As Australia’s urban environments become more dense, the demand for land for recreational purposes becomes harder to fulfill.

Recognising the issue, a team from the Centre for Sport and Recreation Research (CSRR) at Curtin is undertaking an international review of ‘right to roam’ policies and management. The project will investigate public recreational access to land of varying tenure, to inform a strategic research direction for public access to land in Australia.

“Australia is under-prepared for the increasing demand for recreational land,” explained CSRR Director Professor Marian Tye. “It’s happening faster than we realise, and both the legislative and non-legislative determinants governing public access to land are complex, and often ambiguous.

“Fortunately, the WA Government realises the need to clearly define ‘access’ and better identify where and to what extent public access can be granted.”

The research also involves the Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre and the WA Department of Environment and Conservation. In a related project, CSRR will examine strategic planning of public open space within Perth’s metropolitan area.

“There’s some concern that active open space is being reduced by planning initiatives established for environmental reasons,” Tye said.

“Because active recreation is an important part of Perth’s lifestyle, policymakers need the knowledge that achieves a balance between human recreational needs and environmental measures that safeguard biodiversity and water resources.”

The two projects are among several that Tye has initiated since being appointed as CSRR’s inaugural director early in 2009. The centre is also undertaking research that tackles issues of sustainability, through its partnership with WA’s Department of Sport and Recreation. The first of these research projects involves several of CSRR’s industry research associates, including Leisure Institute of WA Aquatics, Royal Life Saving WA and Parks and Leisure Australia, to achieve water- and energy-efficient aquatic centres.

“CSRR is addressing the challenges that arise from environmental issues and population growth,” Tye said.

“Our charter is to undertake research that helps build stronger, healthier, happier, safer and more sustainable communities.”

Pumping up SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR CURTIN, AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IS ONE AREA THE UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN ITS RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION.

T he Federal Government has awarded Curtin $2.5 million to investigate the sustainable production of high-quality second-generation transport biofuels from mallee biomass.

The research project will be conducted at the Curtin Centre for Advanced Energy Science and Engineering (CCaESE), which is one of 16 centres under the research umbrella of the Australian Sustainable Development Institute (ASDI) at Curtin, launched in May 2009.

“ASDI projects are organised around three principal areas of sustainable development: advanced energy technologies, climate change and coastal zone management, and future water technologies,” said ASDI’s Director, Charlie Thorn.

Curtin was the only university in WA to receive funding from the Government’s $15 million Second Generation Biofuels Research and Development Grant Program, and it confirms Curtin’s role—and that of the CCaESE specifically—in the development of renewable energy technologies that reduce CO2 emissions.

The Federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, announced Curtin’s funding success at the University’s Bentley Campus in August, and toured the CCaESE laboratories at Technology Park.

CCaESE researchers have been working on the development of biofuels technologies, particularly for mallee biomass, for some time now. The sustainable production of biofuels and chemicals has been an important research topic at Curtin. This grant will undoubtedly speed up the technology development in this area, greatly contributing to the development of a biofuel industry in Australia.

Project participants include the WA Department of Environment and Conservation, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, the Centre for Research into Energy for Sustainable Transport (a joint venture between Curtin and Murdoch University), Future Farm Industries CRC and Spitfire Oil Pty Ltd.