

**Submission  
No 2**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING SYSTEM AND THE IMPACTS  
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND  
COMMUNITIES**

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# Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Sustainable Building Practices in New South Wales- David Schwartz

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## To whom it may concern.

I am writing to submit my views and recommendations to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Sustainable Building Practices in New South Wales, as outlined in the Terms of Reference document available on the official website of the New South Wales Parliament.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the recent improvements to the Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) standards and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022 (SEPP), which appear to lack sufficient consideration for critical issues raised by the Terms of Reference, notably the impacts of climate change, ecosystem preservation, urban green spaces, and long-term planning goals.

1. **Climate Change Consideration:** The recent improvements to the BASIX standards and the SEPP do not explicitly acknowledge or address the impacts of climate change, such as increased storm intensity, flooding events, and bushfires. Given the escalating climate crisis, it is imperative that building regulations include considerations of the resilience of structures to these climate-related challenges. I recommend that the SEPP and BASIX standards incorporate specific provisions related to climate adaptation, including flood and fire-resistant design principles.

Additionally, in the context of sustainable building practices and long-term planning, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of land use zoning that incorporates advanced flood and fire risk modelling techniques. Traditional approaches that rely solely on historical data and fixed upper limits for flooding, for example, may not be adequate in the face of evolving climate patterns and the increasing uncertainty associated with climate change impacts. To address this, the SEPP and zoning regulations should encourage the use of predictive flood and fire risk models that encompass a range of scenarios, accounting for potential variations in rainfall patterns, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. This forward-looking approach to modelling will enable more resilient land use planning and development decisions that prioritize the safety and well-being of communities in the face of a now rapidly changing climate future
2. **Ecosystem and Environmental Impacts:** The existing regulations do not adequately address the environmental and ecosystem impacts of development or overdevelopment. There is a pressing need to prioritize the protection of vital native habitats and green spaces within urban areas. I suggest that the SEPP include provisions mandating comprehensive environmental impact assessments for developments and stringent requirements for the preservation and rehabilitation of native ecosystems.
3. **Heat Island Effects:** To mitigate the heat island effect in urban areas, the SEPP should include provisions for the incorporation of green infrastructure, such as green roofs, vertical gardens, and permeable surfaces, in building design. Additionally, requirements for shade

provision and tree planting should be enforced to reduce heat-related health risks and energy consumption.

4. **Flooding and Fire Mitigation:** Considering the increasing frequency and severity of flooding and bushfire events, building regulations should incorporate measures to mitigate these risks. Mandatory flood and bushfire risk assessments, as well as appropriate design standards for buildings in vulnerable areas, should be included in the SEPP and BASIX standards.
5. **Long-Term Planning Goals:** It is essential to establish clear, long-term planning goals that guide medium and short-term planning. These goals should address sustainability, resilience, and liveability, ensuring that urban development is conducted with a focus on the well-being of current and future generations.

In conclusion, I urge the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee to consider the inclusion of the legislative provisions in the SEPP and BASIX standards to promote sustainable building practices in New South Wales. By addressing climate change impacts, protecting ecosystems, reducing heat island effects, and mitigating flooding and fire risks, we can create a more resilient and environmentally responsible built environment for our communities.

Thank you for your attention to these critical matters. I am available to provide further information or participate in any discussions related to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

David Schwartz

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