

Transition The Grove

Newsletter Issue 10 June 2010

Newsletter - June 2010

www.transitionthegrove.org.au

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www.transitionthegrove.org.au

A tool to help fulfil the aims of Transition The Grove.

■ Community building

Encourage you friends, family, teams, clubs and business associates to explore the web-site and use it to know what is happening in The Grove, announce events, or to find local businesses and services.

■ Developing ideas

Use the Forum to share, and increase, your own understanding of the issues facing us, and collaborate with others to develop effective strategies and plans for our future here.

■ Planning

Join the Sub Group for an issue you are passionate about and meet like-minded community members to take practical action.

Transition The Grove Inc is a not-for-profit local community group. This website is provided as a free community service to The Grove.

From Head to Hands to Heart

After all the practical tasks of forming a committee, preparing our constitution, getting incorporated, developing web-sites and publishing newsletters, to say nothing of 'spreading the word', Transition The Grove members finally managed to get together, on 13 June, for a social gathering with almost no formal business to be conducted. Food, wine and lively conversation were the order of the day. This seemed like a real milestone because gatherings like this are the real source of fresh ideas about how our local community can make the transition to a low-energy future. The picture above is a collage of six photos provided by Robert Standish-White who is also in the picture – behind the camera. Thanks, Robert for being there with your camera.

It's just like building a house really. If the end result is going to be livable, you need to do some careful thinking and designing before you start building. Then there's a lot of practical work to do getting it built. But the house only becomes a home when it's full of people, conversation, sharing and participation.

Hopefully there will be many more such gatherings, and hopefully they will contribute to The Grove becoming a really effective Transition Town.



Just Sitting

A little Orb Web spider has built an almost perfect web close to our fish pond. Perfect because of its symmetry, but also because it is invisible most of the time. I'll bet it is very effective at catching unwary insects. I have only noticed it a couple of times when the morning sun strikes it at a particular angle. In the middle of the web sits the spider, very still. It made me think "Pretty boring life being a spider."

But after a moment's reflection I realised that the spider was actually very busy. Busy conserving energy! It was pretty obvious that, earlier, she must have been busy building and maintaining a beautifully constructed web. A daunting task if you scale it to human dimensions. You can also be sure that as soon as an insect got snagged on the web there would be a lightning fast response to make sure it was securely captured and stored away in the 'larder'. Energy conservation of a different sort!

Then I got to thinking how the spider knows when her web is finished and it's time to stop being busy, and wait for dinner to arrive. Why doesn't she just keep building a bigger and bigger web? She would be sure to catch lots more tasty morsels. She could go for the big house on rural acreage with a couple of rental properties in the suburbs to generate 'passive income'.

Somehow the spider, and most of nature for that matter, has innate understanding of the notion of 'enough'. There is an optimum size for any organism and growth beyond that is an abnormality.



So, what does the spider do once she has built her beautiful web and had a good feed? How does she cope with boredom? ...and that brought to mind the famous quote attributed to US baseball player Satchel Paige (1906 – 1982) "Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits." And this from someone who, like my spider, was capable of lightning speed when called upon.

In our media-filled, activity-packed world, have we lost the ability to sit still, comfortable with our own thoughts, busily conserving energy. Perhaps, with a little more time for reflection we might consider whether lots of busy-ness, and limitless growth, makes sense or whether our lives would be richer if we recovered the lost arts of reflection and conversation and found our riches in relationships and creativity, rather than frenetic activity, more stuff, and endless consumption.

Partnering

Transition The Gap

Our neighbouring Transition Initiative in The Gap, with leaders Chris and Joan Wright, has been immensely supportive and encouraging in allowing us to learn from them, participate in their meetings, and learn about Transition.

They have held a number of movie nights, started a community garden, and are now holding a Visioning workshop. This is a 'Heart' activity, working with processes to unlock our creative thinking so that we can start to generate clear visions for workable futures. The Workshop will be on 21st July at the SOWN Environment Centre, 98 Yoorala St, The Gap. 7pm for 7:30pm.

Northey Street City Farm

A Partnerships Dinner at Northey St brought together groups with visions compatible with Northey St, and invited them to consider partnering with Northey St. Exactly what this would mean is open, but at least it could be an expression of mutual respect and acknowledgement of working towards compatible ends. At times it might lead to something more.

World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia

A presentation by two members of Friends of the Earth who travelled to Bolivia for this conference left feelings of hope and concern.

Hope because the people of Bolivia were so angry at the failure of the Copenhagen Summit to take serious action on climate change that they organised their own global conference. It was attended by around 20,000 people from all over the world.

Concern because what is happening in Bolivia is so alarming and distressing, and so symptomatic of all areas of the world dependent on glaciers for their water supply. The glaciers in Bolivia are vanishing, which is why the Bolivians are so desperate about urgent action on climate change. They are in the life-and-death front line.

The Hands - getting things done

Getting Active on Community Gardens

How to use www.transitionthegrove.org.au as a tool for getting things happening locally.

Using community gardens as an example, here is how to do it:

- Check the website Transition The Grove
- Have a look at the left-hand menu 'The Grove Today – Food'
- Have a look 'Community & School Gardens'.
- Have a look at the top menu 'What's On' to find any community garden events.
- Try doing a 'Search' for terms like 'garden'.
- Become a member of Transition The Grove Inc through 'Join'. Tick 'Food & Gardens' as one of your interests.
- Log on once you've joined, and check out the other members in the Food – Community Gardens Sub-group.
- Tell the 'Forum' for Food & Gardens what you are interested in and want to happen. Get something started.
- Have a look at the left-hand menu 'Transition to the Future –The Head - Food Sovereignty' for items to think about, and discuss on the Forum.
- Get together with other members of the Community Gardens Sub-group to plan getting a community garden. ▫ ▫
Where would be a good site? Visit sites together. Visit some community gardens already in operation to learn from their experience. Plan who to talk to about your vision. How much land would you need? Who would be able to use it? How would it be managed? What insurance cover would be needed? What infrastructure like sheds, watering equipment and tools would you need? What is your philosophy of what a community garden is for? Design the layout.
- Put some events on 'What's On' to let others know if there is a garden tour, a workshop on growing food, a speaker or film about food and gardens, or a social event around gardens.
- Take some photos and write down your ideas and send them to go in the Transition The Grove Newsletter to inspire others.
- If you are really passionate and a good leader and organiser, you might agree to coordinate the Community Garden Sub-group. Discuss the process with the Sub-group Coordinator.
- As your plans for a community garden start to get clear, make sure the Sub-group communicates back to the Management Committee, so they can help you with project funding and approval processes.
- If you know of someone who'd be a good speaker, or who could run a workshop, or who has a garden or skills that would be good to share, let others in the Community Garden Sub-group know.
- Transition The Grove Inc. allows for meeting to discuss and plan together, to do things like tour gardens, or go around The Grove looking for suitable sites for a community garden. There is no provision

under the Constitution of Transition The Grove Inc for you to start the physical work of setting up the garden and growing your vegetables. The Management Committee is there to help support you with planning, getting interested people together, project proposals, applications for funding grants,

and getting appropriate insurance cover. Then the physical work begins!

- Celebrate and have fun. Look forward to successfully completing your project, meeting some great people, and ending up with healthy produce you have grown.

Transition The Grove website

A lot of work and technical stuff, and the new interactive website is now loaded onto host site Newsprout and has a fine new web address:

www.transitionthegrove.org.au

This has evolved a long way from the first website. A lot of work has been done on content, and formatting to make it simple and clear to use.

Local Information

There is an enormous amount of local information on the website that can be found by exploring menus, or by using the Search tool.

Subgroups & Forums

The interactive nature of the website means that once you have joined you get onto Subgroups with locals with shared interests, and can also have your say on the discussion Forums. The Subgroups are already attracting enough members to make the next step getting things going.

The website has been built from Joomla open source software and add-ons, almost all available freely for downloading from the web.

Your Feedback

Explore the new website gradually. Your feedback is needed to fine-tune it. Say what needs to be added, changed, corrected, deleted. How does it work for you?

What's On

What's On calendar of local events (and some other events directly relevant to Transition) is live and active, and once you've joined you can add events directly.

Joining – some hand-holding in the process

The website is designed for you to be able to find your own way around step-by-step, but we've been

doing some hand-holding for early joiners. As we talk them through the process, it also helps understand where the design is working and where it can be tweaked.

It is very exciting to be part of the process. It is like designing a marvellous machine, then turning on the switch to start it, and suddenly it comes alive and starts working.

All the start-up stuff done

With the approval of the incorporation process being complete, the next steps were to establish a website provider and the website address, get a post-office box, open a bank account, and get an ABN. All this is now done.

Transition the Grove Inc. contact details

Contact us through

www.transitionthegrove.org.au

The postal address is: PO Box 471

Ferny Hills DC QLD 4055.

Secretary: Byron Adams

Bank: ANZ

Treasurer: John Jordaan

Subgroup meetings – starting the process

With something like 30 Subgroups, all with a workable number of people who have joined them, starting activity is the next step.

The early stages of Subgroup formation are expected to require some hand-holding to get people meeting together, understanding processes and the vision, and using the Forums for discussions.

To explore how this process works, we have started with the **Food- Community Gardens Subgroup** and are arranging times for members to meet probably to go and visit the new community garden in The Gap first up. This will be a first opportunity for everyone to get together.

Where to meet

We urgently need to resolve the best local places to hold meetings, as there could be a lot happening, especially as more people join.

We're hoping and expecting that growth in membership numbers will be 'organic', but if it goes through any sudden or sharp growth spurts we need good processes to make it work.

Health and fitness planning for The Grove

Local research for the website has identified most of the people involved in providing health and fitness services in The Grove.

With the Federal Government's health framework having a local focus, and on the advice of another health planning group, we see an opportunity to network with all the local health and fitness providers to get a discussion going about whether to put in an

application for this area to be in the Government's first trials of the program.

It is a big vision, and how far it would go is unclear, but it offers a wonderful theme for real discussions locally around health planning.

It could also offer the Federal Government a model of how to make their local health management program work effectively.

Right now the first step is phoning around getting as many email addresses as possible to let people know about it.

Those who want to take part can do so by joining on www.transitionthegrove.org.au and joining the Health Subgroup and entering discussion on the Health Forum.

Local News from The Grove

- Ferny Grove Tavern planning has opened up new options as a result of local community action by more than 1000 locals on Facebook.
- Moreton Shire Regional Council's budget is now out with lots of funds announced for projects in Cr Geoff Battersby's Division 10 area in The Grove.
- Keperra Station is getting a major revamp with murals by artist Kerrith Giese. Transition The Grove, the NW Community Health Centre, and local schools have all had input providing materials about local themes, birds, butterflies and activities to go on the panels.
- The Living Sustainably in the Suburbs course offered through Pine Rivers U3A and held at Arana Library will continue for another term starting 14 July.

Ferny Grove Station Precinct Redevelopment - Contributed by Tristan Peach

The much needed redevelopment of the Ferny Grove Railway Station precinct has moved another step forward in the planning process. Two visions for the precinct have been released by Queensland Transport, and are available on their website (see below).

After community consultation a final concept plan will be submitted to Brisbane City Council for development approval. This approval will not be for exact heights and uses but for the broad intent of the precinct.

Vision 1 includes a relocated tavern (corner of Arbor Street and Samford Road), medium density residential and retail / professional uses.

Vision 2 is for a predominately residential precinct with room for shops and offices.

Both visions will incorporate car parking and space for the open air markets, as well as improved pedestrian facilities, bus interchanges and kiss 'n' ride drop off spots.

The Queensland Rail track duplication project between Keperra and Ferny Grove, which will include alterations to the station platform at Ferny Grove, is also in planning stages but consultation for this project will occur separately.

At a meeting with Geoff Wilson MP and the Queensland Transport project team a number of ideas were raised by community members.

Access to the platform is to be restricted to the western end of the station, with the entrance at the Arbor Street end to be closed. A local resident suggested that the implications of this change for pedestrian movements, particularly for children walking to and from the high school, should be investigated. The Project Team said they would undertake a pedestrian study but said that there was no money in the budget for an overhead crossing.

Tristan Peach asked how ownership of the land would be affected and was told that the land would remain in state ownership but that the residential and retail precincts would be leased out to the private sector. He also asked what kind of market (low, medium or high price) housing they thought developers might provide on the site but they did not have any forecasts.

Community consultation

Formal feedback will be open from **Monday 12 July 2010 until close of business Monday 9 August 2010**. Details about providing feedback on the visions will be provided when consultation begins.

Information session

An information session has been planned to give the community a chance to discuss the visions with the project team.

Date: Saturday 17 July 2010.

Time: 9am–1pm.

Location: Ferny Grove Bowls Club, 20 Tramway Street (corner of Samford Road), Ferny Grove.

Weblink

[http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/](http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/Projects_and_initiatives/Projects/Ferny_grove_station_precinct)

[Projects_and_initiatives/Projects/Ferny_grove_station_precinct](http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/Projects_and_initiatives/Projects/Ferny_grove_station_precinct)

Seven Social Sins

People of faith have formed the backbone of many of the most powerful and successful movements for peace and justice around the world. Many proclaimed a moral vision guided by their strong religious faith. Mahatma Gandhi was one such man. Read what he thought were the seven social sins:

- Wealth without Work
- Pleasure without Conscience
- Science without Humanity
- Knowledge without Character
- Politics without Principle
- Commerce without Morality
- Worship without Sacrifice

Unconventional?

Where does coffee grow. Brazil? Africa? Papua New Guinea? Byron Bay? What about The Grove? It seems to grow fine here, but we are still working on the process of converting it to a palatable drink. This might be a good example of a local crop that would benefit from a community cooperative processing project. This would also benefit from sharing community knowledge about coffee growing. Anyone interested?

Another tasty fruit that seems to thrive in Ferny Grove is cumquats. Very healthy, very decorative, very tasty, and great for marmalade.



Last month we included an article about the OOOBY (Out Of Our Own Back Yard) experience. Pumpkins and sweet potatoes featured. Well, here's another one. We have had a clump of arrowroot growing beside the house for quite a while. It's very easy to grow. I hadn't paid it much attention because the only uses I knew of for arrowroot were Milk Arrowroot biscuits and arrowroot flour as a substitute for cornflour. Well, we had some for dinner the other day. Lightly steamed as a carbohydrate. Nice flavour, nice texture. Reminded me of water chestnuts.

Does anyone else have examples of unconventional produce that grows well in The Grove?



Worms Build Soil

Whether you are interested in your own backyard garden, or a community garden, one of the most important processes to master is building soil.

It's just over a decade since ABC's Landline first caught up with US organic farmer Joel Salatin.

Back then he made quite an impression at a holistic farming conference at Orange as much for the staggering returns from his tiny family farm in the Shenandoah Valley as for his down-to-earth approach. According to Joel Salatin, If you can get 12 worms per cubic foot you can build an inch of soil every couple of years. The worms will do the work.

You can watch the full interview on the ABC's web-site at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2010/s2919477.htm>

Peak Oil Education

Wally Wight of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil (ASPO) talked to the year 12 students at Hillbrook Anglican School about peak oil.

He said they were very interested to hear of his experience growing up in an oil-drilling town just east of the Rocky Mountains in the USA.

This town existed because of the oil, and when the oil peaked in the early 1970s it turned off the lifeblood of the whole community. Businesses closed, people sold or walked away from their homes, the school closed down eventually. All the people he had grown up among left.

Open Source?



In the world of Transition Towns you come across a lot of video talks by Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement. Rob often refers to the movement being 'open source'. However, the importance of the concept, and how it applies in transition culture is probably not widely understood.

I recently had occasion to write an explanation of the open source idea, so thought I would take the opportunity to share it here.

Open source is defined as a practice in production and development that promotes access to the end product's source materials. While the concept is not

limited to the software industry, it has flourished in the software development domain where the development of new applications demands enormous time and cost.

What does Open Source actually mean? Well, to use an example from the software industry, suppose a large corporate enterprise requires an in-house word-processing application with some important features that are not currently available in the market. It would be prohibitively costly to develop a new word processing system from scratch. In the open source model the corporation's software developers could join in the development of an existing open source word processor like Open Office and add just the features they required. By benefiting from the open source model they would also contribute to it by making their enhancements freely available to others. The result is a very efficient, highly democratic, global network in which everybody wins. The majority of users have access to a huge range of free, good quality software, corporate users greatly reduce their software development costs, and talented software developers get to showcase their skills.

The unprecedented challenges of global climate change and peak oil demand solutions that are beyond the scope of international conferences, government policies, community initiatives or individuals.

The best hope for the future is the open source model, where nobody 'owns' the project. Everyone can participate freely in sharing ideas, both giving and receiving, with the confidence that they are contributing to the solution, not being exploited for the purpose of someone else's personal or corporate gain.

In setting up Transition the Grove we have been very conscientious about collaborating to prepare a constitution that makes it safe for everyone to contribute ideas, energy and passion into developing and fulfilling a vision for a future with a safe climate and a stable, sustainable economy. In the spirit of open source collaboration we have offered this constitution to any other Transition Initiatives considering incorporation. When our web-site is finished, we will offer the template to other Transition Initiatives free of charge. From an open source perspective, sharing these productions freely with other groups multiplies the value of the many hours of effort that has gone into them. Similarly, we have received a great deal of help from other groups, often benefiting from sharing in various Brisbane Transition Hub gatherings.

Talking about Population

It's not unusual to hear people gripe about traffic congestion on our roads, or the folly of building suburbs on some of our best food growing land. Sometimes you even hear wry comments about 'raising the drawbridge' over the Tweed River to prevent invasion by sea-changers from southern parts looking for a place in the sun. The conversation seldom gets serious because self interest reminds us that the money that cashed up sea-changes bring with them stimulates our construction industry, the trades and service jobs that depend on it, and ultimately our economy.

Moving the conversation to national population policy is a sure fire barbecue stopper. The topic is fraught with emotional complexities around fear, guilt, social justice, cultural prejudice and is probably slightly less acceptable than sex or politics as a topic for 'polite conversation'.

Move on to global population and you have an even bigger conversational challenge. If the world has too many people, where are they to go? We only have one world! But surely the fact that it is such a difficult and unprecedented problem is reason for applying our most creative thinking.....

Dick Smith's \$1m prize to curb our growth

By Olga Galacho and John Masanauskas From: Herald Sun June 28, 2010 2:00AM

Businessman Dick Smith says Australia can't sustain a bigger population.

MILLIONAIRE former electronics guru Dick Smith will give \$1 million cash to a young person who designs the best population plan for Australia.

The businessman yesterday was "delighted" that new Prime Minister Julia Gillard had announced she opposed a "Big Australia" and had created a ministry of sustainable population.

Mr Smith, fiercely opposed to immigration, said he would devote the rest of his life to educating other Australians, including politicians, about the need to keep the nation's population from exploding.

"When we design an aircraft, it is built for 25 years of safety," Mr Smith said. "But if we don't have a safety plan for allowing the population to grow to 36 million by 2050, then we will all come crashing down.

"That is why I am announcing a \$1 million award for a person less than 25 years old to design a sustainability plan for our population," he said.

The ABC will screen Mr Smith's documentary on population in August, and the businessman said he would make other announcements at that time about incentives to limit the size of the nation.

There are now 22 million Australians and Mr Smith said if that number grew beyond 26 million, the nation could struggle to feed its own people.

"I am going to commit the rest of my life to this issue, and to communicate to Australians that they need to wean themselves off constant growth in the economy, too," he said.

From www.news.com.au/business

Food Inc – the movie

This movie made a big stir in the US, but it would have bypassed Brisbane if the Brisbane Transition Hub (especially Rolf Kuelsen) hadn't fought to have it here. Rolf arranged for it to be shown at the Palace Centro, then he organised a sold-out crowd for the evening, and it ended up being shown for a full season.

It was one of those nights! A whole cinema full of people networking beforehand, then after the movie you couldn't stop them talking. A huge crowd went out for an Indian meal.

Food Inc- the movie asks how much we really know about the food we buy at our local supermarkets and serve to our families. Robert Kenner lifts the veil on the food industry, exposing the highly mechanised underbelly that's been hidden from the consumer with the consent of the government. The movie looks at

surprising and often shocking truths about what we eat and how it's produced, what the cost to our health is, and how this wave of change is sweeping across the global food industry.

There is a 'good farmer' in the movie, a farm called Polyface which is inspiring in the way it weaves chickens, cows and pigs together into a grass-fed agriculture that glows with radiant health.

The parts I found most distressing were brutal scenes of cruelty to chickens and cows, and the number of dead chickens being raked up in the jam-packed batteries of the industrial farms.

Next day we had our question answered: Is it happening here? The answer is yes – food-lotting cattle and pigs and battery chickens is the primary use of grain grown on the Darling Downs.

Green Star Communities

Transition The Grove member, architect Robert Standish-White has recently become accredited with the "Green Star" program that seeks to encourage more sustainable building practices.

The GBCA is Australia's only independent and nationally representative member-based organisation for sustainable building. The Green Star Communities framework has established five principles to influence the evolution of new and existing sustainable communities in Australia. The five pillars underpinning the principles listed in the table on the right highlight some areas of common interest with Transition Towns.

- Create liveable communities
- Provide opportunities for economic prosperity
- Enhance environmental quality
- Design great places
- Promote good urban governance

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. And remember, a picture is worth a thousand words so please include digital images that complement your story.*

For more information please contact us on

www.transitionthegrove.org.au

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