

21 August 2020



Environment Institute  
of Australia and  
New Zealand Inc.

A Stronger Tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper

Infrastructure WA  
2 Havelock Street  
West Perth WA 6005

Online Submission Via: [iwaconsultation@infrastructure.wa.gov.au](mailto:iwaconsultation@infrastructure.wa.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: Submission on the State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper**

The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) (the Institute) Western Australia (WA) Division (the Division) is pleased to provide feedback on the *A Stronger Tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper* released by Infrastructure WA in June 2020 for public consultation.

The Institute is the leading professional body in Australia and New Zealand for environmental practitioners and promotes independent and interdisciplinary discourse on environmental issues. On all issues and all projects, the Institute advocates good practice environmental management delivered by competent and ethical environmental practitioners.

We forward this submission on behalf of the WA EIANZ members. The WA Division currently has approximately 170 members while the Institute has over 2000 members across Australia and New Zealand. Our members come from a range of technical disciplines including certified environmental practitioners (CEnVP), ecological consultants, environmental advocates and environmental impact specialists working in government, industry and the community.

I have also included for your information a recent policy paper prepared on Covid 19 recovery focus areas for Western Australia which may be useful as part of your considerations. Again, we thank Infrastructure WA for the opportunity to be engaged in discussions on achieving better outcomes for Infrastructure in Western Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bastow".

Belinda Bastow  
President  
EIANZ – WA Division

## 1 Summary of Submission

The EIANZ WA Division is pleased to make comments on the *A Stronger Tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper*. EIANZ-WA commends the Government on developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment in Western Australia (WA).

The EIANZ-WA promotes well researched, scientifically robust and sound decision making in Government. The following summarises EIANZ-WA's feedback on the Discussion Paper.

### **Process and principles:**

EIANZ endorse the approach proposed by Infrastructure WA regarding the development of the State Infrastructure Strategy (SIS). We advocate for transparent engagement by government with a range of stakeholders in the development of government policy and strategy to ensure that it reflects the views of society and meets the expectations of future generations.

We would recommend that Infrastructure WA (IWA) also adopts an approach which is ecologically sustainable and socially just. To ensure that we meet our future needs we must be explicit in defining societal needs and the importance of building a strong and healthy environment where all members are able to access basic resources.

### **Strategic direction:**

EIANZ endorse the approach that long term strategies act as a mechanism to create a society that is better than today. While we may be limited in our ability to fully understand what the world will be like in 20 years, at a fundamental level, it should be more sustainable and equitable than today.

EIANZ advocates for improvements in our society around energy, water, other resource use, and social equity. We strongly support the development of strategies that will assist Western Australia to:

- Support the transition to a low carbon economy
- Protect and enhance natural resources upon which our society depends (i.e. clean air, clean water, robust and thriving natural environments)
- Support a circular economy where natural resources are maintained within the economy through multiple phases, including the removal of regulatory and other barriers to the transfer of materials between industries

### **Scope of application:**

Population presents many challenges to Western Australia that need to be fully appreciated to be managed effectively. One of Western Australia's unique qualities is the low population and large geographical size. However, this does present challenges with respect to the delivery of services. EIANZ supports a holistic planning approach that would protect the unique regional features while ensuring that better mechanisms are introduced to ensure equality between regional locations and the Perth metropolitan areas.

Western Australia is one of 36 global biodiversity hotspots; areas that support more than half the world's plant species as endemics and nearly 43% of bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian species as endemics. The Southwest Australia Hotspot contains over 5,500 plants, of which, more than half are found nowhere else. This biodiversity benefits not only our essential living services (clean air, water) but also provides a unique opportunity for greater diversification of economic opportunities through tourism and native flora cultivation.

The promotion of increasing population within this region and a second satellite city would place this unique environment under greater threat than it is already experiencing due to dryland salinity, grazing and farming activities, urban encroachment and climate change.

EIANZ supports an approach to the development of the regions that looks at improving the interconnectedness through better resources while ensuring that the natural environment continues to be conserved.

### **Infrastructure sectors:**

EIANZ endorses the proposed sectoral groupings outlined within the discussion paper and is particularly pleased to see attention directed towards waste management, energy transition, water sustainability and digital connectivity.

How these sectors are developed and the direction that they take will be dependent upon the principles and objectives established to guide their advancement. EIANZ re-emphasises its position that fundamental to the strategy and equal to economic opportunity is the importance of ecological sustainability and social justice.

We encourage IWA to develop suitable assessment tools to ensure that ecological sustainability and social justice are able to be measured appropriately, alongside economic opportunity. Many poor decisions have been made in the past on the basis that only economic benefits have been considered and this has been to the detriment of Western Australia's natural environment and equality in social services provided to Western Australians.

### **Methodology and prioritisation:**

EIANZ endorses the collaborative and transparent process established through the IWA Act and outlined within the discussion paper. EIANZ supports a long-term strategy being developed based upon robust scientific assessment alongside tested scenario tools to help anticipate the future needs of Western Australia.

In addition, we see a benefit in long-term planning to overcome short-term politicisation of issues that may have a detrimental effect on the both the environmental attributes of the state and its community members.

While EIANZ appreciates the built element of the strategy cannot be influenced in the 0-4 year horizon, for IWA to achieve the 20 year vision for Western Australia, we need to be realistic in identifying activities that we currently conduct that will not be viable moving forward. We therefore recommend that IWA remains open-minded regarding the ability to shift built priorities from the 5 years and beyond, particularly in the early years of developing the rolling 20 year SIS.

EIANZ also supports the approach of the strategy to look beyond just the built elements and examine the policy, regulatory, social, technology and other factors that determine the effectiveness of infrastructure delivery.

EIANZ would welcome the opportunity to work with the IWA on the development of the SIS over the next 18 months. Through our member organisation we have access to a range of qualified environmental professionals who work across a variety of environmental disciplines including transport and infrastructure, scientific research, environmental management within a range of industries and conversation. We are able to access this body of knowledge and contribute to the process to ensure that the outcome delivers an improvement in Western Australia's long-term sustainability – socially, environmentally and economically.

## **2 Role of the EIANZ**

The EIANZ, as the leading membership based professional organisation for environmental practitioners in Australia and New Zealand and is an advocate for good practice

environmental management. The Institute supports environmental practitioners and promotes independent and interdisciplinary discussion on environmental issues. The Institute also advocates environmental knowledge and awareness, advancing ethical and competent good practice environmental management.

A Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme ([www.cenvp.org](http://www.cenvp.org)) is also in place to assess and certify competent experienced environmental practitioners working in government, industry and the community. This includes specialist competencies such as Impact Assessment, Ecology, Land Rehabilitation and Contaminated Lands.

The EIANZ is an advocate for environmental assessment, management and monitoring investigations and reports being certified by suitably qualified and experienced persons for the completeness and scientific rigor of the documents. One of the ways of recognising a suitably qualified practitioner is through their membership of, and certification by, an organisation that holds practitioners accountable to a code of ethics and professional conduct, such as the EIANZ.

The EIANZ is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation incorporated in Victoria, and a registerable Australian body under the Corporation Act 2001 (Cwlth), allowing it to operate in all Australian jurisdictions.