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Your Ref: 11839
Enquiries: Paul Watt

26 February 2003

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Department of the Premier and Cabinet
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Dear Ross

RESPONSE TO THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft State Sustainability Strategy. The City of Wanneroo considered the draft Strategy at its meeting of 25/2/03 and resolved,

“That Council ENDORSES the comments made in the comment section of this report as its submission to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the draft State Sustainability Strategy”.

A copy of the report to Council is attached as the City's response to the draft State Sustainability Strategy. Should you have any queries on any of the issues raised please contact Paul Watt on 9405 5473.

Yours sincerely

MANAGER - PLANNING SERVICES

PD05-02/03 Submission on the Draft State Sustainability Strategy

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|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| File Ref: | S09/0072V01 |
| Responsible Officer: | Director, Planning and Development |
| Disclosure of Interest: | Nil |
| Attachments: | 1 |

Issue

To consider a submission on the State Government's draft State Sustainability Strategy.

Background

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has prepared a draft State Sustainability Strategy, which proposes a series of principles, visions, goals and actions to assist the State achieve a more sustainable future.

The draft Strategy has been released for public comment until 28 February 2003. A full copy of the document has been placed in the Elected Members reading room.

Detail

While many definitions of sustainability have been used in the past, the draft Strategy has defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of current and future generations through simultaneous environmental, economic and social improvement". The strategy emphasises the importance of integrating these factors and achieving them simultaneously. The strategy suggests that unless all three factors are achieved, an activity cannot ultimately be considered to be sustainable.

The draft Strategy attempts to cover a wide spectrum of issues of Governmental responsibility and as such is a sizable document, covering many different areas of specialist knowledge. The draft Strategy is based around a framework comprising eleven principles, six long term visions, each with a goal, and 42 priority action areas.

The sustainability principles incorporate not only the traditional environmental aspects, but also attempt to incorporate social and economic dimensions. The first seven principles are known as foundation principles that establish the basis of sustainability through long term economic health, equity, ecological integrity, efficiency, community, net benefit and common good. The last four principles are process related that stress the need for integration, transparency and engagement, precaution and gradual change toward the broad vision.

The draft strategy then sets out a series of six visions being governance, global contributions, natural recourses, settlements, community and business, which place

the principles in a more practical context. Each vision is then presented with a goal and, in total, 42 priority areas for action and a total of some 249 action items.

The strategy framework is set out in **Attachment 1**.

Consultation

The draft strategy was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, through means such as a seminar series, university research case studies and background papers, invitations for written submissions and a public exhibit as part of the MuseumLink programme.

The draft strategy document was released for public comment in September 2002, initially until 10 January 2003, however the comment period was subsequently extended until 28 February 2003.

A working group from the City's Environmental Advisory Committee provided input on the recommended responses and then endorsed, in principle, the comments raised in this report.

Comment

The draft Strategy represents a significant step for Government. The preparation of the draft Strategy is therefore commended, as this is the first attempt to look comprehensively at the issue of sustainability on a state wide basis, across all sectors of the State Government.

The draft strategy compliments efforts made by the City in its Strategic Plan and other strategies such as its Local Environmental Strategy.

A series of comments on the draft strategy have been prepared which is recommended to form the basis of the City's submission. These comments are grouped together as either general comments on the strategy as a whole, or relate to a specific section.

General Comments:

- 1.1) Resourcing Implications - Implementation of the strategy will require adequate and ongoing funding. Many Government agencies in the environmental sector are already suffering from inadequate resourcing, with the provision of additional requirements likely to exacerbate this.
- 1.2) Local Government - The strategy seems to indicate that additional responsibilities will be required of Local Government, but does not generally specify how these will be resourced. If the State Government intends to increase Local Government responsibilities it should identify how it will provide support to achieve these actions. Particular attention should be given to those Local Governments with an inherently smaller capacity to implement such sustainability initiatives. The development of partnerships between the

community, Local Government and the State Government could improve communication and may assist in this regard.

- 1.3) Vague Action Statements - Many of the proposed actions are vague and non-committal. Measurement of the level of success or implementation of these actions will therefore be difficult without specifically noted and appropriate key performance indicators.
- 1.4) Responsible Authority - Each action item needs to have an identified responsible authority to ensure that it is carried out.
- 1.5) Timeframes - Each action item should be allocated a timeframe for implementation. The strategy should be reviewed regularly, reflecting on the degree of implementation of the strategy. The strategy also needs a greater acknowledgement that this is just the start of the process where practices, processes, policies etc are constantly improved. Achieving sustainability will require a constant effort and re-evaluation, it will not be achieved at the end of the lifespan of this strategy. It is suggested that a new action should be included recommending that the strategy be formally reviewed and updated in 5 years.
- 1.6) Actions Underway – The actions identified in the draft strategy as being underway should also be included in the list of action items to ensure that they are completed. Some of these actions, such as the Environmental Protection (Swan Coastal Plain Wetlands) Policy and the Future Perth project, have been in progress for a considerable time.
- 1.7) Summary document - The strategy is a long document which takes considerable time to digest. The action items represent what is proposed to take place to achieve sustainability and therefore represents the most important part of the document. While the background information provided is beneficial it is suggested that an executive summary, comprising a summary of what sustainability means, the sustainability framework and a full list of the action items with responsible agencies and timeframes, should be prepared and inserted at the beginning of the document.
- 1.8) Integration with Federal programmes and activities - The effective implementation of the Strategy will require close co-operation with the Federal Government, with it being unclear as to how this will occur in many of the Strategies.
- 1.9) The City strongly supports the principles and visions of sustainability as outlined in the strategy framework.
- 1.10) The City strongly supports the necessity for the State to take a strategic approach to sustainability planning by making contributions to global sustainability.

Specific Comments:

- 2.1) Action 1.4 - Instead of just assisting relevant agencies to incorporate sustainability practices into their policy functions this should be required of all agencies.
- 2.2) Action 1.7 - Other initiatives that could be included on this list include support for Greensmart which is being developed by the Housing Industry Association, developing a State Government Environmental Management System, and support for eco-efficiency and cleaner production
- 2.3) Action 1.29 - An on-line information system can be a useful and informative tool, however an equity issue exists that such information is not uniformly accessible. Consideration should be given to means in which to reduce this inequity.
- 2.4) Action 1.30 - Annual sustainability awards are an excellent idea. As there are many different facets that go towards creating sustainability it is suggested that several awards should be granted, with each focusing on one of the identified visions rather than one general award.
- 2.5) A possible key performance indicator for overall assessment of progress towards sustainability could be the use of ecological footprint analysis, both per capita and total.
- 2.6) Maintaining Our Biodiversity (Action Items 2.6 – 2.14) - Local Government and community groups undertake and support significant bushland restoration works throughout the State. The development of a bushland restoration manual (similar to the Water and Rivers Commission's existing River Restoration Manual) collating and updating existing information may enhance the capacity of these groups to undertake this work. Active support should be given to these community groups to assist with environmental works.
- 2.7) Maintaining Our Biodiversity (Action Items 2.6 – 2.14) - The State Weed Plan and Environmental Weed Strategy for WA should be implemented with appropriate resources allocated to it.
- 2.8) Maintaining Our Biodiversity (Actions 2.6 – 2.14) - There are several widespread and significant plant declines occurring throughout the State (eg Wandoo, Flooded gum and Tuart), with the causes of these being unknown. Appropriately funded research should be conducted into the causes of these declines to enable appropriate conservation measures to be implemented.
- 2.9) Responding to Greenhouse and Climate Change (Action Items 2.15 – 2.23) - Support to assist all Local Governments to undertake Greenhouse Gas Reduction programmes should be considered.

- 2.10) Responding to Greenhouse and Climate Change (Action Items 2.15 – 2.23) - The State Government should acknowledge that Australia should ratify the Kyoto Protocol and promote this with the Federal Government. This position should be endorsed in Policy. The State Government should also adopt a role in assisting and equipping Local Government and the broader community, with better information and resources to advance in unison on such initiatives. For example a hydrogen economy conference for Local Government and the broader community may empower the early delivery of the objectives sought by the State Government.
- 2.11) Oil Vulnerability (including Action Item 2.24) - To assist the transition from the oil based economy, support for research into alternative fuels should be encouraged.
- 2.12) Sustainable Agriculture (Action Items 3.1 – 3.9) - The salinity crisis will result in the loss of much biodiversity and farming land with resulting negative social and economic implications. The scale of the problem is far too widespread and complex to expect community groups, farmers and rural shires to tackle. The State Government needs to ensure that sustained and adequate resourcing is applied to ensure that this issue is effectively addressed.
- 2.13) Sustainable Forestry and Plantations (Action 3.23) - Consideration should be given to the preparation of an Environmental Protection Policy or similar statutory policy to control the spread of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (dieback). This is of particular importance as it is recognised by Environment Australia as a ‘*Threatening Process*’ that is likely to cause extinctions. The proposed development and implementation of rehabilitation plans for dieback affected areas should commence with the areas that have the highest identified ecological values.
- 2.14) Sustainable Mining and Petroleum Production (Actions 3.26 – 3.31) - The extraction of minerals is inherently unsustainable and should be recognised as such. It is agreed however, that sustainability principles can be used to make this process more socially, environmentally and economically more acceptable.
- 2.15) Protecting Aquatic Systems (Actions 3.36 – 3.44) - The definition of aquatic is unclear, with the draft strategy appearing to focus more on land based wetlands than marine and semi-marine areas such as estuaries and coastal fringe. In this regard it may be more appropriate to use the terminology of ‘*Inland Water*’ as used in the State of the Environment reports. A whole of catchment approach to use and management should be encouraged.
- 2.16) Protecting Aquatic Systems (Actions 3.36 – 3.44) - To complement the River Restoration Manual the Water and Rivers Commission should develop its proposed Wetland Restoration Manual.

- 2.17) Sustainability and Settlements (Chapter 4) – Current urban growth patterns are unsustainable and this should be recognised in the strategy. Notwithstanding this, much can be done to improve the manner in which growth and development in settlements is undertaken and a range of positive action items are set out in the draft strategy which will provide for more sustainable urban areas.

A legitimate attempt is however required at the strategic level if there is to be any real move toward to sustainable urban areas. Other supporting systems also need to be put in place to support such a planning framework, for example an economic system that provides incentives toward sustainable development and disincentives to non sustainable development. In addition, sustainability indicators should be prepared as part of the planning framework for developing areas to provide a mechanism for both the developer and government agencies to measure the achievement of the predetermined strategic objectives for the development.

The development of the Future Perth strategy is an example of an initiative by Government that was examining a framework for progressing toward a more sustainable future for Perth. It is therefore very disappointing that this strategy has not been finalised.

- 2.18) Preserving Air Quality (Action Items 4.34 – 4.40) – The objectives for these action items should seek full compliance with World Health Organisation standards.
- 2.19) Our Water Future (Action Items 4.52 – 4.58) - The second of the objectives for this section proposes that responsibility for management of groundwater supplies be extended to local government and Regional Councils. The action proposed to achieve this objective is to ensure that local government and Regional Councils, co-ordinated by the Department of Environment Water and Catchment Protection, take more responsibility for managing groundwater, including household and municipal bores and storm water collection, through the development of Regional Groundwater Management Plans.

This would place additional burdens upon local government and Regional Councils, including obtaining appropriately qualified staff to manage such requirements. It would also perhaps remove the broader focus that is necessary in considering water supply that only state level agencies can supply. The need for a more efficient use of available water resources is supported, including the introduction of pricing structures that reflect the true cost of water usage.

Since the coming into effect of the new Rights in Water and Irrigation Act in January 2001, this City has been urging the State Government to establish a Water Resources Management Committee under that Act to deal with the Wanneroo area. Such a committee would involve local government and

community representatives, as well as having necessary state agency expertise, and would be able to proceed to prepare Regional, Sub-regional and Local Area Management Plans as proposed under the Act. To-date, the government has not been prepared to give priority to the establishment of such a committee for this area however such an initiative would be clearly supportive of the water management objectives of the draft state Sustainability Strategy.

- 2.20) Our Water Future (Action Items 4.52 – 4.58) - The Environmental Protection (State Groundwater) Policy should be finalised. Similarly the Gngangara Mound Crown Land Statement of Planning Policy and the Environmental Protection (Gngangara Mound Crown Land) Policy should be updated.
- 2.21) Sustainable Energy (Action Items 4.59 – 4.71) - Financial support should be provided for research into alternative energy sources.
- 2.22) Sustainability and Business (Action Items 6.1 - 6.17) - While much employment occurs in small to medium sized enterprises, the ability to address sustainability outcomes is inherently greater in larger businesses. Support mechanisms specifically aimed at smaller businesses should be considered.

Statutory Compliance

Nil

Strategic Implications

The City's Strategic Plan states that "the triple bottom line of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability is a core theme that unites all of our goals and strategies". The overall direction of the draft Sustainability Strategy is complementary with the City's Strategic Plan.

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

Nil

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Recommendation

That Council ENDORSES the comments made in the comment section of this report as its submission to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the draft State Sustainability Strategy.

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK
FOR THE STATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Principles for Sustainability

Foundation Principles

Process Principles

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| LONG-TERM ECONOMIC HEALTH Sustainability recognises the needs of current and future generations for long-term economic health, diversity and productivity of the earth. | EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS Sustainability recognises that an environment needs to be created where all people can express their full potential and lead productive lives and that significant gaps in sufficiency and opportunity endanger the earth. | BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY Sustainability recognises that all life has intrinsic value, is interconnected and that biodiversity and ecological integrity are part of the irreplaceable life support systems upon which the earth depends. | INTEGRATION OF THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE Sustainability requires that economic, social and environmental factors be integrated by simultaneous application of these principles, seeking mutually supportive benefits with minimal trade offs. | PRECAUTION Sustainability requires precaution, avoiding poorly understood risks of serious or irreversible damage, designing for surprise and managing for adaptation. |
| SETTLEMENT EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY FOR LIFE Sustainability recognises that the earth can only adjust to a more balanced state if settlements reduce their ecological footprint (i.e. Less material and energy demands and reductions in waste), while they simultaneously improve their quality of life (health, housing, employment, community...). | COMMUNITY, REGIONS, ‘SENSE OF PLACE’ AND HERITAGE Sustainability recognises the significance and diversity of community and regions for the management of the earth, and the critical importance of ‘sense of place’ and heritage (buildings, townscapes, landscapes and culture) in any plans for the future. | ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT Sustainability recognises that people should have access to information on sustainability issues, that institutions should have triple bottom line accountability, that regular sustainability audits of programs and policies should be conducted, and that public engagement lies at the heart of all sustainability principles. | HOPE, VISION, SYMBOLIC AND ITERATIVE CHANGE Sustainability recognises that applying these principles as a part of a broad strategic vision for the earth can generate hope in the future, and thus it will involve symbolic change that is part of many successive steps over generations. | |
| NET BENEFIT FROM DEVELOPMENT Sustainability means that all development, and particularly development involving extraction of non-renewable resources, should strive to provide net environmental, social and economic benefit for future generations. | COMMON GOOD FROM PLANNING Sustainability recognises that planning for the common good requires equitable distribution of public resources (like air, water and open space) so that natural carrying capacities are not exceeded and so that a shared resource is available to all. | | | |

Sustainability Visions for Western Australia

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| GOVERNANCE Western Australia’s system of governance is world famous for its responsiveness to sustainability issues, effective and financially responsible in its programs, transparent and inclusive in its processes and reflects its globally significant responsibilities towards the land and its people. | GLOBAL CONTRIBUTIONS Western Australia contributes to the solution of global sustainability issues particularly population pressures and poverty, climate change, threats to biodiversity and oil vulnerability and in so doing creates significant local opportunities for the new jobs in the rapidly growing sustainability economy. | NATURAL RESOURCES Western Australia’s vast landscape, intricate web of biodiversity and natural resources are managed and used sustainability for the common closely involving the community in management and planning processes that are transparent and visionary. | SETTLEMENTS Western Australia’s settlements are among the most attractive places to live in the world, constantly becoming more innovative and efficient in their use of resources and management of wastes while simultaneously being more liveable and equitable. | COMMUNITY Western Australian communities in cities and in regions have a strong sense of place, supportive networks receptive to local needs, and through this respond uniquely to the sustainability agenda. | BUSINESS Western Australian businesses, large and small, are globally innovative and responsive, leading to the resolution sustainability issues at home and abroad and achieving competitive advantage and prosperity. |
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Government's Sustainability Goals and Priority Areas for Action

| GOAL 1 | GOAL 2 | GOAL 3 | GOAL 4 | GOAL 5 | GOAL 6 |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Ensure that the way we govern is driving the transition to a sustainable future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability assessment • Institutional change • Embracing sustainability in government agencies • Partnerships for action • Planning for sustainability • Sustainability in the regions • Indigenous communities and sustainability • Research and development for sustainability • Sustainability online information • Recognising sustainability excellence | <p>Play our part in solving the global challenge of sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population, development aid and environmental technology • Maintaining our biodiversity • Responding to greenhouse and climate change • Oil vulnerability, the gas transition and the hydrogen economy • | <p>Value and protect our natural environment and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable agriculture • Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture • Sustainable forests and plantation • Sustainable mining and petroleum production • Sustainable tourism • Protecting aquatic systems • Sustainable coastal and marine environments • Sustainable rangelands management • | <p>Plan and provide settlements that reduce the ecological footprint and enhance quality of life at the same time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing urban and regional growth • Revitalising declining centers and suburbs • Integrating land use and balanced transport • Managing freight and regional transport • Preserving air quality • Reducing and managing waste • Our water future • Sustainable energy • Preserving cultural heritage and landscapes and creating 'sense of place' • Building sustainability | <p>Support communities to fully participate in achieving a sustainable future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community services and development • Housing and sustainability • Sustaining healthy communities • Education and community awareness for sustainability • Sustainability through culture and the arts • Multiculturalism and sustainability | <p>Assist business to benefit from and contribute to sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and facilitation for sustainability • Financial reform and economic instruments for sustainability • Eco0efficiency and industrial ecology • Industry sustainability covenants |