

**Perth Area Consultative Committee Inc**  
**Priorities for local community infrastructure that could encourage economic  
development in local communities.**

**Work Plan Item Three**

**31 October 2008**

## **Executive Summary**

In developing this report, Perth ACC has addressed the guidelines provided by the Department and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders on priorities for local community infrastructure that could encourage economic development in local communities. The consultation included community stakeholder forums, a survey and face to face interviews. Feedback from the community and key stakeholders included information on priorities affecting their areas or communities and the initiatives and projects being undertaken to address them.

While much of the feedback has been in relation to community infrastructure and can be noted in the reporting template provided, many of the issues raised were of a strategic and significant nature addressing the comprehensive and interrelated issues facing the Perth metropolitan area. The Perth ACC considers this stakeholder feedback to be highly relevant to assist all Australia Government portfolios plan on the basis of need and as such, a summary of these issues is included in this report.

Perth ACC acknowledges that larger projects of national significance would possibly be part of Infrastructure Australia mandate and as such, this submission concentrates on primarily the regional and local issues.

This report contains:

1. Community and Stakeholder Issues
2. A Summary of Key Infrastructure Needs
3. Community Infrastructure Table
4. Appendix and Reference Documents

# 1. Community and Stakeholder Feedback

As part of the Perth ACC Stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to provide information on priorities affecting their areas or communities and the initiatives and projects being undertaken to address them.

While much of the feedback has been in relation to community infrastructure and can be noted in the reporting template provided, many of the issues raised were of a strategic and significant nature addressing the comprehensive and interrelated issues facing the Perth metropolitan area.

The Perth ACC considers this stakeholder feedback to be highly relevant to assist all Australia Government portfolios plan on the basis of need and as such, a summary of these issues is included below.

*Appendix One Stakeholder Summary*

## 1.1 Social Infrastructure

Investing in community infrastructure is only one facet of long term regional development which includes economic and social development, community engagement and cohesion, community amenity and provision of services.

The “glue” for effective regional development activity is community capacity building and cohesion and this crucial element should be considered as important as investment in community infrastructure. Stakeholders voiced their concern that the focus on hard infrastructure should not be at the expense of social and community driven projects. These projects play a vital role in supporting and building healthy, resilient communities through working partnerships between community, business and government.

## 1.2 Environment and Climate Change Issues

The primary driving force behind any community infrastructure developments should be the need to reduce our carbon footprint by making individual communities more sustainable and self contained. Increasingly, walkable neighbourhoods with an emphasis on low energy requirements will become the necessary means of addressing the world’s environmental crisis. As such, all of the infrastructure requirements described here have a common purpose of supporting the development of self contained, sustainable communities.

The primary requirements are:

- Increased access to public transport within communities. Traditionally public transport has been used to move people from the suburbs to the CBD, with very few inter or intra community public transport networks. This needs to be addressed. The style and type of public transport should also be varied. Whilst buses will always have their place, especially those with high fuel efficiencies or alternative fuel capacity, consideration must also be given to light rail and river based public transport. Again, the emphasis is on public transport within communities.
- Increased bicycle and pedestrian networks. There is consistent evidence that the availability of safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian networks leads to an increase in alternative transport. This is ideal for intra community networks as well as links to the CBD or other communities.

### **Climate Change Impact on Existing Infrastructure**

Infrastructure will need to be reviewed and upgraded in association with adapting to climate change issues such as undertaking a Master Plan for Ocean Nodes that may be affected by rising ocean levels, upgrading of facilities to be energy efficient and water wise, planning for sporting facilities to reduce water use, re landscaping median strips and introducing water wise initiatives at aquatic centres, recreational areas and public buildings.

## **“Green” infrastructure”**

There needs to be an overt focus on infrastructure that does more than just support environmental protection, but actually promotes it. Examples include:

- Green roofs. The benefits of promoting the use of roofs for plant growth include:
  - Water capture
  - Insulation, leading to reduced energy requirements
  - Reintroduction of carbon capturing plants to urban landscapes;
  - A general cooling of hot environments.

Green roofs do represent a new paradigm in planning and construction practices and methodologies. Consideration should be given to demonstration projects and seed funding.

- Localised, small scale energy production. The focus on large scale wind farms and massive solar arrays is welcome and necessary. However, there is also significant scope for small scale photo voltaic energy generators and an increased use of wind turbines on high rises for the purpose of meeting the energy requirements of one or two buildings. There are also hectares of roof space in industrial and commercial districts where the facilities are shut on weekends. These could be used to put power back into the system when not being used to supply or supplement the power requirements of the business.

## **1.3 Labour Shortages**

WA is facing a critical and widespread labour shortage with predictions of a shortfall of up to 150,000 workers by 2017. This is a key limiting factor to economic growth and will effectively stall large infrastructure projects currently planned due to lack of skills and labour force.

The global financial crisis will see the cost of borrowing increasing due to the lack of funds available and this will also impact on the undertaking of large construction projects. Already large office constructions in the city and some mining projects are having their plans shelved due to cost of finance and labour.

## **1.4 Housing Availability and Affordability**

This is both a social and economic issue for WA.

The rising cost of land and housing impact on the capacity of employers to attract skilled and unskilled labour to the state further aggravating labour shortages.

The lack of housing in mining areas across the state creates a barrier for people wishing to take up job opportunism in the sector. The demand for rental housing across the state has exceeded supply and as such the prices have increased to a point where housing is beyond the affordability of many middle income earners. People are moving to the outer fringes of the metro area to find affordable housing. These areas are often marginalised due to lack of community services, poor public transport and lack of local employment resulting in community disruption and social problems.

WA has a huge waiting list (estimated to be around 18,000 people) for public housing. This waiting list has grown by 40% in three years. Coupled with lack of public housing, there is a growing number of people that are homeless with estimates of that number being around 7,000 people in WA.

Housing stress not only reduces household spending power but has significant ability on the ability for people to get jobs, reduces ability to access health, education and reduces the ability of people to participate in society and culture.

## 2. Summary of Key Infrastructure Needs

### 2.1 Road, Rail, Port, Air Transport Status

Access to appropriate infrastructure is fundamental to ensure that the whole community can contribute and share in equal access to economic and social life of the region. There will always be a need for major highways and connecting roads. It is considered a given that an assessment of the country's infrastructure requirements will address the need for a consistent, efficient national roads network.

Certainty of planning, prioritisation and implementation of infrastructure projects was regarded as essential to ensure that infrastructure is provided in a timely, objective manner rather than on a reactive or political nature.

Construction, maintenance and upgrade of the transport network requires consistent, equitable and sufficient sources of funding.

Improving transport infrastructure is critical to facilitate economic development, support sustainable residential development and community service delivery and address traffic management issues, practicality those impacting on traffic and pedestrian safety.

Efficient connectivity between road, rail, air and port facilities is vital to the competitiveness of industry and to minimise impact of freight movement on the amenity and safety of communities.

#### 2.1.1 Road

The key enablers for industry growth, employment accessibility and connected communities are efficient and connected road systems. Traffic congestion impacts safety, increases costs of production, increases carbon emissions and impacts on urban liveability.

Doubling of road freight over the next 20 years, accompanied by increasing commuter traffic resulting from economic and population growth and urban sprawl, will have major adverse impacts on the efficiency of the transport system, with resultant social and environmental impacts on the health of communities<sup>1</sup>.

#### 2.1.2 Rail

The upgrade of public transport including rail is essential to relieve traffic congestion, improve accessibility to employment and services and reduce carbon emission.

Additions to the Metro Rail system to improve access and increase connectivity have been widely discussed. The sinking of the railway line underground to improve access to Northbridge, additional lines to the airport and Ellenbrook as well as additional stations and rail cars to meet growing demand are some of the projects.

Improvement to heavy freight lines to gain connectivity with the Kewdale and Kwinana inter modal hubs with improve efficiency of freight movement from non metro centres to major interstate and international transport facilities and reduce the number of freight movements by road.

#### 2.1.3 Air

The Perth International Airport Precinct is destined to be Perth's largest commercial development. The airport terminal and adjacent land is attracting companies who want to take advantage of the proximity to the CBD and nearby rail and road transport terminal.

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<sup>1</sup> EMRC Submission State Infrastructure Strategy

The necessary infrastructure to support the expansion and improvement of Perth and Jandakot airports is a priority. This includes upgrading and extending road transport links for access to the sites both for air freight and passenger transport and also for the development of airport land for commercial uses.

This is a priority due to the increasing demand for air services from the mining sector and also the increase in air transport and freight both interstate and internationally.

#### **2.1.4 Ports and Harbours**

An increase in harbour capacity and efficiency is essential to deal with increased shipping and to maintain productivity of local industry.

Container port traffic for Fremantle is anticipated to more than double by 2020 and there are plans to deepen the harbour, to extend the outer harbour facilities at Kwinana Quays or to build a privately owned port at James Point. .

### **2.2. Health Services – Hospitals and Medical Centres**

A rapidly growing population and aging existing infrastructure are factors impacting on the high need in this area.

Provision of infrastructure is only one part of the equation. The construction of these buildings not only requires labour for the construction but places an increased demand for staffing in sectors that are suffering severe labour shortages.

The booming resources sector is having a major impact on health and community services by way of exacerbating labour shortages and increasing the demand for these sorts of services. Labour shortages are acute in these industries as they do not have the capacity to compete with the strong wages growth in other sectors. Labour shortages are widespread across the sector in acute care, general practise, aged care and disability services and in all professional groups particularly doctors and nurses.

Feedback from stakeholders has supported the view that changes in technology and in consumer demands will alter the types of health care and the ways in which health care is delivered in the future. These factors will see service delivery diversified from hospital health care delivery and therefore decrease the dependence on bricks and mortar health care infrastructure by monitoring people from their homes or lower care facilities.

### **2.3. Access to Welfare and Support Services**

In 2007, over 9000 people were turned away from social and community services due to those services being at maximum capacity level. Demand for community services such as human and social services, child protection, child care and aged care, emergency relief and mental health support has increased nationally at 9% per annum with organisations turning away almost 30% of eligible people<sup>2</sup>.

The equitable access to welfare and support services across the region was seen as vital by stakeholders. Communities can not be self sufficient without access to local facilities and services. As well as recreational, these include the broad range of age related facilities such as early childcare, seniors and localised medical services. Wherever possible there should be a focus on co-location and shared facilities to make effective use of resources and to enable the community to access services in the one location. Stand alone facilities targeting a narrow section of the community should be discouraged.

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<sup>2</sup> WACOSS, 2008; ACOSS 2007.

## **2.4. Communication Services**

The availability of high speed broadband in WA's metropolitan and regional areas is vital for state development and community and industry participation in the knowledge economy. The existing telecommunications infrastructure requires updating and expansion due to outdated technologies and cabling, the system operating at capacity or coverage being inadequate or non-existent in many areas.

## **2.5. Utilities**

Water, power, gas and telecommunications are at capacity in inner urban areas with risk of failure due to the age and strain on the aging system by urban infill and higher demand on the services.

In outer growth areas, the timely provision of these services is required to ensure land is available for residential and industrial needs and to meet the population growth and demands for these areas.

Sewerage infrastructure infill is required to service residential, commercial and industrial areas, to allow greater housing density and reduce use of septic tanks and issues with drainage into groundwater.

## **2.6. Water Storage Capacity**

The number and storage capacity of the dams/weirs for the Integrated Water Supply Scheme is unlikely to increase. Increases to the metropolitan water supply will be undertaken by the construction of the second desalination plant at Binningup to increase water supply for metro areas.

Underground water is being used by developers in new residential areas however this strain on the Gngangara mound and other sources cannot be sustained indefinitely without environmental impact.

As options to address supply are limited by either cost or environmental impact, it is essential that initiatives to reduce demand, make better use of grey water and recycle are supported by research and technology advances.

## **2.7. Sporting and Recreational Facilities**

Sporting and recreational facilities were seen by contributors and stakeholders as a major area in which infrastructure was required to address the needs of either fast growing outer metropolitan areas or to upgrade outdated/poorly maintained existing facilities. Items such as regional sporting complexes, aquatic centres, walking and cycling paths, youth facilities and a major sporting stadium for the state were all seen as vital for community health and well-being, community cohesion and social interaction.

## **2.8. Arts and Culture**

This section has been included as a subset of Sporting and Recreational Facilities to more adequately reflect and categorise feedback on priorities from stakeholders.

Arts and culture are an important component of the development of Perth as a vibrant place to live, work and recreate. Stakeholder feedback provided information on the requirement for facilities for arts exhibitions, performance space, an amphitheatre, the relocation of the state museum and the development of a State Cultural precinct in central Perth.

## **2.9. Business Services**

Small business makes up 95% of businesses operating in Western Australia and are significant contributors to the State's economy. They are the major providers of employment as well as providing a diversity of goods and services and supporting community activities.

Reliable access to power, water, sewerage, high speed broadband and an efficient and interconnected transport system where seen as impacting on productivity and competitiveness.

Lack of business skills and knowledge can limit the ability of business to maintain or expand their operations including employment of additional staff and the need for business skills training was seen as important. Assistance for small business growth in the area of training and support services also ensures a strong and diverse sector that continues to provide employment and services.

**Report endorsed by Perth Area Consultative Committee Inc Board 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

Elizabeth Taylor  
Chairman  
Perth Area Consultative Committee Inc

## Table

## Appendix

Appendix Item One - Stakeholder Summary

### Source Documents:

**Infrastructure Report Card** – How does Western Australia Compare on a National Level?  
Engineers Australian WA Division

**South West Group Infrastructure Priorities**, SW Group of Councils

**Perth Vibrancy and Regional Liveability Report** – A Discussion Paper, CCI WA

**Strategies for Growth- Policy Priorities for the Next WA Government**, CCI WA

**State Infrastructure Strategy** – Submission by the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council

**2008-2009 Pre Budget Submission to WA Government**, CCI WA