



The Urban Ecology NEWSLETTER

UEA Newsletter Vol12 No.1 #80 March 2013

UEA Convenor's Report March 2013

INSIDE

Climate change march.....	2
Solomons update & appeal	3
Tuning out?	3
From Cruxcatalyst	4
Are building standards failing us? ..	5
Earth Communities.....	6
Book reviews	7/8
Websites from Rick Risemberg:.....	9/10
Centre for transition	11

Urban Ecology Australia
Inc 105 Sturt St Adelaide
Phone (08) 8212 6760

E:urbanec@urbanecology.org.au
W: www.urbanecology.org.au

UEA has started the year with a new board member. Debbie Saegenschnitter brings a wealth of experience with her and we can look forward to closer collaborations with Cother like minded groups as a result of her participation on our board. Have a look at the notes extracted from her CV.

Other partnerships are slowly taking shape, including with the Global Environment Network (GEN). Interestingly that connection was made through the social media site Linked In. Early preparations for a conference in Australia, linking eco-villages and sustainable communities are underway. Currently there is no official body that links all of these different like minded projects and if GEN could do that it would be a progressive step forward. It would also be good if the conference could be held in Adelaide, I will certainly be advocating for that.

This newsletter marks the end of an era. Joan Carlin, one of Christie Walk's beloved octogenarians is retiring from its production. Joan has produced, directed, harassed tardy contributors, her input has been amazing.

She has tertiary qualifications in agricultural science but her main passion in more recent years is the environment and urban issues.

She came to Adelaide 20 years ago with her partner Scott Christie to work with Community Aid Abroad (now Oxfam Australia) and became interested in Urban Ecology when Christie Walk was just a twinkle in the eye.

Scott died in 1998 and Christie Walk was named after him. Joan was one of the first to move in to Christie Walk in 2002 and has remained an active energetic contributor in all aspects of community life. This last newsletter of hers is to be seen as a tribute to all she has done.

She assures me she will keep up her interest in all things environmental and with Urban Ecology.

Thank you from all of us Joan

Sue Gilbey

Debbie Saegenschnitter

Debbie is a Registered Landscape Architect, a Fellow of Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Currently she is Director, Senior Registered Landscape Architect of OUTERSPACE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Their work includes landscape design, revegetation plans, plant procurement, and vegetation management plans.

- Debbie started the company in 2005 with Patrick Graham and now manages a staff of up to 8 people
 - She is responsible for all business administration, including developing and managing all accounts with MYOB. Established website and newsletter.
 - Responsible for project management of many large projects undertaken by Outerspace.
 - "Currently working on Water Proofing the South 2, a large stormwater harvesting project in the City of Onkaparinga, my role is to attend community consultation events, design the planting plans, procure the indigenous plants, superintend the works by the landscape contractors, and assist with facilitation of community planting events."
 - Developed several display home garden designs for Rosedale to promote water efficiency. These designs and additional information was then used for a brochure put out by Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board, titled "Creating Water-efficient Gardens".
-

March For A Solution To Climate Chaos: Sustainable, Renewable Passion

Posted: 19 Feb 2013 08:48 AM PST

by Dominique Browning Via from *Slow Love Life*

Depending on who is counting, about 35,000 to 50,000 people showed up in a freezing cold and windy Washington D.C. for the largest climate march in history on Sunday, February 17.

It was one of the most inspiring events I have ever attended, and I've been trying to sort out why, exactly - beyond the incredible contact buzz of the crowds, the flags, the banners, the costumes.

So do marches matter? You bet. Here's what this one demonstrated:

1. **Sustainable, renewable passion.** People care about climate change. I was struck by the range of participants—from college kids all the way up to grandparents, and lots of families with children. And people convey passion. Urgency. That's what we need now. Urgency.

2. **Marches mean being out in the open.** This is in sharp contrast to the stealth tactics of deniers. You don't see them marching. Instead, they are meticulously, cynically seeding disinformation and sowing confusion wherever they can, from the websites of major newspapers to small ones across the globe. I was struck by how little money Donor's Trust has actually spent over the last decade on their denier campaign: \$400 million. They have used it well; their impact has been outsized.

But deniers have also had the unwitting collusion of major media, in their silence—as well as the big environmental organizations, suffering from post cap 'em depression; they essentially stopped talking about climate change for years after the failure of cap and trade. That silence has cost us a great deal of progress. So now we have to move with urgency.

Note: All of us should demand of our media: stop posting denier rubbish in your comment sections — unless you note, each and every time, what is factually incorrect. Otherwise, you are participating in the disinformation campaign, and it is harming your integrity, and our democracy.

3. **Marches provide political cover.** Many politicians, including the president, remarkably (as you would think he is so powerful that he would simply do the right thing), are so wary of climate politics that they need to know that citizens want this issue addressed. "Show me the movement" means "give me reasons to take a tough stand." Votes count.

4. **Now, it's personal.** Extreme, unpredictable weather—a result of climate change—has touched all of our lives, across the country. This march reminds everyone: climate change is affecting people as well as polar bears.

And one final note. I was in a panic about attending this march, due to my fear of crowds. But I was reminded of something important. If you tell your friends, this is what I'm worried about, so please take care—most of the time (excepting the occasional knucklehead) they come through. I never once felt lost.



And that leads me to one of the most comforting things about this march: the sense of solidarity. If we can keep rallying the kind of energy (sustainable, renewable passion) around fighting climate change, we will have a shot at success.

— Dominique Browning is the Senior Director of Moms Clean Air Force.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dominique-browning/march-for-a-solution-to-c_b_2718444.html

photos: Ted Fink

Update from the Solomons - earthquake & tsunami

Those of you who attended the joint JSA/ Hawke Centre presentation in November last year will remember the very powerful and personal story presented by Dr Alice Pollard of the Solomon Islands. Those who did not are encouraged to listen to the podcast. Dr Pollard's story struck a chord and personalised the reality of climate change and rising sea levels.

Since then, parts of the Solomon's have been decimated by an earthquake and tsunami: the situation is now even more immediately threatening, ground-water has been contaminated by sea water and some of the Island's main income generating facilities, coconut processing plants, have been destroyed and washed away.

Aid organisations are on the ground doing a wonderful job but through Alice and her husband Bob, we have become aware of one individual from Nela village in the Temotu province who has lost everything, including his mum and dad.

He along with other villagers operated a small coconut processing plant, which made use of locally produced coconuts to produce high quality oil for local use and for export to generate overseas income, enabling the import of products not made in the Solomon's. This small scale local model has replaced the old colonial model, in which islanders and indentured labourers from other countries worked for low wages to produce a low value product, copra, which was then sold overseas. He is planning to rebuild his coconut processing shed further inland – further away from possible future danger - but needs some help to do the rebuilding.

At present aid organisations are providing drinking water as a stop-gap measure, following the tsunami, but sea-water intrusion into the groundwater means that an alternative, ongoing source is needed. Part of what we plan to assist with for this village is the provision of a sizable rainwater tank to collect fresh water.

How many times have you heard the question, but what can I really do or where does my donated money go? Well now your dollar can make a real difference to one family group, one village, in one province. Helping provide a drinking water supply and the reconstruction of the processing plant fits the model JSA has adopted – responding to the needs as defined by the local people in a respectful way while enabling future income generation and employment.

Now we invite your assistance.

Funds raised by this appeal will be channelled through Bob Pollard's NGO, 'Kokonut Solomons'.

Funds can be paid by direct credit to Just Sustainability Australia BSB 805-022 Account No 22543715, by cheque or money order

Why we're turned off and tuned out to environmental crises

By Sam Mountford Published February 07, 2013

Environmental concern among the global public is on the wane across a whole range of issues, GlobeScan's most recent polling finds. But, with no sign that the problems facing the planet are any less severe – quite the reverse – how do we explain this increase in apathy?

The trend is certainly stark. GlobeScan tracks public concern on six environmental issues in its annual Radar global poll. Across eighteen countries, public concern about all six issues – water pollution, fresh water shortages, natural resource depletion, air pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss – is way down from its peak in 2009, with double-digit falls in the proportion of the public considering them “very serious.”

When it comes to climate change, the fall in concern since 2009 has eroded the head of steam that appeared to be building around this issue over the course of more than a decade. Now, barely half of those polled consider it a “very serious” problem.

The timing of this fall in concern is no coincidence. The period since 2009 has witnessed the most sustained period of economic strife in most of the world's major economies for the better part of a century. All our polling suggests that, while alarm about the economic situation and jobs has retreated from the stratospheric levels it reached in 2008, it has stabilized at a much higher level than before the crisis. The full ramifications of the banking collapses, ensuing government bailouts and crippling high levels of public indebtedness that have resulted have only slowly become apparent. And bluntly, for many citizens, these appear to pose a much clearer and more present threat to their well-being than environmental jeopardy, which for most people remains hidden from view.

What's more, the environmental threat is complex, abstract and contested. When it comes to natural resource depletion, concern about dwindling oil reserves has coincided with the shale gas boom, blurring the debate about sustainable energy sources. Leading scientists have maintained that the widely reported rate of species loss has been vastly exaggerated. And missteps from those attempting to engage public attention, such as the faulty figures on glacier melt in the Himalayas issued by the IPCC, have presented an open target for those looking to discredit the entire field of climate science.

While the examples above may well be the exceptions rather than the norm, there is a sizeable body of opinion that is

ready to seize on these developments in order to sow doubt in the public mind. Conservative commentators in particular appear unwilling to countenance the increased role for government and multilateral organizations that engaging with the environmental threat seems to require. Arguably, the energy that environmental skeptics put into discrediting their opponents is testament to the potency of the arguments – but their views find a ready audience in many sections of the media.

What is urgently required is a genuine attempt to reinvigorate a sterile debate. For those already convinced by the magnitude of the environmental threat and passionate in their desire to convince others, doom-laden pronouncements about impending planetary catastrophe may seem like the only responsible course of action.

But our figures suggest people are starting to tune these messages out. Ultimately, the challenge for the environmental movement is to articulate an alternative to our current economic model that empowers people rather than constrains them, and that is politically achievable in difficult times.

It's time, in other words, for a real alternative.

Sam Mountford leads GlobeScan's Global Insights practice, directing the Radar Research Programme tracking business and society issues, and thought leadership studies for corporate and NGO clients.

and from: *Cruxcatalyst: The Heart of Change Time for Sustainability*

When we think of 'sustainability' we don't tend to think immediately of the relationship between humanity and our conception of time, yet the very idea inherent in sustainability is to 'sustain' – to organise how human beings live in such a way that we sustain ourselves and the planet over a long term time frame.

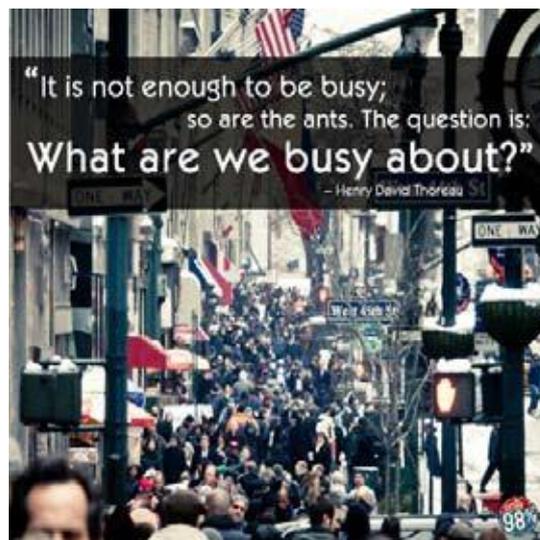
Sustainability debates often focus on the physical limits to growth - the non-negotiable biological limits of the closed system called planet Earth.

But there is another non-negotiable limiting factor that shapes our existence.

Time.

It is a great leveller. No matter who you are, or how much money you have, we all have the same number of hours in the day. While it is true that how we are able to harness those hours as a resource in part depends on our ability to command, or be offered, resources to meet our needs, there is still a limit – constrained by biology – to what we can all do, regardless of our skills, social capital or bank balance.

Our cultural norms influence how we use time – and in turn, how we use this limited resource influences our culture, our health and wellbeing, and our impacts on the Earth.



In our cult of speed, media messages and social norms influence us to equate 'fast' with 'good' and 'desirable'. Fast is sexy. Fast is savvy. Time is money. Get up to speed. Multi-tasking is seen to be a sign of efficiency and busy-ness, a demonstration of one's importance.

In contrast, to be 'slow' carries negative connotations of being dull-witted or backward.

Yet could it be that the pace and complexity of 24-7 consumer societies is not savvy at all, and is in fact what is creating psychological and physical stress? Could it be that it is actually the cult of speed which is dull-witted and backward, burdening our adrenal glands with a constant flow of fight-or-flight stressors and stimuli?

With thanks to Sharon Ede author of CruxCatalyst

Are our building standards failing us?

In May 2011, the new national building code came into force, requiring all new homes and major renovations to comply with a '6 star' standard.

The standard applies to the thermal performance of the building envelope as well as the energy efficiency of fixed lighting, the type of hot water heating, and the use of rainwater tanks to reduce a home's energy and water consumption. The 6 star standard is expected to slash energy use by 24% compared to a 5 star house

That sounds fab right?

Needless to say, there's been much hand wringing in the industry about how difficult and costly it will be to implement.

The Master Builders Association commissioned a report titled *Energy Efficiency: Building Code Star ratings* which assessed the economics of energy efficiency.

One barely has to read the report to see where they're heading

– the chapter headings do that for us:

1. Benefits Diminish sharply as star ratings rise
 2. Costs escalate sharply as star ratings rise
 3. Once costs exceed benefits, higher star ratings are wasteful
 4. Optimal star rating varies by location and house design
- ...and my favourite
5. *Optimal* star rating is generally around 5 or below!
(emphasis is mine)

Given the average Australian home uses about 7 Megawatt hours of electricity each year (40% of which goes to heating and cooling)– how does accepting that the current standard (or lower) make sense – I don't care which school of economics you ascribe to, that's madness!

Despite all the posturing from industry about economics and the potential job losses, the standard was implemented, and has now been in force for more than 18 months.

So, what do these new beacons of sustainability look like? Are they busy saving Australian home buyers on their energy and water bills and contributing to a greener more sustainable suburbia?

In a word, **NO!**

Looking West: Note no Northern windows, large Eastern windows and lack of solar access



The building commission's own website gives us a clue that this wasn't an eco-revolution in sustainable building techniques.

Their section on the rating system proudly states "Meeting 6 Star compliance is not difficult", and they go to some lengths to dispel common "myth-conceptions" that the 6 star rating is either difficult or expensive. I guess that's all fair enough, we don't want to make it difficult – or expensive, but one wonders if we're setting the bar a bit low?

I recently had a chance to see a 6 star home being built first hand.

My mate built his home with Metricon, a project home builder at the upper end of the pricing scale and supposedly one of the better building contractors. As he lives interstate, I've been onsite regularly watching the progress of the build and sending photos back to him.

It was instructive to say the least.

The first problem was with the placement of the house on the site. It's right up against the Northern boundary and has the minimum allowable 1100mm gap between his house and his next door neighbours – also being built at the same time. This blocks almost all Northern solar access.

The house has huge East facing windows that make the living room hot in the morning, and 2 enormous unshaded windows on the Western boundary that ensure both bedrooms on that side of the house are un-livable in the afternoon if it's more than about 24C. That is of course, unless the 8kW ducted air- conditioner is working it's guts out to expel the hot air.

To add insult to injury, the house features a black tiled roof, and black bricks. To complete the package there is a West facing tiled "outdoor room" which provides great thermal mass to the outside of the house but does nothing to heat the house in the Winter, and probably makes it unbearable on a Summers afternoon.

Apart from R3.5 batts in the ceiling and R2 batts in the wall, It's hard to imagine how you could design a more poorly performing house. Don't get me wrong – the interior of the house is lovely, and importantly, my mate loves it, which is good. But I have to wonder how it achieved 2 stars, let alone 6.

I don't think this is my mate's fault. Nor is it the fault of the thousands of the often young home buyers that are building these 6 star rated dwellings to raise families in.

It's a failure of the system. Our building code is failing us and failing us badly. I think it's time for a real standard. I'd welcome the views of members as to what that should look like and how it should be implemented.

It's something we're uniquely placed to achieve.

*Patrick Greene
Business Development
Manager Ingenero Pty Ltd*

References:

*Building Commission website: <http://tinyurl.com/b5eashu>
CIE report for Masters Builders Association: <http://tinyurl.com/>*

An introduction to Earth Communities

A 'musing' about how we know what we do and act on it

Alan Stewart, PhD

To be clear from the outset that **Earth Communities** (based at a restaurant called Earth's Kitchen, 131 Pirie Street in the city of Adelaide) is a most worthwhile enterprise, in my opinion. One which could be of great interest to readers of this newsletter. And one which I sense we who are passionate about an enduring and wholesome future of our species and of the ecosystems for which we have responsibility would do well to pay close attention.

This article is not about **Earth Communities** per se. Information and insight on it can be seen on their [website](#) (see [Communities](#)) and on [Facebook](#). Rather it is a reflection of how I have come to be engaged with it. At the end of the article I set my experience in a context of a particular kind of knowing which readers may also find interesting.

A start may be taken from an email sent in mid August 2012 by Andrew Tidswell, member of the board of Urban Ecology Australia to fellow board members, in which he noted:

"Interesting email I received from Eric Nicholson about an organisation called Earth Communities, which is basically looking at an alternative to the capitalist economic system. It appears that they are in the process of leasing a property in Pirie St so must have a fair bit of financial backing, and they are looking for more.

Might be worth keeping a watching brief on them to see if there are any synergies with us to explore."

I subsequently received background information on this organisation, which as it seemed somewhat abstract and theoretical, I did not follow up.

Until I received an email in late October 2012 from Kris Korba, a young American recent high school graduate from Colorado who had lived for several weeks in Christie Walk through a 'chance' (?) meeting with friends of Simon Fisher. Kris and I had a lively conversation at a working bee at Christie Walk and continued this face to face connecting on several occasions until he went on his way.

In his note Kris said:

"Alan,

Part of me wants to head back to Adelaide just to experience this café..." For it was about:

EARTH'S KITCHEN - Final transformation is underway

29th of October to 2nd of November

2012 "Build it and they will come"

Four weeks ago the doors to Earth's Kitchen quietly opened. No signage, no promotion, no menu, just the smell of organic pizza and coffee.

"Are you open?" - "Not really, but come in if you dare", was the standard response.

Well they did come, and they came, and they came, and they came, until there was room for no more.

Within a month We have turned a empty unused space into a very groovy happening place, but with that success has come some challenges.

Cleaning and renovations could not get finished. There has been little time for training and procedure development. The signage and artworks have not been finished, and the list goes on.

So that we can make Earth's Kitchen everything that it can be we have decided to close for one week (next week) to complete a wide range of works, and we really do need a hand to get it all done.

We have kitchens to clean, stoves to fix, benches to install, walls to paint, pictures to hang, signage, plants, floors, etc, etc - to attend to.

Come give us a hand next week to make it all happen. Come in old clothes, come with tools, come with a smile and give a little time, we expect you'll actually have a lot of fun.

We now know we have a great opportunity and that Earth's Kitchen can and will be a great success.

This is our Kitchen, its is your Kitchen, and its only our first.

(continued from p6)

I [Alan] responded to this by going along a couple of times during that week to assist in the cleaning. And through doing this 'hands on' work have become engaged in a truly remarkable experiment in a new form of ownership of productive enterprises; an (ad)venture which can be seen as having inspiring antecedents. (See "**Owning our Future**").

Which is being conceived and conducted by people who I greatly admire. And in which my particular skills as a process artist – a facilitator of conversational processes who co-creates the context in which all present treat each other well when addressing complex issues – may prove of value.

People with other skills and passions who are attracted by what they sense is happening with this 'generative enterprise' are welcome to come along to their current meeting place, **Earth's Kitchen** restaurant, to learn what is developing and to make themselves known. Doing this is likely to be both an enlightening and wholesome experience.

This reflection may be seen in the broader context of our 'knowing' about the world. In essence, there are three kinds of knowing, according to philosopher John Shotter. The first is about 'what something is,' eg an eco-village. The second concerns 'how to do it,' eg design and build an eco-village. Knowing of the third kind is that which emerges from *within* relationships with *others* (original emphases) whether the relationship is actual or imagined. It is the knowing 'which is to do with us - even when we are all alone - relating ourselves to each other, with us coordinating our actions as members of a community.' While this latter cannot be learned from teachers or books it is integral to how we construct our lives.

I wonder if this reflection helps you to see how it is that through 'within relationships' we perceive 'meaning' in enterprises such as Urban Ecology Australia, or Earth Communities or any other? And that, perhaps, it is through organisations such as these which have a specific focus on wholesome relating (see also ['thriving communities'](#) now under construction in Seattle), that we may create viable futures?

Owning Our Future: The Emerging Ownership Revolution: Journeys to a Generative Economy

by **Marjorie Kelly**

Drawn attention to by **Alan Stewart, PhD**

This book points to a new and emerging way of conducting enterprises. Marjorie Kelly, the author, draws on a great depth of experience and research on the foundation of modern economies. She finds them 'wanting' and suggests alternatives, based on different means of ownership and associated different intentions in conducting business.

Information about the book can be seen in the [description by the publishers](#), Berrett-Koehler in San Francisco and in a [perspective](#) on it by the organisation of which Kelly is a Fellow, the [Tellus Institute](#).

In bringing this book to your attention I would wish to make these points:

. Essentially, in my understanding, it is about the creation and development of enterprises which Kelly names as 'generative'. By this she refers to an emerging family of ownership designs for which the aim is to generate the conditions for our common life to flourish. This provides an alternative to the ownership 'archetype' of today, which can be called "extractive," for it aims at extracting maximum amounts of financial wealth.

. An economy based on 'generative' intentions and actions can create fair and just outcomes, benefit the many rather than the few, and enables an enduring human presence on a flourishing earth. Kelly reports on her visiting such enterprises all over the world among which are a community-owned wind facility in Massachusetts, a lobster cooperative in Maine, the employee-owned John Lewis Partnership in the UK, foundation-owned Novo Nordisk in Denmark, a farmer-owned dairy in Wisconsin, and other places where an economy that works for all is being built. "This is not a moment for old solutions and tired approaches. As we enter a new era of limits, alternative ownership designs can help it become a new era of fairness, sustainability, and community."

David Korten author of [The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community](#) wrote in the Foreword:

"Of all the important elements lacking from much progressive thought and action, the issue of ownership design is perhaps the most foundational. Marjorie Kelly illuminates this crucial topic in a way that can drive it home to everyone. *Owning Our Future* offers the most thorough and properly nuanced treatment of the subject I've seen anywhere...

It is the design of ownership that creates the essential framework for the capitalist economy that is beginning to break down— and for a potentially new generative economy we can bring into being.

This is one of the most important books of our time. I found it so informative and inspiring that reading it literally brought tears of joy to my eyes. It gets my very highest recommendation."

. I came to know of this book partly through being a longstanding participant in the [Great Transition Initiative \(GTI\)](#) which is operated by the Tellus Institute in Boston. I visited there in 2010, met the director Paul Raskin and stayed overnight at the home of one of his and Kelly's colleagues, Orion Kriegman.

I wrote to Orion recently to comment on his 'significant role' as featured in *Owning our Future* and to say: "I found it fascinating to learn both of your traumatic experiencing in wishing to buy a particular house and of the insights your saga provided to Marjorie of how complex and tortuous were the 'shenanigans' associated with the thoroughly 'extractive'

mortgage industry.”

. In my other article in this newsletter (see p6) I touched on the existence of an enterprise newly begun and yet already gathering remarkable momentum, [Earth Communities](#) in Adelaide.

From this 'statement' of intent in their recently drafted Information Memorandum you may get a sense that what has been conceptualised – from first principles! - and is now under way is of a similar nature to those reported on so well in 'Owning our Futures.'

The book review below was sent by an Urban Ecology member G Pearce <firetail8@bigpond.com> who says:

Perhaps members would be interested in this book:

BOOK REVIEW

THE BIGGEST ESTATE ON EARTH ~ HOW ABORIGINES MADE AUSTRALIA -

by Bill Gammage

Across Australia, early Europeans commented again and again that the land looked like a park. With extensive grassy patches and pathways, open woodlands and abundant wildlife, it evoked a country estate in England. Bill Gammage has discovered this was because Aboriginal people managed the land in a far more systematic and scientific fashion than we have ever realised. For over a decade, Gammage has examined written and visual records of the Australian landscape. He has uncovered an extraordinarily complex system of land management using fire and the life cycles of native plants to ensure plentiful wildlife and plant foods throughout the year. We know Aboriginal people spent far less time and effort than Europeans in securing food and shelter, and now we know how they did it. With details of land-management strategies from around Australia, *The Biggest Estate on Earth* rewrites the history of this continent, with huge implications for us today. Once Aboriginal people were no longer able to tend their country, it became overgrown and vulnerable to the hugely damaging bushfires we now experience. And what we think of as virgin bush in a national park is nothing of the kind.

Many of you will by now be familiar with the TED talks

'Great talks to stir your curiosity. Browse by subject, length, or rating (inspiring, jaw-dropping, funny...)'

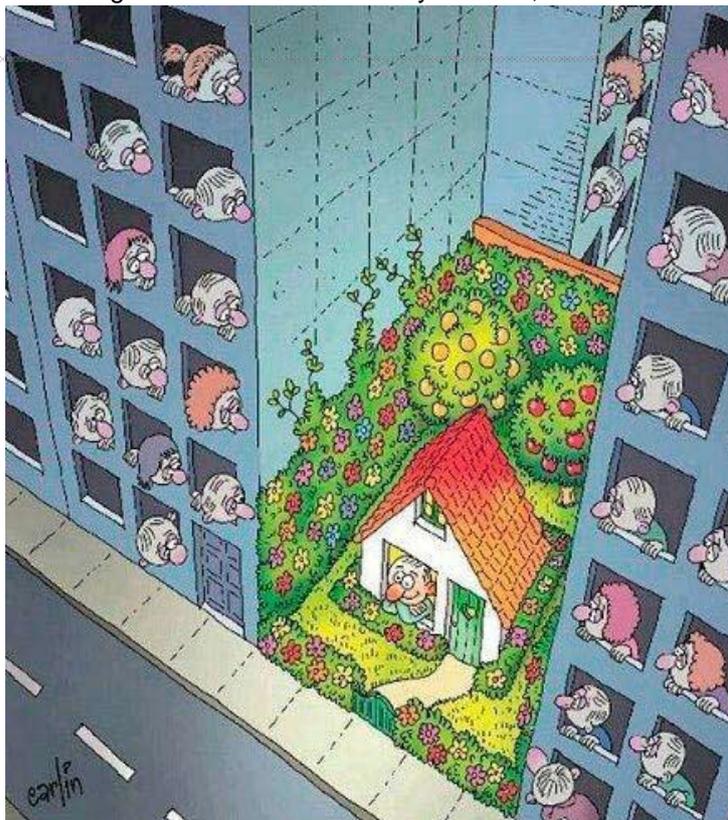
You can check recent ones by topic, date etc - and you can subscribe for them daily or weekly

Here is an an illuminating and inspiring TED talk:

Pam Warhurst: How we can eat our landscapes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KmKoj4RSZw&feature=player_embedded#

From 'Thriving Communities' in Whidbey Institute, based on Whidbey Island off Seattle



This was sent by Sue Gilbey - it was posted on Urban Ecology's Facebook page

Urban Ecology Australia gets many articles sent by Richard Risemberg

[<rickrise@earthlink.net>](mailto:rickrise@earthlink.net)

On these pages we have selected a number of the articles sent by Rick and hope that you will find at least some of them relevant to your interests.

Many of you will have already received these links from the Urban Ecology office but it may be useful to have them on one or two pages.

Are we wasting water?

This report is from Los Angeles - but has relevance here in Australia

Of all the monthly bills you pay, your water bill is probably one of the smallest. But that doesn't mean water is cheap. We dam rivers, create huge pipelines, build treatment plants -- all to deliver water clean enough to drink. And then we flush it down the toilet. Or water our lawns with it, even though most homes produce enough greywater -- that's what it's called after you use to bathe or wash your clothes -- to cover all your landscaping needs. And to get that water from your shower to your yard doesn't require a complicated plumbing system. Many people install it themselves. But that doesn't always go over well with the local plumbing inspector.

From David Weinberg Marketplace.org and <http://t.co/CYti0s6O>

The article continues: Jimmy Lizama is a bike messenger in Los Angeles. He lives his wife, Josie, and their 2-year-old son in a place called the *Eco-Village*. It's a building with 40 apartments, whose residents share a mission to reduce their environmental impact...

Jimmy describes the options and concludes:

"[It's insanity] that this [grey water re-use] isn't required for all buildings. I mean, we bring water from hundreds and hundreds of miles away, we kill a lot of fish to do it. Spend a lot of money treating it and then we wash our clothes and dishes with it and then we have to spend a lot more money treating it again."

Because water is relatively cheap, installing a system doesn't mean you will save a ton of money on your water bill.

According to a recent study by *Greywater Action*, it would take a family of four anywhere from four to 14 years to cover the cost of installing a system. And that's if you do it yourself. If you pay a contractor it could take more than 40 years depending on water rates. (figures from the Los Angeles study).

Does anyone have comparable figures for cities in Australia?

Local Warming

Reeling from an historic drought, the hottest year on record and more frequent wild weather, mayors from a number of U.S. cities urged the White House this week to take the lead on setting an agenda to address climate change.

See: <http://planetark.org/wen/67661>

The urban regeneration project for the district San Filippo Neri, ex ZEN

An interesting article about rebuilding an urban area in Italy from *Making Cities Livable*

<http://www.livablecities.org/articles/proposal-urban-regeneration-suburb-zen-palermo-italy>

"peak oil"

It's a bit hard to believe that in 2012 anyone is still unclear about what "peak oil" means, but enough confusion about it has surfaced in the past week that I feel compelled to, once again, try to set the record straight. From <http://t.co/IUXBMorc>

"Peak oil" refers to the maximum rate of production of regular crude oil. Period. It's a number.

It is not a theory.

It does not mean "running out of oil."

It is not the moral equivalent of Malthusianism. It is not a political movement, or a religion.

It's not a dessert topping. It is not a floor wax.

It is not about oil reserves (oil that has been proved to exist and to be producible at a profit), or resources (oil that may exist in the ground, irrespective of its potential to be produced profitably). Those quantities do play a role in estimating the peak, but do not determine it in any way.

"Peak oil" is not the same as "the end of cheap oil," although the latter is also true. Price is not a proxy for production.

More from Richard Risemberg

Peak oil, the end of cheap oil, vested interests, and media imbecility and, often, duplicity:

<http://t.co/IUXBMorc>

How Business Adapts to Climate Change

From Forvbes: Includes emphasis on distribution networks, etc, community and ecosystem resilience. <http://t.co/Gro0S4AB>
Full report mentions imperative to nurture resilience in local communities, triple-bottom-line principles.

Link to full report: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/press/files/prep-value-chain-climate-resilience.pdf>

Can housing again prop up economy--and should it?

via @TracyDavis: Automobile-centric development, the credit scam, bubbles, and a sustainable economy:
<http://t.co/ru307pCe>

Somewhat related article on private driving subsidy: <http://t.co/SolWMevm>

Freeways, Congestion, & the Economy

Dallas article on how tearing down freeways eases congestion and revives economies--with reality-based examples:

<http://t.co/JN98IQom> 'Gut feelings aren't facts--freeways cause congestion and bankrupt cities.'

Important Changes in UK Street Regulations

Major changes in UK guidelines for street building, speed limits, more. If this is followed through on, it will bring major and beneficial changes for all communities... let's hope for the best. <http://t.co/YqcrPqel>

Another one bites the dust...maybe

Talk of tearing down the end of I-280 in San Francisco and replacing it with a street level boulevard, community development, and a high-speed rail terminal:
<http://bit.ly/VgEVlz>

Carfree Mixed-Use Development in Boston

It has 44 units, bike parking, two carsharing slots, some retail. Developer promises to manage building to ensure that it is marketed to carfree families (which is about 50% of the population in the area). <http://walkingbostonian.blogspot.com/2013/01/back-to-future-building-homes-for.html>

Tragedy of walking in America From Tracy Davis

"The disturbing and sometimes tragic challenge of walking in America" ow.ly/2ulhKN

Including mention of an inhuman law in Virginia that charges pedestrians hit by cars with "interfering with traffic!"

From the Atlantic Cities: *how the spatial inefficiencies of the car destroy economies, kill cities:*

<http://t.co/5bMbTuJH>

Cars as a "drug which distorts reality":

<http://t.co/POUbCRLu>

infill development that is integrative rather than imposing:

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/place/article/Exciting-enticing-housing-that-fits-in-4284949.php>

Rick says: We need more of this! My own neighborhood in LA has been afflicted by megablock infills, monolithic structures, nicely designed but with little differentiation along their full-length facades.

"Place Capital"

'Possibly the best article of the new year, the Project for Public Spaces presents what should be a manifesto for America in "Place Capital:

Re-connecting Economy With Community" : <http://t.co/Xmp6LCdY>

"We All Depend on the Kindness of Strangers": from Debra Efroymsen of Sri Lanka

<http://www.sustainablecitynews.com/strangers.html>

Waste Not Want Not

A short musing on food waste: <http://t.co/m201RNzh>

Biological Concrete

Biological concrete coming to a city near you...oneday... maybe

www.dezeen.com/2013/01/03spanish-researchers-develop-biological-concrete-for-moss-covered-walls

The Centre for Transition

Andrew Olivier visited Christie Walk recently and shared a meal with some members of the community. Andrew is involved with The Centre for Transition. He invited us to include details of his e-Newsletter in our Urban Ecology newsletter

Welcome to Our Second e-Newsletter

- 2013 Workshops & Programmes (Sustainability Skills: Intro to the Ecovillage Design Education, Personal Transitions: The Transformation Game, Personal Transitions; Death & Dying, Transition Economics)
- A word about our Workshops...
- Planning a National Conference 2014 - The Global Ecovillage Network Australia and New Zealand - calling for representatives for steering committee....
- An update on ecovillage and eco-urban developments - Narara Ecovillage, Hobart Ecovillage, Heatherbell and Christie Walk.
- Resources
- Guidelines for Building Eco-housing - AILA & two Eco-urban villas in Adelaide & Melbourne...
- Profile of Shane Schmidt

Enjoy! Please forward to others who may be interested.

Aluta Continua

Andrew Olivier.



Contents of Volume 1: No.2, February 2013.

- Welcome to Our Second e-Newsletter
- 2013 Workshops & Programmes (*Sustainability Skills: Intro to the Ecovillage Design Education, Personal Transitions: The Transformation Game, Personal Transitions; Death & Dying, Transition Economics*)
- A word about our Workshops
- Planning a National Conference - The Global Ecovillage Network Australia and New Zealand
- An update on ecovillage and eco-urban developments - *Narara Ecovillage, Hobart Ecovillage, Heatherbell, Christie Walk.*
- Resources
- Guidelines for Building Eco-housing - AILA & two Eco-urban villas in Adelaide & Melbourne...
- Profile of Shane Schmidt

Publication Details

Vol 1: No 2: February 2013

Infrequent Annual Publication.

Please feel free to pass on, copy or quote.

Contributions welcomed, but all rights reserved.

Please note our website will be launched this month.... !