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## Towards net zero, with jobs

West Australian, Perth



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# Towards net zero, with jobs

## PETER NEWMAN



The weather here and elsewhere seems to be getting more and more extreme. Is it climate change? How do we do something about this?

At the same time we are being implored to create more jobs so we can help make the future better. Can we do the two together especially along the Fremantle to Kwinana coastal corridor?

I think so and I want to try to help envisage it along our coastal corridor. I have lived and worked here for the past 50 years and have been part of many issues such as saving the Freo railway, redeveloping the old noxious industries in Coogee, and helping make the case for a new port in Kwinana, backed by Lithium Valley projects.

These have all worked well in one way or the other. Now we have a new agenda: making climate-friendly urban development with lots of new jobs along the whole corridor as it redevelops.

The core development arenas are: future Fremantle, the South West group of local governments, Kwinana industries, marine construction and defence facilities. All of these are looking to go net zero as well as seeking very large development finance that is increasingly linked to net zero.

The core idea underlying net zero is that researchers, government agencies and communities must be involved. It's not possible to do otherwise because it's such a deep issue about our culture and economy.

It's essential to collaborate, otherwise we won't do it well. So far, all these arenas have projects that have been doing this. They all want to create brilliant new developments which are both net zero and create lots of jobs.

Now we need to be able to show in detail how this can be done in practical reality, not just in plans. And, the whole urban corridor needs to be linked together.

The reality is that we are working out how to do this as very few other places are doing it much yet. This makes it hard but it's also an opportunity. We can help the world find out from us and become a leader in this new economy.

We are already showing that we could do this in associated areas.

For example, we have been putting solar on our rooftops way ahead of most cities and it is changing how we now can

proceed in this corridor. We have also been a global leader in industrial ecology where, through the Kwinana Industries Council, wastes from one industry have become resources for neighbours. The whole area shares recycled water and the next phase is a big shared battery to assist with the grid and show how solar can be shared from all the various businesses and homes.

We are researching a series of net zero precincts across Australia and were a little surprised to find that we have the best demonstration projects anywhere. The White Gum Valley (project in Fremantle) is a project we have worked on for

10 years and it shows how we can share solar, batteries and

EV recharging. Down the road is the Peel Business Park with its solar farm and batteries showing that businesses can save money and greenhouse gases.

We want to make these famous globally as part of our research and we hope they can help all the new developments along the Freo-Kwinana corridor, can learn from them.

The whole corridor also needs to be better linked together as each part of the future development creates jobs, houses and urban activity along the corridor. There are plans for the Metronet project to come to Fremantle along the freight corridor from Cockburn Central to Fremantle CBD.

And there are plans from the South West group of councils to build trackless trams down the whole corridor which perhaps

could be revised as the projects are seen as one huge new opportunity. The trackless tram has been a project of ours for a decade and after it was tested in Stirling with more than 1000 people riding it, we have begun to focus on how to link Fremantle better with its surrounding area. The local governments have great plans that need to be further developed with local communities and potential development projects around stations.

The potential is there to show how this innovative, smart, electric tram technology can link together much of the corridor as it enters its next big growth phase.

Jobs will be focused in the future Fremantle area that will shift from being a container-oriented place to an intensive waterfront



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development. Several other places along this corridor will also have tourism jobs and professional jobs as they redevelop.

The next big industries will all need to be net zero including having better public transport links. The next phase of net zero for industries is to achieve net zero exports that have green premiums on their products rather than having border taxes placed on unprocessed, carbon-filled products.

Marine construction and defence in a global context are already moving towards net zero products, so we will have plenty that we can share from them, particularly in the US. Our new projects will all need to ensure they are also leading as they create new jobs for the next economy.

There is considerable progress in all these areas so it's a chance to put the whole corridor on the world map and show how to do net zero and new jobs really well.

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**Peter Newman is a professor of sustainability at Curtin University**

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**An artist impression for trackless trams proposed for the City of Stirling.**