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Rachel,

PIA SUBMISSION: LOCAL SUSTAINABLE HOUSING ENGAGEMENT REPORT AND STUDY OUTCOMES

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) continues to support the Local Sustainable Housing Study through our involvement with the steering group on the Literature Review and survey design for the Engagement Report. We look forward to contributing to the implementation of outcomes through the planning system and by training planners and promoting best practice.

PIA notes the study highlighted an appetite for change among the stakeholders. Several Councils are already acting within the existing planning system to deliver sustainable new homes beyond a regulation-based baseline (ie BASIX). The engagement suggested the ability to implement leading sustainability initiatives is correlated with the size of the council (larger), the resources available and their political commitment. Among the development industry – mostly Tier 1 developers - many are already excelling in the development of sustainable housing, largely driven by marketability and long-term cost savings.

Background

The Local Sustainable Housing study (LSHS) investigated the role and viewpoints of New South Wales local councils and developers in driving the adoption of sustainable practice in housing development. Following a Literature Review, an Engagement Report documented and analysed sustainability practices and compiled results from stakeholders about barriers, enablers and opportunities.

The Engagement Study results supported the conclusions of the Literature Review and put forward specific suggestions:

- Sharing and networking across councils
- Recognising high performing developers
- Providing training and education for trades, builders, developers and councils
- Introducing sustainable design competitions
- Providing a clear definition of sustainability for all to use.
The Engagement Study highlighted the three areas of activity of most relevance to councils and developers were Regulation/Standards, Data/Knowledge and Occupant/Customer. In addition, the engagement identified systemic barriers, enablers, and potential interventions concentrated in these three categories. The interrelated systemic barriers and enablers highlighted were:

**Identified Barriers**

- Lack of knowledge, information, capacity and resources (see below)
- Non-enabling legislative and regulatory frameworks
- Lack of incentives
- Leadership & mandate (Government)
- Perceived and actual costs
- Insufficient marketing and communication

In addition, the OEH / Ramboll Project Team stressed a need to address the widespread lack of understanding of BASIX - and means to incentivise BASIX. Beyond BASIX - PIA has offered input that many building designers are unsure how to design in a more sustainable way, including passive design or the use of landscaping to impact upon the climatic features of a development. Likewise, increased education would result in consumers knowing what is possible through good holistic design, and the additional cost (if any) of passive solar design /other features. Sustainable design knowledge and a skills shortage is a specific gap in the literature and practice.

**Identified Enablers**

- Leadership and commitment to sustainable housing from all decision makers
- A well-informed public and community stakeholders on sustainable housing
- Supportive planning and regulatory frameworks
- Full consideration of sustainability embedded into development processes
- Marketing and communicating information as well as education on sustainable housing
- Adequate information and knowledge received and understood by key decision makers
- Incentivised developers through strengthening existing mechanisms and new innovative mechanisms
- Strong Government (Federal, State, and local) leadership on sustainability

**Study Recommendations**

There is room within the current process to encourage sustainability in housing development by better leveraging best practice off the successful relationships and channels established through the Engagement Study. These 'collaborate for impact' channels include industry leadership by PIA, LGNSW, UDIA and PC to provide education and collaboration to champion sustainability in housing.

PIA has already offered to consider extending our training programs to include housing and other environmental sustainability modules in the short term. We recognise the importance of promoting current best practice by councils and developers. In particular, identifying the policy processes that have helped councils lead in adopting evidence-based sustainability policy and implementing these through the approvals process. We have noted some councils include incentives for superior BASIX performance as well as consideration of a wider range of sustainable design and practice issues – at a dwelling and precinct scale.
In the medium term, PIA supports OEH focussing on improving metrics and measurement used across the industry. PIA also supports broader engagement on the recommendations regarding regulation and finance.

Whilst this study largely addressed residential apartment developments, any future regulatory reform would impact a far greater proportion of buildings including those covered in the new missing middle and greenfield codes. Given that these codes have now been released, the revision of the NCC and BASIX is now even more important to ensure the development emerging under the next wave of redevelopment is contributing towards the zero net carbon future outlined in the Regional Plan for Sydney. This is of course in addition to the immense quantum of urban renewal that will result from the Region and District Plans, revised LEPs and State priority planning precincts.

Given the timing of this study, it is imperative that the State and Federal Governments review the regulations and policies to ensure that Australia and NSW is not locked into a high-carbon future, and to ensure health living environments for all of our residents.

Should you wish to discuss our response please contact myself on 0400 953 025 (john.brockhoff@planning.org.au) or Jaime Hogan (Jaime.hogan@waverley.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

\[Signature\]

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