

29th January 2003

Dr Peter Newman
Director
Sustainability Policy Unit
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Government of Western Australia

Dear Peter,

RE: **COMMENT ON DRAFT STATE
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

Thank you for the opportunity to critically review your policy draft. To communicate concisely, and hopefully as useful as possible, I have broken my review into a number of headings:

The Initiative

This review of government policy is the most significant and comprehensive effort I have witnessed from any government, of any persuasion in WA, over my 30 years of professional and technical career. Without doubt you and your team deserve congratulations for serving the public, national and global interest in such a sincere, intelligent and forthright manner.

What is impressive is the depth and extent of the possibilities and opportunities for implementation opening for sustainability policy practice for Western Australia.

Without doubt it has international implications and serves the development of a strong reputation and ethical base.

Draft

It is encouraging that industry, professions and the public have been allowed to participate in the review, as well as the development of the concepts that make up this strategy document.

Detail

Although all government authorities see this document as a catalyst for change, it will undoubtedly be an evolutionary process with some ideas, objectives and emphasis changing with time. Irrespective of the rate of change, it will be an excellent benchmark document for all sectors of the WA community as these changes occur in the future.

So as not to duplicate comments about detail of the strategy at a micro level, further comments will be covered through my input at the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Research

I am sure the government realizes that solid policies and government regulations must be based on reality rather than perceptions, especially if it is going to deliver outcomes, reduce greenhouse gasses. For this reason, the strategy will only be successful if the process ensures comprehensive research before action occurs.

Therefore it is imperative that the government supports collaborative and independent research, analysis, surveys and reports. It is critical for this process to be successful in the medium and long term. This means the strategy should engender open minded, factual and not necessarily, quick reactionary responses.

Website

The one stop shop for government services, updates on policy outcomes and endorsement of industry/professional milestones is a very exciting development.

To ensure ongoing success, the chain of action needs to be monitored and reviewed regularly. The transition of policy, to endorsement, to practice, implementation, post completion evaluation, and back to policy reassessment and modification where necessary, is an important feature to incorporate, in the government system of implementing this strategy. In fact, the reassessment process should be denoted as part of the final strategy document as it evolves into policy.

It is recognized that the document communicates this intent and it is healthy politics. But, eternal vigilance will be needed. This Sustainability Policy Unit has a solid mandate for at least 20 years, to see the state, nation and global community through a very difficult period in world history. The WA Government has taken the lead in this approach and governments of all political persuasions in the future simply must continue the Gallop government's approach for the coming decades.

Role for Solar Energy

There is a tendency for the document not to define the role of passive, active use of solar energy in a sunny state like WA. There are enormous industrial and professional opportunities for the export market if there was a more defining proactive approach for promoting solar energy development and use. Perth has a very important role in this field in the first half of the 21st Century.

I recognize that it is covered briefly, but the setting of targets of 25% use over the next 30 years, would be welcomed and would set a global benchmark for other countries to the north of us to emulate. The document needs greater focus and emphasis in this area.

Further development of the strategy could be explored in conjunction with WASEA, ANZSES, ISES, technical resources through Murdoch University, the RAIA and

Institute of Engineers. Large industry lobbies should not have free reign of progress in this important visionary process.

Facilitation of Implementation

The support for public, professional education and training needs greater resources and attention, to deliver the outcomes that are desired and expressed in the strategy document. This needs to be a high priority of investigation, early in the process. It probably needs integration into the final document over the next 6 to 12 months. From a legal sense, facility for this evolving policy function must be integrated into the Parliamentary endorsed document when this occurs.

Final Comment

This is the starting point of a marathon race for all governments over the next 20 to 30 years. This initiative was long overdue in WA, but very welcomed.

It is encouraging and exciting to see democracy alive and well in Western Australia. My 30 years of experience in this area (as well as for my colleagues in ESD and solar energy industries) has in many ways been vindicated by this document. It is very pleasing!

Best regards

GARRY BAVERSTOCK
Principal