

My Two "Dreams"

For those who have followed my letters to newspapers and politicians over the years, you will have seen a number of letters referring to the need to bring water from the north of WA.

Martin Luther King said: "I have a dream..." Well, I have two dreams...

The first has been a life-long dream to see Australia become a Republic. To see the Union Jack erased from our flag.

I think I must have been born a "Republican" for, as far back as I can remember, I have rebelled against all things "royal" - always refused to toast or swear allegiance to the queen whom I consider the head of a foreign country (*see story "Back to Teenage Years!", about my induction into National Service, on page 22*).

To this end I have even designed a new flag that I believe can unite all Australians, including our Aboriginals, colonist descendants and the immigrants from all parts of the globe who have made Australia "home".

I believe the Aboriginals of our country would be proud to accept a flag that accommodates the best of their flag and that of the existing Australian flag.

The design uses the earthy colours of the Aboriginal flag that truly depict the vastness of Australia. The Southern Cross is a must in whatever design is accepted, and I have changed the sun of the Aboriginal flag to that of our Federation star.

I believe it is way past time for Australia to stand for itself; at the same time I see no reason not to continue as part of the Commonwealth of Nations, the same as other former colonies have done.



My second dream started in the mid 70's when I came west and looked over this vast, sun-burnt land of ours, spurred on by the only politician with real vision that we have had in Western Australia in my time here, Ernie Bridges.

Ernie was an Aboriginal from the Kimberley region, a member of the WA Labor Party who, when pushing for his dream of bringing water from the north to Perth, was vilified and pushed out of the Labor Party as a "radical".

His dream and my dream is to one day see water channelled down from the north of WA.

Where Ernie Bridges promoted piping it down the coast, my dream sees it flowing down through inland WA, creating a green belt from the Kimberleys to Perth and beyond.

If you followed my letters you will see my continued voice pushing to, at least, have this seriously looked at. It is not "impossible" as some would have you believe. In fact, some years ago, a private company offered to do it but their offer was spurned by the then government as not practical. (Probably because it was not an idea mooted by the government.) Rubbish!

Yes, it would be costly and need to be a State/Federal project.

Yes, our water costs may be high for a time. However, over time it would become cheaper and



ensure that WA has a viable future for our children and their children.

It can be done and needs to be done for the future of Western Australia and the benefit of all Australia.

Western Australia could become the food bowl for southeast Asia.

The soils are fine . . . they just need water!

Unfortunately, our politicians only seem to think of the short term - their future, not that of the future of our country.



Here, especially in WA, we should be looking at what will happen to our State after the mining fades out - and it will; perhaps not in our generation or even that of our children, but future generations will suffer.

Instead of the money taken by the Federal Government from the mining being used to prop up the eastern states (who will do nothing for themselves as long as they can bleed WA), the money should be channelled back into developing Western Australia for the time when resources either fade out, or their value becomes unviable.

The obvious solution to this is to bring water from the north down through the centre of WA, opening up the country to agriculture.

I don't believe this would require piping other than, perhaps, in short bursts through hilly areas. I would suggest investigating the possibility of open-cut following the contours of the country and utilising the many, enormous, disused open-cut mines as storage areas along the way for when the seasonal water may not be running.

Western Australia could have its own equivalent of New South Wales' Darling River, with towns developing along its length that would, in themselves, generate more employment and absorb immigrants.

Ernie Bridges idea of piping it down the coast may have been a fine idea in his early days, but the development of desalination makes this unnecessary. Desalination can cater for the coastal areas but not really viable for the centre.

Western Australia has a vast area of land that, with water added, is ideal for farming and has the potential to be the food bowl for South East Asia.

They said the Sydney Harbour Bridge couldn't be done; they said the Snowy River Scheme couldn't be done - but they were!

I have argued for years that we should be putting migrants to work in developing this waterway in the same way as migrants were the main labour force in building the Snowy River Scheme.

The same would happen here as happened in the Snowy area where many of those migrants stayed and expanded and developed the towns into vibrant hubs.

All we need is some leading politicians who have the calibre of Lang, Chifley, Curtin, Menzies, who are prepared to say "it will be done!".

I hope to live long enough to see these two dreams come true.