

Future vision needs enthusiastic attitude

FOR the past two months, I have had the great good fortune to get to know South Australia and some of its people. As the guest of the State Government, I have been assisting with the implementation of SA's new Strategic Plan.

Modelled after a similar effort that I manage in my home state of Oregon, in the US, the plan is intended to provide a long-term vision for guiding SA to a brighter future and spur the state's lagging position in relation to other mainland Australian states.

It aims to expand the economy, better the environment and improve the health of the population. Most importantly, the plan is designed to be a vision that all South Australians can work towards achieving, not just the state government.

In Oregon, an independent progress board, representing Oregon's business and community diversity, monitors and reports on how the state is going in relation to the plan, known as *Oregon Shines*. Oregon business and community leaders play an important part in supporting this vision.

Given SA's history of dependence on state government for leadership, involving the community in this plan is a formidable challenge. In my two months in SA, I have talked to hundreds of leaders from many walks of life. Most agree that community ownership of a shared vision for the future is the way to go.

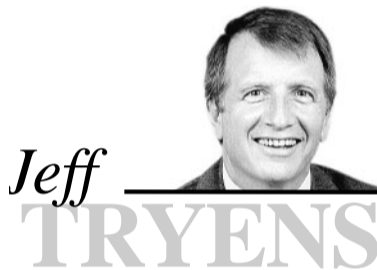
What has fascinated me is how many bright, dynamic leaders are willing to tell me why it probably won't work.

How many times have I heard: "You know we have the tall-poppie syndrome here in SA? Anyone who stands out too much gets knocked down." Or: "We still haven't gotten over the State Bank failure so it's hard to get people excited about this type of thing." Or: "We South Australians are great at planning but nothing ever gets done."

Perhaps all true and valid statements, but what do they have to do with the future? If single tall poppies get knocked down, why not form tall poppies clubs for mutual protection? The state now has AAA credit rating. How much more assurance do people need to put the State Bank failure behind them?



NEW VISION: Enthusiastic state-wide support needed to keep the Strategic Plan going forward.



As for too many plans and no action, SA's Strategic Plan is a perfect opportunity to fix that. No doubt, the roll-out of the plan so far has been less than satisfactory from the community's perspective.

Leadership is unco-ordinated. Opportunities for engagement are scarce. Information about implementation is also scarce. While vexing, these are all fixable problems.

At its core, SA's Strategic Plan remains an excellent opportunity for South Australians to define their future. It is only fair to note that Oregon's process has had its ups and downs over the past 15 years. The board has

nearly gone out of business twice and for over two years, Oregon's economy has been stalled, causing real distress.

While the state is showing some signs of economic recovery, it is not what the Progress Board envisioned 15 years ago.

Does that make Oregon's approach a failure? Certainly not. The basic framework for prosperity is sound. The benchmarks continue to tell us how we're doing, good or bad, and we continue to take steps to reach that brighter future.

I hope SA's leaders will come together to support your state's vision for a prosperous future. I hope they will use the process as an opportunity to change, just a bit, that negative attitude about the state's ability to change for the better.

Without the enthusiastic involvement of the state's leaders, community ownership of the plan will, indeed, be out of reach.

□ **Jeff Tryens is executive director of the Oregon Progress Board and consulted on SA's Strategic Plan.**

Players to avoid in the celebrity sales game

EVERY celebrity capable of a cheesy grin seems to endorse some product or other these days. But why do we buy them? Do we think celebrities are much smarter than we are? Maybe. Then there is Fergie, the Duchess of (now lean) Pork, who fluffed her lines 102 times recording a fruit juice ad. Now really, how hard is it to say cranberry juice?

Do we believe celebrities have superior taste? Maybe. Then there is Monica Lewinsky. She endorsed Jenny Craig. Now if she was flogging washing powder, that would make sense. But the only diet Monica Lewinsky was famous for I'll say no more about. Tacky. Tacky. Tacky.

Moreover, if a celebrity endorses a fashion brand, do they wear it themselves? I can understand Ian Thorpe flogging his own undies brand. Stripped down, he can add oomph to a dreary pair of grey flannel Y-fronts.

But why is he selling pearls? Does he wear drop-pearl earrings?

And, even if the celebrity has good taste, is the product any good? Liz Hurley has her own clothes brand. This is ridiculous. She's famous for wearing a dress held together with safety pins.

Or do we purchase celebrity-endorsed products simply in the hope that we are buying a small slice of their glamorous celebrity lives? Maybe. But Lleyton Hewitt put an end to that possibility with



his toilet paper endorsement. For once, it was obvious that no matter how much of that toilet paper one used, one remained a million miles away from winning Wimbledon, bedding a tennis star/groupie/John McEnroe look-alike and/or even improving one's backhand.

If simply by purchasing a celebrity-endorsed product, you also buy a slither of a glamorous celebrity life, then here are a few products you may wish to avoid.

□ **Liz Taylor Perfume Passion:** Attracts husbands after eight uses. Also delivers a love of big-hair wigs and chandelier jewellery, and gives you that urge to adopt Michael Jackson.

□ **Paris Hilton Rhinestone Jewellery Collection:** Combines trailer-park trash chic with Rodeo Drive tackiness ideal for that home sex video.

□ **Joan Collins Eyewear:** For that rigor-mortised, cadaver-in-spectacles look.

□ **Sean "P. Diddy" John Combs Wear:** Look cool and be confused about your own name in a Puff, P, diddy, daddy sort of way.

□ **Debbie Reynolds Incontinence Pads:** One try and you'll want to tell the whole world you're wearing them.

□ **Sarah Michelle Gellar Maybelline Makeup:** You, too, can slay vampires. All you need is one volumiser mascara brush.

□ **Billy Connelly ING Superannuation:** And you'll skip around in circles, too, when you've got as much loot stashed away as our Billy.

□ **Britney Spears Perfume Curious:** For that two-minute marriage, dab on after the ceremony and when your spouse regains consciousness, he'll demand an instant divorce.

□ **Madonna's Children's Books:** You, too, can be Princess Party Pants, who kisses hoards of toads, turns 40 and becomes Princess Better-be-Good writing morality tales for children.

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Phone ban likely to trigger another social restriction

MOBILE telephones may soon be banned in many workplaces in Australia. A Melbourne tyre company has effectively been given Australian Industrial Relations Commission authority to outlaw the use of mobile phones during working hours.

Anyone breaching the ban will face disciplinary action and possible dismissal. There will be plenty of firms that will want to replicate the Melbourne decision, which presumably is now a legal precedent, and impose similar restrictions. It's not enough to say mobile telephones are now a part of life and therefore anyone should be allowed to use them when they want to.

The arguments are superficially valid. Children might notify parents by telephone that they are safely home from school or will be having an evening meal with their mate. Workers may need to contact their spouses or partners.

And these days, mobile phones can be used for curious things like triggering the air-conditioning or the automatic oven. They are hooked up to household security systems.

The commission accepted argument from South Pacific Tyres, in Melbourne, that mobile phones were a safety risk and a drain on productivity. Under a compromise, only union delegates, shift supervisors or safety representatives will be allowed to carry mobile phones during working hours.



If there is an emergency, family members or other likely callers will be asked to phone one of the designated officers. These officers will then relay the message to the staff member involved and, where appropriate, allow a mobile call to be made. Staff will be allowed to store mobile phones in their lockers or bags for use at meals breaks.

What happens if a secret boyfriend or girlfriend rings is not clear. Presumably the call would have to be an emergency.

The agreement brokered by the commission between South Pacific Tyres and the National Union of Workers is believed to be an Australian first. But it is unlikely to be the last.

We have all been caught waiting for retail service while the person behind the counter takes a mobile phone call. Or plaiting our feet at a service station while the mechanic chats to some unknown person on a private call. Talking on a mobile phone while driving a forklift truck or operating a crane or tractor must be as dangerous as making a call while

driving a car. Imagine workers on a production line trying to make quality checks or mechanical adjustments if they are talking or texting on a mobile.

While the South Pacific Tyres decision may break new ground in the Australian workplace, it is likely to trigger yet another social restriction, another freedom we have to surrender.

Technology is meant to make our lives easier, to give us more time, to liberate us. In reality, the South Pacific initiative again proves technology is becoming our master, not our servant.

Futurists are already predicting that it won't be long before we are wearing ear studs as semi-permanent mobile telephone receivers, with the mouthpiece perhaps little more than a Dick Tracy-style watch band. Mobile phones, they predict, will be connected to radios, computers, the Internet and television. How far restrictions on their use will extend will become a community debate.

With smaller and more discreet devices, will it be possible to apply restrictions on their use? Or in the end, will we simply capitulate to technology and take them for granted in the same way we read a newspaper or listen to a radio? We still have a long way to travel down the pathway to the brave new world of technology.

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