

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

INQUIRY INTO A SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

A SUBMISSION FROM DENNIS J. CLARKE

1. A Singular Guiding Principle.

With reference to WA's Sustainability framework and its seven foundation principles and four process principles which are all fine, I would like to see a singular guiding principle that comprehends what the Charter is trying to achieve. For example:

"A process which enables one to evaluate decisions, practices and strategies for the economic, environmental and social impacts both within an entity and external to it. An entity in this context can be for an individual or a whole nation or anything in between."

2. Competition Policy

Competition Policy is hardly a good model on which to base a template for incentive payments. As it is practiced in Australia, Competition Policy is in conflict with the principles of Sustainable Development. The reason for this is that it is driven by the bottom (economic) line and without comprehending the associated social and environmental impacts.

Competition Policy within the electricity industry for example has led to:

- (a) Many displaced skilled persons in the workforce who have been unable to find useful work again. (The supermarkets are full of these people during the day.)
- (b) Many persons in the career transition process becoming sick and suffering from the boiling frog syndrome.
- (c) A hostile focus on making money for an entity becoming an end in itself and has replaced the noble notion of serving the state and the community.
- (d) The absurd situation of greater GHG emissions resulting from the market competitive preference for cheaper Victorian brown coal in lieu of the slightly more expensive but cleaner black coal of NSW.

3. The Natural Step

It is recommended that The Natural Step be included in the suite of tools required for the sustainability charter. It is particularly useful in:

- (a) Identifying materials that are sustainable and those that are not.
- (b) The evaluation of decisions, strategies and processes that are more in alignment with the path to sustainability.
- (c) The process of backcasting to chart the transition from the present to the future goal of sustainable outcomes.

It is a non-judgmental tool that is easy to learn and apply. It has been used successfully for many years throughout many countries.

4. Concerning Energy

Australia needs a long term National energy policy that:

- (a) recognises Australia's contribution to global GHG emissions is not sustainable.
- (b) comprehends Australia's responsibility to respond to the measured harm done to environmental capital by past and present energy practices.
- (c) significantly increases efficient use of energy.
- (d) continuously and increasingly reduces GHG emissions both in per capita and real terms.
- (e) provides incentives for renewable energy sources to become the dominant form of energy.
- (f) recognises the validity of the full spectrum of energy technologies in Australia's energy mix.
- (g) recognises that coal, natural gas and nuclear energy technologies are at best only transitory sources of energy and are in conflict with achieving sustainable outcomes.

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SPECIALISATION: Sustainability, Energy, Water and Waste Industries, Project Management, Planning and Scheduling, Strategic Management and Management of Change.

QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, University of Sydney, 1969
Master of Business Administration (Technology Management), Deakin University/APESMA 1995
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SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE:

Dennis Clarke is a senior professional engineer with many years' experience in leadership roles in the energy industry and in voluntary organisations. He is a founding associate of EcoSTEPS, the multi-disciplinary consultancy that provides education, training and strategic advice to all sectors of society on sustainability and 'triple bottom line' issues. Dennis provides specialist advice to EcoSTEPS on Sustainable Development in the Energy, Water and Waste Management industries and in Ecological Conversion.

In the Energy Industry, Dennis has had extensive experience in power station planning, project management, design coordination, construction, operation and maintenance. Other areas of senior management experience include the management of Change, Business Operations, e-Commerce and IT projects.

Dennis' work in voluntary organisations consists of preparation of project plans, business plans, business mentoring and conducting strategic planning workshops.

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