuel efficient and low-emission passenger vehicles.**

In terms of the ‘Questions for Consideration’ following Section 3.3.4 I consider that uptake of more fuel efficient passenger vehicles could well be improved by reducing registration fees for such vehicles. No doubt the steady increase in fuel costs as the demand for oil increases and oil supply falls will contribute to making such vehicle options more attractive to a broader range of society.

**All levels of government should continue to promote planning of communities that reduce reliance on high emission transportation and are dominated by development that strives for sustainability.**

Reducing reliance on high emission transport options is also a product of good town planning – providing nodes of services and facilities close to residential areas and having town planning controls that enable well-designed higher density housing forms (energy and resource efficient of course) suited to the modern community and future demographic needs adjacent to those nodes are essential components. When those demand nodes are made more accessible by non-motorised transport such as walking or cycling then short, inefficient trips in vehicles are discouraged and the ideal low emissions transport environment is more possible to achieve.

**Expansion and intensification of rail activity, especially freight, in Australia is absolutely essential.**

When ‘Issues for Consideration’ in the freight sector (Section 3.4) and aviation and shipping (Section 3.5) are considered then my thoughts are to inject more funding back into our declining rail systems (in metropolitan and regional areas), upgrade rail lines for more and longer freight trains, and develop a network of intermodal terminals to increase freight movement by rail. These funds would also provide opportunities for increased patronage of trains for passenger transport. In some regional areas the potential for passenger and tourist travel is likely to be quite strong, eg Lismore – Byron Bay line. It’s difficult to develop a culture of Australians that use and enjoy train travel when governments keep closing down lines and underspending on maintaining existing services. The National and State governments need to work on these initiatives in partnership. In terms of encouraging emissions reductions from these sectors one tool might be to ensure they are included in the coverage of the national Emissions Trading Scheme.

**Houses must be smaller if residential development is to be truly sustainable and make a substantial contribution to reducing our carbon footprint – and achieve a win-win-win-win situation (read on to see how).**

Opportunities for reducing emissions from the building sector have been touched upon already in this submission. Buildings need to be made for our current and future needs and not our desires and dreams. Efficiency in resource use, both in

construction and maintenance, will demand that future residential development is smaller. The cost of land, development, and shortages of good land close to services means that more people will have to occupy less land. The traditional ¼ acre block on which much of Australia's suburban culture has been built must be made less of the norm and be replaced (or better still redeveloped) with well-designed higher density housing forms. The consumer society needs to roll over to a less greedy way-of-life and standard of living that aren't 'keeping up with the Jones's'. Smaller houses are easier and cheaper to heat, cool and build. Consumers may even have some cash left to purchase energy efficient appliances. That's a win-win-win situation!

**The federal government must promote regulation to require more efficient and sustainable residential and non-residential development in all State and Territory jurisdictions.**

The opportunity to encourage more energy efficient residential development (including renovations and alterations) has been taken on by the NSW Government through regulations such as the State Environmental Planning Policy – Building and Sustainability Index (BASIX for short). I am not aware of the status of such regulatory controls in other States and where they are lacking they must be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century pronto. Indeed, leading State jurisdictions like NSW shouldn't be resting on their laurels but need to also ensure commercial or other non-residential building forms are also designed to meet to current and future energy challenges and reduce emissions embodied in materials and associated with operational demands. The Federal government needs to drive an agenda to get State governments collectively acting for the greater good in building design.

**Lending institutions have a significant role to play in encouraging more sustainable development choices for Australia.**

As interest rates increase we can only hope that lending institutions, and consumers, start to act more conservatively. Less capital funds provides some likelihood that smaller, more efficient building options will become more of the norm. The 'culture' of large McMansions built beyond the needs of their occupants is largely the doing of over-generous lending institutions. As interest rates rise the sustainability of such lending practices must be severely questioned. Sustainable lending is a trend Australian financial institutions must develop.

**The time is 'ripe' for introducing appropriate legislation to create positive changes in society, increasing consumer awareness of products and services, and increasing government rebates for clean, domestic-scale energy sources.**

Many of these challenges are cultural and hence, they can be slow to achieve a critical mass. Legislative change has the ability to create great change over a short time span. The majority of the community know that they need to do something. Much further, people want to do something to help. The time is right for relevant change to be enacted such that it invades our everyday life. The reasons for change obviously need to be conveyed and much of society will accept change if it contributes to the well-being of current and future generations and the environment. Other tools available relate to increasing consumer knowledge of products and services, eg Federal and State government rebates for solar hot water systems. In some areas there could be more government funding to assist such initiatives, eg greater rebates for installation of photovoltaic solar cells on private and commercial development to provide clean power to the electricity grid and at the same time

reducing the need for and demand on producing 'dirty' coal-generated power support for such.

**Short term costs for longer term gain. Remember the earlier question - "What will be the cost to future generations if we do nothing now?"**

Yours faithfully

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