AGENDA 21 IN AUSTRALIA

FAQ’s about the wonderful UN program the politicians prefer not to talk about

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Introduction

This brief article is intended to give an overview of Agenda 21 in Australia by answering various commonly asked questions about this United Nations program.

The following information is based upon extensive research, more details of which may be found here (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

What is ‘Agenda 21’?

Agenda 21 is the United Nations global program for the 21st century. It is an attempt by the UN to control people and resources throughout the world under the guise of protecting the environment and assuring the ecological sustainability of the world. The United Nations adopts the view that only a global ‘solution’ will be effective and therefore all the countries of the world are required to transfer political power and finance to the UN, and cooperate with their requirements. All in the interests of ‘sustainability’ of course (9). The UN will decide what they consider to be sustainable, as well as unsustainable practices, which must either be restricted or cease completely.

Is Agenda 21 the same thing as ‘ecological sustainability’?

Yes, the terms “Agenda 21” and “ecologically sustainable development” (ESD) are used synonymously. The Agenda 21 program is a guide to achieving ecological sustainability. Legally, Agenda 21 is implemented in Australia under the 1992 Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment and the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).

Is there a connection between human caused climate change & Agenda 21?

Yes. Human caused climate change or AGW, is considered by the UN to be a global problem which threatens sustainability, hence it forms one part of Agenda 21, and has been included by the UN in the Agenda 21 document. This connection has been confirmed by those responsible for implementing Agenda 21 in Australia (10).
But Isn’t Agenda 21 ‘non-binding’ or voluntary?

Agenda 21 was initially a voluntary international agreement, however a number of mechanisms are commonly used to ensure such agreements ultimately become binding.

Firstly, a sense of international moral obligation, or economic pressures, is used to ensure compliance.

Secondly, in the case of Agenda 21, a central part of the agreement was a reporting requirement which required the Commonwealth to periodically submit detailed compliance reports to the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UN CSD), an organisation specifically set up to oversee the implementation of Agenda 21. These reports were very detailed, requiring input from all 3 levels of government. Australia was a driving force behind the establishment of the CSD. This type of reporting requirement is a common method the UN uses to ensure compliance (11, 17, 18).

Thirdly, when a sufficient number of countries sign an agreement it is then considered an ‘international agreement’ by the Commonwealth which is then permitted, by use of the external affairs powers under the Constitution, to enshrine the provisions of the UN agreement into Commonwealth laws (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24) This of course, then has a flow on effect, to State laws, and ultimately, Councils. Some examples of legislation based upon or including the principles of AG21/ESD include (25, 26):

- the Commonwealth Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Act 1994, the amended Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975, the Commonwealth National Environment Protection Council Act 1994 (and complementary legislation in other jurisdictions);
- Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)
- Wetlands policy and the Ramsar Convention
- new or amended fisheries legislation and environment protection legislation in the States and Territories; and
- jurisdictions which have included ESD in legislation which is not principally focussed on the environment,
  - in New South Wales for instance, this includes the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 1994, the State Owned Corporations Amendment Act 1995 the Water Board ( Corporatisation) Act 1994 and the Electricity Legislation Amendment Act 1995, and
  - while in Queensland it includes the Land Act ( commenced in July 1995), amendments to the Mineral Resources Act - proclaimed on 1 May 1995 and the Planning, Environment and Development Assessment (PEDA) Bill which is presently out for comment

Finally, UN agreements are commonly considered a stepping stone to binding international laws. It is very much an ongoing process.

In answer to the question, in Australia, various provisions of Agenda 21 have been enshrined into Commonwealth, State, and Council, laws and regulations and are therefore legally enforceable. Agenda 21 per se though (ie in totality), strictly speaking remains legally unenforceable until it becomes enshrined in international law, although considerable international pressure may still be used to ensure compliance. It is certainly NOT true to say though, that the provisions of AG21 are ‘non-binding’ or voluntary, as many are now statutory laws within Australia.
Who is responsible for implementing or enforcing Agenda 21 in Australia?

As then Environment Minister Ros Kelly in the Keating government pointed out when Agenda 21 was introduced to parliament on 26th May 1992, the Commonwealth is the driver of AG21, and assumes ultimate responsibility:

“The recommendations of agenda 21 cover a wide range of issues and responsibilities for implementation, cutting across virtually every Commonwealth and State government agency as well as local government and the non-government sector. The recommendations of agenda 21 cover a wide range of issues and responsibilities for implementation, cutting across virtually every Commonwealth and State government agency as well as local government and the non-government sector. My department has the responsibility for the overall coordination of the domestic follow-up of agenda 21, although other agencies will have a more direct implementation task.”

In matters of national significance the States are required to comply with the dictates of the Commonwealth regarding international agreements, hence various provisions of Agenda 21 have become firmly entrenched in State laws. This process was further strengthened by the introduction of the 1992 Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment (IGAE) and the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). The IGAE, which was signed by the Prime Minister, all State Premiers, and the President of the Local Government Association of Australia, enabled the Commonwealth to consolidate its environmental powers over the States and local Councils. The signatories to the IGAE were even required to recognise that the Australian Constitution, with respect to the environment, is outdated and irrelevant:

“RECOGNISE that environmental concerns and impacts respect neither physical nor political boundaries and are increasingly taking on an interjurisdictional, international and global significance in a way that was not contemplated by those who framed the Australian Constitution;”

While the Commonwealth exerts direct control over States in the ‘national interest’, and States in turn control local Councils, the Commonwealth has also exercised more direct control over Councils by funding Agenda 21, by embedding Environmental Resource Officers in Councils or Local Government Associations, and even by producing an Agenda 21 instruction manual for Councils. As a result of these pressures, Councils around Australia have widely adopted Agenda 21/ESD programs.

What is the role of the judiciary in AG21/ESD implementation?

The lawyers and judges of course, are at the forefront when it comes to forcing Australians to comply with the dictates of AG21/ESD, as required by the UN. But when it comes to political issues such as AG21/ESD, judges may go beyond impartiality and become ‘activists’.

The underlying philosophy driving Agenda 21 and the rewriting of our legal system is based upon ecocentrism, or the transferring of property rights from humans to plants, animals, or the environment. This is a complete reversal of traditional legal principles which were based upon anthropocentrism or human centredness.

Ecocentrism, or earth jurisprudence, was explained by Justice Preston in a recent speech entitled ‘Internalising Ecocentrism in Environmental Law’:

“Ecocentrism involves taking a nature-centred rather than a human-centred approach, where the earth is valued not as a commodity belonging to us but a community to which we belong. Development of an earth jurisprudence requires the internalisation of ecocentrism in environmental law....... An increasing recognition of the first law of ecology – that everything is connected to
everything else - and that the Earth’s ecosystem is, in a sense, a spaceship, may necessitate more sweeping positive obligations on landowners……. The Australian National Strategy of Ecologically Sustainable Development defines the concept as “development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends.” Statutes could enhance implementation of ESD by imposing positive obligations on landowners to achieve ESD, including by the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.”

This represents a radical revolution in legal thinking and the fundamental values that underpin our society. Even more radical though, is the belief that these ideas should be permanent and unchallengeable, regardless of the will of the people. According to Christine Trenorden, Former Senior Judge, SA Environment Resources and Development Court, in Judicial Review and the Principles of Ecological Sustainable Development: Where are we Going, ESD means non-regression of environmental laws:

“Although the mutability of laws is an essential principle in general, our understanding of the environment and the concept of sustainable development compel new thinking: the repeal or diminution of progressive laws to protect the environment would contradict the principle of inter-generational equity;

• The right to a healthy environment is recognised as a human right from which there can be no derogation;
• A number of international environmental conventions aim to conserve, protect and improve the environment/ecosystems…….

The principle was inferentially recognised, it is argued, in the final document agreed at the Rio + 20 Summit The Future We Want. Paragraph 20 states that ‘In this regard, it is critical that we do not backtrack from our commitment to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment’…

the following might provide arguments for non-regression:

• Australia is a signatory to a number of international environmental conventions that aim to protect, preserve and enhance the environment; and
• as a result of the incorporation of the principles of ESD into legislation many years ago Australians have an expectation that the government will continue to assess development against these principles.”

So not only are the traditional values which underpin our society under attack, but further, there are moves to completely prevent any democratic reversal of these laws. And all this is being done under the banner of human rights?

Is Agenda 21 a bipartisan issue?

Yes. Agenda 21 has long been supported by both major political parties and the Greens. Unlike the ALP and the Greens however, the Coalition did not declare Agenda 21 in their official policy platform even though it has long been supported by the highest levels of the Liberal Party.
Is Agenda 21 democratically based, were the people given an electoral choice?

No, it is not democratically based and the people were given no choice. As already noted, it was a bipartisan policy, so even if Agenda 21 had been openly declared as policy, the people had no choice.

But how is it possible for a UN program to be implemented by successive governments for 20 years without the people being given a democratic choice?

The United Nations issued instructions that the global sustainability agenda must transcend party politics and be thoroughly embedded into the bureaucracy to prevent any threat to the continuation of the policy upon change of government. In order to achieve this, the Commonwealth put in place various (undemocratic and unconstitutional) intergovernmental bureaucratic measures, and sought to deliberately embed the sustainability agenda at all levels of the bureaucracy and the executive. In this way, and by bipartisanship, democracy was subverted and the people were prevented from having any democratic influence which could threaten the UN’s sustainability agenda.

Why do our politicians claim Agenda 21 is a wonderful environmental program to protect trees, reduce pollution, and even reduce poverty, and yet they unanimously agree it is not a vote winner to be discussed during election campaigns?

The reasons for this are obvious from the above. While the politicians may have been proud of the stated aims of AG21/ESD, they were certainly NOT proud of the true aims, or the deceitful anti-democratic, anti-Australian means by which this imported global program has been forced upon the Australian people.

But isn’t a healthy environment a fundamental human right?

Those with an obsessive undemocratic global agenda commonly seek to export control of the environment and climate to the UN. Human rights are no different.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission:

“key human rights standards are included in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, even though these standards are not referred to as rights. They include an adequate standard of living, freedom from hunger, health care and education.”

The HRC continues to list what it describes as “The right to a healthy environment”:

1. Environmental rights include the right of access to the unspoiled natural resources that enable survival such as land, shelter, food, water and air; the right to refuse development; and specific environment-related rights of Indigenous peoples.
2. Environmental rights are provided for by international instruments including the Convention on Biological Diversity[9], the Ramsar Convention, the Rio Declaration[10] and Agenda 21[11].
3. The Rio Declaration asserts that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and that we are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. It also recognises the vital role of Indigenous communities’ knowledge and traditional practices in environmental management and calls on States to recognise and duly
Once again of course, these so called ‘human rights’ involve transferring the power to the UN to control or revoke these ‘rights’ at their discretion.

**How much do all 3 levels of government spend on Agenda 21 related initiatives?**

In spite of repeated requests made to various politicians in an effort to ascertain the costs of Agenda 21, all have refused to respond. One difficulty of course, is that AG21 is thoroughly embedded at all levels, and in all departments, of the bureaucracy and government. What we do know is that in the decade following the introduction of Agenda 21, Commonwealth government environmental expenditure exploded, **going from $80 million in 1992 to $1.557 billion in 2002**. This of course does not include the incalculable amounts spent in total by State governments and local councils. And since Agenda 21 embraces cultural, social, and economic policies in addition to environmental policies, the true cost of Agenda 21 implementation is obviously many times greater.

**Is Agenda 21 illegal or unconstitutional?**

Legislating to enforce the dictates of foreign organisations such as the UN within Australia is most certainly in violation of the spirit of our Constitution and our legal system. Additionally, when the people are denied a democratic choice, it also represents an attack on the foundations of democracy within Australia.

The fact that our politicians have been able to exploit various loopholes in our system to subvert our Constitution and democratic institutions does not change this fact.

Having said this, there seems little doubt that the Commonwealth, the States, and Councils, have exceeded their Constitutional and legal authority in regard to the various mechanisms they have utilised to enforce the dictates of AG21/ESD upon the people of Australia.

Only appropriate court action can decide definitively.

**Why do so many, including the mainstream media, prefer to pretend Agenda 21 is a conspiracy?**

Many in the media, and no doubt politicians too, really do believe AG21 is just ‘conspiracy’ talk. Frequently though, the term ‘conspiracy theorist’ is very deliberately used to demonise and silence critics when it is considered that publicity would have extreme repercussions. The use of such language by those who have been involved in implementing AG21, and are aware of the undemocratic unconstitutional mechanisms which have been utilised, is clearly a means of control, denial, and continuing suppression of truth.

**But why should I care? How will AG21/ESD affect me?**

If you, or your family, or your business, use energy and consume resources, then AG21 will affect you. If you own private property, and if you reside in a modern capitalist country like Australia, AG21
will affect you. As previously noted, the UN will decide what they consider to be sustainable, as well as unsustainable practices, which must either be restricted or cease completely.

Energy and resource usage will be increasingly monitored and restricted. This will result in attempts to modify behaviour by increased costs for such basics as electricity, gas, petrol, water, and usage of motor vehicles. Businesses will face increasing costs for energy use and pollution. And rights to private property will be increasingly restricted on environmental grounds, with land owners facing huge obstacles in order to develop their properties or remove vegetation. Effectively, land ownership rights will be sterilised with owners unable to make significant changes to their own properties.

Of course a huge part of this will be a massive bureaucratic system to monitor all Australians and enforce the requirements of the UN. Already carbon footprint calculators have been developed to analyse the environmental costs of every food you eat, every appliance you use, and every mile you drive (27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34). These calculators will become even more complex as resource consumption is increasingly restricted by law and will be backed up by monitoring devices such as smart meters which will be connected to an international grid (35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40). CSIRO is developing smart meter technology to control in house appliance use at times of peak power consumption (41). And new buildings will become more expensive as they are forced to comply with the Green Building Guide. There is even Green Globe Certification for tourism.

As industrial costs skyrocket because of ever increasing environmental costs, the bureaucracy will expand and Australia will be required to send increasing amounts of money and resources to the UN, and to other countries. The Australian economy, industry, and life style, will increasingly suffer.

Big brother will be increasingly watching your every activity and controlling your behaviour. All for the good of the planet of course.

What is the best means of countering Agenda 21 & restoring democracy?

The agenda driving climate change and Agenda 21 is all about global power. As a result, the 3 greatest antidotes to the agenda are nationalism, genuine democracy, and increased public awareness. While those driving the agenda constantly speak of sustainability, they carefully and most persistently avoid any mention of democratic sustainability, or means by which democracy and national sovereignty may be strengthened.

While Australia faces very real environmental problems, these should be addressed democratically by the Australian people, NOT undemocratically by foreign agencies.