

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts  
PO Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Submission to the Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities**

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities and commends the Government in addressing this important and urgent issue.

PIA supports the urgent need to address the environmental impacts of existing and emerging new settlement patterns along our coastline and hinterlands, especially in the context of climate change impacts. A national approach where the Australian Government provides leadership and collaborates with state/territory and local jurisdictions is required.

The Planning Institute of Australia represents around 4600 urban planners and associated professionals working in Australia and internationally. Around half of our members work in local government, thirty percent in the private sector and the remainder in state/commonwealth government and academia.

Planners are integral stakeholders and decision makers in the management of land use and development, and as such PIA believes that:

- Planners are charged with the challenging task of creating an enabling environment for change (in terms of mitigation of future impacts overlapping all sectors);
- Planners will be faced with increasingly difficult land use and development scenarios reflecting population and settlement trends which will need to be managed within the context of climate change issues to reduce vulnerability to coastal communities and individuals and the environment;
- Planners will be under pressure to manage coastal and hinterland areas in new ways in the future which may impact on the way that the community has traditionally used such spaces/places.
- PIA and planners generally will be key agents for awareness raising and capacity building in the community generally and within this peak profession;
- Planners will need to continue to work with other key sectors and across government to ensure an integrated approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation is achieved.

PIA along with other Industry groups has endorsed a Sustainable Communities Model which proposes that agreed performance indicators are developed and incorporated into national, regional and local plans and tied to financial incentives. This model was supported in the recommendations of the House of Representative's Sustainable Cities Inquiry and ensuing Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter. PIA would highly recommend that this current Inquiry into coastal communities also refer to these earlier Inquiry reports for principles that can be used in addressing environmental impacts on coastal communities. The model could equally be modified to govern a program of national state and regional Coastal Management Plans aimed at addressing climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities. Further information is provided in the attachment.

In this regard, PIA also supports the views of the National Sea Change Taskforce which promotes the adoption of a co-ordinated national approach to managing sea change growth that would involve a commitment by all three levels of governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment<sup>1</sup>. The research undertaken by the Taskforce concluded that priority planning areas for intervention include: environment and heritage, community well being, economy/tourism, infrastructure and governance<sup>2</sup>. PIA supports the view that these priority areas can best be addressed through a COAG endorsed national approach.

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<sup>1</sup> National Sea Change Taskforce : <http://www.seachangetaskforce.org.au/Publications.html>

<sup>2</sup> Meeting the Sea Change Challenge (2005) Report for National Sea Change Taskforce

## Summary of Key Recommendations

PIA is recommending the following urgent action:

- 1 The Council of Australian Governments develop a national vision for and approach to the management of our coastline to deliver nationally consistent policies and outcomes for:
  - co-ordinated growth management along our coastlines
  - identification of priority areas for action
  - agreement on national performance indicators and criteria covering environmental, economic, social and governance
  - appropriate levels of funding and resourcing to local governments and other groups to deliver these outcomes through Coastal Management Plans
  
- 2 Establish a Coastal Management Unit addressing climate change impacts in a central unit within a Federal Government Department, to co-ordinate and facilitate action on this initiative; which may be best placed within the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Services and Local Government. This would assist with the co-ordination of state and local government in areas such as planning, environment, transport and infrastructure for our coastline.

### What is the current state of coastal communities?

The Planning Institute of Australia is concerned that our coastal and peri-urban areas are growing at an unsustainable rate, and that this will continue if a business as usual approach is taken by all levels of government. A more active and integrated approach to growth management and infrastructure provision especially in relation to climate change impacts is urgently needed. Some of the areas for concern are:

- **Coastal areas and their hinterlands are growing at a rapid rate.** The ABS currently projects that 40% of our population growth to 2050 will be outside our major metropolitan centres.
  
- **Without proper and co-ordinated planning, threats to property and life in coastal areas will result in financial, environmental and social impacts to communities, governments and ecosystems.** The Insurance Council estimates that 710 000 addresses are vulnerable to coastal inundation. Between 1967 – 2005, cyclone damage cost the community \$281M/year and flooding \$376M/year.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Transport and Regional Economic figures

- **Local Governments are struggling to meet the demands of infrastructure and services from a growing population.** Detailed analysis of 441 councils completed over 2005/06 across four states by Access Economics (for NSW, South Australia and Western Australia) and in Victoria<sup>4</sup> found that the average infrastructure renewal backlog per council is \$20.8 million. If this average result applies across all 700 councils the aggregate national renewals backlog is approximately \$14.5 billion<sup>5</sup>.
- **Coastal areas are vulnerable to a range of potential damage from climate change.** In work undertaken by CSIRO and the University of the Sunshine Coast for the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, five areas of vulnerability were identified - extreme heat and human health effects, sea level rises and coastal hazards, extreme rainfall and stormwater management, bushfire and natural ecosystem and assets. It is likely that these areas of vulnerability will be found in most coastal communities. It is therefore important that consistent modeling and assessment of the specific climate change related environmental vulnerabilities of Australia's coastal regions be undertaken to better inform local decision making.
- **Skill shortages exist in the planning profession and related professions especially in Local Governments.** In the 2004 PIA National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment, research indicated a vacancy rate of around 20%. In more recent work undertaken by the SA Division of PIA, the situation has not improved with a 20% shortfall of planners across 42 of the State's 68 councils and a 67% shortfall of support staff. This shortfall will impact on the ability of local governments and the community to respond to the challenges of coastal development.

The attachment provides more detailed information addressing the Terms of Reference.

We would be happy to elaborate on any of these issues further and if you require further information on any of the above information please contact Liz de Chastel, National Policy Manager on telephone 02 6262 5933.

Yours sincerely



**Di Jay**

Chief Executive Officer  
2 June 2008

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<sup>4</sup> Municipal Association of Victoria

<sup>5</sup> Price Waterhouse Cooper (2006) Report to Australian Local Government Association

# Detailed Response to the Terms of Reference

## 1. Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum

### 1.1 Planning Legislation

Planning legislation and policy is state/territory based and as such does not provide a consistent national response to the issues along Australia's coastline. This is particularly evident where there are cross-border issues such as the coastal growth in SEQ which extends into northern NSW. Different standards cause community and developer frustration and a lack of certainty for planning. Another example is the differing requirements in planning legislation to the incorporation of sea level rises and the timeframes and data used in the calculations of storm surge and sea level rises.

Regional planning processes provide an excellent opportunity to integrate social, economic and environmental issues and plan for future growth in a co-ordinated way. A good example of this is the SEQ Regional Plan which guides long term development for the region, co-ordinates infrastructure and addresses environmental impacts of growth. More recently the plan is seeking to address climate change impacts including coastal impacts. However it should be noted that not all state and territory governments have strong regional planning processes in place and even within states, regional planning processes vary in quality and scope.

Better linkages between Natural Resource Management Plans and Regional Plans are also recommended. At the present time, integrated outcomes which are essential in dealing with climate change are difficult to achieve.

An example of a state-wide coastal plan is the 2007 winner of the PIA National Award for Planning Excellence. This Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study undertaken by Planisphere for the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment focused on visual significance, and informed the State Coastal Strategy. This may be a model for that can be translated into assessing environmental and climate change vulnerability.

The Australian Government has been supporting more streamlined and integrated planning processes through the Development Assessment Forum which PIA and other industry and government groups have also supported<sup>6</sup>. In addition, recent changes have been made in most state land use planning systems to make them more "performance", policy and outcome oriented rather than prescriptive. A stronger national focus on coastal development will raise awareness of our Coastal Zone as a key asset and an asset vulnerable to climate change where development needs to be performance and outcome assessed. It also provides an important opportunity for the

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to <http://www.daf.gov.au/>

Australian Government to stimulate coordinated strategic land and natural resource planning in the Coastal Zone to more consistently and coherently address environmental impacts and ideally, speed up the response to climate change now that increasingly reliable impact data is becoming available.

## **1.2 Draft National Climate Change Adaptation Framework**

PIA also believes that the draft National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) is a useful reference document highlighting the potential impacts of climate change on a diverse range of key sectors, supported by a series of high level actions to mitigate these impacts in the future.

Specific to PIA, the NCCAF acts as an important tool to anticipate a number of the more generic and overarching issues that will arise for the planning profession in terms of information and knowledge needs and the ability to 'mainstream' climate change adaptation into our daily practice and long term strategic direction/s. Awareness of this and other tools available to assist must be raised amongst those determining planning policy or in delivering outcomes in the Coastal Zone (developers, legislators, regulators and strategic and development assessment planners).

## **1.3 Federal Legislation**

The new strategic planning provision introduced under the *Environment Protection and Bio-Diversity Conservation Act* in 2007 combined with the national system of Natural Resource Regional Plans (under the Care for Country programme) provides a key set of overarching tools to aid integration of threatening process in the Coastal Zone in the absence of national and regional coastal specific plans. The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan identifies the importance of aligning these federal and local systems within a natural resource planning context that is sensitised to climate change information. PIA supports this alignment and also recommends:

1. Through COAG and the Local Government and Planning Minister's Council seeking agreement on a national set of actions and policies to deal with planning issues along our coastline
2. Establish a central unit within a Federal Government Department to co-ordinate and facilitate action on this initiative; which may be located in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Services and Local Government. This would assist with the co-ordination of state and local government in areas such as planning, environment, transport and infrastructure.

## **2. The environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources**

Coastal environments are impacted in a number of ways. It is estimated that more than 50 per cent of the threatened or rare plants, mammals, birds, reptiles and freshwater fish are distributed in and around our major cities or in other population growth areas<sup>7</sup>. The process of coastal development is a broader expression of peri-urban forces at work in the landscapes beyond our major cities and regional centre. Biodiversity is heavily impacted by these new settlement patterns.

Coastal areas and their hinterlands are growing at a rapid rate. The ABS currently projects that 40% of our population growth to 2050 will be outside our major metropolitan centres.

From the 2007 ABS data the regions of greatest development outside the major cities are Hervey Bay to Byron Bay (south Qld to north NSW) Newcastle to Wollongong (NSW) Port Phillip region (Vic.) and the City of Wanneroo to City of Mandurah (north Perth to south Perth). Most are potentially subject to extreme weather effects and other impacts of climate change on Coastal Zones.

Coastal zones also often have the best location for agricultural land for food production, having suitable soils and often adequate water supplies. However this land is also under pressure for residential and other development. Given climate change issues, global food shortages and increases in fuel costs, the issue of protection of good agricultural land in Australia's coastal zone needs to be addressed.

Local Governments are struggling to meet the demands of infrastructure and services from a growing population before demand associated with the risks and potential impacts of climate change are overlaid. Detailed analysis of 441 councils completed over 2005/06 across four states by Access Economics (for NSW, South Australia and Western Australia) and in Victoria (by the MAV) found that the average infrastructure renewal backlog per council is \$20.8 million. If this average result applies across all 700 councils the aggregate national renewals backlog is approximately \$14.5 billion<sup>8</sup>.

Local governments' capacity to respond effectively and to meet the adaptation and mitigation costs of climate change and environmental impacts in Coastal Zones is limited and varies according to resources available. Additional support from the Commonwealth and from State/Territory Governments, preferably in incentive funds linked to outcomes, is needed.

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<sup>7</sup> Change and Continuity in Peri-Urban Australia (2006) Buxton et al P110.

<sup>8</sup> Price Waterhouse Cooper (2006) Report to Australian Local Government Association

## 2.1 Need for Peri-Urban Research and Action

There is currently a high level of interest in Australia's peri-urban regions—the fast growing fringe and hinterland surrounding major metropolitan areas and provincial cities. These regions coincide with some of Australia's most favourable and strategically important environments, and have been attracting the attention of government as critical locations for a range of sustainability and developmental themes (eg. Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council 2006). Most notably, Land and Water Australia (2007) has been sponsoring investigations that have highlighted the importance of peri-urban regions in terms of biodiversity protection, water resources and agricultural production.

The recent research work and modelling of peri-urban forces in Australia and referenced internationally carried-out by Land and Water Australia posed a range of important research questions to inform planning for peri-urban and coastal areas. This research work and the growth, change and planning approaches recommended should be incorporated into all coastal planning and environmental assessment<sup>9</sup>.

Despite this activity and interest there is no agreed understanding amongst researchers or government about what constitutes Australia's peri-urban regions. This situation limits the scope for systematic research (eg. longitudinal studies within peri-urban regions and comparative studies between regions) and the confidence with which research findings can be used. More importantly, it means there is currently no agreed basis for monitoring and reporting on the NRM status of peri-urban regions or other social and economic indicators of interest to government, such as the value of agricultural production. Therefore, there is no empirical basis to identify areas that may be critical to economic or environmental sustainability in order to support protection or to guide development in these areas.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.periurban.org.au/publications.htm> and [http://products.lwa.gov.au/products\\_details.asp?pc=EF051035&pn=1&method=search&browse\\_program\\_group=&browse\\_subject=&title=peri%2Durban&author=&code=&date\\_from=&date\\_to=](http://products.lwa.gov.au/products_details.asp?pc=EF051035&pn=1&method=search&browse_program_group=&browse_subject=&title=peri%2Durban&author=&code=&date_from=&date_to=)

### **3. The impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise**

Without proper and co-ordinated planning, threats to property and life in coastal areas will result in financial and social impacts to communities and governments. The Insurance Council estimates that 710 000 addresses are vulnerable to coastal inundation. Between 1967 – 2005, cyclone damage cost the community \$281M/year and flooding \$376M/year.<sup>10</sup>

Coastal areas are vulnerable to a range of potential damage from climate change. In work undertaken by CSIRO and the University of the Sunshine Coast for the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, five areas of vulnerability were identified - extreme heat and human health effects, sea level rises and coastal hazards, extreme rainfall and stormwater management, bushfire and natural ecosystems and assets. It is likely that these areas of vulnerability will be found in most coastal communities.

Significant skill shortages exist in the planning and related professions especially in Local Governments. In the 2004 PIA National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment, research indicated a vacancy rate of around 20%. In more recent work undertaken by the SA Division of PIA, the situation has not improved with a 20% shortfall of planners across 42 of the State's 68 councils and a 67% shortfall of support staff (vocationally trained or para-planners). This shortfall impacts on the ability of local governments and the community to respond effectively to planning issues and particularly to emerging or increasingly important challenges such as coastal development and climate change.

#### **3.1 Strategies to deal with climate change adaptation**

In 2006-07 the Planning Institute of Australia with the support of the Australian Greenhouse Office conducted ten national seminars to raise the awareness of climate change adaptation to planning practitioners and related professions and to determine what tools and resources planners required to address climate change adaptation in their communities.

A full copy of the final report is attached to this submission and can also be accessed at:

[http://www.planning.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=641&Itemid=580](http://www.planning.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=641&Itemid=580)

The main recommendations and feedback from the planning community about what they need to undertake climate change adaptation were:

- Planners require greater skills and training in climate change issues and impacts.

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<sup>10</sup> Bureau of Transport and Regional Economic figures

- Robust policy and regulation is needed to support the inclusion of adaptation and mitigation strategies in state and local planning instruments.
- Planners require more planning tools and skills such as baseline and impacts modelling capabilities.
- More resources and funding are required to implement adaptation and mitigation activities, particularly within local governments
- A risk management approach should be taken in developing climate change responses by planners.
- More champions and stronger leadership is required within the profession and across all three spheres of government.
- Regional and local variations in Australia need to be recognised in understanding possible impacts and actions.
- Reliable information needs to be more accessible, consistent and more effectively communicated.

Throughout the ten seminars, very similar issues and barriers were identified by planning professionals facing the task of administering climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies into their planning activities despite regional variations. Many of these issues raised, also reiterated what the National Adaptation Framework for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 'Plan of Collaborative Action on Climate Change' framework (4) identified in February 2006 such as the need for training, planning tools, building adaptive capacity, strong leadership and policy, and multidisciplinary assessments of vulnerability to climate change.

A key concern by planners was that Government leadership on climate change adaptation was vital and that national, state, territory and local governments have differing and complimentary roles in this regard. This requires decision makers to build on adaptive capacity that provides sector relevant tools and information, raising awareness of adaptation and mitigation options, educating and training key professionals and elected representatives in climate change science in relation to social, ecological and economic implications in the planning arena. Planners consistently reinforced that there was a critical need to develop accessible and robust policy and legislation that would provide clear guidance and to provide them with readily applicable tools and data access points.

Access to credible and current environmental data of species and communities that are or will become increasingly threatened in the Coastal Zone, will need to be regularly provided with centralised scientific support if planners are to take into account environmental conservation protection in a timely fashion. This knowledge is seldom available or is not readily accessible to Local Governments.

Planners also reiterated that planning legislation and the policy framework had not kept up to date with current issues and information on climate change. This was causing a major concern for planners who felt under pressure to actively build mitigation and adaptation strategies into their strategic planning processes and to develop robust methods for administering them. In particular, many local governments were looking to their relevant Stat/Territory Government to provide clear directions on climate change policy before proceeding with some work due to

concerns about litigation. In other words, they were concerned about their capacity to develop an assessment of impact that was defensible.

Litigation was a major area of concern for the majority of planners especially those who work within local governments, as this was a new area which has not been tested in the court system. For example, if a local government decided to “wind back” development in an area due to new flooding information this may require compensation to the land owner for loss of development rights. For some local governments this may mean substantial costs, especially on prime coastal land. Land owners may choose to use the court system to seek fair compensation if aggrieved by the local government’s decision. They were also concerned about their vulnerability to litigation for inaction by the local government, in the event of sea level rise or severe weather effects that had not been predicted or mitigated.

Another major concern raised throughout the seminars was that the planning professions did not readily incorporate a risk assessment methodology into their work and generally worked with minimal or no risk assessment. Planners were keen to embrace a risk assessment/management culture, however, they need support, cooperation and tools to adopt this approach. Leadership tools such as methods for assessing the costs and benefits of adaptation strategies and guides for risk assessment analysis are required. Training, education and public awareness in risk management guidance to take into account any projected changes as a result of climate change and reduce the vulnerability were also seen as imperative.

Training and education programs should be designed and delivered at a practical grass roots level, presented in ‘real terms’ and should cover related climate change issues such as risk assessment techniques, climate change responses in strategic planning and the impacts including potential financial and legal liability as well as the mitigation options and limitations through mechanisms such as insurance. Some communities are more adaptive to climate change, eg Darwin and Cairns, where tropical cyclones are a regular feature whereas in other areas, such as those currently less vulnerable to extreme weather events, are not so adaptive to changes in their environments. Training should be tailored to the specific area given that Australia spans 20 or more climate zones and bearing in mind the variety of planning regulatory frameworks that exist across the nation.

A key factor which recurs in discussion with the profession is the shortage of planners which is impacting on the ability to respond appropriately to climate change issues. This needs to be taken into account even in determining the way training might be delivered such as the need for short courses to limit time away from the office, in-house training, pooling of skills in regions and up skilling existing as well as training emerging professionals.

Local governments are the closest to their communities but increasing demands and limitations are placed on local governments for implementing planning adaptation strategies to address climate change issues. Historic decisions, practices, systems and management have sometimes created a ‘silo’ affect between neighbouring councils and the disjoint between economic vs. environmental issues are common

realities within the local government environment. A regional approach is likely to be more effective and robust in delivering responses to climate change.

PIA has approached the Australian Government for further support with:

- The delivery of additional seminars to be held in regional areas due to unmet demand. One of these seminars would be in Alice Springs where the focus would be on arid zones and remote communities.
- Preparation of national guidelines for planners on climate change adaptation (and mitigation) which would include general principles, tools, case studies, international and national best practice, references and a web site with a link to a recognized climate change web portal. These guidelines will respond to many of the tools that planners have requested.
- Proposal for modelling greenhouse gas emission reductions in the built environment

Leaving a small, stretched, but critical profession to identify solutions and prepare themselves from within their own resources or those of the local governments for which they largely work, will not be an adequate response. Planning professionals represent a critical workforce to adapting and mitigating climate risk, but are not being invested in adequately or given adequate tools or training to drive change.

## 4. Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities

### 4.1 Sustainable Communities Model

PIA has developed and endorsed with other organisations the Sustainable Communities Policy demonstrating how climate change responses can be built into urban action plans. The Sustainable Communities model was adopted in the Sustainable Cities Report in September 2005 led by the House of Representative Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/enviro/cities/report.htm> and referred to in the later Report on the Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter. The Sustainable Communities Policy emphasised the need for more sustainable built environments.

The Commonwealth should have a strong and positive position on urban and regional policy. This approach must be based on the concept of subsidiarity, under which the Commonwealth would establish national sustainability targets and incent the States, Territories and Local Government to implement diverse and innovative ways of meeting those targets. A program of incentives would be funded through a bring forward of the productivity gain in our cities in much the same way as National Competition Policy was funded. A small, effective Sustainability Commission would oversee the review of Urban Action Plans (state and regional levels) that would result in more sustainable and economically efficient cities and allocate funding.

The Commonwealth through the Commission, with COAG agreement, would lead the establishment of an Australian Sustainable Development Charter. Urban Action Plans would need to contribute to achieving progress against key sustainability/performance indicators in that Charter. The Charter which would describe the overarching principles for sustainable urban and regional development and set out time-bounded and measurable national targets in economic, environmental and social terms – this is covered in detail in the PIA submission to the House of Reps Inquiry into Sustainable Cities (August 2005) and the Sustainability Charter (August 2007). Examples of measurable targets can be developed for:

#### Environmental sustainability

- water consumption per capita;
- water quality standards;
- environmental flows in key river systems;
- desalination;
- bio-diversity retention or protection;
- native vegetation; and

#### Social sustainability

- access to quality public transport service;

This model could equally be modified to govern a program of national state and regional Coastal Management Plans aimed at addressing climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities with the indicators framed accordingly and the Urban Action Plans being more limited in their scope.

In general terms, PIA believes that the Sustainability Charter should be framed with reference to the following principles.

**1. Performance based targets.** The sustainability objectives enshrined in the Charter should specify what outcomes are to be achieved but not prescribe how these are to be achieved.

**2. Independent and public verification.** Progress towards the adopted sustainability objectives must be capable of independent and authoritative verification by a third party, whose processes and findings are subject to public scrutiny. This is described in further detail in the background paper.

**3. Nationally consistent, regionally specified.** The objectives should relate to a common set of sustainability parameters, but the specific targets set within each of these parameters should recognize regional differences. Regional categories should be kept to a minimum for the sake of clarity and ease of administration. PIA recommends the following groupings:

- Metropolitan
- Regional Australia
- Remote Australia

**4. Sustainability parameters.** The Charter should adopt the triple bottom line approach and set targets for social and economic sustainability, as well as for sustainability in the natural / physical environment and for governance issues such as regulation and consultation.

**5. A small number of high impact indicators.** Rather than seeking to describe all facets of sustainability, the Charter should enshrine the *minimum* number of indicators required to elicit the required policy, strategy and action response from the Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments. Progress against these strategic indicators will signify achievement of multiple sustainability gains.

PIA proposes that the Commonwealth should establish a \$10 billion over 10 years program under which it would provide additional untied payments to the States and Territories, and through these to local government, for the implementation of sustainable development strategies, including investment in key infrastructure, introduction of pro-sustainability pricing policies and institutional reforms to bring about better integration of planning and budget setting processes.

This program should be funded partly through the productivity dividend from more sustainable cities and regions. Efficient settlement patterns, better resource management and improved institutional arrangements for development assessment and infrastructure provision will lead to significantly higher rates of economic growth

and taxation receipts, compared to a continuation of current conditions. The program might also be funded by the re-assignment of some existing Commonwealth expenditures in climate change, the environment or urban and regional infrastructure.

The bulk of funds would only begin to flow to the States and Territories once they have developed appropriate plans and policies to meet the targets and milestones set out in the Sustainable Development Charter. These plans and policies would need to be certified as efficacious by an independent Commonwealth body – the Australian Sustainable Development Commission. This would audit proposed policy packages and monitor actual progress towards the sustainability targets and milestones in each jurisdiction. The Commission would report directly to Parliament.

Again the Commonwealth may initially decide to tie such a program to the sustainability of Coastal Zones, specifically, climate change adaptation and environmental impact mitigation.

#### **4.2 Promoting Sustainable Development**

PIA is also involved in a national project known as YOUR DEVELOPMENT <http://www.yourdevelopment.org> which is led by CSIRO in partnership with the Department of the Environment and Water Resources. The project's goal is to develop a web portal for sustainable and innovative urban developments that will allow all people involved in the creation of new neighbourhoods to access the latest information on sustainability issues. This project should continue to receive funding by the Australian Government.

It has been proposed by a number of industry participants who have been working with PIA and the Government in developing this website that a national tool for assessing the sustainability of master plan or precinct scale developments should be created. PIA would strongly support Government investment in such a tool which could then be used voluntarily by developers in Coastal or other zones to assess the impacts of their developments in a nationally uniform manner, thus providing a market indicator of sustainability and sensitivity to such factors as coastal and environmental vulnerability.

#### **4.2 Training of Professionals**

PIA has also been involved in a project looking at the skills that built environment professionals will need to address climate change adaptation: “Shifting Towards Sustainability: Education for Climate Change adaptation in the built environment sector”. (<http://www.aries.mq.edu.au>). This project was initiated by Macquarie University and commissioned by the Australian Department of the Environment and Water Resources in partnership with the four professional institutes representing Architects, Engineers, Landscape Architects and Planners.

## 5. Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

In order for consistent approaches to mitigation and adaptation of settlements patterns in our coastal areas it will be important to have a shared national strategy approach that cascades to the detailed State and Local Government responsibilities regarding the planning and servicing of new and inappropriate areas for development such those affect by rising sea levels, flooding and storm surge. Land use and environmental; controls that are applied in a non uniform way will create disparities encouraging forum shopping by foot loose coastal development investment that can play region and state against each other.

Rather than establish new governance arrangements, PIA supports the following existing organisations to have a renewed focus on coastal development in line with the Sustainable Communities Model (discussed earlier):

### **Council of Australian Governments**

- Co-ordinating body to ensure integration of coastal policy
- Implement agreed performance indicators for the coastline (established through a Sustainable Development Commission)
- Link to Infrastructure Australia in ensuring appropriate infrastructure is provide for coastal development

### **Local Government and Planning Ministers Council (LGPMC)**

- Develop national standards and policies for the development the coastline including appropriate growth management strategies and priority areas.

It may be opportune to augment this body (LGPMC) by the inclusion of the Ministers for the Environment and Climate Change to address the coastal intergovernmental coordination issues and development of new arrangements recognising that spatial and environmental perspectives are critical to effective and robust decision making.

It should be noted that LGPMC has in the past been responsible for development facilitation with respect to the alignment of planning systems throughout Australia and that additional support may be required to reorient this body to address the strategic planning coordination need for the coastal and climate change challenges facing planning.