

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

12.2.03

re: WA State Sustainability Strategy

Firstly, we would like to congratulate the WA State Govt for its foresight and ground-breaking approach in drafting a whole of government sustainability strategy. To recognise the importance of a coordinated approach to ensuring the health and vibrancy of our communities and plant is not only commendable but very necessary.

Youth Arts Network WA (YAN) is a relatively new organisation and has arisen from the need for an information, advocacy and development network for Youth Arts in this state, as reflected in the Young People and the Arts Policy developed by ArtsWA in consultation with the local arts industry.

In the attached response, we have focused on a couple issues from a youth arts perspective. We would like to acknowledge the “young people” and their arts and cultural practices are incredibly diverse – we have attempted to represent diverse range but do not pretend we can cover all young people’s views

YAN would be happy to be a part of developing any amendments to the draft, or implementing the final strategies. Should you have any further queries regarding this response, please feel free to contact me.

With Respect,

Sunny Drake  
Coordinator  
Youth Arts Network WA

## **Response to WA State Sustainability Strategy Draft Youth Arts Network WA**

### **CONSULTATION**

*Consulting Citizens: A Resource Guide* identifies young people as a group that require special consideration in consultation processes. Not only do community issues impact massively on young people, they are also less likely to respond to traditional means of consultation. Whilst it fails to provide any guidelines or proposed implementation strategies, the *Consulting Citizens* guide has also identified that creative consultation processes need to be used with young people

Our concern with the draft strategy is that it may not represent and incorporate young people's views and valuable contributions due to the consultation processes employed. Upon questioning a staff member involved in the draft strategy, we were informed that there had been some opportunities for young people to be involved in the formation of the strategy. These included involvement of Murdoch University students, a workshop at the Student's and Sustainability Conference in July 2002 in Perth, and a workshop at the Youth Affairs conference in May 2002. These are certainly good beginnings or engaging young people in the consultation process. However, these workshops would have attracted a very specific demographic of young people, and thus our concern remains that a wide range of young people did not have the opportunity to be involved due to a lack of appropriate opportunities.

Young people cannot be expected to come to a seminar run by people they may not relate to, in a style they do not enjoy, or if it has been advertised through inappropriate means. We appreciate the difficulties in engaging young people in consultation and other processes – it can require additional resources, but more often than not requires a whole different way of thinking. Ongoing consultation can be integrated with other sustainability goals – as the style that many young people respond to includes more 'hands-on' and creative approaches. Thus actually engaging young people in a myriad of sustainability related activities can provide a natural avenue to also conduct consultation.

#### *Recommendation:*

- Develop and implement best practise guides for appropriately consulting with young people.  
Involve key organisations and young people themselves in the development of these guides  
Revise them regularly.

### **Action**

In the chapter of Multiculturalism & Sustainability, an objective is stated: "Developing strategies for public sector services to respond to the needs of diverse groups of clients, including newly arrived migrants, refugees, women, seniors and youth".

However, there is neither any actions underway, nor any proposed actions to address the development of these strategies for responding to the needs of *young people*.

*Recommendations:*

- “Cultural awareness training across the public sector” to specify and include training re: young people’s strengths, needs and issues.
- Increased opportunities for the public sector to network and develop partnerships with various government and non-government organisations representing young people (and other multi-cultural groups)

**Youth Arts Network Involvement**

YAN would be happy to assist in developing appropriate advocacy and consultation processes, and the development and implementation of other strategies.

**References:**

*Consulting Citizens: A Resource Guide*, Department of Premier and Cabinet (April 2002)