



Newsletter

Transition The Grove

...to a low carbon, low oil future
for Ferny Grove, Upper Kedron, Woolshed Grove,
and the mountain catchments of Cedar Creek and Kedron Brook

#6 – January 2010

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January has been an opportunity to catch up on a range of domestic responsibilities while there is a bit less going on, and folks are still away on holiday. Most groups seem to shut down over January, but one that didn't was the Alternative Technology Association.

For their January meeting the ATA organised a visit to the West End Ecohouse, “*a landmark sustainable home for inner Brisbane using design features, materials and products which have undergone rigorous assessment of their environmental, social and economic sustainability credentials*”.

Of course, building a new house incorporating all the latest technology is fine if you have a budget for sophisticated materials, complex plumbing and electronics. While most of us are more concerned about retro-fitting our existing houses with low-cost and practical measures, major projects like this do help support the development of innovative products.

It is certainly the case that technology is an important part of the way forward in reducing our carbon footprint. It seems to start out with enthusiasts (well represented in groups like the ATA) making a lot of 'sweat investment' to come up with novel ideas, initially on a non-commercial basis. For example, they have been experimenting with a range of automotive technologies for years, and have often extensively modified their own vehicles as a way of learning the principles and refining their methods. You might not want to go out and buy one of these vehicles for your own use, unless you really enjoy 'tinkering'. As some of these new ideas start to become commercialised they depend on a different type of enthusiast who is prepared to invest, and possibly risk, serious money to be on the leading edge, with the latest technology. Once these new but expensive products have proven themselves, and established a market, mass production soon brings the price down for more general application.

All very well, but the other side of this process is that, in emerging markets for new technologies there tend to be few established players with a sound reputation. It can be difficult sorting out the serious and committed players from the cowboys who are in it for a quick buck.

We have been delighted with our grid-connected, solar panels and solar hot water system, but have also heard horror stories from individuals who have been caught out by rapidly changing government subsidies, or unscrupulous vendors.

The best way to reduce this risk is to be well informed, and a good way to do this is to collaborate with a larger group to make a bulk purchase. The obvious benefit is the ability to negotiate a cheaper price, but sharing the collective skills, experience and knowledge of a larger group helps ensure that you 'get it right' the first time. It also gives you more 'clout' if you need remedial action taken.

This is an example of the kind of joint project that Transition The Grove aims to facilitate by arranging public get-togethers around vital issues like energy, transport, food and water. Folks with a common interest can meet up in a low-stress location, share a cuppa or a BBQ, and work out how to work together to get the best result. And, doing it this way is much more fun than stressing about it on your own.

Brisbane Transition Hub

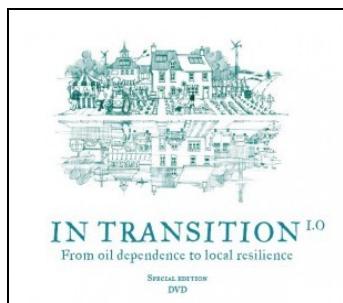
One important aspect of the Transition movement is the idea of local community resilience, which means reducing dependence on sources outside the community for food, energy, skills, materials and social engagement. This will only happen if we focus our energy in our local community, explaining the idea and discovering what community activities engage people's interest.

While this is happening locally there is also great value in members of the various initiatives around Brisbane getting together to share experiences, ideas and learning. The Brisbane Transition Hub is simply a gathering of interested people in a central location readily accessible by some combination of public transport, walking and cycling.

On Sunday 10 and 17 January Transitioners got together at the Brisbane City Library to renew contact after the holidays and to kick off the new year. As usual there was a lot of lively discussion, updates from various related groups such as BRISLets and Transition Decade, and the opportunity to see some new videos. At these meetings there was a viewing of the movie "In Transition 1.0" along with much lively conversation.

These Transition Hub meetings have been an excellent opportunity for networking between different local initiatives, sharing ideas, information about events and activities, and generally socialising with good people.

In Transition 1.0 – The Movie



The following outline comes from the Transition Culture web-site: – TransitionCulture.org where you can watch the film, in full.

'In Transition' is the first detailed film about the Transition movement filmed by those that know it best, those who are making it happen on the ground. The Transition movement is about communities around the world responding to peak oil and climate change with creativity, imagination and humour, and setting about rebuilding their local economies and communities. It is positive, solutions focused, viral and fun.

'In Transition' has been shown in communities around the world to enthusiastic audiences, and is now available as a special edition 2 disc DVD set, beautifully packaged in entirely compostable packaging, featuring the film itself (with subtitles in Deutsch, Español, Français, Italiano, and Nederlands) and an embarrassment of outtakes and extras, with interviews, films about Transition you've been searching high and low for quality copies of, and other gems. It is a must-have for anyone with an interest in this new take on responding to the challenges of the 21st century.

Transition The Grove market stall



In the Transition Handbook, one of the early steps in starting a transition initiative is 'awareness raising'. With Transition the Grove, this has mainly been through letter-box drops and one-on-one conversations. In 2010 we are planning activities that will provide opportunities to engage with more people living in Ferny Grove and Upper Kedron. One good place to start this seems to be at Ferny Grove Markets on Sunday morning. So, on Sunday 17 January we had our first market stall. This allowed us to talk to local people, collect email addresses, and hand out information. It was a very early start, and a very hot day, but good fun, especially when we could get inside out of the sun.

As you can see from the photograph, this was a 'green' solar powered stall. I wanted to run a short

(17 minute) video by Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Network so we needed a solar panel to power the laptop computer, larger monitor and speakers. This helped attract the attention of passers by. Obviously it will be important to upgrade our stall with a banner and some colourful illustrations, but it was a start.

We had a good stream of visitors, some good conversations, and added some new contacts to our email list.

Focus on The Grove Environment

An important theme of Transition Towns is for people to put their energy where their hearts, interests and passion lies.

In working on Transition The Grove website, and locating material to put under the various Portfolio links, it has become obvious how passionate I am about the local environment. Many of you share that passion, and it may well be one of the reasons you came to live here.

The Environment portfolio link is rapidly accumulating material on the local species (plants, animals, birds, snakes, butterflies, frogs, etc), the geology and the bio-region, the forests and national parks, the creeks, and the bushcare and wildlife interest groups.

It is hard to keep 'organized' because it keeps growing! Also, the information could do with checking, and adding photo links and species details.

As we transition to a future in which we will have less access to oil, and where the urgency of the need to reduce the planet's carbon load is being addressed, our local environment will be where we live, produce much of our food and fuel and timber and water, and at the same time we will be sharing it with the other species indigenous to this area.

There is an urgent need to understand the local soil geology if we are to begin to build up good soil for growing food in The Grove.

We need to manage our forests for fire, timber, biodiversity, the pristine water-supply catchment they provide, their beauty and as home to all our local species.

As we are faced with the necessity of 'coming home' to our local area, we will need to open our eyes to its beauty and value, and change our scale of thinking to discover why this is a good place to live. We need to love the land, love the bush, love the rivers. We need to know them, to create and record song trails that guide us around them. We need boundaries we can recognize so we identify this as 'our place, our valley, our bio-region, our water-catchment'.

The Grove is a natural bio-region, a double catchment area for Cedar Creek and Kedron Brook nestled in the

D'Aguilar Range next to Camp Mountain. Mt Nebo Rd runs along the southern edge of The Grove. It is a heart-shaped region, visible 'from space' - try looking on Google Maps. Our highest 'mountain' is 414 metres above sea level, and our lowest point, where Cedar Creek and Kedron Brook join, is 56 metres above sea level. We are surrounded by hills well above 200 metres. The D'Aguilar Range begins in the western suburbs of Brisbane, and reaches north to the township of Woodford as a vast natural area, including national park areas in Brisbane Forest Park which reach into The Grove. There are a number of peaks in The Grove which it would be good to know the names of: they stand at 206m, 215m, 245m, 309m and 300m (McAfees Lookout). Are you good with graphics or a camera? It would be great to have:

- a 3-D pictorial representation of The Grove around the themes of its mountains, forests, waterways, shape and colours
- photos taken of the land and trees and birds and animals and butterflies and frogs around The Grove to load onto Google.

The Brisbane City Council has released its planning document Cityplan 2000 including Ferny Grove and Upper Kedron in Chapter 4.

This plan shows:

Habitat areas and ecological corridors to be preserved

- Landscape trees that must be retained
- Corridor link parks enhancing biodiversity and waterway function
- The very large amount of land in Upper Kedron that is set aside as waterway corridors around Cedar Creek.

Our two water systems in The Grove are Cedar Creek and Kedron Brook. The photo in the header of Transition The Grove web pages is a photo of Kedron Brook, and the colour scheme for the web page was designed from the colours in that photo. Cedar Creek is more extensive than Kedron Brook, but joins with Kedron Brook as the pointy tip at the bottom end of The Grove to become Kedron Brook, before flowing down to the 'mangroves' at Nudgee Beach. A link to the history of Kedron Brook is given on the web site.

We have abundant wildlife. This is one of the richly bio-diverse regions of Australia. There are full lists of local species - vertebrate and invertebrate - (snakes,

spiders, butterflies, frogs, birds, and other species) on the web site, along with a lot of links to wildlife care groups, and what to do if you are bitten, including identifying the varmint. There is information on local pest species. There is great potential for doing species surveys and counts in The Grove. Contact details for the local native bird rescuer are provided.

The Grove is surrounded by forests (Enoggera and Samford State Forests, both part of Brisbane Forest Park), with 3 types of forest (dry rain forest, wet rain forest, moist and wet sclerophyll forest and gully rain forest). Species lists for both the trees and understorey are provided for each forest type on the web site.

The Grove has some 'special' trees that Brisbane City Council requires to be preserved. They are in Levitt, McGinn and Ross Rds (hoop pines, silky oaks, fig trees, foambark, bunya pine, and crows ash).

Does anyone have any information about local plant species that are edible (bush foods)? If we are serious about developing resilience in The Grove for the transition to reduced dependence on oil, then we will need to be paying urgent attention to planting food-bearing species in our local streets, parks and forests, either indigenous or from the great food garden of the planet. They take time to prepare the soil and sites, time to grow, and time for us to learn how to look after them and the sooner we get on with it, the sooner we will be more food-resilient in The Grove.

It is easy to take fire management for granted when most of us never have had to think of it. The Fire Brigade does a wonderful job, but we need to understand what they do to manage the forests that

That's Folk for you!

Come the end of January and I feel that I'm still basking in the glow of the Woodford Folk Festival, which prompts me to reflect on why it was so special. I suppose one obvious reason is that we were involved as volunteers and that made us feel part of the action. Another might be that various local Transition Initiatives were 'conceived' there last year, so it was a bit like family gathering where everyone is interested in the progress of the new arrival. The gathering certainly made me realise how many special new friends and acquaintances we have made in the past year. But why is Woodford the fertile valley from which all this has sprung?

It has long been a puzzlement to me exactly what is the meaning of 'folk' when applied to folk music, folk culture, or folk festival. I can usually

surround us and how they stop them turning into dangerous infernos that threaten our homes. Could we lend a hand? Would we be able to share in managing the forests if the big equipment was less available because fuel was less available?

The Grove is blessed with three bushcare groups:

- * Wahminda Grove Bushcare Group
- * Ferny Grove Bushcare Group
- * Cedar Creek Bushcare Group

Other wildlife and landcare groups are active from time to time in the region.

The water catchment of The Grove is a wonderful natural resource, and hopefully there will be locals with expertise and/or passion for water management and waterway care, and for learning about our local catchment and creeks.

While our local soil probably does not excite you if you are a gardener, it is worth learning about. The Grove has/is a location where rock, clay and gold are mined. The creek beds provide soil that has been used for market gardening and vineyards for a long time. The process of building up and preserving our local soil to make the most of it is an exciting challenge that offers rich learning curves, and essential knowledge if we are to live here on a long-term basis.

There is so much we can learn about the environment and species in The Grove, and it promises to be one of the real rewards of 're-localizing'.

Anne Tennock

distinguish between country, rock, rap, chamber, or elevator music, but there is no way I could hear something and say "Ah, that's folk music". As far as I can recall from childhood, the first music I was introduced to as folk music was Burl Ives singing *Blue Tail Fly* and *Big Rock Candy Mountain* but I never understood what differentiated it as 'folk' music.

One of my pleasures after a volunteer work shift at Woodford was dozing, sipping a cup of chai, and listening to live music in the relaxed atmosphere Chai tent. One morning session was a blackboard concert in which emerging talents can sit in the audience, summoning the resolve to give their first public performance in front of an 'away' crowd. Once they have plucked up enough courage, they write their name on the blackboard and when their turn comes, they're up.

As I dozed I was pondering the 'what is folk' question and I heard the compere introduced 15 year old Jo Ashley from Bellingen who writes his own music and lyrics, had been picking up pointers and encouragement from other performers at Woodford, and was now ready to give it a go. As Jo's song unfolded I was amazed that one so young could give a performance of such maturity. Even though I couldn't quite catch all the words, I found the song catching my attention with its depth and passion. Then it struck me that this is the essence of 'folk' music and folk culture. This was a regular guy using his developing gifts and talents to express what was in his heart, and Woodford was providing the nurturing environment in which he could do it. Naturally his parents were hovering in the background as you do when your child takes their first steps, but he was the one performing on stage. I was so impressed that I approached Jo after his performance to ask for a copy of the words of the song, and for his permission to include some of them in this article. Here are the first couple of verses:

Remember Me

*And you are a growing sea,
From a river to an ocean deep,
And you start just from a seed,
And then you sprout your leaves,*

*And you are a little baby fern,
You've no light until the season turns,
And you weep and you cry,
And then you grow and touch the sky,*

*And I want to know,
Why you leave me alone....*

by Jo Ashley

Hype and Climate Change

“ There's too much hype about climate change” is a common phrase people use as they turn off news about climate change.

Is there too much hype about climate change?

Well, it is all relative.

Is there too much hype about the earthquake in Haiti and the misery it is causing? How many deaths and how



You might ask what has all this to do with Transition The Grove. To me it seems no coincidence that the Transition movement is so embedded in the Woodford experience. Transition is effectively a 'folk' movement that provides an environment in which local communities can creatively imagine their own meaningful response to the challenges of peak oil and climate change, depending on the particular gifts, talents and passions of their members. Once they have captured a future vision of their community, the Transition Network provides a nurturing and supportive environment in which they can work towards it. There is no right or wrong approach, no direction from 'the top'. It's a matter of working together, doing the best we can with what we've got.

All we need is a vision for the future, a nurturing community, and the courage to get up and take the first step.

John Tennock

much misery might climate change cause by comparison? How many deaths might be saved if planning and preparation is put in place in advance to reduce the effects?

Cars and consumer items are advertised on our television sets every time we turn them on, and a vast advertising industry devotes money and knowledge to crafting messages to convince you to purchase. [Advertising delivered to mobile phones](#) is a huge market. [Internet advertising](#) continues to grow and outpace television advertising.

Is information about climate change getting out? It has no advertising budget. In fact, vested interests pay to advertise against it. Who is doing the hype here?

What is the risk? Is it worth insuring? Well, we insure our homes against storm and fire and theft and flood, our cars against accident, our incomes in case we are unable to work. We insure against public liability and death and accident. Yet these have tiny expectations of actually occurring compared to climate change. The insurance companies are paying a lot of attention to climate change. They don't think it is hype.

If something is threatening to happen that would harm your child or grandchild, do you want warning? We have baby alarm systems and car seats and whole

bureaucracies set up to attempt to keep our children safe. Do we want to be warned about the danger to our children from climate change?

Risk managers calculate the risk of something happening, and the size of the effect if it does happen. They use these two numbers together to identify serious threats. Something that is likely to happen with very serious consequences if it does happen is definitely in the worst risk category. We like to be given information and warnings about what the weather is going to be like tomorrow. Do we want the bigger picture on climate?

Anne Tennock

That's it for January.

Please check out our web-site at http://www.tennock.com/j_data/TTFG/

Contributions: *If you would like to submit relevant articles for this newsletter, please send them as an email attachment in either an MS Word (.doc) or Wordpad (.rtf) format. Please do not send as text in the body of an email. Please include your full name and contact details.*

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