



## Happiness, Wellbeing and the Urban Environment

By Kate Meathrel

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**“The kind of civilization we build depends on the way we do our accounts, quite simply because it changes the value we put on things”**

President Nicolas Sarkozy

Until now, many people would never have heard of the country of Bhutan, a small Himalayan kingdom landlocked by China and India. However, this small country is responsible for a worldwide ‘Happiness’ movement. Yes, Happiness. The Buddhist concept of happiness was adopted by Bhutan as a new economic paradigm and measure of national prosperity, not Gross National Product (GDP) but Gross National Happiness (GNH). The new measure is a holistic indicator of the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of a country and is used as a tool to guide public policy. In 2012 the UN Assembly placed happiness on the agenda, stating, “conscious that the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal” and “recognizing that the gross domestic product (...) does not adequately reflect the happiness and wellbeing of people.” The idea has spread globally, with governments adopting the concept in decision-making and economists performing calculations and surveys to measure levels of happiness and wellbeing all over the world.

**“ recognizing that the gross domestic product (...) does not adequately reflect the happiness and wellbeing of people. ”**

### Our ecological footprint

Although Australians report that they are happy with their households and living situations, our ecological footprint suggests that a major overhaul is needed. It is common knowledge by now that our houses are too large and we rely too heavily on cars for transport. Other areas of our ‘unhappiness’ lie in the gap between rich and poor, long work hours, social exclusion, difficulty influencing decision makers, adult obesity, safety in public and reduced leisure time. This is where the economic measure of development (GDP) fails to factor in important social inequalities and environmental consequences. Our current economic model is dangerous in that it continues to respond to consumer choices and spending that are not necessarily rational and positive i.e. large houses, cars and fast food.

Is it therefore the policy maker’s responsibility to tell people what will make them happier? The media’s use of scare tactics is often in vain. This is why the built form and design of cities is so crucial in promoting sustainable wellbeing and happiness. But what kind of built form can achieve these results? We need only to look at Christie Walk as a model for wider Adelaide.

Attempts at high density are often met with backlash from NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) supporters and angry suburban residents. High density is a necessary step towards reducing our ecological footprint and is already underway; it is now a matter of ensuring that it is implemented correctly. What Christie Walk shows us is that aesthetics, social connections, affordability, accessibility, connectedness to nature and transport are crucial in the design of high-density developments.

### Aesthetics

Developments need to be consistent with their surroundings aesthetically; too often do we see high-density developments that stick out like large, sterile, grey thumbs. For the residents of the development, a degree of personalization in the home is important. Most of all, the sense of community through the use of communal spaces, shared stairwells and walkways, and green space are crucially important for social vitality and environmental sensitivity.

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## Convenor's Report

The format of this long awaited newsletter has changed a little and I invite reader's comments. For years we have had the benefit of Joan Carlin's time, energy and skill in formatting and collating the information that was sent to her from a number of sources, but no more. In this winter edition I have collected articles that I thought might be of interest, but again, I would encourage reader's contributions.

If anyone wishes to have an article in the newsletter, send it to Sue Gilbey at [urbanec@urbanecology.org.au](mailto:urbanec@urbanecology.org.au) preferably in Trebuchet font, pictures to be sent separately as jpeg files. Newsletters will be going out seasonally so the deadline for the spring edition is September 13th.

It is nor our policy to advertise in the newsletter but when you see businesses that are really making an effort to incorporate sustainability into their daily operations, I think they deserve all the credit they can get, hence the Printak article.

I hope you enjoy reading this and I look forward to your responses.

*Sue Gilbey*

Convener Urban Ecology Australia



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High density will continue to be received negatively if it: involves imposing on or removing a part of the existing neighbourhood and the community; if developments do not respect the surrounding environment and the residents; and if the community is not engaged completely and sensitively in the process.

Undertaking this report will involve an in-depth analysis of the local environment in Adelaide including housing issues, transport, planning policy and future planned developments. Discussions will center largely on high-density developments, including case studies on 'the good and the bad' and also on eco-developments in Adelaide, namely the Christie Walk community. It is the intention of this study to spread the word about the benefits of using happiness and wellbeing in policy making and to provide positive recommendations for the housing and high-density problem in Adelaide and the wider global community.

***Kate successfully submitted an abstract on this subject to the National Housing Conference which will be held here in Adelaide this year.***

***She and Sue will deliver a presentation which will give wonderful exposure to Urban Ecology, so watch this space for more information.***

***Any questions, ring the Urban Ecology office on 82126760.***

In the heart of Adelaide's City West is a family owned printing business that is acting locally to make a global environmental difference!

In its 28 years of operation, Printak has endeavoured to exceed industry and council regulations for sustainability and environmental operation. Already choosing to use soy and vegetable based inks, moving its plate-making from traditional film-based to chemical-free; computer-to-plate processes, joining the Sustainable Green Print Program and undertaking a level 2 Energy Audit - but they wanted to do more!

David Bland, the founder of Printak, after having a substantial solar system installed in his home, started to investigate how he could utilise the clean energy of the sun, some 149 million kilometres away, in his Sturt Street Business.

In 1882 in France, Monsieur Abel Pifre, a French Engineer developed a solar engine that managed to run a printing press for more than 4 hours, quite a feat for its time!<sup>1</sup>

Since 1882, we have been lucky to witness astounding leaps in solar technology, and by combining his dedication to not only his own Print business, but the Printing industry as a whole with his new-found admiration of the clean and abundant energy available from the sun. David has successfully developed a stand-alone section of Printak's large premises and filled it with a combination of offset and digital printing machines, all 100% solar powered.

The colourful 'Green Room' uses a combination of carbon neutral and recycled papers, vegetable and soy based inks and uses alcohol free environmentally friendly printing processes.

Printak have always offered excellence in print and now they are striving to offer 'the purest print on earth'.

The Green Rooms powerful solar collectors generate up to 80 kilowatts of power per day, currently, running all machines, all day uses less than 35 kilowatts per day. One of the 4 machines is a traditional Heidelberg offset press, and a new Dutch made digital press, that uses less power to run than a hair dryer!

It was finding technology such as this environmentally friendly digital press that has made having all presses run using 100% solar power possible.

Printak's Green Room can produce a wide variety of printed material from full coloured business cards, brochures, saddle stitched books and NCR handwritten numbered books to architectural plans and banners up to 15 metres wide!

We are available to discuss all your printing needs, our handy city location at 107 Sturt Street Adelaide (next door to the Christie Walk Eco-Village) makes picking up or proofing your print work simple.

Why not contact our friendly staff by phone 8231 2352 or email [info@printak.com.au](mailto:info@printak.com.au)

1. Metal Type; [www.metatype.co.uk](http://www.metatype.co.uk). ref. Victorian Inventions Book, 1971.



Christie Walk Happennings

Christmas in July celebration



# Food and Land at the Service of People

An edited interview with Peter Rosset  
Posted by Deepa Panchang on February 25, 2013 at 2:41pm  
contribution by Tory Field and Beverly Bell

**T**here are several fundamental pillars that are necessary to take control over food and agricultural systems..

Governments need to support peasant and small-farmer agriculture as the fundamental source of food for national economies.

It's more than proven in any country in the world that if agribusiness controls the majority of the land, there will not be enough food for people because agribusiness just doesn't produce food for local people. ***What agribusiness does, is produce exports.***

Sometimes those exports are not even food for people but soybeans for animals, or ethanol, or biodiesel for automobiles in other parts of the world.

On the other hand, the real vocation of the small farm, the family farm, the peasant farm, the indigenous farm, is producing food for the family, for the local economy, and for the national economy. All over the world, these farmers are underrepresented in control of land.

So a ***second*** essential element to claim control over food and agricultural systems is for countries to place their bets on peasant and family agriculture. And that means land has to be taken away from agribusiness. That, in turn, means real agrarian reform, redistribution of land to people who are landless, who are poor, who want to earn a living with dignity by producing food for people. And that means rebuilding small and family agriculture by investing in it. That necessitates changing budget priorities so that, instead of government subsidies flowing to support the exports of agribusiness, they flow to small farms.

Yet a ***third*** pillar in reclaiming control of agriculture means changing how we produce food. We can no longer afford to keep food prices tied to the cost of petroleum. We can't keep using indiscriminate amounts of chemical fertilizer, tractors, mechanical harvesters, and pesticides. We need to engage in ecological agriculture that preserves soil fertility for future generations.

***Fourthly***, we need to defend the territories of Indigenous peoples and peasant communities who haven't yet lost their land. Part of the strategy must also be to gain new territories through land reform or land occupations.

A ***fifth*** element involves seeds. We can't allow seeds to be patented and privatized. We can't allow them to be contaminated by GMOs. We need to support the free exchange of local, indigenous seeds, because those varieties are much more adapted to local environmental conditions and can form a much stronger basis for new national food systems.

***Sixth***, we need to nationalize the food reserves that are in the hands of transnational corporations.

Part of the origin of the recent food crisis is that under neoliberal policies of the past 20 years, most countries sold off their food inventories that were in the hands of the public sector.

World food reserves are now largely in the hands of private corporations like Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland. This is a problem because when it comes to food reserves, the public sector and the private sector behave in exactly opposite ways. If there's a food shortage, the public sector releases food from storage so that prices won't rise so fast, or so people who can't afford food can get it from public sources. But private traders and transnational corporations hoard and speculate. That is, they withhold food from the market in order to drive prices up even higher so that they can make a windfall profit, at the cost of some people not being able to eat.

But we can't just renationalize food reserves in the hands of governments because we can't trust governments. There has to be some kind of a co-management scheme where farmers and consumers, through their social movements and grassroots organizations, participate in owning and managing food reserves so that those reserves exist in every country – but at the service of people, not of private profit.

This is the collective banner of struggle to build counter-power to transnational corporations, to renationalize food systems, and to regain control over rural territories and the land. To make sure that land is used to support rural peoples. To support production, for local and national consumption, of healthier food, more affordable food, food that's not speculated with, that's not hoarded, that's not contaminated with GMOs. To reclaim our food systems and protect our lands and territories.

***"To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness."***

Bertrand Russell

***A real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken a new action. If there's no action, you haven't truly decided.***

Tony Robbins

***Real, Decision, Fact***

***Beliefs have the power to create and the power to destroy. Human beings have the awesome ability to take any experience of their lives and create a meaning that disempowers them or one that can literally save their lives.***

Tony Robbins

***Power, Experience, Human***

***One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular.***

Tony Robbins

# An Intentional Community

Christie Walk, a city based eco-village and with the 10 guiding principles of its foundation was as an intentional community, way ahead of its time. We have Paul and Cherie to thank for that. We who are involved with it, either by living within the community or by involvement with Urban Ecology Australia (UEA) or just by knowing people in either or both understand that we were and in some senses still are pioneers. Some people seem to learn that by osmosis, just by being here and sensing some of the background it becomes part of an almost learned history.

## What is an urban eco-village?

A small scale full featured intentional settlement focusing on the integration of

1. personal,
2. community,
3. diversity
4. connectivity
5. environmental
6. development and building
7. economic
8. means of transport
9. sustainability into a city neighbourhood.

It incorporates spatial planning, resilience, social equity, local culture, community engagement, bio-diversity and must be aesthetically pleasing and socially supportive to both the residents and the neighbourhood. It must have a low environmental impact and cultivate a sense of self reliance in its own capacity. A substantial amount of land should be dedicated to green space.

Colonel Light did a good job on Adelaide, the city itself is a square mile bordered by parklands and unless you have a disability it is very walkable.



## Personal sustainability

Walk ability is one of the most important factors in personal sustainability for numerous reasons, including preventing obesity, saving money, talking to neighbours, knowing your environment ( etc etc there are many other reasons that could be added to this) . Questions that need to be How far things from home and work, most people are will do up to 20 minutes of walking happily (see later on walk ability and personal sustainability, obesity, health, exercise)

1. Are streets tree lined, are they pedestrian friendly, are there car free streets?
2. Is walking pleasurable or is it hard? Is it accessible?  
Quality of life studies have shown that people fare better in terms of health and well being when they have a sense of belonging and an attachment to their place and space.

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## Sustainability and Diversity

The other things that makes Christie Walk work is where it is, its diversity and connectivity.

1. There is a mix of cafes, restaurants, shops, a huge produce market, the legal precinct and other offices, all within the square kilometre.
2. There is a huge diversity of people, from high income to homeless, all ages, and all income levels, differing cultures and races.
3. A whole range of residential living, apartments, row cottages, single housing, with a range of sizes, prices, and desirability.
4. Close walking distance to parks and playgrounds and community gardens.

## Sustainability and Community

### Aesthetically pleasing

Quality architecture and design focused around the urban environment are the next important angles. The importance of beauty, of a sense of place and space, of human comfort, surroundings that not only place you, they place you away from the usual hubbub of city life including nourishing the need that all individuals have of being in touch with the earth. To do this in an inner city environment is a real accomplishment. The circular spaces encourage community, Many people comment on the beauty of the gardens, the uniqueness of the buildings, the wildlife.

### Smart Transportation

Free buses around the city, Go-Get car share, bike posts



## 1. BENEFITS (For Residents)

Higher quality of life; Better places to live, work, & play; Higher, more stable property values; Less traffic congestion & less driving; Healthier lifestyle with more walking, and less stress; Close proximity to main street retail & services; Close proximity to bike trails, parks, and nature; Pedestrian friendly communities offer more opportunities to get to know others in the neighbourhood and locale .People get to be known as having an environmental consciousness , like minded people are attracted.

Rarely do people get the opportunity to live where there is a vast difference of age ranges.

More freedom and independence to children and the elderly, a greater awareness of the impact disability has on residents.

Great savings to residents with the car pooling system, savings from being able to drive less, not having to own a car, easier for children being able to walk or bicycle to neighbourhood schools.

Savings due to lower utilities costs.

More diversity of people and place.

Less ugly, congested sprawl to deal with daily; Better sense of place and community identity with more unique architecture; More open space to enjoy that will remain open space;

## 2. BENEFITS (For Businesses - Local)

More foot traffic generally means increase in sales. Cafes more inclined to go alfresco, less road traffic. Local interaction more people opting to buy locally rather than from supermarkets.

Economies of scale, in marketing due to close proximity and cooperation with other local businesses; Smaller spaces promote small locally owned and family run business incubation. Locally grown produce c be traded. Healthier lifestyle due to more walking and being near healthier restaurants; More community involvement from being part of community and knowing residents.

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### 3. BENEFITS (To Developers )

More income potential from higher density mixed-use projects.

Attractive leasing potential developers can on sell to investors, due to more leasable property per square metre. More sales, again due to higher density therefore more sales per square metre. Higher property values and selling prices, sought after properties

Faster approvals in communities that have adopted smart growth principles resulting in cost / time savings; Cost savings in parking facilities in mixed-use properties due to sharing of spaces throughout the day and night, resulting in less duplication in providing parking.

More space for green space making properties more attractive due to less need for car parking facilities. Mix of residences and commercial uses within walking distance of each other; Less impact on roads / traffic, which can result in lower impact fee.; Greater appeal to baby boomers as well as NIMBYS and families due to high saleability and acceptance from a broad range of customers interested in low energy cost and increased lifestyle potential i.e wider market share.

### 4. BENEFITS (To Municipalities)

Ability to demonstrate environmental credentials and promote world class design.

Stable, appreciating rates base; Less spent per capita on infrastructure and utilities than typical suburban development due to compact, high-density nature of projects; Increased rates base due to more buildings packed into a tighter area; Less traffic congestion due to walkability of design; Less crime and less spent on policing due to the presence of more people day and night; Less resistance from community; Better overall community image and sense of place; Less incentive to sprawl when urban core area is desirable. Greater civic involvement of population leads to better governance

### 5. GENERAL BENEFITS

Increasingly, regional planning techniques are being used to control and shape growth into compact, high-density, mixed-use neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities. Planning new train systems (instead of more roads) delivers the best results when designed in harmony with regional land planning - known as Transit Oriented Development (TOD). At the same time, the revitalisation of urban areas directs and encourages infill development back into city centres.

Planning for compact growth, rather than letting it sprawl out, has the potential to greatly increase the quality of the environment. It also prevents congestion problems and the environmental degradation normally associated with growth.

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## Daniel Spencer: an Environmental Activist

I'm a 22 year old campaigner with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition ([aycc.org.au/](http://aycc.org.au/)), a part-time student and the lead singer/guitarist of the Adelaide reggae band Babylon Burning. I grew up in the Riverland which gave me a strong appreciation for the environment. I've been involved in climate activism and other social justice movements for the last five or so years.

Growing up during a drought and then learning about anthropogenic climate change had a big impact on me and made me want to do something about it. After meeting people who were involved and hearing about other movements that had made positive changes I started working to build a mass movement of people, critical to getting government and industry to take significant action on this issue.

I'm currently involved in a campaign to replace Port Augusta's ageing coal-fired power stations with solar thermal as part of the Repower Port Augusta Alliance. This has involved working with the local community, power station workers, unions, business groups and others to demonstrate that people want to see the government invest in solar thermal in Port Augusta. Two of the biggest moments in the campaign so far for me were helping organise a community vote in Port Augusta that saw 98% of over 4000 people say they wanted solar not gas to replace coal, and a two week walk from Port Augusta to Adelaide that ended in a 2000-strong rally that got the issue into the national media. It is a really inspiring campaign to be a part of.

Every day I work with young people from across the country who are involved in climate activism. We've still got a lot to do, getting more people involved and making ourselves more visible, but it is young people's future that is on the line, which is why so many of us are concerned.

# Call for Transforming Economies

Eminent Persons from Around the World Call for a New Global Partnership to Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development

The High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda today released “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development,” a report which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world.

The Panel was established by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and co-chaired by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron.

For more information and to download the report, see <http://www.post2015hlp.org/featured/high-level-panel-releases-recom...>

## The Roadmap

In the report, the Panel calls for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformative shifts:

- **Leave No One Behind.** After 2015 we should move from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights.
- **Put Sustainable Development at the Core.** We have to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. We must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity.
- **Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth.** A profound economic transformation can end extreme poverty and improve livelihoods, by harnessing innovation, technology, and the potential of business. More diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and foster sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All.** Freedom from conflict and violence is the most fundamental human entitlement, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. At the same time, people the world over expect their governments to be honest, accountable, and responsive to their needs. We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognize peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not an optional extra.
- **Forge a New Global Partnership.** A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. It should be centered around people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. It should include civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, and private philanthropy.

## The Process

The report builds upon the historic advances of the Millennium Development Goals. It also harnesses the incredible passion and diversity of voices heard in the Panel’s consultations with people around the globe. The Panel interacted with more than 5,000 civil society groups from 121 countries in developing its recommendations.

The report was presented to the United Nations Secretary-General, as an input in the process of consultations being conducted by the U.N. in crafting the development agenda to succeed the Millennium Development Goals following the 2015 deadline for their achievement. The Secretary-General is expected to present his own vision for the world’s next development agenda to U.N. member states in September 2013.



Tags: Global Development, Goals, High Level Panel, MDGs, Secretary General, UN

# Anarchy

by Daniel Boon  
a Brisbane  
environmentalist  
and blogger, a  
supporter of Urban  
Ecology through  
Linked-In.

At what particular point does anarchy start?

Is it when the first person throws a rock through a window (of a shop)?

Is it where corporate government policy constricts the people to such a point that those most under pressure react and throw the rock?

On the ABC TV's recent Q&A there was some suggestion that Crean 'did the right thing' when he called for a vote on who should lead Labor. Whether he did or didn't is not relevant, what is relevant is that someone did crack under the pressure and with his close connection to the 'policy makers' and given the long history of governments living off its people, why is his suggestion that Labor not touch people's already over-taxed Superannuation?

Corporate government lives on a fine – parasitic – line; when things are running well, and assets are moving to the top, the middle class likewise benefits; however, when things get a bit tighter, first the marginalized suffer, then the workers suffer, then the middle class (AKA middlemen) starts to contract. This is where we are right now in Australia.

Labor and LNP are but mouth-pieces for the system that wants it pound of flesh, regardless of whether there is blood or no ...remember that pensions were the promise for leaving war taxes in place, and all that money has been long squandered ... what makes anyone think that Super will be any different ... the big difference is that the growth (increased population and baby bonuses) is being capped by the diminishing amount of energy which is proportionally increasing in cost....

When the middle-class have been squeezed dry, it will be like wringing out a chamois, it will be done again and again ... and the ways to squeeze people is to tax and then take money from their banks accounts ... it takes two to Tango (remember Argentina).

When anarchy starts ...

Go to [www.energyefficienthomedesign.com.au](http://www.energyefficienthomedesign.com.au) and read the articles about Iceland and Cyprus, the comparison ... Cyprus is unlikely / unable to borrow more money, yet Iceland has suitors lined up ... they have a clean slate, after telling the world's financial institutions to get stuffed ... it's the usury of the USA / IMF / World Bank and puppet UN that facilitates the transference of wealth from any and all countries ...

In simple terms ... money is representative of energy; humans have written cheques / borrowed far into the future, more than the World has in available energy ... in project management you learn the LCC (lifecycle costs) of a commercial building is about twice the construction costs over a 20 – 25 year period; if we have reached Peak Oil (we have passed it), then a simple formula suggests we need twice what we have spent just to maintain it ...