

CHAPTER 2.0 FAIRFIELD RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

2.1 WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

A sustainable Fairfield LGA is a healthy community, which is economically viable, socially interactive and environmentally sustainable.

2.1.1 Models of Sustainable Development

In developing the best approach to sustainable development in Fairfield LGA a review was undertaken on a range of models for sustainable communities including:

- Creating healthy communities;
- Creating mixed socio economic communities;
- Creating sustainable communities, and,
- Creating revitalised communities.

The key elements of these models are summarised below.

2.1.1 Creating Healthy Communities

To create a healthy community, Fairfield LGA should apply the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2003) ten indicators or social and economic determinants of health, which include the social gradient, housing, stress, early life, social exclusion, work, unemployment, social support, addiction, food and transport.

Planning for future communities needs to ensure opportunities to minimise socio economic disadvantage, as measured in the Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA Index, by creating high levels of access to education, housing, health, preventative care facilities, transport, parks and open space. The availability of a range of suitable employment opportunities and a choice in housing types that meets the needs of the community will also build community capabilities. To create dynamic communities land use responses also need to ensure that a high level of amenity can be achieved, through open space and recreation, high quality public domain which enables passive and active recreation and incidental exercise.

Of critical importance is the facilitation of an active and strong community and to build opportunities through interaction. Creating communities with a high quality social environment and consequently high levels of social interaction creates inclusive communities with a strong sense of belonging. Community involvement in the future planning and development of Fairfield will address the community's needs and aspirations but also creates community ownership, which in turn contributes to sustainable communities.

Planning can ensure that the social environment is one that offers access to a range of shops and services. Planning for the provision of a range of recreational and leisure opportunities accessible to communities that are conducive to a range of travel will further address health and fitness.

2.1.1.2 Creating Mixed Socio-Economic Communities

Due to the high levels of disadvantage within Fairfield LGA there is a need to ensure that future development seeks to encourage socio-economically mixed communities. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006), have studied numerous mixed income communities, in both the USA and UK to determine the ingredients of sustainable and healthy neighbourhoods. The findings identify that diversifying the socio-economic makeup of communities creates opportunities to reduce the poverty cycle, creates private sector investment enhances employment opportunities and increases the levels of service provision in neighbourhoods. Mixed communities, regardless of whether they have developed organically or intentionally are characterised by:

- Tenure mix in terms of private rental, home ownership, affordable housing and social housing;
- Diversity in housing types (size and style of housing) and densities and household mix;
- Socio-economic mix to provide “role models” and raise expectations of attainment;
- Cohesive quality housing design which emphasises similarities rather than differences;
- High levels of occupancy and pride in place;
- Strong community and educational facilities, which provide informal meeting and gathering and interaction;
- High environmental quality and perceptions of safety and community cohesion; and
- A strong mix of household types (from single persons to family to older person households).

Therefore future development within the Fairfield LGA should seek to facilitate socio-economically mixed communities, both through planned projects and through market forces to contribute to the sustainable development of communities throughout the LGA.

The elements of a sustainable framework are therefore a social and housing mix, its economy and employment base, environment, infrastructure, transport, design and sustainable and efficient development.

2.1.1.3 Creating Sustainable Communities

The NSW Department of Local Government (2006) has identified the core components of a sustainable community to include:

- Social cohesion: a socially mixed community where neighbourhoods are characterised by diversity of income, age, culture and housing tenure etc and there are opportunities to move freely through life’s cycles without the need to relocate.
- Functional economy: diverse employment opportunities exist which underpin a quality of life matched with community prosperity expectations.
- Robust environment: ecologically balanced with impacts from human activity capable of being accommodated without degradation, and,
- Sound infrastructure: facilities and services are matched to community needs.

The US Green Building Council, the Congress for New Urbanism and US National Resources Defence Council have developed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards and rating systems to encourage sustainable development in buildings and neighbourhood development. These standards embrace elements of economic and social indicators, with the key indicators used in the LEED rating system for neighbourhood development including:

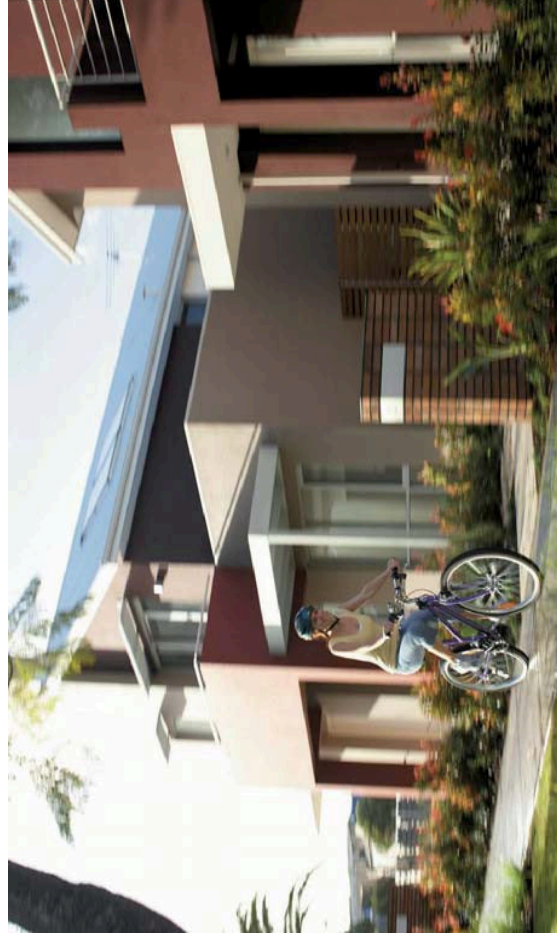
- Smart location and linkage which seeks to ensure future housing is developed in close proximity to transport and key services and facilities, while being cognisant of natural and resource constraints and limitations and conservation areas;
- Neighbourhood pattern and design which seeks to create compact involved communities with a diversity of housing types (including affordable housing), public and active spaces and transit facilities within walking distance of a diversity of uses. Neighbourhood patterns should encourage walkable streets, universal accessibility and community involvement, and,
- Green construction and technology which seeks to create certified green buildings which are efficient in their water and energy use, that reuse and recycle and better manage waste, lighting and heating.

The LEED rating system provides a range of criteria for development to meet to achieve sustainable neighbourhood status. The focus of this system and model is to rate individual developments against the criteria to give it a star rating, as per the Green Building Council rating system.

Over the next 30 years the primary task for established urban areas such as Fairfield LGA, will be to accommodate a changing demographic and reduce vulnerability to shortages in resources such as water, coal and oil. Pinnegar, Marceau and Randolph (2008) have identified these key drivers that will place additional demands on urban areas and resources they rely on, which include:

- Climate change: An emphasis to reduce energy use and restrictions placed on the emission of carbon in homes, industries and workplaces.
- Peak oil: Escalating cost of oil will force people to move to alternate modes of transport and will require reconsideration of the movements of people and accessibility to different places.
- Demographic change: Increased population size and an ageing population will create demand for additional dwellings in a much broader range of dwellings.
- Urban densification: This is a key policy direction across Australia but must be underpinned by substantial investment in new hard and soft infrastructure.
- Social inclusions and social equity: New policies particularly within an 'carbon constrained' economy will have cost implications for many households.
- Information technology: It is increasingly having a greater role in day to day life of people and providing increased opportunity for communication regardless of location.
- Global competitiveness: Results in increasing susceptibility to global trends at the regional and local scale and the need to future proof future development and the economy.

The key drivers identified above are at a global scale but do have local impacts on the location and type of future planning and development within Fairfield LGA and the resulting need for more sustainable models of development.



2.1.1.4 Creating Revitalised Communities

Existing urban areas present a range of issues, particularly revitalisation of those with a low socio-economic base. In such communities, renewal needs to adopt pro-active planning strategies to firstly address the issues of the existing community and in the long term, achieve a healthy, mixed-socio-economic and sustainable community.

Randolph (2008; p4) identifies that there are considerable issues in stimulating renewal in low valued areas. This is primarily as: "property values are currently too low to generate anything but the lowest quality higher density housing. Put simply, the gap in value between required outcomes and current market capacity in these areas is too large." Continuing to develop low quality high density housing in these areas may result in a poor quality urban environment, continue to concentrate low-socio economic populations and limit the opportunities to create healthy, mixed, socio-economic and sustainable communities.

Randolph (2008) advocates that a pro-active planning approach is required to stimulate good quality and sustainable renewal. This approach is similar to programs in the UK where a government agency or renewal authority work with the community to undertake a range of social, economic and built form improvements for a specific centre or locality. Importantly such approaches can overcome some of the barriers to renewal in these areas such as low land values, poor development viability and issues with strata titling.

Pro-active planning approaches as promoted by Randolph (2008) use tools such as Urban Renewal Master Plans to guide re-development of specific locations and develop site-specific strategies to:

- Develop a greater understanding on the drivers of housing supply and demand in these areas;
- Revitalise existing urban centres and areas;
- Stimulate development and re-new housing stock which has reached the end of its economic life;
- Address issues of strata and site amalgamation;
- Create socially sustainable communities;
- Address social and economic issues of the existing community;
- Provide incentives to attract and retain upwardly mobile households;
- Integrate a range of local, state and federal initiatives and programs for the local area; and,
- Create healthy and safe environments.

2.2 CORE PHILOSOPHY FOR FAIRFIELD LGA

The development of the core philosophy for the Fairfield RDS considers the above findings from models of sustainable development, as well as adopting the seven broad aims in the Fairfield Council's City Plan. The core philosophy for the Fairfield RDS therefore seeks to extend beyond the provision of housing to provide a sustainable development philosophy that seeks to achieve:

- More self sustaining, mixed and economically feasible communities;
- A mix of housing types and densities to meet the needs of the changing population;
- A walkable and highly accessible healthy community - Ensuring people can walk or cycle to a wide range of commercial, retail, community, open space and recreation facilities and services and overall, reduce car dependency;
- Maximum effective use of existing hard and soft infrastructure;
- Increased local employment opportunities;
- A high quality public domain and built form which fosters pride in the local community, and,
- Maximising the communities use of public transport services.

2.2.1 Centre and Corridor Development Model

To achieve this philosophy future development will be encouraged to focus on existing centres and corridors, where there exists a high level of service provision and the focus of the public transport network. The Fairfield Residential Development Strategy has adopted a centres and corridors based planning approach as outlined in the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2005) to guide the location of new housing within existing urban areas of the Fairfield LGA. The location and form of future development will be subject to meeting the criteria in the sustainability matrix.

A centres and corridors based planning approach seeks to locate additional housing within the catchments of retail, commercial (and other service and employment functions), community and transport infrastructure services, to ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure and to reduce the demand for new infrastructure. Within the Fairfield LGA, a number of strategic centres and corridors have been identified to be the focus of future residential activity but also the priority locations for community services, retail and commercial services, employment and key transport nodes.

For each centre, the centre hierarchy clearly nominates the character and level of service provision in terms of number of dwellings, types of retail and employment, infrastructure requirements, public transport provision and level of community services. The location of some centres, particularly in the eastern part of the LGA result in some catchments overlapping and creating key corridors which are well located to service future growth and development.

A Sustainability Matrix has then been developed to provide a checklist and indicators to ensure each centre provides the required level of services in line with the needs of each catchment area and avoids competition between centres.

2.2.2 The Fairfield Approach

The Fairfield RDS seeks to create sustainable development which addresses building on the social, environmental and economic assets of the community.

A range of issues currently influence and will continue to influence the sustainability and residential choices for Fairfield LGA, which include:

- Housing: providing for a range of well located housing types and tenures to meet various housing needs as well as providing affordable housing options;
- Retail and Commercial: building on the existing centres and employment areas;
- Infrastructure: ensuring appropriate range of service infrastructure;
- Public transport: building on and expanding the capacity of public transport services;
- Open space and recreation: enhancing the provision and quality of open space and recreation;
- Natural environment: protecting the natural environment;
- Community facilities: building on and expanding the community facility provision to better meet future population needs;
- Public Domain: enhancing the public domain and urban amenity, and,
- Sustainable development: encouraging sustainable development.

These issues comprise the key elements of the sustainability matrix which identifies strategies to meet the challenges associated with each issue and key indicators which provide some form of measure of success or progress with regard to the strategies.

Chapter 3.0 of this report outline these issues in detail as well as the centres and corridors based approach and the sustainability matrix.