

Regional Sustainability in Western Australia: An Enabling State?

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Central Thesis

**The international participatory
development paradigm offers
insight
into a process for Regional
Sustainability
in Western Australia**

Presentation Outline

- v A context for regional sustainability in Western Australia.
- v Conceptual and methodological framework of the international participatory development paradigm.
- v Employing this framework to conduct an analysis of potential for regional participatory development in Western Australia.
- v Lessons from the international paradigm that suggest a need for the creation of an enabling bureaucratic environment.

A context for regional sustainability in Western Australia

- v Regional sustainability and the Draft State Sustainability Strategy
- v What evidence suggests a need for a regional approach?
 - Non Capital City issues
 - Globalisation and economy
 - Ecology
 - People

What is a region?

- v **Defining regions for the purpose of sustainability requires consideration of a number of factors**
 - **Social factors**
 - **Administrative boundaries**
 - **Ecological boundaries**

Regional governance structures in Western Australia

- v **Regional Development Commissions**
- v **Regional Associations of local government**
- v **Regionalisation and/or Regionalism**

International Participatory Paradigm Framework

v International Participatory Paradigm

- Coherent and mutually supporting pattern of concepts, values, methods and behaviour amenable to wide application.
- Move away from industrial modernist expert controlled to participatory inclusive and open ended learning process.

A Conceptual Framework

- v **Participation**
- v **Facilitation**
- v **Capacity building**
- v **Empowerment**
- v **Networking**
- v **Conflict resolution**

Participatory Methods

- v **A systematic learning process**
- v **Multiple perspectives; group learning process;**
- v **Context specific;**
- v **Facilitating experts and stakeholders; and**
- v **Leading to sustained action.**



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Western Australian Regional Participatory Development

- v **Participation and the Citizens
and Civics Unit**
- v **A need for facilitation**
- v **Government support for Capacity
Building and Empowerment**
- v **Networking and Conflict
Resolution**

International Participatory Development Lessons: An Enabling State

- v Top-heavy bureaucratic hierarchy tendency to standardize, centralize, impose targets within projects.
- v Power differentials a constraint. Power includes influence and authority over decision-making and access, control and ownership over funding and knowledge.
- v Complementary focus upon government and civil society. Sustainability requires partnership with industry.

Key elements required for government to become a strategic and enabling institution: International experience

- v a policy framework supportive of a clear role for local communities;
- v strong leadership committed to developing learning-organisational systems, capacities and working rules;
- v long-term financial commitments and flexible funding arrangements;
- v better systems of monitoring and evaluating performance, and new mechanisms for ensuring accountability, both to policy and to communities;

Continue

- v attention and patience in working out the details of systems and procedures, with lessons learnt from pilot projects, and the negotiation and accommodation of different interests and perceptions;
- v creative management, so that improved policies, procedures and field practices, once developed, can be scaled-up and implemented effectively;
- v and open, supportive yet challenging organisational climate in which it is safe to experiment and fail;

Continue

- v small, interdisciplinary teams or working groups of innovative and committed agency professionals working in collaboration with external resource persons capable of acting as catalysts for change (unbundling hierarchy);
- v regular documentation and analysis of lessons for improving practice and building and institutional memory;
- v a flexible, integrated, phased training programme over a sustained period of time, involving key actors at different levels.

Implementing Institutional Change

- v Institutional frameworks that facilitate processes of dialogue, partnership, networking, learning and managing change.
- v Methodologies are employed for training. Supported by changing the rules in use, financial management practices, reporting systems and supervisory methods.

Continue

- v **Korten identifies five inter-related stages which are linked through feedback loops.**
 - **I identify the changes required within training.**
 - **Exposure of senior staff.**
 - **Approach is tested in the field and assessed.**
 - **Training of large numbers of staff.**
 - **Training of in-house facilitators.**

Conclusion

- v Political commitment to participation in Western Australia.
- v Needs to be reoriented towards a facilitative approach.
- v International experience demonstrates transformation within the structures and philosophy of government is necessary.
- v Important for regional sustainability strategies