

To: Peter Newman  
17 July, 2002

This is 542 words, I wonder if its suitable for your project "What is the ethical foundation for planning a more sustainable future?" Sorry this is at the last gasp and if it is too late or unsuitable don't worry, I quite understand.

**"Ethics for Sustainability"**  
A suggested Charter for Western Australia

**Interdependence and interrelationship.**

An ethics for sustainability needs to flow from values that respect all aspects of our living planet and not just one country or the people of that country because of the interrelationship and interdependence of those of us who live in WA with the rest of the world.

**Quality of life and Social Responsibility**

Values for sustainability rightly link with quality of life for all rather than quantity or affluence for some at the expense of the rest. Quality of life implies a wellbeing of spirit as well as material benefits and the concept of social responsibility is helpful here. Social responsibility includes what Matthew Fox<sup>1</sup> calls "the Great Work, the work of care - care for each other and for the earth. This work and those who engage in it often go unrecognised, unpaid and undervalued while those who pursue the exploitation of people and the planet gain absurd levels of material benefits."

**Government policy working for the public good**

Governments appear to have abandoned the priority of the public good and the responsibility for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. Therefore it is important while calling on Governments to act responsibly, not to rely on bureaucracy or leaders but to provide what the community needs from within through people's own special gifts of compassion, creativity and love. The concept of the public good also applies to future generations.

**"7th generation policies"**

The concept of the 7th generation is to ask all decisionmakers to include in all policy positions answers to the question "How will this effect the children and people 7 generations after us?" This well and truly covers the "pre-cautionary principle".

**Re-envisioning work**

Modern Western society has lost the plot. We think work is something you do to get money. The more you get paid, the more important the work. WRONG. Real work is the work of care - care for each other and the Earth. It will involve proper reimbursement and reward for effort and to meet basic needs. But we really have it upside down. Many people, who do the most significant work for the planet and for all of us, are unpaid. Those who do the most damage and

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Matthew Fox ( 1994) The Re-invention of work- A new vision of livelihood for our time. Harper Collins NY

care least for anyone apart from themselves are paid the most. Women who are half the population and gave birth to the other half receive less than 1/3 of the wages. The people who have become rich through exploitation/domination of the planet -10% - own 90% of the resources. Real work - nurturing babies, protecting the forest, loving - goes unpaid and undervalued. The concept of sustainability is helpful in assessing whether something is part of the great work.

### **Spirituality which respects diversity**

Spirituality which flows from love rather than fear will encompass sharing the resources of the earth for the benefit for all, including future generations. It is fear that leads to hoarding, control and warfare. Sustainability comes from a generosity of spirit and is compatible with all religions which do not see themselves as the supreme authority or owners of the earth but as good and responsible stewards and who see the Earth as mother and sustainer of life for us all.