

Dear Peter

My submission is attached.

Re my last paragraph: What do you think about the potential of the planned Bunbury Museum?

I have no idea what is going on. There is a million to spend this term and nothing seems to happen. I am worried that something is happening without us knowing and that the wrong direction is encased, if that is the right term, in concrete. Could you please look into it.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

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Submission to the

Sustainability Strategy: Consultation draft

My submission is more an assortment of related thoughts than a substantial dissection of the draft document, which appears to be very promising.

Re the Summary (pg.8 of draft)

I would like to see the 3rd paragraph expanded and repeated in various shapes throughout the policy as a remainder that there are compelling reasons why Western Australia should be part of the global agenda. We Western Australians are in the unfortunate situation that due to the way the country has responded to our activities since our arrival here we are virtually forced to rethink the way we live and use our resources, if we want to have a future comparable to our present.

This paragraph spells out many sad truths without resorting to direct criticism. I will be less diplomatic, because the truth is, that we have raped the country, we have not only been blind and greedy, but also stupid and very slow to learn.

A need to change our attitude

The Consultation Draft could say more about why there is the need for a sustainability strategy. It may be painful to reflect honestly on the reasons. But is it not true, that until we understand and admit our mistakes, intentional or not, we may not accept the need to re-evaluate our actions or the need to change our attitudes?

While many people will reject a serious talking to, many others might just accept past mistakes and try and develop a new attitude.

Sustainable use of natural resources

Draining in (of) the Coastal Plain - Salinity in the Coastal Plain –Hay Park, Bunbury

I have a specific concern about the damage done to aquatic systems and wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain by engineering solutions when there is seasonally a high water table. How many urban wetlands on the coastal plain are threatened by salinity?

Engineering solutions to wetlands or their periphery appear not always assessed sufficiently for their long term effect and probably not monitored either, yet the threat of salinity is very real as an example in Bunbury shows.

At Hay Park, Bunbury there is a well vegetated wetland which in its western part shows signs of incipient salinity. The hydrology of this wetland was affected by at least four events: the deviation towards the ocean of the upper 5-Mile Brook, channelling of the brook into a deep drain, removal of trees in anticipation of further alienation of the wetland, and the filling of other parts of the wetland to create playing fields.

Do we have to wait until this wetland with its unusual communities is beyond repair before remedial action is taken.

At the same time millions of litres of highly treated wastewater, which could possibly be used to re-dress the water balance, are pumped into the ocean only 3 to 4 km away.

More support for voluntary organisations and independent individuals

It is probably true to say that without the sustained vigilance and protests by voluntary groups and other independent voices the natural and man made environment of WA would be in a far worse state than it is today. This section of the community deserves recognition for driving the sustainability agenda for decades in the past and support to continue the work in the future.

‘Sustainability and the individual’

I would like to see a chapter about this subject matter added to the ‘proposed priority areas for action’ to dispel the impression that sustainability is a problem for government and other institutions only – an impression a superficial look at the consultation draft may create. There is a desperate need to encourage West Australians to take on sustainability as a personal philosophy or objective.

Of the many actions individuals can take only a few may be mentioned here

- Healthy eating and drinking
- Energy conservation at home
- Water wise gardening
- Waste reduction
- Weed awareness
- Reducing vandalism of all kinds
- Getting involved with management of the natural environment
- Casting a vote for sustainability aware candidates

What are the chances that we learn to consider the long term effects before we act?

The enormous problems with obesity among young Australians do not augur well for the future. Over indulging with food and sweet drinks appears to me symptomatic for a worsening attitude. We can only hope that the bad effects these people experience on them selves might teach them that short term thinking – or not thinking - can lead to long-term suffering.

Education and community awareness - The planned Bunbury Regional Museum

Education and community awareness needs to be promoted in all sorts of innovative and traditional ways. Threats of terrorism should not detract from the need for sustainability.

I would like serious consideration be given to the visual presentation of examples of the damage man has done to the WA environment in museums and other exhibitions. For too long the facts have been glossed over or avoided altogether.

The planned Bunbury Regional Museum may offer opportunities in this respect, although there has been a recent push (from unknown directions) to establish a Museum of Social History instead of a General Regional Museum which could also deal with the beauty and more unfortunate aspects of the natural environment. Bunbury being the regional centre has greatly benefited from the produce of the hinterland. It should accept that some of the projects and practices of the past have proven not to be sustainable. We have to wait and see whether it is mature enough.

Museums have to be respected and attract visitors. Do achieve that they have to be honest and hard hitting if necessary. The planned Bunbury Regional Museum could just be the institution that the sustainability strategy needs.