



Our Ref: 200708539

Ms M Hudson
Youth Board Member
Millennium Kids
PO Box 7043
APPLECROSS NORTH WA 6153

Dear Ms Hudson

Thank you for your letter in which you enclosed a list of key concerns of young Western Australians.

Your organisation is commended for the excellent work being undertaken towards facilitating and championing the voice of Western Australia's future. This Government is mindful of the hopes and aspirations of young people and you can be assured that their views are valued.

The key concerns that have been nominated by Millennium Kids have been examined, and the following information is provided in relation to the issues involved:

Climate Change

Climate change is an issue that concerns all of us. It is perhaps the greatest challenge yet faced by mankind and must be taken very seriously by all Western Australians.

The Western Australian Government has actively responded to climate change and has joined the other Australian State and Territory Governments in committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050. Additionally, the State Government is developing climate change legislation, to be introduced into Parliament in 2008.

Earlier this year, this Government released a Climate Change Action Statement, 'Making Decisions For the Future', which contains many new initiatives, such as the Act Now For The Future campaign, sustainable household audits, an expanded solar schools program, renewable energy targets and many other important programs. The Action Statement can be viewed on the 'Act Now for the Future' homepage at www.actnow.wa.gov.au.

This Government has established a Ministerial portfolio for Climate Change and also established the Office of Climate Change which is located within the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). The Minister for Climate Change is now responsible for developing new policies and specific strategies that will deliver significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors, including transport and industry. The Office of Climate Change will also oversee new and existing climate change initiatives and provide high level advice to the Minister and myself.

The Environment/Travelsmart

As acknowledged, the Government is committed to a TravelSmart program. This program includes providing people with the information they need to consider their active options at a household level, including cycling, walking and public transport.

This program has resulted in a substantial reduction in car use and increased public transport use in project areas. Approximately 256,000 households have been approached to date, resulting in 140,000 fewer trips per annum and an estimated annual reduction of 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. By June 2009, the TravelSmart Program will have been offered to almost 450,000 households in the Perth metropolitan area.

The Department for Planning and Infrastructure is working with the Western Australian Planning Commission and other stakeholders to scope the potential application of behaviour change methodologies, which could be applied at a household level to help the community reduce its environmental impact by minimising water, energy and car use, and reducing waste. A number of information strategies may be developed as a result of these considerations.

However, the request to widen the existing cycle paths and to allow motorised scooters to share with cyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities would not be supported by the State Government for a number of reasons including:

- under the Australian Road Traffic Code 2000, Regulation 253(1), it is an offence for a motorised vehicle, other than wheelchairs and other powered devices for the disabled, to ride/drive on the shared path. To change this regulation would require a national agreement;
- allowing motorised scooters to use shared paths would create an unsafe environment, which would put other path users at risk; and
- the widening of the existing shared path network would be extremely disruptive and it would be difficult to justify the expense of such a program to cater for one small section of the community.

With respect to providing school children with an awareness of environmental issues, it is advised that the Department of Education and Training (DET) has a number of projects and programs running in schools that address the issue of climate change with students.

The Sustainable Schools Initiative commenced in Western Australia in 2005. This initiative integrates sustainability education into a holistic program with measurable environmental, economic, educational and social outcomes.

Information about this initiative can be found on the website at <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmis/eval/curriculum/learningareas/ssi/>.

Water Resources

It is pleasing that people in Western Australia are becoming more aware of the need to conserve our precious water resources.

Our drying climate and decreased rainfall, combined with the growing demand for water, means that the State Government has implemented a range of projects to make sure there is enough water into the future.

As you know, there are many competing demands for water. We need water for drinking, gardens, industry and regional development, farming and horticulturalists, the environment and recreational purposes.

To help make sure that we have enough for all these needs, the State Government is pursuing a water reform program that will help preserve and maintain our water resources and encourage people to be more efficient with their water.

These actions include:

- metering and monitoring the water we have, so we know how best to conserve it;
- the development of strategic and regional plans that will help to balance the different needs for water and make sure people have secure access to water; and
- scientific research to identify new sources of water and better ways to keep the water we do have clean and healthy.

Managing our water carefully will cost more money, so the Government has imposed fees on those people who have water licences and who use their water for commercial purposes, or who take water from a stream on a watercourse.

The State Government has imposed water restrictions, which encourages people to be more water efficient in how they use water in the home and on their gardens. Local governments and universities will have to use less water on their gardens and the Government is looking for ways to recycle water.

Through these measures, communities in Western Australia are becoming more aware of the need to conserve water and the State Government will continue to look for ways to better manage our water sources more sustainably for the future. I have enclosed some pamphlets from the Department of Water for your information. Should you wish to obtain further copies, may I suggest you contact Corporate Communications at the Department of Water, on telephone 6364 6848.

Energy Resources

The concerns raised by the Millennium Kids towards the development of nuclear energy are acknowledged. As you may be aware, the Western Australian Government adamantly opposes the use of nuclear power in Western Australia. Reinforcing this stance, the Government has recently introduced legislation to prohibit the generation of electricity from nuclear power in Western Australia.

Nuclear energy presents a number of problems environmentally, socially and economically. The Government believes that issues such as radioactive waste disposal, nuclear safety and high plant construction, maintenance and decommissioning costs, more than offset any advantages nuclear energy may provide.

Nuclear power is often promoted because it has no direct greenhouse gas emissions, but this Government believes that there are more appropriate avenues to pursue the fight against global warming in Western Australia. The abundance of alternative fuels in this State and their relative accessibility and cost-effectiveness ensure they will underpin the energy needs of Western Australia for many years to come.

Technologies are emerging to enable these fuels to be used with low or zero greenhouse gas emissions. Western Australia also has excellent renewable sources such as wind, solar and bioenergy, and is actively expanding opportunities for geothermal power.

In May 2007, the Government announced renewable energy targets for the State's main South West electricity grid of 15 per cent by 2020 and 20 per cent by 2025 as part of the Government's *Making Decisions for the Future: Climate Change* policy framework. Achieving the 2020 target will see over \$1 billion invested in renewable energy projects in Western Australia. This is equivalent to another nine wind farms similar to the 80MW Emu Downs wind farm being built near Cervantes in Western Australia.

A 15 per cent target reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Western Australian electricity generation by more than 27 million tonnes over the life of the scheme, equivalent to taking more than 600,000 cars off the road for 10 years. The target will apply to all renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, bioenergy, geothermal and wave power.

The Government's support for the increased use of renewable energy is also demonstrated by the following examples:

- the Government's progressive increase in the purchase of renewable energy from 5 per cent in 2007/08 to 20 per cent by 2010;
- the commitment to establish eight new renewable energy projects in remote towns;
- the commitment to provide \$2.5 million to support a 2-2.5 megawatt concentrating solar power system in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder region;

- the use of solar water heaters for homes through the Solar Water Heater Subsidy Scheme and the use of solar power systems in urban areas through the Photovoltaic Rebate Program; and
- the Solar Schools program, involving installation of solar power systems for up to 100 schools.

Further information on renewable energy programs, including the Energy Smart Government and Energy Smart Homes is available from the Sustainable Energy Development Office (SEDO) at www.sedo.energy.wa.gov.au. Alternatively, you can request information by writing to SEDO at 197 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA 6000, or telephone 9420 5600. For your convenience, I have attached a range of information for your interest.

Improving energy efficiency and vigorously pursuing and promoting clean energy technologies is the Government's preferred approach to address the environmental problems associated with energy generation.

This Government will continue to work towards finding the optimal balance between the preservation of the environment and the demands of Western Australia's industry and community for efficient, sustainable and competitive energy supply.

Multiculturalism and Citizenship

The State Government has implemented a number of measures to address perceived racism, and discussions about terrorism, in the community.

In 2001, the State Government established the Anti-Racism Strategy Steering Committee to oversee the development and implementation of various strategies to combat racism in the community. A number of major initiatives generated include:

- the Western Australian Charter of Multiculturalism, which was endorsed by Cabinet as State Government policy in October 2004. The Charter articulates the Government's commitment to the principles of multiculturalism and is based upon the premise that a democratic society must allow all its members to participate in all aspects of community life to achieve stronger social cohesion;
- Public Sector Anti-Racism and Equality Program assists public sector agencies in meeting the diverse needs of Western Australians by addressing institutional discrimination through finding ways to recognise the consequences of actions, practices and policies that have unequal impact upon different groups and individuals;
- amendments to the racial vilification provisions of the Criminal Code in 2004, broadening their application, increasing the maximum penalty to 14 years, introducing appropriate safeguards for freedom of speech, and making "race" an aggravating circumstance in relation to offences; and

- proposed changes to the current *Western Australia Equal Opportunity Act*, introducing a number of new grounds of unlawful discrimination, including breastfeeding, bullying and irrelevant criminal or medical record.

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) engages in programs designed to further the principles of the WA Charter of Multiculturalism in our community. For example, through OMI's Inclusion and Integration Grants Program and Community Grants Program, the State Government provides financial support to programs run by community and non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) that encourage people to interact with and learn from each other. Details of funded projects are available on OMI's website at www.omi.wa.gov.au.

Other projects that the State Government, through OMI, have developed, which are directly or indirectly aimed at decreasing racial tension and increasing participation in the community include:

- Youth Sports Program - an initiative of OMI and the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR), aimed at increasing the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) young people in structured sport and recreation across the community spectrum;
- Integrated Service Centres (ISCs) - the ISC project is a joint initiative of OMI, the DET and the Department of Health, and provides culturally appropriate services to support Humanitarian entrants in their health, psychological, social and community needs. Pilot ISCs are located at Parkwood and Koondola Primary Schools;
- Intercultural Arts Project - a joint initiative between OMI and the Department for Culture and the Arts is designed to develop and implement policies and programs to increase the level of participation by CaLD artists in the arts, support partnerships between CaLD artists and groups and arts organisations, and increase employment opportunities of CaLD artists; and
- Community Relations Integrations Officers (CRIOs) - a project designed to provide one-off funding for NGOs to employ a CRIO will raise awareness of and facilitate access to services and programs for members of new and emerging communities. It aims to develop relationships and networks between new and emerging communities and service providers to facilitate access to services and to build the capacity of these communities to identify and find solutions to their needs.

Directly or indirectly, all OMI's projects and programs are designed to increase social inclusion and community cohesion by breaking down attitudinal and structural barriers that exist between groups. These initiatives ultimately contribute to building a stronger, more cohesive Western Australia.

Habitat Protection for Native Animals

The Government recognises the importance of habitat protection. In the past, large amounts of vegetation were cleared with little or no understanding of the environmental consequences. However, the Government has a very effective habitat conservation program and many millions of hectares of important terrestrial and marine ecosystems have been protected as national parks, marine parks and other conservation reserves.

Western Australia is a world leader in protecting plants and animals and through innovative research, has re-introduced threatened species back into habitats where they have not been found for decades. To ensure that these plants and animals have the best possible chance of survival, the DEC has developed very effective programs, including Western Shield, that remove predators including foxes, cats and other feral pests.

The Government through the Swan River Trust is working very hard to protect and restore habitat on the Swan and Canning Rivers. The Trust is working closely with local governments and community groups and is replanting large areas of river foreshore with native vegetation.

Sustainability Planning in Development

Perth's rapid expansion, particularly along the coastal strip, is placing pressure on the environment. Government is continually working with developers to ensure that new housing estates are as sustainable as possible.

The Government's own land development agency, LandCorp, has developed award winning housing estates, such as Harvest Lakes, that apply best-practice sustainability principles.

To support these initiatives, Government introduced the 5 Star building standards in May 2006 to minimise energy use in the heating and cooling of homes. Known as 5 Star, the provisions encourage better design in new homes, resulting in environmental benefits such as reduced energy consumption and real savings in heating and cooling.

Now the State Government has gone further and introduced 5 Star Plus - that builds on the energy efficiencies of 5 Star and adds the benefits of water reduction measures for homes right across the State.

Environment and Sustainability within the Education Curriculum

The *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998) establishes learning outcomes expected of all students from Kindergarten to Year 12, which aim to ensure that all students in Western Australia have the knowledge, skills and values necessary for effective participation in a changing world.

The learning outcomes also aim to ensure that students develop a sense of pride in themselves, their schools, environment and society.

Values underpin and shape the curriculum, and core shared values are explicitly articulated within the *Curriculum Framework*. The importance of 'Environmental Education/Education for Sustainability (EfS)' within the school curriculum is reflected in three of the five core shared values, including Environmental Responsibility, Social and Civic Responsibility, and Respect and Concern for Others and their Rights. Schools integrate these within their teaching programs to enhance the learning opportunities for their students linked to this important context for learning.

Across the curriculum, extensive opportunities exist for students to learn about the natural environment and sustainability, and how they themselves can demonstrate practices consistent with the principles and values associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.

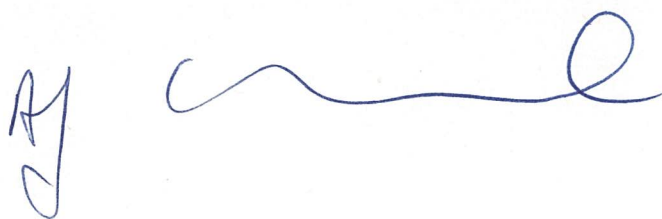
The DET is in the process of developing K-10 Syllabuses that will provide further support to teachers on content that should be taught at each year level. EfS is cross referenced extensively within these documents.

Schools are encouraged to participate in the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative WA (AuSSI-WA) which is an overarching whole-school planning framework for EfS.

The ongoing support by the DET for the development of AuSSI-WA as a key supportive resource for the K-10 Syllabuses reflects the importance placed on this highly significant part of the curriculum.

Your assistance in making the 2006/2007 Millennium Kids Challenges available to this Government is appreciated. I trust this information is helpful in providing you with an understanding of the Government's position and the action being taken in relation to the issues identified in the Millennium Kids Challenges.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alan Carpenter', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Carpenter MLA
PREMIER

Enc

19 NOV 2007