

Focus on the Future: Opportunities for Sustainability in Western Australia

A consultation paper for the State Sustainability Strategy
for Western Australia



Government of
Western
Australia



Lake Toolibin

This is the last major freshwater lake in the Wheatbelt. It is surrounded by a remnant piece of bush managed by CALM. To prevent the lake and bush being destroyed by salt, the community set up action groups to

develop short and long-term plans with the Government. Drainage and pumping is taking away the immediate threat and long term revegetation of the catchment is under-way. Plans to use the salty water for salt harvesting are being considered.

Photo from Lucy Carew-Reid



Fremantle, Heritage and Sustainability

Economic development can work with the community's environmental concern, not against it - this is the message of sustainability. Fremantle has shown

that heritage concerns can be translated into economic opportunity.

Photo by Peter Newman



Cottesloe Reef

This popular snorkelling area has been under intense recreational pressure. A community group has worked with the local authority and Government to create a unique marine partnership for fish

habitat protection. Regulations have been set, an education process has enabled users to adopt a code of conduct, and volunteer rangers manage the site. The local economy benefits from visitors to the area and now the reef is protected and managed by the local community.

Photo from Helen McAuley



Like the rest of the world, Western Australia is approaching a critical turning point in its history.

For many years we pursued economic, environmental and social goals in isolation from each other. We have come to recognise that our long-term well-being depends as much on the promotion of a strong, vibrant society and the ongoing repair of our environment as it does on the pursuit of economic development. Indeed, it is becoming obvious that these issues cannot be separated.

The challenge is to find new approaches to development that contribute to our environment and society now without degrading them over the longer term. It is about ensuring that our economy thrives in a durable, efficient and equitable manner so that we can continue to deliver the schools and hospitals that we need, the jobs we want and a healthy environment for the kind of inclusive communities we all wish to live in.

Not only is this important for today, it is essential to ensure the quality of life we presently enjoy will be available to future generations of Western Australians.

Sustainability offers a process whereby these goals can be achieved simultaneously without trade-offs or compromise.

The development of the State Sustainability Strategy is a fundamental commitment of the Western Australian Government. This evolving Strategy, based on common values and shared solutions, is a positive step in delivering a better future for all Western Australians and, most importantly, for our children.

Achieving sustainability is a significant goal for Western Australia. It will provide a range of new opportunities for more employment, increased

economic efficiency, better environmental management and greater social engagement.

Our immediate objective is to translate this vision of sustainability into a reality by reaching a common understanding of what sustainability means and identifying a Sustainability Strategy which will allow all Western Australians to make the most of these opportunities.

Partnerships must be the centrepiece of any approach to sustainability. It is only through sharing and understanding the full spectrum of problems and opportunities that confront the State that we can resolve our mutual obstacles. Over the next year, the Government will consult with industry, non-Government organisations, unions, local governments and the wider community to develop this Strategy. This consultation will be designed to make use of ideas for new businesses, new projects and new processes that can help Western Australia become more sustainable and to identify an achievable agenda for change.

Western Australia is well placed to become an innovative leader in emerging global economies based on knowledge and the pursuit of sustainability. This Paper sets out how you can assist in making this journey to a sustainable future.

I am pleased to invite your participation in developing our State Sustainability Strategy *Focus on the Future: Opportunities for Sustainability in Western Australia*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Geoff Gallop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Geoff Gallop MLA
PREMIER

December 2001

Purpose of the consultation paper

This paper invites the Western Australian public, Government departments and non-Government stakeholders to become involved in developing the State Sustainability Strategy. You are encouraged to participate in the process for developing the Strategy and to prepare a written submission on how the Strategy can put Western Australia on a path to a more sustainable future.

This consultation paper outlines:

- The Western Australian Government's position on sustainability including the definition and principles that will inform the State Sustainability Strategy;
- Some of the key concepts of sustainability;
- Examples of the issues that could be addressed in the State Sustainability Strategy;
- The process that will be used to develop the Strategy; and
- Guidance on preparing written submissions.

Mine site rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of mine sites in WA has become an innovative scientific process to determine how best to re-create native habitat. Recently this process has included social sustainability as a number of mining companies work with local Aboriginal people to manage the land. Argyle Diamond Mine has been using this process as a way for Aboriginal people to plant 'bush tucker' vegetation.

Photo of Sam Samaraweema (environmental scientist at Argyle) by Peter Newman



What is Sustainability?

In 1987 the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development identified sustainable development as:

Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The sustainability agenda has come from a global and local process designed to resolve the tensions between the world's ecological problems and the need for development to overcome social and economic poverty. In 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the world agreed to implement *Agenda 21* at all levels of Government. *Agenda 21* is the official global strategy for sustainability¹.

Sustainability involves rethinking society and its development to integrate environmental, economic and social goals.

In coming to office in February 2001 the Gallop Government made a strong commitment to sustainability and the development of a Western Australian strategy for sustainability. The Government has adopted the following definition of sustainability:

Sustainability is the simultaneous achievement of environmental, economic and social goals.

The definition challenges Western Australia to focus on the resolution of major environmental, social and economic problems through an approach to development that creates new opportunities. Some of the concepts associated with sustainability are outlined further on the Sustainability Policy Unit's website - www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au. Also, there are case studies that set out examples of innovation in sustainability.

¹ In Australia, the term Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) emerged from the development of the 1992 *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development*. Since this time there has emerged a preference among business and community leaders world wide and in Australia for the term 'sustainability' because this term is perceived to be more inclusive. The Western Australian Government has therefore adopted the term 'sustainability'.

A challenge and an opportunity

The conclusion of the official global state of the environment report, *Global Environmental Outlook 2000*, was that “the continued poverty of the majority of the planet’s inhabitants and excessive consumption by the minority, are the two major causes of environmental degradation. The present cause is unsustainable and postponing action is no longer an option”.

Many actions have been taken to address environmental and social problems, however, the fundamental causes of these problems have not been adequately addressed. The scale of the actions has not matched the scale of the environmental and social issues we face.

To give some appreciation for the scale of the action required to bring human interference with the environment back into balance in accordance with the principles of sustainability, the United Nations and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development have established high level targets for industrialised countries. They have estimated that industrialised countries such as Australia need to achieve a 10 fold reduction in our consumption of resources and a 20 fold increase in resource efficiency by 2040. At the same time there must be rapid transfers of knowledge and technology to developing countries.

While the challenge of sustainability is large, it is important to remember that over the past 200 years, throughout the Industrial Revolution, human productivity has increased by 20,000 per cent. A significant part of the challenge is to turn our economy around so that it drives the protection and repair of the local and global environment, while providing a better, fairer, more equitable and just society.

In the past, sustainability has been considered a threat to economic development, however, many of the world’s largest corporations and business associations are now embracing the ideas and opportunities that sustainability offers. For example, some firms are showing that eco-efficiency

(reducing resource requirements while increasing productivity) can be achieved by a factor of four to ten. Those businesses that can demonstrate such sustainability have a chance of creating new economic opportunities locally and globally, while making a contribution to sustainability at the global scale.

Western Australia has many advantages to be harnessed in the pursuit of sustainability, and by developing innovative solutions we have the potential to turn our current social and environmental problems into future economic strengths. The State Sustainability Strategy will promote ideas on how Western Australia can harness the new opportunities from the global sustainability challenge.



Renewable Energy

The Albany Wind Farm is a good example of how renewable energy can fit in with the environment and create regional jobs. Other innovations in renewable energy are occurring across the State.

Photo by Peter Newman



Oil Mallee Project

Twenty species of Mallee are being planted in the Wheatbelt to provide: a source of natural oils, a resource for creating electricity (a demonstration 1MW power-plant is being built in Narrogin), a technique for reducing salinity, a carbon storage device (in the mallee roots) suitable for trading carbon credits, and a potential means of rebuilding Wheatbelt communities.

Photo from Oil Mallee Company

Facilitating sustainability

Commitment and leadership

Government must take a leadership role in facilitating the shift to a sustainable future. By developing the State Sustainability Strategy the Western Australian Government is taking this leadership role. The Strategy will enable the community and business to understand and contribute to the sustainability agenda that is pursued in Western Australia.

Sustainability principles

The Government is committed to the following principles for sustainability:

- Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity (as the basis on which life depends);
- The precautionary principle (lack of scientific certainty should not delay measures to prevent environmental degradation and other damage);
- Inter and intra-generational equity (our decisions today should not compromise the choices of those generations still to come and should provide for equity within generations); and
- Improved resource valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms to protect and repair the environment.



Gas as the transition fuel

Climate change policies are favouring the use of gas as a fuel to replace both oil and coal. It is also a transition to the hydrogen economy in the long term. Thus gas pipe lines, storage

systems and liquefaction facilities can have a long term future. WA's gas can be used to help locally in this transition and as an export to places like China, it can help these countries contribute to greenhouse reductions.

Photo: Courtesy of Woodside Petroleum

Sustainability Policy Unit

The Government has established a Sustainability Policy Unit in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to coordinate the development of the State Sustainability Strategy.

The Sustainability Policy Unit is also raising the level of debate on sustainability by organising seminars on key sustainability topics. The seminar series is designed to provide important input during the development of the State Sustainability Strategy.

The Sustainability Policy Unit is documenting case studies on globally significant innovations for sustainability in Western Australia. Information on the seminar series and case studies is available on the web site: www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au and a sample of case studies are featured throughout this consultation paper in the illustrations.

Existing Government initiatives related to sustainability

Apart from the development of the State Sustainability Strategy, the Government has also initiated other strategies and plans that will contribute to the pursuit of sustainability in Western Australia. Examples include the:

- Development of a State Housing Strategy;
- Development of a State Greenhouse Strategy;
- Development of a State Industry Policy;
- A review of Major Projects Approval Process;
- Establishment of the Premier's Science Council and the Innovate WA Strategy;
- Implementation of Perth's Air Quality Management Plan;
- Future Perth - a new strategic plan for Perth and the South West;
- Development of a State Policy on Access to Biological Resources;
- Development of a State Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and legislation;
- Action plan recommended by the Physical Activity Taskforce; and
- Development of a State Citizenship Strategy.

Sustainability will be a key theme of these initiatives and each will reinforce the State Sustainability Strategy.

Beginning in 2002, the Environmental Protection Authority will oversee the development of the next 'state of the environment report' for Western Australia. The report will analyse and outline environmental trends and indicators of sustainability in natural resources sectors and the regions of Western Australia. The State Sustainability Strategy will identify headline sustainability indicators for Western Australia. It will also examine the effectiveness of information and decision support systems for sustainability in Western Australia.

Partnerships for sustainability

The State Government is forming partnerships with important institutions in Western Australia to assist in the development and implementation of the State Sustainability Strategy. So far the Government has made a commitment to partnerships with:

- Aboriginal organisations;
- The Western Australian Municipal Association;
- The Western Australian Sustainable Industries Group;
- The Environmental Alliance of Western Australia;
- The Western Australian Council of Social Services;
- The Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Minerals and Energy;
- The Western Australian Chapter of the Australian Corporate Citizenship Association;
- All Western Australian Universities and the CSIRO to form the *Global Centre for Sustainability*; and
- The Western Australian Museum to help promote sustainability across the community.

The State Government welcomes proposals for partnerships where there is potential to help achieve sustainability in Western Australia.



Liveable Neighbourhoods Project

The multi-award winning set of guidelines developed in the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to show how traditional town centres like Claremont,

Mt Lawley and Cottesloe can be built in new and redeveloping urban areas. Such centres are less car dependent, better for communities, the environment and the economy. Gosnells has been applying Liveable Neighbourhoods to its plans for a new Town Centre.

Photo: Concept plan from City of Gosnells.



Transport for the future

Technology is being progressively adopted to help WA move more sustainably. A Hydrogen Fuel Cell bus project is linking us to the long-term future.

And the new electric train to Mandurah will

be completing a fast and environmentally attractive transport option for the city.

Photo: Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus, courtesy of Dept. of Transport.



Coolamon Solar Village

At Ellenbrook, an attempt has been made to orient and design houses so they use the sun to minimise heating and cooling needs. Extra help is provided with insulation if a housing

design, chosen by the housekeeper, meets criteria for reduced energy use.

Photo: Courtesy of Ray Hart

The role of the State Sustainability Strategy

While there is widespread acceptance of the need to pursue sustainability, there is also confusion about how to achieve this goal. Government has an obvious role to develop concepts and programs that can address the sustainability agenda in partnership with business and the community. It is also vital that there is national leadership on sustainability issues from the Commonwealth Government and from national business and community organisations.

The role of the State Sustainability Strategy is to focus and mobilise efforts to move to a sustainable Western Australia through identifying:

- priority sustainability issues for Western Australia;
- short, medium and long-term goals for sustainability across regions and sectors;
- targets and indicators that can be used to assess our progress in implementing the Strategy;
- actions to promote and encourage long-term progress to sustainability, including new initiatives, policy and legislative change and institutional reform;
- policy and management tools to improve decision making for sustainability;
- barriers to achieving sustainability and how these will be overcome;
- research and development priorities for sustainability;
- examples of best-practice sustainability in different sectors in Western Australia and how this can be achieved more widely; and
- means of securing ongoing commitment to sustainability by Government, business and community.

Given the significant and fundamental changes that will need to occur at the individual and societal level, sustainability will only be achieved in the longer-term. To assist us to move forward however, we need to create new forms of economic and social development where pursuit of synergies between economic, social and environmental goals becomes the norm not the exception.

Currently, there are limited opportunities available to achieve this integrated approach to development and the State Sustainability Strategy will make it easier for these opportunities to be realised and will set Western Australia on the long path to achieving sustainability.

The State Sustainability Strategy will include measures that create a business environment more conducive to sustainability. The Government encourages submissions in response to this consultation paper that identify how business and the State economy can facilitate the transition to a sustainable future.

The State Government will be looking for ways that it can work with the Commonwealth Government to use economic and other policy instruments to achieve sustainability.

Measuring progress to sustainability is a complex task where data is often unavailable. In developing the State Sustainability Strategy, the Premier's Sustainability Policy Unit will more accurately research targets that may quantify some key aspects of a sustainable Western Australia. This will provide decision-makers with some yardsticks so that they can effectively govern and lead society to sustainability.



Local Government and Sustainability

Many local authorities have been pioneering sustainability in WA local government (eg. the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale). Local Government has responsibility for issues such as solid waste,

local transport, building by-laws, parks and many land management issues that are critical to how the State Sustainability Strategy unfolds.

Photo of Tumblegum Farm, courtesy of Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale

Global and local sustainability issues

The global context

It is not possible for Western Australia to simply focus on achieving sustainability within our own borders. We are intimately connected to other countries within the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world, particularly through trade and by sharing the same environment. The task of achieving sustainability requires international cooperation.

Some of the global issues that require a shift to sustainability include:

- Nearly 50 per cent of the earth's land surface has been transformed for human activity;
- More than half of the earth's accessible fresh water is now being used, directly or indirectly;
- More nitrogen is being fixed synthetically than naturally;
- More than half of all mangroves and coastal wetlands are lost;
- The rate of species extinction is between 1,000 and 10,000 times what it would be naturally;
- In the second half of the twentieth century the human population doubled but grain production trebled, energy use quadrupled and economic activity quintupled;
- Although the world economy has grown from US\$5 trillion to US\$30 trillion over the last 50 years, the number of people who live on \$1-2 a day is projected to increase from 2 to 4 billion within the next 25 years;
- Global oil production is nearing its peak;
- The global atmosphere has increased in greenhouse gases by 28% over the last past 130 years and has reached a point where noticeable and sustained climate change is now occurring; and
- The global loss of land to salinity and other land degradation is around 12 million hectares per year, about the size of the Wheatbelt.

Global environmental, social and economic issues are intimately linked and require a long-term commitment and a holistic approach to developing solutions. This challenge will be the focus of the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable

Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. Western Australia can play a positive role in helping address global issues while focusing on achieving a sustainable future for the State. For example, in the immediate future, we can help globally by providing natural gas to countries needing to replace dirty fuels, and we can assist with our knowledge and experience in sustainability services and technology. WA has shown that it can be highly innovative in sustainability on a global level.

An Australian perspective

Australia is the only continent on Earth that is affluent, highly developed, and politically stable, while retaining a relatively healthy environment. However, since white settlement in Australia, 70% of vegetation has been removed or significantly changed. We have lost 40% of forests, 75% of rainforests, 90% of temperate woodland and mallee. Almost 50% of marsupials and monotremes are extinct, endangered or vulnerable and more than 3000 plant species are rare or threatened.

Australia is the only developed nation in the world to have a section of its population with a declining life expectancy. Life expectancy for Aboriginal Australians is about 20 years less than the average Australian, and this figure has continued to worsen through the 1990s. The overall death rate of Aboriginal Australians is 3 times higher and infant mortality is 3.5 times higher than the average Australian.

Australia also has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, and this rate has been increasing over the past 20 years. Another worrying sign is the rate of poverty in Australia. Around 2.4 million Australians (13.3% of the population) do not have enough money for basic, every day needs such as housing, clothing and food. At the same time the gap between the rich and poor has been increasing. The top 10% of households in Australia hold over 50% of the household wealth while the bottom 50% hold only 3% of the household wealth and this gap is growing.

Australia's official unemployment rate has increased from 1.8% in 1973 to 7.1% in September 2001, reaching a peak of 10.7% in 1993. Since 1973 one full-time job in five has been lost. Australia also has one of the highest long-term unemployment rates in the OECD, with the proportion of unemployed who are long-term unemployed increasing from 3.6% in 1973 to 27.9% in 2000.

A focus on Western Australia

In many ways, Western Australia is a fortunate and prosperous state, with substantial natural resources, a productive agricultural sector and an outward-looking and pro-active business environment. These factors have traditionally led to a strong and competitive industrial base, a robust level of entrepreneurial activity and an evident willingness by foreign investors to invest in Western Australia.

However, even in light of these positive economic factors, Western Australia also has its share of important challenges and vulnerabilities that impact heavily on our ability to create a more ecologically and socially sustainable economy.

The primary challenge is to recognise that our economic prosperity cannot indefinitely rely solely on the utilisation of our abundant natural resources.

The volume of material, energy and water that an economy needs to function is an important indicator of sustainability. The Western Australian economy uses a large amount of materials, energy and water for every unit of economic production. Preliminary analysis by Curtin University and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has found that Western Australia has a very large total 'ecological footprint'². On average each Western Australian effectively uses between 17 and 31ha of land to maintain their standard of living, which is greater than the national average. To be sustainable we should be aiming to reduce the total ecological footprint of our economy by at least half over the next 10-20 years.

Environment Western Australia 1998: State of the Environment Report concluded that the most important environmental issue was our high consumption lifestyles. Western Australians have some of the highest rates of resource consumption in the world. For example, we use more energy, water, and emit more carbon dioxide per person than almost any other society other than the United States, and the rate at which we are eroding our biological resources is also one of the highest globally. Patterns of production and consumption are fundamental causes behind the priority environmental issues identified in the State of the Environment Report such as the loss of biological diversity, salinity and greenhouse gas emissions. We need to find ways of reducing this ecological footprint whilst improving the quality of life for everyone.

Very often the environmental issues facing society are directly related to social problems, such as population drift from rural communities to coastal cities, the state of the health system, youth suicide and the disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal peoples in Western Australia. Any distinction between social and ecological health is artificial and prevents the discovery of solutions that address both sets of problems.

The last thirty years have witnessed the global economy steadily transforming itself into a single marketplace, where sustainability factors, such as knowledge, technology and innovation, are increasingly becoming the major drivers of growth and employment.

Western Australia's economic strength has always been underpinned by the production of minerals (more recently, oil and natural gas) and agricultural products. All of these commodities are subject to international price fluctuations determined by production, competition, trade barriers and monetary exchange rate changes that have been largely outside of the State's control. Accordingly, a major challenge we face is the need to diversify our industrial base, particularly our export capability and our ability to value-add to raw materials. Our

² Ecological footprint is the total resource and waste impacts calculated on a per person basis and converted into a standard for comparison using amount of land required.

resources and agricultural industries also can be building blocks for a range of sustainable industries. This challenge is especially pertinent with regard to small and medium sized businesses that may not necessarily have the capacity, resources or expertise to adapt to the new economy by themselves.

Changes in the global economy associated with new technologies also present us with both an opportunity and a challenge, requiring an ability to adapt and innovate in times of technological change. Many of the emerging economic opportunities are dominated by the services sector where knowledge-based skills and a high level of education are the most important factors. WA is contributing to this transition through its education and training sectors. We need to work out how to help them grow and prosper for a sustainable economy.

The promotion of innovation is a major factor in achieving sustainability. The Government's *Innovate WA* Strategy has been recently launched to strengthen our long-term competitiveness by establishing Western Australia as a global leader in innovation-related activities. In particular, this Strategy will need to focus on a range of issues across the triple-bottom line, such as:

- reversing the decline in R&D activities in this State;
- achieving higher school retention rates;
- encouraging greater participation in science at a tertiary education level;
- providing leadership, research capacities and comprehensive industry plans for industries that offer a high growth potential; and
- developing infrastructure for innovation strategically.

All of this can be used to help the sustainability agenda as innovation in eco-efficiency (and other aspects of sustainability) is one of the new global challenges for industry³. The drive to eco-efficiency and sustainability should stimulate local innovation and economic activity while securing a healthy environment and a vital, diverse and fair society.

A report by the Department of Training outlines job opportunities in six areas that are all part of the sustainability agenda:

- Earth repair (restoring land damaged by society)
- Environmental survey (generating knowledge of the environment and its protection and management, for example using satellite data)
- Resource renewal (increasing eco-efficiency, i.e. in the use of materials and water and recovering and preventing waste)
- Sustainable energy (renewable energy and energy efficiency)
- Sustainable communities and cities (transport infrastructure, planning, urban design and building design)
- 'Clean and green food' and sustainable agriculture (organic farming, low input agriculture, agriculture based on ecological principles)

The State Sustainability Strategy will recognise the need for long term social and economic change, and will use the challenges of sustainability to stimulate innovation and social and economic development.



Ribbons of Blue

School children are trained in science classes to monitor water quality. Then they create plans showing trends in the region and how the catchment can be improved.

Photo: Courtesy of Ribbons of Blue, Dept. of Environment and Water Catchment Protection.

³ Eco-efficiency involves dramatically reducing the amount of materials, energy and water that is required to produce goods and services.

Process to develop the State Sustainability Strategy

The process to develop the State Sustainability Strategy will engage Government departments, the community and business in identifying, promoting and supporting actions leading to sustainability as well as evaluating options for addressing priority issues including legal reforms, economic instruments, institutional development, capacity building and other programs.

The process to develop the State Sustainability Strategy includes:

Phase 1

Written submissions

December 2001 - March 2002

Interested members of the public, Government departments and other stakeholder groups are invited to provide written submissions at the beginning of the process of developing the State Sustainability Strategy. The content of the Strategy will be directly shaped by these submissions.

Meetings with key stakeholders

December 2001 - March 2002

Direct consultation will occur with key stakeholders. Please contact the Department of the Premier and Cabinet directly if your group would like to discuss the Strategy. Contact information is provided below.

Partnerships

December 2001 - September 2002

The Government will form partnerships with key stakeholders to develop the Strategy including with business, environment, community, professional and Aboriginal organisations, universities, unions, local government and others.

Sustainability Seminar Series

August 2001 - May 2002

The seminar series that started in August 2001 has provided the opportunity for members of the community to debate important issues for

sustainability. The seminar series in 2002 will feature panel discussions to bring together Government, business and community representatives. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet will also host a range of workshops and discussion forums to develop new ideas for sustainability in Western Australia. These will be promoted widely and announced through the Premier's sustainability website.

Phase 2

Draft Sustainability Strategy

June - September 2002

Government will prepare the Draft Sustainability Strategy that will be widely circulated for further comment and consideration.

Phase 3

State Sustainability Strategy

October 2002

Following review of feedback on the draft, Government will finalise the Strategy for endorsement by Cabinet.

Strategy Implementation

Government will ensure that the Strategy is effectively implemented, and will monitor and review progress to sustainability on a regular basis.

Preparing a written submission to the State Sustainability Strategy

The Government is committed to seeking the views of the Western Australian community, Government and non-Government stakeholders to inform the development of the State Sustainability Strategy.

You are encouraged to prepare detailed written submissions outlining your ideas and aspirations for a sustainable Western Australia covering any aspect raised in this consultation paper.

In particular, the Government welcomes your views on what are the priority sustainability issues in Western Australia and how these could be addressed through the State Sustainability Strategy. Some of the key questions you should address in your submission include those set out in Box 1.

Box 1

Key Questions

- Is sustainability a worthwhile pursuit?
- What benefits could flow if sustainability was taken more seriously?
- In your experience, what opportunities exist to pursue sustainability?
- What is the role of government, business and the community in facilitating change to be more sustainable?
- What best-practice examples exist, if any, to demonstrate how sustainability is being progressed?
- What research and development is needed to ensure sustainability outcomes can be achieved?
- In a more general sense, what else should Western Australia be doing to contribute nationally, regionally and globally to progress sustainability?

See also Box 3

Different people, groups and communities can contribute to the sustainability agenda in different ways. Possible perspectives that different sections of society may be able to contribute to sustainability in Western Australia are outlined in Box 2.

These different perspectives will be very welcome, as they will add breadth and richness to the Strategy as it is being developed.

Box 2

Different Perspectives

Professional associations

What skills, ideas and resources can professionals contribute to achieve sustainability?

Community groups

How can community values be brought into all sustainability issues and what is the role of civil society in the transition to sustainability?

Schools

How do young Western Australians envisage a sustainable future and how can we better educate for sustainability?

Business and industry groups

What innovations in business and industry can assist in the transition to sustainability? How can business work in partnership with Government and the community to pursue economic development that achieves better social and environmental outcomes?

Indigenous Groups

Reconciliation and the recognition of indigenous rights and social justice are critical if we are to successfully move to sustainability. How can sustainability be facilitated in a post native title world? How can we achieve sustainability and simultaneously address the needs and rights of Aboriginal peoples in Western Australia?

Social welfare groups

How can social justice approaches have mutual benefits for the environment and the economy?

Artists and creative associations

What is the role of creativity and culture in making the transition to sustainability?

Universities and Research and Development Organisations

What research and development is needed to progress to sustainability?

Local Government

What is the contribution of local government to achieving sustainability?

In preparing your submission you are encouraged to think creatively and broadly about the potential opportunities for sustainability that exist across Government's economic, social and environment activities and outside of Government, within the community and business sectors. Other important questions on issues in sustainability are listed in Box 3. You may wish to consider these questions when preparing your submission.

Examples of questions on sustainability issues...

Sustainability, Governance and Society

- How can governance and democracy be enhanced to achieve sustainability?
- What institutions do we need to establish and change to help achieve sustainability?
- How can Government promote good corporate citizenship?
- What legal framework and law reform is required for sustainability?
- How should Government's purchasing power be used to promote sustainability and stimulate sustainable businesses?

Sustainability, Natural Resources Management and Biological Diversity

- Can fisheries continue to provide economic opportunities within a framework for conservation? How do marine parks fit in with fishing? Can they help to make better economic and social outcomes? How can the coast be managed more sustainably?
- How can farmers and pastoralists adopt their management practices to conserve soil, save native vegetation, reduce chemical problems and create more diversity in production? What does the future hold for our agricultural landscapes?
- How can we better manage land? What is the role of technologies in areas such as satellite imagery, communications technology and data storage? How can the public gain better access to these new tools for land management?
- Up to one third of the Wheatbelt could be lost to salinity. Hundreds of rare and endangered plants and animals could be lost as well as destruction of small Wheatbelt towns already under depopulation pressure. Can we reverse this process and simultaneously create new economic opportunities and revived communities in the wheatbelt? Can regional towns be a focus for sustainable industries that help solve this problem?
- How can we protect our natural heritage and biodiversity while using our rich biological resources to develop new sustainable industries?
- The South West of Western Australia is one of the world's 25 'hot spots' for biodiversity. Increasing global attention is being directed to our attempts to save forests, create habitat for rare and endangered species, manage feral animals and weeds. Can this become a new economic opportunity for the State? How can this help communities in rural areas?

Economic strategies for sustainability

- The world is committing to greenhouse targets. How can we assist in this global challenge? What is the long term future and what are the best transition strategies to achieve sustainable energy systems? Can we participate in the new economic opportunities emerging

from renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, carbon storage and planning to reduce impacts? What social benefits can be found from this process?

- How can industry become more eco-efficient, adopting cleaner production techniques, creating opportunities for industrial ecology where wastes are seen as resources? What are the key export opportunities in eco-technologies? How can a more sustainable industry improve local communities?
- What is necessary for each region of Western Australia to make the transition to sustainability?
- What role can Government and industry play in making houses more sustainable in urban, rural and remote communities?
- The world's conventional oil production is peaking as consumption outstrips discoveries by 9 to 1. The remaining oil is predominantly in the Middle East and is subject to political uncertainty. Can Western Australia's gas reserves be part of the world's solution to this economic and resource problem? Can we become a model for the use of gas as a transition fuel? How does this lead us to a hydrogen economy? Do we adapt our cities and towns as we make them less oil dependent and can this be better for communities?
- Western Australia has vast renewable energy sources. What needs to happen to develop a world leading renewable energy sector in the state?
- What is the future for mining and resource industries in an eco-efficient and dematerialising global economy? What are the opportunities for resource recovery technologies and how can mining and resource industries contribute to sustainability?
- How can Perth and regional towns become more sustainable? Can we use urban design, public transport, travel demand management, waste and water management more effectively to reduce our ecological footprint? How can we manage urban development so bushland can be conserved?

Social strategies for sustainability

- What strategies can we adopt to build social cohesion while addressing key economic and environmental issues?
- How can we achieve jobs growth while protecting the environment and improving society?
- What strategies can we adopt to reduce the impact of our consumer lifestyles and improve our quality of life?
- Fundamental health issues still are a challenge in remote areas. Ideas are required on how aboriginal communities in particular can be drawn into the sustainability agenda and how remote settlements can use appropriate technology to solve, cost effectively, their settlement problems.

Where to send your submissions and how to get further involved in developing the Strategy?

Written Submissions

Written submissions from the general public, departments and non-Government stakeholders are welcome and should be submitted by no later than **end of March 2002**.

Please send your submission to:

Professor Peter Newman
Director, Sustainability Policy Unit
Policy Office
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Mail: 15th Floor, 197 St Georges Tce
PERTH WA 6000

email: sustainability@dpc.wa.gov.au

Fax: 08 9222 9509

More information

For more information about sustainability, the Sustainability Policy Unit or to track progress on the Government's sustainability initiatives, visit the Sustainability Policy Unit's website at

www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au

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