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Sustainability and community

Vision for Western Australia

Western Australian communities in cities and in regions have a strong sense of place, are inclusive of all citizens and have supportive networks receptive to local needs, and through this can respond uniquely to the sustainability agenda.

Goal

Support communities to fully participate in achieving a sustainable future.

Priority areas for action

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[Social sustainability] ... seems frequently to fall off the sustainability agenda or to take second place to environmental and economic concerns, despite the fact that it is so critical to the lives of individuals and communities and to the overall health of our society.

L Barron and E Gauntlett⁴³

The incorporation of sustainability into Government decision-making processes requires building capacity, broad support and involvement throughout the community.

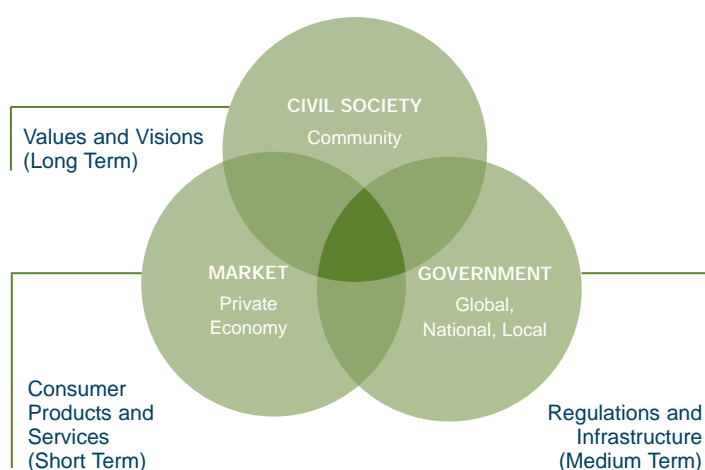
Environmental Alliance

A strong case has been made in this draft Strategy to better integrate the social dimension of development and human activity into sustainability. The most fundamental concept behind social development is the importance of community.

This section gathers together core issues that focus on the social and that enhance our sense of community.

The rationale as to why community is so important to sustainability and to all of our lives, is set out in Figure 10 below showing the roles and functions of government, the market and community.

Figure 10. The interconnection of community, government and the market.



The primary function of government is to provide regulation and infrastructure, the market's function is to provide goods and services—but neither of these is about the direction and purpose of development. The community is the major provider of the values and visions for the future. This section will follow through on the values and visions set by the community and will emphasize the importance of finding partnerships that enable a true interconnection between government, market and civil society. The section will focus on what sustainability could mean for health, housing, education, the arts and multiculturalism.

⁴³ L Barron and E Gauntlett, *Housing and Sustainable Communities Indicators Project - Consultation Paper*, Western Australian Council of Social Services, Perth, 2002.

There are a range of government agencies with responsibility for community related services. The primary interest and focus of most of these agencies is the social dimension of sustainability. Their submissions and those of the community with interests in this area, concentrated on how 'the social' can be linked to economic and environmental processes.

The general sustainability implementation model established in *Sustainable use of natural resources* and *Sustainability and settlements* also appears to be relevant to the community with some important provisos. These relate to the necessity to be fine-grained, local community oriented and bottom-up. The State-Local Government Roundtable will consider how Regional Councils can assist with issues related to Indigenous people, health, education, justice, disability services, community welfare, housing and the arts. In each region there will be special needs and the issues will overlap. It is proposed that a mechanism to implement social sustainability be developed through Regional Councils or local governments based on the need for a greater degree of integration and co-location of services.

Social and community issues are considered throughout this draft Strategy. In this part, however, particular attention is focussed on the provision of socially sustainable housing, how to develop and sustain healthy communities and the importance of formal and non-formal education in raising community awareness of sustainability.

Also considered is the role that the arts and culture can play in raising community awareness and interest in sustainability. Culture and the arts provide the community with its creative edge needed to face the new and potentially difficult problems of sustainability, to find the ethics which underlie every element and every issue in sustainability. Multiculturalism provides the opportunity for different answers to be found and to build a whole of community approach to sustainability.

Together each of these issues form the basis of how the community can be motivated for sustainability reform.

> COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Community is critical to how we live and how we feel about the future. Strong communities are more sustainable in themselves and are able to contribute to sustainability in general.

Social interactions affect what happens in the economic and environmental spheres. Promoting social sustainability therefore promotes sustainability overall and vice versa.

Western Australian Council of Social Services

Government agencies involved in the delivery of community services include the Departments of Housing, Police, Health, Education, Training, Disability Services, Community Development, Justice, Indigenous Affairs, Local Government and Regional Development, Planning and Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation. It is contended in this draft Strategy that their services can be better coordinated to meet community needs and assist with the development of our 'social capital'.

'Social capital' is an important concept for the State Sustainability Strategy. It is about the extended networks that link us together in our communities. It measures the sense that people are involved in the immediate society within which they live and work and over which they are, or can be, empowered to be involved. Participation and the ability to access information are two vital attributes in this regard⁴⁴.

Sustainability can be understood in terms of the relationship between financial capital, natural capital (the biodiversity and ecological integrity of an area) and social capital. Each has intrinsic worth and influences the other. Not only is social capital important in determining how people value and enjoy their community, but it also contributes to an informed and participative community (which is best placed to enhance financial and natural capital).

In turn, the state of financial and natural capital influences social capital since only the most resilient communities can function effectively where there is significant financial disadvantage or a degraded natural environment. Understanding how to improve social, natural and financial capital in an integrated way is one of the central challenges of this draft Strategy.

Sustainability through social capital improvement can be conceived through a number of community centred ideas⁴⁵ including sustainable communities, community strength, resilient communities, community development, healthy communities and community capacity (see Boxes 32, 33 and 34).⁴⁶

A focus on sustainable community should also support the resilience and capacity at critical life stages. This can mean the development of skills and resilience in the early years, the integration and acceptance of young people, support to families in their important social role, and facilitation of the continuing involvement of seniors in the Western Australian community. It can also include an ongoing commitment to the support of volunteers, the foundation of community-based organisations.

⁴⁴ For a comprehensive overview to these issues, see the Western Australian Council for Social Services' submission to the State Sustainability Strategy, April 2002 and the background paper by Kerry Stoll *Youth and Sustainability: Social Capital, Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Civic Engagement*.

⁴⁵ Community can refer to both geographical communities and communities of common interest. Moreover people can be simultaneously involved in a number of different communities and move between them over a short period of time. To actively enhance communities also requires an understanding of what people perceive as their community.

⁴⁶ Barron, L and Gauntlett, E. *Housing and Sustainable Communities Indicator Project - Consultation Paper*, WACOSS, December 2001.

BOX 32 THE KALGOORLIE PROJECT

Capacity building and community partnerships are key ingredients of this project, which was established to address youth crime in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The project has set out to achieve a strong local commitment to reduce youth crime and boost pro-social development through a strong collaborative approach. Starting out by identifying factors that influence a child to engage in crime, the process includes community consultation, engagement and ownership of the issues.

All members of the community with a stake in youth have been mobilised to help establish a shared vision and shared priorities for action. The process undertaken has focused on long-term solutions and the implementation of sustainable strategies.

While it is at the local government level that local communities and government most directly interact, at the state level responsibility for engaging Western Australians with the development and strengthening of their communities rests with the Department for Community Development. The range of services, programs and initiatives undertaken by the Department are numerous.

BOX 33 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PEEL REGION

The Peel Development Commission in its report entitled 'Peeling Away the Mask' identified a range of challenges facing this rapidly growing region. Its report clearly showed how difficult it is to build sustainable communities when the balance is not maintained between economic, environmental and social bottom line outcomes.

In the case of the Peel region, less real economic growth had led to a number of undesirable social outcomes including low retention rates at high school, high youth unemployment rates and a large commuting workforce to Perth, all of which have had a significant impact on the community and its ability to build a sustainable future.

Key stakeholders from both the community and government are now working to address these emerging issues, effectively diverting resources and evolving a more sustainable model for the community. Principles pertaining to community development, capacity building and community regeneration have all been employed. As in work also carried out by the City of Gosnells, one of the many tangible outcomes to date has been the crime prevention benefits, a result of community development and capacity building within the Peel community.

Overall, the aims of these programs and services are threefold:

- to strengthen communities so that individuals and families are able to meet their own needs, achieve self reliance and contribute to their own solutions
- promote a just and equitable community enriched by diversity and increased social participation
- support families and communities to provide for the care and safety of their members.

In the community sector the Western Australian Council for Social Services (the community service umbrella organization in Western Australia), has undertaken an extensive body of research and work into social sustainability and how it can relate to the Western Australian community. This includes the development of a model of social sustainability centering around five principles and 36 characteristics. Their work on social assessment should be of interest when developing sustainability assessment methodologies in Western Australia.

BOX 34 NETWORKED NEIGHBOURHOODS

Networks achieved and nourished by electronic communication can facilitate community development.

The Neighbourhood Network program run from the Department of Industry and Technology is a world first. The project is being trialled in Picton Waters, Bunbury, and will be facilitated by a \$2,500 package provided to each household by the developer of the area, Pindan. This money will enable each household to have a computer and fast (broad band) Internet access from which a community electronic network can be created.

The project provides a mechanism for each person in the Picton Waters estate to link up with likeminded people both immediately within and outside their community, so as to create communities of interest. It will also connect them with local businesses, government information of interest to them and local community associations.

The software is being developed in partnership with Microsoft and may be able to make a major global contribution to community network software. It follows the instructions entered by each householder and constantly updates and provides the information asked for by each householder. Register, for example, that you are interested in playing tennis and someone from a local tennis club will get back to you with relevant contact names and information. Similarly, finding out who can deliver the newspaper or milk is 'a click' away.

Sustainability requires a 'grass roots' upwards community development process that avoids the 'darker side' of community'-exclusion, elitism, polarisation and cliques.⁴⁷ In this regard the Western Australian Council of Social Services argue the importance of establishing processes that, among other things:

- support a diverse range of people to participate in all decisions and processes
- build capacity at the local level
- are based on collaboration and partnerships
- support local solutions and initiatives
- incorporate formal and informal interactions.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Anna Carr *Grass Roots and Green Tape* (Federation Press Sydney 2002) p. 18

⁴⁸ Western Australian Council for Social Services' submission the State Sustainability Strategy p.16

The government will establish Regional Integrated Community Service Plans that:

- examine the various community needs of each region,
- assess the relevance of various programs and services available,
- show how they are linked to the other economic and environmental issues of their area, and
- suggest how and where services could be co-located to improve their integration and relevance.

This Policy on Regional Integrated Community Services will be developed with the close involvement of the Departments of Education, Training, Health, Disability Services, Housing and Works, Community Development, Indigenous Affairs, Justice, Local Government and Regional Development, Planning and Infrastructure and Sport and Recreation.

These Regional Integrated Community Services Plans may form the basis of a Statement of Planning Policy that can be applied to each local government Town Plan. These Plans should assist with the integration and relevance of government services, articulate a vision and get detailed planning underway, achieving beneficial change in communities. They will be empty shells, however, without a simultaneous achievement of processes at the local level that lead to community engagement, community direction and community energy and inspiration.

In short...

Vision

Communities develop through close participation in solving their own sustainability issues. In particular, they are able to help overcome the divisions and disparities in opportunity across cities, towns and between regions. Coordinated government services are vital to this process.

Objectives

- To link community development and sustainability.
- To more efficiently and effectively provide community services.
- To facilitate community development 'bottom-up'.

Actions underway include

- An Early Years Taskforce has been established to develop state wide strategies to enhance services for young children and their families through community engagement and better interagency collaboration.
- The Family Strength Program is to be extended to include new Indigenous family strength services and community based child and family centres.
- Developed the *Consulting Citizens Resource Guide* and created a citizenscape web site.
- Community development opportunities are being examined through new technology (see *Networked Neighbourhoods*).
- Crime Prevention Strategies involving the community are underway.
- Legislation is being developed for carers.
- A future has been created for City Farm through a long-term lease.

Proposed actions

- 5.1 Develop a Policy on Regional Integrated Community Services based on Regional Councils creating Plans that:
 - examine the various community needs of their region
 - assess the relevance of various programs and services already available
 - link up to other economic and environmental issues in their area
 - suggest how and where services could be co-located to improve their integration and relevance.

In short cont'd...

- 5.2 Facilitate local community involvement in defining community service needs thereby creating engagement with local issues and the inspiration and energy to solve them.
- 5.3 Use the Consulting Citizens Resource Guide to promote effective public consultation and active citizenship.
- 5.4 Review crime prevention programs to ensure links between community development initiatives and sustainability as a way of focussing partnerships in areas of multiple social disadvantage, especially using 'sense of place' projects.
- 5.5 Use a whole of government response to enhance the capacity and resilience of people at critical life stages, especially carers and volunteers.

Indicators and targets

The number of Regional Integrated Community Services Plans completed.

Global opportunities

Community based approaches to development are now the basis of most major international aid projects and are required as part of AusAID projects. Western Australian experience in this technique will be of international significance.

Further information

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> HOUSING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Good housing should provide shelter, safety, security, access to education, a sense of community and local access to amenities such as parks, schools and shops. Inadequate housing can exacerbate family pressures, harm health, limit educational achievements, strain family budgets and enforce long commuting trips to shops, schools and work.⁴⁹

Housing ...plays a significant role in supporting connections between people as well as being one of the most important factors in people's levels of poverty or wealth...it is a key factor in terms of people having a sense of empowerment and responsibility and a sense of safety in their community.

Western Australian Council of Social Services

The emergence of the working poor as a result of economic reform, the loss of low cost rental housing, reduced public housing funds and the changing role of the housing sector to support those in greatest need calls into question the long term sustainability of current social housing settings.

Department of Housing and Works

A growing body of research evidence has highlighted the critical role of housing in people's lives and the interconnectedness of housing, employment, health, education, land use and other social and economic factors⁵⁰.

Housing policy for decades has been focussed on affordability at the expense of location. There is a desperate need now, if sustainable community regeneration is to work, for it to involve a component of social and affordable housing.

This social approach to housing and the positive impact it can have on community development is the reason why housing is dealt with twice in this draft Strategy. *Building sustainably* dealt with housing as a shell, its ecological footprint and how it can be improved as well as better located. This section deals with housing as a means of better addressing social justice problems, as a facilitator of local community and as a core element in people's quality of life.

Sustainable housing must confront the issue of providing affordable housing. This needs to be done in innovative ways given the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement has diminished the States' capacity to provide public housing (the amount of public housing in Australia is now down to 5-8% of all housing). Western Australia has 5% of public housing and has been able to provide more housing than any other State in recent years due to innovative land banking approaches that have enabled it to do joint venture developments. These developments have seen one in twelve houses being built set aside for public housing and a lot more affordable private homes. This is a major reason why Perth first homebuyers have been able to purchase homes at a lower price than anywhere else in Australia.

This innovative approach to housing through partnership between government and the private sector needs to continue. It is important that it now take on other sustainability elements as discussed elsewhere in the draft Strategy, such as innovations in sustainable building and construction (as in Atwell South) and in location (adjacent to railway stations as in Leda, Atwell South, Butler, Brighton and Clarkson).

⁴⁹ Housing Industry Association submission to the State Sustainability Strategy p.5

⁵⁰ Barron, L. and Gauntlett, E. *ibid* p.4

BOX 35 SUBIACO'S HOUSING

The Subiaco centre redevelopment, called Subi-Centro, has attracted worldwide attention for its architectural and urban design qualities, as has the redevelopment of East Perth.

A common criticism of Subi-Centro, however is that it is too expensive and therefore inaccessible to many people. While the East Perth redevelopment set aside 10% for social housing (a condition of funding from the Commonwealth Government's Better Cities Program) none was provided in Subi-Centro.

To address this situation, the City of Subiaco Council has developed a policy of building Council housing on Council land so that Subi-Centro will now have 10% social housing. Council plans to lease this housing to both Homeswest and various Housing Associations to enable people to live near all the good facilities and services of Subiaco, including the train system. As the Mayor of Subiaco has said, 'Why shouldn't ordinary people live in the best part of the city? Indeed everyone gains from having a social mix'.

There also needs to be a greater proportion of housing in areas being renewed and revitalised. This extra locational factor not only helps by utilising present infrastructure, it is often a critical element to the process of community revitalisation in older areas (see Box 35).

The provision of public housing and affordable private housing is at world best practice in urban areas in Western Australia. However the provision of community housing is not. Community housing is a housing option where the housing is managed by a Housing Association or Cooperative. It can also include shared-equity schemes. There is potentially a real market for this type of development which is also well placed to address sustainability issues (see Box 36).

BOX 36 ECO-VILLAGES AND COOPERATIVES: SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION?

Several background case studies have been written for this draft Strategy on innovative housing developments that incorporate both ecological factors and social factors. These include the South Beach Eco Village, Pinakarri and the Rosneath permaculture village.

Housing cooperatives are only a small part of the housing market in Western Australia (there are 111 housing cooperatives in the state at this time). However they have the potential to tap the public sentiment to 'belong' and contribute to sustainability.

An example of a new cooperative is the Somerville Eco Village at Chidlow. Seventy-four members of this non-profit association are planning their village over the next two years. In a detailed submission to the State Sustainability Strategy the group stated, 'Our objective is to promote the eco village concept as a practical environmental and socially responsible alternative to land settlement and resources'.

Community housing needs facilitation. It is also the type of housing in which local government can become more involved, as it reflects a community focus. In addition, local governments often have land available on which community housing, demonstrating sustainability principles, could be developed. Indeed, local government is already active as a joint venture partner in developing community housing. Standards and accreditation of community housing need to be better established so that financing can be more assured and social and environmental outcomes can be better facilitated (see submission from Shelter and Community Housing Coalition of WA).

To ensure common good outcomes, the government has a role to play in the location of public housing, affordable private housing and community housing. There is a need to work out region-by-region the most appropriate mix of these housing options. This is an ideal process to be on the agenda of the State-Local Government Sustainability Roundtable and the possible subject of a Statement of Planning Policy.

In short...

Vision

Housing is available to people of all means and is also a key tool for the development of social capital, financial capital and natural capital.

Objectives

- Provide more public housing, affordable private housing and community housing.
- Ensure that this housing provides on-going sustainability benefits.

Actions underway include

- State Housing Strategy is underway.
- Residential Design Codes have been revised.
- Landstart's support for the Housing Industry Association's Partnership Advancing the Housing Environment (PATHE) evidenced by the development in Broome of culturally responsive design for Indigenous housing.
- New urban centres are being developed or re-developed in conjunction with the future northern rail link and the south west metropolitan rail line.
- Homeswest tenants are being employed in construction and landscaping of new estates on the urban fringes, alleviating local unemployment levels.
- Indigenous housing programs encourage community input into the design and siting of housing, while the remote area essential services program includes community participation and training in maintenance and management support.
- A new Indigenous housing agreement has recently been signed with the Commonwealth Government.

Proposed actions

- 5.6 Develop a Statement of Planning Policy on Public Housing, Community Housing and Affordable Private Housing with groups of local regional councils to ensure there is an appropriate distribution of all three housing tenures with guidelines and incentives, for example, density bonuses built into each local Town Planning Scheme.
- 5.7 Evaluate underutilised government owned land close to services, for example passenger train stations and institutional sites for potential to develop as mixed housing opportunities.
- 5.8 Develop a community housing framework involving standards and accreditation to ensure world best practice in the provision of this housing type.
- 5.9 Draw on research to demonstrate the business benefits of sustainable housing so as to help transform the house construction market to one receptive to sustainable development.
- 5.10 Utilise the housing research and training provided by the Australian Housing Urban and Research Institute to facilitate policy development in the provision and location of social housing in Western Australia.

Indicators and targets

Proportion and distribution of public housing, community housing and affordable private housing.

Global opportunities

Western Australia already provides consulting services in housing to other parts of the world. Innovations in community housing will be of global interest.

In short cont'd...

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Pinakarri, an intentional co-housing community in suburban Perth, is demonstrating how to live in a way that is environmentally sound and socially supportive.

> SUSTAINING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

While most Western Australians have never lived as long, or as well, as they do now, good health and well being are linked with the state of the environment. As our lifestyles, consumption patterns, development and continuous urban growth continue to degrade the environment, new hazards and diseases will emerge.

The maintenance and improvement of health should be at the centre of concerns about the environment and development. Yet health rarely receives high priority in environmental policies and development, rarely figures as an important item in environmental or development programs despite the fact that the quality of the environment and the nature of development are major determinants of health.

World Health Organisation⁵¹

Innovative approaches are needed to help the Australian population to understand and act on the subtle links between environment, sustainability and health, and between local and global action.

Guest, Douglas, Woodruff and McMichael⁵²

Good health is the most important asset of any country. Without a healthy population, productivity is low, health care costs are high and there is diminished capacity for skills development and social advancement.

Gains experienced in Western Australia's human life expectancy rates have predominantly been achieved by improved nutrition, housing, and safe and clean food and water, and have followed on from the economic success of our primary industries.

Continued improvements in human health are possible and will enhance our local wealth. They will rely not only on advances in medical science but also on the management of the resources of the State to ensure hazards to human health are controlled and the resilience of the community to cope with ongoing change is enhanced.

A population's health, both physical and mental, is a sensitive indicator of the health of the physical and social environment. One of the challenges for the health system is to protect the health of the population in the face of ongoing environmental and social changes.

Sustainability seeks to maintain and improve the environment and ensure that the natural ecological, physical and chemical systems that support life continue to function effectively. If we are successful, we will hand future generations the same potential for health and wellbeing that we have enjoyed.

The links between sustainability and health

The environment in which humans live affects them through the physical, chemical, biological, social, cultural and economic conditions to which they are exposed. Some of these are hazardous to health. Many of these hazards have been known for a long period of time, while others have arisen more recently through lifestyle choices, the effects of environmental degradation, social change, and an aging population.

Existing environmental hazards

Most Western Australians enjoy a lifestyle free of the traditional environmental hazards to health. The expectation that food will be safe, drinking water clean, the air unpolluted and our personal safety unchallenged has almost been fully met. This excellent physical environment has been achieved by the sustained efforts of agencies to identify and control sources of contamination and potential contamination. These efforts must be ongoing and involve investment in skills and knowledge, surveillance and monitoring and the implementation of effective control strategies.

Not all Western Australians have such a healthy environment. Environmental hazards are still inadequately controlled in remote Indigenous communities. Health problems, particularly infections, diabetes and injuries, are common and

⁵¹ World Health Organisation, *Our Planet, Our Earth: Report of Commission on Health and Environment*, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 1992.

⁵² CS Guest, RM Douglas, RE Woodruff, AJ McMichael 1999, *Health and the Environment*, Tela Series Issue 1, Australian Conservation Foundation and Australian Medical Association, 1999, p. 35.

are directly related to the lack of clean water, lack of waste disposal, poor housing, overcrowding, dust and poor nutrition. Sustainability in Western Australia must mean these issues remain a priority focus.

New hazards arising from environmental and social change

Rapid social, technological, industrial and economic changes are all contributing to a new set of health hazards. Being of more recent origin, the impact of these hazards on health is less well understood, and effective control strategies may not yet be known, much less effectively implemented.

Following the control of infectious diseases, chronic illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory illness and diabetes have assumed a much higher importance in our community. The prevalence of these chronic diseases is increasing, fuelled by unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as tobacco use, inappropriate nutrition and lack of physical activity.

Tobacco use is the single most important risk factor for chronic diseases. Tobacco consumption is a causal risk factor for a range of diseases, including heart disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, many cancers and lung diseases. While smoking rates have been falling since the 1970s, about 20% of the population still smoke. Reducing tobacco use will continue to be a priority for a health sector focused on improving a population's health, and will, over time, translate to a significant reduction in demand for health care for illnesses caused by tobacco.

Inappropriate nutrition accounts for more than 30% of all cancers, and contributes to the growing prevalence of overweight and obesity. Low levels of physical activity compound the contribution of over-nutrition to obesity. The cost attributable to the six most prevalent illnesses related to low levels of physical activity, (heart disease, stroke, non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression) have been estimated at \$36 million per year in Western Australia.

The past decades have seen enormous social change. Urbanisation is increasing and some small rural communities have become unviable. A high proportion of families have both parents in fulltime employment, with children in childcare from an early age and older children unsupervised and unsupported after school. Our society is being increasingly divided, as the gap between the most wealthy and poorest increases. Research on the health effects of social inequality, where the society has a mix of people with vastly different economic status and social empowerment shows the detrimental effects on personal and community health.

Urban sprawl and time pressures promote dependence on the car. Western Australians make 63% of all personal trips by car as the driver. Increasing car dependence impacts on business efficiency, environmental quality, community cohesion and personal quality of life. Residence in a suburb with little public transport and no access to a car creates social isolation, poor employment prospects and economic disadvantage. Good physical and mental health are jeopardised in these circumstances and as such health needs to be partnered with town planning processes.

Better work practices and healthy physical and mental work environments can also prevent potential mental health problems. In recent years many studies have documented the significant effects that issues such as extended working hours, bullying in the workplace and work related stress can have on mental health, the economy, family life and the broader community. 'Sense of place' is not just a good feeling; it is how we grow. The development of community, the importance of walking and of safe and supportive work environments, are all part of the sustainability health agenda.

New environmental hazards to health have also arisen from developments that have occurred without sufficient environmental safeguards and which have involved the unsustainable consumption of natural resources. Wastes are produced at a rate that is above the capacity of the environment to absorb, leading to landfills for solid waste, chemical emissions and changes in air quality and the atmosphere. Landfills must be appropriately sited to avoid pollution of ground water, and old landfills appropriately used to avoid human

exposure to chemical emissions. Nutrient run-off from agricultural lands has resulted in toxic algal blooms in our rivers, the overgrowth of sea grasses and fish death, which require better management of agricultural land. Within Western Australia, health will need to contribute to solutions to problems we have inherited and to change our development techniques to ensure that the environment is not further degraded.

New perspectives from ecological health are showing the links between health and the release of new diseases from the destruction of tropical rain forest habitat, climate change, global over-population, loss of biodiversity, depletion of fish stocks, stratospheric ozone depletion and depletion of fresh water (see background paper *Health and Sustainability* by Thomas, Douglas and Cohen). All such trends will need to be assessed and managed, for example, loss of the ozone layer has increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation and increased the risk of skin cancers, necessitating more attention to the provision of shade and use of protective clothing.

The links between the health of the environment and the health of the population are clear and inextricable. The health system has a central role to play in the sustainability agenda outlined in this draft Strategy. This role should encompass:

- Continued efforts to improve the living conditions of remote Indigenous populations, and to improve the health and life expectancy of Indigenous people. This is a long term agenda, and success will require persistence and creativity as well as commitment to difficult programs such as controlling the spread of sexually transmitted disease and managing alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse.
- The provision of advice on the health impact of new developments, new technologies and new industries to ensure that hazards to health are avoided where possible or controlled to be below levels that are hazardous to health. Health impact assessments are a vehicle for achieving this.
- The continuation of strategies to remedy existing environmental hazards and to avoid exposures that may damage health.
- Continuing to promote a health agenda that seeks to improve health, as well as to treat illness and care for those with ill health. Tobacco control provides a model to be followed by other programs which seek to reduce exposure to significant risk factors to health.
- The development and implementation of programs, incentives and disincentives to combat obesity and to make healthy lifestyle choices easier. The Western Australian Government's Physical Activity Taskforce is an example of such an initiative. It will be important that such strategies are well linked.
- Understanding the factors that make communities and individuals resilient to change, and promoting these, to develop a population that is skilled, educated and robust in the face of change.
- Partnerships with planning agencies to develop friendly and health promoting urban developments; with environmental agencies to ensure that health concerns are integral to environmental decisions; with transport agencies to promote safer and more accessible forms of transport; with education to ensure the next generation of Western Australians is well informed on sustainability.

The health sector itself, along with health sectors across all developed countries is confronted by ever increasing cost pressures stemming, in part from increasing community expectations, an ageing population and new technologies. The health sector needs to improve its efficiency while at the same time raising community awareness about the importance of prevention and early intervention. These themes are explored in the recent report of the Health Administrative Review Committee.

The community and health sector need to work collaboratively to determine how to achieve the greatest health gains for the greatest number of people while

recognising the continuing disadvantages faced by some sections of the community, such as Indigenous people. The health sector's contribution to the maintenance of a clean and safe environment for the majority of Western Australian is unseen and unacknowledged. Its essential role in providing our current levels of good health must be supported.

Failure to maintain the viability of the health sector will deprive the drive for sustainability of a major source of strength and advice, and a powerful resource ensuring that the current excellent health expectations are passed to future generations.

Not only is the health sector an important partner in reducing the detrimental effects of environmental change, it is also a potential contributor to environmental damage, through use of and disposal of drugs, chemicals, and radioactive materials. Health care centres are also potentially hazardous sites for both workers and patients and adherence with the State Sustainability Strategy will emphasise this ongoing commitment to safety.

In short...

Vision

The health of all people, especially Indigenous people, continues to improve and the health system also becomes a means for the promotion of sustainability.

Objectives

- Reduce the health disadvantage endured by remote Indigenous communities and communities with multiple social disadvantage.
- Create greater links between health and other elements of sustainability.
- Reduce the incidence and severity of disease by increasing the focus of the health sector on primary and secondary prevention.

Actions underway include

- Significant research is being undertaken (eg. the Enhealth Program) investigating the links between environmental degradation and health.
- Government agencies are working collaboratively to incorporate health impact assessment into the environmental impact assessment process.
- Funding for medical and health research infrastructure is supporting high quality medical research and assisting the development of a strong medical research sector.
- A new set of Statewide programs for 0-2 year olds is using evidence-based approaches for identifying children at risk and supporting family and community environments that are aligned with positive child development.
- Health is part of a multi-agency commitment to the better delivery of services to 0-8 year olds and their families/carers.
- A new Primary Health Partnerships model is supporting the development of collaborative approaches to health issues between community health, public health and general practice divisions at a Statewide and local level.
- The development and funding of new programs to promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent disease should reduce future demands on health services. The programs aim to improve nutrition, reduce smoking, encourage responsible drinking and increase physical activity.
- Initiatives are encouraging the contribution by volunteers to the delivery of health care services.
- Initiatives to attract and retain medical practitioners and other health professionals in rural and remote areas (eg. rural scholarships) are assisting to build and sustain health services in these areas. Telehealth is also being developed to expand health services to rural and remote communities.
- A review of Country Services will set the framework for establishing networks of sustainable health services with clearly delineated roles and minimum standards.

In short cont'd...

- Country Hospital and health service boards are to be replaced by District Health Advisory Councils. These will facilitate community participation and involvement in rural health services to ensure seamless service delivery. This will include the establishment of regional forums of key agencies.
- The development of a Rural Clinical School in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, with teaching sites located in Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Pilbara and Kimberley, will assist medical students to obtain rural and indigenous health exposure.
- The recently launched WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2002 - 2005 provides a framework for a comprehensive and coordinated response to drug use, involving all layers of government working in partnership with non-government agencies and the community.

Proposed actions

- 5.11 Support the existing role of the health sector in the control of environmental hazards and ecological health issues as well as community public health programs that deal with long term health issues.
- 5.12 Ensure health is part of the Regional Integrated Community Service Plans through the new Health Regions.
- 5.13 Continue to take account of cultural dimensions in health programs, particularly as they apply to remote Indigenous communities and in areas of multiple social disadvantage.
- 5.14 Provide effective links between the health sector and other agencies to create whole-of-government approaches to reduce lifestyle choices that cause disease and disability and new environmental hazards that affect health.
- 5.15 Develop and implement health impact assessments, as part of the sustainability assessment process.
- 5.16 Pursue the recommendations of the Report of the Health Administrative Review Committee which pertain to the development of long term planning directions and the focus of the Western Australian health system.
- 5.17 Initiate a program, involving key government agencies and local communities, to enhance the delivery of services to 0-8 year olds and their families and carers.

Indicators and targets

- Continued improvement in the wellbeing and longevity of Western Australians.
- Improvements in the health of Indigenous people.
- Number of sustainability issues that are addressed on a whole-of-government approach, including health.
- The inclusion of health concerns in environmental assessments.
- The development and testing of effective interventions for social inequality.
- Changes in lifestyle choices such as prevalence of tobacco use, nutrition and physical activity.

Global opportunities

Health impact assessment and successful Indigenous health programs will attract considerable global interest as has already occurred with some of Western Australia's more successful community public health programs.

Further information

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> EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Education is vitally important as it plays a key role in raising awareness and changing individual attitudes and behaviour towards achieving sustainability. People's awareness that they are part of their environment and 'not that the environment is something out there separate from them' is an issue that can be largely addressed by both formal and non-formal education.

Education needs to be focused on enabling people to become informed so that they can take up ... what they want and prefer for their future ... Such education is part of a process that continues from primary school through tertiary levels and into adulthood, so that people are full participants in creating more sustainable futures.

Environmental Alliance

There is a major need for education ... to be a key factor in the Sustainability Strategy. Public support and interest is essential to ensuring sustainability is economically viable on a large scale, otherwise key issues and opportunities for sustainability will not be addressed to the full extent.

Danielle Brown

Education will help everyone to realise that what we do today will affect our children's lives and further generations to come.

Kim Reid

Any attempt to incorporate sustainability in the public, business and community sectors must also explicitly address awareness raising, public participation and education.

We need to raise awareness of sustainability and provide education for sustainability if we are to shift to a more sustainable society. To achieve this our pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in both the public and independent school sectors, together with our TAFE colleges and universities, each have a critical role to play.

Schools are especially important. Sustainability in areas such as health and community services and development can be supported through the school being a central facility and resource for these services. Children's school education, in partnership with community education, can also be a powerful way to embed the principles of sustainability and long-term change in behaviour.

But educational and awareness raising opportunities must also be available to the whole community of Western Australia, for example through:

- a broad media and advertising campaign
- support for community sustainability education initiatives
- the development of innovative community education sustainability programs.

The Western Australian education system has gone some way towards embracing the need to educate about and for sustainability. The Curriculum Framework to be implemented by 2005 is supportive of sustainability. A range of school and community based partnerships, such as Ribbons of Blue, the Gould League, Waste Watch, WaterWise, Bush Rangers and AirWatch are supporting this implementation.

The Department of Education's 'inclusive schooling' policy is working towards building a greater sense of community and commonality. Similarly the community involvement mandated under the *Education Act 1999* has provided a sound basis to involve and educate the wider community. Schools are

involved in a range of broader community programs including Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare.

The Department's new school in South Atwell, which will open in 2004, is being designed according to world's best practice in sustainability. In addition, the Department's commitment to the WA Cleaner Production Statement will achieve a 10% reduction in energy utilisation and waste over the next 3 years in central and district education offices.

Over 100 public submissions considered the importance of education for sustainability and it is clear there is a real belief in the community that much more can and should be done.

The Department of Environment, Water and Catchment Protection is developing an Environmental Education Strategy. This initiative needs to be supported and implemented and consideration needs to be given to how environmental education can be expanded into sustainability education.

Public submissions also pointed to the need to address the lack of formal accreditation of environmental education training. They also pointed to the lack of any mechanism to bring sustainability to Universities, Catholic Education and Independent schools.

As is outlined in *Sustainability and business: Training and facilitation for sustainability*, TAFE does have a commitment to sustainability. As a corollary, the University Partnership Program has resulted in 40 case studies and 18 background papers being written as part of the State Sustainability Strategy.⁵³

It was also argued that there is a greater potential for state and local government environmental education initiatives to enhance the localisation and on the ground effectiveness of programs. This could also involve the development of appropriate training programs for local government both in general environmental education/environmental management and in capacity building for the delivery of specific environmental programs in partnership with the State government.

Public submissions highlighted the lack of a central database of environmental education initiatives and resources that provides a central point of information and coordination for environmental education resources. This could be overcome by the proposal in the Environment Education Strategy above and the Sustainability Online proposal (see *Sustainability and governance: Sustainability information online*). Other submissions also questioned the level of staffing support presently available for environmental education in the Department of Education's central and district offices.

Strategies to assist education for sustainability will need to link in with other programs, for example, the Department of Education will need to participate in the development of Regional Integrated Community Services Plans, to facilitate school curriculum and teacher development in sustainability and to create school buildings and grounds as demonstrations of sustainability.

An example of unsustainable practices is the present regulation which facilitates clearing of native bush on school sites. Funding for gardens can be determined by how much land is cleared. It is proposed that this be repealed and instead (as outlined in the *Contributing to global sustainability: Protecting biodiversity*) that each school be encouraged to look after their native bush. This activity could be integrated into the school curriculum.

⁵³ Over 100 students are enrolled in the Sustainable Development undergraduate degree at Murdoch University. In addition, there are around 30 postgraduate students and more than 60 PhD students in the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy. Many have contributed background papers to the draft Strategy.

In short...

Vision

Education becomes the means by which current and future generations are inspired to live more sustainably and to find innovative solutions for the future.

Objectives

- To develop curriculum support for sustainability education.
- To use educational buildings and grounds to demonstrate sustainability.
- To assist teachers to develop their understanding and skills in sustainability.
- To develop a clear strategy for community awareness of sustainability.

Actions underway include

- An understanding of sustainability is being introduced progressively through the curriculum.
- The community has been involved with schools closely since 1973 and this is mandated under the *School Education Act 1999*, providing a basis for community involvement and education through programs like Landcare, Coastcare, Bushcare and Rivercare.
- Many school-based partnerships are already underway, including Ribbons of Blue, Gould League, Waste Watch and WaterWise, Bush Rangers, AirWatch and others.
- South Atwell Primary School is being designed in accordance with sustainable building design.
- Department of Education has reviewed air conditioning standards to meet best practice environmental standards, implemented a utilities management trial in which schools share in savings made in utilities costs, reviewed water usage to effect savings and worked to reduce under utilised but serviced land holdings.
- Department of Education's 'inclusive schooling' policy promotes acceptance of diversity and aids community development.
- Department of Education is a signatory to the Western Australian Cleaner Production Statement and is on target to achieve a 10% reduction in energy utilisation and waste in central and district offices over the next three years.

Proposed actions

- 5.18 Develop a comprehensive communications strategy on sustainability in the implementation phase of the State Sustainability Strategy which includes all aspects of formal and informal education.
- 5.19 Further develop the draft Environment Education Strategy to support education for sustainability.
- 5.20 Involve District Offices of the Department of Education in the development of the Policy on Regional Integrated Community Services.
- 5.21 Assign a senior officer in the Department of Education with responsibility for formal environmental and sustainability education through the Curriculum Framework.
- 5.22 Continue to introduce sustainability into the curriculum.
- 5.23 Encourage the further use of schools as community hubs.
- 5.24 Move towards new schools being built according to sustainability principles including universal design and progressively convert existing schools.
- 5.25 Orient schools to an ecological ethic, for example through school bushland projects, growing native trees from seeds, composting, using water run off for gardens.

In short cont'd...

- 5.26 To encourage greater biodiversity conservation and water efficiency, amend the Department of Education's policy that pays for grounds maintenance on the basis of how much bush is cleared.
- 5.27 Develop and support partnerships on sustainability education with other sectors (such as local government and the WA Collaboration) to maximise the delivery of sustainability education.
- 5.28 Develop partnerships and provide ongoing support to community-based groups to assist in delivering school and community-based programs that engage children in activities that contribute to reducing car use for school trips, including the promotion of proficient bicycle use.
- 5.29 Provide travel choice, cycling and walking behaviour change programs including the annual *Bike to School Day* during Bikeweek and the annual *Walk to School Day* during the *Walk There Today* week of walking events and the Walking School Bus program.

Indicators and targets

- Number of sustainability education initiatives in schools.
- Community awareness of sustainability.

Global opportunities

Education for sustainability is a global need and innovation in this area will attract global interest.

Further information

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> SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH CULTURE AND THE ARTS

The arts has a role to play in providing much of the interpretive work behind sustainability be it through educative exhibitions, story telling, public or visual art. The arts can be extensively employed as a means to engender sustainable community development goals through problem definition, communication, collaboration and celebration. In addition arts and cultural organisations have the capacity for reflection, criticism and articulation of community concerns.

The Department of Culture and the Arts contends that culture informs the human response to the environmental, economic and social life of the State....The journey towards ecological sustainability must also be a journey towards economic, social and cultural sustainability.

Department of Culture and the Arts

A vibrant culture, one encouraging diversity, equity and creativity, is at the very basis of a sustainable society

Western Australian Museum

In arguing that to ignore the importance of culture in development programs was to risk failure, the 1995 UNESCO Report, *Creative Diversity*, noted that:

It is culture that connects people with one another and makes the development of the individual possible. It is culture that defines how people relate to nature and their physical environment, to the earth and to the cosmos and through which we express our attitudes to and beliefs in other forms of life both plant and animal. It is in this sense that all forms of development including human development, ultimately are determined by cultural factors... It is meaningless to talk about the relation between culture and development as if they are two separate concepts, since development and the economy are part of, or an aspect of, a people's culture.

Culture shapes our values, beliefs and meanings. These in turn will shape our attitudes and actions with respect to sustainability. If Western Australia is to be sustainable, then what needs to be sustained is not only existing buildings and industries, but cultural and natural environments.⁵⁴

Attempts made in the past to quantify the value of artistic, cultural and creative activities in dollar terms, are increasingly being seen as futile. The accepted statistical definition of the arts and cultural industries is very broad and the links between commercial activity and state government policy ill defined. Without the means to capture and evaluate these social and cultural measures it is not possible to realistically value the sustainable contributions or degrees of success made by arts and cultural bodies—for example, to the bridges built to the socially marginalised or to, from and within regional communities.

Arts and cultural organisations are critical to the development of a 'sense of place'.

In this regard, Community Arts Network WA Inc has long been active in community cultural development, partnering a range of agencies and community groups including local governments across the State and Indigenous communities in Ieramagdu (Roebourne). This work has served to acknowledge, preserve or enhance the culture of many communities. Similarly, the Western Australian Museum is delivering a range of programs designed to engage the community with sustainability issues. These include Museumlink, Biosphere West and three educational exhibitions *Sustainability WA*, *Watching Waste and the Power of Wind*.

⁵⁴ A background paper on the Arts, Culture and Sustainability was written by Alix Rhodes (see www.sustainability.dpc.wa.gov.au/backgroundpapers).

⁵⁵ Museumlink produced the Sustainability WA touring exhibition available to some 85,000 people throughout Western Australia.

In addition to these developments, a far greater recognition is now given to the potential for cultural tourism to generate jobs in a socially and environmentally sustainable way. Recent examples of this include the Lurjarri Dreaming Trail in Broome and the Kimberley Coastal Odyssey which serves to interpret local and marine life.

Improved facilities are being planned for the performing arts (a master plan for enhancing Perth's existing performing arts venues and for shaping future developments is currently being finalised) and a whole of government approach to arts and culture is actively being pursued by the Department of Culture and the Arts. Examples of this are the Percent for Art scheme and, at a micro level, the planned Design Futures Conference, being held to better connect international design in the wood based crafts and value added timber industries (see Box 37).

BOX 37 GENERATING EMPLOYMENT IN FINEWOOD CRAFTS

Designing Futures has the potential to develop tangible employment, business and environmental outcomes and is a good example of how sustainability is linked to the arts. The project, being developed by Craftwest, has now attracted partners in Rio Tinto, Wesfarmers, the Australia Council, Lotteries Commission and the Departments of Local and Regional Government and Industry and Technology.

Melding wood craft with business, the project will team designers with furniture manufacturers to develop new products locally and overseas, lead to touring exhibitions and international fine wood tenancies. It will involve artists, manufacturers, the timber industry and the training sector and lead to a more sustainable timber industry in Western Australia. In artistic terms it is a leading example of art shaping, rather than reflecting, personal and public consciousness.

In the public and local government sectors, artists are already involved in the design of buildings, parks and streetscapes to help make them more regionally distinctive.

Story telling is undertaken by all art forms and can help us develop a deeper 'sense of place' (see Box 38). In particular, performing arts groups, writers and film makers, in the state are supported to tell Western Australian stories through literature, film and theatre productions with regional and local themes.

BOX 38 THE ARTS, FOOTBALL AND A 'SENSE OF PLACE'

The Fremantle Dockers use local performing art groups such as Deckchair Theatre to entertain football followers before home games. This award winning collaboration includes the now famous Len Hall Day on Anzac Day that has seen a huge public response to the dramatisation of Anzac themes.

Deckchair Theatre tries to help people to see the football arena as a public event celebrating 'sense of place' - in this case the Fremantle region. Its themes are designed to help people reflect on what is special about their place and celebrate it. Such use of the arts is an important element of community development.

While it is acknowledged that *all* art forms have a role to play, the Screen Industry Partnership Fund and the ABC co-production deal for local development purposes will assist in the promotion of more localised film and television production and assist the performing arts generally.

Box 39 is an example of how the arts can bring sustainability issues to life. The example outlined is but one of many across Western Australia, each of which can be seen to be addressing issues pertaining to sustainability. In this instance, art has been used to communicate in a culturally relevant way a potential solution to the growing diabetes problem among members of remote Indigenous communities in the North West of the State (see also *Sustaining healthy communities*).

BOX 39 HONEY ANT DREAMING

Over a year ago, Roebourne's Cheeditha Aboriginal community and the West Pilbara College of TAFE started an Indigenous art program in a disused heritage building in Cossack.

One participant, Mr Terry Willis, created a work called Honey Ant Dreaming, depicting ants' nests full of eggs with males collecting sugar. Purchased by diabetes nurse educator, Ms Sam Chandler, it was subsequently used as a teaching aid for a pilot diabetes project run by the Mawarnkarra Health Service, the Pilbara Division of General Practitioners and the West Pilbara Health Service.

Ms Chandler noticed that the painting depicted how insulin works in the body, 'There's the sugar and the body cells and the ants, which are insulin from the pancreas'. One in two Aboriginal people in the region have diabetes and this is a good example of art informing and educating for sustainability. The program itself also provided those with health problems a reason to feel and get well.

'Healthy interest in art helps beat diabetes', *The West Australian* 3 July 2002, p.13

The above activities notwithstanding, public submissions on this issue demonstrate that the role arts and culture can play in the sustainability agenda can be enhanced in three ways:

- Consolidating the role that community arts (and indeed all arts and cultural activity) can play in enhancing a 'sense of place'.
- Enhancing the capacities and viability of arts organisations through a changed focus in funding and support programs.
- Embedding arts and cultural considerations in the sustainability assessment of projects, programs and policies.

Consolidating the role of community arts

Community arts has been promoted as an important focus of arts funding for many years, indeed from the very earliest days of Commonwealth Government arts funding. The importance placed on this area has changed over the years, and while the building of appropriate arts centres and workshops has been a primary focus, the need for community-based art activity has always remained. This is particularly important when sustainability is considered as its roots are deeply set in community values. Community art that celebrates local 'sense of place' needs to be a high priority when sustainability is a factor in funding.

The extensive range of local art galleries and museums and other local art forms also need to be supported and valued as contributors to the creation of a 'sense of place'. The viability of these local endeavours may require a whole of government approach to drive new partnerships with the business and commercial sector.

Enhancing the capacities and viability of arts organisations.

The funding strategies which have characterised support for the arts over the last 30 years need to be examined to ensure they are in line with the development of arts organisations.

New funding models and mechanisms should be developed to encourage the endeavours of arts organisations. A range of structures may develop to suit different operating styles. The complementary entrepreneurial activities of arts companies could also be encouraged and the centrality of annual subsidies modified as part of this process. The current focus on funding art form activity could be enhanced by incentives for arts organisations to seek opportunities for their industry to partner and link with other interests and embrace the development and viability of the arts industry as a whole.

The need to pursue strategies that address the lack of economic status and financial viability of artists is essential. This is being addressed through the review and development of a number of arts and cultural policies in Western Australia. These include a review of art development policy, a regional cultural policy, a contemporary music policy, an arts and education policy an Indigenous arts and cultural policy, a re-focused cultural tourism strategy, a capital works policy and a policy on small and independent museums. There are currently two major national reports, which will also influence future funding practices. These are the *The Small to Medium Arts Sector Report* and the *National Arts*

and Crafts Inquiry due to be released at the end of 2002. These developments are all intended to contribute to a more progressive funding and support systems for arts and cultural organisations.

Other trends requiring greater attention are the 'demand driven' funding strategies used to support touring networks and the importance of touring itself. The opportunity for Western Australian arts and cultural organisations to tour and export services across the nation, to the Indian Ocean region and elsewhere is fundamental to their growth and viability, just as the visits of groups from other states and overseas is important to the national and local perspectives of the public.

These demand driven strategies can mobilise community interest in the arts and empower communities to express their preferences for a range of artistic expression and cultural activities. They also assist in overcoming limitations to growth generated by our small population base. The adoption of touring and interstate exchange is an important component of the health and advancement of arts and cultural organisations. This will create a viable and exciting arts profile for the state.

Embedding arts and culture in sustainability assessment

Social assessment (incorporating arts and cultural considerations) is a major component of the triple bottom line process proposed in the draft Strategy. Support for such an approach has been provided by the World Bank, which has argued the need to marry cultural activity to economic development.

The framework for social assessment is still in its development and is clearly an interesting and emerging discipline. The arts and cultural component is likewise a new and as yet virtually unexplored area. However in certain instances existing cultural institutions have taken a role, for example, the Western Australian Museum will be involved in protecting the rock art of the Burrup Peninsular.

The assessment of the cultural dimension of all projects will inevitably include consideration of existing cultural networks and how they can be maintained and enhanced, how the cultural and artistic significance of places is understood and supported and how Indigenous issues can be assessed. Future strategies should encompass:

- The need to take greater advantage of the still largely untapped opportunities created by Western Australia's position in the Indian Ocean Rim, including the opportunity to capitalise on continuous 24 hour film work production cycles between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean zones.
- The need to enhance Indigenous employment opportunities in the Arts and give greater representation of Indigenous culture and history in local museums, particularly the globally significant Burrup rock art.
- The potential to embed art in the health system (through an extension of the Percent for Art scheme) and other arts and health partnerships to improve health outcomes.
- The need to develop a range of strategies to make Perth (city centre and sub centres) more culturally vibrant and thereby a better place to visit and live.
- The need for further strategic investment in the Western Australian Museum's eco and indigenous tourism products.
- The need to institutionally integrate the use of art and artists in planning processes and in land developments so as to help create a sense of difference and enhance urban settlements.
- The need to take advantage of the new ABC Production Facilities and associated funding to ensure a local film production industry develops in Western Australia.
- The potential for artists to work alongside sustainability scientists to generate new products and to offer new solutions to complex problems.
- The need to initiate a cultural tourism strategy for Western Australia which capitalises on renewable resources.
- The need to develop new capital infrastructure for the arts and culture.

- The need to establish a Cultural Property Bank for medium term lease of government properties and land holdings for temporary use on peppercorn rents as artists' studios.
- The need to encourage the Federal government to introduce *droite de suite* (resale royalties) on artworks and intellectual property rights.

In short...

Vision

Culture and the arts become a means for developing the Western Australian community's sense of place, future needs and understanding of sustainability.

Objective

- Reinforce a sense of place and identity among the community.
- Include creativity and the arts in policy development, implementation and sustainability assessment of new projects, policies and programs.
- Increase industry's utilisation of the arts and creative industries in research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the arts.
- Encourage greater personal creativity and participation in the arts and cultural activities.
- Develop a vibrant and competitive economy for the arts and creative industries.
- Contribute to urban regeneration processes and projects.

Actions underway include

- *Symbiotica* - A science/arts project
- The Department of Culture and the Arts is encouraging a whole of government approach to arts and culture.
- The Department for Planning and Infrastructure's Working Paper No 12 '*Can Perth be more Creative?*' supports a shift to creative industries.
- Community Arts Networks of Western Australia has been working with local governments to develop cultural plans and has conducted cultural planning with Aboriginal communities in Ieramagadu (Roebourne).
- The Percent for Art scheme.
- Ellenbrook and other land development projects have involved artists to create a sense of difference.
- MuseumLink's *Sustainability WA* exhibition toured regional areas and the metropolitan area and the *Watching Waste* exhibition will open in late 2002. *The Power of Wind* exhibition is being developed.
- The WA Museum is undertaking significant planning for its Biosphere West initiative.
- Fremantle Aboriginal Heritage Walking Tour has been established.

Proposed actions

- 5.30 Develop programs, partnerships and incentives that encourage research for example into cultural heritage, innovation, new products, entrepreneurship (new distribution channels) and business sponsorship through the arts around key sustainability issues.
- 5.31 Encourage flexible funding criteria that facilitate entrepreneurial endeavours in the arts and cultural activities that promote sustainability.
- 5.32 Ensure that sustainability is embedded in the goals of community arts and community cultural development processes.
- 5.33 Support Indigenous cultural issues in planning, especially for new developments so that regional Indigenous stories and perspectives can be built into the emerging story of the region.
- 5.34 Support cultural tourism endeavours that meet heritage, reconciliation, environmental and community access and development criteria.

In short cont'd...

- 5.35 Develop the BiosphereWest Plan for the provision of a Museum facility which utilises the building as a sustainability educational tool in itself.
- 5.36 Improve the opportunities for children and young people to experience art and cultural activity including through better coordination of school visits and partnerships with arts and cultural organisations.
- 5.37 Take advantage of the new ABC Production Facility to forge new partnerships and ensure local 'sense of place' film and drama are created in Western Australia.

Indicators and targets

- The ways government agencies use the arts and culture to advocate sustainability practices.

Global opportunities

The opportunity exists for arts agencies to create multinational links with communities throughout the Indian Ocean region to plan expositions of cultures and maximise opportunities that exist for 24 hour film work.

Similarly, the Western Australian Museum can contribute to global sustainability by forming networks and partnerships with museums worldwide. This fosters dialogue, research, ideas and actions to clarify and expand the role of museums in securing a sustainable future for their communities.

Further information

Rhodes, A 2002, *The Heart of Sustainability: An encore for culture and the arts*, sustainability background paper, Draft State Sustainability Strategy CD-ROM, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Perth.

> MULTICULTURALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

Western Australia is a highly diverse community which provides extra opportunities to address the global and local sustainability agenda.

Although the definition (of sustainability) includes the concept of social, the definition used for conceptualising sustainability is inadequate as it excludes the concept of culture ... An inclusion of the concept of culture not only recognises the cultural dimension of sustainability, but also provides a space/place in which different groups (Indigenous, women, youth, ethnic minorities) needs and aspirations can be valued.

Community Arts Network

The inclusion, participation and contribution of people from different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds is critical to the effectiveness of the State Sustainability Strategy. As elaborated in *The conceptual base: developing a framework for sustainability*, little progress has been made on resolving the social aspect of development. Incorporating the social dimension into the economic development process is necessary to achieve creative partnerships that can contribute to sustainability.

Today's Western Australia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society whose members are drawn from a rich heritage of cultural traditions and histories. Ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity poses a number of challenges to decision-makers, service providers and policy makers.

The central issue relates to creating and sustaining a cohesive, cultural and political identity. This means enabling, empowering and ensuring that all citizens have a legitimate voice as Western Australians. It demands inclusion, and not exclusion based on the grounds of race, ethnicity, national origin, language, as well as factors such as the length of time spent in Western Australia. Excluding those who appear or are considered to be "different" threatens the sustainability of a stable and productive State.

The benefits of multiculturalism to sustainability come from the benefits of recognising difference. Different cultures have different approaches that can be utilised for solving the multiple problems of sustainability. Their integration and application to sustainability comes from a mutual recognition of the fundamental principles underlying sustainability.

Multiculturalism challenges "old" or traditional ways of conceiving how a community may live, work and grow together when that community is heterogenous, rather than homogenous or mono-cultural in terms of practices and beliefs. Therefore, to develop a multicultural state, community groups must be empowered to participate as well as confront the many challenges we all continue to face in terms of prejudice, discrimination and invisibility. If sustainability is to be achieved, it is critical for the rights of all Western Australians to be safeguarded, and for diversity to be promoted and recognised.

Multiculturalism in Western Australia is a commitment to social equality based on four key principles - civic ideals, fairness, equity and participation.

Multiculturalism, and the notion of diversity, should help inform and shape the planning, development and delivery of services. Such an approach necessarily means processes that facilitate clients and customers from diverse backgrounds to participate in the design and delivery of services and products from the outset, and not as an afterthought. Including diverse people in the conceptualisation of services will result in the delivery of responsive and cost-effective services, as well as greater innovation, creativity and productivity.

Sustainability is about building communities and strengthening the bonds between them. The *Community Services and Development* section explored some of the principle ways in which that can be done. Multiculturalism and sustainability means that the cultural needs of all citizens must be empowered to participate effectively, creatively and critically in community life. This includes ensuring that the necessary assistance for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is made available so that they are able to participate in a meaningful way.

It also means that there is a greater representation of ethnic diversity in decision making processes and that an emphasis is placed on community partnerships through meaningful consultation on policy development and implementation.

Some measures have already been implemented to give effect to an even more inclusive and diverse Western Australia. These include the establishment of an Anti Racism Strategy (see Box 40).

BOX 40 ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY

The purpose of the Western Australian Government's Anti-Racism Strategy is to eliminate racism in all its forms by first understanding racism in all its manifestations and then taking action to address the social and structural issues. It is a strategy that supports sustainability principles. It seeks to meet its objectives by:

- Forming strategic and community partnerships with other bodies in relation to anti-racism.
- Increasing public awareness of racism.
- Empowering groups which are targets of racism, through advocacy, public education and the provision of credible and persuasive information.
- Strengthening the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.
- Addressing issues as they arise in the short-term and developing and implementing longer term strategies to target specific structures and behaviours. and
- Encouraging and acknowledging positive initiatives in the elimination of racism and the promotion of harmonious relations in the community.

On the basis of a wide ranging consultation process, a committee, chaired by the Premier, is developing the Anti-Racism Strategy.

There are a number of constraints to the achievement of the ideals of multiculturalism in Western Australia, including:

- the many definitions associated with multiculturalism over a considerable period of time which has caused much confusion and, at times, discontent amongst Western Australians
- the perception that multiculturalism refers to a policy perspective which provides special treatment for people of diverse backgrounds
- the association of multiculturalism primarily with the practice and preservation of traditional cultures, including food, song and dance
- the lack of recognition of the unique status of Aboriginal people as the first Australians in previous policies relating to multiculturalism, which has contributed to the rejection of Multiculturalism by Aboriginal Australians
- the attachment of some Western Australians to a monocultural Western Australia
- the refusal by some Western Australians to treat people of diverse backgrounds as equals worthy of dignity and respect
- the anxiety/fear of difference felt amongst some Western Australians
- tension amongst and between Western Australians of diverse backgrounds.

However, there are also some promising opportunities for sustainability in the achievement of multiculturalism which include:

- Western Australia, as confirmed through the 2001 Census, is the most diverse of all Australian states
- extensive research shows that migrants help make links to the global economy
- partnerships between the Government sector, non-government sector and community groups in the development and implementation of joint initiatives which promote multiculturalism
- collaboration across the public sector to ensure strategies are sustainable and effective.

In short...

Vision

An inclusive Western Australia where all individuals and groups participate equitably and in a spirit of mutual respect, enriching, developing and sustaining the social, economic and environmental development of our State.

Objectives

- Building and sustaining the democratic and egalitarian traditions of this State by enabling all its members, drawn from a rich heritage of cultural traditions and histories, enjoy individual freedom, mutual respect and equality of opportunity to participate equitably in all spheres life.
- 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.
- Utilising the State's diversity to generate greater innovation, creativity and productivity for the State's development and sustainability in the future.

Actions underway include

- The development and implementation of the Government's Multicultural Policy.
- The development of an Anti-racism Strategy for Western Australia to address issues relating to individual and systemic racism.
- Implementation of the Minister for Multicultural Interests' Multicultural Ambassadors Awards.
- The development and implementation of a community education strategy.
- Further development of the Government's language services policy to develop communication strategies that improve access to services to people with a limited proficiency in English
- Online WA Multicultural Communities, established to assist multicultural communities and service organisations to get online.
- Community grants program to enhance initiatives relating to multiculturalism at the local level.

Proposed actions

- 5.38 As part of the consultation phase of developing the State Sustainability Strategy, a seminar will be held entitled *Many Cultures: One Earth* to seek perspective on all aspects of the Strategy. The seminar will include the various authors of the background papers on explaining the ethics of sustainability. The aim will be to establish the seminar as an annual event to review sustainability in the State from an ethical and cultural perspective.
- 5.39 Finalisation and implementation of the Anti-racism Strategy including implementation of a community consultation strategy to obtain community feedback on issues relating to multiculturalism and anti-racism as well as implementation of a community education strategy which encourages an understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism and which dispels stereotypes and prejudicial perceptions.
- 5.40 Continue to develop multicultural perspectives and link them to sustainability outcomes through:
 - Expansion of the Minister for Multicultural Interests' Multicultural Awards

In short cont'd...

- Production with Channel 31 of television programs on multiculturalism and racism
- Cultural awareness training across the public sector
- Greater diversity towards appointments on Boards and Committees.

Global opportunities

Multicultural perspectives in sustainability are a truly global phenomenon and should be pursued in this context.

Further information

People from a diverse range of creeds, traditions and philosophies were invited to submit submissions on ethics and sustainability. These are available on the CD-ROM, the sustainability web site and are listed in Appendix C.



Multiculturalism is celebrated in the Fremantle sculpture of Italian-born sculptor Porcini, who made statues of famous Western Australians but was little known himself. The influence of Italian culture in Fremantle led to alfresco dining which has helped to revitalise inner city areas across Perth.

Source: Peter Newman