



THE PEOPLE'S ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ALLIANCE INC.

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<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/environ/charter/index.htm>

**Committee Secretary**

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## Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter

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Please excuse the lateness of this submission. The call has only just come to our attention, but it has developing a profile for sustainability has been one of our goals for some time. I attach a PowerPoint document at this stage, but do have a draft word document providing greater detail should you be interested. I am happy to take calls or to visit Canberra to support the proposal and comments, to clarifying the issues that are dealt with in this submission.

## INTRODUCTION

We submit to the committee the desperate need to develop a modelling system for sustainability. We believe that a proposal we have better suits this application than other systems because it has potential to overcome the isolation of various markers from one another.

We have a long standing interest in resolving conflict in the community that is related to conflicting activities being located and developing in proximity to one another. As one solution to the incompatibility, we see the need to have measures that reflect the cost associated with what has evolved. The measures we are thinking of are those that might paint a bigger picture of what is occurring, than those accounted for by the various stakeholders, including regulators.

The reason for looking to see something done in relation to improving sustainable performance relates to the inequity of political, regulatory and administrative decisions within our community. We see so many affected by poor interface, without any chance of justice within the present system.

We suggest a project format that encompasses evidenced-based strategies for introducing change. To recognise what is going wrong, and do something about it. The model might be incorporated into administrative and regulatory process. We look closely at the strategies and resources being used in the NRM section of Government. This encompasses some of it, and it is both at State and Federal levels.

We are presently trialing a software application from Prof John Glover, in Social Science at Adelaide Uni. While we have not quite got there, it looks to have potential. In providing the software John also provided access to Health databases he is using, and makes them available to others, (<http://www.publichealth.gov.au/data.html>). The other databases we have been invited to share are from within Planning SA, but there is a charge for those. As a community group without any financial support, we are restrained at this stage from accessing these databases. I attach a list of the Planning databases and contact for your information.

Developing a sustainability audit profile is something that others have thought about, but as far as we are aware, have not put into an environmental management profile. We are conscious of the challenge to do this, without driving business and politicians away. But it needs to be done for the good of all.

Our thought is to use what markers might exist in database format, in departments, in each of the sustainability elements, in a geospatial referencing system utilising data linkage. How markers relate to one another is an aspect that can only be explored by putting them together and trialing change or investigating historical perspective.

Our hypothesis is that regulation is done mostly in isolation, without fully accounting the benefits and costs related to the environment. If sustainability is going to have any useful meaning, it needs a system that relates the benefits and costs derived from activities that affect the environment.

One worry we have is that departmental accountancy is just about putting numbers on activity to justify the next round of administrative budgetary allocation. Regulators are focused on providing administrative surveillance, rather than providing environmental monitoring and assessing impact in relation to capacity and sensitivity.

Our proposal is about establishing the importance of a role for developing inherent value of the environment, and the various competing interests in it. You will be conscious that there is no dedicated authority with access to data that might illustrate the limitations of competing interests, nor any administration to bring it together. We are hopeful that the Strategic Planning Office in South Australia might be interested in developing this, and have submitted comment to them along this line.

We would be very grateful if you could consider this suggestion. We think it is one of few viable strategies that might improve integration our community. I would appreciate and be interested in any comments you might have.

Best Regards, Gary