

I refer to the recently released Issues Paper, which has been read with interest, and the Chair's invitation for either full formal submissions or brief emails of your ideas for the Inquiry. This short response is in the latter category as simply an interested citizen's suggestions:

1. Assuming the Government's State Planning Strategy is to be the guiding blueprint for WA's future, it seems very necessary that its implementation and the realisation of the Plan's vision is considered by the Inquiry in terms of the microeconomic reforms which will be necessary to facilitate those outcomes. Hopefully the Strategy will be more than 'just another plan' and instead will garner corporate, community and bipartisan political support – otherwise there is not a great deal of purpose in having it.

I believe the ERA could play a key role in lifting the profile of the State Planning Strategy and positioning it correctly as the paramount planning document for the State of WA.

2. The incoming Australian Government has made much of its intention to reduce the costs to business of 'red and green tape' by \$1 billion each year. This is a very commendable objective, however clearly this cannot be achieved unless there is an 'across government' approach which engages each of the three spheres of government and the business sector in a collaborative approach.

Potentially the ERA and its report could suggest a structure within the microeconomic reform space which would facilitate an approach to this exercise which is collaborative and constructive, rather than combative. Again, it would be highly encouraging to see a bipartisan approach.

3. The so-called 'digital economy' presents some amazing opportunities for Australian businesses, as well as for the wider community. High speed broadband will provide substantial increments in the growth of the technology revolution, yet from all accounts many micro and small businesses are poorly prepared for the transition and this is likely to lead to business failure. Several major reports and studies, corporate and government, highlight this potential threat to these businesses and the associated investments and livelihoods.

While perhaps not a microeconomic reform matter in a traditional sense, it is suggested the ERA might consider it as an issue which could have major impacts on the efficacy of the small business sector as a major contributor to employment and economic growth, and perhaps propose some mechanisms to ensure this sector is provided with appropriate support/assistance measures to facilitate the transition into the rapidly occurring ubiquitous digital age.

Thank you for the opportunity of submitting these brief comments/suggestions. The work of the Authority is very commendable, and I look forward to reading the Discussion Paper at the next stage of its Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Hill