

Submission to the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy

Comments and recommendations

By Michael Bell

State Sustainability

Overview of selected Strategic Actions

Comments;

n Demonstrate leadership;

I realise major policy and legislative changes are required but I urge you to fulfill your commitments to the fullest possible extent.

n The leadership shown in the past has been a disgrace as many Acts of Parliament are ancient and contradictory, I applaud your actions in having the courage to start this process to bring about change that is many years overdue.

Value and Protect our Environment and Ensure the Sustainable Management of Natural resources;

- I have personal experience where a Government agency that is an environment body and also in charge of development of a natural resource, has gone against all their literature and environmental values, to the detriment of the environment.
- In my experience it is very difficult to “get a leopard to change his spots” In such cases it may be necessary to employ different persons that are willing to uphold the legislation.

Plan and Provide Settlements that Reduce Ecological Footprint and Enhance our Quality of Life.

Household water Management;

- Until recently it was possible to buy devices like suds save washing machines (I have been told they are no longer available)

I have one and it saves 50% or more of the water used in washing, people should be made use these water saving machines!

Overcome car dependence;

- This goal is only practical for large city populations, country people may always be dependent on cars, perhaps changing the fuel or to electric for country cars would be a more achievable goal!

List of actions;

Sustainability assessment

1.1 One environmental agency I know of has the capacity to carry out environmental protection measures now, according to the Act, but is willing to trade off the environment because they mistakenly think litigation will result if they act to protect the environment! (or at least that is the story they are spinning)

They are making decisions based on ignorance and fear and sacrifice the environment!

Institutional changes

1.4 It would appear that some agencies are unaware of State, Commonwealth and International agreements that currently bind them to environmental agreements.

Embracing sustainability

- 1.7 Government should commit its fleet vehicles to be totally, gas or electric powered.
(Gas powered vehicles have been made for about 100 years)

Partnership for action

- 1.8 The present system where a local government can be completely ignored, kept in the dark and left out of environmental decisions in their area is a disgrace!
- 1.25 at present the C.S.I.R.O. advise against deep water bores for the Gnangarra mound and the Water Authority is going ahead regardless!

Population Development and Environmental Technology

- 2.1 We should explore and embrace **global** environmental technologies.
(environmental conservation is not new, England and Europe are many years ahead)
If development of our coastal wetlands is put into perspective, as to how much of the original wetland areas have been developed, I am sure that there would only be a small percentage left.

I think that all the canal developments that have taken place in the last 10-15 years is a disgrace and environmental vandalism!!

It would seem that authorities are willing participants in this vandalism and when money is involved do not hesitate to sacrifice the environment.

Maintaining our Biodiversity

- 2.6 As we can't fulfill our present commitments to global treaties now, how do you suggest new initiatives are enforced ?

Is a body going to be set up to assess developments that are too small to be considered by the E.P.A. but could have a significant, cumulative effect ?

- 2.8 How can one branch of government (the E.P.A.) say that development should proceed at the Cape Range Ningaloo area, and another branch say that the area deserves World Heritage Listing? They seem to be opposing views!

- 2.14 Research **ways to stop**, not limit marine pests, perhaps the use of filtered and tested ballast water would be a start.

- 2.18 Commit to changing the Government fleet to Gas powered vehicles

- 2.19 Political factors should not influence power supply decisions.

Sustainable Agriculture

- 3.3 Local Government needs to be involved agricultural management.

Farm waste is a big problem, silage plastic disposal is one major area of this, in America they compact it in something like a old square bailer, then it is recycled into various

plastic products, such a scheme here would probably need some form of Government assistance because of viability problems, but it would save a large environmental problem!

Some farms need a program of tree planting to replace trees that have been killed from soil compaction, superphosphate or ringbarking by stock.

Farmers need to be paid to look after remnant bush etc. as an incentive to do so, or the pressure to ever increase their cleared land or stock grazing areas through decades of declining farm income and declining rainfall will put pressure on farmers to use these areas.

Salinity is a huge problem that will destroy everything living thing we know today if it is not stopped.

City people need to be educated that this is the areas that our food production comes from!!!! And is a large part of our economy.

Weeds in terms of area are many times a bigger problem than salinity and have removed very large areas from economic agricultural production.

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

3.14 I would have thought the Leschenault Inlet was a protected area, as there are migrating birds of which W.A. is a international signatory in agreements to protect, and there are rare fish species like Lampreys. But it would seem that this is not enough to stop suggestions that Collie river water should be siphoned off to Perth.

Protecting Aquatic Systems

3.36 Triple bottom line decisions can be implemented now but agencies refuse to do so!

3.37 Where is the required involvement of local government in this process ?

Sustainable Settlements

Maintaining Urban and Regional Growth;

4.1 how can country towns irrigation remain sustainable if their dam water is siphoned off to Perth ?

4.6 Protection needed from the Water Authority grabbing water from where ever the like, for instance the Gngarra mound and the Wellington Dam!

At Gngarra C.S.I.R.O. advise of very serious implications, what happened to the precautionary principle?

Integrating Land Use And Balanced Transport

4.24 Work to remove inequity of taxation.

One thing that appears to be unbalanced is the situation that, it seems trucks are favored over rail for, all goods transport. This is partly because rail transport is said to be too costly,

Of course it is not competitive when you consider the following;

Most Rail transport costs are transparent and easily understood whereas;

Road transport costs are blurred into public road costs, as the trucks are not paying for the cost of damage and wear and tear that they cause to the roads!!

Therefore road transport is at an advantage and does not have to pass this cost on to the consumer.

These costs are left to the rate payers of those areas, these Shires in many cases struggle to maintain these roads, and this will be made more costly now by the current duty of care legislation that Councils must comply with!

Another cost is in human life, trucks seem to always be in the news in traffic accidents.

Less trucks means less accidents.

In many areas the speed that trucks can travel seems appropriate but in many more these speeds seem too fast.

Trucks fully loaded are allowed to travel faster than a car towing a small empty trailer,!!

Preserving Air Quality

As the owner of a gas powered car I cannot recommend too highly the benefits of gas, but I am hearing constantly that there is not enough price difference to be worthwhile, there is not enough outlets or it is not suitable for their car.

I drive a 1975 Holden V8 on gas only, and I manage! In the last 4 years I have traveled to a Station 400kms NE of Carnarvon and to the Eastern States three times, including Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Provide better incentives for private vehicle owners to convert to gas by the following;

1. Put Pressure on car manufacturers to make gas powered cars at competitive prices.

Perhaps tax relief on gas cars or **increased tax on petrol cars** can make these cars more appealing.

Support these measures for the environmental benefits and not for political economic reasons. (use the triple bottom line principle)

2. Through taxes, even out the difference or increase the cost of petrol cars.

3. Advertise this cheaper gas on T.V. along with the current petrol prices.

4. Detach linkages with petrol price rises. (it isn't a petrol product)

Find out why gas price varies wildly, 41c to 95c per litre (cheaper in Melbourne and Queensland than Perth)

5. have slow fill devices removed from fuel stations.

6. More gas outlets to be installed

7. Educate people about the benefits of gas only as a better fuel

(petrol and gas cars are a compromise, straight gas can be more efficient)

Our Water future

4.58 It is, or has been illegal, for some Perth hills residents to have rainwater tanks.

There should be limitations placed on Swimming Pools, new swimming pools near the Ocean unless supplied water from a licenced bore should be banned.

A financial incentive should be paid to remove swimming pools.

Spas should be discouraged.

Our water is too cheap, the true environmental and social cost needs to be taken into account.

People do not appreciate or realize how little water is available and that it is not an endless resource.

Manufacturers to introduce throughout their product range devices such as suds save washing machines and water efficient dishwashers that do much to save water.

Sustainable Energy

4.65 **Change to gas NOW!** Trial other fuels latter! See above.

Housing sustainability

Implement practices where **native gardens are phased in** and water dependent gardens are discouraged!

Draftsmen, planners and domestic appliance manufacturers to be forced to adopt safe working products and install them in safe places.

It is dangerous to have any oven above waist height. (I am sure it would not be tolerated in a industrial situation, hot foods are easily spilt over the operator)

Fixed bottom hinging oven doors are dangerous, retractable doors are much safer!

Education and Community Awareness for Sustainability

5.25 When new schools are built, retain close bushland/ wetlands for students to study.

Eco- Efficiency and Industrial Ecology

6.14 Despite what is claimed in the media, I have experienced first hand that recycling is not working as it should, one of the problems for country areas, is distance to further processing.

Resource recovery and processing centres could overcome some of these transport problems.

Michael Bell
R.M.B. 209 Ferguson Road
Ferguson W.A. 6236
Ph/ Fax 97283123