



Welcome to the February/March edition of the SOC newsletter for 2008/09. In this edition we are continuing our series of articles that seek to explain a bit more about what SOC is on about, and give some flesh to the bare bones of our aim as stated in the constitution. This being:

‘ Recognising Te Tiriti O Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, to actively contribute within Otautahi/Christchurch to opportunities and means for achievement of long term sustainability. In doing so, to seek to ensure that all people have their basic needs satisfied, so that they can live in dignity, in healthy communities, while having the minimum adverse impact on natural systems, now and in the future.’

In this newsletter John Peet is following up on the ‘strong sustainability’ component of this, from his article on this in the previous email, as well as presenting the ‘Earth Charter’. There is also a particular focus in this issue on water quality issues, with several items addressing this on pages 5-8, and information about **Markus Milne** who is a Professor of Accounting, Finance and Information Systems at the University of Canterbury and will be speaking on the topic of - **How different does Sustainable Business need to be for Business to be Sustainable?** at **7.30pm Wednesday 25 March 2009**, Knox Church Lounge, Bealey Ave.

As for previous newsletters, the articles are classified in the following manner

Personal (and domestic)
 Local (neighbourhood level)
 Town and Around (city and region wide)
 National
 Global

Systems Conditions for Strong Sustainability

Following on from the previous Newsletter’s definition of Strong Sustainability, the following are a set of System Conditions; criteria which need to be followed by any group, city or nation, in order to achieve “real” sustainability. They were put together by a recent Think Tank organized by Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (<www.phase2.org>), in conjunction with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD).

The ‘6+1’ System Conditions for a Strongly Sustainable New Zealand

1. New Zealand limits emissions into the atmosphere, discharges into waterways, and chemicals into soil, to levels within the assimilative capacities of the relevant ecosystems.
 2. New Zealand regenerates and grows natural and social capital to sustain the health and resilience of its people and the whole of nature.
 3. New Zealand uses renewable resources effectively, and non-renewable resources are stewarded within closed cycles that maintain their quality.
 4. New Zealanders are broadly and deeply eco-literate and have a strong human-Earth relationship. They know that people are a part of nature and ecosystems - not separate - and understand that what they do to nature, they do to themselves.
 5. Person-to person relationships are based on strong mutual respect and recognition of human interdependency.
 6. Understanding of strong sustainability is deeply embedded in all of New Zealand’s governance, economic, legal and educational systems and practice.
- ‘+1’ . All of these system conditions – they are interrelated and all must be satisfied.

These are, of course, aspirational, longer-term ideals of behaviour, rather than accurate reflections of current attitudes. **SOC members are invited to consider them and respond with their views, to SOC meetings and events, and to SANZ also.**

SOC (and SANZ) contact: John Peet at njpeet@gmail.com or 03 384 1281

The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter was created over a number of years, in an international effort to follow up from the 1987 Brundtland Report and develop a new ethic to underpin and guide sustainable development. Initiated at a United Nations conference on the environment and sustainable development, most of the work was done by an international network of non-government organizations, via a worldwide consultation and drafting process, in a process lasting seven years. The Charter was launched in 2000. The document itself (downloadable from www.earthcharter.org) has four core principles, upon which all the other (supporting) principles are based. These are:

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity;
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love;
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful;
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

These core principles are consistent with the ideas of Strong Sustainability, as described in the preceding item.

Contact: John Peet at njpeet@gmail.com or 03 384 1281

Innovative initiative in local body consultation with the tangata whenua

At the October SOC committee meeting Andrea Lobb, General Manager of Mahaanui Kurataiao Ltd (MKT), told us about this novel and interesting new company. It opened for business on 1 October 2007 and is jointly owned by the 6 Ngai Tahu Rûnanga. The 12 directors are from the Runanga and most are involved in resource management work for their Runanga. The company was formed in response to huge demands on tangata whenua, through requests for comment on and evaluation of proposals. The same issues are being faced all over the country. These demands result from a desire to raise awareness of Maori issues and from consultation outcomes not reflecting Maori interests. They are often driven by the Local Government and Resource Management Acts to take account of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The capacity and resources for this voluntary work is limited and the people are overloaded. The CCC, for example, wanted to work more effectively with Maori in general, and with Ngai Tahu in particular. It reached an agreement with MKT to provide advice, liaison and engagement services for officers. With Councils MKT works on a cost recovery model for its base operations in order to minimize the financial risks to the Runanga. CCC has made a 3-year commitment to the agreement which has a broad scope across Council activities. Andrea says the CCC has been willing to transform the challenges of engagement with tangata whenua into opportunities. MKT aims to maximise the opportunities for improved outcomes within the constraints of the legislation under which Councils work. Continued commitment to openness and growth is a key to the success thus far. The Mahi (work) of MKT is to uphold the Mana of the Runanga as Kaitiaki. MKT does this through an appreciation of the depth of meaning of whakapapa, tikanga, mana whenua, and kaitiakitanga, underpinned by an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Andrea's presentation showed the committee that there is a lot to be learnt from the fruitful relationship that is being developed.

Free advice to improve the ecological soundness and efficiency of your home

is available from Beacon Pathway. See <http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/homesmart+renovations.aspx>

How different does Sustainable Business need to be for Business to be Sustainable?



Markus Milne is a Professor of Accounting, Finance and Information Systems at the University of Canterbury and will be speaking on the topic of - How different does Sustainable Business need to be for Business to be Sustainable? at 7.30pm Wednesday 25 March 2009, Knox Church Lounge, Bealey Ave

For Markus, sustainability is a “planetary imperative.” As a professor, Markus believes he has a responsibility to raise awareness of the many issues surrounding sustainability, which he endeavours to do through teaching,

research and his various leadership roles. “There are many dimensions to sustainability and these all need to be addressed,” he states. One of the ways he does this is by being involved in the University’s Strategy Working Group for sustainability.

Markus also recently completed a three year research project funded by Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund. Markus’ research has focussed upon sustainability in business, and triple-bottom line reporting. “Essentially in response to stakeholder pressure, organisations voluntarily began to report on their environmental and social impacts. They were already producing financial reports,” However, as Markus’ research shows, triple-bottom line reporting has now become synonymous with sustainability, raising concerns about whether organisations actually are sustainable in an ecological and systems sense.

Markus’ research has consequently focussed on the reliability of such reporting, and on developing methods to ensure consistency in bottom-line analysis. “Unfortunately what we have found is that organisations tend to ‘cherry-pick’ information to put in reports, and the information may not be audited at all, so our research focuses on how that can be addressed.” Ultimately, business sustainability is, for Markus, a planetary systems issue. It makes little sense to him for a business to claim to be sustainable while relying on a wider system that is patently unsustainable. Markus feels that in order to create true sustainability, individual action must be complimented by cumulative, consistent and long-term changes. “I have students coming to me at the end of a year saying that they have managed to save a few thousand dollars by living more sustainably, not driving etcetera. When I ask them what they are going to do with that money, they say they are going to travel overseas, which rather destroys all the benefits accrued by their sustainable living in one hit.”

This systemic approach to sustainability is, for Markus, where the real issue lies. “We can measure and manage issues collectively, but we need to address why they occur in the first place. Why do we behave the way we behave? We are not addressing the causes nor

consequences of our actions.” Markus’ focus on sustainable systems serves as a reminder that sustainability needs to be viewed within broader contexts if it is to become a reality for society today. In his words, “living sustainably creates a constant tension. Organisations often try to present themselves as the balancing factor in that tension, but it is something we need to be continuously negotiating ourselves.”

Profile by Narelle Suisted. <http://www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/events/profilemarkus.shtml>

Lincoln Envirotown BioBlitz

BioBlitz is a celebration of the diversity of life. It helps people understand and appreciate local biodiversity, and measure the health of their local environment. Part contest, part festival, part educational event and part scientific survey – BioBlitz is a scientific race against time. Our goal is to find as many species as we can in 24 hours in the Liffey Domain.

BioBlitz will take place at Lincoln on Liffey Domain between 3.15pm Friday 3rd April and 3.15pm Saturday 4th April, and is a fantastic opportunity to meet experts on insects, plants, birds, lizards and fungi, and experience the diversity of life around us. There will be lots to do and see at Base Camp at the church hall on James St (opposite the fire station). You can also join field trips with scientists throughout the day and after dark. Schedule (draft only) as below.

Pre-BioBlitz activities

10.30am -3pm – Lincoln Primary (& possibly secondary) School

- Talk by Ruud Kleinpaste on biodiversity, bugs
- Talk on spiders by museum spiderman Simon Pollard
- Bugmobile visit & talk
- Lizard life – talk by herpetologist Marieke Lettink

BioBlitz activities

- Join Ruud Kleinpaste and interact with bugs
- The past and present – what used to be here and how can we improve the current biodiversity
- How pure/polluted is the Liffey water? - Water Watch
- Meurky Walk – learn about the local plants while walking the Liffey with Colin Meurk
- Who are the local insect pollinators?
- Bird watch / mist netting
- Spiderman – check out the Liffey spider species with spider experts
- Weed Watch
- Electro-fishing in the Liffey
- Moth trapping at night
- Spot-lighting for mammals (possums, mice, rats, cats, etc) /tracking tunnels/wax tags/ camera traps
- Leaf litter critters
- Radio tracking /Tree-climbing demonstrations
- Fungi forage – join a fungi expert on a foray along the Liffey
- Insect collections – check out the amazing displayed of insect diversity from the Lincoln University invertebrate museum

For more information contact Mike Bowie 3218388 or Sue Jarvis 329 5858 or 021 100 1009

'Now or Never: A Sustainable Future for Australia?'

is a quarterly essay written by Tim Flannery, ecologist and author of the award winning 'The Planet Eaters'. It is about sustainability, our search for it in the twenty-first century, and the impact it might have on the environmental threats that confront us today. Flannery discusses in detail three potential solutions to the most pressing of the sustainability challenges: climate change. <http://www.quarterlyessay.com/qe/pastissues/index.php>

Hundreds Gather to Protest Global Warming



ECAN's Regional Environment Report

This report, released in January notes that while public transport patronage is increasing, motor vehicles remain the main mode of travel throughout Canterbury, there is increased congestion in urban areas along with declining levels of walking and cycling. Copies of the report can be downloaded from ECan's website on www.ecan.govt.nz or a hard copy and CD can be obtained from Customer Services on 353 9007 or 0800 ECINFO (0800 324 636).

Cityhop car hire

An increasing number of businesses and organisations including the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) have started using the Cityhop service that is now available in Christchurch, although at a minimal level of 1 car. Cityhop members access cars via a swipe card. Members join online for \$75 and can reserve a car at any time. Rates are as low as \$13.50 an hour or \$75 per 24 hours - that includes petrol, parking, insurance and maintenance. The vehicles are the Mitsubishi i-car (estimated 5.4L/100km) and Daihatsu Sirion (estimated 6.0L/100km). For more information, go to <http://www.cityhop.co.nz/>



Councils to work together to prevent river pollution

On 12 September an agreement to work together to improve the quality of surface water being discharged into Christchurch rivers was signed by the City Council and Environment Canterbury.

Christchurch City Council (CCC) Healthy Environment Programme Manager Jenny Ridgen says, until now, resource consent conditions relating to the quality and quantity of surface water being discharged from new developments have been determined on a site-by-site basis.

“One of the risks of considering resource consent applications on a site-by-site basis, instead of holistically, is the cumulative effects of a lot of small developments. Each one may have only a minor impact, but together the effects could be significant,” Ms Ridgen says. The Surface Water Protocol Implementation Agreement between the two councils provides a new way of managing stormwater on a catchment-wide basis, including:

- Protecting waterways as development occurs,
- Enabling early intervention if water quality deteriorates, and
- Setting out how the two Councils will work together to deal with pollution.

Catchment boundaries are determined by areas of urban growth and Christchurch’s main rivers, the Avon, Heathcote and Styx. Banks Peninsula catchments will also be covered by the agreement. Surface water can be polluted by many things, such as zinc from the roofs of houses, copper from brake linings in cars, fertilisers, pesticides and sediment runoff from building work disturbing the soil. These contaminants and sediment can effect the health and food chains of various species that rely on high quality water. The protocol aims to prevent deterioration of water quality, restore the life of the streams as much as possible and manage the risk of flooding.

Until now, developers have applied for resource consent from Environment Canterbury (ECan) to discharge stormwater. Under the new catchment-wide consents, they will seek authorisation from the CCC to discharge stormwater, as per the CCC’s consent from ECan, although high risk discharges will still require consent from ECan. The CCC will apply for its first catchment-wide consent from ECan soon. Planning will be based on a joint CCC and ECan document entitled “Planning and Consents Protocol for Surface Water Management,” which was adopted by the councils in March 2006. For more information contact Jenny Ridgen on 941 8407 or jenny.ridgen@ccc.govt.nz.

Source: CCC

Fifteen Canterbury waterways are unsuitable for swimming due to faecal contamination.

A further 13 of the region's rivers should be avoided, especially by the elderly and very young, according to a Consumer Magazine report.

Of the 10 councils surveyed, Canterbury has 15 sites rated as "very poor" for swimming, followed by Northland (13), Taranaki (eight), Wellington (seven), Southland (four), Hawkes Bay (four), Bay of Plenty (three) and Manukau (two). Data was not available for Otago, Marlborough, Tasman, West Coast, Waikato and parts of Auckland and Nelson.

The state of the nation's recreational waterways was a big concern and contamination in pastoral farming areas was getting worse, the report said.

Environment Canterbury's annual swimming-water quality report released last month said water quality at most Canterbury beaches was improving, but swimmers were warned to stay out of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. Swimming was not recommended at 23 sites.

The 15 "very poor" sites in Canterbury, listed by Consumer, were: Waimakariri River mouth, Selwyn River (Coes Ford), Otukaikino Creek (above Groynes picnic area), Otukaikino Creek (below Groynes picnic area), Lyell Creek lagoon, Kaiapoi River (boat ramp), Humphreys Drive (in Avon-Heathcote Estuary), Heathcote River (Catherine Street), Cust main drain (recorder site), Avon River (Kerrs Reach), Avon River (central city), Ashburton River (State Highway 1), Ashburton River (Hills Road), Ashburton River (Digby's Bridge), Ashburton River (Boundary Road).

Source: Consumer/Press

Swimming water quality monitored:

Swimming water quality at Canterbury's rivers, lakes and beaches is regularly monitored by ECan over the summer period. Updated information about the region's 100 river, lake and coastal swimming sites can be viewed at <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Our+Environment/Water/SwimmingWaterQuality/Check+Your+Swimming+Water+Quality/>

Deep wells at low levels:

ECan well-water checks during mid January showed that many deep wells in Te Pirita, Selwyn, Orton, Rangitata Huts, Acton, Mayfield-Hinds areas are at or close to their lowest ever levels for that month. Overall, groundwater levels are at or below average levels for this time of the year. Groundwater levels in deep wells are moving into territory not seen since the irrigation season of 2005-06. Most of the rivers around Lake Ellesmere are now below their restriction flows and water users with minimum flow conditions are on restriction.

Source: ECAN

Spending of transport funds:

The regional distribution of transport funds was discussed at a recent Canterbury Regional Transport Committee meeting. Committee chair ECan councillor Jo Kane said that Canterbury's walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure were a national priority and the New Zealand Transport Agency indicated that national funds could be used rather than regional funds. The committee recommended that the regional funds should be spent on planned state highway improvements in Canterbury that were less likely to attract national funding. People will have the opportunity in April to comment on the draft Canterbury Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-12.

Source: ECAN

More bikes on buses:

Bike racks will feature on more Christchurch buses this year. The bike racks, which carry two cycles, have been successfully trialled on the Lyttelton (number 35 Heathcote) route since November 2007. One Ilam/Mt Pleasant bus, one Northern Star bus to Rangiora and Kaiapoi and one Redwood bus also had bike racks fitted as part of the trial. The 10 services involving hills and/or significant distances which will soon be re-tendered and will require bike-carrying racks are to Halswell, Kennedy's Bush, Styx Mill/Westmorland, Harewood/Dyers Pass, Bishopdale/Major Aitken, Airport/Sumner, Ilam/Mt Pleasant, Lyttelton/Rapaki, Riccarton/Heathcote and St Albans/Huntsbury.

Source: ECAN

Christchurch Landfill Gas Scheme wins Engineering Award

QEII, the city's largest sports centre is powered by a landfill gas scheme. The \$4.2 million project which saves than \$1.1 million a year in energy costs, has won the sustainability and clean technology category of the New Zealand Engineering Excellence Awards.

Source: CCC

Community Currencies Conference 2009

Trading through troubled waters: Creating Resilient Communities

17th -19th April, Wanganui. For more information see www.sustainablewhanganui.org.nz

UPCOMING EVENTS

- How different does Sustainable Business need to be for Business to be Sustainable?

Markus Milne is a Professor of Accounting, Finance and Information Systems at the University of Canterbury. For the last 15 years he has been researching corporate social and environmental reporting and most recently has critiqued corporate attempts to address the issues of Triple Bottom Line and Sustainability at 7.30pm Wednesday **25 March** 2009, Knox Church Lounge, Bealey Ave. See article in this newsletter for more information.

- Earth Hour Saturday 28 March 8:30 – 9:30pm Take a bus to the Square or contact your local community centre to see what they are doing for this, if they are not organise something yourself! See <http://www.earthhour.org/news/nz%3Aen> for more information.



- Christchurch Transition group 12.30 pm Tuesday, **7 April**. (shared lunch at 12.00). St Albans Community Centre, 1047 Colombo St. See <http://transitionaotearoa.org.nz/group/canterbury> for more information

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Completed

- Submission on Department of Internal Affairs discussion document: “Building Sustainable Urban Communities”.

In Process

- Work Plan for 2009
- Consideration of relationship between Sustainable and Treaty based development, incorporating recent input from Andrea Lobb.
- Discussions with the Urban Landscape Group, a group focussed on the importance of Indigenous biodiversity are proceeding, with the aim of this group becoming a part of SOC.
- Preparation of DVD of Transition Communities Bus tour
- Purchase of Data Projector and Screen
- Submission on Greater Christchurch Travel Demand Management Strategy and Action Plan