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Dear Professor Newman

**CONSULTATION PAPER FOR THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

In response to correspondence received by Hon Jim McGinty MLA, Minister for Peel and the South West, the South West Development Commission is pleased to provide comment on the consultation paper for the State Sustainability Strategy.

Sustainable development is a key issue affecting the South West given that the region is currently experiencing a high rate of population and economic growth.

- The South West Region's population growth rate is 2.6 per cent. Projections for the region's population give the South West a population of about 142,200 by 2006, rising to about 172,300 by 2016. Growth at this rate will be greater than both the regional and State average growth rates, which are projected to be 1.8 and 1.6 per cent per annum respectively.
- The value of the South West's Gross Regional Product is currently estimated at \$4.5 billion, growing 8 per cent for the period 2000/01.

With this level of growth it is important that development is managed to provide a range of new opportunities for more employment, increased economic efficiency, better environmental management and greater social engagement. In this way the South West will be on the path to a more sustainable future.

In addressing the role of the State Sustainability Strategy the following points are submitted for consideration:

- While renewable energy is amply catered for in the strategy, waste minimisation and recycling are also important sustainability issues to be emphasized. A greater emphasis also needs to be placed on harnessing the “best waste” of many industrial projects in a way that will promote economic development while delivering environmental benefits in the recovery and use of this type of waste.
- Permaculture, composting, chemical minimisation and other land issues of this type are also positive initiatives that promote a productive agricultural sector while minimising the “ecological footprint” on the substantial natural resources of the South West Region. These issues need to be included in the strategy as well as actions to promote and encourage long-term progress to sustainability.
- The South West Catchments Council is currently preparing a South West Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management. This strategy will cover land, water, biodiversity and resources in a coordinated approach involving the conservation of natural resources, the sustainable use of natural resources, integrated planning, research, monitoring and community development.
- Advances in water recycling and desalination should be considered, as they will have an impact on urban, industry and rural development.
- The issue of sustainable development should be addressed at the grass roots level of our society beginning in our schools. Education on the environmental, economic and social aspects of development is vitally important if the objective of sustainable development is to be achieved in our State.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper for the State Sustainability Strategy. The Commission is keen to be kept up-to-date on the progress of the development of this strategy.

Yours sincerely

DON PUNCH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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