

Dear Professor Newman

I am copying a letter (below) I wrote to Dr. Gallop regarding research I am hoping he would like undertaken for Western Australia. It may be of particular interest to you since my biotechnology research was all in environmental microbiology, for which I am currently employed here at Monash University. I do not believe biotechnology (which overlaps many disciplines) can be ignored as another alternative for enhancing Western Australia's sustainability. The business administration thesis I would like to research would concentrate on what research the biotechnology community of WA would like to pursue for sustainable and ethical competitiveness.

I hope that you find the letter useful and please keep in touch with any comments you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alan Howgrave-Graham

Dr. Geoff Gallop
The Premier: Western Australia
24th Floor
197 St. Georges Terrace
Perth
WA 6000

20 February 2002

Dear Dr. Gallop

I was, until recently, a resident of East Victoria Park and hence a member of your constituency. I sadly left Western Australia at the beginning of the year due to a consistent lack of employment opportunities for highly qualified biotechnologists there. The opportunity arose for me to take up my current academic position at Monash University, but not before completing the theory and a candidacy for my second doctorate (this one being in business administration) through Curtin University's Graduate School of Business (GSB).

During my stay in Western Australia, I did keep abreast of biotechnology developments via networking and biotechnology breakfasts. I determined that there is no formal biotechnology strategy for Western Australia and that this emerging and potentially lucrative field was formerly considered a low priority by state government. I therefore based my candidacy, and the project I would like to undertake, upon this omission especially since the previous government identified a need for state strategy development in biotechnology. This requirement was also alluded to in the TIAC report on Western Australian Biotechnology strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The title of my thesis is deliberately vague, allowing me to target other regions, states or nations in case the Western Australian government indicates no interest in supporting such a project. I am particularly interested in doing the work for Western Australia through loyalty to my previous home state and because of the opportunities being missed there, as confirmed by the TIAC report.

The title of my DBA thesis is "Knowledge-Based Strategy Development for Regional Biotechnology Competitiveness" and my candidacy has been approved. The study has been designed in such a way that a practical outcome for the state under investigation is the primary deliverable. In addition, the methods to be employed overcome most of the problems of a pure survey-based study. The involvement and commitment of most stakeholders is to be elicited for a strategy/policy to emerge that is amenable to practitioners, business people and government representatives within the state. The Delphi method is to be used to confirm findings and investigate the practicalities of alternative strategic decisions for their long-term suitability and sustainability.

An expert team with complementary skills will contribute to this investigation and comprises:

- me (a PhD graduate in Microbial Biotechnology and academic with 49 publications);
- Professor Margaret Nowak (Chairperson of my thesis committee and Head, GSB, Curtin University);
- Dr. Peter Galvin (strategy and policy specialist at the GSB);
- Assoc. Prof. Mohammed Quaddus (expert in knowledge management at the GSB);
- Dr. Simon Carroll (a highly respected West Australian biotechnologist based at Curtin University).

The intention is to determine how best Western Australia may harness its resources (human and infrastructure) to facilitate economic growth through biotechnology, as well as competitively attract funding and expertise to the state. The Stratcom Laboratory at the GSB with its associated Group Support Systems (GSS) and/or Decision conferencing software would be used to overcome most of the problems normally associated with decision making.

I, under supervision of the other team members (who are all on my thesis committee) would conduct most of the research, in which biotechnologist and policymakers are canvassed on which directions biotechnology should take in Western Australia and how to achieve identified goals in light of competition from other states, regions and countries. This study would culminate in a practical document that would clearly direct policymakers in their allocation of resources to support thoroughly investigated consensus-based strategic competencies. It would inform the biotechnology community and other interested parties on Western Australia's strategic objectives with respect to biotechnology. The investigative methods employed prior to writing this document enhance stakeholder commitment as their vision will be elucidated and ultimately portrayed. This is seldom achieved in strategy development and such an approach would make Western Australia unique in this regard.

Dr. Gallop, I request that you support us in conducting the above study on Western Australia, especially considering the practical benefits that the outcome of such an investigation would have on the state's technological advancement. I have followed your speeches with great interest especially to the Australian Resources Research Centre (Technology Park, 14 November 2001) and at the Australian Technology Network Conference (Curtin University, 31 January, 2002) and feel that, at last, Western Australia is looking to the future. I just hope that I can be a part of it. Whether you are interested in having this project proceed or not, please contact me so that we may discuss the matter further.

Yours truly,

Dr. Alan Howgrave-Graham

P.S. I have attached a summary of my candidacy to give a broad outline on how we anticipate proceeding with this project.

Dear Professor Newman

Yesterday I sent you a copy of a letter I posted to Dr. Gallop regarding the development of a biotechnology strategy for Western Australia. As your version did not have a letterhead, none of my contact details were enclosed. I apologise for this and am sending them now. My e-mail addresses are either: alan.howgrave-graham@sci.monash.edu.au or howgrava@cbs.curtin.edu.au while my telephone number is (03)9902 6439 and fax: 9902 6738 in case you need further information or have any comments.

Regards,

