

PRECINX makes an entry on the sustainability stage.

Following the principles of the BASIX tool that seeks to increase the sustainability of buildings in NSW Landcom is developing a similar purpose tool *PRECINX* for the planning of subdivisions. The project is driven by Landcom's Planning Manager Steve Driscoll using as their engine room the skills of the consultancy firm Kinesis who were the primary authors of BASIX.

In summary *PRECINX* is a mathematical based diagnostic tool that assesses the sustainability of large-scale residential projects by assessing:

- Green house gas production equivalent energy use
- Embodied carbon in building materials used in construction
- potable water consumption
- Transport options
- Housing diversity – smaller is better
- Stormwater management

The tool provides a “black box” outcome by inputting a series of predetermined variable. As Steve Driscoll emphasises, at the moment, the tool targets Landcom's core business and primary needs being value for budget and resource expended. It aims at an 80% capture target incorporating the critical aspects of sustainability issues relating to Landcom's Triple Bottom Line reporting, who summarise their key performance indicators as being :

- Greenhouse Gas equivalent (tonnes CO₂/yr)
- Potable Water consumption (kL H₂O/year.)
- Total Affordability (\$/wk)
- Vehicle Hours Travelled (hrs/wk)

PRECINX is a mathematically driven tool with input that need to be quantified based on industry accepted criteria or methods. It focuses on measurable , verifiable outputs and scientific data

Unfortunately for the Landscape Industry there is no promotion of less anthropomorphic techniques of moderating our development machine for increasing sustainability- while Landcom is a staunch supporter of the importance of quality landscape in their estates there are no aspects of *PRECINX* that promotes the use of trees or landscape elements to improve sustainability. The reason for this omission is, in significant part, the lack of scientifically verified data on the measurable environmental benefits of trees or other landscape components in a development.

I believe that the AILA, under their Climate Change Adaption Skill initiative would be seen as being proactive and responsible, if we promoted research in to generating empirical data (in the Australian context) on the reduction of local temperatures by tree canopy which appears to be emerging as the single greatest benefit trees provide in terms of Co₂ reductions. Other areas of interest would be specific data on carbon capture by a range of tree species and various trees capacity to reduce or slow runoff.

All these capacities of trees or planting maybe well known by hearsay, however, there is little hard data and almost none for the Australian context. Until Landscape Architects can call on scientific data to support our sustainability or climate change

adaption initiatives we will continue to be sidelined being seen as outdoor decorators or purveyors of "landscaping".

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