

## Strategic Planning with the Earth Charter *City of Joondalup, AUSTRALIA*



### Background

The City of Joondalup is the second largest local government authority in Western Australia, representing approximately 161,000 residents. The City's approach towards developing a sustainable future is one based on education and community participation. The City of Joondalup came up with an innovative project of integrating the Earth Charter into its strategic planning process as an important initiative to build the community's capacity to address sustainability issues.

A comparative analysis of the policies of the City Council on one hand, and the values and principles of the Earth Charter on the other hand, demonstrated significant common ground between the two, and demonstrated the value of the Earth Charter as a tool for local government strategic planning.

### Aim

The City Council decided to apply the Earth Charter as part of its strategic planning process in order to achieve economically viable, environmentally responsible and socially sound policies for the local community.

### Participants

The stakeholders of the project were the staff of the *City's Strategic and Corporate Planning Business Unit* with direct input from community and major stakeholders within the City.



*Sustainability advisory council*

### Timeframe

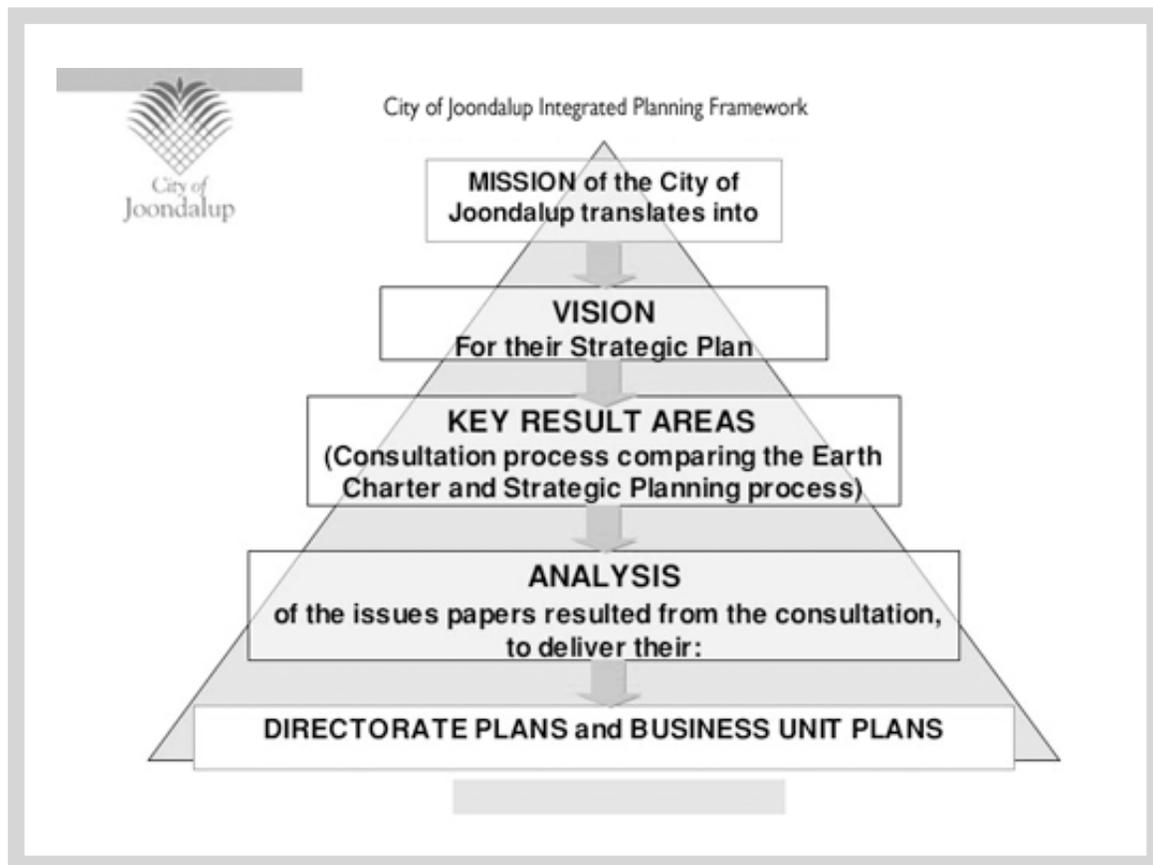
The project was executed by the City of Joondalup during the period of 2001-2002.

## Description

The City Strategic Plan needed to be based upon the formulation of a vision, key strategic themes, and values. At the very beginning of the project, a consultation process on the relevance of Earth Charter principles to the existing City's policies occurred through a number of mechanisms, including a survey of four questions provided on-line, advertised through newspaper and hardcopies distributed in the libraries and customer service centres. All these points of entry served as communication inputs for collecting the data required for analysis. Approximately 400 surveys were completed and the results were incorporated to the City's Strategic Plan. After its completion, the City's senior staff then commenced the development

of the City's Corporate Plan, Directorate Plans and Business Unit Plans. The outcome of such exercise was a cascading integrated framework for the City (see diagram).

The staff of the City's Strategic and Corporate Planning Business Unit took an active part in the process, developing and submitting papers, processing multiple inputs from community and stakeholders, and analysing the Earth Charter principles and their coherence with the City's policies. This comparative analysis between the Earth Charter text and the strategic planning process was prepared as an issues paper. Approximately 80 issues papers were analysed to identify the key strategic themes that Council could use as strong guidance for the City's Strategic Plan.



## **Funding**

The funding for the project was provided by the budget of the City of Joondalup.

## **Results**

The results of the comparison between the City policies and the Earth Charter main principles highlighted two Earth Charter principles, 9 and 16, (“Eradicate Poverty” and “Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence and peace”) which had not yet been incorporated into the existing City policy. This helped draw attention to existing gaps in the City policy, such as the lack of a focus on poverty alleviation.

Overall, the experience of the City of Joondalup in applying the Earth Charter in its strategic planning process demonstrated numerous benefits, including:

- The Earth Charter helped promote an integrated approach for environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- The Earth Charter was used as educational material for staff and the broader community.

- It helped bring about cultural change within the organisation.
- It presented an opportunity to adopt and endorse the Earth Charter.

## **Conclusion**

By and large, city policies tend to be more specific and relatively narrow in contrast to the broader scope of the Earth Charter principles. However, in the course of the project, it became clear that the Earth Charter could be applied to strategic planning exercises. Other applications included using the Earth Charter as a comprehensive checklist for developing sustainability indicators, as an educational tool for teaching and learning about sustainable development, and as an inspirational set of principles to guide community’s activities.

For local governments, the Earth Charter can play an important role in promoting sustainability. It provides a broad and inclusive concept of sustainable development with its key themes of ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, non-violence, and peace.

*Sources: This case was directly drawn from the following material:*

- ‘City of Joondalup Earth Charter case study’, by John Goldstein and Rhonda Hardy.