

Energy Subgroup Meeting 10 March 2011

John Tennock
Dale Shuttleworth
Jo Barkwprth
Chris Wright
Anne Tennock
Kahli Hall
John Donnelly
Peter Leith
Charles Neville
John Jordaan
Robert Standish-White
Sharon – Crabbe resident of The Grove. Hilda Rd State School community garden. Knows Chris.
Horticultural background.
Clare Locke
Russell McCurdie

Charles thinks we need 100% renewable energy now.

Peter commented on the lights in the Resource Centre and explained how they could be replaced with something using much less power to produce the same lighting. He has a long history of helping workplaces reduce their energy use and monitoring energy flow. He is now marketing large scale solar projects that communities can buy into to offset their power use.

Kahli is a Permaculturist, and interested in energy efficiency.

Robert thinks that the economy we have means we end up stuck with a lot of environmental problems. Energy is part of that. How can we use resources better and end up with a better environment? Transition Towns is interesting because it disperses energy production rather than concentrating it.

Clare interested in energy because she thinks it is very relevant here and now. Wants to ensure her children can have a good quality of life in 20-40 years' time.

Russell stumbled across TTG. Goes to the Hills Uniting Church. The lady who does the newsletter told him about the TTG website. Strongly believes business and governments should be doing the right thing. Very deep concern that large corporations think that anything like patents that eat into their profit bottom line should be bought up and locked away. That's criminal. We've seen what's happened to the oil. There's only one lot of oil. How many golden opportunities have we lost.

Putting solar panels on the roof. Found a decent company – not many around. Also putting water in to run the toilet, shower,... Someone he knows is putting 100,000litre tank under the ground.

Anything to be nice to the environment has got to be good. Doesn't know where he stands about carbon offsets. Interested in computers and websites. Enjoys ideas atmospheres. Is community minded. Spent most of his employed life with the Ambulance Service. Wants to keep his mind active. On a cruise they changed the light bulbs and saved 80% energy generation. When the volcanos in Iceland exploded it stopped a lot of planes flying. It was the first volcano eruption in history that was carbon neutral!

There are some very active national campaigns going at the moment.

100% Renewables. They haven't set a time limit on it at the moment, but they are lobbying very hard. They are going around with surveys that are designed to lead people to the conclusion that we need to do something about it. It is about energy. Specifically focused on political and policy issues.

We as a group might decide to run a 100% Renewable campaign. Or we could do a survey

ourselves as a local survey.

Charles and John T. went on a training course for Zero Carbon Australia: Beyond Zero Emissions. They've got a fully costed plan using currently available technology to get Australia down to zero emissions by 2020. It is put together by a bunch of scientists and engineers. It launched in QLD at the Convention Centre in December. Specifically not focused on political and policy issues, but on technological and engineering solutions.

We watched a video with David Whitehill on Zero Carbon Australia 2020.

19th century fossil fuel technologies.

Professor Tim Flannery. Wind farms. Solar farms with solar towers and salt energy storage. Malcolm Turnbull. Nina Mulheisen (Mechanical engineer, Toyota Australia). A gift of hope and enlightenment that is quite affordable.

Sir Gustav Nossal AC. Heartening to me as a grandfather to have a plan like this that simply plainly says: This can be done. Peter Doherty Nobel Laureate University of Melbourne. Australia has enormous availability of land for wind power and solar thermal power collection, so we don't need to use fossil fuels. We've found the solution to use the heat of the sun during the day to heat molten salt. We dismantled the horse-drawn carriage as the basis of transport. We can and have to change.

Taking a risk management approach to climate change is clearly the best way to manage this challenge. Zero Carbon Australia is shovel ready and clearly within the capacity of Australia to move to zero carbon in a decade. Affordable at about \$8 per household per week.

Actively seeking technical volunteers and donations.
zerocarbonplan.org to find out more.

This is a very informative website with a lot of excellent downloadable files.

The stationary energy plan was passed around. They are working on version 2 of this.

ABC on the net with Tony Jones and Cate Blanchett are discussing it. Australian business leaders are also discussing the project. www.abc.net.au/bigideas It is there permanently to download.

It has been launched in all the capital cities.

Sharon – has family who are engineers and technologists. Knowing how they all like to make money, she is very impressed that all these engineers and technologists donated their time to put this together.

Also the issue of jobs: If we stop digging coal out of the ground, where will the jobs go? But there'll be lots of jobs putting renewable energy systems into place.

On 30th March, Luke Read of the 100% Renewables Campaign is coming to talk at Transition The Gap.

Peter Reith's company is starting to build a solar generator here in Australia. It comes like a Meccano set. It will create jobs to put together. A brown coal generator in NSW wants to buy one to put out at Horsham. Victorian government said: Great. We can create jobs out there. We can have employment in Horsham that wasn't there before and create infrastructure around it.

Flat land screams out for solar farms, creates work.

How do Peter Reith's systems work? This of it as a parabola – it magnifies the energy 70 times. 26 in an array. They all follow the sun. You can stack them in paddocks. For a company that mines coal it is brilliant because they can put them on overburden dumps. 4 kilowatts produced per hectare. They can make and store the energy in batteries (the size of a 20 foot container) to use when needed. The batteries were developed in Australia. The way the power industry work, it is a bit like share trading. At 9am in the morning a company can buy a megawatt of power for \$x. At 3pm in the afternoon they can sell it for a lot more.

Peter's website: www.appliedsolarwindsolutions.com.au

It needs very good sunlight to work properly. Anything west of the Great Dividing Range.

They also sell Flexcell. It is a Swiss-developed solar cell that is designed to be put on buildings like a skin. In Europe they have hundreds of acres of it on big commercial buildings. Thousands of kilometres of it along freeways. They zero out their carbon emissions. Power companies buy roofs of buildings in Europe. Carbon taxes are good things. We have to change the way we think. Only 3% of people will end up paying carbon taxes.

Wind turbines can't be put anywhere near where people live.

Vertical axis wind whirley birds can be put on buildings in town. They are only a meter wide. You wouldn't even notice they are there. They are only slightly taller than the building. They only need 2km of wind to turn it around. You could put it on a house, but it would look rather strange. It would go well on the school.

Solar panels on roofs have a carbon footprint that is about 7 years before you get to zero. The average 1.5kwatt system isn't enough to zero out the cost of running a house. You'd probably get \$10-\$20 a month of your power bills.

Smart passive cooling. Re-educate construction industry. Green walls. Green roofs have such an application here. Using the right horticulture first.

I'd rather redesign my house and put louvres in than have air-conditioning.

You can have a solar-powered ventilator. It moves 1500 cubic metres of air/minute.

The building regulations are getting a lot tighter. That's one good thing that's happening. The Green Building Council. A lot of firms in the building industry are starting to join. Along with the stick there needs to be the carrot. Also that it is possible.

As an architect do you find yourself restricted that you aren't allowed to design a building that's more efficient.

There's quite a big change of people in Council as younger people are coming on. You'd be amazed at the change of attitude in the last 10 years.

The other 80% is just as disturbing though. They are going out putting in houses with no eaves and putting in air conditioning. They are taking out all the trees.

There's a much-improved energy section in the Building Code of Australia.

There's been a change in what we see as a satisfactory size building. More. Bigger. More stuff churning through the system. The bizarre GDP. It doesn't matter what you do. Just as long as there's more of it.

Peter: We pale into insignificance compared to Phoenix (Arizona) the energy consumption. They use atomic power.

65% of energy in France is atomic.
Atomic power stations need water to cool them.

High tension power cables.

We don't know what a complexion of government is going to be in 2 years time. The more we've dug out uranium to make nuclear power, the more is available to governments whose complexion we don't know. We still don't know how to deal with the waste. It is impossible to stop it happening once it is out of the ground and refined.

The sprawl of housing estates: the demand for housing. Over 300,000 people homeless.
Homelessness is a social justice issue.

Council has tried to compensate when they realised the sprawl was getting out of control.
Mitchelton is a good example.

The infrastructure needs to come in before the people.

Needing to move towards transit-oriented development, which is what is happening in Ferny Grove.

Energy is a big word.

There is a particular project to do with the Ferny Grove SHS that J. would like to get some focus on tonight. Maria Hill (teacher from the High School) will be available for future monthly meetings on 2nd Thursday night of the month if that suits other people. That is an important part of building a relationship with the school. John will go to a meeting at the school and bring to them a report on what was talked about here.

The School Environmental Management Plan. A bit vague, but there's stuff here that was put out by the government Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative QESSI. Ferny Grove SHS is the first school to implement it. A number of strands. Includes community partnerships which has prompted this connection – that they want us to get involved. They're talking about putting on a mini-Expo at the school. The school would be willing to host it. Could get suppliers of products to come and display and talk about their products. Speakers from the Alternative Energy Association. Similar to Hillbrook Sustainability Day. If we said to the school: "We would like to do this" we couldn't do it this year. It would compete with the Hillbrook Sustainability Day this year anyway. But we could do it next year. And the school could communicate with parents and the community to help organise.

How do we reach people in the community who are already concerned about their energy footprint?
How do we convince those who are not concerned that they should be?
What programs can we develop that locals can use to create actual reductions in carbon emissions?

The GreenStreet program is available for people to monitor their energy-reduction projection, and the street energy reduction trajectory. We could promote that without having to do any work, but it only works if you get a critical mass.

What meaningful goals should we have if we aim to reduce our energy consumption?
How can we go about promoting to the community what they can do about it?

What's in it for the community?

Can we start thinking about it.

Charles asked Dale what his 'energy plan spiel' is. Dale: Couldn't honestly tell us what the LNP plan is at this stage. Charles: But what is your individual plan. Aligns with Sharon and someone else. We've got one planet. We've been poor stewards of it, and we've got to get better at being good stewards. What do I say on the carbon tax? At this stage No. There's a shuffle of deck chairs. We haven't reduced the demand. Our goal is to reduce the carbon footprint of everyone. My personal view is every single person on the planet has a contribution to make in terms of their stewardship.

The devil's in the detail. The details aren't there at the moment. We have a name for a plan, rather than a plan at the moment.

If you took your rubbish out on the road people would complain. But we are doing that with carbon. We are dumping it invisibly, in third world countries. They don't deserve it. We shouldn't be doing it.

Dale has just bought \$170 carbon offsets for his vehicles so he can put a sticker on his vehicle. 7 tonnes. He bought them about 6 weeks ago from a company called Carbon Conscious in WA. Their shares went up 300% on the day the carbon tax was announced.

How about planting food trees as carbon offsets in our valley?

Peter: We gave companies the option of we plant the trees or we give you the trees to plant. The sporting organisations always wanted to plant them themselves. The businesses wanted us to plant them!

Offset plans being properly managed on a national and international scale is just another potential port.

Peter mentioned the carbon tax is working in Europe. Why aren't we doing it.

We have 200 paid fossil-fuel lobbyists in Canberra.

Connecting with people who are already concerned about their carbon footprint:

- Facebook
- The Hills Echo
- Get a photo of the group on the cover page.
- Put it in North West News frequently. (Quest. They will put in any article that you pre-write, especially with illustration.)
- Philippa of The Western Echo regards their role as supporting non-profit groups. She's more than willing to have ads put in and she rejigs for the paper. Send in Word format. They ran 2 for Transition The Gap on facing pages.

- Keep an eye on the deadlines for the papers. Write 2 or 3 in advance.
- Radio YYY 87.6 FM

How can you encourage people to show they care and are doing something about it? Self-promotion.

- Car stickers. Hand them out as well. Clare would be happy to design something. “I care about No Carbon”. Have available for sale in markets too.
- Sharon knows someone who prints tee-shirts. Charles knows someone with a tee-shirt press in Enoggera. He works for Reverse Garbage.
- Flyer targeting homes with panels on their roofs. Or water tanks. Or vege gardens.

Share ideas online on the Forum.

2nd Thursday of the month as the regular energy group meeting. But next month the In Transition film is on at Arana Library.

Send out links to the Forum every few weeks.