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Australian experts guide UN and China on sustainable cities

Australian low carbon living experts from the CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) have led United Nations (UN) Environment guidelines to help China develop more sustainable cities and communities. The guidelines have been embraced by five major cities* and are now being adopted globally.

China alone is predicted to add more than 300 million urban inhabitants in the next three decades, while more than half of the world's human population currently living in cities is expected to increase to three-fourths by 2050.

The UN's Sustainable Urban Development (SUC) *Guidelines for Sustainable Cities and Communities in China* were released by the former UN Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang at the first International Conference on Sustainable Development in Egypt. The report aims to help meet UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)11: 'Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.

"The world's burgeoning urban population growth presents enormous developmental and environmental challenges that need to be addressed by a robust sustainable development framework," said main author, CRCLCL CEO Professor Deo Prasad, who travelled through China presenting sustainable options to government and city leaders.

Along with technical advice, the Guidelines provide sustainability goals, key performance indicators, and management toolkits, some developed by the CRCLCL.

The Guidelines also include Australian examples such as [Josh's House](#) – one of the CRCLCL's 15 Living Laboratories – and the [Greater Sydney Region Plan](#).

"The Guidelines are extremely comprehensive, advising on all aspects of sustainable city development and management, such as setting measures and providing technical advice for commercial and residential properties so best practice is used, or ensuring transport plan meets certain standards.

"Maximising ventilation to reduce the need for energy-guzzling air conditioning, or increasing renewable energy production while reducing energy use, are examples of indicators and measures listed in the Guidelines."

The report addresses issues like water recycling, rainwater collection, water saving measures and waste management, plus how to utilise landscape and building design to enhance green urban features, while increasing oxygen in the atmosphere and absorbing carbon dioxide.

Senior co-author and CRCLCL researcher, A/Professor Lan Ding, from UNSW Sydney, said the Guidelines not only look at the practical aspects but the community, policy and economic needs.

“The publication is an A to Z of sustainable measures for urban development and includes less obvious aspects, like indicators for a healthy lifestyle such as green recreation space and community facilities; access to quality and affordable aged care; economic opportunities to help business flourish; and ways to encourage community engagement and communication,” she said.

“Overall these guiding principles will directly assist Chinese cities and Governments, plus other developing countries around the world, to achieve the highest international standards in sustainable cities and communities,” said A/Professor Ding.

The SUC Guidelines were Commissioned by the UN’s Environment Program (UNEP) and the Jai Cui (China) Environmental Promotive Centre (JCEP), under the SUC and Liveable Garden Community China Program.

View the full report [here](#).

* Shenzhen, Quzhou, Yan’an, Yueyang, Fuzhou - plus communities: Beijing-Tianjin Dougezhuang Zhongchuan Scientific, Technological and Cultural Park; and Changxing County Huaxi District “New Energy Town”.

About the CRC for Low Carbon Living: The CRC for Low Carbon Living is Australia’s only research and innovation hub committed to lowering carbon emissions in the built environment sector. The CRCLCL is on target to meet its founding goal of lowering Australia’s residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes by 2020, through the development of advanced construction materials and the development of social, technological and policy tools.

Media Contact:
CRC for Low Carbon Living

Fran Strachan E: fran.strachan@unsw.edu.au
M: +61 429 416 070 or

Sharon Kelly E: s.kelly@lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au
M: +61 414 780 077