



Newsletter

Transition The Grove

...transitioning to thriving resilience in a low-carbon low-oil-dependent future in Ferny Grove, Upper Kedron, Ferny Hills, Arana Hills, Keperra & Woolshed Grove and the mountain catchments of Kedron Brook

#8 – March 2010

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The Newsletter format

You will notice a change of format in Transition The Grove Newsletter this month to frame it clearly within the Transition Towns 'The Head – The Heart – The Hands' model.

The Head is the best-quality information that can be put together about peak oil, climate change, and possible future scenarios. It also includes information about technology.

The Heart is about processes of changing feelings, and facing our dependence on oil. It is about celebration and having fun together, and about visioning resilient futures.

The Hands – what is being done is about organising and putting into practice transition processes. Meeting local people, lots of chats on a whole range of topics, getting incorporated, having a website, starting to prepare an Energy Descent Action Plan for The Grove, applying to do local projects like a community garden, doing the leg-work of collecting the information about The Grove and getting to know the area really well, working alongside as many local organisations (clubs, schools, businesses) as possible in a big local network, having fun!

What's On – Transition The Grove Events is where you can start to get involved in Transition The Grove. We get together in local venues such as the hall, parks, coffee shops, restaurants, the Tavern, schools, clubs or people's homes. There is so much to chat about.

THE HEAD

Brisbane Institute hosts Transition Towns

March was off to a running start on day one. Monday March 1 was a discussion at about Transition Towns hosted by The Brisbane Institute, in recognition that the Transition Town movement is gaining momentum in communities around Australia as small groups of motivated individuals come together to make positive changes in their communities.

Most readers probably know that the Brisbane Institute is an independent organisation that provides opportunities for business, government and the community to come together to share information, innovative ideas and solutions to contemporary issues.

The three main panelists for this discussion are all involved with a range of projects and initiatives that demonstrate resilience and adaptability on an individual and community level. Collectively, they are providing education, advice, support and encouragement to those keen to learn more about how to build a richer and more vital community.

Not surprisingly they represented three main aspects of the Transition Towns movement, The Head, The Heart and The Hands.

The Head: Phil Heywood is currently Associate Professor of Urban & Regional Planning in QUT and a Fellow and former President of the Queensland Division of the PIA. He is the author of a number of publications including: *Planning & Human Need* (1974) on the social role of planning and *The Emerging Social Metropolis* (1997) on the future of metropolitan regional planning. His latest book on Community Planning is being published by Wiley-Blackwell in late 2010

The Heart: Emma-Kate Rose is currently the Enterprise Development Coordinator for the Food Connect Foundation, leading projects including the Sustainable Farmland Trust and New Farmers Pathway, as well as providing support for Food Connect's community franchises in five cities around Australia.

Emma-Kate founded Ashgrove Climate Action Group in 2006, has been a climate change activist, and in 2007 started Brisbane's first commercial car-sharing operation in Brisbane. She is a founding member of the Brisbane Transition Hub.

The Hands: Howard Nielsen: Principal Consultant and co-owner NAC Consulting. Howard Nielsen lives at Samford and conducts his family consultancy company with a focus on sustainable business, leadership and community engagement. Howard is currently working with fifty businesses in three Queensland communities to help them develop sustainable business practices and sustainable local economies.

The subsequent forum discussion included Andrew (Wilf) Wilford. Andrew is an Associate Professor in the School of Sustainable Development at Bond University. He is passionate about leading the professionalism of project management and has been actively involved with introducing project management into the Climate Change arena.

The event drew a capacity audience at The Irish Club venue in the city and the discussion was lively, well informed and motivating.

Food Chain Forum – State Library of Queensland

The combination of a changing climate and diminishing oil supplies has an enormous impact on our capacity to provide food for our growing population. Pause for a moment to consider the amount of oil consumed, and green house gases emitted, in the many processes that occur between paddock and plate. One aspect of Transition Towns is focusing on reducing this vulnerability through community based local food production.

The current topic of disruption to our food supply is also challenging the minds of planners, writers, scientists and farmers, and this prompted the State Library of Queensland to include it in their "Deepening The Conversation" series of public forums.

The Thursday 11 March forum was entitled "Food Chain" and the speakers were contributing authors to the latest issue (#27) of Griffith Review of the same title. The discussion was consistent with the aim of Griffith Review to reflect on the underlying significance of events and trends, explain the details that get lost in the news and examine the unintended consequences of public policy.

"Food Chain" has been Griffith Review's best selling issue ever. Why such interest?

The source, supply and price of food is likely to change significantly. Policies to reduce the impact of climate change will have a profound impact on the food supply here and around the world.

Food is particularly vulnerable to global warming. Droughts, storms, pestilence and the increasing cost of fuel are already taking a toll on the reliable supply of affordable food.

Discussing these issues were Brendan Gleeson (Professor of Urban Management and Planning and Director of the Urban Research Program at Griffith University); Virginia Balfour (Journalist); Tony Fry (Adjunct Professor, Design Futures Program, Queensland College of Art). The moderator was ABC Radio National's Paul Barclay.

The current reality is that we are an increasingly urbanised society. As more people move into cities, food production is moved further away. This is precisely the opposite of what needs to happen in the face of climate change and peak oil.

Corporate, industrialised food production has run its course.

We have a crisis of over-production, not over-consumption. Food wasted because it doesn't conform to 'standards' of presentation (not nutrition or taste standards)

Initiatives that can be implemented are home gardens, community gardens and mini-farms, farmers markets.

Our urban way of life is a given and we can't turn back the clock. **We urgently need an urban food production master plan and a department of urban farming to administer it.**

Longer term planning can include urban roof gardens, vertical garden developments, productive parks.

Legislative, administrative and taxation changes that reflect the true value of land for food production rather than for virtual wealth creation through speculative investment are needed.

A true carbon price would encourage a move away from industrialised to local community food production.

<http://www.griffithreview.com/editions.html>

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/find/webcasts>

Clive Hamilton at Queensland University on his new book: Requiem for a Species: Why we resist the truth about climate change

Clive Hamilton, Charles Sturt Professor of Public Ethics at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, addressed a capacity audience and received a standing ovation when he spoke at Queensland University as part of the UQ Centenary Oration Series. His new book examines the many forms of denial and disconnection from nature, and asks: Is there a way out?

THE HEART

The miracle of petrol to transport us to rich experience

We've been away down for 10 days, a remarkable experience provided by the miracle of petrol. What amazing stuff!

We drove down to Repton south of Coffs Harbour on the stunning Bellinger River to participate in a wooden boat regatta camping on the river banks and putting up the river with our tiny nested dinghy Curlew and a 3.5hp motor.

As a sideline we visited a friend who lives in an eco-community deep in the forests by the ocean near Repton.

For one day we drove from Repton to beautiful Bellingen then up the amazing Waterfall Way to Dorrigo on the highlands, and across to Armidale and back. High tea with scones and jam and cream at Ebor then short detours to look at the magnificent local waterfalls at Ebor, and the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Armidale and Dorrigo were dressed in autumn splendour. On the way back, the country stilled us to awed silence for over 50kms it is so lush and beautiful, with vast waterfalls, tall forests, and rolling downs covered in babbling brooks and rich volcanic soil.

After 4 days camping on the river bank at Repton, it was hard to press on south, but we are glad we did. We spent the next 6 days at our very tiny hut on an eco-community near Port Macquarie. It is a place of stillness and simplicity, a true spiritual retreat. It was a sacred time in the bush, with the forests, the rivers, the mountains, the beaches, and the whole of the Milky Way. We arrived to 5 tiny wrens on the blueberry bush and kangaroos. Later we saw a mated pair of barn owls, 5 Jacky Winters which flitted around the fruit trees all day, a sooty oyster catcher, a black swan, bats, possums, and lots of other birds.

We drove from Crescent Head along the coastal road to Goolawah Beach, Delicate Nobby and Big Hill

which has to be the most beautiful beach imaginable.

Another day we drove down along Maria River Rd to Port Macquarie, crossing the Hastings River on the ferry, overwhelmed by all the activity in this thriving wealthy town. The Hastings River, Maria River and Limeburners Creek network of waterways is vast and would take years to explore and get to know thoroughly.



John combined a bit of walking power with 8 litres of that miraculous fluid, petrol, to turn about 2 acres of waist-high waving grasses into a lawned estate. In between he enjoyed the simplicity of full mod cons with a 12 volt system running on one solar panel and 2 car batteries in what we call the 'sound box' (3mx3mx3m with perfect acoustics for radio and CDs), and immersion in great books (Clive Hamilton: The Freedom Paradox, and Irving Stone: The Passions of the Mind (about Freud)).

The Camry odometer now reads about 2000km more than it did a few weeks ago but for about \$240 of the miracle fluid we

call petrol we have been richer than kings exploring the most stunning parts of this glorious world. Petrol is so precious.

Late in the afternoon

In the golden late afternoon
Of the Oil Age
Basking replete on abundance
We fish the river, quaff the wine
Tumble in the surf, cavort in the spa
Our toys are legion, our plates piled high
Late in the afternoon
Of the most golden age
Late late at the end of the afternoon
We still only play.

Hope

Hope is something within us. It is the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. If your hope is committed in action, then hope is alive in the world.

Co-Empowerment for Change

A 2 hour workshop was run by Transition The Grove at Northey Street City Farm. It gave participants a chance to experience a structured process for working through the feelings associated with major transitions.

THE HANDS – what is being done

A lot of the work is happening in the formative stages of Transition The Grove.

Redefining who we are – The Grove within Kedron Brook Catchment

The concept of The Grove is evolving as our understanding of this region, its people, and transition deepens.

- Started with the suburb of Ferny Grove
- Evolved to the upper catchment of Kedron Brook and Cedar Creek, including Ferny Grove and Upper Kedron
- Kedron Brook Catchment /bioregion emerges as a critical defining concept
- There are now two Transition Initiatives along Kedron Brook (The Grove, Enoggera) with ‘room’ for three more further downstream
- Postcode boundaries almost follow the catchment.
- **‘The Grove’ evolves to become ‘the upper catchment of Kedron Brook (& Cedar Creek) within the postcodes of 4055 and 4054 including the suburbs of Ferny Grove, Upper Kedron, Ferny Hills, Arana Hills and Keperra with approximately 35,000 residents. Caesar Rd is the watershed of the Kedron Brook Catchment running through Ferny Hills, and The Grove ends a little after Dawson Parade, taking in Grovely TAFE. Train stations include Ferny Grove, Keperra and Grovely. The centre of ‘The Grove’ is about Ferny Grove Station. Mt Nebo Rd and Camp Mountain define another boundary.**

This has been discussed with Robert Standish-White of Kedron Brook Catchment Group, and Enoggera Transition Initiative who are in agreement with it.

The Website

There has been a lot of work done on Transition The Grove website, but it still has a long way to go.

What has been done so far:

- Design of colour scheme and layout
- Design of menus
- A lot of work collecting factual local information
- A lot of ‘Head’ documents have found a home
- Website entered and maintained in HTML
- More and more links added to useful local stuff
- What’s on in The Grove gets updated regularly, but no reliable process yet for collecting information
- Website not interactive
- Website hosted on private web space - not suitable in the long run

A lot has been learned from the process, and the website is a good thing to have. However, it needs to evolve.

Some other models have been explored:

- Mind-mapping
- Ning
- Joomla
- The UK Transition Towns host site

Technical issues were worked through, and the Joomla option is now going ahead to produce a much more interactive web-site.

The mind-mapping process has helped greatly in thinking through the conceptual layout of the site. This is now in two parts:

- Transition
 - The Head
 - The Heart
 - The Hands
- The Grove – starting from us, our resources, here, now

A big part of transition is getting very clear about where we are now, who we are, what resources we now have,

where we are starting the transition from. This is under The Grove.

In a way, it becomes a link to a huge range of current information about The Grove in one place so it can be easily looked up.

Joomla will provide the facility to make the website interactive so locals can upload events in The Grove.

With the decision to include Ferny Hills, Arana Hills and Keperra in The Grove, there is another big research job to do collecting information about services and facilities in these suburbs. It is a fantastic way to get to know and understand the local area in detail!

There is great opportunity to share the task of pulling together the information about The Grove for anyone who wants to be part of it.

Getting incorporated as a not-for-profit association

A draft constitution is ready to put to an inaugural meeting. It is available to anyone wanting to have a look at it and make suggestions. The meeting to incorporate Transition The Grove will be held on Sunday 18 April.

We are now Official

Transition The Grove is now the official Transition Initiative for this region, and it is registered on the Transition Network at www.transitionnetwork.org

The process of becoming an official Transition Town involved more than filling in a form. In particular, we needed a person who is a Permaculture designer (got that!), and for two people to attend Transition Training. That has now happened when two of us went up to Eumundi for a training weekend – what a great experience. That left the form filling in to be done, with half a dozen signatures of people involved, and sent off. Confirmation has now come through.

Presentation

A Transition powerpoint presentation with lots of photos was prepared and given to an Inner Wheel group at Carseldine by a Transition The Grove member. This 20 minute presentation (now modified a little) is available for groups who want a guest speaker on the topic of Transition.

Local action – Ferny Grove Tavern

Arising directly out of becoming much more aware of this local area, the State Government plans for the Ferny Grove Station and the demolition of the Ferny Grove Tavern grabbed attention.

There is a Save the Ferny Grove Tavern group on Facebook with well over 700 members. Also a little group who wants the Tavern demolished.

It is a real on-the-ground example of an issue that would be good to have a way for all local voices to be fully listened to on matters concerning our local area. How do we meet as a community to discuss local issues together? How do we talk to each other about local issues and arrive at a democratic voice? Where do we meet locally? How do we communicate with each other when there is a need to meet and discuss local issues? Who are we as a community? How do we get our community voice heard, whatever we as a community decide we want?

Local action – Keperra Station

Transition The Grove met with a representative from Qld Passenger to propose themes for murals that will be painted on the walls and fences at Keperra Station by professional artists. One proposed theme is for a large mural showing The Grove bio-region with the Kedron Brook Catchment, mountains, and Kedron Brook and Cedar Creek flowing down through forests full of local birds, animals, butterflies, and frogs, along with some farms and the golf course. Another proposal is for a set of smaller murals each around a transition theme (local food growing, education, health, transport, energy, water, recreation, business, security,...). Qld Passenger actively seeks local input. The aim of the murals is to increase a sense of local community and safety, and reduce graffiti.

Energy Descent Action Plans – Health and wellness; community gardens & food supply; local transport, local currency; local environment; local recreation

A key aim of Transition Towns is to work on preparing an energy descent action plan (EDAP) for the community to provide a framework for transitioning to a viable future when oil and carbon are less available.

An EDAP involves lots of local people and groups having lots of conversations and visioning the way forward. The areas to think about pretty well cover our whole infrastructure! Food supply, water, energy, transport, education, health, waste management, business and economy and finance, environment, recreation, construction, manufacturing,... These are big topics, and need a lot of input from interested people to work through the ideas and to develop a viable and realistic way forward.

A start has been made on a **Health and Wellness EDAP**. The discussion has started, and has been shared with our local community health centre (the North West Community Health Centre) and the Community Consultative Committee. The discussion on health has started. It is hoped that planning can begin soon to invite all interested local health stakeholders to become actively involved in the EDAP.

The discussions on community gardens, local food supply, local currency, local transport, local recreation, and local environment have also started.

Community gardens is particularly generating interest. The Gap Transition Initiative has focused for some time on getting a community garden, and Brisbane City Council has now granted it a large tract of fertile land in The Gap near the Pony Club for a community garden. Members of Transition The Grove have been following the meetings and development closely, and it provides an excellent model for us to follow. Enough people have already expressed interest in a community garden in The Grove to get started. Two sites have been proposed so far.

Gathering and chatting

The process of starting to talk to each other about Transition ideas in the local community is progressing steadily with more and more people wanting to become involved. It is being actively held back from going ahead full steam at the moment while the foundational structures are finalised. This should be completed within this month (April), and active planning can then happen for widespread promotion to residents and businesses and organisations throughout The Grove.

The email list of people interested in receiving information about Transition The Grove is growing steadily. An example of what is being sent out is this monthly Newsletter.

There is a huge amount of activity happening across the Transition movement of wider Brisbane, with a lot of Transition initiatives being started up. The danger is that this can drag energy away from the local area, but it also brings ideas and enthusiasm back into the local area. It is taking off in other states too, particularly Victoria where the state government is moving the whole state into transition.

Some things are important to happen now:

- The Inaugural Meeting to incorporate Transition The Grove, confirm the Constitution and elect the office-bearers required by the Office of Fair Trading
- Planning meetings with the representatives from the widest possible range of local groups, schools and businesses – the aim is not to reinvent the wheel, but to work with and build on what is already being done locally
- Planning some initial informal get-togethers to chat with other locals about Transition and share enthusiasm and ideas and start to work together. Local coffee shops, bars, clubs, restaurants, and picnic grounds would be good venues. One member has his own museum and he is keen to have a gathering there.
- Planning a bigger local event like a film and discussion night. The Gap Transition Initiative has held several of these and they have been very popular.

During March our neighbouring Transition Initiatives in Enoggera and The Gap held local events in which we participated to provide the support and encouragement that we have found characteristic of the Transition Towns movement.

WHAT'S ON – TRANSITION THE GROVE EVENTS

April 11 9am-noon Sandgate Transition gathering. Local speakers from Transition The Grove will address this meeting about what is happening in The Grove. 153 Rainbow St, Sandgate.

Sunday April 18, 4.00-5.00pm Inaugural Meeting for Transition The Grove. For details ring 3851 1016.

Wednesday 14 April, 9.30-11.00am U3A 7 week course: Living Sustainably in the Suburbs.



Andrew Weldon – The Age, 5 July 2008

That's it for March.

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.

For more information please contact us on

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