

Convener's Report

**The following report was prepared by Wayne Anthony for the Urban Ecology Australia
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 11 November 2008**

Urban Ecology Australia (UEA) has had a steady-as-she goes year, with two exciting new projects being initiated. The organisation is perhaps not as innovative as it was a decade ago, but still fulfils an important role. The Christie Walk project, which was the main concern of UEA a decade ago is now successfully completed and so we must consider what our role should be, and how we can best use our accumulated expertise, given that dozens of other green and environmentally concerned organisations have sprung up in the last ten years.

During 2007/2008 UEA's main focus was on the following projects:

- Conducting the site tours of Christie Walk.
- Lobbying Government and business bodies on matters of ecological importance.
- Auspicing the Story Wall mural project.*
- Development of the GoGet car-sharing project. *
- Maintenance of the UEA and associated Christie Walk websites, which contain vast amounts of information on ecological issues and are gateways to much more.

** Both of these projects were initiated in the financial year to the end of June 2008 but were not started operationally until later in the year.*

In March 2008, Convener Chérie Hoyle stood down from the UEA Board for personal reasons and I became Convener. Eric Constantin took over from me as Secretary. We also reluctantly accepted the resignation of Jacqueline Mulberry for personal reasons including taking on a fulltime teaching job. Anne Hamilton continued as Treasurer and Michael Robertson as website manager.

Since July Sophia van Ruth has resigned from the Board and been replaced by Charmaine Harvey, who is the coordinator of the Global Education Centre. Norm Rohde was co-opted to the Board to continue his support for, and promotion of, the GoGet car sharing service.

Margaret Rohde has continued as part-time office coordinator and site tour manager.

In addition we decided at our last meeting that we would re-visit the idea of getting the large solar PV array erected atop the Stage 2 roof-garden at Christie Walk. This was a part of the initial plan back in 2000 or so but was abandoned because of cost.

I wish to extend sincere thanks to all Board members for their efforts throughout the year and in particular to Margaret Rohde, who has worked more unpaid than paid hours in the UEA office. Also thanks on behalf of the Board to Joan Carlin for producing the regular UEA newsletter at a very high standard.

*Wayne Anthony
Convener*

Site Tours

Tours are still increasing in numbers and there are three new tour guides who have been taking the groups this year. They are Helen Lawry, Kingsley Knott and Clive West, who all have a teaching background.

Thirty three schools and tertiary institutions have visited Christie Walk this year with just over 900 students. Many of the teachers accompanying the students have been bringing their classes for the past three years and some schools are bringing classes from several year levels on different dates. Feedback from teachers and students has been excellent and we have received some beautiful letters of thanks from a whole Grade 5 class at Walford. Most of the teachers bringing students to Christie Walk have purchased the resource 'Moving Towards Urban Sustainability' which was published in June 2007.

Other groups visiting this year have included teachers from Urrbrae High School, the Slow Food Group, and a large group from the Oxfam Australia network of supporters. The Adelaide City Council has been promoting sustainable living to apartment residents in other parts of the City and a small group from the east end of Rundle St came to see what has been accomplished at Christie Walk.

The monthly site tours for the public continue as usual on the third Sunday of the month. In February, the SA Premiers Department brought 25 visitors to Christie Walk as part of the Solar Cities Conference. Planning SA brought another 20 visitors from the Land Management Corporation in April. Both of these groups were hosted by Paul Downton.

In addition there have been visits from interstate and international environmentalists, academics and other eco-village residents from interstate and from the Aldinga Eco Arts Village.

Forums:

The following forums have been held since July 2007:

- * Tuesday 7 August. *Ecocity Adelaide - What will it look like?* Michael Robertson.
- * Saturday 9 September. Illustrated talk by Richard Register, founder of Urban Ecology in the US.
- * Tuesday 2 October. *Photovoltaics and Other Available Solar Technologies*. Sandy Pulsford (Solaris)
- * February 2008. *Genetically modified crops*. Effie Best
- * June 2008. *'Peak Oil - how should South Australia respond?'* Michael Robertson gave a presentation and was followed by Michael Dwyer from the Adelaide Peak Oil Community Transition Group.

Because of the low attendance at the forums it was decided to suspend this as a regular activity while looking for a wider audience.

Submissions:

Sept 2007: Urban Ecology Australia submission to Planning SA concerning proposed changes to Adelaide's urban growth boundary.

May 2008: UEA Submission to the Garnaut Climate Change Review on the topic of Transport, planning and the built environment.

Sept 2008: Draft Residential Development Code.

Other UEA events and activities:

- Margaret Rohde gave a presentation at a Community and Neighbourhood Houses conference at the Fullarton Community Centre.
- Paul Downton was a Plenary speaker at the Climate Emergency Action Network (CLEAN) conference in September 2008 and Margaret gave a workshop presentation at the same conference.
- A group of UEA members and Christie Walk residents went on a visit to the Aldinga eco-village (a group from Aldinga had visited Christie Walk earlier in the year on one of the public site tours).
- A group of eight from Moreland City Council in Melbourne attended the Solar Cities Conference in Adelaide and visited Christie Walk.
- Four UEA newsletters were produced during the year. Each one included a selection of edited extracts from websites that were referred from UEA member Sharon Ede.
- UEA applied to the Adelaide City Council for a grant to develop a Story Wall in the undercroft entrance to Christie Walk. The ACC approved a grant of \$7,000 and artist Evette Sunset was selected. Work started in August and is progressing well. Workshops on most Sundays have been well attended and have attracted Christie Walk residents as well as many from the local area and further afield.

In addition to the tours and other activities UEA receives constant requests from media outlets and publications who want to take photographs and interview residents. These have included the local media, the BBC from the UK, ABC's *Life Etc* Magazine, and *National Geographic*. Arrangements for these visits are often made at short notice and involve finding residents who are willing to be photographed and sometimes interviewed, and getting approval from the Community Corporation.

Treasurer's Report for Year July 1 2007 - June 30 2008

The following is a summary of the last financial year in UEA.

Donations

We continue to receive regular monthly donations from several of our members. A few more long-term loans were converted to donations. The remaining outstanding loans are from people we have been unable to contact.

Membership

During this financial year we have received \$720 in membership fees a large decline on last year but in the last 5 months things have picked up with several new members including two new life members.

Book Sales

The teaching resource 'Moving Towards Urban Sustainability' has sold well as most teachers bringing students on site tours purchase a copy. Sales have brought in \$2,737 to the end of the financial year. Copies of the book are available for purchase at a discounted price for members.

Office Administration and Site Tours

An added cost in the past financial year has been the payment for the office to be managed for a few hours each week. This together with payment to site tour guides has been our major expenditure. Income from tours was \$6,691, an increase of 20% on last year.

The bank balance at year end was \$11,930.

I would like to thank Margaret Rohde for her ongoing work in maintaining the financial affairs of UEA.

Finances

Summary statement of financial position as at June 30 2008

	2007-08	2006-07		June 08	June 07
INCOME			ASSETS		
Donations EFF	6,609	71,949	Cash at Bank	11,930	11,361
Interest	310	413	Receivables		402
Membership	720	1,550	Lease	63,049	63,705
Book Sales	2,737	406	Equipment	2,895	4,342
Site visits	6,991	5,522			
CUE sponsorship	-	2,500			
Other income	104	-			
Total Income	17,471	82,340	TOTAL	77,874	79,810
EXPENDITURE			LIABILITIES		
Accounting fees	782	173	Loans	3,740	9,690
Stationery & equipment	562	348			
Office costs	2,220	360			
Communications	1,570	1,567	NET ASSETS	74,134	70,120
Depreciation	1,447	1,447			
Site tour expenses	2,530	1,683			
Insurance	1,192	1,655			
Equipment rental	235	-			
AGM	36	-			
Christie Walk contribution	2,050	-			
Lease amortisation	656	-			
Subscriptions	177	300			
Total	13,457	7,533			
Operating profit/loss	4,014	74,807			

The accounts were audited by Lee Green & Co and the full statement is available on request.