

Sustainability Chairman
Sustainability Policy Unit
Department of the Premier and Cabinet
197 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Sir,

RE: DRAFT STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (*Authority*) provides the following submissions in relation to the Draft State Sustainability Strategy (*Strategy*).

The Authority agrees with the overall vision for the Strategy and feels the word 'sustainable' should be included in front of "statutory policies and plans".

The Authority is of the view that its vision for the marine environment should be included in the vision provided on page 125 of the Strategy. The Authority's vision is as follows:

"Healthy, sustainable marine and estuarine ecosystems"

Objectives

The Authority is of the view that an objective should be added for marine planning and suggests the following.

- Establish effective marine planning throughout all State waters (fresh, marine & estuarine) to enable appropriate freshwater, marine and estuarine biodiversity management, such as in process in the terrestrial environment.

Actions underway include:

- Last dot point should read: "The Marine Parks and Reserves Authority, together with the Department of Conservation..."

Proposed Actions

Any actions which are to be finalised, in the Authority's experience and view, need to be reasonable and auditable.

The Authority is concerned about the suggestion that for many of the actions it is proposed that protection of societal and environmental values be undertaken through instruments of State planning policies (SPP's) which are merely a relevant consideration which often can be ignored if appropriate. For many such values the Authority is of the view that there needs to be rigorous legislative backing to ensure the proper protection and management of those values. As a result, the Authority is of the view that the SPP's suggestion is inappropriate as a sole solution. The full suite of mechanisms available at law and as policy should be considered to protect the values once the actions are specified.

One such mechanism is to ensure that the development of the marine reserve system occurs through the CALM Act or the proposed Biodiversity Bill. The CALM Act mechanism provides for the establishment *inter alia*, of reserves with legally

enforceable zoning classes, whilst it appears that the proposed biodiversity Bill is set to protect biodiversity, including the mechanisms of conservation reserves systems and that MPRA or whatever body looks after the integrated marine reserves system should be set up and fully resourced through this.

That development has been constrained in Western Australia. Recommendations which will arise from the current review into the MPRA should be incorporated into or aligned with the State Sustainability Strategy.

A critical component to that will be a commitment from Government to properly resource the MPRA so that it can fulfil its statutory functions.

Also, the Authority feels that the system of concurrence of three different ministers and agencies involved at various stages of the creation of a marine conservation reserve and its associated political issues has significantly delayed creation of such reserves. The Authority feels it is imperative for government to urgently review this process and to actively pursue a mechanism to solve such issues.

As a result, the Authority recommends the following as additional actions on pages 125/126:

- Ensure the Marine Park and Reserves Authority is properly resourced to enable it to discharge its functions under the CALM Act, particularly with respect to the creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine reserve system;
- Work with Commonwealth for regional marine planning beyond 3 nm to ensure effective and integrated marine planning and adequate, comprehensive and representative marine planning.
- For government to urgently review the three ministers concurrence process and to actively pursue a mechanism to solve such issues to successfully allow speedier creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine conservation reserve system.

Indicators and targets

- Dot point two should read: "Proportion of the State's marine ecosystems with designated ecosystem-based management plans." Ecosystem-based management is a sustainable system incorporating social, cultural, economic and ecosystem values and is now in process of adoption internationally and nationally. This should be followed through in dot points one, three and four.

Other recommendations from the Authority are as follows.

Maintain Biodiversity section (p80 – 85)

Vision

- Overall Vision statement (p83): this statement is very wordy and should have been simplified; also it appears to relate to terrestrial biodiversity only. Biodiversity conservation should include all types of biodiversity, including the geodiversity it is dependent upon.

Objectives

- In the second objective (p83) “marine parks” should read “marine conservation reserves” or “marine reserves” to allow less restriction, as in WA marine parks are one on type of marine protected area.

Proposed Actions

- 2.10 should include a marine and estuarine component. It is sadly lacking at present.

Indicators and targets

First dot point: delete “the extent to”. As a target we should aim to have such a system established and then monitor the extent as an indicator. Should also add “integrated terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine” between “representative and “conservation”. WA is well forward with establishment of a terrestrial system and is well behind with the rest.

- Establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative integrated terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine conservation reserve system for WA within 20 years. Monitor the extent of establishment and review as an indicator.

The Authority looks forward to being involved in the future development of the Strategy.

Yours sincerely

Dr Barry Wilson
CHAIR
MARINE PARKS AND RESERVES AUTHORITY

19 March 2003