

Other impacts

Introduction

Sustainability does not stop at the front door. Your lifestyle will have an impact far beyond your immediate home environment. This section deals with the wider implications of the living choices you make. Understanding the impact of your choices empowers you to make the best possible decisions about your home, your future and your environment. It is the outcome of these decisions that will contribute to your community and make it a better place.

This section contains detailed information about:

- > Streets and Communities.
- > Transport.
- > Health and Safety.
- > Adaptable Housing.

STREETS AND COMMUNITIES

When you choose a home you are also choosing a street and a community. A street is more than a collection of buildings and trees. Well-designed and cared-for streets encourage connected, inclusive, supportive and safe communities.



A good community consists of diverse elements, which blend into a vibrant, functional and well connected whole. Diversity of age, ethnicity and means are all essential ingredients. In the same way, a good street consists of houses that have their own character but fit together in a complementary,

respectful way. A good street improves quality of life in numerous ways:

- > Promotes community interaction.
- > Provides a safe environment.
- > Enhances the character and comfort of the neighbourhood.
- > Encourages people to walk for short trips.
- > Increases property demand and resale value.

How to enhance the quality of your street:

Understand the character of your local neighbourhood and design your home or addition sympathetically.



Face houses towards streets, parks and open space to improve visual access and security. This needs to be balanced with good orientation for passive heating and cooling.

Set garages and carports away from the house frontage to minimise their visual impact.

Limit the width of driveways and use shared driveways where possible.

Plant trees to enhance the quality of the street.

Avoid high walls and hedges on the street boundary as they isolate the home from the neighbourhood.

Be a good neighbour and respect your neighbours privacy, sunlight and views.

[\[See: Streets and Communities\]](#)

TRANSPORT

The wealthiest cities in the developed world generally have the lowest rates of motor car use. Urban transport is an important national issue, as about two thirds of Australia's population lives in capital cities. Decreased motor vehicle use and increased use of public transport, cycling and walking are vital to creating a healthy, liveable city, now and for future generations. A sedentary lifestyle is a health risk. A brief walk to the bus or train each day can improve your health and lower stress levels.

Some of the problems of car dependency include:

- > Urban sprawl.
- > Depletion of urban spaces.
- > Greenhouse gas emissions.
- > Air and noise pollution.
- > Depletion of finite oil reserves.
- > Loss of valuable bushland and farmland to roads and car parks.
- > Communities fragmented by roads.
- > Flooding and water pollution from road runoff.
- > Death and illness from air pollution, accidents and sedentary lifestyle.

How you can help?

Avoid car dependency by choosing to live in an established area close to public transport and other services.

Walk, ride a bicycle or take public transport instead of driving.

Shop locally and buy locally made goods.

Lobby governments for improved public transport services and comment on development proposals.

Work from home.

Do you want to live in an environment designed for you or for your car?

If you are car dependent try the following measures:

- Minimise the number of cars per household.
- Buy a small car and rent a large one for holidays.
- Share car ownership and car trips.
- Use the most environmentally friendly fuels available.
- Drive calmly.
- Maintain your car regularly. [\[See: Transport\]](#)

HEALTH & SAFETY

Sustainability is concerned with improved quality of life, for which health, safety and amenity are fundamental.

Many domestic accidents can be prevented with better building design. Most domestic accidents occur in the bathroom and kitchen.

Here are many actions that you can take to improve home safety through design, fittings and behaviour. The actions contained in the fact sheet particularly seek to protect children, the elderly and the infirm.

Safety tips include:

- Round bench edges and corners.
- Eliminate cross-traffic routes through the work triangle (area between stove, sink and refrigerator).
- Use slip resistant flooring and avoid steps in bathrooms.
- Install fail-safe mixing valves on both the bath and the shower.
- Ensure that privacy locks on bathroom doors can be opened from the outside in the case of an emergency.

Provide energy efficient outdoor lighting along paths. [\[See: Health & Safety\]](#)

THE ADAPTABLE HOUSE

The term 'adaptable' is used to describe a structure that has the ability to be modified or extended at minimum cost to suit the changing needs of the occupants. This extends the life of the home and increases its value.

Adaptable housing is designed to accommodate future modifications, catering for:

- > Changing family size.
- > Ageing.
- > Physical disability.
- > Working from home (home office/telecommuting).
- > Changing lifestyles.

[\[See: The Adaptable House\]](#)

