

Please find attached the submission to the State Sustainability Strategy compiled by the Western Australian chapter of the Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance.

<<20030114 SSS comment on draft.doc>>

Cheers

Richard Taylor

Chairperson, ACCA  
PO Box 252, Applecross 6953  
Western Australia  
Tel: 61 8 9316 5295  
Fax: 61 8 9316 5166  
[richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au](mailto:richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au)

## **Comment on the WA State Sustainability Strategy Consultation Draft**

The Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance has considered the content of the draft strategy and we provide the following comments on behalf of members who are not intending to submit individual responses.

Our members concerns fall into two categories:

1. The strategy documentation
2. Specific aspects of the strategy

### **1. The strategy documentation**

The strategy paper is discouraging to many readers and we are concerned that its excessive wordiness will disenfranchise many from engaging with the sustainability agenda.

In our view, the document needs to be reduced and simplified to enable as wide an audience as possible to comprehend the basic principles of sustainability in such a way as to clearly depict the interconnectedness of the 'people, profit and planet' imperatives. (Perhaps a document like the Consulting Citizens Guide could be produced?)

This is particularly relevant in Section 2, the conceptual basis, where we would like to see a much clearer conceptual model of sustainability and some basic principles that can be adopted at a personal level, by organisations and by our society as a whole. Section 2 needs to provide the current generation of Western Australians with a clear, shared vision of a preferred future for our WA community/ies and how the adoption of sustainability principles today will secure the legacy we want to leave for future generations. Without this vision, we do not believe the community will fully engage in sustainable practices.

We are also concerned at the lack of clarity as to what sustainability means. Without a clear definition people will continue to interpret sustainability in its literal form ie the maintenance of the status quo.

The content of the draft strategy report indicates a very strong bias towards ecological sustainability as opposed to the more balanced 'people, profits and planet' view. The integration of the three areas needs to be far more clearly enunciated in the final strategy document and the economic and social imperatives given much more weight throughout.

We suggest that a simple graphic is developed to depict the interconnectedness of 'people, profits and planet' and that a few key

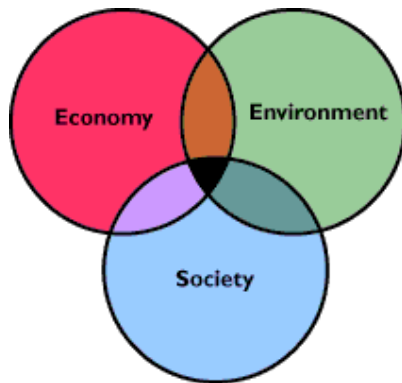
principles are developed to support the model. We have provided below a few examples of well-known sustainability principles and simple graphics:

**Example 1: 'The Natural Step' approach to ecological sustainability:**

1. Substances from the earth's crust can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
2. Substances produced by society can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
3. The physical basis for the productivity and diversity of nature must not be systematically deteriorated.
4. There must be fair and efficient use of resources to meet human needs.

Robert, Daly, Hawken and Holmberg

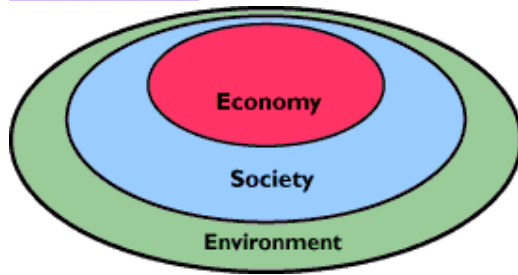
**Example 2:** Another figure that is frequently used to show the connections between the economy, the environment and the society.



A view of community that shows the links among its three parts: the economic part, the social part and the environmental part.

**Example 3:** An emerging view of sustainable community is the 'circles within circles' shown below:

A view of community as three concentric circles: the economy exists within society, and both the economy and society exist within the environment.



We are not recommending the adoption of the above models in their current form however believe that a simple, but clear, graphic depicting accompanied by a brief statement including values and key principles on one or two pages will encourage more people to adopt and support sustainable lifestyles.

### **The strategic approach**

We would also like to see a far more strategic and long-term approach taken to sustainability given that this is the crux of the issue. Rather than have a number of individual initiatives identified and then consolidated into a long-term operational plan, let's look at the big issues for the State and design a much longer term strategy which may incorporate issues not yet identified through the current consultative process.

In this context, it is imperative that the Premier, his Parliamentary colleagues and his Government infrastructure start to sing from the same song sheet. The media and the wider community will only readily embrace sustainability when its principles are succinctly and repeatedly explained, and particularly, a vision from these principles that show the benefits to society and to individuals.

## **2. Comment on specific aspects of the strategy from ACCA members**

### **Section 3**

#### **Partnerships for Action**

This section begins by stating that:

*Implementation of sustainability will require partnerships with a range of key stakeholders. Local Government in particular will be a key partner for implementing sustainability.*

The actions in this section incorporate local government in implementing sustainability principles at the State level including the development of a State/Local Government Common Sustainability Framework and a State-Local Government Sustainability Roundtable.

While endorsing this approach, there is also the opportunity to encourage partnerships at the local level particularly between business and local government. If business is to be responsible for economic, environmental and social bottom lines, their local impact is a good starting point.

Local Government not only represents the interests of the local community, but is made up from, and understands the needs of the local community. It can assist in a number of ways including:

- Identifying local concerns.
- Priority setting.
- Social and environmental impact management.
- Liaison with the local community.
- Planning.
- Setting and monitoring regulatory requirements.
- Performance measures of community good (quality of life).

Partnering at this level can provide tangible benefits within relatively short time frames and provide a stepping-stone to involvement in broad long-term strategies to achieve sustainability outcomes.

## **Section 7**

### **Sustainability and Social Issues**

Section 7 of the draft strategy discusses sustainability and community and the WA Council of Social Services has provided some excellent input. We are very keen to see social issues fully integrated in the final strategy including such issues as maintaining the Western Australian culture.

In addition to dealing with the practicalities already covered in section 7, there is an opportunity to design the kind of society and culture we want to leave as a legacy for WA's future generations.

This overall strategic design would then act as a blueprint for the operational areas described in the strategy and, through its development, may highlight other actions required to achieve the preferred future. It would assist in short and medium term decision-making, enabling those involved to test the long-term impact of their policy decisions. It would provide a framework to conduct a gap analysis as to what is desired for the future and what currently exists.

## **Section 8**

### **Training and Facilitation for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*The new global economy of sustainability requires new concepts to be applied in business and industry and this requires training, and facilitation of sustainability enterprises.*

There is an important link to the Education and Community Awareness for Sustainability section that discusses how general awareness of sustainability can be improved.

While it is acknowledged in the Strategy that the universities can play an important role in developing the skills required in the new disciplines centred on sustainability, it is proposed that TAFE is best placed to provide vocational training. As a result the actions in relation to training and facilitation focus mainly on the role TAFE can play in this process.

What appears to be missing is a strategy to develop an understanding of how sustainability principles can be embraced by the business community, and a lack of discussion on how government can facilitate this through financial encouragement or regulatory control. This must occur in order to create the demand for workers with skills in sustainability principles. What is of primary importance is the balance between what are, at least in the short-term, competing priorities between economic, social and environmental objectives.

The level of learning required in order to achieve this cannot occur in either universities or TAFE colleges. It requires exposing key people in business to the principles of sustainability so that they can learn of their benefits, but also providing practical means by which they can be implemented.

The knowledge base of sustainability is relatively small and new, is still being debated and explored and is not capable of forming an accepted body of knowledge that can be incorporated into educational programmes.

This is particularly true in relationship to business. The strategy needs to incorporate forums that allow sharing of ideas, debate and evaluation of possible courses of action. Organisations such as the ACCA can provide this and their role needs to be acknowledged and supported.

### **Financial Reform and Economic Instruments for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*Economic theory has undergone major changes in recent times in response to challenges arising from the sustainability debate, particularly by environmental and ecological economists.*

There exists a real opportunity for the State Government to lead in this field by making as one of their objectives, that all government departments begin the journey to full cost accounting (using triple bottom line principles) in their

annual reporting. At the very least, seeking their involvement in using guidelines such as the Global Reporting Initiative would be a wonderful start.

The other process that Government could be active in is an ongoing education program among financial analysts with whom they deal. Education of analysts is critical to the success of sustainability. All surveys indicate public preferences lie with Social/Sustainable Investment Indices, yet traditional measures of success (or failure) still prevail among this key group's decision-making processes.

### **Eco-Efficiency and Industrial Ecology**

The section begins by stating:

*Industry ecology involves better planning, design and management of industrial activity, so that material, energy and water is not wasted and industrial opportunities are maximised. Industrial ecology requires a completely different approach to industrial development, where industrial facilities are planned, designed and managed to mimic ecological processes."*

The crux to the adoption by industry of sustainable directions lies in costs. Industry, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, will not alter their processes or industrial capital for a "feel-good" push. There needs real encouragement to help them understand that they need to manage their waste to manage their costs.

A considerable portion of costs to industry (other than wages and inputs) is spent on managing the outputs of industry, effluents, emissions and general waste. If the Government can encourage SMEs to become educated in the elimination of waste, rather than end-of-pipe solutions, then significant progress will be evident in coming years.

### **Industry Sustainability Covenants**

The section begins by stating:

*Government needs to go beyond traditional command and control regulation that minimises harm, and find new ways to encourage business to create economic, environmental and social benefits. The Western Australian Government will seek to do this by entering into 'sustainability covenants' with progressive industry associations and companies.*

The concept of covenants is commendable, but it is unlikely that they will capture the imagination of the public or press. They tend to be one of events with no potential for follow up by the media.

If sustainability is to become part of the mainstream public/industry agenda in Western Australia, then there will be the need for ongoing and imaginative “events” that provide a focus for the media and public.

In the United Kingdom, the government has initiated the “Quality of Life” Index, a series of broad indicators designed to give focus to the media and public on the issues of sustainability. Without some similar level of involvement from the State Government, gaining attention of stakeholders will be difficult in the short term.

Please find attached the submission to the State Sustainability Strategy compiled by the Western Australian chapter of the Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance.

<<20030114 SSS comment on draft.doc>>

Cheers

Richard Taylor

Chairperson, ACCA  
PO Box 252, Applecross 6953  
Western Australia  
Tel: 61 8 9316 5295  
Fax: 61 8 9316 5166  
[richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au](mailto:richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au)

## **Comment on the WA State Sustainability Strategy Consultation Draft**

The Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance has considered the content of the draft strategy and we provide the following comments on behalf of members who are not intending to submit individual responses.

Our members concerns fall into two categories:

1. The strategy documentation
2. Specific aspects of the strategy

### **1. The strategy documentation**

The strategy paper is discouraging to many readers and we are concerned that its excessive wordiness will disenfranchise many from engaging with the sustainability agenda.

In our view, the document needs to be reduced and simplified to enable as wide an audience as possible to comprehend the basic principles of sustainability in such a way as to clearly depict the interconnectedness of the 'people, profit and planet' imperatives. (Perhaps a document like the Consulting Citizens Guide could be produced?)

This is particularly relevant in Section 2, the conceptual basis, where we would like to see a much clearer conceptual model of sustainability and some basic principles that can be adopted at a personal level, by organisations and by our society as a whole. Section 2 needs to provide the current generation of Western Australians with a clear, shared vision of a preferred future for our WA community/ies and how the adoption of sustainability principles today will secure the legacy we want to leave for future generations. Without this vision, we do not believe the community will fully engage in sustainable practices.

We are also concerned at the lack of clarity as to what sustainability means. Without a clear definition people will continue to interpret sustainability in its literal form ie the maintenance of the status quo.

The content of the draft strategy report indicates a very strong bias towards ecological sustainability as opposed to the more balanced 'people, profits and planet' view. The integration of the three areas needs to be far more clearly enunciated in the final strategy document and the economic and social imperatives given much more weight throughout.

We suggest that a simple graphic is developed to depict the interconnectedness of 'people, profits and planet' and that a few key

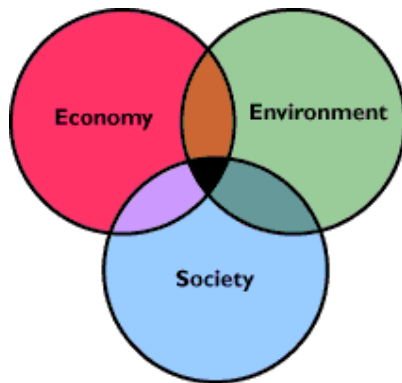
principles are developed to support the model. We have provided below a few examples of well-known sustainability principles and simple graphics:

**Example 1: 'The Natural Step' approach to ecological sustainability:**

1. Substances from the earth's crust can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
2. Substances produced by society can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
3. The physical basis for the productivity and diversity of nature must not be systematically deteriorated.
4. There must be fair and efficient use of resources to meet human needs.

Robert, Daly, Hawken and Holmberg

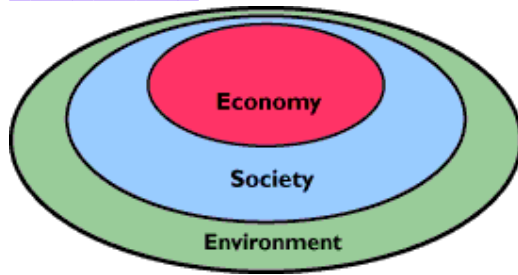
**Example 2:** Another figure that is frequently used to show the connections between the economy, the environment and the society.



A view of community that shows the links among its three parts: the economic part, the social part and the environmental part.

**Example 3:** An emerging view of sustainable community is the 'circles within circles' shown below:

A view of community as three concentric circles: the economy exists within society, and both the economy and society exist within the environment.



We are not recommending the adoption of the above models in their current form however believe that a simple, but clear, graphic depicting accompanied by a brief statement including values and key principles on one or two pages will encourage more people to adopt and support sustainable lifestyles.

### **The strategic approach**

We would also like to see a far more strategic and long-term approach taken to sustainability given that this is the crux of the issue. Rather than have a number of individual initiatives identified and then consolidated into a long-term operational plan, let's look at the big issues for the State and design a much longer term strategy which may incorporate issues not yet identified through the current consultative process.

In this context, it is imperative that the Premier, his Parliamentary colleagues and his Government infrastructure start to sing from the same song sheet. The media and the wider community will only readily embrace sustainability when its principles are succinctly and repeatedly explained, and particularly, a vision from these principles that show the benefits to society and to individuals.

## **2. Comment on specific aspects of the strategy from ACCA members**

### **Section 3**

#### **Partnerships for Action**

This section begins by stating that:

*Implementation of sustainability will require partnerships with a range of key stakeholders. Local Government in particular will be a key partner for implementing sustainability.*

The actions in this section incorporate local government in implementing sustainability principles at the State level including the development of a State/Local Government Common Sustainability Framework and a State-Local Government Sustainability Roundtable.

While endorsing this approach, there is also the opportunity to encourage partnerships at the local level particularly between business and local government. If business is to be responsible for economic, environmental and social bottom lines, their local impact is a good starting point.

Local Government not only represents the interests of the local community, but is made up from, and understands the needs of the local community. It can assist in a number of ways including:

- Identifying local concerns.
- Priority setting.
- Social and environmental impact management.
- Liaison with the local community.
- Planning.
- Setting and monitoring regulatory requirements.
- Performance measures of community good (quality of life).

Partnering at this level can provide tangible benefits within relatively short time frames and provide a stepping-stone to involvement in broad long-term strategies to achieve sustainability outcomes.

## **Section 7**

### **Sustainability and Social Issues**

Section 7 of the draft strategy discusses sustainability and community and the WA Council of Social Services has provided some excellent input. We are very keen to see social issues fully integrated in the final strategy including such issues as maintaining the Western Australian culture.

In addition to dealing with the practicalities already covered in section 7, there is an opportunity to design the kind of society and culture we want to leave as a legacy for WA's future generations.

This overall strategic design would then act as a blueprint for the operational areas described in the strategy and, through its development, may highlight other actions required to achieve the preferred future. It would assist in short and medium term decision-making, enabling those involved to test the long-term impact of their policy decisions. It would provide a framework to conduct a gap analysis as to what is desired for the future and what currently exists.

## **Section 8**

### **Training and Facilitation for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*The new global economy of sustainability requires new concepts to be applied in business and industry and this requires training, and facilitation of sustainability enterprises.*

There is an important link to the Education and Community Awareness for Sustainability section that discusses how general awareness of sustainability can be improved.

While it is acknowledged in the Strategy that the universities can play an important role in developing the skills required in the new disciplines centred on sustainability, it is proposed that TAFE is best placed to provide vocational training. As a result the actions in relation to training and facilitation focus mainly on the role TAFE can play in this process.

What appears to be missing is a strategy to develop an understanding of how sustainability principles can be embraced by the business community, and a lack of discussion on how government can facilitate this through financial encouragement or regulatory control. This must occur in order to create the demand for workers with skills in sustainability principles. What is of primary importance is the balance between what are, at least in the short-term, competing priorities between economic, social and environmental objectives.

The level of learning required in order to achieve this cannot occur in either universities or TAFE colleges. It requires exposing key people in business to the principles of sustainability so that they can learn of their benefits, but also providing practical means by which they can be implemented.

The knowledge base of sustainability is relatively small and new, is still being debated and explored and is not capable of forming an accepted body of knowledge that can be incorporated into educational programmes.

This is particularly true in relationship to business. The strategy needs to incorporate forums that allow sharing of ideas, debate and evaluation of possible courses of action. Organisations such as the ACCA can provide this and their role needs to be acknowledged and supported.

### **Financial Reform and Economic Instruments for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*Economic theory has undergone major changes in recent times in response to challenges arising from the sustainability debate, particularly by environmental and ecological economists.*

There exists a real opportunity for the State Government to lead in this field by making as one of their objectives, that all government departments begin the journey to full cost accounting (using triple bottom line principles) in their

annual reporting. At the very least, seeking their involvement in using guidelines such as the Global Reporting Initiative would be a wonderful start.

The other process that Government could be active in is an ongoing education program among financial analysts with whom they deal. Education of analysts is critical to the success of sustainability. All surveys indicate public preferences lie with Social/Sustainable Investment Indices, yet traditional measures of success (or failure) still prevail among this key group's decision-making processes.

### **Eco-Efficiency and Industrial Ecology**

The section begins by stating:

*Industry ecology involves better planning, design and management of industrial activity, so that material, energy and water is not wasted and industrial opportunities are maximised. Industrial ecology requires a completely different approach to industrial development, where industrial facilities are planned, designed and managed to mimic ecological processes."*

The crux to the adoption by industry of sustainable directions lies in costs. Industry, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, will not alter their processes or industrial capital for a "feel-good" push. There needs real encouragement to help them understand that they need to manage their waste to manage their costs.

A considerable portion of costs to industry (other than wages and inputs) is spent on managing the outputs of industry, effluents, emissions and general waste. If the Government can encourage SMEs to become educated in the elimination of waste, rather than end-of-pipe solutions, then significant progress will be evident in coming years.

### **Industry Sustainability Covenants**

The section begins by stating:

*Government needs to go beyond traditional command and control regulation that minimises harm, and find new ways to encourage business to create economic, environmental and social benefits. The Western Australian Government will seek to do this by entering into 'sustainability covenants' with progressive industry associations and companies.*

The concept of covenants is commendable, but it is unlikely that they will capture the imagination of the public or press. They tend to be one of events with no potential for follow up by the media.

If sustainability is to become part of the mainstream public/industry agenda in Western Australia, then there will be the need for ongoing and imaginative “events” that provide a focus for the media and public.

In the United Kingdom, the government has initiated the “Quality of Life” Index, a series of broad indicators designed to give focus to the media and public on the issues of sustainability. Without some similar level of involvement from the State Government, gaining attention of stakeholders will be difficult in the short term.

Please find attached the submission to the State Sustainability Strategy compiled by the Western Australian chapter of the Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance.

<<20030114 SSS comment on draft.doc>>

Cheers

Richard Taylor

Chairperson, ACCA  
PO Box 252, Applecross 6953  
Western Australia  
Tel: 61 8 9316 5295  
Fax: 61 8 9316 5166  
[richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au](mailto:richard.taylor@alcoa.com.au)

## **Comment on the WA State Sustainability Strategy Consultation Draft**

The Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance has considered the content of the draft strategy and we provide the following comments on behalf of members who are not intending to submit individual responses.

Our members concerns fall into two categories:

1. The strategy documentation
2. Specific aspects of the strategy

### **1. The strategy documentation**

The strategy paper is discouraging to many readers and we are concerned that its excessive wordiness will disenfranchise many from engaging with the sustainability agenda.

In our view, the document needs to be reduced and simplified to enable as wide an audience as possible to comprehend the basic principles of sustainability in such a way as to clearly depict the interconnectedness of the 'people, profit and planet' imperatives. (Perhaps a document like the Consulting Citizens Guide could be produced?)

This is particularly relevant in Section 2, the conceptual basis, where we would like to see a much clearer conceptual model of sustainability and some basic principles that can be adopted at a personal level, by organisations and by our society as a whole. Section 2 needs to provide the current generation of Western Australians with a clear, shared vision of a preferred future for our WA community/ies and how the adoption of sustainability principles today will secure the legacy we want to leave for future generations. Without this vision, we do not believe the community will fully engage in sustainable practices.

We are also concerned at the lack of clarity as to what sustainability means. Without a clear definition people will continue to interpret sustainability in its literal form ie the maintenance of the status quo.

The content of the draft strategy report indicates a very strong bias towards ecological sustainability as opposed to the more balanced 'people, profits and planet' view. The integration of the three areas needs to be far more clearly enunciated in the final strategy document and the economic and social imperatives given much more weight throughout.

We suggest that a simple graphic is developed to depict the interconnectedness of 'people, profits and planet' and that a few key

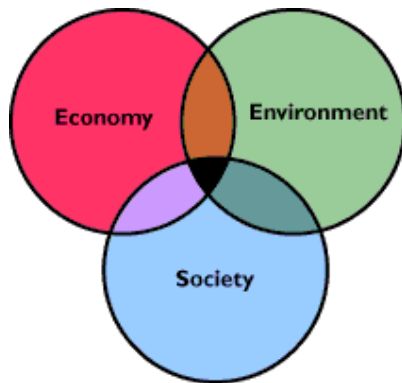
principles are developed to support the model. We have provided below a few examples of well-known sustainability principles and simple graphics:

**Example 1: 'The Natural Step' approach to ecological sustainability:**

1. Substances from the earth's crust can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
2. Substances produced by society can not systematically increase in the biosphere.
3. The physical basis for the productivity and diversity of nature must not be systematically deteriorated.
4. There must be fair and efficient use of resources to meet human needs.

Robert, Daly, Hawken and Holmberg

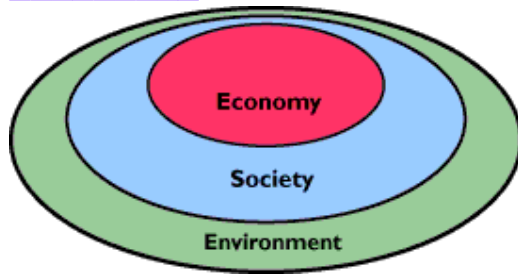
**Example 2:** Another figure that is frequently used to show the connections between the economy, the environment and the society.



A view of community that shows the links among its three parts: the economic part, the social part and the environmental part.

**Example 3:** An emerging view of sustainable community is the 'circles within circles' shown below:

A view of community as three concentric circles: the economy exists within society, and both the economy and society exist within the environment.



We are not recommending the adoption of the above models in their current form however believe that a simple, but clear, graphic depicting accompanied by a brief statement including values and key principles on one or two pages will encourage more people to adopt and support sustainable lifestyles.

### **The strategic approach**

We would also like to see a far more strategic and long-term approach taken to sustainability given that this is the crux of the issue. Rather than have a number of individual initiatives identified and then consolidated into a long-term operational plan, let's look at the big issues for the State and design a much longer term strategy which may incorporate issues not yet identified through the current consultative process.

In this context, it is imperative that the Premier, his Parliamentary colleagues and his Government infrastructure start to sing from the same song sheet. The media and the wider community will only readily embrace sustainability when its principles are succinctly and repeatedly explained, and particularly, a vision from these principles that show the benefits to society and to individuals.

## **2. Comment on specific aspects of the strategy from ACCA members**

### **Section 3**

#### **Partnerships for Action**

This section begins by stating that:

*Implementation of sustainability will require partnerships with a range of key stakeholders. Local Government in particular will be a key partner for implementing sustainability.*

The actions in this section incorporate local government in implementing sustainability principles at the State level including the development of a State/Local Government Common Sustainability Framework and a State-Local Government Sustainability Roundtable.

While endorsing this approach, there is also the opportunity to encourage partnerships at the local level particularly between business and local government. If business is to be responsible for economic, environmental and social bottom lines, their local impact is a good starting point.

Local Government not only represents the interests of the local community, but is made up from, and understands the needs of the local community. It can assist in a number of ways including:

- Identifying local concerns.
- Priority setting.
- Social and environmental impact management.
- Liaison with the local community.
- Planning.
- Setting and monitoring regulatory requirements.
- Performance measures of community good (quality of life).

Partnering at this level can provide tangible benefits within relatively short time frames and provide a stepping-stone to involvement in broad long-term strategies to achieve sustainability outcomes.

## **Section 7**

### **Sustainability and Social Issues**

Section 7 of the draft strategy discusses sustainability and community and the WA Council of Social Services has provided some excellent input. We are very keen to see social issues fully integrated in the final strategy including such issues as maintaining the Western Australian culture.

In addition to dealing with the practicalities already covered in section 7, there is an opportunity to design the kind of society and culture we want to leave as a legacy for WA's future generations.

This overall strategic design would then act as a blueprint for the operational areas described in the strategy and, through its development, may highlight other actions required to achieve the preferred future. It would assist in short and medium term decision-making, enabling those involved to test the long-term impact of their policy decisions. It would provide a framework to conduct a gap analysis as to what is desired for the future and what currently exists.

## **Section 8**

### **Training and Facilitation for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*The new global economy of sustainability requires new concepts to be applied in business and industry and this requires training, and facilitation of sustainability enterprises.*

There is an important link to the Education and Community Awareness for Sustainability section that discusses how general awareness of sustainability can be improved.

While it is acknowledged in the Strategy that the universities can play an important role in developing the skills required in the new disciplines centred on sustainability, it is proposed that TAFE is best placed to provide vocational training. As a result the actions in relation to training and facilitation focus mainly on the role TAFE can play in this process.

What appears to be missing is a strategy to develop an understanding of how sustainability principles can be embraced by the business community, and a lack of discussion on how government can facilitate this through financial encouragement or regulatory control. This must occur in order to create the demand for workers with skills in sustainability principles. What is of primary importance is the balance between what are, at least in the short-term, competing priorities between economic, social and environmental objectives.

The level of learning required in order to achieve this cannot occur in either universities or TAFE colleges. It requires exposing key people in business to the principles of sustainability so that they can learn of their benefits, but also providing practical means by which they can be implemented.

The knowledge base of sustainability is relatively small and new, is still being debated and explored and is not capable of forming an accepted body of knowledge that can be incorporated into educational programmes.

This is particularly true in relationship to business. The strategy needs to incorporate forums that allow sharing of ideas, debate and evaluation of possible courses of action. Organisations such as the ACCA can provide this and their role needs to be acknowledged and supported.

### **Financial Reform and Economic Instruments for Sustainability**

The section begins by stating:

*Economic theory has undergone major changes in recent times in response to challenges arising from the sustainability debate, particularly by environmental and ecological economists.*

There exists a real opportunity for the State Government to lead in this field by making as one of their objectives, that all government departments begin the journey to full cost accounting (using triple bottom line principles) in their

annual reporting. At the very least, seeking their involvement in using guidelines such as the Global Reporting Initiative would be a wonderful start.

The other process that Government could be active in is an ongoing education program among financial analysts with whom they deal. Education of analysts is critical to the success of sustainability. All surveys indicate public preferences lie with Social/Sustainable Investment Indices, yet traditional measures of success (or failure) still prevail among this key group's decision-making processes.

### **Eco-Efficiency and Industrial Ecology**

The section begins by stating:

*Industry ecology involves better planning, design and management of industrial activity, so that material, energy and water is not wasted and industrial opportunities are maximised. Industrial ecology requires a completely different approach to industrial development, where industrial facilities are planned, designed and managed to mimic ecological processes."*

The crux to the adoption by industry of sustainable directions lies in costs. Industry, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, will not alter their processes or industrial capital for a "feel-good" push. There needs real encouragement to help them understand that they need to manage their waste to manage their costs.

A considerable portion of costs to industry (other than wages and inputs) is spent on managing the outputs of industry, effluents, emissions and general waste. If the Government can encourage SMEs to become educated in the elimination of waste, rather than end-of-pipe solutions, then significant progress will be evident in coming years.

### **Industry Sustainability Covenants**

The section begins by stating:

*Government needs to go beyond traditional command and control regulation that minimises harm, and find new ways to encourage business to create economic, environmental and social benefits. The Western Australian Government will seek to do this by entering into 'sustainability covenants' with progressive industry associations and companies.*

The concept of covenants is commendable, but it is unlikely that they will capture the imagination of the public or press. They tend to be one of events with no potential for follow up by the media.

If sustainability is to become part of the mainstream public/industry agenda in Western Australia, then there will be the need for ongoing and imaginative “events” that provide a focus for the media and public.

In the United Kingdom, the government has initiated the “Quality of Life” Index, a series of broad indicators designed to give focus to the media and public on the issues of sustainability. Without some similar level of involvement from the State Government, gaining attention of stakeholders will be difficult in the short term.