



Hello Everyone, and welcome to the June/July issue of the SOC newsletter. The major event for us coming up in this time is the Annual General meeting (see notice below), if as many of you as possible could be there, that would be great. Also there are 2 Climate Change related events coming up (see page 5) and a guest article from Jane Demeter from the Regional Council sees us continuing our

practice of giving space to politicians to outline their perspective on sustainability and how to make it happen. As in prior newsletters, articles are classified by the colour of their headings as follow. All quotes in this months newsletter are taken from <http://www.sustainablelivingdirectory.com/sustainability-quotes.php>

Ian Burn, Newsletter Editor

Personal (and domestic)

Local (neighbourhood level)

Town and Around (city and region wide)

National

Global

**The World We Leave For Those That Follow**

Guest article by **Jane Demeter**, Canterbury Regional Councilor.

*How do we get the next generation to care about our environment?*

Imagine communities where each 11 year old is paired with an over 70 year old for that school year and together they keep a common journal of their joint activities for the year. They meet once a week during the school year and create their own plans for each visit. Some European countries have done this for decades and New Zealand would benefit from a similar programme for our schoolchildren. Our youngsters would develop lasting friendships, gain knowledge, understanding and empathy and learn skills that would serve them well in these changing times. For example, they could learn how to grow vegetables with guidance from these experienced seniors. Each of us can become less dependent on grocery stores by growing our own vegetables.

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**Annual General Meeting  
7.15pm Monday 22 June  
2009**

**At the Waiatu Theatre,  
Environment Canterbury  
(enter by the eastern most  
door on Kilmore Street)**

**The AGM will be held at  
7.15pm and will include the  
annual reports and election of  
Committee.**

**At 8pm there will be a  
discussion featuring a  
representative of the Greater  
Christchurch Urban  
Development Strategy  
Implementation Committee  
and John Peet (SOC and  
Sustainable Aotearoa New  
Zealand) entitled:**

**“The Urban Development  
Strategy  
and Strong Sustainability”**

**Supper will follow**



Jane Demeter

*What is the most important single thing we can do to help in these economic times?*

Buy local. Breaking ourselves of the addiction to cheap imported goods from China and other countries and support our local businesses. This would help reduce our foreign debt and boost local economies. We need to fully understand our dependence on imported fuel and how poorly we have prepared for the time when foreign tankers no longer deliver petroleum products to our shores.

Flexibility will be a key attribute for us all as we move from the current economic model to whatever the future has in store for us. To continue with our current addiction to consumption and debt is a recipe for dependence. Who would have imagined that we would be the third most indebted nation in world behind Iceland and Hungary?

*Can we really be a sustainable country?*

We are no longer a nomadic people. Our lifestyle is one that is settled in an area and we would be wise to live in ways that do not compromise the available resources for future generations. The term “sustainable” is fraught with many possible interpretations. Some would consider it to be short term economic viability. My personal view of sustainability is: can we live in ways that leave our natural resources in excellent condition for the next generation?

Our natural resources are the envy of many countries and need to be nurtured. Improving our fiscal and scientific literacy is essential to making informed decisions for our future so that we are less vulnerable to the persuasions of advertising and short term political positions. Special interest groups continue to push short term solutions so as to not endanger their economic interests. It is about recognizing that once our resources are compromised or gone we have failed our children and grandchildren.

*What is the most important thing we must do?*

We must have a vision for our future supported by policy that ensures that we have protected our natural resources. It is also about ensuring that our communities are well informed about the status of our resources and are participating in the decision making processes for the use of those resources. Once people are informed and aware they can push our local and central governments to lead with action and not just empty rhetoric.

**continued page 8**

## **ECO Expo**

SOC (and a huge range of other organizations) will be at the ECO Expo at the Christchurch Convention Centre from Friday – Sunday see [www.ecoexpo.co.nz](http://www.ecoexpo.co.nz) for more information.

## **Letterboxer**

A good little waste reduction project for yourself and few mates / family would be to contact the following and go and blitz / survey your local area with no junk mail stickers. <http://www.letterboxer.org.nz/> Also on the site is a summary of bylaws in regard to direct mail, common questions about the impact of direct mail (70kg on average per household per year), etc. There is also a list of sites that will send you circular type information electronically if you really feel you need to know this sort of thing, and the phone number to contact if you already have a sign on your letterbox and are still getting advertising (0800-111-081).

**Treat the Earth well.  
It was not given to you by your parents.  
It was loaned to you by your children  
- Kenyan Proverb**

## **Getting Real about Plastic Bags**

In association with SOC's recent support of pressure being put on supermarkets etc. to charge for plastic bags, (<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/national/2343204/Group-charges-in-to-reduce-bag-use>), please see the following message from the Get Real organization who were behind this. 'I would appreciate it if you can encourage members, friends and relations who have an interest in these things to sign up on the campaign site <http://www.getreal.org.nz/> as numbers do make a difference. GetReal is a group of smart, educated people who are passionate about Zero Waste and all things sustainable. We want to move up the triangle to reducing and reusing rather than focusing on recycling.'

## **Report assesses nitrate discharge into Canterbury groundwater**

A report commissioned by the Canterbury Water Management Strategy Steering Group has been released assessing nitrate discharge into groundwater on the Canterbury Plains from rural land uses. The report analyses nitrate discharge from rural land use and its implications for water quality in shallow groundwater quality on the Canterbury Plains and deeper groundwater quality for Central Canterbury. A copy of the nitrate report is available at [www.canterburywater.org.nz/](http://www.canterburywater.org.nz/)

## Central Plains Water Trust hearing resuming October 2009

The Commissioners appointed by Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury to hear consent application from Central Plains Water issued a Minute setting out the process, reasons for the decision and timeframe for reconvening in October this year. See [www.ecan.govt.nz/Resource+Consents/Central+Plains+Water/Hearings.htm](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Resource+Consents/Central+Plains+Water/Hearings.htm)

## Environment Enhancement Fund

The Environment Enhancement Fund is a contestable fund which provides grants of up to \$5,000 to individuals and groups working to protect and enhance Canterbury's indigenous biodiversity. The Fund can also be applied to for recognition of past work. The fund is open from 1 June to **31 August** each year and funding is announced that December. For more information see [www.ecan.govt.nz/eef](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/eef)

**When we tug at a single thing in nature,  
we find it attached to the rest of the world.  
- John Muir**

## 350.org – Action on Climate Change

350.org grew out of Step It Up which in 2007 organised the first campaign of public rallies and events about global warming in the United States. Over 2000 events took place in all 50 states.

Bill McKibben, who is one of the founders of Step It Up was brought to New Zealand recently by Victoria university student, Aaron Packard. Bill gave a talk in Christchurch on 1 May hosted by SOC, and introduced by Chrissie Williams, This was attended by 40 people and gained coverage in the Press.

350.org started because Bill wanted to draw attention to what level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere could cause dangerous climate change. 450 parts per million (ppm) seemed 'safe' so he first thought of '450.org'. To make sure he contacted James Hansen, a climate scientist who runs NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and had been instrumental in starting the climate change debate when he told the US Congress in 1988 that, in his opinion,



Bill McKibben (left) and James Hansen

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“the greenhouse effect has been detected and it is changing our climate now”.  
This did not go down well!

Hansen’s response to Bill McKibben was that 350ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> is “**at most**” the safe limit. So “450.org” became “350.org”.

CO<sub>2</sub> wobbles up and down during the year (mainly due to plant growth in the Northern hemisphere) but overall was about 384ppm in 2007. Now it’s between 389 and 390 ppm. We’ve overshot the safe level and are heading up not down.

350.org’s objective is “to inspire the world to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis--to create a new sense of urgency and of possibility for our planet.” “Our focus is on the number 350--as in parts per million, the level scientists have identified as the safe upper limit for CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere. But 350 is more than a number--it’s a symbol of where we need to head as a planet.”

350.org want our help on 24 October in sending a strong message to all the governments at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December that it’s time to stop arguing about short term profits for the few and take action to ensure both humanity’s and the global ecosystem’s survival (the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment not the other way round!). 24 October will be a day of global action to send that message. New Zealand (Christchurch!) will play a crucial part as we’ll be kicking off global action before most of the world (Asia, Europe, the Americas) is even out of bed.

Act to send that message. Check out 350.org and get some ideas for action at <http://www.350.org/about> For the science behind “350 ppm” go to [http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2\\_20080407.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TargetCO2_20080407.pdf). For local action that can be taken on climate change see article on page 6

Also see Nature’s “Climate Crunch” issue (Nature, 30 April 2009) at the Central Library in Gloucester Street or email me at [mimas@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mimas@xtra.co.nz) for e-copies of the articles.

Tom Taylor.

**Slums may well be breeding-grounds of crime,  
but middle-class suburbs are incubators of apathy and delirium.  
Cyril Connolly**

## Canterbury's air pollution monitoring is online

Environment Canterbury's website now features daily air pollution forecasts and records each night's levels. The site monitors records for the Canterbury region, including 3 sites in Christchurch. The results are online at:

<http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Our+Environment/Air/Monitoring/Air+Pollution+Today.htm>

The guideline for the 'healthy air' using the PM<sub>10</sub> measurement is 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of air over 24 hr period. The following is a summary of 2009 results to date.

Location	No. of 2009 High Pollution Nights > 50 µg/m <sup>3</sup> of air over 24 hr period	Highest Pollution Level	2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest Pollution Level
St Albans	1	51	43
Burnside	0	43	36
Woolston	2	64	51

## Transition communities update

The next Transition communities regional groups Forum is to be held on Tuesday **9th June** from 12-2pm. Venue is St Albans Community Centre, 1047 Colombo street, just up from Metrostar bus stop on Edgware Road.(100 metres on RHS). We share lunch and information. Most transition groups and interested individuals in greater Christchurch attend.

**Some people say complexity is 'out of control'.  
But not knowing how to reach a destination is one thing —  
having no destination at all is another, more wretched, thing.  
John Thackara**

## SOC submissions to Regional Land Transport Programme and on Waste Minimisation

SOC has made two submissions since the last newsletter. The first was on the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-2019. We tried to push the message that peak oil, climate change and the global financial crisis necessitate a move away from the tired old formula of building new roads. Specifically, the high priority given to the Southern Motorway Extension is inappropriate when what we need is better public transport and a move towards more efficient modes of transport such as rail. SOC protested at the low proportion of funding (1.2%) devoted to walking and cycling facilities. We also noted that of the various sources of funding, a less predictable and reliable source has been chosen for the bulk of the money to be allocated to walking and cycling, and so is more likely to be subject to cuts.

The second submission was on the Ministry for the Environment discussion paper on Waste Minimisation. SOC pushed for more aggressive waste to landfill reduction targets

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and better control of sites contaminated by hazardous waste. The discussion paper signalled a proposed watering down of the Waste Management Bill introduced by the previous government and SOC tried to counter this trend by requesting that e-waste and packaging be subject to product stewardship requirements as soon as possible. Expecting manufacturers and importers to voluntarily reduce packaging waste has been seen to be fruitless and regulation is required. SOC also expressed the worry that the criteria identified by MfE for selecting projects to be supported by the Waste Minimisation Fund would lead to a bias for large business-oriented projects and against those undertaken by NGOs and community organisations.

All SOC's recent submissions can be downloaded from the SOC website at:  
<http://www.sustainablechristchurch.org.nz/submissions>

Dave Evans

### **Key year for Climate Change – 2 chances to do something**

SOC Secretary reports that he's getting the following message from all directions, the following is from 'Sign On' but we'll be hearing more on 350.org (<http://www.350.org.nz>) in the next newsletter. He says 'This is the year we have to insist that the government really addresses climate change. Please take part in one or more of these campaigns.'

**1)** 'Hello, 2009 is a make or break year for climate change. World leaders will meet in Copenhagen in December to decide on a new global treaty to reduce emissions. Greenpeace launched the **Sign On** campaign last Saturday, because the world needs New Zealand to agree to a meaningful emission reduction target at Copenhagen. 'Sign On' (<http://www.signon.org.nz>) aims to get as many New Zealanders signed up to a petition calling for a 40 per cent by 2020 emission reduction target. We have some ambitious goals for the numbers of signatures we want to gather and we need your help to achieve them.

We launched the campaign with a BBQ with our celebrity climate ambassadors at Lucy Lawless' house. We got great media coverage in the Sunday Star Times and TV3 News. We also had nearly 100 people around the country collecting around 2000 signatures on the Sign On petition. We currently have 46,500 people signed up but need lots more.

That's why in the coming weeks we are hosting meetings for Greenpeace members to talk over the campaign with you and also discuss the ways you can help the campaign, and help John Key to do good in Copenhagen. Geoff, our Political Liaison will be Skyping live from Bonn at the next international climate meeting to give us the latest updates.

**Christchurch Community House  
141 Hereford Street  
Wednesday June 3 from 6-8pm**

Please RSVP to [karengreenpeace@gmail.com](mailto:karengreenpeace@gmail.com) if you can make it (and so we know how much pizza to order).

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**2) Meeting: STOP CLIMATE CHANGE.** Get involved with a 350.org climate action group organising a massive worldwide protest on October 24 demanding action for climate change. There will be an initial organising meeting

When: 7.30-9pm on Thursday 11 June

Where: WEA - 59 Gloucester Street

More information go to [www.350.org](http://www.350.org) and [www.350.org.nz](http://www.350.org.nz)

**Don't follow trends - start trends.  
Frank Capra**

### **Jane Demeter Continued**

*What resources are the most at risk?*

Water. Water. Water. It defines who we are. Use of our water resources will be the issue that shapes our future here in Canterbury. Temperature increases along with more nor'westers and decreased rainfall on the plains from projected climate change means increased demand for water in Canterbury. Balancing competing demands while ensuring the resource is not compromised for quality nor depleted beyond its capacity to replenish will be the ongoing challenge. The richness of our environment is built on our water resources. That same environment that is our point of difference in international markets and is currently at risk. We cannot afford to lose that edge.

Our soils are under ever more pressure. Compaction and loss of topsoil means the loss of food production. Nourishing our soils is essential rather than compromising them with contaminants and chemicals.

With more extreme weather events expected, we have even more need for our natural hazard protection programmes. The upcoming proposed project to develop additional flood protection measures for the Waimakariri River is a good move for Christchurch and communities to the north and south of the river. But we can never fully remove all risk. It is about being prepared – for storm surges, for tsunamis, for earthquakes. It is hard to imagine what the countryside might look like if a changing temperature range, particularly in winter, means that our native species might be challenged by invasive weed and pest species that are more adaptable. Preserving remnant biodiversity right now becomes even more important. Historically we have not done well at this and we need to do better.

A low carbon society makes sense for so many reasons. How we get there will take a multi faceted approach – touching those we interact with each day by our example and our awareness raising and working to push government to create fiscal instruments and incentives to get us out of our cars and also into new energy options. Our newly formed Community Resilience Unit (see last edition) is working with communities to raise the awareness and level of understanding of what it takes to be sustainable. Transition Towns are a focus. Outcomes are what it is all about. For me, it is about living consciously and living here as if we plan to stay

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*Whatu ngarongaro te tangata, toi tuu te whenua.*

*People come and go, what remains is the  
world we leave for those that follow*

Jane Demeter, Councillor, Environment Canterbury [jane.demeter@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:jane.demeter@ecan.govt.nz)

## **SOC Committee Activities**

### *Completed*

- Public meeting with Bill McKibben, International Climate Change Activist (see article above)
- Submission on Regional Land Transport Strategy (see article above)
- Submission on Ministry for the Environment discussion paper on Waste Minimisation (see article above)
- Support of Get Real campaign for Plastic Bag levy (see article above)

### *In Process*

- 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.