

Transition Communities

NORTH MT LOFTY RANGES

N E W S L E T T E R

Issue 1 May 2011

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IMPORTANT DATES

OOOOBY at Sevenhill Market	last Saturday monthly
SA Transition Convergence	Sunday July 24
National Tree Day	Sunday July 31
Sustainable House Day	Sunday September 11

*One can see from space how the human race
has changed the Earth ... human exploitation
of the planet is reaching a critical limit.*

STEPHEN HAWKING 2007



WELCOME to our first newsletter.

It has taken a while in coming, but now we've made that first leap it will become a bi-monthly issue. It's hoped that this newsletter will travel throughout our communities, and that as many people as possible read it, take action, get involved. So ... a request – please pass this on to anyone who you think may be interested in reading about us but more importantly to anyone who would like to be a part of “making the transition”.

Our purpose is to inform, to take action, and to encourage as many people as possible to transition to a low impact lifestyle.

This first issue could be a bit long, but it's best to introduce us in detail and describe what we're on about. We have a lot to talk about ... and a lot to do.

The Beginnings

Transition Communities North Mt Lofty Ranges ... it's a bit of a mouthful of a name, but who are we? How did we start this “thing”? What are we all about? A few lines will be taken to answer these questions for new readers. But first, an apology. The acronym TCNMLR is going to be used, until a new name or a new tag is invented for the group. To those with a dislike for acronyms, your ideas for a short name are invited. I think we need a shorter name, something that rolls off the tongue in general conversation.

TCNMLR began as a coming together of the fertile minds of U3A (now that's a catchy name) and Colin Endean in early 2010.

I'm now going to re-cap on a few happenings from last year – so hang in, as this will only be written once!

It's now one year (May 25, 2010 to be precise) since Colin introduced us to the “In Transition Movie” and if you want to see it then that can be arranged. Out of that initial gathering of 20 people a core group of about 12 or so people came together with a common purpose of leading by example about sustainable living. I know that word “sustainable” is a bit ubiquitous, but it encapsulates in a single word what we are striving for.

Thereafter, the name **Transition Communities North Mt Lofty Ranges** (TCNMLR) was chosen, as it represents two aspects – firstly, “Transition Communities” was adopted because of our emphasis on “community” and because we are a thread of the [Transition Towns](#) network around the globe ... and secondly, North Mt Lofty Ranges is the region in which we live and is the area of our common interest.

First Community Events

Film and discussion evenings October and November 2010. Colin provided the engaging films – “In Transition” and “The Power of Community” – at a series of community viewings.

Display at Clare Valley Sustainability Expo – November 2010

Sustainable Communities SA Inc.

To put things into context, an introduction to SCSA needs to be made. To simplify organisation and public liability insurance arrangements for us, individual TCNMLR members are also members of SCSA Inc. TCNMLR is one of several community groups under the SCSA umbrella.

Recently we received a grant for a project (see later), and therefore the funds will be administered by SCSA. Any project we are involved in, members are covered under SCSA's public risk indemnity policy.

We are grateful for SCSA's assistance, and at \$10 per year per person or \$15 per year per household, it is a very small cost to support, and become involved in, the aims of community change.

Why not join?

Contact Beth Mylius ... bmylius@chariot.net.au

Go to www.sustainablecommunitiessa.wordpress.com for further information.

What's On ...

here's what we're involved in

OOOOBY - Out Of Our Own Backyard

What is OOOOBY?

OOOOBY creates an opportunity for local people by:-

- ◆ bringing together and facilitating opportunities for home food gardeners to share surplus produce
- ◆ providing an outlet for this locally produced food (fruit & vegies) at the Sevenhill Producer Markets
- ◆ developing the opportunity to bring this produce to outlets in the Clare Region
- ◆ encouraging and supporting local home gardeners with the skills, information and sharing opportunities

OOOOBY is for you if you either like to grow food (on a farm, in your backyard, in a community garden or where-ever) or if you just like to eat locally grown food.

OOOOBY contacts ... Colin Endean, Joey Duncan, Jane Holland



A happy OOOOBY-er at Sevenhill Market

Find out what's happened where OOOOBY started in Auckland
<http://ooooby.ning.com>

“Permablitz”

Hybrid words – they make for quick descriptions of activities that can take a page to explain. Have a look [here](#) for all things Permablitz.



Willing workers at the start!

TCNMLR has its own Permablitz story ... our first garden several weeks ago was at Tony & Deb Kelleher’s place in Clare. The makeover of their front yard to a productive vegie patch is seen in these photos. We’ll let these speak for themselves.



“Director of Operations”



The end result has been terrific. Many hands do make a wonderful difference!

Co-operation + Community = Change



Mucking in

Another Permablitz is likely to happen some time this year. Anyone can be involved in helping others make a transition in their lives. Want to join us?

“Permablitz” contacts :
Colin Ball, Peter Whitham

Sustainable House Day

SHD is another essential step in our Transition initiatives, but it’s been 11 years since the last one was held in the Clare area. Our registration has been accepted for the national SHD event in September, and we’re working towards identifying a range of houses to be included on the tour.



Sustainable House Day gives people the chance to get a look inside houses that have been designed, built or fitted out with sustainability in mind. For people contemplating building or retrofitting their house, SHD also gives them the opportunity to talk to owners, to get ideas, and to receive unbiased advice.

TCNMLR has received a grant of \$1000 towards costs in running the event. This funding will be used to advertise, prepare a brochure & pamphlet on sustainable housing including back/front yard space for food production, and signs for individual properties participating on the day.

More on the SHD is at ... <http://www.sustainablehouseday.com/>

And more news coming soon.

SHD contacts : Daryl McIntyre

Des Menz

Revegetation & Landscape

Another transition initiative ...

This year is [UN International Year of Forests](#). Most of the native forests in SA have gone, but there are still remnants of mallee and bluegum woodlands, and other scattered native species. Support is needed for all ecosystems.

Forests, and woodland connections can also be re-created, and so TCNMLR landscape involvement is happening – albeit at a small scale.

Our focus is to provide greater involvement in [National Tree Day](#) and to make it an annual community event in the ranges region. Dave Potter from Blyth Nursery has kindly allocated up to 1,000 trees/shrubs to the project.

Targeting vacant road reserves, Dave Spackman and Des Menz have met with Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council CEO about a suitable site to commence the project. Ann Brown from Greening Australia also wants to be involved in our efforts.



Join us. We will need a small army of “Revegetators” for July 31.

Contacts ... Dave Spackman (88430054)

Des Menz (88423495)

Transition Moves

WASTE MANAGEMENT is a major unresolved community concern. There is still far too much potentially recyclable material going to landfill. At the Clare EXPO last November, one of the themes of the TCNMLR display was waste. There is still no automotive waste oil facility in our area, no e-waste collection system, and plastics are still being landfilled.

These fossil fuel-derived “wastes” have value. What is needed are systems to collect, contain, store, recycle, re-use ... all at the local level.

So ... here’s one contact who is getting back into the **e-waste** service.

Trevor Ware ... 85285359 Call Trevor – he will collect all your e-waste and defunct appliances.

Useful Links

Transition Network ... www.TransitionNetwork.org

Sustainable Communities SA ...

www.sustainablecommunitiessa.wordpress.com

OOOBY ... www.ooooby.ning.com

Sustainable House Day ...

www.sustainablehouseday.com

National Tree Day ... <http://treeday.planetark.org/>

International Year of Forests ... <http://www.internationalyearofforests.com.au/>

Greening Australia ... <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/community/sa>

Viewpoint

This space in the Newsletter is for people to express a point of view. To all TCNMLR members, transition participants, and Newsletter subscribers, crank up your grey matter and submit a brief opinion piece.

I'll kick it off with the following.

The greatest impact on the South Australian landscape – aside from humans – has been vegetation clearance. A view of Google Earth attests to this. About 12 million hectares have been cleared in the state for farming, mostly cereal cropping. The problems are profound.

Rural communities are at significant risk in the future as a result of land clearance. Decline of regional rainfall is linked to removal of surface vegetation cover (see <http://eprints.usq.edu.au/18483/>).

Have a read of the latest (2008) [State of the Environment Report for South Australia](#).

Also, have a read of the recent [Draft Climate Change Adaptation Framework](#). There is some very serious stuff in this Framework.

Much of the mallee land in the state has been cleared. And the only tall timber forests that once existed – these were in the Mt Lofty Ranges – were removed in the early years of European settlement. Habitat and species loss has been very extensive. How many species have become extinct that we don't know about?

The condition of agricultural land now suffers a range of detriments – water erosion, wind erosion, soil acidity, dryland salinity, compaction, structure decline, soil

nutrient decline, water repellancy ... and perhaps the greatest threat of all, declining rainfall. Watercourse condition is “highly degraded” (ref. Mid North Rivers Project 2000).

A new agricultural economy is needed, and revegetation is one part of the solution. It can also provide a new sustainable industry in bioenergy, but that's another story.

Presently, about 4,000 ha annually is revegetated in the state. That may seem a lot, but it's a tiny fraction of what's needed to recover a semblance of health and condition of land, watercourses, catchments, and ecosystems.

Consider this scenario ... if 10% of agricultural land is turned back to native vegetation – that's 1.2 million ha – it would take 300 years at the present rate of 4,000 ha to cover this area. The problem is that it's likely that at least 20% of cleared land will need to be returned to a native vegetation condition, just to preserve the existing ecosystems fragments and the agricultural framework. The sums now mean either 60,000 ha revegetation annually (for 20 years) or 600 years. The figures speak for themselves.

The Draft CC Adaptation Framework missed the beat entirely by not focusing on the 60,000 ha issue. It seems that it's just all too hard.

My revamped site www.sustainable.space.info (to be published online by June 17) contains more on this critical issue.

Des Menz, May 2011

End Words

There's always something happening in our communities and we know how busy people's lives can be. But if you want to make a difference in another way – no matter if it's a day for a “Permablitz” or a day for National Tree Day, or if you have a passion for OOOBY, or if you'd like to be involved in SHD – and if you'd like more information about other Transition happenings in our region, contact one of us.

Colin Endean – kunmanara@optusnet.com.au, Des Menz – desmenz@aussiebb.com.au, David Spackman – hilltop@chariot.net.au ... along with all the other TCNMLR contacts.

I've taken the liberty to send this newsletter to many people who I think would be interested in what TCNMLR is doing. Here are two choices.

STAY ON OUR NEWSLETTER LIST – DO NOTHING.

OPT OUT BY SENDING AN EMAIL WITH “Remove from TCNMLR newsletter” TO ... desmenz@aussiebb.com.au

This newsletter was prepared by Des Menz after being dobbed in by someone close to him.

Any comments about content and layout are welcome. I guarantee that Newsletter 2 will be shorter.

Contacts : Des Menz – desmenz@aussiebb.com.au Colin Endean – kunmanara@optusnet.com.au