

Professor Peter Newman
Director, Sustainable Policy Unit
Policy Office
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
15th Floor, 197 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

Darralyn P Ebsary
20 Brockman Avenue
Bullcreek
WA 6149.

Dear Professor Peter Newman,

I appreciate the opportunity to make some small contribution to the future of our wonderful state. I have in the past been an inaugural community member of the Swan Avon ICM, the Avon Working Group and have participated on Sustainable Rural Development and Women in Agriculture Groups. I have also been a member and Chairperson of the Central Region Assessment Panel, and taken part on Technical Assessment Panels for Natural Heritage Trust Funding. I have also been a member and Chairperson of the Corrigin Land Conservation District Committee. I now live in the metropolitan area, after years of living in a rural community. Being a farmer and having a great interest in conservation and our environment, I have a great passion and dedication for our unique and wonderful state.

I hope and trust, that with interaction and communication between the community, private business and government agency, we can set a path for economic and environmental sustainability in Western Australia. It is certain that we should at least be aiming for sustainability in our society...and a society such as ours, has a real opportunity to achieve this desirable position and be shown as an example to the global community. In fact we should be focused on achieving this goal for just for the present and not only for ourselves but for our future generations.

The education of our community, especially our young people, about what “sustainability” really is, and how we can all support that ethic, even in a small way. Such as described to us in the Agenda 21 papers from the Rio De Janeiro Conference some ten years ago.

It should also be said that we should be honest and realistic about projects, that have not achieved their potential, these should not be seen as errors but part of our learning journey towards a viable and sustainable future. Education of our whole community, at all levels, at our schools, adult education facilities and tertiary institutions.

We have many groups, agency and community organisations that do, and attempt to do, good work for our community. I believe that we need to support, some of these projects more effectively. I really believe that we should, make looking after our own “backyard” a priority.

- The Oil Mallee Project – already has many hundreds of thousands of trees planted to help combat salinity. That is great and admirable, however we also have an opportunity for a viable industry, if only we could harvest, treat and purify the oil mallee vegetation. Research and development has taken a long time, we seem to be a long way from any commercial and sustainable advantage with this project, is it not possible to financially push it to prosperous fruition.

- Lake Toolibin is a project supported by local people and Government agency, but again si the delay and lack of financial resources going to be the undoing of such important research and practice.

There are of course, many important areas that need major consideration and input when discussing sustainability.

To me some of the most important and necessary are the following:

- Renewable energy is an important area for us to expand on. Isolation from electrical grids in our rural regions, and our persistent and growing use of non renewable fuel sources, seems to be a very valid reason for us to be, utilising and encouraging the use of alternatives, such as solar power, wind power, methane power. Researching the use and developing any other renewable power source that we can envisage.
- Water, without it we cannot function. These last few summers have shown us just how vulnerable we have become with our growing population and changeable weather patters. We need to acknowledge the fact, we live on a mostly desert continent with perimeters of Mediterranean climate and small regions of sub tropic.

We could and should encourage/enforce the provision of rainwater tanks on all dwellings – if not for drinking then for washing or toilets or gardens. That enormous catchment of suburban rooftops, that we do not utilise.

In the past de-salinisation was thought to be too expensive, but in reality how long have we got to save our present water resources. In the Wheatbelt, it is not only salinity that is an enormous insidious problem, but rising water tables. Why can we not desalinate this water...even to a level that could support stock or possible alternative industries?

Industries that use water should be encouraged/enforces to recycle their water, they should also be encourage/enforced to harvest water for their own use, instead of accessing our diminishing community resource. Factories and industrial buildings utilising their rooftop catchments and harvesting water, could sell their unused water to other industry.

It is so very important to protect and maintain our unique and precious natural heritage and biodiversity. We should be more than attempting to save our forests, habitats and endangered species, we simply must do it.

At present we may see this to be costly, but future generations, not just of our own state, or even our own nation, but the global community will value our efforts.

We now appreciate the foresightedness of previous generations that retained our National Parks, we need to add to, and enhance these areas, they are a natural heritage resource that is not renewable. It is not only local communities that utilise these areas. Many of our international visitors come to see our wilderness, our forests and our unique and precious flora and fauna.

We should appreciate, treasure and really “value” these areas as precious commodities.

There will be ways to utilise our natural heritage and biodiversity resources, possibly by exporting the knowledge that we are gathering and developing into the areas of mine site rehabilitation, cryo-genetic storage and tissue culture of plant material, food and fodder plants, and so on.

It is very probable, that we have an enormous medical resource we have yet to access and utilise, that being our unique and diverse flora and fauna.

We need to empower regulator legislation to really deter and control illegal clearing, both in the rural and metropolitan regions, illegal drainage and illegal waste material dumping, at the present we seem to be content with the smack on the wrist approach, especially when private enterprise appears to have more extensive resources than government, to fight these actions through our courts.

Recycling and waste disposal is a relatively untouched area. New and alternative industry could be developed to utilise this rapidly growing resource. We need to consider more 'earth friendly' packaging, and reward industry that takes a lead in this area. Let's use less plastic. The whole community should be education in how to, and encourage to recycle more effectively.

I know there are many other key concepts that this consultation paper process will bring to the Sustainability Policy Unit, I have only mentioned a few.

I support and commend the view that we should be aiming at sustainability and wish you positive progress with the community consultation process. I look forward to seeing the future initiatives that eventuate.

Once again I thank you for this opportunity, and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can further support this ideal.

Yours sincerely

Darralyn P Ebsary