

IMAP Action 9.3 WSUD**LOCAL PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Introduction

1. Following the IMAP Implementation Committee's request for assessment on 29 August 2008 on the practicality of the proposed Local Planning Policy, an assessment was completed as follows:
 - a. Initial assessment by the City of Port Phillip of previously approved planning applications in February 2009
 - b. Joint assessment workshop with statutory planners, strategic planners, and internal referrals from across the four IMAP councils on 10 March 2009.
2. The purpose of the assessment process was to:
 - a. further test the policy against the IMAP council's planning schemes;
 - b. receive feedback from statutory planners less familiar with environmentally sustainable design criteria; and
 - c. assess whether any further amendment was required to the draft policy.
3. The joint assessment workshop was delivered as follows:
 - a. Introduction to the draft policy and key references within, including Water Sensitive Urban Design and best practice stormwater performance objectives on which the policy is based;
 - b. Introduction to the use and interpretation of stormwater modelling tools which may be used to demonstrate compliance with the policy;
 - c. Discussion of City of Port Phillip case studies, including opportunities to optimize each application's ability to meet policy objectives;
 - d. Application of the policy to a range of development applications typical of each municipality;
 - e. Evaluation of the policy and assessment process undertaken; and
 - f. Discussion of the communication needs required for policy implementation

Workshop Outcomes

4. A range of applications deemed typical for the IMAP Councils were assessed as follows:
 - a. Multi-unit residential development
 - b. Semi-detached residential dwelling
 - c. Commercial development (Medical Centre, Commercial Building)
 - d. Multi-storey mixed use development
 - e. Serviced apartments
 - f. Industrial development
5. As most of these applications did not have accompanying stormwater treatment reports, workshop participants were required to use STORM to identify the application's current compliance with the policy.
6. Workshop participants attempted to optimise the application's ability to integrate water sensitive urban design and meet best practice stormwater treatment objectives. This was achieved with the assistance of STORM, application of applicable WSUD solutions, and advice from internal referral staff in ESD and engineering. Options for optimizing applications included resizing rainwater tanks and catchment areas, plumbing tanks to toilets, and applying raingardens and porous paving as a measure to increase permeability of the site.
7. Workshop participants noted that Council is not required under the policy to undertake this modelling and that the applicant is required to demonstrate the development's compliance with policy. However planners will need to interpret this modelling, for which this assessment process proved useful.
8. The assessment process raised recommendations for minor amendment to the draft policy for greater clarity around the key responsibilities of the applicant, and for a more generalised reference to stormwater modelling tools to keep the policy current. These recommendations are documented under Policy Assessment.

9. Whilst the WSUD Guidelines provide significant support for the interpretation and implementation of the draft policy, it was noted that additional practice notes will be required to support planners, together with a community fact sheet on understanding and conceptually applying stormwater modelling tools. These materials can be easily developed based on existing material and workshop outcomes, and appropriate capacity building programs can be developed based on this workshop's structure and components.

Policy Assessment

10. Policy Basis

- a. Planners responded well to the presentation on water sensitive urban design and stormwater management. It was noted that the policy rationale will be a necessary component of policy implementation, together with supporting materials to increase planner's knowledge of WSUD solutions most applicable to different development types.
- b. **Recommendation:** retain the current wording of this section.

11. Policy Objectives

- a. As above, clear presentation to planners of the objectives of water sensitive urban design and stormwater management is sufficient to clarify the policy objectives detailed within.
- b. **Recommendation:** retain the current wording of this section.

12. Policy

- a. The range of options that could be applied to increase an application's ability to meet policy objectives is outlined within. This includes rainwater tanks, raingardens and buffer strips. These items are referenced in stormwater modelling tools such as STORM providing further guidance to planners on how policy objectives can be met
- b. These options were briefly presented to statutory planners at the workshop. As the policy was applied, planners became increasingly familiar with the range of design and stormwater treatment measures that could be applied to meet policy objectives. For more complex options planners were comfortable with approaching internal ESD and engineering referral staff for advice.
- c. The Model WSUD Guidelines contain fact sheets that provide additional advice and support. These fact sheets were briefly presented noting that any emerging gaps can be managed with additional fact sheets as the policy is implemented.
- d. **Recommendation:** water quality performance objectives detailed in the Decision Guidelines section to be moved to the Policy section, to provide a clearer indication of the intent of the policy.

13. Decision Guidelines

- a. IMAP statutory planners had no difficulty in understanding or conceptually applying the stormwater modelling tool STORM to each development application, noting that this is not a requirement of the policy and that the applicant is required to undertake this modelling.
- b. Capacity building in the interpretation of results will be required for statutory planners engaged in the assessment of reports generated by such tools, and this was delivered without difficulty at the assessment workshop. An appropriate capacity building program can be developed and delivered based on this workshop
- c. It is expected that it will take some time to bring the community up to speed in understanding best practice stormwater performance objectives and conceptually applying stormwater modelling tools. Planners and internal ESD/WSUD referrals should be prepared to provide some advisory support in the initial stages in addition to what is available in key reference documents, until the community is more adept at understanding and meeting policy requirements. The direct impact on planners will be a closer relationship with internal referral staff in the initial stages, and some impact on the length of assessment, which will become more streamlined as the process and key references become business as usual.
- d. **Recommendation:** clarify the policy requirement of applicants, by breaking this section into
 - i. Application Requirement, requesting the provision of a WSUD Response;
 - ii. WSUD Response, outlining what the applicant's accompanying documentation should include; and
 - iii. Decision Guidelines, outlining what the responsible authority must consider when assessing the application.

14. Reference Documents

- a. IMAP councils are currently localising the Model WSUD Guidelines for use. These Guidelines contain a range of fact sheets that will assist planners and the community to meet policy objectives.
- b. It was noted that there may be a need to prepare additional support material to assist applicants to apply the range of stormwater modelling tools available. Simple fact sheets advising the community how such tools can be used to demonstrate policy compliance should suffice.
- c. It was also noted that practice notes for planners will need to be prepared covering a range of areas such as policy rationale, guidelines for optimizing application's compliance with policy, interpretation of relevant stormwater modelling tools, and a list of FAQs likely to be raised by the community.
- d. A targeted capacity building program should be rolled out to planners as part of policy implementation.
- e. **Recommendation:** retain the current wording of this section.

15. Expiry date

- a. **Recommendation:** modify wording to '[date of adoption + 2 years] or when superseded by Building Code of Australia Regulations, whichever happens first.'

Next Steps

16. Wording of the draft policy to be amended to reflect the above recommendations.

17. Development of a targeted Policy Implementation Plan covering capacity building and communication needs moving forward.