

South West Catchments Council

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SWBSSS

Professor Newman
Director Sustainability Policy Unit
Policy Officer
Dept Premier & Cabinet
15th Floor, 197 St Georges Tce
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Professor Newman,

STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY – Consultation Paper

The South West Catchments Council (SWCC) is pleased to have received a copy of the document "Focus on the future: Opportunities for Sustainability in Western Australia". SWCC has considered the consultation paper and offers the following summary comments:

- SWCC was formed as a Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Group in 1997 with the principle objective of seeking sustainable management of natural resources within the South West Region of western Australia. The Region is recognised by the State and the Commonwealth and is nominated under the National Action Plan for Salinity and water Quality as being eligible for priority funding. SWCC encourages the Sustainability Policy Unit to recognise Regional NRM Groups as important stakeholders in the development of a State Sustainability Strategy.
- SWCC has produced a South West Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management. This Strategy has been prepared over the past 4 years with extensive community contribution. The draft Strategy is currently seeking further community comment. A copy of the Summary and Chapter 4 (Strategic Framework) is included with this letter for your reference. Please refer to the Strategy for a full description of the priorities and objectives for NRM within the South West Region. The State Sustainability Strategy should include a process to

Coordinating Natural Resource Management Across the South West

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integrate the priorities and objectives of Regional NRM Strategies into the roles identified in the Paper (paragraph 2).

- SWCC strongly supports the Premier's Forward (second paragraph of the consultation paper) in that we promote a strong, vibrant society, sound economic growth while attending to the repair of our environment. SWCC believes these goals are only attainable by adopting a whole of government approach. Furthermore it is recognised that regional communities have an important partnership role in managing the natural resource base.
- The important role of regional communities in sustainably managing the natural resource base is underpinned by their day to day interaction, dependence and knowledge of the land, water, biodiversity, coastal and other resources.
- SWCC also considers that all Regional NRM Groups have a pivotal role as coordinators of strategic regional activity for natural resource management. SWCC provides the forum to support links between onground action and planning and decision making. Regional NRM Groups serve as an important conduit across and between a range of stakeholders within and outside of the region.
- There is a need for Regional NRM Groups (statewide) to work closely with government agencies in partnership to channel investment towards strategic priorities that will make a difference. These partnerships have the potential to deliver real outcomes through negotiated NRM Business Plans within the governments Investment Framework guidelines. Please contact the State Salinity Council for further information regarding the Investment Framework. SWCC is currently developing a Business Plan with associated NRM Targets to guide and measure the implementation of the Regional Strategy by all partners.
- SWCC supports the need for the Government to take a leadership role in facilitating a shift towards a sustainable future. This leadership role should include the formalisation of support for a state/regional NRM framework. The Regional NRM Chairs Group has been working towards the formalisation of this framework for some time and is hopeful of some breakthrough in the near future.

In summation, it is believed that real progress in Sustainability can only occur with a fully integrated approach including the highest level of government to the smallest landowner.

Yours sincerely,



David Reid
Chair
South West Catchments Council
19th April 2002