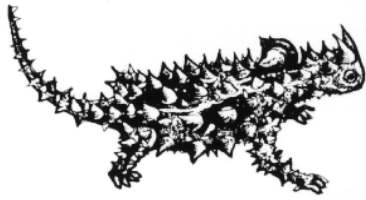


# Arid Lands Environment Centre, Inc.



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The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) is the key community environmental organisation in Central Australia. ALEC's network includes a committed group of community members who are actively engaged in sustainability in Alice Springs. For over 37 years ALEC has played an important role in promoting sustainability and working towards the vision of leadership in sustainability for the arid lands.

A strategic plan for Alice Springs is fundamental for a coordinated approach to the healthy and sustainable development of the town. ALEC supports the strategic objectives of the plan, especially the objective of being leaders in sustainability. However, there are several measures which should be included in the strategic plan to improve our ability to become leaders in sustainability.

## **Conserve and protect the Alice Springs environment**

ALEC supports all three of the objectives included within the leadership in sustainability objective. However, the sub objectives within that section could be strengthened by providing more clarity on how those objectives will be monitored and achieved. Support for a healthy natural living environment is positive but it is not clear what this support would look like.

In working to protect the natural environment it would be valuable for the plan to identify key threatening processes and the mitigation measures that match those measures. For example, diminishing green space through the loss of significant trees should be explicitly acknowledged in the plan.

Climate change is not acknowledged in the plan as a threatening process, but a warming climate is already influencing the liveability of Alice Springs. Climate Change adaptation measures, such as greening and cooling of the CBD should be a key indicator for protecting the natural environment and enhancing liveability.

Ecologically sustainable development (ESD) should be embedded within objective 3. This will provide more guidance on the direction of development to ensure it occurs in a way that is compatible with the natural amenity of Alice Springs and does not pose unacceptable environmental risks. It will also mean that the interests and needs of future generations in the Town are properly accounted for.

The strategy does not include a plan to encourage and facilitate active transport. Transport infrastructure of the town is largely based around cars. This is a known impediment to people taking up cycling. To provide a more balanced approach to transport the strategic plan should incorporate the development of a cycling plan. The vision for Alice Springs should include a commitment to becoming a cycling friendly centre. This will improve sustainability, health outcomes and community cohesion.

## **Place making**

ALEC support the explicit need to encourage public spaces that are safe and inclusive. Alice Springs needs more public spaces that are not restricted to commercial experiences but include

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free recreational spaces. The town drastically needs open spaces that are freely accessible and race neutral. Race is a divisive term but segregation is an obvious reality for many in the red centre.

Plans made under the strategic plan should involve broad consultation that identifies how regional indigenous people experience the town with a view to encouraging cross cultural exchange. There is little opportunity for this now, so one way of addressing this is to develop 'grey spaces'. These are areas that provide safe recreational spaces for multiple cultures. There should also be recognition of the need to address obvious economic inequality. This will improve community cohesion and harmony.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the plan incorporate the objectives of ecologically sustainable development.
2. That the plan should identify key threatening processes on the natural environment of Alice Springs.
3. That the plan explicitly identifies the need to encourage strategies that promote climate change adaptation and mitigation.
4. That the plan sets specific targets to increase total green space and create legal protection for significant trees.
5. That the plan includes a vision for Alice Springs to become a cycling capital.
6. That the plan identifies the need to develop strategies for addressing economic inequality and racial segregation.