

Environment Crusader Sees 'Win-Win' For Development, Environment Harmony

Legendary environmental crusader, Doctor Harry Butler, believes crucial resources development in Australia can successfully occur in tandem with strong environmental practices in a 'win-win' situation for the Australian community.

Butler has outlined a five stage plan to manage the development of the industry without harming the environment:

- Recognise and preserve those segments of the natural environment which are irreplaceable keys to wildlife survival;
- Preserve representative areas of all habitats and plant associations, even if they are not recognised to be significant;
- Systemically rehabilitate utilised areas once completed and maintain the status quo by not allowing new development until rehabilitation has been undertaken over a similar sized area;
- Exclude unnecessary impacts of the development and its workforce on the environment, and;
- Minimise or mitigate those impacts which cannot be avoided.

"Conservation or sustainable development hands on to tomorrow's world a richer, better, cleaner and safer global community than the one we inherited", Butler said. "Developers over generations have invoked the term 'good housekeeping', which today is often referred to as 'environmental care'."

Butler said environmental care, like many other aspects of humanity, is riddled with subjective value judgements. "Environmental care is comprised of varying percentages of



Environmental crusader Dr Harry Butler believes resource development and environmental sustainability can co-exist by implementing sustainable environmental management practices.

“Environmental care is comprised of varying percentages of opinion, politics, morality and science.”

opinion, politics, morality and science. Of those, only science is repeatable and valid."

"A better environment must include jobs, houses, health and welfare, and does not entirely depend on preservation of forests and wildlife", he said. "It depends as much on the preservation of the development and economic

structure, which allows our community the time, inclination and education to enjoy those things we seek to have."

In a wide ranging presentation titled, Environmental Issues for the Upstream Hydrocarbon Industry, Butler also offered his views on such aspects as current state and federal legislation, waste management, atmospheric emissions, emergency procedure, education and induction and land rehabilitation.

"As the world population is so large, and its supportive technologies are so powerful, today's human impacts transcend national levels and affect global communities and generations", Butler said. "The shape of the future depends entirely on future discoveries and is quite unpredictable. The record of human prophecy has been a dismal failure and almost total miscalculation.

"However, due to modern technology, for the first time we not only know a great deal more than has ever been known before about the world in which we live and how it works, but we have ample demonstration of theoretical understanding of the way this works. Understanding nature paves the way for technical control of similar processes by humans."

Butler said the Australian petroleum industry will continue to seek cost-effective, sustainable answers to yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's problems. "Today's humans, all seven billion of them, are healthier, better fed and better educated, with more leisure time than their ancestors, despite some shortfall in distribution of the world's wealth", he said. "Tomorrow's humans will have the advantage of your results from challenges and opportunities today. Theirs will be an even better world." ■