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The Urban Ecology NEWSLETTER

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TALE OF TWO CITIES

In Adelaide the fight is on for the city's biggest redevelopment site to become a model for an ecologically sustaining, socially vibrant, car-free environment but there are two cities here in Adelaide – the citizens' and the experts'. This is the ongoing tale of those two cities. We are now at a stage where your help can be crucial to deciding which city will win!

The Halifax Site

This newsletter gives some information about the progress of the proposed development of this site.

In 1997 the Adelaide City Council, owners of the site, adopted a brief for redevelopment of the site that was totally consistent with the goals put forward by UEA. It had been tested through community processes, not just by UEA but also by the City Council which won awards for its consultation processes.

In the year and a half since then, planning for the site has been hidden from public gaze and there has been absolutely no public consultation. The brief demanded public consultation, lots of it, and even the developer's chosen consultation expert had initially planned a good deal of consultative process very much in the spirit of the original brief. But the city planners have decided that all this is irrelevant. Now, by denying community input, they hope to foist their own 'vision' on to the city and that vision is very blinkered and narrow.

Instead of a car-free, ecologically responsible, mixed-use, inner-city development that embraces street life and celebrates the social diversity of the city the planning clique have been leading the developers to a built form that adds 6 new roads to a site that has never had them, mixes cars into every public and semi-public space within the 2.2 hectare site, has no mixed-use, puts blank 2 metre brick walls against the street rather than house or shop frontages, and provides limited diversity of occupancy tenure and type.

When this impoverished idea was finally unveiled in public at a 1.5 hour lunchtime meeting that was laughingly called 'community consultation' the response was, by all accounts (and not just in UEA's estimation), one of shock.

Meeting 1: 13 August

Chérie and Paul met with CEO Jude Munro who was accompanied by Council officers John Harry and Matthew Adcock. Matthew was the only council staff member to attend the lunchbreak 'consultation' and he received our overt sympathy for having had to bear the brunt of people's anger for something over which he had little control.

Jude appeared to accept that there were problems with the consultation process and not only said that it would be looked at immediately but promised to engage UEA in the process of designing the program.

Jude offered to arrange a meeting with the planners responsible for the Halifax site redevelopment.

Meeting 2: 17 August

Chérie explained that we saw the meeting as an opportunity to be briefed by the planners on the processes and rationale behind the current proposal and at the outset of the meeting we said that we took our role as community representatives seriously and that we would report back to the community about the meeting. This seemed to be accepted. I am not sure that it was understood.

A number of things became clear in the meeting which was attended by Jude Munro, Malcolm Snow, Michael O'Connell, Wendy Bell, John Harry and Bob Evans.

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Editorial Team: Joan Carlin & Chérie Hoyle

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the editorial team or Urban Ecology Australia Inc.

Calendar of Events

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Sunday 17 October | AUSTRALIA CONNECTS: A PEOPLE'S VISION: 10am to 10pm at Gilles St Primary School Adelaide. Ph Carole 8342 4603 or Lawrie 0408 895 579 |
| Tuesday 16 November | 12 noon-2pm Community consultation re Halifax – see below (ph Bob Evans on 8203 7777 for venue) |
| Wednesday 17 November | 7-9pm Community consultation re Halifax – see below |
| 27-28 November | Going Solar Fair in Victoria – launch of Urban Ecology Branch in Victoria |
| Saturday 4 December | 2pm Annual General Meeting of Urban Ecology on the Christie Walk site 105 Sturt St.. – Please nominate!! |

Tale of two cities (cont from p1)

There was an admission of having failed to address the community consultation process properly. Unfortunately, Jude Munro seemed to think it sufficient that this was now being reviewed. She now said that Pentroth and Adelaide City Council would undertake the community consultation process. There was no mention on her part of UEA's involvement in any way.

For over 12 months there had been complete reliance on expert opinion and no attempt had been made to seek any input from the broader community.

UEA, and many other people in the local area, had not received many of the newsletters that the staff insisted had been distributed. They claimed that 500 had been printed and distributed each time.

Wendy Bell made it very clear that she did not see it as important for the site to provide any world leading model for development and that it was sufficient of it just pushed the envelope a little because the developers weren't prepared to go further in any case. (We have been assured by the developers, Pentroth, that they wanted to go much further in the direction of innovation but that the planners were insisting they didn't!)

Wendy Bell and Malcolm Snow explained that having cars drive through the site would add to public safety!!

Chérie asked whether any fundamental changes would be accepted to the design if the consultation process showed that was what people wanted but there was never a satisfactory answer to that question.

All in all, I really think it is fair to report that Chérie and I ended up with the strong impression that

these expert planners were convinced that they knew best in respect of all aspects of the Halifax Site redevelopment from the consultation processes to the detail of the urban design and that the 'community' was, as far as they were concerned, an ill-educated irrelevance.

At one point, for instance, there was a clear statement of concern from the planners about the capacity of ordinary members of the community to read plans, or appreciate any aesthetic issues.

Chérie and I reiterated a number of times our belief that the brief set by council for the redevelopment of the Halifax Depot site was excellent and that the process followed for the tender process was good. We explained our concern to ensure that the council's own brief and processes were respected in order to obtain the best outcome for the site.

Michael O'Connell kept referring back to 'our' scheme, meaning UEA's original proposal, and didn't seem to understand that this was not what we were there to talk about. We were there to talk about the brief, the process, and the role of community. We were also there, to some extent, to discuss what we see as failings in the current proposal to meet the brief.

Local Agenda 21 identifies cross-sectoral partnership and community participation as fundamental to the realisation of sustainable development. This council is demonstrating, through its actions in relation to the Halifax site, that it does not support this principle.

To assist communication, we offered to make any newsletters and information available through the Centre for Urban Ecology,

noting the convenience of our position relative to the site and our commitment to the Council's consultative process as provided for in the brief for the site.

Meeting 3: 31 August

A meeting was arranged between UEA, the developer, John Culshaw, and his community consultant Janet Gould. After those discussions we felt that the consultant, Janet Gould, was working hard to achieve an honest, community responsive solution but was held back by conflicting demands from the developer and council staff.

Meeting 4: 7 September

Janet Gould brokered a meeting for UEA to explore the situation with the Lord Mayor, the CEO and key staff. It stretched out to a 3 hour meeting and was ably facilitated by Rebecca Lang from PIRSA.

Meeting 5: 24 September (again

well facilitated by Rebecca Lang) Beverley Vaughan, Cherie and Paul attended representing UEA; Jane Lomax-Smith representing elected members of ACC; ACC Staff: Jude Munro (CEO), Malcolm Snow, John Harry, Bob Evans. This meeting was not as amicable as the previous ones, and Malcolm Snow changed the whole tone of the meeting. We asked what can we do to make the development something the community wants. What is possible? The CEO assured us that the two public meetings coming up would be consultative and not just saying what the Council had decided to do. But John Culshaw commented that he wouldn't change the design again!

Despite these assurances, at the Operational Committee

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Around the Centre

What's been happening

- Chérie Hoyle and Paul Downton have attended the Adelaide City Council's Environment Advisory Forums. Discussions cover land use, transport, health.
- There was an article by Paul Downton in the Spring Edition of Greenhouse Living magazine (*Your Own Green House Strategy*), and in the July issue of SPACE – Journal of the Town and Country Planning Association, Victoria (*Planning for Change or Obstacles to Progress? The Halifax Eco-City Project*).
- Plans for Christie House (the first of the Whitmore Square projects) have been approved by Adelaide City Council.
- Ongoing debate and discussion with Adelaide City Council and Pentroth over the development of the Halifax Depot site. (see p1)
- Invitation from Senator Robert Hill to Paul Downton to participate as a member of the new Household Greenhouse Action (HGA) Consortium. The HGA program was announced as part of the Prime Minister's package on Australia's response to climate change, and is being administered by the Australian Greenhouse Office. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the residential sector by fostering voluntary partnership projects across community, industry and all levels of government. Greenhouse gas emissions from the household sector account for over one quarter of Australia's total greenhouse emissions.

ACT Branch News

The ACT Branch's 'GREEN LIVING' FAIR is taking shape! Please contact Warren Overton on Tel/fax 02 6299 6527;

Who's who?

Carly Wilks

I have known the Downton-Hoyles for a few years now – I am a close friend and housemate of their daughter Rhiannon. I am 21 years old and spend most of my time playing my violin (I am in a small folk band). I started volunteer work at Urban Ecology about a month ago and usually come in four days a week. My current jobs are filing and answering phones (phones that refuse to ring the minute I step inside the door!). Hopefully in the near future I will be working on a project with a couple of other volunteers but for the time being I am happy to help in whatever way I can and I'm enjoying learning about the environment and Urban Ecology. [Ed note: Carly and Briohny Campbell won the Young Traditionalist Award (Group Division) at the Victor Harbor Folk Festival]

New Branch in Victoria

The Victorian chapter of UEA will be officially launched at the Going Solar Fair to be held on the weekend of the 27th and 28th November at Hanging Rock near Mount Macedon. The organisers of the fair have kindly given UEA some space to talk about the reason for establishing a chapter in Victoria and the issues that we will be tackling.

The Victorian Chapter will be officially launched at the opening of the Fair on Saturday morning, followed by a seminar presentation at 12.00pm. The fledgling Chapter will be running an information booth all weekend as well so volunteers are welcome!! (We require four volunteers over the weekend to help with the stall for two half days each in return for free entry to the event.)

For those interested in attending the **Going Solar Fair** contact Ceridwen Owen, Vic Chapter co-convenor and member of the **Going Solar Fair** organising committee at:-

E-mail: ceridwen@deakin.edu.au
Tel: 0410-691-740

Any questions about UE Victoria contact Peter Graham:
E-mail: peter.graham@mit.edu.au
Tel: (03) 9925 1936

Friends, Urban Ecologists, Poets! Lend me your muse!

Urban Ecology is preparing an anthology of poetry from any Urban Ecologist or fellow traveller who would like to see their work in print. Sylvia Plath or Les Murray levels of talent are not a pre-requisite! All submitted work will be considered.

Overtly environmental themes are welcome of course, but not necessarily the only ones we are looking for. Spiritual, philosophical, political, comedic and personal themes are also welcome. Three poems per author will be the general limit, but feel free to submit more for us to choose from. Old friends or the latest lines from your pen! Bring them in, post or email them to Chérie or Matt at the Centre.

Please. The world needs your words.

Interns:

Thanks to Leonie, Joan, Matt & Kathy, Chérie & Paul for giving space in their homes to interns Jessica and Marcus.

Nina Creedman from the US will arrive on November 6 for about four months and we'd love to hear from anyone who can accommodate her for at least some of the time she will be here.

Wondrous Web sites

www.abc.net.au/m/science/ockham/stories/

Industrial Ecology, Eco Labelling:
[www.environment.gov.au/epg/](http://www.environment.gov.au/epg/environet/eecp/)
environet/eecp/

Hague Appeal for Peace:
www.haguepeace.org

2000 Walk for Nuclear Disarmament:
www.motherearth.org/
SA Food Alliance;
safodnutr@mail.wch.sa.gov.au
Peace:www2.unesco.org/manifesto2000/uk/uk_f_depart.htm

EcoCities update

Christie Walk - Latest

Things are progressing with the development of **Christie Walk** as the first part of a growing **Whitmore Square EcoCity Project** in the South-West quarter of the City. As you may have heard, we have now got firm commitments on all of the dwellings, and some considerable interest in Bourne Court too.

So, the community is taking shape as we move into the construction phase. We have recently had an on-site permaculture workshop for all future residents and buyers, led by Jacqui Hunter of *Hunter Gatherer Designs*. Jacqui is helping us develop a vision for the landscaping and community garden areas, and to plan on permaculture principles.

Currently we are engaged in working through the last two major elements of the planning and design for Stage 1. Firstly, through our Project Manager, Robert Samson, we are conducting a negotiated tender process with our preferred builder. We antici-

pate that this process will be concluded in early October, with Wirranendi signing off on a building contract.

Initially this will be only for Stage 1, but the preparation work involved will make transition into an agreement on Stage 2 easier and quicker. The only significant problem here, apparently, is a current shortage of building tradespeople, because so many are trying to get projects completed before the introduction of the GST.

Secondly, through the Project Architect, Paul Downton and Ecopolis, ably assisted by ADS Architects, we have finalised the design drawings and specifications which the builders will follow for Stage 1. These must be submitted for Building Approval, which again we anticipate will happen in early October. These final designs have all been fully worked through with the individuals involved.

Those with commitments for Stage 2. will commence consultations with Paul in November.

With the completion of these two tasks, and a contracted builder in place, we will be ready to demolish the remains of the cottage on the Russell St frontage and commence site works for Stage 1. All being well this should be by late October!

Whyalla

The next stage of building on the Eco City Core site in Whyalla is ready to go ahead – and the Buddhist community is calling for people to help with the building tasks. Are you able to help with any (or all!!) of the following: plumbing – exterior and interior; carpentry; electricity – exterior and interior; tiling floors; installation of insulation and strawboard in ceilings; installing various fittings to bathrooms etc; fencing; gardening/landscaping; painting.

Plenty of opportunities for you to make a difference and be involved in an exciting community project!

Phone Bruce Muhlhan & Rae Watson on 8645 4620.

Tale of two cities (cont from p2)

meeting of ACC held on 11 October a motion went to the Council to name the roads in the site – so much for community input! This is entirely duplicitous of the Council when they had planned two so-called community consultations: 12noon – 2pm on Tuesday 16 November and 7-9pm Wednesday 17 November, The Meeting Hall (behind the ACC Customer Centre), 25 Pirie St, Adelaide. **BE THERE!!!**

In the meantime if you haven't already written to the Council please do so NOW.

We need articulate, informed (and yes, passionate) communications that emphasise the points below:

- Condemn the fact that decisions are being made in advance of any community consultation (see page 2 for details).
- Dissemble the perverse logic of building new roads in an inner-city environment that doesn't

need them.

- Ask how Colonel Light's Vision fits into an Adelaide more than 150 years later! After all Colonel Light was looking at a city of horse, bullock and pedestrian transport!.
- Explain how density, pedestrian dominance and mixed-use foster convivial, vibrant urban environments, and how through traffic kills them.
- These roads introduce two new road junctions immediately opposite Pulteney Grammar School. It is fact that most road accidents occur at road junctions.
- Council will have spent between \$15 & \$20million on moving the original depot from the site, the cleanup of the site and consultants from the late '80s until now. The justification for this expenditure was for an ecological development that would lead the world and

therefore bring many thousands of people to visit the city. The original brief allowed for around 400 dwellings and 30 businesses with plenty of open community space, and would have provided a much higher rates return to the city. It is surprising that the Council is now willing to accept such a low return!

Emails and letters are our tools in this struggle. It is showdown time between the two types of city represented here – the human city and the car city.

Paul Downton

The address for letters is Lord Mayor and Councillors, Adelaide City Council, GPO Box 2252, Adelaide 5001.

For emails use:

<j.lomax-smith@adelaide.sa.gov.au>

In either case ask for your message to be copied to all councillors and to the CEO, and please send a copy to UEA.

Genetically Correct Nutrition

Some researchers believe that many of the ailments which have become so common in Western societies in recent times (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity, arthritis, to name just a few) are the result of eating a diet to which humans are not genetically adapted. This is not too surprising, you may think, with all the highly processed foods that many people consume these days.

However, the story is not quite as simple as this. It is not only these very modern foods that are regarded as the culprits, but in fact all those that are dependent on technologies other than the primitive tools available to Stone Age hunter/gatherers. This includes agriculture, which has only been with us for around 10,000 years – not long enough, apparently, for humanity to have become fully adapted to the foods that it produces. In particular, such modern staples as grains, legumes and dairy foods are considered to be detrimental to human health. The fact that many people are known to be intolerant to such common food items as wheat, soya beans and milk lends support to this theory.

Humans evolved as hunter/gatherers over several million years, with a diet consisting mainly of meat, fruits and vegetables, as well as some eggs, fish and various kinds of nuts and seeds. Access to cereal grains, legumes and the milk of other animals would have been very limited, as these can only be produced in useful quantities through agricultural practices.

It would be difficult to recreate a 'Palaeolithic' hunter/gatherer diet exactly. Nevertheless, modern-day 'hunter/gatherers' forage in supermarkets and gardens, selecting only those foods that would have been available to pre-agricultural humans (or at least foods closely related to them), as these are the ones that the human body is best equipped to handle as a result of its evolutionary development.

Many of these people report an improvement in their general level of well-being, a decrease in hunger and cravings (and therefore relatively effortless weight loss when this is desired), increased resistance to infection, and relief from a variety of unwelcome symptoms. Of course, such a diet

goes very much against the grain (!) of most current dietary recommendations, which focus on the 'food pyramid' with its heavy base of cereal foods. It is also inconsistent with the growing trend towards vegetarianism, which may suit some individuals, but which is certainly not healthy for everyone.

A book that describes the philosophy behind and implementation of a Palaeolithic diet is 'NeanderThin: A Caveman's Guide to Nutrition', by Ray Audette (with Troy Gilchrist). It is currently out of print, but a new and expanded edition will be available later this year, published by St. Martin's Press in the US.

If you would like more information on the evolutionary approach to nutrition and its implications for human health, have a look at the website www.PaleoDiet.com or contact Barbara Sheppard ph: (08) 8339 4303 email: shepp@camtech.net.au

GE-free foods list

The following products are believed to be free from genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. We encourage you to buy these products as a first preference, to add economic support to labelling.

We will add to this list in each Newsletter.

SOYA GRITS

All products believed to be GE-free

SOYA MILK

- * Aussie Soy (Pureharvest)
- * Aussie Lite Soy (Pureharvest)
- Australia's Own (Australian Natural Foods)
- Bonsoy (Spiral Foods)
- King Land (King International)
- * Nature's Soy (Pureharvest)
- So Good (Sanitarium)
- * So Natural (Australian Natural Foods)
- Vitalife (Australian Natural Foods)
- * Vitasoy

SOYA MILK – FLAVOURED/SOYA SMOOTHIES

- Aussie Soy (Pureharvest)
- Australia's Own (Aust. Natural Foods)
- King Land (King International)
- So Good (Sanitarium)
- * So Natural (Aust. Natural Foods)
- Vitasoy

SOYA MILK POWDER

- * Bonvit (Gerardis)
- * F G Roberts (Soy Products)
- * Herb Valley (Natural Product Dist.)

SOYA OIL

All/most brands likely to have GE ingredients

SOYA PROTEIN POWDER

All/most brands likely to have GE ingredients

SOYA SAUCE, TAMARI & SHOYU

Any product with an organic/BD certification logo, or:

- Abundant Earth (Health minders)
- Lotus
- Nature First
- Pureharvest
- Spiral (Spiral Foods)

SOYA SLICES, RASHERS & FILLETS

All/most brands likely to have GE ingredients

SPAGHETTI & PASTA - CANNED

- Bi-Lo (Coles)
- no Frills (Franklins)
- Orgran (Roma food products)
- PMU (Heinz)
- Savings (Coles)
- Watties (Heinz)

SPORTS NUTRITION PRODUCTS

Likely GE ingredients in - products containing dextrose, glucose, lecithin, maltodextrin, soya ingredients, thickener, veg. extract, veg. oil & veg. proteins

STOCK & STOCK CUBES

- Continental (Unilever) - cartons only
- Rapunzel Vegetable Bouillon
- Rapunzel Vegetable Broth

SUGAR

All products believed to be GE-free

SWEETS

Any product with an organic/BD certification logo

Likely GE ingredients in - products containing chocolate ingredients, corn/maize ingredients, glucose, lecithin (E322), maltodextrin, margarine, modified starch, 'starch', thickener, veg. fat & veg.oil

TACOS, NACHOS, BURRITOS, TORTILLAS ETC

All/most brands likely to have GE ingredients

TEA

All products likely to be GE-Free

International News

Snippets from: *The EnviroLink News Service*

E-Mail: <newsdesk@envirolink.org> Web : <<http://www.envirolink.org>>

Home Depot old-growth vow praised –

Greenpeace and the Rainforest Action Network said that if Home Depot sticks to its new vow to stop selling old-growth wood products, the policy change could make a huge impact in protecting forests worldwide. The largest single retailer of lumber in the world said that by 2003 it will stop selling goods – from lumber to doors and brooms – made using trees cut in ancient forests. (MSNBC)

Natural gas has been solution for pollution —

Some 11,000 people in Cairo, almost all taxi drivers, have converted their engines to work

with inexpensive natural gas since January 1996 under a government-sponsored project. The lure is high savings rather than environmental concern. Read the story: <http://www.spokane.net:80/news-story-body>.

Rethinking the Subdivision Design —

Big homes on big lawns on long winding roads. That's how many residential subdivisions have been designed for decades. Now, some people are trying to change these traditional methods and make development less damaging to the environment. The Great Lakes Radio Consortium's Todd Witter

visits one site. Hear the story: <http://www.glr.org/archivera/>

Futuristic Cars Lukewarm Sales

While the auto industry has invested billions of dollars to develop cars that run on electricity or natural gas, few American drivers are buying them. The latest technology is in a vehicle called a hybrid, which runs on electricity and conventional power. Auto makers are test-marketing the hybrid to see how consumers react. Hear the story: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/me/>

Food Miles

Forces behind Food Miles

(summary)

These are complex – one key area is the low cost of fuel, which does not reflect the full environmental and social costs of its use. The large retailers wield enormous power through their huge market share, and have centralised distribution, resulting in enormous mileages being covered between producer, packager, distributor and ultimate retail outlet.

Who Reaps the Profits?

In summary the report suggests that Transnational corporations (TNCs) are the big winners. Almost all primary commodities are each now marketed by fewer than six multi-commodity traders (probably even less by 1999).

Reducing Food Miles

Food Miles form a complex problem – and there is no single solution. The

SAFE Alliance believes that the answers lie in long term cultural changes for consumers, for retailers, and policy makers.

Action by Individuals

- When buying food that cannot be grown in the region, individuals should buy fair trade products whenever possible.
- Buy locally produced, seasonal, fresh, preferably organic or low-input produce whenever available, from small, local shops or through direct producer-consumer links.
- Reduce consumption of meat and dairy products from intensively reared animals and avoid processed and preserved food.

In 1994 a report was prepared by the Sustainable Agriculture, Food & Environment (SAFE) Alliance in the UK entitled **The Food Miles Report: The dangers of long distance food transport.**

This report makes some interesting points – in the Foreword it states: Two Major determinants of a country's environmental impact are the nature of its food economy, and its systems of transport. Though they are not usually bracketed together, they are becoming closer and closer intertwined. Food production is highly dependent on external inputs – which have to be transported. Eating has never been so transport-intensive... Food is becoming *the* issue in the transport debate.

Food Miles: Issues & Implications (summary)

The environment: Air pollutants and climate change gases are released as fossil fuels are used for production, transport and packaging.

There are implications for poor countries as resources are allocated to export production rather than for local needs and

Case Study:

oranges are not the only fruit

The report states that over 90% of the 55 million metric tonnes of orange juice consumed world-wide goes on the account of the northern industrialised nations (which include Australia). More than 80% of the orange juice consumed by Europeans originates from Brazil, the largest orange juice producing country world-wide. It argues that there are plenty of healthy alternatives to orange juice! [Ed: readers might like to make an assessment as to how much orange juice marketed in Australia contains concentrate from Brazil].

National News

Powerful new alliance sets the pace for government action on climate change

The first meeting of the Climate Action Network of Australia (CANA) in Canberra on 17-20 September has launched a national community effort to ensure that Australian governments and industries reduce greenhouse pollution and avert the threats of climate change to the environment, public health, and the economy.

CANA is a powerful non-government alliance of more than twenty regional, state and national environmental, health, community development, and research groups from throughout Australia. It is part of a global network of CAN groups from every continent that represents citizen opinion and environmental imperatives at international negotiations about climate change, such as at Kyoto in 1997.

CANA resolves to bridge the gap between the Australian community's desire to reduce greenhouse pollution, and the reluctance of Australian governments to take effective action

about the impacts of the fossil fuel industry on the atmosphere and global climate.

The member groups of CANA, representing mainstream opinion and hundreds of thousands of Australians, express grave concern about the impacts of global warming on Australian environments and communities, from increasing temperatures, decreasing rainfall, rising sea levels, and more frequent and intense storms.

CANA believes that Australia should be a world leader in: • phasing out the use of fossil fuels and shifting to a renewable energy future; • developing an Australian manufacturing industry for renewable (eg. wind, solar) energy technologies; • ratifying the Kyoto Protocol early, and • introducing national greenhouse legislation that sets clear targets to cut greenhouse pollution. CANA regrets that the Federal Government has so far failed to take a whole-of-government approach and lead a national action plan.

A priority for Australia is to

protect the carbon stocks held in native vegetation such as forests, wetlands, rangelands, and woodlands by preventing them from being cleared. While planting trees and establishing plantations are important for a range of environmental reasons, they are no substitute for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases at their source.

Australia would need to replant an area about the size of Victoria (more than 200 times the entire plantation area currently in Australia), and keep the trees forever, in order to offset our annual greenhouse pollution from burning fossil fuels. Clearly, reducing our consumption of coal, oil and gas is the main way to avoid the threat of drastic climate change to Australia and the world.

For further information, contact Anna Reynolds on 0419 547217. National Liaison Office Australian Conservation Foundation canberra@acfonline.org.au 02 - 6247 2472 (p)

Member groups of Climate Action Network Australia include:

Aidwatch, Australian Conservation Foundation, Australia Institute, Australian Reproductive Health Alliance, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre, Community Information Project on Sustainable Energy, Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Environment Centre of the Northern Territory, Environmental Defenders Office ACT, Environment Victoria, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace Australia, Institute for Sustainable Futures, Kimberley Land Council, Mineral Policy Institute, Nature Conservation Council, Queensland Conservation Council, Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Total Environment Centre, Urban Ecology Australia, Wilderness Society, World Wide Fund for Nature

Snippets

Some snippets from Peter Sellar's Investigator lecture in July. (Peter Sellars has been appointed Artistic Director of the 2002 Adelaide Festival)

'our task is to image the next sustainable, survivable society'

'we need an alternative information for the actual news ie to report when somebody is about to accomplish something'

'the arts can be used as the way in which to create the next paradigm'

'the focus of Adelaide can be to face issues that are urgent all around the planet with courage, invention, skill and generosity'

'... and let's build the next society'

'Australia can play a leadership role...'

Green Building Challenge

There are a lot of people doing a lot of work in this country at the moment trying to work out the best way to assess the contribution of a building or building development to ecological sustainability, that is (by some popular definitions) the buildings 'Greenness'.

Why do this? Because by developing a tool for assessing a building's environmental performance requires knowing what attributes a building has that will influence it's environmental impact, and what effects these impacts (both discrete and combined) will have on ecosystems, economic and social contexts.

This means you have to understand the relationships between natural and built environments and the influence the design process has on these relationships. These are fundamental to knowing important things like your building's contribution to greenhouse gas reduction, resource depletion, pollution and solid waste. Most importantly you end up with a checklist of design parameters that describe what a 'green building' is. Now try to make the assessment method you develop universally applicable.

Sound complicated? Well it is. The good news is that much of the conceptual work has already been done by an international group of experts that have formed under the auspices of the International Green Building Challenge. This group, the GBC International Framework Committee (IFC) comprising eight countries, has created an assessment framework for the environmental performance of buildings known as the *GBTool*. The *GBTool* framework is intended to be an over-arching framework for environmental assessment and environmental sustainability with the overall goal to inform the international community of researchers, designers and builders about advances in Green Building world wide and NOT a commercial product.

This process was initiated in 1996 at which time national teams modified *GBTool* to suit local conditions and assessed their country's greenest buildings. The whole project culminated in the

GBC'98 conference in Vancouver Canada where countries including the USA, Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the UK showcased and compared the relative environmental performance of their buildings. Australia did not enter a team in the GBC98, however we will be represented at the next GBC2000 to be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands in October 2000.

The Australian GBC Team, comprising representatives from UEA, CSIRO, RMIT, UNSW and chaired by the DPWS-NSW, will undertake research to adapt and apply a framework that defines the total scope of building environmental performance in Australia. The framework will also provide a basis for understanding how aspects of the environmental performance affect issues of Ecologically Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development, and Environmental Impacts. Some of this work has already begun.

This project will first of all customise the *GBTool* framework by undertaking a series of research tasks aimed at establishing Australia's capacity to assess building environmental performance, methodologies for qualitative assessment, and the nature and regarded importance of Australian environmental issues. Once customised the *GBTool* framework will be used to assess one 'standard' building project to establish base-line building environmental performance, and then apply the framework to a case-study 'green' building. The overall objectives of this process are:

- To revise the underlying assumptions, scope and criteria in *GBTool* for relevance to Australian environmental issues;
- To develop a set of regionally-sensitive building environmental performance assessment criteria;
- Apply the *GBTool* framework to assess the environmental impact of at least one Australian building;
- To define "best-practice" by benchmarking the performance of green buildings in Australia

and document the successful elements of individual green buildings relative to standard practice;

- To contribute to international benchmarks for building performance while respecting regional and technical diversity.
- To participate in an international exchange of information, ideas and green building technologies.

Benefits of the project:

This project will benefit the Australian construction industry, people and natural environment by creating:

- Greater awareness in the construction and research industry of the scope and application of Australian building performance assessment tools and methods;
- Greater awareness of the current environmental impacts of the construction industry in Australia;
- Greater awareness of the contribution of the Australian construction industry to ecologically sustainable development in this country.
- Greater awareness of the level of environmental performance achievable with compliance to minimum standards and codes of practice;
- Greater awareness of the life-cycle benefits and costs of standard and high environmentally performing buildings;
- The ability to review current environmental performance standards for improved environmental performance against a set of best practice criteria;
- The basis for pre-empting possible codification of mandatory environmental policies;
- Promotes green building in Australia in an international context and provides opportunities for industry to see the mainstream potential benefits of environmentally high performing building developments.

Outcomes of the project

will be covered in the next newsletter.

Thanks to Peter Graham for this article

The Real Y2K Problem

by David La Chapelle

(from his book: *Navigating the Tides of Change*)

As the reality of the Y2k problem truly begins to emerge the call to action is becoming less easy to avoid. But action without a vision is difficult and even dangerous.

There are certainly actions to be taken in terms of personal contingency plans, community outreach, networking and other forms of response. These actions are necessary and need our attention and concern.

There is, however, a more fundamental issue which is driving much of the confusion around our response to the dilemma posed by Y2k; we are being asked to consider a fundamental disruption of our way of life in the absence of clear and compelling vision of what may lie on the other side of such chaos.

It is this fundamental lack of vision at a societal level which I wish to address at this time.

Most social upheaval and chaos in human history has been constellated around natural disasters, wars, revolutions and vectors of disease transmission. During such times there is a rapid disintegration of existing structures, a period of chaos where anarchy is predominant, and then a coalescing of new systems in response to the disturbance...

I believe that we are approaching a similar threshold of change and transformation. Y2k is not the problem that we truly face. Y2k is the symptom of a technologically driven, just on demand, ever expanding globalized culture which is leaving in its wake environmental devastation, societal malaise and spiritual emptiness. The very speed which our computers have given us has become our Achilles heel. We live in a world where the movement of material goods and services has outstripped the fundamental quality of our lives. This is the real crisis beyond the mask of Y2k.

I recently discussed the Y2k issue with a southern banker in a small town in Northern Georgia. As it turns out his particular bank had finished all testing assessment and remediation around Y2k compliance. Seeing as though their own house was in order I turned our conversation to some of the more global implications of the issue and he responded by saying, "The best thing that could happen to this country is that it learn how to slow down. Everything is going too fast, and you are right there is a spiritual emptiness in

the way we live our lives now."

Finding such sentiment in the rural south was as an eye opener for me and gave me an indication of just how pervasive our societal unease truly is.

Y2k is the miner's canary of a culture that has lost its natural rhythm. Every system in nature has a period of rest followed by a period of growth and expansion. This episodic pattern gives us magnificent sunsets, Sequoia trees and the curl of the surf upon our beaches. We are facing a cancerous growth which is expanding beyond its ability to communicate coherently with the rest of the universe.

The cellular aggregate of cities are spilling out across the countryside and the demand such growth is placing on

**Y2K is the
miner's canary
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the rest of the ecology is disturbingly apparent in clear cuts, open pits, monocrop plantings and excavation sites which are visible, unabated, even from thirty thousand feet.

The real issue underneath the compelling dangers of Y2k is far more daunting than the remediation, triage and damage control of our eroding computer networks; It is the need for a more sustainable, renewable, resting and spiritually fulfilling way of life.

The lack of a coherent vision of how this may be possible is, I believe, the greatest single obstacles in dealing with the crisis of Y2k.

We are being called upon to craft a vision of a way of living which does not continue business as usual. The knowledge of such a way of living does not need to be created out a vacuum. Just as the concept of universal suffrage which the framers of the constitution felt was so essential to their vision of a new country came from the Cherokee people, so we have many wisdom streams to draw upon which can help us create a vision of hope in the face of crisis.

It is not enough to simply prepare for the physical shocks of Y2k. We are being asked to reach deeply into our

greatest yearnings for a more sustainable world and make that yearning real. If we can answer this yearning with vision and action then Y2k will be a bloodless revolution which can help usher in a societal transformation.

This vision cannot be the product of just a few, it must be the coherent synthesis of many if we are to respond to the Y2k crisis in a way that moves beyond mere triage. We must harness the very interconnectivity which the computer revolution has unleashed to be in service of defining such a vision.

I would like to leave you with a few questions to ponder and invite you to help build a vision of a possible future as a way to move beyond the fear and denial inherent in impending disruptions of Y2k.

- *What does it mean to live in relation to your physical world in a sustainable way?*
- *What would an economy based on renewal and rest look like?*
- *What role should technology play in a renewable world?*
- *How should we be entertained in a sustainable culture?*
- *What is meaningful work in such a culture?*
- *How would we tend our bodies and our minds? (What would our health care look like?)*
- *How would we tend our spirits differently?*

These are but a few questions which I think are essential to be asking. Our capacity to envision a positive future is our very best ally in facing the potential disruptions which the Y2k issue is bringing to our doorstep. This is a fundamental responsibility which we all must share so that we can respond with clarity, heart and wisdom to the opportunities in this looming crisis.

I invite anyone who reads this piece to respond to me personally at dlaclape@ptialaska.net, but more importantly to enter into meaningful dialogue with your own community so that you can help create a better world. This is an ultimate win-win situation. If Y2k turns out to be a minor road bump, (a scenario which is not supported by the evidence) then you have used your time to better your world. If Y2k creates a cascade of chaos and transformation then you will have the most potent force ever unleashed upon this planet to aid you: the power of imagination and vision when linked to a higher purpose.

(From *ERA Email Network)



Heroes and Villains

HEROES!

GM may have had various reasons for the ban of PVCs, but there is a very significant long-term environmental benefit. This could be the beginning of the end of PVC entering the auto scrap smelting furnaces (at dozens of pounds of chlorine/car, more or less). (from Greenpeace)

Plastics News September 20,

GM banishing PVC in auto interior panels

By Joseph Pryweller

General Motors Corp. plans to become the first carmaker to eliminate PVC on all its interior panels worldwide. By 2004, the Detroit-based carmaker expects to use non-PVC materials for all new vehicle programs. The policy primarily affects covering skins for instrument panels and door panels. According to several resin companies, PVC now captures 70-80 percent of the materials market for those parts in North America and Europe. The surprise move paves the way for the introduction of other materials, such as thermoplastic olefins and polyurethane, in those applications. GM's decision was made partly to light a fire under parts and resin suppliers to find alternatives, Sobolewski said. ...

Performance issues helped force the move, including PVC's

lack of durability over a long period, according to William Shikany, director of GM's interior center. The carmaker found that PVC cracks, warps, and fades too quickly, Shikany said. "It didn't take consumer studies to tell us that people didn't like cracks in panels," Shikany said. Other issues include windows fogging from the leaching of PVC plasticizers, and PVC's weight disadvantage compared with other materials, Shikany said. But the issue was brought to a head by the inability of PVC to work with seamless air-bag doors, said David Mattis, engineering director for materials and appearance at the Warren center. Consumers are starting to request doors with invisible seams that still can be penetrated with an air bag during a crash, he said. GM's rollout of non-PVC materials began in May for all future vehicles...

And more!!

USA: Sept 22, 1999 DETROIT – Ford Motor Co. and General Motors Corp. both said yesterday that they would require parts suppliers to become more environmentally-friendly in the next few years.

The two Detroit automakers said they want all suppliers to conform to the international ISO 14001 standard, under which independent auditors evaluate processes to measure energy use, waste

disposal, water treatment, recycling and air pollution.

Both the automakers announced the standards within an hour on Tuesday, yet said it was by coincidence.

Ford, the first automaker to certify all its plants worldwide under the standards, will require suppliers to have at least one manufacturing site meet ISO 14001 by the end of 2001, and all manufacturing sites shipping products to Ford conform by July 1, 2003.

"We're looking for ways to be more environmentally friendly," said Ford spokesman Ron Iori. "We realise we have quite a long supply chain and value chain that goes into making vehicles, and this is one way we can make that chain more environmentally friendly."

Ford and its suppliers can also cut costs and improve efficiency as it implements more environmentally-friendly methods, Iori said.

GM set a deadline of December 31, 2002 for its suppliers and its own facilities to meet the environmental standards.

"Working together with our suppliers, we can accomplish much more to improve the environment than GM can alone," said Harold Kutner, group vice president of worldwide purchasing and North American production control and logistics, said in a statement.

REUTERS NEWS SERVICE

Letters

Cherie,

Next year I hope to put some time aside to work voluntarily, hopefully in a building and marketing capacity. I believe that the work UEA does is integral to making this city a world leader in ecology and spirituality, which I feel is practically the same.

I am also moving addresses at the end of this month, so send those great newsletters to my new address (enclosed).

Sincerely *Sam Holmes*

Hi Cherie and Paul,

Peter Graham chaired a brilliant meeting last week which I was able to attend. I gave a bit of a spiel about my knowledge of Adelaide UEA (wish I was better informed, but I will work on that!). And I have volunteered to get a website for UEA Vic up and running, perhaps at the URL www.urbanecology.org.au/vic or similar?

In the meantime, could your web person please post the following minutes on your site under Recent News or wherever? Thanks a lot, and I'm sure we'll be in touch some more soon,

Regina.

Regina Huntington
reginah@jsc.com.au