



The Urban Ecology NEWSLETTER

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UEA NEWS AND UPDATES

Things are going ahead in leaps and bounds for UEA, the hardest thing is finding the time to properly follow up. We have a fantastic board with a huge pool of talent but everyone is busy and getting busier. Having said that, we've had a good couple of months.

Our strategic plan is evolving as a lot of the goals we set for ourselves are being met.

I would like to quote from a card our Patron Dr Barbara Hardy sent us. *"I think Christie Walk is a wonderful example of sustainable living... with effective use of resources and I looked at the roof garden which is very impressive. Thank you for the UEA newsletter"*.

ADMINISTRATION

Glenys Videon our new admin worker has picked up and run with the gap that Margaret Rohde left when she went away. Again, there is a resource issue; in the time that she works it is impossible to get everything completed. Glenys is a very professional person, she has been with us for 3 months now and she has made her mark. In the future though we will need to look at the complexities of employing an admin person on a permanent basis. I don't think there is enough appreciation from the membership of exactly how much voluntary time is put in by the board. This all contributes to keeping UEA afloat.

WEBSITE A little left to do to complete it but it is looking good!

CARNEGIE MELLON (CM)

International masters students are looking for a project relating to sustainable communities. Andrew Tidswell has met with them and developed strong and ongoing links between CM and UEA.

DVD LAUNCH

Everyone did a fantastic job on a very successful launch. (see article on next page)

Prof STEFAN LEHMANN

Professor Sustainable Design and Director Zero Waste at Uni SA and Dr Angelique Edmonds Lecturer from the school of Architecture Art and Design came to Christie Walk on UEA's invitation. It was a most fruitful meeting and a lot of information was shared with some very valid comments on how we can improve the way we share information.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

We also had a visit from a Parliamentary committee who had as their brief for the visit issues such as compact footprint, energy-efficient design & construction; benefits of socially inclusive design, including shared facilities, community 'connection'/ community resilience, health & wellbeing; lowering the environmental impacts of high density urban environments; multiple transit modes and walkability; fostering biodiversity etc. The committee consisted of

Ms Gay Thompson MP (Presiding Member); Hon Mark Parnell MLC; Hon Michelle Lensink MLC; Hon Carmel Zollo MLC; Mr Ivan Venning MP; Mr Michael Atkinson MP

They will contact us to give evidence on sustainability and community in the next 18 months as they put all their information together.

Another important visit was from Mayor Kirsten Alexander, elected to the Charles Sturt Council on the basis of opposition to development of two key sites in that council area. Kirsten is very keen on involving UEA and Paul in any new developments that happen in her council area.

RADIO PROGRAM

UEA pays a nominal fee for access to *A Peace of the Action* on Radio Adelaide. If anyone has any ideas on what they would like put on air, or would like to contribute in any way, contact Sue on 8410 0303.

ECO-CITIES

There are hundreds of developments that call themselves Eco-villages. UEA is establishing contact with them and is focusing on several in this newsletter, including one of the first, Findhorn in Scotland (with permission).

Sue Gilbey (UEA Convenor)

LAUNCH of CHRISTIE WALK RESOURCE PACK



On 6 April 2011, an enthusiastic gathering of more than 50 people joined the UEA Board and Christie Walk residents to launch the new educational Resource Pack: *'Christie Walk – a piece of ecocity'*.

The event was sponsored by the Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board (AMLR NRM), a Key Partner in the production of the resource. AMLR NRM's involvement, spanning more than 18 months, had been

the catalyst for grants of \$13,400, as seeding funds. As well, NRM gave UEA guidance and support throughout the project. NRM's Event Management team rallied to ensure the success of the launch, resulting in a truly memorable occasion (a highlight of which were Jeni Kent's 'finger food' delicacies and a range of fine SA wines).

Guest of Honour was the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Stephen Yarwood, a long-time supporter of UEA and who has been closely associated with the development of Christie Walk.

Other guests included: Jennifer Lyons-Reid and Carl Kuddell, principals of *Change Media*, Key partner in the production; Dr Barbara Hardy, Patron of UEA; Cherie Hoyle and Paul Downton, founders of UEA and initiators of the Christie Walk project; Richard de Groot, representing the NRM Boards; Hugh Kneebone, Manager of NRM Education and Sue Coad, an advisor in Sustainability Education, Department of Education and Children's Services. Sue and Hugh were consultants in the project.

Speakers included Norm Rohde (UEA), Carl Kuddell, Hugh Kneebone and Stephen Yarwood, who collectively rounded out the story of why and how the resource was created and its potential as a 'springboard to learning about the environment and what it really means to live more sustainably'.

Significantly, the project attracted combined grants to a final value of \$38,000 from Key Partners: NRM and Arts SA, in association with Change Media, plus a further \$7,000 as sponsorships from Supporting Partners: Hebel Australia, Adelaide City Council, SA Water and Zero Waste SA. This generous level of support was further enhanced by a magnificent contribution of more than 900 volunteer hours from individuals within UEA and Change Media and many Christie Walk residents. The contributions of all supporters were gratefully acknowledged.

Simon Fisher, a Christie Walk resident who worked tirelessly and competently as Coordinator of the DVD Production Team, acted as an engaging MC on the day.

Stephen Yarwood effusively talked about the 'Christie Walk journey', drawing on his extensive urban planning experience to highlight some of the defining qualities of the development, its community ethos and its strong commitment to designing and building for a more sustainable future. He acknowledged the unique

contribution of Paul Downton and Cherie Hoyle in all this.

In closing, Stephen acknowledged the potential of the resource, 'officially'

launching it and commending it to schools, community centres and libraries, higher education and families.

'Christie Walk – a piece of ecocity' is available for purchase at \$49 (price includes postage/handling). Refer to UEA website:

www.urbanecology.org.au for details or phone (08) 8212 6760

Norm Rohde



Photos courtesy: Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board (Ben Grant)

Two new UEA School Programs get underway

Earlier in the year, Urban Ecology received almost \$13,000 in grant allocations, from two sources, to expand the outreach of the 2011 Christie Walk school tours program.

The Adelaide City Council 'City Schools Initiative'

A Community Grant of \$3,000 has been made available by the Adelaide City Council to subsidise places for students and teachers in city-based schools to take part in Christie Walk educational tours.

All nine schools in the Adelaide/North Adelaide area are eligible for this support – ie both in the state and independent sectors; Primary (Years 6-7) and Secondary (Years 8-12). The grant offers savings of 50% for primary participants and almost 60% for secondary participants and also provides for a free Christie Walk Resource Pack per school. (The resource pack is an ideal 'review tool', designed to facilitate discussion and issues-based learning activities, after the visit).

Council has chosen to partner UEA in its educational tours program, because it considers the tours to be a highly effective adjunct for its current sustainability and community development initiatives.

No-Charge School Tours ... for schools in disadvantaged communities.

\$9,800 has been made available by the SA Government's Department for Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in association with the Natural Resources Management Boards' (NRM) Community Grants Program, to cover full charges for tours of Christie Walk. The grant also includes reimbursement of bus-hire costs.

It is envisaged that the funding will cater for groups of students and their teachers, from up to 30 schools, providing them with an opportunity for an excursion that would otherwise not be possible. (As previously, the grant applies to primary/secondary in both state and independent schools and also provides for a free Christie Walk Resource Pack per school).

The UEA Board commends this access and equity initiative to its members and to CW residents!

These two programs will surely add a new dimension to Christie Walk Tours in 2011!

Norm Rohde

Paul Downton presents at TEDx in Christchurch

The May 21st TEDx had a special theme: *The Re-Imagination of Christchurch*. This one-day event was focused entirely on the future of the city and featured speakers like Art Agnos, the former Mayor of San Francisco during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, Cameron Sinclair, the CEO of Architecture for Humanity, together with Paul Downton, founder of Urban Ecology and designer of Christie Walk:

<http://tedxeqchch.com/2011/05/paul-downton/>

This was important extra exposure for Paul's vision of EcoCities blooming, "one fractal at a time".

Traditional city development is trashing the planet, he argues, but equally the city can save the planet, if we begin to think of cities as ecosystems, and as networks of communities, and plan them in that light. Christchurch has a unique opportunity to be a role model as much of the CBD is rebuilt from scratch.

In addition to the main TED Global Conferences, there are also independently organised local events known as TEDx, which is how the Christchurch event fits in.

The next *TED Global* is in Edinburgh and the main theme is "What is life? And how can it be better lived?" How perfectly does Paul's vision fit that? We should do all we can to get Paul onto the speaker list.

ACTION

Please go to: <http://www.ted.com/nominate/speaker> and nominate Paul as a future speaker.

Maybe you can remodel some of the words I used when I nominated Paul:

'A visionary on EcoCity design.

Combines depth of theory with practical personal knowledge of having built an EcoCity community from scratch.

His insight: "The city can save the planet" should be tattooed onto the forehead of all city architects, urban planners and bureaucrats.'

Brian Loffler - New Internationalist Co-operative

WHAT IS TED?

For those of you who haven't yet dipped your toe into the TED phenomenon, it's a remarkable annual global event that moves from one city to the next, under the banner of Ideas worth spreading - Riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world.

You can watch previous presentations here:

<http://www.ted.com/>

I have a bunch of TED favourites, but here's a quick one to get started:

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement.html

(3 minute video)

Brian Loffler

A focus on ecovillages & cohousing

On the next few pages we give a small insight into various ecovillages and cohousing groups both in Australia and overseas. You will find the websites give a wealth of information. We hope that other groups will send UEA notes about their initiatives to be included in future newsletters.

Ecovillage Findhorn: New Frontiers for Sustainability

<http://www.ecovillagefindhorn.com/index.php>

The Findhorn Ecovillage situated in the beautiful Findhorn Bay of Moray is a synthesis of the very best of current thinking on sustainable human settlements. Within the ecovillage, sustainable values are expressed in the built environment with ecological houses, innovative use of building materials such as local stone and straw bales, beauty in the architecture and gardens, and applied technology in the Living Machine sewage treatment facility and electricity-generating wind



from the website

turbines. Sustainable values are also expressed in the community's social, economic and educational initiatives.

- a low carbon pioneering ecovillage since 1985
- UN Habitat Best Practice Designation 1998
- a major centre of adult education serving 14,000 visitors a year from over 50 countries
- ecological footprint is half the national (UK) average
- 61 ecological buildings, including the famous whisky barrel houses
- 4 wind turbines
- a biological Living Machine sewage treatment system
- UK's oldest and largest Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) system
- numerous solar water-heating systems
- comprehensive recycling scheme
- publisher of UK's first technical guide to ecological housing
- own bank and community currency
- site of CIFAL Findhorn - a UNITAR Associated Training Center

A focus on ecovillages & cohousing - continued

On a recent visit to Victoria I visited *Westwyck* in Brunswick, *Munro Court* in Castlemaine and also discussed eco-developments with Tania Lewis who is involved in the *Urban Coup* in Melbourne, and with Dean Bridgfoot at *The Hub* in Castlemaine.

Joan Carlin

Westwyck

<http://www.westwyck.com>

WestWyck calls itself an 'ecovillage' because it emphasises interactive and shared living while not being an intentional community. It is designed to adhere to the key sustainability principles of 'materials efficiency', 'energy efficiency' and 'water efficiency'.

The 12 dwellings in Stage 1 are finished and have been occupied for a few years now. Planning for a further 18 dwellings in Stage 2 has been stuck at VCAT where WestWyck feels the principles of sustainability are just not comprehended and many extra car parking spaces were required. WestWyck Stage 2 plans to have underground parking. The present bikeshed holds more than 25 bikes and the Stage 2 plans include space for some 50 more bikes.

I spent a couple of hours with the key people involved in the development – Mike Hill and Lorna Pitt. It was a good exchange of ideas and I left them with a copy of the UEA DVD '*Christie Walk – a piece of Ecocity*'.

How do they measure the productivity of their veggie garden and fruit trees? They have an old set of scales and a recording book (under a plastic cover). When a resident picks fruit or veggies they weigh the produce and record in the book. You might like to check the Westwyck website (under 'news') to see the impressive list of veggies harvested between December 2010 and April 2011! The list is topped by 18kg of tomatoes, 15kg of silverbeet and nearly 12kg of zucchini.



Enjoying the apple harvest at Westwyck
from the website

Urban Coup - an example of cohousing

<http://www.urbancoup.org/>

Urban Coup is an initiative of a group of Melbournians who share a vision of creating not just housing, but community.

Home is where the hearth is... but more than this home is where our community is, our family, friends – the networks that support and nourish us.

Cohousing allows for you to enjoy the privacy of your own home, and yet walk out your back door to be part of a community with which you share a garden, some common facilities and even a regular meal. For three decades cohousing has been growing successfully worldwide, reinvigorating with it the age-old concept of community. (from the website)

I spoke with Tania Lewis who has joined the Coup quite recently. She shared some information with me. The group has at least 20 people who have committed money to be part of the community. At present they are trying to find a suitable site which they want to be 'inner urban'. (For Adelaide readers 'inner urban' is not clearly defined as it is in Adelaide.) The group is looking for a developer who will buy a site big enough for say 30 dwellings. Members will find the money to buy their houses/apartments but need a developer to buy the property (a significant sum of money is needed for land in Melbourne).

Munro Court – Castlemaine

<http://lifehousedesign.com.au/projects/munro-court>

2002-2009 Design Brief

110 - 140 square metres

Castlemaine, Victoria

A collaboration between developer, designer and landscaper, this cluster of eight houses (and a communal veggie garden and chook-house) is set in native drought-tolerant gardens by Sam Cox Landscape. The development promotes social sustainability through considered site planning, and values the design of small houses that are light-filled, tightly planned and spacious inside.



I met with Sue Turner from Munro Court and we exchanged many ideas. I left her with a Christie Walk DVD.

My first impressions of Munro Court were the way houses (8 in total) were almost hidden by native vegetation – all planted since the site was procured. The veggie garden across a small creek was impressive together with chooks! Sue and Don's house faces north and has a long wall of glass which makes for a wonderful view and for good climate control.

At present one of the eight houses is used as a weekender by the owner. So it is therefore available for use by other Munro Court residents who have visitors who would like to stay for a while.

Sue talked of her plans to lobby for the local community bus to extend its route (Munro Court is about 2kms from Castlemaine) so residents will have another alternative to driving cars.

A focus on ecovillages & cohousing - continued

The Hub (Castlemaine)

www.thehubcastlemaine.com

I met with Dean Bridgfoot at The Hub. This is the home of the *Mount Alexander Sustainability Group*.

In 2006 Heather & Neil Barrett purchased the building (previously a hotel) to give a home to the then newly formed *Mount Alexander Sustainability Group*.

Extensive renovations have since been done to provide comfortable offices and a restaurant.

The aim has been to refurbish the building, maintaining as much as possible of the original building. Whilst respecting its heritage some contemporary architectural changes have been made to make the building more climatically comfortable and meet current safety standards.

A full energy audit was conducted and the intention has been to incorporate as many sustainable features as possible within budgetary constraints. (from the website)



The Hub is the white building at the right of the picture

Cohousing up close in Colorado

In the August 2010 UEA newsletter I wrote 'What Is Cohousing'.

Cohousing communities exist in northern Europe, Canada, Australia, the UK and elsewhere. There are more than 100 in the US and nearly another hundred being planned. While not officially a cohousing development, *Christie Walk* follows similar principles and would certainly qualify as one. Recycling, resource sharing, thermal and water efficiency, a strong sense of community, shared spaces and activities, a range of dwellings, social inclusion, and less emphasis on cars are just some of our common features.

This January I visited two cohousing communities in Colorado. Being midwinter I saw both under a blanket of snow in near freezing temperatures.

Nyland Cohousing

is set in farmland a little east of Boulder, and has 135 people (110 adults and 35 kids) in 42 households on a large acreage of former farmland – 42 acres. The land is partly being revegetated with local grasses, the rest available for organic gardening and farm projects. The houses built in 1992 include duplexes and triplexes and are smaller than average US homes, and the monthly townhouse association fee is lower than normal. Despite the large land available, the homes are grouped close together in lines running east-west, to maximise southern sun access for heat/light/solar electric power and to make social interaction easy. (A regular developer would surely have placed them all in north-south rows to take in the view of the Rockies!) Cars are kept to the

extremities, and 'pedways' (pedestrian ways) run between the rows of houses. Handcarts are used to move shopping or large items.

The 'common house' (a regular feature of cohousing projects) is a large separate building located among the houses – with a commercial kitchen and meeting rooms which are used for community meals and functions, and are sometimes hired out. It includes a young kids' playroom, a teens game room, a laundry room, a craft room, a TV and pingpong room, a gym, a mailroom and two guest rooms (for which there's a small nightly charge).



A typical 'pedway' in winter

River Rock Commons

is in the heart of Fort Collins, a town with a name for being 'green'. Like Boulder, it has about 100,000 population and is set against the 'front range' of the Rockies but a little further north. River Rock is the second cohousing community there (the first being *Grey Rock Commons*), and has slightly less houses and residents than Nyland.

Houses, parking and pedways are similarly arranged to Nyland, and while some houses have a small backyard which they may choose to

fence, there is no additional land.

To the north, however, River Rock has an elevated view over the adjacent public park and playing fields to trees flanking the Poudre River a few hundred metres away. At River Rock I was invited to see inside two homes, as well as the common house which was very similar in essence to Nyland's. I also met more residents there, and immediately felt that they would have slotted into *Christie Walk* seamlessly, and vice versa, as our

Cohousing up close in Colorado

guiding principles and general arrangements are essentially similar.

As cohousing is so well established in the US, there are plenty of resources on their websites (see below) created by residents who have shared their experiences over the years. Topics like planning, financing and building are well discussed, and there's a lot of information on things like social arrangements, shared work, pets, consensus decision making and dispute resolution.

The River Rock Manual is a good example of how an individual community works in practice. It welcomes new residents in a friendly and positive way, and explains that everyone is expected to participate in the work and life of the community.



Kids playroom in a community house

Cleaning the Common House, for example, is done by all households on a rotating basis 3 to 4 times a year (except for under 15s and over 80s), though you can opt out and instead pay \$20 per time. And everyone is expected to give at least 2 hours on monthly work days six times a year (they don't have working bees the other 6 months due to weather). Interestingly, renters who rent an entire unit take on that household's community work responsibilities. Renters are also encouraged to participate in all activities to get the full River Rock experience.

The cost of cohousing?

Real estate prices are still depressed in the US, so cohousing homes are a little below the usual price, but as usual compare well with general housing stock. A 95 sq m duplex 'cottage' at Nyland (2 bed 2 bath, garage and large under house storage) is going for US\$275,000. Housing assoc dues are \$240 a month and include internet, utilities \$30 to \$90 a month (cheap heating due to thermal efficiency).

At River Rock there's a 5 bed 2 bath 195 sq m attached family home going for \$295,000.

Websites

www.cohousing.org
www.nylandcohousing.org
www.riverrock.org

Simon Fisher

Lochiel Park

UEA members recently had the opportunity to take a guided tour of the Lochiel Park green village community. Our tour included the community garden, the sculpture park, the aboriginal food garden, the wetlands, the community information centre and a visit to one of the recently built residences.

Lochiel Park is 8 kilometres from the Adelaide CBD in the suburb of Campbelltown. The site covers 15 hectares in total, with only 4.25 hectares allocated to residences. Over 10 hectares have now been incorporated as parklands and are protected by legislation against future development. A substantial area of the Lochiel Park site has been established as an 'urban forest', with over one hundred and sixty thousand plants and trees contributing to bio-diversity in the area.

Lochiel Park's ecologically sustainable development technologies include energy efficient building design, solar

energy systems, a recycled water system and the effective management of waste to minimise the impact on the environment.

A number of innovative systems have been trialled and implemented including recycled paving materials, bio-filtration pits, and in-home devices to monitor resource consumption.

Lochiel Park's sustainable approach means the village is aiming to achieve a 74% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 78% reduction in mains water usage compared to the average Adelaide home.

It is intended that Lochiel Park will serve as a model for other urban developments and assist in educating the public and the property development industry about sustainable housing and land development.

The project has commenced a nine year monitoring program, collecting detailed data on energy and water consumption and behavioural change. This is intended to further inform the industry about which initiatives are the most beneficial.

To learn more about this green village model, visit:

www.lochielpark.com.au

Anne Hamilton



Transport issues

Growing Vibrant Communities Through Transport

(Fred Hansen's final lecture March 2011)

Recent Thinker in Residence Fred Hansen gave his final lecture in the Adelaide Town Hall to a packed audience. It must have been considered important as the Premier was there to introduce him.

As General Manager of TriMet for 11 years, the public transport provider for Portland, Oregon Fred pursued an ambitious public transport strategy for the city transforming it into a model of a sustainable and integrated system, demonstrating the social, environmental, economic and health benefits of well planned public transport, integrated into the cityscape and the way that people work and live.

The Total Transit System instigated by Fred for TriMet makes the entire transit experience easier and more sustainable. It involves online trip planning, real time bus and train arrival times, accessible from mobile telephones or computers, bus shelters with solar lighting, better customer information, safer street crossings to transport stops and constructing an improved pedestrian network connecting, people, transport, work, leisure and home.

Believing that integrating transport planning and urban design is key to building viable, liveable cities, Fred Hansen speaks widely on these issues, serves on many advisory panels and boards as well as bringing his expertise to us as a Thinker in Residence.

His final report has not been released as yet but he gave some considered insights in his final lecture; things that are well known to Urban Ecology adherents and many other current commentators on how to better plan for ecologically sustainable human settlements.

Some of the practical actions Fred believes that Adelaide should be addressing include:

PLANNING & TRANSPORT

- Integrating land use planning and transport planning is essential.
- Denser development around transport nodes. Dense development brings economic activity and community vibrancy to a district.
- Variety of development patterns in different places to suit local needs (not a 'one size fits all' TOD solution.)
- Transport infrastructure planning must be strategic to drive the right development, not merely reactive to the demands of cars.
- Car priority should only be for major roads.
- Transport systems must be designed around a carbon constrained economy.
- Tram and train extensions are important drivers in bringing good economic development with them. Portland has demonstrated this.

- All public transport needs to be simple, frequent, reliable and integrated.
- There is a place for buses but their infrastructure and operation needs to be as efficient as trams, including bus lanes and signal priority at intersections.
- Grenfell Street should become a bus transit thoroughfare, free from cars.
- People need to be provided with real-time information about public transport services.



GOVERNMENT ROLE

- Governments need to drive new development patterns, industry won't do it unless required to, by incentive and regulation.
- Investment in public transport is fundamental to developing good communities.
- Ensuring a variety of good quality housing is delivered.
- Ensuring good quality open spaces for a variety of uses are provided in close proximity to housing.
- Responsibility to produce good community consultation and engagement.
- Each project proposal must be used to leverage consistent and supporting other development.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Processes must be transparent and involve all citizens. Need to learn to trust the public's judgement.
- It is never too early to involve citizens in decision making about their neighbourhood.

PEDESTRIANISATION

- The pedestrian must be central to all urban development planning.
- Planning has to be pro-pedestrian, which is not necessarily anti-car.
- Safe walking and cycling routes are a priority in good planning and they need to link facilities and desired destinations.
- Interactions between people and cars need to be more pedestrian friendly.
- Adelaide CBD must become the best walking and cycling place possible, including better footpaths and longer walk cycles at traffic lights.

We wait with interest to see how Fred's vision and plan gets supported and implemented. He said that it was important to learn from good models that exist, and Portland is one model that we can easily learn from. The State Government seems to be looking at Portland as a model for us, let us hope it has the courage to take the necessary steps to implement Fred Hansen's proposals.

Andrew Tidswell

Bikes in Copenhagen

37% of commuters use bikes in Copenhagen, and the city is trying to get that up to 50%

This video showcases a thrilling set of initiatives that the Danes have taken to make bicycling the main mode of transportation in the city, like bike lanes with LED lights set up to alert cars when a bike is making a turn.

Are small kids and groceries part of your day in transportation? No problem. There are 30,000 "cargo bikes" in the city, nicknamed "SUV's".

Watch this video and get some ideas from the Danes! <http://www.nextworldtv.com/page/771.html>

Bibi Farber Nextworldtv

Other news and notes

Scholarships in Integrated Water Management

The International WaterCentre's Water Leader Scholarships are now open to study the IWC Master of Integrated Water Management in 2012.

The program equips students with the integration, leadership and managerial skills to become part of an elite group of water leaders with sustainable and holistic solutions to global water and climate change challenges. The program takes a multi-disciplinary, whole-of-water-cycle approach. It is a co-badged and co-taught degree by The University of Queensland, Griffith University, Monash University and The University of Western Australia.

- Full tuition (valued at \$41,520) and partial tuition scholarships
- Scholarship applications open 1 May - 1 August 2011
- Program starts in February 2012 (The University of Queensland, Brisbane)
- Full-time or part-time/distance study options

Apply online: www.watercentre.org/education/programs/scholarships

Bowden Urban Village

In future UEA newsletters we hope to give some more information about this project. In the meantime the website is good: www.bowdenliving.com.au

Challenges facing Bangladesh

I went to Bangladesh recently at the invitation of a former public servant, now retired activist who warmly welcomed me into his home in Dhaka and to his village in rural Bangladesh, a rare privilege for a western woman. He was keen for me to ascertain the actual conditions of various locations around Bangladesh and while it could never be seen as a non-partisan fact-finding tour it certainly exposed me to a stream of consciousness in Bangladesh that no government official or mainstream fact finding tour would ever see.

Bangladesh is very much a developing country with huge challenges. I conducted audio interviews with many people and first asked them all the same question, what are the six major issues facing your country. The order was different but the issues were the same. Poverty, climate change/ geographic location, increase in fundamentalism, population control, and massive city congestion as the millions of people who sare now dispossessed, migrate to cities. And of course, land grabbing whether by multinational corporates, by the state or for commercial use.

The other question "is there anything you think Australia could or should do to assist Bangladesh" elicited a variety of responses with one common theme being 'listen to us'. To this end I am now gathering support for the organisation of a people's mitigation strategic Asia Pacific forum here in Australia around September 2012. There are many Australians who are worried about our lack of planning in the event of an influx of environmental refugees. To facilitate this enormous task I have established an advisory board of 10 influential people, two from the board of UEA, one resident of Christie Walk, climate scientists, academics and other professionals. It is interesting

that no-one I approached has declined and there is a huge amount of interest in the subject.

Bangladesh would be the focus, as it has quite a few dubious distinctions in our region. The country covers an area of 144,000 square kilometres (which is about two-thirds the size of Victoria) and has a population of approximately 167 million, making it one of the world's most densely populated countries. Bangladesh is also one of the world's poorest countries - approximately 41 per cent of the population live on less than \$1 a day. The tropical monsoons with heavy summer rains experienced in Bangladesh are generally accompanied by cyclones and floods, often with catastrophic consequences. Climate Change is a huge issue facing Bangladesh.

The planned forum would be open to all countries in our region.

My plan is that it would be held here in Adelaide.

The other thing I talked to a lot of people about in both India and Bangladesh was sustainable living. I was worried that it might be seen by them as a western middle class concept that would have no place in a country where there are millions of starving people.

But because of the mass migration to towns and cities and subsequent ghetto style housing, developing sustainable cities was high on the priority list for many of the people I spoke to, particularly university lecturers.

I walked away from Bangladesh having learnt many lessons and seen and experienced things that will live with me always.

Sue Gilbert

Sanctuary Magazine revisits Christie Walk

Sanctuary Magazine is published by ATA - the Alternative Technology Association. The latest issue - number 15 - includes an article about Christie Walk. It has beautiful pictures taken recently.

<http://www.sanctuarymagazine.org.au/>

Postcards

The popular TV program 'Postcards' on Channel 9 on Sundays at 5.30pm will feature Christie Walk soon. Watch out for it!