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Professor Peter Newman
Director, Sustainability Policy Unit
Policy Office
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
15th Floor 107 St Georges Tce
PERTH WA 6000

Re: Sustainability submission

Dear Professor Newman

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to present a written submission for the State Sustainability Strategy. I am currently studying Certificate 4 of Land Management at TAFE Murdoch Campus. This has given me a greater appreciation of our environment and how to conserve and protect it.

I believe that sustainability is certainly a worthwhile pursuit, further to that I believe that it is not only beneficial but also essential that this subject be taken more seriously. For Western Australia, Australia and the World to meet our present needs without compromising the future generations needs, a level of sustainability must be achieved.

For this to happen a number of key factors must be addressed. One of the most important would be Education and Community liaison. Without the interest and support of the public, sustainability is economically unachievable on the large scale. This is because the key issues and opportunities for sustainability will not be addressed to the full extent due to public opinion not being behind it. Therefore funding for research and opportunities to pursue sustainability will be insufficient.

A means to create public interest could be to "advertise" sustainability to make the public aware of what sustainability is and how to achieve it, either locally or globally. Also educating lower and middle school students on subjects involving the natural environment, management of natural resources and offering more opportunities to be involved in these subjects.

Ribbons of Blue is a good example of educating and actively involving lower school students in the environment. To further enhance the opportunity to achieve sustainability all schools could be held accountable for their level of sustainability. This could be achieved through actions as simple as

planting native trees from seeds collected. Reducing the amount of paper used through on-site re-use and recycling. Collecting water runoff from gutters into rainwater tanks to provide water for school gardens. Though some similar actions are implemented in some schools, to achieve a viable level of sustainability all schools must be involved. This idea could also be adapted to University and TAFE Campuses as well as businesses. It is a small step towards achieving sustainability.

There are many more issues in Western Australia that the Sustainability Strategy could address. Water Use and Management should be one of them and whether the option of the use of deeper ground water is practical and the consequence it would have on the remaining water table levels. I believe that water restrictions through the dryer months are and continue to be an excellent idea.

The ever-present salinity problem, which threatens the wheat belt, should definitely be addressed. Along with the programs already in place with more research a positive solution could be reached through this strategy.

The protection and conservation of our biodiversity and old growth forests in the South West, which natural richness' creates worldwide interest is an issue to be addressed. Additionally the conservation and protection of our coastal waters, such as Ningaloo Reef, Exmouth. And how a balance can be achieved between the natural environments and tourism or eco-tourism as not to put the environment at risk through social pressures.

A global issue to be addressed would be the cutting down of carbon emissions through further use of public transport and promotions. For instance the recent Bike Week to encourage people to look for alternatives to cars. A problem with riding though, I believe is the lack of secure areas to lock up bicycles, which can discourage riders as their bicycle may be stolen.

There are a number of examples that already exist in Western Australia that pursue sustainability. By reducing the use of fossil fuels for energy by using wind power (Albany Wind Farm). Also the use of solar power and tidal power in the proposed scheme in the North West of Western Australia.

If Western Australia is willing to attempt to achieve sustainability, progress must start immediately. If the public are presented and aware of the factors and issues that contribute to sustainability, with the correct research, management and implementation added to a balance of social and economic demands, sustainability is achievable.

Thankyou.

Yours faithfully

Danielle Brown