5

Sustainability and community

Vision for Western Australia

Western Australian communities in cities and in regions have a strong sense of place, are inclusive of all citizens and have supportive networks receptive to local needs, and through this can respond uniquely to the sustainability agenda.

Goal

Support communities to fully participate in achieving a sustainable future.

Priority areas for action

> *[Social sustainability] … seems frequently to fall off the sustainability agenda or to take second place to environmental and economic concerns, despite the fact that it is so critical to the lives of individuals and communities and to the overall health of our society.*
>
> L Barron and E Gauntlett[45]

> *The traditional politics of Left and Right cannot help us in understanding this new world. The flow of trust and reciprocity in the community cannot be adjusted by pulling levers in government or adjusting economic management devices. It cannot be legislated for. Trust and reciprocity are generated primarily in civil society, in the relationships and institutions of civil life—families, friendship groups, neighbourhoods, churches, clubs, and voluntary associations. From there they shape the effectiveness of other institutions such as the market and government.*
>
> Vern Hughes, Social Entreprenours Network, on Perspective ABC Radio National, 6 August 2003.

> *A sustainable community would be secure, healthy and equitable, with a clear sense of place.*
>
> Environmental Protection Authority (2002). Towards Sustainability. Preliminary Position Statement No. 6. Environmental Protection Authority, Perth.

> *…the creative engine of social, cultural and economic improvement lies primarily with individuals and the voluntary associations they form and interests they pursue – in businesses, academia, the arts, community services and activities, interest groups, etc.*
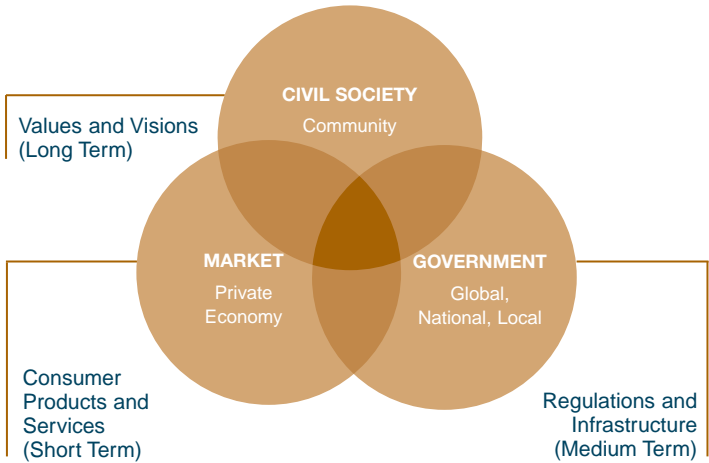>
> CCI response to the WA Draft State Sustainability Strategy

A strong case has been made in this Strategy to better integrate the social dimension of development and human activity into sustainability. The most fundamental concept behind social development is the importance of community.

This section gathers together core issues that focus on the social and that enhance our sense of community.

The rationale as to why community is so important to sustainability and to all of our lives is set out in Figure 11 below showing the roles and functions of government, the market and community.

Figure 11 The interconnection of community, government and the market

- Values and Visions (Long Term)
- **CIVIL SOCIETY** Community
- **MARKET** Private Economy
- **GOVERNMENT** Global, National, Local
- Consumer Products and Services (Short Term)
- Regulations and Infrastructure (Medium Term)

[45]L Barron and E Gauntlett, *Housing and Sustainable Communities Indicators Project - Consultation Paper*, Western Australian Council of Social Services, Perth, 2002.

The primary function of government is to provide regulation and infrastructure; the market's function is to provide goods and services–but neither of these is about the direction and purpose of development. The community is the major provider of the values and visions for the future. It can then express these through the market and through government (see quote at start). When all three overlap and become one functioning society, then there is harmony and the opportunities for sustainability are increased. This section will consider the values and visions set by the community and will emphasise the importance of finding partnerships that enable a true interconnection between government, market and civil society. At times of transition it is necessary to find leadership in the community, in the market and in government. All three have been expressed in the process of developing this Strategy.

The section will focus on what sustainability could mean for health, housing, education, the arts and multiculturalism. There are a range of government agencies with responsibility for community related services. The primary interest and focus of most of these agencies is the social dimension of sustainability. Their submissions and those of the community with interests in this area, concentrated on how 'the social' can be linked to economic and environmental processes.

The general sustainability implementation model established in *Sustainable natural resource management* and *Sustainability and settlements* also appears to be relevant to the community with some important provisos. These relate to the necessity to be fine-grained, local community oriented and bottom-up. The Sustainability Roundtable can consider how local government and regional councils can assist with issues, such as addressing the issues in this Strategy, related to Indigenous people, health, education, justice, disability services, community welfare, housing and the arts. In each region there will be special needs and the issues will overlap. It is proposed that a mechanism to implement social sustainability be developed based on the need for a greater degree of integration and co-location of services.

Social and community issues are considered throughout this Strategy. In this part, however, particular attention is focussed on the provision of socially sustainable housing, how to develop and sustain healthy communities, the importance of formal and non-formal education in raising community awareness of sustainability, and cultural aspects of sustainability.

The arts and culture can play a critical role in raising community awareness and interest in sustainability at a deeper level. Culture and the arts provide the community with the creative edge needed to face the new and potentially difficult problems of sustainability, to find the ethics which underlie every element and every issue in sustainability. Multiculturalism provides the opportunity for different answers to be found and to build a whole of community approach to sustainability.

These issues are important in themselves and together form the basis of how the community can be motivated for sustainability reform.

> ## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Community is critical to how we live and how we feel about the future. Strong communities are more sustainable in themselves and are able to contribute to sustainability in general.

Social interactions affect what happens in the economic and environmental spheres. Promoting social sustainability therefore promotes sustainability overall and vice versa.

Western Australian Council of Social Services

The synergies between community building and other aspects of sustainability are developed through a series of social policy areas that are presented to show how they are directly and indirectly, dimensions of sustainability. The social policy areas: integration of community services; sport and recreation; social justice as it applies to disabilities, multiculturalism and gender; and the role of community aspirations.

Community services integration as a dimension of sustainability

Government agencies involved in the delivery of community services include the Departments of Housing, Police, Health, Education and Training, Disability Services, Community Development, Justice, Indigenous Affairs, Local Government and Regional Development, Planning and Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation. This Strategy is premised on the assumption that their services can be better coordinated to meet community needs and assist with the development of our 'social capital.'

'Social capital' is an important concept for the State Sustainability Strategy. It is about the extended networks that link us together in our communities. It measures the sense that people are involved in the immediate society within which they live and work and in which they are, or can be, empowered to be involved. Participation and the ability to access information are two vital attributes in this regard.[46]

Sustainability can be understood in terms of the relationship between financial capital, natural capital (the biodiversity and ecological integrity of an area) and social capital. Each has intrinsic worth and influences the other. Not only is social capital important in determining how people value and enjoy their community, but it also contributes to an informed and participative community (which is best placed to enhance financial and natural capital). Understanding how to improve social, natural and financial capital in an integrated way is one of the central challenges of this Strategy.

Sustainability through social capital improvement can be conceived through a number of community-centred ideas[47] including sustainable communities, community strength, resilient communities, community development, healthy communities and community capacity (see Boxes 63, 64 and 65).[48] All depend on the integrated provision of community services.

The government is committed to integrating community services based on:

- communities' strengths
- equality of citizens, and
- partnerships with community organisations, private sector and non government sector organisations.

A focus on sustainable community should also encourage resilience and capacity at critical life stages. This can mean the development of skills and resilience in the early years, the integration and acceptance of young people, support for families in their important social role, and facilitation of the continuing involvement of seniors in the Western Australian community. It can also include an ongoing commitment to the support of volunteers, and the foundation of community-based organisations.

[46]For a comprehensive overview to these issues, see the Western Australian Council for Social Services' submission to the State Sustainability Strategy, April 2002 and the background paper by Kerry Stoll *Youth and Sustainability: Social Capital, Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Civic Engagement*.

[47]Community can refer to both geographical communities and communities of common interest. Moreover people can be simultaneously involved in a number of different communities and move between them over a short period of time. To actively enhance communities also requires an understanding of what people perceive as their community.

[48]Barron, L and Gauntlett, E. *Housing and Sustainable Communities Indicator Project - Consultation Paper*, WACOSS, December 2001.

BOX 63   THE KALGOORLIE PROJECT

Capacity building and community partnerships are key ingredients of this project, which was established to address youth crime in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The project has set out to achieve a strong local commitment to reduce youth crime and boost pro-social development through a strong collaborative approach. Starting out by identifying factors that influence a child to engage in crime, the process includes community consultation, engagement and ownership of the issues.

Lotterywest was the initial funding supporter of this project through its 'Connected Communities' Grants. Key to Lotterywest's support was that the young people, identified as involved in crime and 'anti-social' behaviour, were also heavily engaged in the development of the project proposal. The engagement of young people is a feature of this project, in addition to cross-agency collaboration and partnerships.

All members of the community with an interest in youth have been mobilised to help establish a shared vision and shared priorities for action. The process undertaken has focused on long-term solutions and the implementation of sustainable strategies.

While it is at the local government level that local communities and government most directly interact, at the State level responsibility for engaging Western Australians with the development and strengthening of their communities rests with the Department for Community Development. The range of services, programs and initiatives undertaken by the Department are numerous.

BOX 64   COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PEEL REGION

The Peel Development Commission in its report entitled 'Peeling Away the Mask' identified a range of challenges facing this rapidly growing region. Its report clearly showed how difficult it is to build sustainable communities when the balance is not maintained between economic, environmental and social bottom line outcomes.

In the case of the Peel region, low economic growth had led to a number of undesirable social outcomes including low retention rates at high school, high youth unemployment rates and a large commuting workforce to Perth, all of which have had a significant impact on the community and its ability to build a sustainable future.

Key stakeholders from both the community and government are now working to address these emerging issues, effectively diverting resources and evolving a more sustainable model for the community. Principles pertaining to community development, capacity building and community regeneration have all been employed. As in work also carried out by the City of Gosnells, one of the many tangible outcomes to date has been the crime prevention benefits, a result of community development and capacity building within the Peel community.

Overall, the aims of these programs and services are threefold:

- to strengthen communities so that individuals and families are able to meet their own needs, achieve self-reliance and contribute to their own solutions
- to promote a just and equitable community enriched by diversity and increased social participation, and
- to support families and communities to provide for the care and safety of their members.

Sport and recreation as a dimension of sustainability in communities

Sport and recreation are significant tools in Australian suburbs and regions for building healthy and functioning communities and contributing to an integration of environmental protection, social development and economic prosperity.

Sport and recreation contribute to sustainability simultaneously through improving health, community, the economy and the environment in an integrated way.

Health

Enabling people to be physically active, especially through walking, is the basis of biological and mental health. The epidemic of obesity and disease related to inactivity are part of the modern western lifestyle with its car dependence and labour-saving devices such as remote controls for TV. Physical activity enables the heart and lungs to work to capacity and to enable bones and muscles to work as they were designed. Such activity has been proven to have anti-anxiety and mood-enhancing effects. It is associated with creativity enhancement and self-esteem. The State Government's Physical Activity Taskforce is a cross-government approach to facilitating a more healthy, active society in Western Australia (see Case Study). Health from physical activity is fundamental to each of the other factors below.

Community

Community building is a combination of enabling individuals to be better human beings and providing links and networks that are meaningful and creative for community.

Physical activity, especially in groups and teams, builds up life skills through character development and greater self-esteem. Adolescents who exercise regularly have higher self-esteem and physical activity improves the self-esteem of disadvantaged individuals and groups. Membership of sporting and other groups helps develop leadership and team skills.

Sport and recreation connect people. Individuals and groups come together from a wide variety of backgrounds, creating life-long friendships and networks and breaking down barriers of prejudice. Sport and recreation provide opportunities for young people to meet and become role models and to develop community skills. Sporting programs are also associated with reduced crime and delinquency.

Sporting and recreation clubs help develop community pride and belonging that is critical to the development of sense of place, for example when a country town or an urban area loses an important sporting team there is a significant loss of community morale. When they are doing well, the community is boosted in many ways.

About twenty per cent of Western Australians volunteer to assist in sport and recreation associations, providing a major institutional structure that maintains community life. Poorly designed suburbs and towns where walking is difficult and that do not provide interesting public spaces are not able to facilitate the associational activity that is the basis of community (see *Sustainable urban design*). Poor services for sport and recreation similarly will have a negative impact on community life.

BOX 65   LOTTERYWEST

Lotterywest's direct grant opportunities are a key source of support for bottom-up community development initiatives and initiatives linking community development and sustainability.

Lotterywest is the State-owned lottery in Western Australia. It is unique as the only Australian lottery to have a direct funding role in the community, with support provided to hospitals, sports and the arts through annual allocations to State Treasury and direct grants to thousands of community organisations and local government authorities for charitable and benevolent purposes.

In 2002-03 Lotterywest's sales turnover translated into a total of $134.772 million in funding; including $51.36 million in more than 1,500 direct grants to 1,139 community organisations or local government authorities.

Grants contributed significantly to the breadth of Western Australian community life and are reflected by the five key areas for Lotterywest grants that have evolved in response to community priorities:

• Enhancing community development initiatives

• Strengthening community service delivery

• Advancing participation in community life

• Valuing our State's heritage and

• Extending not-for-profit capacity.

Economy

Robert Putnam studied why particular regions of Italy were more wealthy than others. He was surprised to find that the most powerful association was with the number of soccer clubs and choral societies. His analysis provided the basis for understanding how social capital is fundamental to how an economy works. Markets are available to develop everywhere but to bring together the required components of finance, government approval and community support requires the social infrastructure of networks and trust.

Sport and recreation are critical to building social capital, to creating the networks and trust between business, government and community which are totally intermixed and integrated when people join sporting groups and voluntary community associations.

As well as helping provide the glue of economic activity, sport and recreation provide the health that enables people to be economically active. Ill health is also a major drain on the economy.

Sport and recreation are also major direct contributors to the economy, with almost $13 billion in 1994-95 in turnover (1.2% of GDP) and with some $432 million in exports associated with sport and recreation.

BOX 66   NO POOL, NO SCHOOL

A program of installing public swimming pools in remote Aboriginal communities has had multiple benefits. The communities had endemic eye and ear health problems which were the primary target of the program as the 'sandy blight' can be significantly stemmed by regular washing. This was quickly observed after regular swimming began to occur, however the linking of children's pool swimming with school attendance has meant a significant reduction in truancy and improvement in skills within the community. Evaluations have found that the "No Pool, No School" program has demonstrated benefits to health, education, local employment and community morale. See photo on page 232.

Environment

As outlined in this Strategy, 'sense of place' is the basis of why people become involved in environmentally-oriented activity and why they give priority to environmental issues in political life. The development of 'sense of place' is closely linked to community associations through sporting and recreational activity.

The building of local community has direct environmental benefit with groups such as Landcare, bush regeneration and wildflower groups (eg Malleefowl Group – see Box 31), volunteers with CALM (see Box 30) and all the other parts of the voluntary conservation movement. It has indirect environmental benefit due to the reduced travel associated with local community activity.

Reducing car dependence through urban design, better infrastructure for public transport, walking and cycling is a part of the process of building local community but will only work if there is a parallel and integrated facilitation of community associations through the provision of services for sport and recreation as well as other community services outlined in this section.

The State Government has released a new report Strategic Directions for Western Australian Sport and Recreation. This is the third such strategic plan. 'SD3' has a new emphasis on sustainability as a major goal and role for sport and recreation in Western Australia.

Building equity and diversity as a dimension of sustainability in communities

Sustainability requires us to develop and use the talents of all the people in our communities. An approach that focuses on the talents and skills of individuals and avoids discriminatory practices such as exclusion, elitism, polarisation and cliques is essential to successful and vibrant communities[49]. In this regard the Western Australian Council of Social Services argue for the importance of establishing processes that, among other things:

[49]A Carr, Grass Roots and Green Tape, Federation Press, Sydney 2002, p. 18

- support a diverse range of people to participate in all decisions and processes
- build capacity at the local level
- are based on collaboration and partnerships
- support local solutions and initiatives and
- incorporate formal and informal interactions.[50]

The basis of this non-discriminatory approach which builds on our diversity is the fundamental value of human rights. This is expressed in the second sustainability principle (in *Framework*) called Equity and Human Rights:

'Sustainability recognises that an environment needs to be created where all people can express their full potential and lead productive lives and that significant gaps in sufficiency and opportunity endanger the earth.'

Some of the mechanisms for understanding how embracing diversity contributes to sustainability are described below.

Providing for people with disabilities creates better cities

The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 1998, identifies 19.5%, or one in five people in Western Australia as having a disability. The rate of increase of people with disabilities is higher than the general population increase. Since people with disabilities were ascribed rights in law the Federal, State and local governments have been implementing processes to make buildings, footpaths and transport systems more 'accessible'. Facilities and services suitable for people in wheelchairs and with other walking disabilities, and for people with hearing and sight difficulties, also make the physical environment more accessible for others (see Box 67).

[50]Western Australian Council for Social Services' submission to the State Sustainability Strategy p.16.

BOX 67   PROVIDING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CREATES BETTER CITIES

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, *Equal Opportunity Act 1996*, and the *Disability Services Act 1993*, people with disabilities have rights and responsibilities which require their full inclusion as members of the community.

A sustainability-oriented community is one that provides for full inclusion of people of all ages and abilities. People with disabilities, their families, friends and carers form a significant and increasing part of the community, however they do not have the same opportunities as other citizens to access fundamental aspects of daily life including education, employment, transport, recreation and leisure, and justice.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 1998 showed that 93% of people with a disability live in the community. People may have a disability at any age, however the likelihood increases as people get older. For example, almost 5% of the population under 5 years has a disability compared to almost 50% of Western Australians over 60 years. On the basis of ABS disability data and mid level population projections, the Disability Services Commission estimates that the total number of disabled people will increase by 48% by the year 2021.

The creation of an inclusive community is vital for people with disabilities, their families, friends and carers, and strongly supports the achievement of sustainability. The Disability Services Commission is working in partnerships across government and the private sector to create this inclusive community.

The primary focus of initiatives is to encourage local communities to support people with disabilities, their families, friends and carers. The provision of accessible information, services and facilities is fundamental to the achievement of this aim.

The State Government's commitment to people with disabilities is strongly reflected in the *Disabilities Services Act 1993* which requires all State government agencies and local government authorities to develop disability service plans to ensure that their services are accessible to people with disabilities.

These plans address issues relating to:

- existing services being adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- access to buildings and facilities being improved
- information about services being provided in formats which meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities
- advice and services being delivered by staff who are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities, and
- opportunities being provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultation, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

Once provided, the advantages for everyone become obvious as cities become simpler and friendlier for everyone. Apart from those with disabilities, children and older people gain most from these facilities and services. As the population ages the need becomes more and more obvious but in reality it means everyone has better facilities for walking and public transport. The city is given infrastructure that contributes to multiple areas of sustainability and allows all people to participate in its activities.

Multiculturalism creates opportunities and innovation

Anti-discrimination when it applies to other cultures can lead to opportunities and innovation in unexpected ways, e.g. the indirect economic boost found after immigration. This is pursued under *Sustainability through multi-culturalism* to show the advantages of culturally different approaches for sustainability.

The intersection of gender and sustainability

Sustainability requires the full participation of all members of our society. This includes the need to recognise and increase the involvement of women in the sustainability agenda. This outcome can be supported through mainstreaming consideration of gender differences in the development of policies or initiatives in support of sustainability. Gender influences the way in which services are delivered, how providers view consumers and ultimately the effectiveness and degree to which services respond to consumers, needs. For policy to be effective it is essential to recognise gender inequalities and plan to address the issues that arise from these.

Many countries around the world have embraced gender and other equity issues as central to achieving sustainability:

'Governments have expressed their commitment to creating a new development paradigm that integrates environmental sustainability with gender equality and justice within and between generations.'

(United Nations, 1995, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Para 249).

For example, women must be recognised as key consumers and important decision-makers in families and communities. Programs aimed at behavioural change need to recognise the role of women in decision-making. Or for example, when responding to a health issue, consideration should be given to who you are working with and who is not represented. Understanding the demographics of an area and being aware of the people or groups who are not currently using the service is essential to good and inclusive practice. Having identified who the service should be reaching, it is important to understand the gender issues; women are 51% of the population and belong to varied cultural, racial, ethnic and other marginalised groups. Not all women and men are the same; gender issues differ according to age, culture and experience.

The Office of Women's Policy is developing a gender assessment tool in order to support improved policy development processes in government.

Community aspirations (storytelling and visioning) as a dimension of sustainability

In the section *Sustainability in the regions*, an approach was outlined to regional sustainability strategies that suggested the 'missing link' was developing ways to highlight 'community aspirations' and link these to environmental, social and economic plans and programs.

A background paper outlining how this can be done has been provided by Susan Waller (on the CD-ROM and sustainability web site). Storytelling is seen to be a powerful tool for sharing and understanding the many and diverse stories, or place narratives, of regional communities, including the Indigenous and European stories. When these stories are woven together they form a *shared story*, and help to define a region's community values, sense of place, and aspirations for the future, as successfully demonstrated at Kodja Place (see Box 58). Community visioning is a process whereby a community envisages the future it wants, i.e. a *shared vision* of the future, and identifies actions to

achieve it. Visioning uses a range of techniques to engage the community, including workshops, surveys, public meetings, community tours, publications, and special events. Community visioning is a similar process to 'Dialogue with the City' (see *Sustainability and settlements* and Box 68 below).

BOX 68   DIALOGUE WITH THE CITY

The Western Australian State Government, through the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, is currently conducting a comprehensive community engagement process for the future planning of Perth. This process, known as 'Dialogue with the City', aims to address Perth's high population and economic growth rates, and the significant impacts that they will have on land, resources, environment, employment, transport and housing.

Dialogue with the City aims to engage the Western Australian community in the future planning of Perth and empower them in identifying planning issues and solutions. A number of ways to engage the community have been chosen, including:

• a survey of 8,000 households

• competitions for primary and high schools

• sessions with young, Aboriginal and non-English speaking people

• an interactive web site, with access to the latest research and experts from Perth, Australia and overseas

• a television program on the potential futures for Perth in the metropolitan area and

• a consultative forum with 1,300 citizens.

The State Government aims to use the community views expressed through Dialogue with the City to form guidelines, policies and a strategic plan that focuses on making Perth the most liveable city.

Government of Western Australia, "Dialogue with the City" *Intersector: Official Magazine of the Western Australian Public Sector*, Vol 9, No. 15, Aug 1, 2003: p 7.

In short...

Vision

Communities develop through close participation in solving their own sustainability issues. In particular, they are able to help overcome the divisions and disparities in opportunity across cities, and towns and between regions. Coordinated government services are vital to this process.

Objectives

• To link community development and sustainability.

• To develop holistic partnerships across community, government and business to drive and support sustainability objectives.

• To more efficiently and effectively provide community services.

• To facilitate community development 'bottom-up'.

Actions underway

• An Early Years Taskforce has been established to develop Statewide strategies to enhance services for young children and their families through community engagement and better interagency collaboration.

• The Family Strength Program is to be extended to include new Indigenous family strength services and community-based child and family centres.

• The government and ATSIC have signed a Statement of Commitment requiring a partnership approach.

In short cont'd...

• There is a commitment to move towards the concept of an Enabling State which recognises that the role of government is to enable, resource and empower local communities to be a part of the solutions to their social problems.

• The promotion of partnerships between all layers of government, ATSIC, community organisations and the business community is crucial to developing whole of community solutions to social problems as exemplified by the work of the Citizens and Civics Unit and the ATSIC and WALGA Partnership Agreements, and the development of the Industry Plan process with the non-government community services sector.

• The government will be working to develop coherent and sustainable State, regional and local processes to ensure holistic responses across the range of human services.

• The 'Strategic Directions for Western Australian Sport and Recreation' report (SD3) was produced by the Department of Sport and Recreation.

• The development of an Aboriginal Justice Plan, for the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council, which will involve Indigenous people by the development of regional and local partnerships to improve the delivery of justice services to Aboriginal people.

• Crime mapping is underway to assess the extent of safety as a liveability tool in communities.

• Lotterywest endorses sustainability objectives and will continue to factor sustainability considerations into its grant-making and community development activities.

Actions

5.1 Develop an integrated community services policy framework that sets out the core principles and processes for providing more holistic service to help achieve sustainability goals.

5.2 Investigate the establishment of a neighbourhood renewal initiative to contribute to a sustainable future for local communities through:

• building connection, caring, civic pride and common good through engaging local communities in social planning, service delivery and other projects

• creating links between and/or rationalising the plethora of pre-existing local advisory networks on specific social issues

• leveraging other government, business and community resources, and

• linking with revitalisation initiatives (see *Revitalising declining centres and suburbs*).

5.3 Develop a coherent process to support joined-up responses from all levels of government and the private and community sectors to enhance the way sustainability is related to community building.

5.4 Use *Consulting Citizens: a Resource Guide* and *Consulting Citizens: Planning for Success* to promote effective public consultation and active citizenship.

5.5 Ensure links between crime prevention programs and community development initiatives as a way of focusing partnerships in areas of multiple social disadvantage.

5.6 Ensure links to Lotterywest's direct grant opportunities as a source of support for bottom up community development initiatives and initiatives linking community development and sustainability, consistent with Lotterywest adopting a sustainability-oriented approach to its grant-making and broader activities.

In short cont'd...

5.7   Through the Sport and Recreation Strategic Directions report 'SD3' provide a sustainability oriented coherent approach to the provision of sport and recreation services linked to better urban design and infrastructure for walking/cycling and public transport, and funding through government and Lotterywest.

5.8   Through the Physical Activity Taskforce provide educational and organisational coordination for the facilitation and expansion of physical activity for community health.

5.9   Develop equity and diversity programs to provide community-building and sustainability perspectives as well as human rights and anti-discrimination.

5.10 Provide support for community aspirations (storytelling and visioning) projects as part of regional sustainability strategies.

Global opportunities

Community-based approaches to development are now the basis of most major international aid projects and are required as part of AusAID projects. Western Australian experience in this technique will be of international significance.

Further information

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Dialogue with the City
www.dpi.wa.gov.au

Lotterywest Grants
<www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au>

Newman, L 2002, *Permaculture: Designing For A Sustainable Future*, sustainability case study, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth, viewed 15 August 2002, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/permaculture/Permaculture.htm

Samani, S 2002, *The Internet Community Hour: Sustainability and Community-Based Training to Overcome the Digital Divide*, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/communityinternethour/communityinternethour.htm

Stange, L 2002, *Perth City Farm: Cultivating a Vital Urban Community*, sustainability case study, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth, viewed 15 August 2002, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/cityfarm/cityfarm.htm

Stoll, K 2002,*Youth and Sustainability: Social Capital, Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Civic Engagement.* State Sustainability Strategy CD-ROM, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth.

Waller S, 2003, *"Community Aspirations – Storytelling and Visioning"*, sustainability background paper. State Sustainability Strategy CD-ROM, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth.

A Swimming Carnival held at Burringurrah Aboriginal remote community 400Km East of Carnarvon in December 2001 with the motto "No school No pool". Royal Life Saving Swimming Instructors and the Department of Sport and Recreation conducted the carnival. See Box 66.

Source: Department of Sport and Recreation

> HOUSING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Good housing should provide shelter, safety, security, a sense of community and local access to amenities such as parks, schools and shops. Inadequate housing can exacerbate family pressures, harm health, limit educational achievements, strain family budgets and enforce long commuting trips to shops, schools and work.[51]

Housing …plays a significant role in supporting connections between people as well as being one of the most important factors in people's levels of poverty or wealth…it is a key factor in terms of people having a sense of empowerment and responsibility and a sense of safety in their community.

Western Australian Council of Social Services

The emergence of the working poor as a result of economic reform, the loss of low cost rental housing, reduced public housing funds and the changing role of the housing sector to support those in greatest need calls into question the long term sustainability of current social housing settings.

Department of Housing and Works

A growing body of research evidence has highlighted the critical role of housing in people's lives and the interconnectedness of housing, employment, health, education, land use and other social and economic factors.[52]

This social dimension of housing and the positive impact it can have on community development is the reason why housing is dealt with twice in this Strategy. *Building sustainably* dealt with housing as a shell, its ecological footprint and how it can be improved as well as better located. This section deals with housing as a means of better addressing social justice problems, as a facilitator of local community and as a core element in people's quality of life.

Given the significant increase of people with disabilities in the community as Western Australians age, research is required to develop housing which incorporates basic universal design principles, for use by people throughout their life cycle without the need for expensive modifications. When people have to leave their home because of declining ability there is frequently severe dislocation of their social and support networks as well as financial hardship. Demonstration housing needs to be developed that is access friendly, environmentally sustainable and cost-effective to construct.

The global innovation of universal design is directly linked to social, environmental and economic sustainability. Western Australia, through innovations such as disability service plans, is a leader in creating accessible and sustainable communities and is attracting worldwide recognition. For example, in 2002 the Western Australian Universal Design Network hosted the Inaugural Universal Design Stream of the 6th International Global Conference on Ageing.

Sustainable housing must confront the issue of providing affordable housing. This needs to be done in innovative ways, given that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has diminished the States' capacity to provide public housing (the amount of public housing in Australia is now down to 5-8% of all housing). Western Australia has been able to provide more housing than any other State in recent years due to innovative land-banking approaches that have enabled it to do joint venture developments.

These developments have seen one in twelve lots being set aside for construction of public housing and more affordable private homes. There has however been a contraction in the low cost end of the private rental market across Australia. There are now 20 to 22,000 low income people in WA living in private rental accommodation, paying more than 30% of their income in rent.

Perth first homebuyers have been able to purchase homes at a lower price than almost anywhere else in Australia. This is at least in part due to the approach to housing through partnership between government and the private sector. Such partnership needs to continue. It is important that it now take-on other sustainability elements as discussed elsewhere in the Strategy, such as innovations in sustainable building and construction (as in Atwell South) and in location (adjacent to railway stations as in Wellard, Atwell South, Brighton and Clarkson) so that on-going costs in energy, water and travel are also reduced as well as the environmental and community benefits.

[51]Housing Industry Association submission to the State Sustainability Strategy p.5.

[52]Barron, L. and Gauntlett, E. ibid p.4.

One important way to ensure this is through a greater proportion of affordable housing in areas being renewed and revitalised. This contributes to the process of building sustainable communities by ensuring that people of all backgrounds have access to good facilities and services (see Box 69 and P Newman's Bartnett Oration 2002).

BOX 69   SUBIACO'S HOUSING

The Subiaco centre redevelopment, called Subi-Centro, has attracted worldwide attention for its architectural and urban design qualities, as has the redevelopment of East Perth.

A common criticism of Subi-Centro, however, is that it is too expensive and therefore inaccessible to many people. While the East Perth redevelopment set aside 10% for social housing (a condition of funding from the Commonwealth Government's Better Cities Program), none was provided in Subi-Centro.

To address this situation, the City of Subiaco Council has developed a policy of building Council housing on Council land so that Subi-Centro will now have 10% social housing. Council plans to lease this housing to both Homeswest and various Housing Associations to enable people to live near all the good facilities and services of Subiaco, including the train system. As the Mayor of Subiaco has said, 'Why shouldn't ordinary people live in the best part of the city? Indeed everyone gains from having a social mix'.

The provision of public housing and affordable private housing is near world best practice standard in urban areas in Western Australia. However the provision of community housing is not. Community housing is a housing option where the housing is managed by a non-government housing association or cooperative. It can also include shared–equity schemes. There is potentially a real market for this type of development which is also well placed to address sustainability issues (see Box 70).

BOX 70   ECO-VILLAGES AND COOPERATIVES – SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION?

Several background case studies have been written for this Strategy on innovative housing developments that incorporate both ecological factors and social factors. These include the South Beach Eco Village, Pinakarri and Rosneath permaculture village.

Housing cooperatives supply only a small part of the housing market in Western Australia. However they have the potential to tap the public sentiment to 'belong' and contribute to sustainability.

An example of a new cooperative is the Somerville Eco Village at Chidlow. Seventy-four members of this non-profit association are planning their village over the next two years. In a detailed submission to the State Sustainability Strategy the group stated, 'Our objective is to promote the eco village concept as a practical environmental and socially responsible alternative to land settlement.'

Community housing lends itself to the sustainability agenda as communities can provide the synergies and appropriate scale of technology, e.g. community bores, community grey water recycling to gardens and, of course, community support for linking growth and development.

Community housing needs facilitation. In particular it needs a framework that establishes quality assurance in management and this provides the framework for attracting finance. It is also the type of housing in which local government can become more involved, as it reflects a community focus. In addition, local governments often have land available on which community housing, demonstrating sustainability principles, could be developed. Indeed, local government is already active as a joint venture partner in developing community housing (see P Newman 2002 Bartnett Oration).

To ensure common good outcomes, the government has a role to play in the location of public housing, affordable private housing and community housing. There is a need to work out region-by-region the most appropriate mix of these housing options. This is an ideal process to be on the agenda of the State-Local Government Sustainability Roundtable and for the development of a policy on public, community and affordable private housing, which should also scope the use of planning mechanisms, such as a Statement of Planning Policy, for implementation.

The State Government's housing strategy, Housing Strategy WA, will specifically provide strategies that address the affordability, accessibility and sustainability of Western Australian housing in the short, medium and long term.

In short…

Vision

A responsive housing system in Western Australia that meets the changing needs, aspirations and choices of all citizens in a sustainable way.

Objectives

- Provide the appropriate mix of public housing, affordable private housing and community housing.
- Ensure that this housing provides ongoing sustainability benefits.

Actions underway

- Housing Strategy WA is being developed.
- Residential Design Codes have been revised.
- Landstart's support for the Housing Industry Association's GreenSmart program evidenced by the development in Broome of culturally responsive design for Indigenous housing.
- New urban centres are being developed or re-developed in conjunction with the future northern rail link and the south west metropolitan rail line.
- Homeswest tenants are being employed in construction and landscaping of new estates on the urban fringes, alleviating local unemployment levels.
- Indigenous housing programs encourage community input into the design and siting of housing, while the remote area essential services program includes community participation and training in maintenance and management support.
- A new Indigenous housing agreement has recently been signed with the Commonwealth Government.
- The State Homelessness Strategy is being implemented.

Actions

5.11 Develop a policy on public housing, community housing and affordable private housing with groups of local regional councils to ensure there is an appropriate distribution of housing tenures. Guidelines to deliver sustainable and appropriate housing stock will be combined with planning incentives through the Sustainability Scorecard.

5.12 Finalise and implement the Housing Strategy WA.

5.13 Develop a Community Housing Framework involving standards and accreditation to ensure world best practice in the provision of this housing type and create opportunities for partnerships between community housing associations and local government.

5.14 Use the sustainability agenda to facilitate the community housing sector through its ability to create synergies such as community scale technologies, local government support and ethical investment.

5.15 Develop regional housing strategies to ensure housing diversity is appropriate and sustainable.

5.16 Demonstrate the business benefits of diverse and affordable housing to sustainable communities through research, pilot projects and mainstreaming of sustainability in social housing.

5.17 Educate the community about the benefits of diverse and affordable housing to sustainable communities through demonstration projects and information programs.

5.18 Create economic opportunities for Indigenous people through their involvement in government housing projects.

In short cont'd...

Global opportunities

Western Australia already provides consulting services in housing to other parts of the world. Innovations in sustainable housing will be of global interest.

Further information

Armstrong, R 2002, *Reurbanisation in Perth: East Perth and Subiaco Contributing to a Growing Trend Towards a More Sustainable Perth*, sustainability case study, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth, viewed 15 August 2002, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/Subiaco/Subiaco.htm

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Newman, P 2002, *Sustainability and Housing: More than a Roof Overhead,* J Oswald Barnett Oration, CD-Rom.

Ruane, S 2002, *South Beach Village: Prospects for a Sustainable Urban Settlement*, sustainability case study, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth, viewed 15 August 2002, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/southbeach/southbeach.htm

Pinakarri, an intentional co-housing community in suburban Perth, is demonstrating how to live in a way that is environmentally sound and socially supportive.

Source: Peter Newman

Harvest Lakes is Landcorp's flagship program for demonstrating sustainable land development. This is Western Australia's first, and Australia's largest, HIA Greensmart Village, featuring solar-oriented lot design, water management and community development programs with mandatory energy efficiency measures in all homes. The first two stages of land release sold out very rapidly.

Source: Landcorp

> SUSTAINING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

While most Western Australians have never lived as long, or as well, as they do now, good health and well-being are linked with the state of the environment. As our lifestyles, consumption patterns, development and continuous urban growth continue to degrade the environment, new hazards and diseases will emerge.

The maintenance and improvement of health should be at the centre of concerns about the environment and development. Yet health rarely receives high priority in environmental policies and development, rarely figures as an important item in environmental or development programs despite the fact that the quality of the environment and the nature of development are major determinants of health.

World Health Organisation[53]

Innovative approaches are needed to help the Australian population to understand and act on the subtle links between environment, sustainability and health, and between local and global action.

Guest, Douglas, Woodruff and McMichael[54]

People who live in walkable neighbourhoods walk one hour per week more than those who live in less walkable neighbourhoods. By doing so they meet 40% of their physical activity target and halve their risk of being overweight. Developing neighbourhoods where people can walk must be a key component of public policy.

Tolley, R and Walker, J (2003) Walk21-IV: Health, Equity & Environment: The Fourth International Conference on Walking in the 21st Century, Portland Oregon, USA, May1st-3rd 2003:Conference conclusions, unpublished.

Good health is the most important asset of any country. Without a healthy population, productivity is low, health care costs are high and there is diminished capacity for skills development and social advancement. Gains experienced in Western Australia's human life expectancy rates have predominantly been achieved by improved nutrition, housing, and safe and clean food and water, and have followed on from the economic success of our primary industries.

Continued improvements in human health are possible and will enhance our local wealth. They will rely not only on advances in medical science but also on the management of the resources of the State to ensure hazards to human health are controlled and the resilience of the community to cope with ongoing change is enhanced.

A population's health, both physical and mental, is a sensitive indicator of the health of the physical and social environment. One of the challenges for the health system is to protect the health of the population in the face of ongoing environmental and social changes.

Sustainability seeks to maintain and improve the environment and ensure that the natural ecological, physical and chemical systems that support life continue to function effectively. If we are successful, we will hand future generations the same potential for health and well-being that we have enjoyed.

The links between sustainability and health

The environment in which humans live affects them through the physical, chemical, biological, social, cultural and economic conditions to which they are exposed. Some of these are hazardous to health. Many of these hazards have been known for a long period of time, while others have arisen more recently through lifestyle choices, the effects of environmental degradation, social change, and an ageing population.

[53]World Health Organisation, *Our Planet, Our Earth: Report of Commission on Health and Environment*, World Health Organisation, Geneva,1992.

[54]CS Guest, RM Douglas, RE Woodruff, AJ McMichael 1999, *Health and the Environment*, Tela Series Issue 1, Australian Conservation Foundation and Australian Medical Association, 1999, p. 35.

Existing environmental hazards

Most Western Australians enjoy a lifestyle free of the traditional environmental hazards to health. The expectation that food will be safe, drinking water clean, the air unpolluted and our personal safety unchallenged has almost been fully met. This excellent physical environment has been achieved by the sustained efforts of agencies to identify and control sources of contamination and potential contamination. These efforts must be ongoing and involve investment in skills and knowledge, surveillance and monitoring and the implementation of effective control strategies.

Not all Western Australians have such a healthy environment. Environmental hazards are still inadequately controlled in remote Indigenous communities. Health problems, particularly infections, diabetes and injuries, are common and are directly related to the lack of clean water, lack of waste disposal, poor housing, overcrowding, dust and poor nutrition. There are also signs that prevention and early intervention strategies are needed to optimise the development of all children and young people in Western Australia (see Box 71).

BOX 71 EARLY INTERVENTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is about 'meeting the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity,' yet there is little thought given to how we target children now.

Professor Fiona Stanley, Australian of the Year for 2003, has highlighted the strategic importance of prevention and early intervention to avoid multiple problems in later life. Professor Stanley describes the 'dilemma' facing all decision makers, about how best to invest in prevention and early intervention, without detracting from the vital services and supports required for children who have already lost precious opportunities in early life.

'But there are significant, economic, social and environmental advantages,' she said. 'There is mounting national and international epidemiological data showing that welfare, education, health and crime costs could be curbed dramatically if children can be kept on the right path early in life.'

Professor Stanley's vision includes 'enriched eraly childhood services to be freely available, especially in disadvantaged areas.' Research demonstrates that quality 'early childhood activities' can make a significant difference for both disadvantaged and all children, families and their communities.

In 2002, the State Government responded to this evidence by establishing an Early Years Taskforce to progress the early years agenda in Western Australia. The Early Years Taskforce recognised that family and community are central to the health and well-being of children and drew upon local expertise and resources, as well as contemporary research, to develop an Early Years Strategy. The Early Years Strategy will aim to ensure that all children, whatever their circumstances, get off to the best start possible. The Strategy will set a clear mandate for government and non-government agencies, to collaborate with local communities to deliver comprehensive and coordinated services and support for children 0–8 years of age.

The government has also recently announced a $75m program to implement recommendations in response to findings of the Gordon Inquiry into the needs of Indigenous children, especially in remote communities. Together these two major initiatives will form an integral part of Western Australia's commitment to sustaining healthy communities by investing in the early years of life.

New hazards arising from environmental and social change

Rapid social, technological, industrial and economic changes are all contributing to a new set of health hazards. Being of more recent origin, the impact of these hazards on health is less well understood, and effective control strategies may not yet be known, much less effectively implemented.

Following the control of infectious diseases, chronic illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory illness and diabetes have assumed a much higher importance in our community. The prevalence of these chronic diseases is increasing, fuelled by unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as tobacco use, inappropriate nutrition and lack of physical activity.

Tobacco use is the single most important risk factor for chronic diseases. Tobacco consumption is a causal risk factor for a range of diseases, including heart disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, many cancers and lung diseases. While smoking rates have been falling since the 1970s, about 20% of the population still smoke. Reducing tobacco use will continue to be a priority for a health sector focused on improving a population's health, and will, over time, translate to a significant reduction in demand for health care for illnesses caused by tobacco.

The risk of infection with native mosquito-borne diseases, such as Ross River virus, will increase with continued development in high risk areas where natural wetlands and surrounding bushland are retained for conservation purposes. Strategies for managing stormwater (e.g. infiltration structures) and drinking water (e.g. rainwater tanks) will need to include requirements for appropriate design and maintenance so as not to enhance the receptivity of urban areas for native and exotic mosquito-borne diseases. Other factors, such as climate change, some infrastructure and agriculture projects, insect-resistance to pesticides, loss of biodiversity and increasing international travel and freight, may also facilitate transmission of mosquito-borne diseases.

Inappropriate nutrition accounts for more than 30% of all cancers, and contributes to the growing prevalence of overweight and obesity. Low levels of physical activity compound the contribution of over-nutrition to obesity. The cost attributable to the six most prevalent illnesses related to low levels of physical activity (heart disease, stroke, non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression) has been estimated at $36 million per year in Western Australia.

The past decades have seen enormous social change. Urbanisation is increasing and some small rural communities have become unviable. A high proportion of families have both parents in fulltime employment, with children in childcare from an early age and older children unsupervised and unsupported after school. Our society is being increasingly divided, as the gap between the most wealthy and poorest increases. Research on the health effects of social inequality, where the society has a mix of people with vastly different economic status and social empowerment shows the detrimental effects on personal and community health.

Urban sprawl and time pressures promote dependence on the car. Western Australians make 63% of all personal trips by car as the driver. Increasing car dependence impacts on business efficiency, environmental quality, community cohesion and personal quality of life. Residence in a suburb with little public transport and no access to a car creates social isolation, poor employment prospects and economic disadvantage. Good physical and mental health are jeopardised in these circumstances and as such health needs to be partnered with town planning processes.

Better work practices and healthy physical and mental work environments can also prevent potential mental health problems. In recent years many studies have documented the significant effects that issues such as extended working hours, bullying in the workplace and work-related stress can have on mental health, the economy, family life and the broader community. 'Sense of place' is not just a good feeling; it is how we grow. The development of community, the importance of walking and of safe and supportive work environments, are all part of the sustainability health agenda.

New environmental hazards to health have also arisen from developments that have occurred without sufficient environmental safeguards and which have involved the unsustainable consumption of natural resources. Wastes are produced at a rate that is above the capacity of the environment to absorb, leading to landfills for solid waste, chemical emissions and changes in air quality and the atmosphere. Landfills must be appropriately sited to avoid pollution of groundwater and old landfills appropriately used to avoid human exposure to chemical emissions. Nutrient runoff from agricultural and residential lands has resulted in toxic algal blooms in our rivers, overgrowth of sea grasses, fish death and exacerbation of nuisance and disease-carrying insects. Nutrient use and runoff from agricultural and domestic land needs to be better managed. Within Western Australia, health will need to contribute to solutions to problems we have inherited and to change our development techniques to ensure that the environment is not further degraded.

With the advent of new technologies, community concern has been heightened about the potential of new environmental hazards to health, particularly in regard to the commercial release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). While licensing companies supplying GMOs are under the control of the Commonwealth Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, the administration and enforcement of requirements to protect the community and the environment from irresponsible application of GMOs is a State responsibility shared across several government departments, including the Department of Health.

New perspectives on ecological health are showing the links between health and the release of new diseases from the destruction of forest habitat, climate change, global over-population, loss of biodiversity, depletion of fish stocks, stratospheric ozone depletion and depletion of fresh water (see background paper *Health and Sustainability* by Thomas, Douglas and Cohen). All such trends will need to be assessed and managed; for example, loss of the ozone layer has increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation and increased the risk of skin cancers, necessitating more attention to the provision of shade and use of protective clothing.

The links between the health of the environment and the health of the population are clear and inextricable. The health system has a central role to play in the sustainability agenda outlined in this Strategy. This role should encompass:

- Continued efforts to improve the living conditions of remote Indigenous populations, and to improve the health and life expectancy of Indigenous people. This is a long-term agenda, and success will require persistence and creativity as well as commitment to difficult programs such as controlling the spread of sexually transmitted disease; managing alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse; and improving the key basic health determinants of nutrition and physical exercise.

- The provision of advice on the health impact of new developments, new technologies and new industries to ensure that hazards to health are avoided where possible or kept below levels that are hazardous to health. Health impact assessments are a vehicle for achieving this.

- The continuation of strategies to remedy existing environmental hazards and to avoid exposures that may damage health.

- Continuing to promote a health agenda that seeks to improve health, as well as to treat illness and care for those with ill health. Tobacco control provides a model to be followed by other programs which seek to reduce exposure to significant health risk factors.

- The development and implementation of programs, incentives and disincentives to combat obesity and to make healthy lifestyle choices easier. The Western Australian Government's Physical Activity Taskforce is an example of such an initiative. It will be important that such strategies are well linked. Understanding the factors that make communities and individuals resilient to change, and promoting these to develop a population that is skilled, educated and robust in the face of change.

- Partnerships with planning agencies to develop friendly and health-promoting urban developments; with environmental agencies to ensure that health concerns are integral to environmental decisions; with transport agencies to promote safer and more accessible forms of transport; with education to ensure the next generation of Western Australians is well informed on sustainability.

- The development and implementation of partnerships to improve food quality, safety and nutrition, particularly to high risk consumers who are at risk of food-borne illness, such as the elderly, the very young and people whose immune system is impaired.

The health sector itself, along with health sectors across all developed countries, is confronted by ever-increasing cost pressures stemming, in part, from increasing community expectations, an ageing population and new technologies. Demographic pressure associated with increasing urbanisation and the parallel diminution of small country communities add to these cost pressures and multiply their impact on the sector's ability to provide sustainable health services. Consequently, the health sector needs to aim for sustainability of service delivery by improving its efficiency while at the same time raising community awareness about the importance of prevention and early intervention. These themes are central to a new focus on the development of sustainable health systems and services. For example, the goal of the newly established Western Australia Country Health Service is 'to provide a robust and sustainable system of health service delivery that meets contemporary needs'.

The community and health sector need to work collaboratively to determine how to achieve the greatest health gains for the greatest number of people while recognising the continuing disadvantages faced by some sections of the community, such as Indigenous people. The health sector's contribution to the maintenance of a clean and safe environment for the majority of Western Australians is unseen and unacknowledged. Its essential role in providing our current levels of good health must be supported.

Failure to maintain the viability of the health sector will deprive the drive for sustainability of a major source of strength and advice, and a powerful resource ensuring that the current excellent health expectations are passed to future generations.

Not only is the health sector an important partner in reducing the detrimental effects of environmental change, it is also a potential contributor to environmental damage, through use of and disposal of drugs, chemicals, and radioactive materials. Health care centres are also potentially hazardous sites for both workers and patients and adherence with the State Sustainability Strategy will emphasise this ongoing commitment to safety.

In short...

Vision

The health of all people, especially Indigenous people, continues to improve and the health system also becomes a means for the promotion of sustainability.

Objectives

- Reduce the health disadvantage endured by remote Indigenous communities and communities with multiple social disadvantage.

- Create greater links between health and other elements of sustainability.

- Reduce the incidence and severity of disease by increasing the focus of the health sector on primary and secondary prevention.

Actions underway

- Significant research is being undertaken (e.g. the EnHealth Program) to investigate the links between environmental degradation and health.

- Government agencies are working collaboratively to incorporate health impact assessment into the environmental impact assessment process.

- Funding for medical and health research infrastructure is supporting high quality medical research and assisting the development of a strong medical research sector.

In short cont'd...

- A new set of Statewide programs for 0-2 year olds is using evidence-based approaches for identifying children at risk and supporting family and community environments that are aligned with positive child development.

- Health is part of a multi-agency commitment to the better delivery of services to 0-8 year olds and their families/carers.

- A new Primary Health Partnerships model is supporting collaboration on health issues between community health, public health and general practice divisions at a Statewide and local level.

- The development and funding of new programs to promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent disease should reduce future demands on health services. The programs aim to improve nutrition, reduce smoking, encourage responsible drinking and increase physical activity.

- Initiatives are encouraging the contribution by volunteers to the delivery of health care services.

- Initiatives to attract and retain medical practitioners and other health professionals in rural and remote areas (e.g. rural scholarships) are assisting to build and sustain health services in these areas.

- Telehealth is being trialled and evaluated as a vehicle for expanding access to health services into rural and remote communities.

- A major review of country services has set the framework for establishing networks of sustainable health services with clearly delineated roles and minimum standards within each country region.

- Country Hospital and Health Service Boards of Management have been phased out and replaced by new District Health Advisory Councils. These will facilitate community participation and involvement in rural health services and represent the start of an exciting new era in community participation.

- The development of a Rural Clinical School in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, with teaching sites located in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Pilbara and Kimberley, will assist medical students to obtain rural and Indigenous health exposure.

- The recently launched WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002–2005 provides a framework for a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug use, involving all layers of government working in partnership with non-government agencies and the community.

- Statewide training of local government environmental health officers, environmental health workers and officers from other government departments in the awareness and management of vector-borne diseases.

- Interagency collaboration to ensure planning approvals address the issue of environmental hazards, such as mosquito-borne diseases.

- The development of the new Food Act, which provides greater flexibility and responsibility for industry, while introducing new enforcement tools for regulatory agencies.

- An Environmental Health Network, established and funded by the Office of Aboriginal Health and monitored by Environmental Health Directorate, is addressing the issues of lack of clean water, lack of adequate waste disposal, poor housing, overcrowding, poor food handling/storage and lack of dust control. An Environmental Health Needs Survey of over 300 Aboriginal communities throughout Western Australia is currently identifying the specific environmental health deficiencies in the various communities, to allow planning and budgeting to occur to rectify these deficiencies.

In short cont'd...

- An 'Early Years' Taskforce has been established.

- The government developed a $20 million program in response to the Gordon Inquiry.

Actions

5.19 Ensure the health system provides sustainability outcomes through the control of environmental hazards and ecological health issues, the development of community public health programs that deal with long-term health issues and cost-effective health priorities.

5.20 Continue to take account of cultural dimensions in health programs, particularly as they apply to remote Indigenous communities and in areas of multiple social disadvantage.

5.21 Use the implementation of the government's response to the Gordon Inquiry to help integrate community services, health and sustainability through 'place management' approaches in Indigenous communities.

5.22 Provide effective links between the health sector and other agencies to create whole of government approaches to reduce lifestyle choices that cause disease and disability and new environmental hazards that affect health.

5.23 Develop and implement health impact assessments as part of the sustainability assessment process.

5.24 Undertake an Early Years Strategy, a joined-up government initiative involving key government agencies and local communities, to enhance community capacity to support the development of young children aged antenatal to 8 years and their families and carers.

Global opportunities

Health impact assessment and successful Indigenous health programs will attract considerable global interest as has already occurred with some of Western Australia's more successful community public health programs.

Further information

George, S 2002, *WA Physical Activity Taskforce: Helping Create a More Sustainable WA*, sustainability case study, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth, http://www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/CaseStudies/PhysicalActivity/PhysicalActivity.htm

Thomas, T, Douglas, C and Cohen, H 2002, *Health and Sustainability*, sustainability background paper, State Sustainability Strategy CD-ROM, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth.

> **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS
FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**Education is vitally important as it plays a key role in raising awareness
and changing individual attitudes and behaviour towards achieving
sustainability. People's awareness that they are part of their
environment and 'not that the environment is something out there
separate from them' is an issue that can be largely addressed by both
formal and non-formal education.**

*Education needs to be focused on enabling people to become informed so that they can take up …
what they want and prefer for their future … Such education is part of a process that continues from
primary school through tertiary levels and into adulthood, so that people are full participants in
creating more sustainable futures.*

Environmental Alliance

*There is a major need for education … to be a key factor in the Sustainability Strategy. Public support and
interest is essential to ensuring sustainability is economically viable on a large scale, otherwise key issues
and opportunities for sustainability will not be addressed to the full extent.*

Danielle Brown

*Education will help everyone to realise that what we do today will affect
our children's lives and further generations to come.*

Kim Reid

*Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address
environment and development issues… It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness,
values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective public
participation in decision making.*

Agenda 21 report of the 1992 UNCED, Chapter 36, page 2

*Most people in the world today have an immediate and intuitive sense of the urgent need to build a
sustainable future. They may not be able to define 'sustainable development' or 'sustainability' but they can
clearly sense the danger and the need for informed action. They smell the problem in the air; they taste it in
they water; they see it in more congested living spaces and blemished landscapes; they read about it in
newspapers and hear about it on radio and television.*

UNESCO Report

British science writer HG Wells commented a century ago: 'Life is a race
between education and disaster'. One hundred years later, that observation
applies more than ever to sustainability. It is apparent that, particularly in
young people, there is little optimism for a sustainable future within the
community. For example in a study conducted by the Australian Science and
Technology Council more than half of the 16 to 24 year olds surveyed
expressed little hope for a sustainable future. When asked about living
conditions in 2010, more than half said that they believed that the natural
environment, the gap between the rich and the poor, and crime and violence
would be worse than now.

Any attempt to incorporate sustainability in the public, business and
community sectors must explicitly address awareness raising, public participation
and education. We need to raise awareness of sustainability and provide
education *for* sustainability if we are to shift to a more sustainable society.

Education for sustainability seeks to develop civic virtues in, and engage,
motivate and empower all Western Australians, through formal and non-formal
educational experiences, to change their lifestyle choices, undertake personal
and social change and to work towards achieving a sustainable future.

Education for sustainability can be described in four phases:

- Awareness raising – 'Does it matter to me?'
- Shaping of values – 'Should I do something about it?'
- Developing knowledge and skills – 'How can I do something about it?'
- Making decisions and taking action – 'What will I do?'

To achieve this, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in both the public
and independent school sectors, together with TAFE colleges and universities,
each have a critical role to play.

Schools are especially important. Sustainability in areas such as health and
community services and development can be supported through the school as a
central facility and resource for these services. Children's school education, in
partnership with community education, can also be a powerful way to embed
the principles of sustainability and long-term change in behaviour.

But educational and awareness raising opportunities must also be available to
the whole community of Western Australia, for example through:

- a targeted media and advertising campaign that highlights the issue of
  sustainability to the community
- support for community sustainability education initiatives and
- the development of innovative community education sustainability
  programs that engage and empower people to change or modify their
  behaviours.

The Western Australian education system has gone some way towards
embracing the need to educate about and for sustainability. The Curriculum
Framework to be implemented by 2004 supports sustainability. The concept of
sustainability is embedded in outcomes for students from kindergarten to year
12. In addition, the development of the new Courses of Study for years 11 and
12 also includes a focus on sustainability where appropriate.

A range of school and community-based partnerships, such as Ribbons of
Blue, the Gould League, Waste Watch, WaterWise, Bush Rangers, AirWatch and
TravelSmart Schools are supporting this implementation. As well, the new
Education for Sustainability Award is enabling students to develop school
projects on sustainability and school administration to examine how to apply
sustainability principles to buildings, land and school programs.

The Department of Education's 'inclusive schooling' policy is working towards
building a greater sense of community and commonality. Similarly the
community involvement mandated under the *Education Act 1999* has provided
a sound basis for involving and educating the wider community. Schools are
involved in a range of broader community programs including Landcare,
Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare.

The Department's new school in South Atwell, which will open in 2004, has
been designed according to world's best practice in sustainability. In addition,
the Department's commitment to the WA Cleaner Production Statement will
achieve a 10% reduction in energy utilisation and waste over the next 3 years
in central and district education offices. Similarly, ground works at schools
promote recycling of green waste and, while many schools are already chemical
free, there is also a commitment to phase out chemical use over the next five
years. In addition, the Department has commenced a program for sustainable
water use by reducing grassed areas at schools and an ongoing program of
installing automatic reticulation. Some fifty-two schools are currently using
reclaimed effluent water as the preferred water source.

The Department of Education and Training is now focussing on sustainable
practice and management of native bush in its redevelopment of current school
sites and its development of new school sites (see Box 72 Coogee Primary School).

BOX 72 COOGEE PRIMARY SCHOOL – BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Over the last ten years, Coogee Primary School has restored a piece of bush on the school site and created a living library. The bush had to be fenced and weeded with involvement from school children, staff and parents and has now flourished as a source of native species.

The area has been given to the City of Cockburn as a public park but continues to be used as a place for student projects on biodiversity. Funding grants have been attracted to continue work on the site and a native vegetation trail has been created.

The manager of the neighbouring Water Corporation sewerage works noticed how successfully the bush had been restored. The Corporation has now funded the school to participate in restoring the bush on the neighbouring site. The library is growing.

Coogee Primary School has rehabilitated some local bush and uses it as a biodiversity 'living library'.

Source: Keith Brown

The Department of Environment has developed an Environmental Education Strategy that establishes a framework for enhancing environmental education outcomes for the next three years, and also raises the priority of environmental education as an important tool to achieve sustainability.

There is a need to address the lack of formal accreditation of environmental education training and to continue to work to bring sustainability to universities, Catholic and independent schools. As is outlined in *Sustainability and business: Training and facilitation for sustainability*, TAFE does have a commitment to sustainability. As a corollary, the University Partnership Program has resulted in forty case studies and eighteen background papers being written as part of the State Sustainability Strategy.

There is also potential for State and local government sustainability education initiatives to enhance the localisation and on-the-ground effectiveness of programs. This could also involve the development of appropriate training programs for local government, both in general sustainability education management and in capacity building for the delivery of specific environmental programs in partnership with the State government.

Strategies to assist education for sustainability will need to link in with other programs to facilitate school curriculum and teacher development in sustainability and to create school buildings and grounds as demonstrations of sustainability.

One strategy to raise community awareness about sustainability is to give public recognition to outstanding achievement. To this end the Western Australian Government will establish an annual award that will recognise major achievement in sustainability in schools.

In short...

Vision

Education becomes the means by which current and future generations are inspired to live more sustainably and to find innovative solutions for the future.

Objectives

- To develop a clear strategy for developing a community that embraces and works to achieve sustainability.

- To develop curriculum support for sustainability education.

- To use educational buildings and grounds to demonstrate sustainability.

- To assist teachers to develop their understanding and skills in sustainability.

Actions underway

- An understanding of sustainability is being introduced progressively through the curriculum.

- The community has been involved with schools closely since 1973 and this is mandated under the *School Education Act 1999*, providing a basis for community involvement and education through programs like Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare.

- Many school-based partnerships are already underway, including Ribbons of Blue, Gould League, Waste Watch and WaterWise, Bush Rangers, AirWatch, TravelSmart Schools and others.

- The Premier's Sustainable Schools Competition was launched in February 2003 as a category of the Western Australian Environment Awards.

- South Atwell Primary School has been designed in accordance with sustainable building design and all design briefs for new schools direct architects and builders to give priority to sustainability considerations including natural thermal comfort and minimisation of energy consumption.

- Department of Education and Training has reviewed air-conditioning standards to meet best practice environmental standards, implemented a utilities management trial in which schools share in savings made in utilities costs, reviewed water usage to effect savings and worked to reduce under-utilised but serviced land holdings.

- Department of Education and Training's 'inclusive schooling' policy promotes acceptance of diversity and aids community development.

- Department of Education and Training is a signatory to the Western Australian Cleaner Production Statement and is on target to achieve a 10% reduction in energy utilisation and waste in central and district offices over the next three years.

Actions

5.25 Develop a comprehensive communications strategy on sustainability that includes all aspects of formal and informal education.

5.26 Implement the Environmental Education Strategy to support education for sustainability.

5.27 Assign a senior officer in the Department of Education and Training with responsibility for formal environmental and sustainability education through the Curriculum Framework.

In short cont'd...

5.28 Continue to introduce sustainability into the curriculum as the Curriculum Framework and the new courses of study are implemented in all schools in Western Australia.

5.29 Continue to maintain and build a diversity of programs that support the achievement of learning outcomes that develop students' understanding of sustainability in, for example, TravelSmart Schools Teachers Resource Kit which contains a range of cross-curricula classroom activities designed to raise childrens' awareness about the effect of cars and identify actions they can take to reduce school trips.

5.30 Support the further use of schools and museums as community hubs.

5.31 Move towards new schools being built according to sustainability principles, including universal design, and progressively convert existing schools.

5.32 Continue to orient schools to an ecological ethic, for example through school bushland projects, growing native trees from seeds, composting, using water runoff for gardens as provided by the Department of Education and Training's Guidelines for Developing Schools Grounds.

5.33 Develop and support partnerships on sustainability education with other sectors (such as local government and the WA Collaboration) to maximise the delivery of sustainability education.

5.34 Develop partnerships that provide ongoing support to community-based groups to assist in delivering school and community-based programs that link to current curriculum initiatives such as the implementation of the Curriculum Framework. And engage children in activities that contribute to reducing car use for school trips, such as the partnership between the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's TravelSmart Schools program and Millennium Kids, including the promotion of proficient bicycle use.

5.35 Promote and expand travel choice, cycling and walking behaviour change programs including the annual Bike to School Day during Bikeweek and the annual Walk to School Day during the Walk There Today week of walking events, and the TravelSmart to School and the Walking School Bus programs.

5.36 Establish an annual award to recognise significant achievement in sustainability in schools.

Global opportunities

Education for sustainability is a global need and innovation in this area will attract global interest. This has been clearly recognised as the United Nations has declared that 2005-15 is the decade of education for sustainability.

In short cont'd...

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Atwell South Primary School in the new Greensmart suburb of Harvest Lakes is being built based on world best practice sustainable design.

Source: Department of Education and Training

> SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH CULTURE AND THE ARTS

The arts and culture are central to the identity of a healthy and vibrant society. The arts forge connections between people and their natural and built environments and contribute to regional and international understandings.

The Department of Culture and the Arts contends that culture informs the human response to the environmental, economic and social life of the State....The journey towards ecological sustainability must also be a journey towards economic, social and cultural sustainability.

Department of Culture and the Arts

A vibrant culture, one encouraging diversity, equity and creativity, is at the very basis of a sustainable society.

Western Australian Museum

How a community embraces culture and the arts from all spheres of life, will dictate the attitudes of that community.

City of Kalgoorlie- Boulder

They have a role to play in providing much of the interpretive work in exploring and communicating the issues, which are at the heart of sustainability. This can be through educative exhibitions, film, television and multimedia, story telling, public art, the performing arts, literature, visual art and the crafts. The arts and culture can be used extensively as a medium for cultivating sustainable development goals in the community through identification of problems and solutions, communication, collaboration and celebration. In addition, arts and cultural organisations have the capacity for reflection, criticism and articulation of community concerns.

In arguing that to ignore the importance of culture in development programs was to risk failure, the 1995 UNESCO Report, Creative Diversity, noted that:

It is culture that connects people with one another and makes the development of the individual possible. It is culture that defines how people relate to nature and their physical environment, to the earth and to the cosmos and through which we express our attitudes to and beliefs in other forms of life both plant and animal. It is in this sense that all forms of development including human development, ultimately are determined by cultural factors... It is meaningless to talk about the relation between culture and development as if they are two separate concepts, since development and the economy are part of, or an aspect of a people's culture.

Culture shapes attitudes to sustainability and the environment

Culture shapes community values, beliefs and meanings and how people view the environment. These in turn will shape attitudes and actions with respect to sustainability. If Western Australian life is to be sustainable, what needs to be sustained for future generations are its cultural, social, natural and built environments.

'Sense of Place' through art in the Wheat belt. International Art Space Kellerberrin Australia

Cathy Barber, Untitled, video projections on silos, Tammin, 2000.

Photograph: Acorn Photography

A whole of government approach

A whole of government and integrated approach to arts and culture is being actively pursued by the Department of Culture and the Arts as an issue of balance and sustainability. Examples of this are the Arts and Education partnership, which fosters a high quality arts education for young people; the Percent for Art Scheme which involves the commissioning of artworks which are integrated into the fabric and landscaped environments of the State's public buildings and open spaces; and involvement with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure through the *Can Perth Be More Creative?* contribution to the strategic plan for Greater Perth.

Innovation, creativity and cultural capital

Rapid technological change and the information revolution have had a major impact on society, requiring people to be increasingly inventive and innovative in meeting the challenges of a vastly transformed world. Historically, governments in Western Australia have relied heavily on the State's finite mineral and agricultural resources, often overlooking the very significant and renewable cultural and intellectual capital existing in Western Australia.

Creativity, which involves the ability to make new forms and products via the development of a knowledge economy, is now a decisive source of competitive advantage. It is a sustainability and economic imperative for Western Australia to position itself as a creative and innovative society. Creative industries include the fashion industry, architecture, design, interactive games, publishing and contemporary music.

BOX 73   SUSTAINABLE CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY ARE GENERATORS AND CREATORS OF NEW IDEAS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Sustainable and prosperous cities and regions of the twenty-first century will be those which are information rich and are generators and creators of new ideas, products and services which minimise negative impacts on the environment and provide a high level of public amenity and an enviable lifestyle for their citizens. Perth ranked fourth on a creativity index for its capacity to attract and retain creative professionals in a recent report of the Australian Local Government Association's State of 64 Regions. The index combines high tech output, innovation, diversity and human capital into a score that represents the region's potential for future growth and prosperity.

The State's artists, scientists, film-makers and historians have a direct role to play in innovation and in positioning Western Australia as a creative and competitive region which can, in the future, maximise trade derived from its intellectual and cultural capital. Artists are a dynamic force in the life of communities as communicators, animateurs, provocateurs and as social critics, and in exploring and reflecting the natural and social world.

An expanding role for art and culture in community engagement

It is clear that the arts and culture are playing an increasingly significant role in community engagement, in health and well-being, in social inclusion of communities of all kinds (including youth, Indigenous, the aged, those of different cultural and geographic origins and the socially marginalised) and importantly in reconciliation and the life of people in regional communities.

Cultural identity and sense of place

Artists and cultural organisations are critical to the development of a 'sense of place' and identity. They can heighten the character of a place, counter anonymity and differentiate one place from another, creating a sense of meaning and belonging for people. This in turn invokes a sense of community involvement, pride and guardianship in the built, natural and cultural environment, essential to sustainable communities.

In the public and local government sectors, artists are already involved in the design of buildings, parks and streetscapes to help make them more memorable and regionally distinctive. They have a vital and under-utilised role to play in the planning of the built environment and in engaging the community in the planning process.

Sculpture in Lake Ballard near Menzies. 'Inside Australia' by Antony Gormley, 2003 Perth International Arts Festival. A documentary by Thunderbox in association with Artemis International film. Funding assistance from ScreenWest and Lotterywest.

Photograph: Ashley de Prazer, 2003

A range of artists and cultural organisations contribute to the cultural life of Western Australia. Some, such as the Community Arts Network of Western Australia have long been active in community cultural development, partnering a range of agencies and community groups across the State including Indigenous communities. This often involves close partnerships with local governments. Metropolitan and country local governments make significant commitments to the artistic and cultural life of their communities through libraries, provision of cultural venues, programs, local museums and community cultural development activities which build the cultural capacities of their residents. Community-based cultural development can actively acknowledge, preserve and enhance the culture of many communities and play a role in townscaping. The involvement of the Ieramagdu Indigenous community in the Roebourne cultural planning process has, for example, led to a range of cultural and other initiatives which have contributed to a more sustainable lifestyle for the Ireamagdu people.

Story telling is undertaken by all art forms and can help develop a deeper 'sense of place' (see Box 74). In particular, performing arts groups, writers, historians and film-makers are telling Western Australian stories through literature, film, oral and written histories and theatre productions, often with local and regional themes. In addition, libraries play a vital role through collection, documentation and dissemination of information on industry and commerce and on the natural and cultural heritage capturing the stories of place and people.

BOX 74   THE ARTS, FOOTBALL AND A 'SENSE OF PLACE'

The Fremantle Dockers use local performing art groups such as Deckchair Theatre to entertain football followers before home games. This award winning collaboration includes the now famous Len Hall Day on Anzac Day that has seen a huge public response to the dramatisation of Anzac themes.

Deckchair Theatre tries to help people to see the football arena as a public event celebrating 'sense of place'—in this case the Fremantle region. Its themes are designed to help people reflect on what is special about their place and celebrate it. Such use of the arts is an important element of community development.

Cultural tourism

A far greater recognition is now given to the potential for cultural tourism to generate jobs in a sustainable way. Arts and cultural experiences can act as magnets to draw people into towns, cities and regions and can extend visitor stays. They have the capacity to increase local and visitor appreciation and understanding of the unique social dimensions of each location. Historically, the State has concentrated on high yield tourism strategies based around its natural resources, yet these are its most fragile and least renewable resources.

In 2003, the Bureau of Tourism Research reported that cultural visitors contributed proportionally more to the Australian economy in terms of gross value added, gross domestic product, employment, wages and consumption than their non-cultural counterparts.

There is strong tourist interest in Indigenous arts and culture. Many Indigenous communities in Western Australia are acknowledged as important centres for cultural exploration, innovation and artistic excellence. Arts and cultural practice is often a valued and major income-earning activity and social development tool for these communities. There is significant potential to learn from successful communities and individual artists in order to further develop and expand the Indigenous cultural sector. The outcomes are likely to impact strongly on the local economy and facilitate progress towards reconciliation. Indigenous Cultural Centres in Western Australia have the potential to contribute significantly to community and regional identity and to tourism, but are currently suffering from a significant reduction in Federal funding. This has left many such centres without vital base funding. Sustainability of these centres requires a Federal and State (whole of government) response.

The State is now committed to greater diversification of tourism experiences and to placing more emphasis on cultural and Indigenous products.

Interpretation and sustainability

The cultural sector has a major role to play in providing quality interpretation of the State's natural and social environments to increase community and visitor appreciation of its unique qualities and to encourage responsible engagement with it. Western Australia's 250 local and independent museums have the potential to play a greater role in promoting understanding, not only of the State's social and natural heritage but also of its Indigenous heritage.

The Western Australian Museum is delivering a range of programs designed to engage the community with sustainability issues. These include Museumlink, Biosphere West and three educational exhibitions, *Sustainability WA*, the Power of Wind at Work and the forthcoming *Watching Waste*, which encourage Western Australians and visitors to consider the economic, environmental and social issues that must be addressed to move to a more sustainable future. Other initiatives include the Lurjarri Dreaming Trail in Broome and the Kimberley Coastal Odyssey which serves to interpret local and marine life. In addition, the Western Australian Museum Documentary Unit is creating a visual record of the State's environmental assets and, at the same time, vastly expanding its audiences.

BOX 75   WA MUSEUM DOCUMENTARIES TAKE BIODIVERSITY MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Life on the Edge Down Under, on the creatures and ecosystems of the Dampier Archipelago, has now been sold to nine countries, reaching an audience in excess of 50 million people. The Unit is currently involved with *NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai)*, Japan's largest public broadcaster and *Storyteller Productions on Operation Leo* about the exciting new megafauna fossil finds on the Nullarbor Plain. A third project (it has twelve social and natural history projects in train), focuses on a new species of reptile in Indonesia and involves a partnership between *National Geographic* and *Artemis International*. These initiatives have important ancillary benefits for tourism and international partnership as well as for sustainability of the natural environment

Regional cultural development

Arts and cultural development can stimulate economic activity and operate as an effective tool in regional development. A culturally rich environment has great appeal to residents, tourists, business leaders and investors. There are numerous examples around Australia of where arts and culture have been crucial elements in regional regeneration and in boosting local development.

Supporting a vibrant culture not only advantages the broader Western Australian community, it makes good business sense. Art and cultural experiences can provide points of attraction in urban and regional centres, create new products in the market place, add value to others, assist in trade, corporate and customer relations and help create quality environments and desirable base locations from which business can operate. In this sense, the arts and culture are active contributors to a sustainable and desirable commercial environment.

Cultural infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure is essential to a sustainable culture. It underpins and facilitates cultural expression, the communication of ideas and the provision of a rich cultural life for all Western Australians. It has the potential to be iconic in nature and can contribute significantly to urban and regional landscapes. It can have significant implications for tourism and the economy. Development of this infrastructure should be seen as a tourism and economic investment as well as a cultural investment. Greater access for Western Australians to cultural activities, as both participants and audiences, is critical to the development of a sustainable and uniquely Western Australian culture. The Western Australian Government plays a key role in planning, upgrading and building arts and cultural facilities for this purpose. To effect this, the Government has committed to a 10-year capital works plan designed to provide up-to-date infrastructure for a wide range of arts and cultural purposes including a new performing arts venue, the relocation of museum collections and museum planning for the future, and artist studio spaces.

Creating 'sense of place' through art in Kalgoorlie. A Percent for Art Scheme Project Eastern Goldfields Senior School Campus Artist: Tony Pankiw

Source: Courtesy of the Artist

Cultural hot spots

A thriving contemporary arts base is essential to a sustainable cultural life for the State.

Screen industry

Film and television production has a vital role to play in Western Australian culture. The Screen Industry Partnership Fund and the ABC co-production deal for local industry development purposes will assist in the promotion of more localised film and television production and assist the performing arts generally. This key support will encourage the industry to become more stable and attract significant funding from other sources to contribute to the State's activities.

Biodiversity

The south west corner of Western Australia is one of the world's biodiversity hot spots. A recent paper in the prestigious science journal *Nature*, identified twent-five hot spots around the world where biodiversity is especially high. The south west is the only one of these hot spots in a developed country. The Western Australian Museum has a major commitment to sustainability and to biodiversity research and public programs (see also *Contributing to global sustainability*).

The Shark Net is about Perth's 'sense of place' - its treasured coastal environment, relaxed lifestyle and coming of age as a city.

The Shark Net - A Taylor Media Production financed by ABC TV, Australian Film Finance Corporation, Screenwest and Optus Television.

Source: David Dare Parker

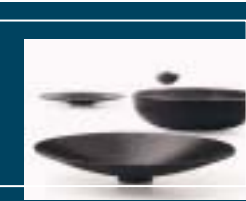**BOX 76   WESTERN AUSTRALIA A BIODIVERSITY HOT SPOT**

Our understanding of biodiversity in this country is still basic. For hot spot areas, we have barely scratched the surface in documenting the diversity of life. Just last year, Western Australian Museum researchers were involved in the discovery and description of a new species of mammal, a species of Pseudantechinus. There are very few places in the world where new mammals are still being found.

Contemporary design

At a micro level, the *Designing Futures* project has been initiated by Craftwest to significantly elevate the role of design as a tool in key Western Australian industries to stimulate innovation and products. The project has been designed with an initial, but not exclusive focus on the timber and wood industry in the south west and will be applied to a range of industries and product designs.

BOX 77   GENERATING EMPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION IN ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIES INCLUDING THE TIMBER INDUSTRY WITH FINE WOOD CRAFTS

Designing Futures is a creative partnership with industry to cultivate innovation and a strong design culture in Western Australia. It will have tangible employment, business and environmental outcomes, which capitalise on Western Australia's intellectual and creative resources. It involves a series of residencies, exhibitions, seminars and cultural exchanges, which bring together top international designers with Western Australian artists to extend local design skills and create new products and processes. Designing Futures links artists, manufacturers, industry and the training sector together. Its initial goal is to help create a more sustainable timber industry for the State. Other areas of focus are glass and ceramic production and jewellery design in association with the State's mineral and pearling industries.

Leading, contemporary Western Australian fine wood crafts by Vaughn Richmond, Tim Leaversuch and Clive & Jenny Kendrick, produced as part of Craftwest's Designing Futures initiative.

Source: Craftwest

The project has already attracted partners in Rio Tinto, Wesfarmers, the Departments of Industry and Technology, Local and Regional Government, and Culture and the Arts, ArtsWA, the Australia Council and the Lotteries Commission.

Broome

The fusion of Asian, Indigenous and European cultures in the Broome and Kimberley region has stimulated a vibrant contemporary arts practitioner and cultural resource base. This includes an Indigenous music corporation, a regional Indigenous publishing house, radio and television stations as well as film production and contemporary music teams and a flourishing performing and visual arts scene. These contribute actively to the cultural identity of the region and the State.

Contemporary Music

Western Australia's isolation from the east coast of Australia has spawned a flourishing independent contemporary music scene and unique sound, with the quality of its musicians and their bands now attracting significant interest from Eastern States and overseas managers, promoters and labels, leading one national newspaper to describe Perth as the new 'Liverpool of contemporary music.'

Box 78 illustrates how the arts and culture can bring sustainability to life for people. This is one of many across Western Australia, each of which addresses issues pertaining to sustainability. In this instance, art has been used to communicate in a culturally relevant way, a potential solution to the growing diabetes problem among members of remote Indigenous communities in the north west of the State (see also *Sustaining healthy communities*).

BOX 78   HONEY ANT DREAMING

Over a year ago, Roebourne's Cheeditha Aboriginal community and the West Pilbara College of TAFE started an Indigenous art program in a disused heritage building in Cossack.

One participant, Mr Terry Willis, created a work called Honey Ant Dreaming, depicting ants' nests full of eggs with males collecting sugar. Purchased by diabetes nurse educator, Ms Sam Chandler, it was subsequently used as a teaching aid for a pilot diabetes project run by the Mawarnlkarra Health Service, the Pilbara Division of General Practitioners and the West Pilbara Health Service.

Ms Chandler noticed that the painting depicted how insulin works in the body, 'There's the sugar and the body cells and the ants, which are insulin from the pancreas'. One in two Aboriginal people in the region have diabetes and this is a good example of art informing and educating for sustainability. The program itself also provided those with health problems a reason to feel and get well.

'Healthy interest in art helps beat diabetes', *West Australian* 3 July 2002, p.13

Public submissions demonstrate that the role the arts and culture can play in the sustainability agenda can be enhanced in three ways:

- consolidating the role that all arts and cultural activity can play in enhancing a 'sense of place' including community arts
- enhancing the capacities and viability of arts and cultural organisations through a changed focus in funding and support programs, and
- embedding arts and cultural considerations in the sustainability assessment of projects, programs and policies.

Enhancing the capacities and viability of artists, arts and cultural organisations.

A sustainable cultural life for all Western Australians necessarily involves support and partnership from all levels of government (State, Federal and local) complemented by the entrepreneurial and marketing endeavours of the State's arts and cultural organisations. The need to pursue strategies that address the lack of economic status and financial viability of artists is also essential. This is being addressed through the review and development of a number of arts and cultural policies in Western Australia. These include a review of arts development policy, a regional cultural policy, a contemporary music policy, an arts and education policy, an Indigenous arts and cultural policy, a re-focused cultural tourism strategy, a capital works policy and a policy on small and independent museums. Two major national reports will also influence future funding practices. These are the *The Small to Medium Arts Sector Report* and the *National Arts and Crafts Inquiry (Myer)*. These developments are all intended to contribute to a more progressive funding and support system for arts and cultural organisations.

Other trends requiring greater attention are the 'demand driven' funding strategies used to support touring networks and the importance of touring itself. The opportunity for Western Australian artists, arts and cultural organisations to tour and export services nationally and internationally is fundamental to their growth and viability, given the limitations to their growth

resulting from the State's small population base. These strategies can mobilise community interest in the arts and culture, empower communities to express their preferences for a range of cultural experiences and create a viable and exciting arts and cultural profile for the State.

Embedding arts and culture in sustainability assessment

Social assessment (incorporating arts and cultural considerations) is a major component of the triple bottom line process proposed in the State Sustainability Strategy. Such an approach is supported by the World Bank, which has argued the need to marry cultural activity to economic development.

The framework for social assessment is still in development and is clearly an interesting and emerging discipline. Similarly, the quantitative measures for the arts and cultural contribution are yet to be fully defined, with many OECD governments currently giving this attention. However there is widespread recognition that they have a valued role to play in a balanced and sustainable society and as active contributors in examining social concerns. Examples of this are the contribution of the Western Australian Museum to the debate on the protection of the rock art of the Burrup Peninsula and the ongoing role of the Western Australian cultural sector in the performing arts, literature and visual arts in reconciliation and in expanding understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture in all its forms in Western Australia and overseas.

The assessment of the cultural dimension of all projects will inevitably include consideration of existing cultural networks and how they can be maintained and enhanced, how the cultural and artistic significance of places is understood and supported and how Indigenous issues can be assessed.

Global opportunities

Western Australia's gateway position on the Indian Ocean Rim creates many untapped opportunities for celebration, cultural exchange, development of relations in the region and expansion of needed markets for the State's arts and cultural organisations to help sustain them. Important research partnerships between the Western Australian Museum and regional neighbours are critical contributors to understanding and sustaining shared species and environments.

In addition, the Western Australian screen industry continues to consolidate production and market relationships with key worldwide partners. Opportunities for animation, including continuous 24 hour film work production cycles between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean zones, are being developed in Western Australia.

Important opportunities exist to:

- Take advantage of the new ABC production facilities and associated funding to ensure a local film and television production industry develops in Western Australia.
- Enhance Indigenous employment opportunities in the arts and cultural sector to encourage greater representation of Indigenous culture and history in local museums, particularly the globally significant Burrup rock art.
- Embed art in the health system and other arts and health partnerships to improve health outcomes.
- Develop a range of strategies to make Perth (city centre and sub centres) more culturally vibrant and thereby a better place to visit and live.
- Achieve tourism investment in the Western Australian Museum's eco and Indigenous tourism products.
- Institutionally integrate the use of art and artists in planning processes and in land developments so as to help create a sense of difference and enhance urban settlements.
- Have artists work alongside scientists addressing the sustainability agenda to generate new products and to offer new solutions to complex problems.

- Develop new capital infrastructure for the arts and culture.
- Establish a Cultural Property Bank for medium-term lease of government properties and land holdings for temporary use on peppercorn rents as artists' studios.
- Encourage the Federal government to introduce *droite de suite* (resale royalties) on artworks and intellectual property rights for individual artists.

In short...

Vision

Culture and the arts are essential to a rich and sustainable life for Western Australians. They are a source and a catalyst for developing the Western Australian community's sense of identity, place and vision for a sustainable future.

Objective

- Reinforce a sense of place and identity in the community.
- Include creativity and the arts in policy development, implementation and sustainability assessment of new projects, policies and programs.
- Increase industry's utilisation of the arts and creative industries in research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the arts.
- Encourage greater personal creativity and participation in the arts and cultural activities.
- Develop a vibrant and competitive economy for the arts and creative industries.
- Contribute to urban regeneration and planning processes and projects.

Actions underway

- The Department of Culture and the Arts is encouraging a whole of government approach to arts and culture.
- The Department for Planning and Infrastructure's Working Paper No. 12 '*Can Perth Be More Creative?*' supports a shift to innovation and creative industries and a proposal to move the arts and culture centre stage in Perth.
- Community Arts Networks of Western Australia has been working with local governments to develop cultural plans and has conducted cultural planning with Aboriginal communities such as the Ieramagadu (Roebourne) community.
- Expansion of the Percent for Art scheme.
- A package of support to underpin and extend the reach of the Western Australian contemporary music industry.
- MuseumLink's *Sustainability WA* exhibition and *Watching Waste* toured the metropolitan area and regional areas. *The Power of Wind* exhibition is being developed.
- The Western Australian Museum is playing a leading role in promoting and understanding the biodiversity of the State.
- Fremantle Aboriginal Heritage Walking Tour has been established.
- A cultural tourism strategy for Western Australia which capitalises on renewable resources is being developed.
- *Symbiotica* - A science/arts project.
- The Culture and the Arts portfolio is committed to improving the diversity of its workforce.

A Percent for Art Scheme Project for the Broome Health Services. This project exemplifies sustainability in art practices. The artists were involved at the earliest stage of the building project and the artworks are highly integrated with the building materials. The motifs and themes of the work respect the cultural norms and traditions of the local Indigenous communities.

Artist: Francine (Ngardarb) Riches with mentor Tony Riches

Source: Malcolm McGregor

In short cont'd...

Actions

5.37 Through the Sustainability Roundtable and in close cooperation with arts and cultural organisations, hold a Sustainable Living Festival to showcase innovative approaches to sustainability with a focus on culture and lifestyle.

5.38 Develop programs, partnerships and incentives that encourage research, for example into cultural heritage, innovation, new products, entrepreneurship (new distribution channels) and business sponsorship through the arts around key sustainability issues.

5.39 Encourage funding criteria that facilitate endeavours in arts and cultural activities that promote sustainability.

5.40 Ensure that sustainability is embedded in the goals of community arts and community cultural development processes.

5.41 Involve Indigenous people directly in planning, especially for new developments so that regional Indigenous stories and perspectives can be built into the emerging story of the region.

5.42 Support cultural tourism endeavours that meet heritage, reconciliation, environmental and community access and development criteria.

5.43 Continue to shape a redevelopment plan for the Western Australian Museum, which examines ways to utilise the new facilities as sustainability and educational tools for the public.

5.44 Identify new land development and planning projects, which can involve artists to create a sense of difference and relate people to their land.

5.45 Take advantage of the new ABC production facility to create new production partnerships in Western Australia that can focus on urban and regional sense of place.

5.46 Work with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, local government and relevant cultural and other organisations to embed cultural planning in town planning to achieve an integrated sustainability approach to the development of new and revitalised communities.

5.47 Through the Western Australian Museum continue to make major commitments to the preservation of the biodiversity and cultural diversity of the State, including by establishing a Sustainability Unit, the first of its kind in an Australian museum.

5.48 Enable communities to develop their own exhibitions at the Fremantle, Perth, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Geraldton Museums to enhance local sense of place.

5.49 Initiate a Culture and the Arts Portfolio statement of principles, policy and action plan for Indigenous Western Australians that incorporates sustainability.

5.50 Develop a framework for support for local and independent museums in Western Australia that enables them to better facilitate 'sense of place'.

5.51 Formulate a new Arts Development Policy for Western Australia incorporating sustainability.

Further information

Department of Culture and the Arts: *Cultural Capital – A Response to Focus on the Future: Opportunities for Sustainability in Western Australia.*

Rhodes, A 2002, *The Heart of Sustainability*: *An Encore for Culture and the Arts*, sustainability background paper, State Sustainability Strategy CD-ROM, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth.

> SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH MULTICULTURALISM

Western Australia is a highly diverse community which provides extra opportunities to address the global and local sustainability agenda.

Although the definition (of sustainability) includes the concept of social, the definition used for conceptualising sustainability is inadequate as it excludes the concept of culture … An inclusion of the concept of culture not only recognises the cultural dimension of sustainability, but also provides a space/place in which different groups (Indigenous, women, youth, ethnic minorities) needs and aspirations can be valued.

Community Arts Network

Historically, multiculturalism evolved primarily as a philosophy of settlement countering the orthodox views of monoculturalism or assimilation. Today, multiculturalism in Western Australia is a commitment to social equality based on four key principles: civic ideals, fairness, equity, and participation.

Multiculturalism is based on democratic pluralism and a shared citizenship, and reinforces the equal rights and responsibilities of all Western Australians. However, for sustainability to be achieved equality should not reflect sameness. Service providers, policy makers, and the like have to be prepared to treat people differently to sustain equality.

While the explicit acknowledgement of the demographic and cultural diversity of Western Australia indicates the role and nexus between migration and sustainability, multiculturalism as a critical framework that offers insights about how members of communities live and/or co-exist is a critical factor in the overall conceptualisation and development of the State Sustainability Strategy.

The inclusion, participation and contribution of people from different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds is critical to the effectiveness of the State Sustainability Strategy. As elaborated in *The conceptual basis: developing a framework for sustainability*, little progress has been made on resolving the social aspect of development. Incorporating the social dimension into the economic development process is necessary to achieve creative partnerships that can contribute to sustainability.

Today's Western Australia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society whose members are drawn from a rich heritage of cultural traditions and histories. Ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity poses a number of challenges to decision-makers, service providers and policy makers.

The central issue relates to creating and sustaining a cohesive, cultural and political identity. This means enabling, empowering and ensuring that all citizens have a legitimate voice as Western Australians. It demands inclusion, and not exclusion based on the grounds of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, as well as factors such as the length of time spent in Western Australia. Excluding those who appear or are considered to be 'different' threatens the sustainability of a stable and productive State.

The benefits of multiculturalism to sustainability come from the benefits of recognising difference. Different cultures have different approaches that can be utilised for solving the multiple problems of sustainability. Their integration and application to sustainability comes from a mutual recognition of the fundamental principles underlying sustainability. If sustainability is to be achieved, the one size fits all approach to the development and implementation of social policy and programs is inadequate to address the State's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. The need for appropriate interventionist and proactive initiatives must move from the rhetoric to the pragmatic and real. Sustainable development demands that multiculturalism becomes part and parcel of the norm rather than an adjunct relating to the 'other'.

Multiculturalism challenges 'old'or traditional ways of conceiving how a community may live, work and grow together when that community is heterogenous, rather than homogenous or mono-cultural in terms of practices and beliefs. Therefore, to develop a multicultural State, community groups must be empowered to participate as well as confront the many challenges we all continue to face in terms of prejudice, discrimination and invisibility. If sustainability is to be achieved, it is critical for the rights of all Western Australians to be safeguarded, and for diversity to be promoted and recognised.

Multiculturalism, and the notion of diversity, should help inform and shape the planning, development and delivery of services. Such an approach necessarily means processes that facilitate clients and customers from diverse backgrounds to participate in the design and delivery of services and products from the outset, and not as an afterthought. Including diverse people in the conceptualisation of services will result in the delivery of responsive and cost-effective services, as well as greater innovation, creativity and productivity.

Sustainability is about building communities and strengthening the bonds between them. The *Community services and development* section explored some of the principal ways in which that can be done. Multiculturalism and sustainability mean that the cultural needs of all citizens must be recognised and that they be empowered to participate effectively, creatively and critically in community life. This includes ensuring that the necessary assistance for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is made available so that they are able to participate in a meaningful way.

It also means that there is a greater representation of diversity in decision making processes and that an emphasis is placed on community partnerships through meaningful consultation and negotiation on policy development and implementation. Some measures are already being implemented to give effect to an even more inclusive and diverse Western Australia. These include the establishment of an Anti-Racism Strategy (see Box 79).

BOX 79   ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY

The purpose of the Western Australian Government's Anti-Racism Strategy is to eliminate racism in all its forms by first understanding racism in all its manifestations and then taking action to address the social and structural issues. It is a strategy that supports sustainability principles. It seeks to meet its objectives by:

- Forming strategic and community partnerships with other bodies in relation to anti-racism.
- Increasing public awareness of racism.
- Empowering groups which are targets of racism, through advocacy, public education and the provision of credible and persuasive information.
- Strengthening the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.
- Addressing issues as they arise in the short-term and developing and implementing longer term strategies to target specific structures and behaviours.
- Encouraging and acknowledging positive initiatives in the elimination of racism and the promotion of harmonious relations in the community.

On the basis of a wide-ranging consultation process, a committee, chaired by the Premier, is developing the Anti-Racism Strategy.

There are a number of constraints to the achievement of the ideals of multiculturalism in Western Australia, including:

- the many definitions associated with multiculturalism over a considerable period of time which have caused much confusion and, at times, discontent amongst Western Australians
- the perception that multiculturalism refers to a policy perspective which provides special treatment for people of diverse backgrounds
- the association of multiculturalism primarily with the practice and preservation of traditional cultures, including food, song and dance
- the lack of recognition of the unique status of Aboriginal people as the first Australians in previous policies relating to multiculturalism, which has contributed to the rejection of multiculturalism by Aboriginal Australians
- the attachment of some Western Australians to a monocultural Western Australia
- the refusal by some Western Australians to treat people of diverse backgrounds as equals worthy of dignity and respect

- the anxiety/fear of difference felt amongst some Western Australians and
- tension amongst and between Western Australians of diverse backgrounds.

However, there are also some promising opportunities for sustainability in the achievement of multiculturalism which include:

- Western Australia, as confirmed through the 2001 Census, has the highest proportion of persons born overseas of any Australian State or Territory
- research shows that migrants help make links to the global economy and contribute significantly to the local economy
- partnerships between the government sector, non-government sector and community groups in the development and implementation of joint initiatives which promote multiculturalism, and
- collaboration across the public sector to ensure strategies are sustainable and effective.

In short…

Vision

An inclusive Western Australia where all individuals and groups participate equitably and in a spirit of mutual respect, enriching, developing and sustaining the social, economic and environmental development of our State.

Objectives

- Building and sustaining the democratic and egalitarian traditions of this State by enabling all its members, drawn from a rich heritage of cultural traditions and histories, to enjoy individual freedom, mutual respect and equality of opportunity to participate equitably in all spheres of life.
- Developing strategies for public sector services to respond to the needs of diverse groups of clients, including newly arrived migrants, refugees, women, seniors and youth.
- Utilising the State's diversity to generate greater innovation, creativity and productivity for the State's development and sustainability in the future.

Actions underway

- The implementation of the government's Charter of Multiculturalism, including a format for reporting on progress being made towards the ideals of multiculturalism.
- The development of an Anti-Racism Strategy for Western Australia to address issues relating to individual and systemic racism.
- Implementation of strategies to empower diverse communities to achieve a more inclusive society.
- The development and implementation of a community education strategy to achieve better understanding of multiculturalism and related concepts.
- Further development and implementation of the government's language services policy to develop communication strategies that improve access to services by people with a limited proficiency in English.
- Developing strategies for reflecting greater diversity in representation.

In short cont'd...

Actions

5.52 Through the Sustainability Roundtable hold a seminar entitled Many Cultures: One Earth to consider sustainability in Western Australia from an ethical and cultural perspective and involve the authors of background papers on the ethics of sustainability.

5.53 Finalise and implement the Anti-Racism Strategy including consideration for developing racial and religious vilification legislation and provision of anti-racism training.

5.54 Explore the establishment of a skilled migration unit within the public sector.

5.55 Continue to develop multicultural policies and perspectives which link multiculturalism to sustainability outcomes so that ecological, social and economic spheres benefit by the contributions of minority groups.

Global opportunities

Multicultural perspectives in sustainability are a truly global phenomenon and should be pursued in this context.

Further information

People from a diverse range of creeds, traditions and philosophies were invited to submit submissions on ethics and sustainability. These are available on the CD-ROM and the sustainability web site.

Multiculturalism is celebrated in the Fremantle sculpture of Italian-born sculptor Porcelli, who made statues of famous Western Australians but was little known himself. The influence of Italian culture in Fremantle led to alfresco dining which has helped to revitalise inner city areas across Perth.

Source: Peter Newman