

ADM017

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Department of Premier and Cabinet
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Dear Peter

STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Premier's invitation to contribute to the development of the Government's State Sustainability Strategy has been extended to me by the Hon. Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. In response, I offer the following supportive comment from Fremantle Ports' perspective.

Australia's economy is very dependant on shipping and since for freight transport this mode is shown to have lesser environmental impacts than other forms of transport it would seem logical that opportunities to maintain, increase or improve shipping services would contribute significantly to a sustainability strategy. Such opportunities could include the following:-

1. Development of strategies to promote increased coastal shipping in place of long haul road / rail transport and for promoting increased rail transport in place of road transport.
2. Development of strategies to protect and optimise existing port infrastructure. As areas suitable for port development are very limited and given that the major environmental impacts of ports are associated with their initial construction it would appear appropriate that a key component of sustainability is to maximise the utilisation of existing infrastructure. Maximisation in itself must be through sustainable means hence it follows that with increased urbanisation surrounding ports it is critical that the road/rail linkages are optimised and protected.

One of the key threats to maximising the utilisation of existing port infrastructure is urban encroachment which whilst it brings social and economic benefits to the immediate community, potentially threatens the benefits to the broader community.

It is essential that the relative benefits be considered at all levels and we see that a sustainability strategy would promote such an approach. In this way it is likely that port development and nearby urban development can be optimised thereby also optimising the overall social, economic and environmental aspects.

3. One particular area relating to biodiversity in the marine environment is the issue of introduced marine pests. This issue extends beyond commercial shipping since other activities such as aquaculture, recreational boating and commercial fishing also contribute to the risk. In recent years a proposal headed by the CSIRO to establish a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) failed to obtain sufficient support. The CSIRO has since relocated some of its staff to the Marmion Marine laboratories with the intention of proceeding with a national / international research program albeit at a significantly reduced scale to that which could have been undertaken through a CRC. It is hoped that the development and implementation of a State Sustainability Strategy may provide a mechanism or foundation for greater support to be directed to future research into this area.
4. In respect to renewable energy sources I would consider the promotion and support for investment in this area would also be a key component of a sustainability strategy. You may be aware that a proposal is currently progressing for the development of a wind farm at Rous Head to provide a major portion of the port's electricity supply.

It is unlikely such a project could be successfully implemented without considerable government, community and specialist industry support. Hence it is critical that the sustainability strategy consider ways to encourage ongoing support to facilitate such projects.

5. I believe industry associations can play a large part in promoting and assisting members to apply sustainability principles into their businesses. The Australian Association of Port and Marine Authorities (AAPMA) has recently convened a "Sustainability Workshop" for the major ports, and it is likely this will be an effective forum for sharing local and international experience. Thus there is benefit in sharing and coordinating the State Government's policies on a national basis.
6. One final point I would like to raise relates to the definition of "sustainability". I note the various definitions put forward from several sources and would like to understand whether there is any significance in the differences. If a reasonable starting point is the 1987 UN 'definition', are the subsequent interpretations of this the same? If we look at the definition adopted by our Government – each state could have the same definition but arrive at very different outcomes, dependant on their own environmental, economic and social goals. Similarly this could be taken to the international level – does it matter?

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the development of the important State Sustainability Strategy. Fremantle Ports views sustainability as an important issue, both for industry and for government. Unfortunately, we have not been able to arrange to meet with you prior to submitting comments, and we may not have followed the preferred format. However, I hope these comments are of value to you in delivering the strategy.

Yours sincerely

Kerry G Sanderson
Chief Executive Officer