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Submission on the WA State Sustainability Strategy Consultation Draft

Overview

Green Skills is a major environmental organisation that operates a diverse range of environmental projects, training and employment programs in both Metropolitan and regional WA. It currently employs over 27 staff, which means that it is one of the largest of WA based environmental organisations.

Green Skills manages a wide range of environmental projects across WA. With offices in Denmark, Perth, Fremantle and Rockingham we work in landcare, bushcare, biodiversity restoration, energy conservation, water conservation, integrated farm forestry, organic farming, waste minimisation and environmental training and employment.

Green Skills is a non-profit incorporated community based group, registered as a charitable public benevolent institution. Green Skills courses, programs and projects have contributed to large scale tree planting, wetlands conservation, whole farm planning, bushland fencing and conservation, bushland management plans, organic horticulture, waste minimisation, energy conservation, eco-tourism and promotion of community-based development.

Green Skills strongly endorses the aims and goals of the report "Focus on the Future", which is the consultation draft for the Western Australia State Sustainability Strategy.

Green Skills programs are designed to help urban and rural communities move towards sustainability.

This submission provides information about Green Skills and its many projects.

In the final report, the Sustainability Strategy may wish to make reference to Green Skills as an organisation working towards sustainability in many ways.

MISSION STATEMENT

Green Skills Inc is committed to supporting the creation of ecologically sustainable employment by providing quality environmental training, employment services and management of environmental projects, while striving to be a model of a pro-active and professional community environmental training organisation providing inspiration and support to all who share a vision of green development.

OBJECTS

- To provide direct relief from poverty, sickness, suffering, destitution, misfortune, and distress to disadvantaged or unemployed persons within Western Australia and beyond, without discrimination;
- To do those things necessary to become and operate as a public benevolent institution;
- To promote and create opportunities for ecologically sustainable employment and to assist disadvantaged or unemployed persons in obtaining such employment;
- To provide quality environmental training;
- To foster and engage in practical projects which benefit the environment;
- To assist in the establishment of environmental enterprises;
- To promote and engage in research projects for the purpose of furthering any of the foregoing objects;
- To do all of the above in ways which are in harmony with nature, resource conserving, ecologically sound and socially responsible.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Green Skills commenced in 1989 under the auspices of Apace Aid Inc. and was formerly known as Greenhouse Corps. The first activity was a Farm Planning Course and the number and range of activities grew to such an extent that in 1998 Green Skills became an Incorporated Society in its own right.

Green Skills has expanded and diversified in those 14 years and provides training, project management and employment services in a wide range of environmental fields including landcare, bushcare, energy conservation, water conservation, waste minimisation, integrated farm forestry, organic farming and environmental employment. The focus is on practical, 'hands on' activity and integrating training with project management and employment.

Green Skills is a not for profit organisation with charitable status and offers tax deductability for sponsors and donors.

LANDCARE

The **Landcare Support Program** provides practical volunteer assistance with skilled supervision to assist landholders in the Great Southern with their landcare and biodiversity objectives. (Based in Denmark)

The **Bush Products Project** developed a database of over 100 Great Southern vegetation species and their properties for food, timber, cosmetics and pharmaceutical use. Four species with higher potential have been chosen from these and feasibility studies prepared. Further projects in developing trials in partnership with Aboriginal groups are a priority for Green Skills. (Based in Denmark office)

Work Experience Weeks provide an opportunity for students and the general public to gain hands on skills in landcare and bush regeneration. Green Skills has run 10 weeks in the last 2 years in the Great Southern, Kojonup and Rockingham. (Based in Denmark office)

Denmark to Nornalup Rail Trail. Green Skills has developed a feasibility study and proposal for a multi purpose trail along the old railway line between Denmark and Walpole. We have received funds for implementation of the first 10 kilometres of this Denmark – Walpole Rail Trail. (Based in Denmark office)

The **Small Property Advisory Service** in Rockingham has worked with landholders since 1999 to develop property plans and implement them. Property plans enable landholders to understand their soils, the geology and movement of water through their property so that they can *** (Based in Rockingham office)

Schools Landscaping Project involves the implementation of a plan to landscape Denmark High School using local species. A nursery is also being constructed. (Based in Denmark office)

Development of **Education Kit on the Baldvis Children's Forest** will produce a resource for use by local primary students comprising kits on Flora Identification, Herbarium Collection , Tree Measurement, Bird Identification, Wetlands Research and Frogwatch.(Based in Fremantle office)

Green Skills is a **Registered Training Organisation** delivering accredited training to 1600 trainees since 1997 from national training packages in Horticulture, Landcare, Farm Forestry and Workplace Training & Assessment. Green Skills is contracted to deliver training by the WA Department of Training, the Department of Justice, local government authorities, government agencies as well as community and landcare organisations. Green Skills has also prepared assessment and training materials.

Federal Government sponsored programs for involving young people in environmental work have included Green Corps, Landcare Environment Action Program and New Work Opportunities. Green Skills has managed 40 such programs and delivered practical hands on training to 760 program participants since 1991

The Landcare Highway route promotes sites that demonstrate salt land rehabilitation, creekline regeneration, ground water monitoring, water control and harvesting structures, road verge revegetation and farm forestry projects between Perth and Albany.

BUSHCARE

Our **Rural Town Reserves Project** assists shires and community groups to develop management plans to protect and preserve town reserves. In the City of Albany plans were developed for the Friends of Mt Adelaide and Mt Clarence and the Friends of Lake Seppings. For the Shire of Broomehill plans were developed for the Friends of Boot Rock. For the Shire of Cranbrook a revegetation plan was prepared for the Cranbrook sportsground and for the Frankland Nature Group. For the Shire of Denmark plans were prepared for the Friends of Strickland Street Reserve. For the Shire of Gnoweangerup plans were prepared for the Friends of Aylmore Reserve , the Ongerup Walk Trails Group. For the Shire of Katanning plans were prepared for the Friends of Myrtle Benn Reserve. For the Shire of Plantagenet plans were prepared for the Friends of Government Dam Reserve and the Kendenup Bushland Group. (Based in Denmark office)

Our **Southern Plants Project** promotes the use of local indigenous plants in gardens and parks. A species list of plants and their characteristics in the Great Southern has been prepared and distributed by email and through the City of Albany, through displays at wildflowers shows in Albany and Mt Barker and at open gardens in Denmark. Species lists have been specially developed for the City of Albany, the Shires of Plantagenet and Denmark and the towns of Walpole and Torbay. (Based in Denmark office)

Our **Crown Tramway Reserve Project** is assisting with the implementation of management plans for a regionally significant corridor identified in the Perth Greenways Plan. The corridor connects Beeliar and Serpentine Regional Parks and has been recognised by three local councils, Cities of Cockburn and Rockingham and Town of Kwinana. (Based in Fremantle office)

A Bushwatch program operated for 3 years on the south coast.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Green Skills undertakes **Energy Audits** for local governments and businesses. 6 energy audits have been undertaken in conjunction with Healey Engineering for the City of Gosnells. (Based in Fremantle office)

Green Skills delivers **Training in Energy Efficiency and Global Warming** to general staff of local governments. The cities of Gosnells, Kwinana and Canning have taken part. Further training is being developed in transportation, purchasing, waste minimisation (green waste, waste to landfill, composting, mulching), building design, appliances, office equipment, renewable energy and community awareness. (Based in Fremantle office)

Workshops have been run in Mt Barker and Albany under the **Cool Communities** project to encourage householders and businesses to reduce their energy consumption. They include the promotion of energy efficient products. (Based in Albany office)

Green Skills **Cities for Climate Protection (CCP)** officer assists local governments attain their CCP milestones 1-4, this involves undertaking energy audits, staff training and developing and implementing Local Action Plans (Based in Fremantle office)

Training in **Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency** have been run for householders, supermarkets and hospitals.

WATER CONSERVATION

Our **South Coast Wetlands Conservation Program** aims to complete two new wetland catchment suite management plans a year in conjunction with local landcare groups and farmers. Six such plans have been prepared and have accelerated and focussed whole of catchment fencing, revegetation and drainage activities in a much more effective way. We have run an average of two workshops per year, with attendances averaging 25 – 45 people. (Based in Denmark office)

Wetlands Partnership Program with Water & Rivers Commission develops Wetland managements plans, assists with wetlands fencing, seedlings for revegetation, monitoring, surveying and field days. (Based in Denmark office)

Torbay Catchment Communication Plan is one of four case studies in Australia. Funding over four years has been obtained from the National Rivers Consortium to develop and implement a comprehensive restoration plan for the Torbay catchment. The project will identify a future vision for the catchment community, get better information about the state of the catchment, the sources of nutrients and how to manage the wetlands that receive water from the catchment, develop a plan to improve drainage management, prepare a plan to restore all the waterways in the catchment, implement activities across the catchment in accordance with the plan and monitor and evaluate progress. (Based in Denmark office)

The **Healthy Waterways Project** is developing a catchment action plan, establishing important revegetation demonstration sites and a water quality monitoring program. It works with landholders and the wider community to implement on ground action that will contribute to improving water quality in the Peel and Birrega Main Drains, Serpentine River and Peel Harvey Estuary in the long term. (Based in Rockingham office)

Waterway Foreshore Surveys have been undertaken since 1997 to document and digitally map the vegetation condition, weed occurrences, stream bank condition, whether fencing is required and revegetation requirements for important catchments. These surveys have helped landcare groups apply for a large amount of funding for prioritised fencing, weed management and revegetation activities. These have helped reduce nutrient run off into estuaries, provide corridors and address salinisation.

INTEGRATED FARM FORESTRY

Our **Farm Forestry Program** has been operating since 1997 and provides landholders with 22 working demonstrations where trees are integrated with agriculture for application on their own farms. Demonstration sites include a range of different rainfall areas in the Great Southern. Many field days and workshops are run on these sites (Based in Denmark office)

Green Skills delivers accredited training in some components of **Cert 2 and 3 of Forest and Forest Products** as well as short courses in Portable Sawmill Operations, Revegetation Production, Seed Collection and Plant Propagation. 5 courses have been held in the last 2 years (Based in Denmark office)

Master Tree Growers Courses include information about plantation establishment, maintenance and value adding. (Based in Denmark office)

ORGANIC FARMING

Organic Industry Development Program. Green Skills employs an Industry Development Officer to develop networks between all sectors of this growing industry. A database is being developed to gather baseline data of the current number of growers, the hectares and commodities grown etc. and for dissemination of valuable information. Green Skills has facilitated the Organic Growers Association to become the peak body representing the needs of the industry - commercial growers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers to the government and the public.

Information and certification workshops are held in the regions and an inaugural state conference on organics and biodynamics will be held in Perth in June, 2003.

A Business Development Officer is also employed to develop supply chains between growers/suppliers and retailers in three commodities: organic beef, apples and olives. (Based in Fremantle office)

Two **Organic Horticulture Training** courses were run in the Great Southern in 1995 and 1996 for six months and 10 participants each incorporating a demonstration farm and short courses on composting and Marketing for the Small Grower.

WASTE MINIMISATION

Our **Denmark Recycling Centre** provides a tip shop at the Denmark Shire's Waste Transfer Station for collection and sale of reusable donated household items and a circuit for recycling building materials. An education program is an important component of the Centre. A worm farm converts green waste and kitchen scraps into worms and worm castings. A composting trial was also undertaken at this site and a report made available to the public describing the inputs required and the outputs achieved. (Based in Denmark office)

Green Skills is managing an **Office Paper Recycling** project to encourage businesses to maximise the collection and recycling of high grade paper. This has resulted in more than 3 tonnes of office paper being diverted from landfill and made into recycled paper products. (Based in Denmark office)

Green Skills organised and hosted a **Waste Forum** for the Great Southern region in Albany in 2001. 70 People from the region attended including agency representatives and members of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL EMPLOYMENT

Green Jobs Survey. Green Skills is surveying employers in WA to determine the rates and areas of growth in the industry, and the training needs and other support required to assist the environmental industry develop. (Based in Fremantle office)

Joblink. Green Skills continues to provide a Joblink service to people looking for environmental work and training. Clients are provided with information about opportunities for work experience and voluntary work, which assist in developing skills and increasing job placement possibilities. (Based in Denmark and Fremantle offices)

Ecojobs. Green Skills provides a labour hire service of skilled environmental workers for landcare projects primarily to local governments. This has provided casual employment and paid work experience to hundreds of staff. (Based in Fremantle and Denmark offices)

Employment Strategy for Gosnells/Armadale Region with funds from the Regional Assistance Program, a Project Officer is developing a plan for this region incorporating the use of traineeships, Green Corps projects and local enterprise development. A survey is being conducted among environmental businesses in the region to gauge local training needs and promote environmental traineeships. (Based in Fremantle office)

OTHER

Agenda 21 Rainbow Coast Regional Council. The RCRC is a body which examines certain local government issues on a regional basis and was used as a vehicle for the Local Agenda 21 project precisely because it was a regional body. It comprises the City of Albany and the Shires of Denmark and Plantagenet. Members of the RCRC are the CEO's from each LGA plus the Mayor/Shire President and another Councillor. Green Skills is assisting this regional council develop best practice management in road design, construction and maintenance and rural land use planning. (Based in Albany office)

A wide range of courses have been held for the general public:

- **A New Uses for Bluegums** seminar was held in Albany. Around 70 people attended
- **A Fox & Rabbit Control** seminar was held in the Great Southern and 90 people attended. Subsequently 5 smaller workshops were held.
- **Environmentally Friendly Lifestyles.** 30 workshops were run in schools and Neighbourhood Learning Centres in Perth to a total of 300 people between 1991 and 1993 on topics including; Waste Minimisation & Recycling, Energy & Water Conservation, Non toxic Cleaning, non toxic Pest Control.
- Two **Negotiation Skills** courses were held in Esperance with 16 people attending each.
- 12 **Facilitation Skills** workshops have been held throughout the state over the years with around 12 people attending each. Special sessions were also held on media and presentation skills.
- **Strategic Planning Sessions** were delivered at the State Landcare Conference to about 20 people

Community Arts Projects have involved artists, Green Skills and the community in Denmark working together to create events and public art with an Environmental theme. The entrance to the Wetlands Education Centre in Denmark was created this way.

Publications include a large number of management plans for wetlands, rivers, inlets and reserves and also:

Green Skills published the '**Wilson Inlet**' book in 2002 with funding from the Gordon Reid Foundation for Conservation. Information towards the book was obtained from many sources including the Water and Rivers Commission,

'Going Green' was published by Green Skills in 1990 with the help of the Minister for the Environment to provide easy to read information on our impact on the impact on the earth and how to lessen this impact.

'Ecotourism Methodology' was based on Green's Pool in William Bay National Park to provide a model methodology for assessing the environmental impacts of Ecotourism in Australia. It was published with assistance from the National Ecotourism Program.