

SMITHSON PLANNING

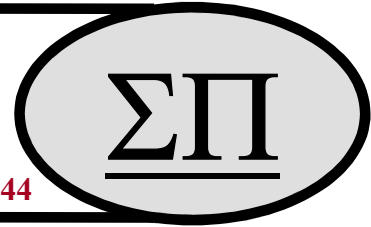
www.facebook.com/SmithsonPlanning

www.smithsonplanning.com.au

www.facebook.com/nsmithson1

smithson@smithsonplanning.com.au

Tel : (08) 9842 9841 Int'l : +61 428 556 444



Ms Marianna Olding
Economic Regulation of Airports
Productivity Commission
Melbourne Victoria

Attention : Stewart Turner
Research Manager | Airport services inquiry

15 Mar 2019

INQUIRY : ECONOMIC REGULATION OF AIRPORTS

Dear Ms Olding – thank you for the opportunity to address the Productivity Commission on this matter.

I refer to the most recent examples of our parliamentary inquiry submissions, both of which can be sourced online, and for which there are corresponding Federal & State briefing notes (**attached**) :

1. Federal ITC.reps inquiry into Australian Government's role in the development of cities; and
2. State EISC.la inquiry into the cost of regional airfares in Western Australia.

I have also attached for the Inquiries' reference two particular letters of relevance among the many :

3. Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary Dept Prime Minister & Cabinet (dated 21 Dec 2018); and
4. Dr Peter Shergold, Secretary Dept Prime Minister & Cabinet (dated 10 Nov 2005).

Background

For the benefit of the Inquiry, Smithson Planning is a sole-trader consultancy in regional development, and a registered lobbyist in Western Australia – now based in Perth, but for the past 20 years operating from Albany, Mr Smithson has also lived and worked in four states and multiple regions / cities across Australia.

Mr Neil Smithson as the Principal of the practice holds a Master of Arts in Urban Studies (Curtin University), and has accumulated 35 years' experience in the areas of city planning, business and regional development – and more particularly regarding city and regional development at the NSW Dept Environment & Planning, Kinhill Engineers, GHD Consultants, the City of Melville (City Development Planner) and the Rural City of Mildura (Manager Business Development).

Mr Smithson is an Alumni of the Commonwealth Study Conference (2003); an Associate of Future Directions International; has also held the office of Senior Vice-President of the Albany Chamber of Commerce & Industry; and is a two-time Past-President of the Rotary Club of Albany.

Mr Smithson also contested the seat of O'Connor in the 2010 federal election (as an independent), and stood for the office of Mayor of the City of Albany in 1999 and 2015.

Context

Over the past 20 years, Smithson Planning has made multiple submissions to the Commonwealth via Inquiry (either House, Senate or Joint Standing Committee) and invitation all premised around the Rainbow 2000[©] Project, and including :

- HoR SC PIRS - Infrastructure & Development in Regional Areas (1999)
- DoTaRS – AusLink Green Paper (2003)
- Cwth JSC NC&ET – Adequacy of funding for Australia’s Antarctic Program (2004)
- HoR SC T&RS – Transport Networks Inquiry (2006)
- HoR SC E&H – Sustainability Charter (2006)
- HoR SC E&H – Sustainable Cities 2025 (2006)
- COAG CIRA – Allen Consulting : Review of Western Australian Ports (2008)
- APH SSC F&E – Securing Australia’s Energy & Environmental Future (2008)
- APH JSC C&FS – Aspects of Agribusiness Managed Investment Schemes (2009)
- APH HoR CCWE&A – Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate (2009)
- Infrastructure Australia – National Freight Network Plan (2010)
- Infrastructure Australia – Major Cities Unit : State of Australian Cities (2010)
- Productivity Commission – Performance Benchmarking Australian Business Regulation (2010)
- Cwth DPM&C – National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary (2010)
- Cwth DSEWP&C – Sustainable Population Strategy Taskforce (2011)
- Cwth RDA Great Southern – Regional Plan 2010-2020 (2011)
- Cwth DSEWP&C – Marine Bioregional Plan for the South-West Region (2011)
- Cwth DVA – Permit to use the word ANZAC (2011)
- APH SSC RRAT – Freight Logistics for the Grains Industry (2014)
- Senate SC RRAT – Future Role & Contribution of Regional Capitals to Australia (2015)
- HoR SC IT&C – Australian Government’s Role in the Development of Cities (2017).

Briefing Notes

Please find attached our briefing notes, which are a derivation of the briefing notes we have previously and consistently provided to relevant project stakeholders over the past 20 years ... typically, State & Federal politicians, and related business groups. They contain the questions that might be put to the Prime Minister and Cabinet / the Premier and Cabinet, in relation to our research project and corporate investment strategy.

On-line Reference Material

You will also find extensive background information at Smithson Planning’s website and facebook pages, in particular, the full PowerPoint presentation that accompanies the Rainbow 2000[©] Project.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/SmithsonPlanning/photos/?tab=album&album_id=154042347988361

The Rainbow 2000[©] Project

The Rainbow 2000[©] Project is a regional planning strategy for regional development in Australia, focusing initially on Albany, Western Australia – it was published under copyright in 1997, and examines the hypothesis ... Is planning the antithesis of politics?

The project specifically identified and proposed the Anzac Centenary 2014-19 commemorations and the forthcoming Albany Bicentennial 2026-27 celebrations, as two major 1:100 year international tourism and business development opportunities for the city of Albany and the Great Southern Region ... unprecedented was the analogy at the time, and those efforts were subsequently rewarded with national and international acclaim.

Part of the regional strategy includes the establishment of an Albany Port Corporation as a public private partnership (PPP), and the development of an Albany International Airport as one of the major assets of the corporation ... along with Albany sea port relocation, and a toll route ring road / railway for metropolitan freight accessibility, three very attractive commercial propositions that tangibly address the emerging planning, infrastructure, transport and city issues of the region – if all of that sounds familiar now, it is perhaps testament to how those ideas have pervaded mainstream planning & infrastructure across Australia over the past 20 years.

In the more recent years that we operated from Albany, Smithson Planning presented two specific proposals for international hotel groups whom were aware of the prospect of better domestic and international air services to and with the proposed Albany International Airport ... suffice to say that multiple hotel and aviation interests were canvassed to support the growth path envisaged for hospitality and business in the city and region over two decades, most of whom were also aware of the Anzac Centenary relationship.

Moreover, as the former City Development Planner at Melville, I was aware of the issues confronting the future of the Port of Fremantle and the Perth & Jandakot Airports – whilst smaller in ambition, essentially Albany and Fremantle share the same history and the same constraints in terms of infrastructure provision, market accessibility and potential global trade portal.

In fact, from a risk management perspective, one might conclude that a weakness of the Western Australian economy is that Fremantle and Perth dominate as trade portals to the exclusion of all other ‘southern’ trade portals (Geraldton to Esperance) – I would suggest those portals are ‘a reflection of local politics’, rather than the pursuit of commercial opportunity or intentional state asset development strategies.

The Anzac Centenary 2014-19 & WA Bicentennials 2026-29

None-the-less, this is (was) a very special period for these cities and their regions, and warranted market disruption in the absence of governance vision, leadership and decision-making. Published in 1997, this was the decade leading up to the Anzac centenary commemorations, and then leading to the cities’ / State’s bicentennial celebrations ... 200 years of post-European settlement in the western third of Australia – an extraordinary opportunity for Perth, Fremantle and Albany.

Thematic Analysis

As a function of project research over the past 20 years, Smithson Planning has also documented on facebook various thematic issues pertaining to project observation, management and implementation, including :

- The Anzac Centenary 2014-19 (Volumes 01-21 & Volume 100 : the Centenary Events)
- Albany Anzac 2014-18 (Volumes 01-09)
- **Peak Oil, Gas & Nuclear Power (Volumes 01-14)**
- WA Farmers – issues in Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (Volumes 01-09)
- Rainbow 2000 – a Regional Planning Strategy for Albany & the Great Southern (Volumes 01-15)
- Rainbow 2000 – the Commonwealth Government Response (Volumes 01-12)
- Rainbow 2000 – the State Government Response (Volumes 01-17)
- Rainbow 2000 – the Local Government Response (Volumes 01-07)
- Rainbow 2000 – the Private Sector Response (Volumes 01-14)
- Rainbow 2000 – the Media Response (Volumes 01-19)
- Albany Waterfront Project & Entertainment Centre (Volumes 01-07).

In the context of extant and emerging energy security, transport and environmental issues form a local to a global scale, I could comfortably recommend a further presentation just on **Peak Oil, Gas & Nuclear Power**, alone.

Regional Analysis

The project has evolved as a regional strategy for Australian regional development, and as I indicated at the national 2016 SEGRA Conference held in Albany, now includes planning strategies for several regions and their cities around Australia, including :

- Kimberley 2020 (Volumes 01-02)
- Pilbara 2020 (Volumes 01-04)
- Gascoyne 2020 (Volume 01)
- Batavia 2020 (Volumes 01-02)
- Avon 2020 (Volumes 01-02)
- Perth North Metropolitan (Volume 01-10)

- Fremantle South Metropolitan (Volume 01-10)
- Peel 2020 (Volumes 01)
- Leeuwin 2020 (Volumes 01-03)
- Recherche Goldfields 2020 (Volumes 01-03)

- Eyre 2020 (Volume 01)
- Sunraysia 2020 (Volume 01)
- Riverina 2020 (Volume 01)
- Alpine 2020 (Volume 01)
- Orana Blue 2020 (Volume 01)
- Capricornia 2020 (Volume 01)
- Brisbane SEQ 2020 (Volume 01)
- Leichhardt 2020 (Volume 01)
- Arnhem 2020 (Volume 01)
- MacDonnell 2020 (Volume 01).

Project Horizons

The intention of the original project brief was to document the growth and development of Albany and the Great Southern from 1997 to 2027, as the thirty-years leading up to the city of Albany's bicentennial celebrations. We are now more than halfway through that timeframe, approaching the end of the Anzac Centenary, and perhaps just starting to consider preparations for the Western Australian bicentennials. Perth has undergone extensive transition, but Fremantle and Albany have arguably sat dormant and resisted change.

Project Prognosis

The project fundamentals are robust and resolute – basically, in the context of the Federal Government's role in the development of cities and regions, Albany is an emerging small order city capable of great things ... **agriculture** and **forestry** are going head-to-head with **tourism** and **mining**, and along with **defence**, **transport**, **education**, **health**, **retail**, **commerce**, **recreation**, et al., are all competing for public and private sector funding, space and infrastructure access, while providing employment and economic development.

Albany is a product of political juxtaposition between local, regional, state and commonwealth interests – perhaps in hindsight, better decisions may have been taken earlier were the appropriate resources available to canvass a meaningful debate and resolve the commercial aspirations, but it is like all human endeavours ... a work in progress that will not go away.

Summarily, the Government isn't accustomed to competition in strategic planning, and struggles to rationalise the application of intellectual property considerations ... if this were an Engineer's drawing, an Architect's design or a Scientist's formula, but no ... it's a planner's plan / process, and the choice remains with the people.

Quite literally, the Prime Minister, Premier and Cabinets (whomever they are or maybe as time progresses) will either address the questions nominated, and act on the opportunity afforded by the Rainbow 2000[©] Project, or neglect their fiduciary duty under those respective constitutions toward the peoples of Australia.

But, what the Government has here are the two largest urban redevelopment projects in Western Australian planning history ... an extraordinary and unprecedented opportunity for growth and development – there is already a political mandate for Fremantle Ports relocation to Kwinana as a result of the 2017 State Election results, and the circumstances could not be better save for the lack of state finances ... which necessitates the public private partnership, all logical and achievable – and the same applies to Albany.

The Commission may be aware of three recent conferences held in Albany, which literally embody the struggle between industry groups for control of the Albany waterfront :

- National SEGRA Conference (24-27 Oct 2016)
- Inaugural WA Regional Tourism Conference (11-13 Sep 2017)
- ALGA National Local Roads & Transport Congress (06-08 Nov 2017).

Manifestly, the WA Planning Commission is currently dealing with the City of Albany Draft Local Planning Strategy 2018 (on exhibition), as well as several other strategic and statutory planning processes pertaining to key locations and development issues confronting Albany and the Great Southern.

Those same issues at a different scale apply to Fremantle and Perth.

I trust our submission meets with your expectations, and I would be pleased to provide further information / address your questions as appropriate.

Yours faithfully

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Neil Smithson
Managing Director

Web : www.smithsonplanning.com.au

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/nsmithson1>

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Smithson Planning - Consultants in National Investment Growth Pathing
ABN : 46 782 764 220