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SUBMISSION ON THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR WA

My apologies, but I do not have the time to answer all your questions in the three boxes at present, even though I am very interested in this vital issue. Of course sustainability is worthy of pursuit if we are not to create major difficulties for this and future generations! We are already missing out on major economic benefits by not living more sustainably. I believe sustainability is the biggest issue facing our society (and all nations) today, yet it is hardly considered by most citizens, politicians or the media in Australia and most countries elsewhere, except maybe some of the northern European countries.

As far as input from the community is concerned, I imagine the State Sustainability Strategy Consultation Paper will mainly be read (and commented on) by people such as myself who care about the issue of sustainability and are already trying to live sustainably to the best of their ability. For most of my associates, sustainability is not a concept even considered, and they treat major environmental issues such as the Greenhouse Effect as something not caused by them, nor impacting on their lives or that of their friends or family, now or in the future! More education is desperately needed!

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the State Government consider running an advertising campaign on the importance of living in a more sustainable way, with examples of some simple actions that everyone can take to help achieve this.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the State Government makes “Living Sustainably” a basic life skill for study and discussion in both public primary and secondary schools.

Even by raising the profile of this issue, most people, in my opinion, will still not necessarily take any notice. There must be legislative and financial incentives to live more sustainably if mass behaviour change is going to occur in our “me first” culture. Some examples of what could be done:

- Australia uses and discards billions of plastic bags per year - I believe the number used would drop dramatically if everyone was charged, say, 50c per bag. Save on the cost of landfill, rubbish transport and petroleum to produce this plastic.
- The amount of car pooling used in WA is minuscule. The majority of vehicles on the freeway each day are single occupant, using fossil fuels at a high rate, polluting the air and contributing to the Greenhouse Effect, not to mention the staggering economic

cost of this transport choice. Even with the very best of public transport facilities, most people will not get out of their cars! By offering significantly cheaper parking areas in Perth (and regional centres) for cars with two or more occupants (after considerably increasing the cost for single occupant vehicles), together with a special Website (where people could find out about others who want to car pool in their area), the amount of car pooling could increase significantly. Save on fuel, car maintenance, landfill (eg discarded car tyres), imports, cost of road accidents, cost of road building, and promote a sense of community!

- Work with the Federal Govt to end the taxation benefits of cars and parking “packaged” as part of salary. Stop the tax payer subsidy of vehicles, roads, and channel the subsidies to more useful sustainable activities.
- Legislate for a 25% Council rate reduction, phased in over 5 years, for all houses that meet certain passive solar design criteria, inspected (at a cost to the owner) as complying to these criteria when built. Save on the cost of energy (and associated environmental effects) while promoting sensible and innovative design.
- Tie the first homebuyers grant only to housing designs that meet a certain thermal efficiency criteria. This is a Government Grant, so why not!
- Make 20% of the cost of any appliance with a government approved energy conservation rating a tax rebate, up to a maximum figure per year of say \$1000. Apart from saving on energy, this will create export opportunities for innovative designs created by this strategy. Further requirement could be that the subsidy applies only to designs/ materials that can be 90% recycled at end of life.
- Apply a carbon tax on all fossil fuel sources to subsidise the development and implementation of renewable energy options. This would create many industries and jobs in renewable energy technologies.
- Calculate “reasonable water usage” based on land area of a residential property and climate location zone. Then substantially increase the cost of water per unit above this usage. This will save the cost of continuously having to develop new water resources.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Legislate or implement real financial incentives to live sustainably, which reduce resource usage and with the potential to create new industries and jobs.

Most people I know understand financial incentives! It is only by such real financial incentives that the community as a whole will sit up and take note. If applying real financial incentives are considered politically too hard, then it is likely that in the years to come, our society will not reduce consumption at anything like the rate needed to prevent all the negative economic and environmental consequences which will arise from our current lifestyle. Nor will we create new industries and jobs based on living sustainably, finding new services and products and continuously improving on this.

Regards,
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