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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY No. 3

URBAN GROWTH AND SETTLEMENT

Prepared under section 5AA of the
Town Planning and Development Act 1928 (as amended)
by the Western Australian Planning Commission

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community need to work together to support more consolidated development in appropriate locations where consistent with neighbourhood character and where the necessary services are available or can be provided.

In the new suburbs, there is an increasing drive to return to the traditional neighbourhood form with more of a sense of community as well as access to jobs, services and public transport.

The trend is to create more liveable communities in the new suburbs, revitalise and enhance neighbourhoods in existing urban areas, provide for variety in housing and living environments, widen the range of transport choices, conserve water and other natural resources, and provide for wider social interaction and opportunity.

Affordability of housing is a key issue. There is a need to maintain a supply of affordable land for housing and affordable housing products for all in the community including those with special needs. The majority of new affordable housing land is in the outlying suburbs reinforcing the need for medium and higher density housing in inner and middle suburbs for low to middle income households as well as in the growth corridors. There is also a need to design the built environment in a way which reduces the fear and incidence of crime and which enhances community pride.

In the regions, whilst the larger regional centres such as Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Broome and Esperance have continued to grow, some of the smaller country towns have declined due to reduced employment opportunities and social change as people have moved out of the rural settlements into urban centres.

In the mining and resource sector, improvements in mobility brought about by more cost effective travel, has seen the growth of the fly-in fly-out workforce often accommodated at mine sites. There are concerns that fly-in fly-out working arrangements do little to contribute to the local economy and the viability of regional towns and communities. The resources sector, however, regards fly-in fly-out as critical for remote mining operations and in attracting skilled workers. There is a need to promote investment in regional communities whilst recognizing that fly-in fly-out arrangements will often be necessary due to remoteness and to attract skilled workers.

The overall aim of the policy is to facilitate sustainable patterns of urban growth and settlement by setting out the requirements of sustainable settlements and communities and the broad policy in accommodating growth and change. This policy should be taken into account in preparing regional and local planning strategies, and planning schemes and amendments, and given weight in statutory decision making in relation to urban growth and settlement.

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The key requirements for sustainable communities are—

a strong, diversified and sustainable economic base with assured access to jobs and employment;

sufficient and suitable serviced land in the right locations for housing, employment, commercial, recreational and other purposes, coordinated with the efficient and economic provision of transport, essential infrastructure and human services;

variety and choice in the size, type and affordability of housing to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes and which is responsive to housing demand and preferences;

affordable land for housing and affordable housing products in both greenfield and brownfield locations to ensure the housing needs of all the community can be met including those with special needs;

making the most efficient use of land in existing urban areas through the use of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings, and higher densities where these can be achieved without detriment to neighbourhood character and heritage values; the cost-effective use of urban land and buildings, schools and community services, infrastructure systems and established neighbourhoods; and promoting and encouraging urban development that is consistent with the efficient use of energy;

directing urban expansion into desyve Tal15.5(ese c)81.5(c)d6.3(s)-7.6(il96.4(at)12(e))7.1(i)11.66(il96.aa.

consist exclusively of housing but must be planned as a sustainable community with a mix of land uses including, employment, shops, open space, schools and other services. In the new development areas, the aim should be to achieve increases in average housing density and provide a range of housing types. Higher densities and mixed use development should be encouraged near public transport nodes and activity centres.

for a mix of housing types and households, creating the opportunity for social interaction and designing at a human scale so that streets are attractive, convenient and safe public spaces.

The *Liveable Neighbourhoods* principles apply to the preparation and review of regional and district structure plans for new growth areas, local structure plans for new subdivisions, and in planning for the revitalisation or redevelopment of existing areas. These principles are—

- a sense of community and strong local identity and sense of place in neighbourhoods and towns;
- an urban structure of walkable neighbourhoods clustered to form towns of compatibly mixed uses in order to reduce car dependence for access to employment, retail and community facilities;
- access generally by way of an interconnected network of streets which facilitate safe, efficient and pleasant walking, cycling and driving;
- safe and convenient access to services and facilities designed for all users, including users with disabilities;
- active street frontages with buildings facing streets to improve personal safety through increased surveillance and activity;
- new development which supports the efficiency of public transport systems where available, and provides safe, direct access to the system for residents;
- mixed use urban development which provides for a wide range of living, employment and leisure opportunities capable of adapting over time as the community changes, and reflects appropriate community standards of health, safety and amenity;
- a variety of lot sizes and housing types to cater for the diverse housing needs of the community at a density that can ultimately support the provision of local services;
- subdivision and housing types which can adapt to changing needs and accommodate gradual intensification;
- the protection of key environmental areas and the incorporation of significant cultural and environmental features of a site into the design of an area;
- an integrated approach to the design of open space and urban water management; and
- cost-effective and resource-efficient development to promote affordable housing.

Planning for new growth and settlements should be co-ordinated with the cost-efficient provision of infrastructure and services such as roads, public transport, water supply, sewerage, electricity, gas, telecommunications, drainage, open space, schools, health and recreational facilities.

Regional and local strategies and plans should identify land required for future transport routes, infrastructure, community services and facilities. Transport and other infrastructure with off-site impacts should be separated from residential and other sensitive uses. Infrastructure and service providers need to be consulted early in the process to ensure that service delivery is co-ordinated with new development.

While there are clear costs in providing services on the urban fringe, there may also be significant costs and long lead times in upgrading existing infrastructure capacity in existing urban areas to serve higher densities. The construction of service infrastructure may also be disruptive to local communities. Infrastructure providers will need to be consulted for advice on the practicality, costs and funding of infrastructure services.

The Commission's land release plans should be used to guide the programming of new development on greenfield and major infill/redevelopment sites in the metropolitan region and regional towns and cities to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure and services.

Developer contributions for infrastructure should be made in accordance with Commission policy. In areas of fragmented land ownership, consideration should be given to cost-sharing among owners to ensure the equitable funding of infrastructure.

Developer contributions should be consistent with the principles of need, nexus, equity and accountability and should always take account of housing affordability.

Greenfield developments that leapfrog the existing urban front should be required to pre-fund extensions to infrastructure, including extensions to major roads and utility networks, that would otherwise be provided by service providers. There will, however, be scope for negotiated agreements between developers and State and local government regarding funding of major infrastructure for out-of-sequence development, particularly for land which is zoned for urban development, and taking into account land supply and land assembly constraints. Consideration may also need to be given to

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Rural-residential development, however, can have a range of negative impacts. Hobby farms and rural homesites can present potential conflicts with other land uses and rural resources such as water catchments, basic raw materials, conservation areas and outstanding landscapes. There are also pressures placed on State and local governments for services and infrastructure which are difficult to provide economically because of the dispersed pattern of subdivision. In the metropolitan region and around towns and cities in the regions, rural living development can also limit opportunities for future urban development by fragmenting land, and making land assembly and the provision of services more difficult and costly.

There is a need, therefore, to locate and design rural-residential settlements in a sustainable way which is integrated with the overall pattern of settlement.

The Commission's *Statement of Planning Policy No.2.5: Agricultural and Rural Land Use Planning* applies to the zoning of land for rural-residential development. Planning for rural-residential development should—

- avoid productive agricultural land, important natural resources, areas of high bush fire risk or environmental sensitivity;
- avoid future urban areas or areas particularly suitable for urban development in terms of their characteristics and proximity to urban services;
- give preference to locations near existing settlements with available services and facilities in order to support the local community and avoid locations where services are not available or costly extensions are necessary;
- minimise potential for conflict with incompatible activities associated with productive rural uses or natural resource management;
- only include locations which are suitable for this type of development, such as land which is topographically varied, visually attractive and with distinctive environmental attributes or otherwise has potential for lifestyle pursuits; and
- take a realistic approach by allocating land based on forecast estimates of demand for rural living not on the speculative development of land.

Whilst many Aboriginal people live in closely settled rural or urban areas, there are many who live in townships and settlements which are Aboriginal managed communities.

The Commission oversees the state-wide *Planning for Aboriginal Communities* project which involves preparing community layout plans to guide the location of new houses and community buildings.



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