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Telephone: (08) 9321 1925 Fax: (08) 9321 1798
GPO Box K 845, WEST PERTH WA 6842
E-mail: wacni@msn.com Web Site www.cniwa.com.au

Council for the National Interest

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE

Winter Newsletter

"What will be next?" When will it stop? These and other questions most likely would have crossed the minds of many Western Australians upon opening their daily newspaper on 25 July to read the headline 'Federal high-rise plan for WA coast'. Despite assurances from the Prime Minister that the Government would use cautiously its new found power of control of the Senate it seems that this was an empty gesture.

Already there are direct moves in some areas and threats in others to take control of industrial relations, vocational education training, a National Secondary Schools Certificate, direct funding of local government and threats to withhold

Commonwealth funding for a number of projects unless various Commonwealth demands are met.

Now the article mentioned indicates that the Commonwealth intends to wrest control of coastal planning from State and Local Governments. It would seem from comments attributed to Federal

Environment Minister, Senator Ian Campbell, that the Commonwealth already has a "30 year plan to save the coast" and "States and Councils which co-operate with the new policy by developing regional plans, to be submitted for Commonwealth accreditation, would benefit..... But those which resisted must be prepared for a fight with the Commonwealth."

The Federal Government's intention is to set its plan in law preventing future State and Local Governments from deviating from it.

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Whether Commonwealth intervention will produce better outcomes is irrelevant. The situation is that town planning and development issues are the responsibility of the States. The

State Government has a comprehensive planning process which involves Local Government, a creation of the State Government and about which there is no mention in the Australian Constitution.

CNI argues that the Constitution provides for certain powers to be exercised by the States with a much narrower range of powers accorded to the

CNI accepts that if this is the wish of the people then so be it. To determine whether it is what the people want the matter should be decided by a Federal referendum as required by the Constitution. Otherwise, call a halt now to further expansion of Commonwealth powers, start to hand back those powers to the States. As this happens the Federal bureaucracy can be scaled down and savings of ten to twenty billion dollars per annum could be directed to better education, health and family services, skills training and lower income taxes.

Two recent successful public forums the first addressed by the Hon Richard Court and the second on 22 June by Professor Greg Craven hosted by CNI have sought to expose these issues to the wider public.

EARLY WARNING

DATE

Readers are urged to reserve Thursday 29 September 7.30pm in their diaries. On this evening His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia Lt General John Sanderson AC will be guest speaker at the next CNI forum at City West Function Centre. Reserve the date and contact your friends and bring them along. More details to follow.

ELECTION FRAUD

Commonwealth. Over the years the Commonwealth has gradually taken over many of the States' powers and continues to threaten to take over more. The logical eventual outcome is that the States will become irrelevant, all power will be vested in Canberra which will govern through local governments by passing the States.

As reported in Spring Newsletter, October 2004, the legislative changes for better identification requirements for electoral enrolment did not come into force in time for the October 9 Federal election.

Consequently CNI has continued its strong lobbying of the Federal Government to strengthen the reforms which were passed by the House of Representatives and watered down by the Senate Labor Opposition and minor parties.

Our lobbying has drawn a five page letter of response from Senator The Hon Eric Abetz, Special

Minister of State who is responsible for electoral matters.

The Minister stated, inter alia, that he shares CNI's concern to ensure the electoral roll is of the highest integrity and has invited CNI to make a further submission to the Joint Standing Commission on Electoral Matters (JSCEM).

The submission is being prepared and will recommend improved identification procedures for enrolments and for voter identification at the polling booth and for pre-poll and postal votes, enhanced post poll scanning for multiple votes and closure of the roll at the time an election is called.

When completed this submission will be posted on CNI Website www.cniwa.com.au

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The very essence of CNI in WA is that the voice of CNI is the voice of its members. These members are concerned Australians who seek to build a better Australia for future generations. A number of them meet regularly in policy discussion groups to share ideas, to become better informed and to better inform others. Their collective thoughts form the core of CNI's lobbying of both Federal and State Governments on issues of national interest.

New participants are always welcome. The commitment is modest - a couple of hours a month with a cuppa as well.

If you are interested in participating in a new group or if you know of some one who would be interested please contact:

Anne-Marie Pike Tel: 9321 1925
Denis Whitely Tel: 9271 3586