

newsletter



sustainable
otautahi christchurch

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Sustainability & the Triple Bottom Line

Thanks to Katherine and John Peet, SOC members and friends were able to hear a very interesting presentation from Steve Viederman late October.

Steve broke a tour of Australia sponsored by Philanthropy Australia to visit Christchurch to tell us that sustainability must be viewed in totality. "It is a holistic concept that can't be broken in environmental, economic and social silos, there is no triple bottom line, just one," he said.

For Steve, sustainability is not

- a technical problem to be solved
- a managerial problem
- an administrative problem

To achieve better sustainability Steve advocates an entirely new framework to operate from. He believes the current approaches are not workable. Sustainability can only be approached from engaged community participation. This means working with local communities and encouraging small-scale initiatives at the grass roots level. Tapping into people's hopes and dreams and then enabling them to make them a reality. People need to have faith in processes and be encouraged to believe that their small-scale actions can have a significant impact. "We need a revolution to change the way that we do things," he said. "We can all play a very active role in our future and not leave things to experts who often create this managerial, technical and administrative net that is very difficult for ordinary people to penetrate".

Steve believes we can never achieve sustainability by making long-term linear plans. These plans are too inflexible and rarely deal with unintended consequences.

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Looking at district plans and traffic models highlights this time and time again. We leave off some of the variables and as a consequence are getting many unintended consequences that do not support sustainable solutions.

Current thinking needs to be transformed. Achieving sustainability is a really complex area with all actions connected in some way to the whole.

There are no quick fixes and the time frames are really long. In Steve's opinion a 30-year time frame is short. He feels we need to create an envisioning process to move forward that creates some outcome-orientated options and not plans as such. We are on a long journey that has no end.

(Professor Marilyn Taylor from the UK was recently in Christchurch speaking about the volunteer sector and policy making, also endorsed this type of approach.)



Steve Viederman and Katherine Peet

Editorial Opinion

Steve's message for us is to examine how we approach change. Are our organisations grasping the new way of operating? Are we connecting to the grass roots and empowering change or are we simply applying the same managerial/linear approach and not really connecting and inspiring the people we need to?

What Local Initiatives are you Involved With? By Wendy Everingham

The key to change seems to come from small grass roots actions where people feel empowered to experiment. What exciting things are happening where you live? Is your community taking a positive lead? Please forward your stories. It is encouraging for others to know they are not the only ones trying to make a difference.

Local Initiative -A Body Corporate

On a very personal level I can say that my immediate neighbours are all experimenting. Six families live in a body corporate. That is we have separate homes on one large block with several communal spaces.

We are starting to share things. Rather than everyone has their own tools etc we borrow from each other. Four of the households are working together on a shared vegetable garden. In the process nearly everyone has started composting and reducing his or her household waste.

A car is being shared and we are all great friends. The benefits have been great for all of us. We have a real community. Whilst a very small-scale idea, it is a start.

Local Initiative - Project Port Lyttelton

On a larger scale I am involved with Project Port Lyttelton. This is a voluntary organisation that is trying to create a vibrant and sustainable community in Lyttelton. Almost three years ago Margaret Jefferies and myself were involved in a community visioning process where a group of Lyttelton residents created a vision for the type of place we wanted to live in. We have brainstormed many projects that help us to achieve our vision of:

“Portal to Canterbury’s historic past, a vibrant sustainable community creating a living future”.

To date we have established a Farmers Market that is enabling local people to purchase food locally, which in turn is reducing food miles and encouraging local food production. We created a material shopping bag to reduce the use of plastic bags, many people coming to the market shop with the bags.

We are writing a monthly newspaper insert into the Akaroa Mail highlighting the initiatives and community building we are involved with.

Margaret Jefferies has established a Timebank, which allows a place for local people to trade services with one another. We have hired Taskforce Green workers to develop our outreach to local people, improve the community garden and create a community centre.

Our initiatives have given people confidence to try new things. We have helped organise community festivals to link people together and we actively encourage people to dream of what is possible.

We seed ideas in our community and watch them become reality. This is a really exciting process. Lyttelton has come alive with possibilities and people are starting to take responsibility to create the type of place they want to live in.

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SOC meets CCC

On November 1st SOC members were invited to the City Council offices to begin a dialogue with the Mayor Garry Moore and council staff. Mayor Garry Moore gave our group a warm welcome and highlighted how our two groups could work together in a meaningful partnership. He felt SOC had a significant role to play in implementing/developing the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy.

From SOC’s perspective it was a chance to outline our new organisation to the Council. Chair Chrissie Williams highlighted the strengths that SOC can bring to the council table. She highlighted how our organisation had extensive networks and significant expertise to help council with many issues they are dealing with. She emphasised that SOC seeks on-going meaningful dialogue with the council and in particular would like representation on the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Forum.



Morgan Williams

After the formal introductions a group dialogue began and Morgan Williams kindly acted as the facilitator between SOC membership, council staff and Mayor Gary Moore. Issues that were raised were the need for real outcomes. People are tired of hearing warm fuzzy

statements that don’t seem to have any real outcomes.

Simon Swaffield felt that progress could be made if a local think tank could be set up that studied and researched and recommended actions for major sustainability issues. The point was made that there is an urgent need for projects that go right to the heart of sustainability and not just projects that skirt the issue. Loss of capacity within the council, ineffective consultation processes and the need to operate within a framework were other issues highlighted.

The meeting concluded with some positive leads for SOC to work with the Council. Garry Moore promised to advocate for SOC representation on the Greater Urban

Development Strategy and SOC membership were encouraged to compile a list of priority projects that really address sustainability issues and to lobby for a think-tank independent of Council to pursue these issues.

SOC Submission – Draft Waste Management Plan

A series of options have been put to Christchurch residents about how the city should deal with waste. SOC members led by Arthur Williamson have written a submission to council outlining ways the plan could be improved.



Recycling options suggested in the plan

Some key points that will be made in the submission:

- Council is to be congratulated for having a draft waste management plan
- More effort should be spent on redesign and reduction of waste at the source
- There should be a greater concentration on non-domestic waste. Domestic waste only accounts for 12% of the waste stream
- Reduction and treatment of organic waste is paramount to reducing waste to landfill
- If organic waste is collected there needs to be a plan for effective treatment
- Biogas production should be examined
- Organics collection is the key to major waste reduction via landfill. Until more options about what to do with organic waste are clear it is premature to consider a specific plan for kerbside collection

If you would like a copy of the full submission that will be presented to council on December 13th please contact Arthur <mailto:arthur.williamson@canterbury.ac.nz>

SOC Committee Vacancy

The “Secretary” position is vacant from January 24th. Please contact Chrissie Williams if you would like the job. Thanks to John Stocks for all his hard work.

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Te Ara Kakariki

Greenway Canterbury

A wildlife network across the plains



Ian Spellerberg from the Isaac Centre of Nature Conservation at Lincoln University briefed the committee on a wonderful concept to create a “greenway” zone in Canterbury.

The vision is the Greenway would consist of a continuous network of native vegetation spanning from the sea to the mountains created by the people who live in the region. The area proposed area would stretch from the Banks Peninsula to the mountains and include the land between the Waimakariri and Rakaia Rivers.

This is a huge project, but conservation corridors could be created in numerous ways. Road and rail corridors, river boundaries, field boundaries were just a couple of the ideas suggested.

The project seeks to achieve several things. Native vegetation corridors will enable wildlife to move freely between the sea and mountains. Communities will become more aware about the value of native vegetation and in the process become excited about the project and participate. Natural ecosystems will be restored and productivity improvements will be gained.

Greenway Canterbury is run by a concept-working group. They envisage their role will be to help facilitate the process and provide technical advice where needed.

If this concept excites you, please contact Ian Spellerberg spelleri@lincoln.ac.nz for more information.

WEA Courses

Are any members interested in running some short courses at the WEA next year? Please contact Margaret Lovell Smith 366 0285

Consultation – Maybe Christchurch can look to Banks Peninsula?

Consultation for the Christchurch City Community Development Strategy is going to begin next year. SOC as a community stakeholder has just been notified of the process. Like most consultation processes the planning has already begun and the frameworks have been drawn up. During now and next August a discussion paper and high level policy options will be developed by council officers and they will seek our feedback in Aug/Sept 2006.

Community consultation always seems to happen after the parameters have been set and we merely get to say yes or no to what has been proposed. SOC believes to improve outcomes the community needs to be involved right from the beginning of the process so that their ideas can be incorporated into the discussion paper and other processes.

A recent trial on the Banks Peninsula with the Walking and Cycling Strategy has had community involvement right from the outset. The council discussion paper was developed from issues the community raised. The entire strategy has been based on feedback received from the residents". Whilst the strategy is not completely finalised we think many people would feel they had meaningful input into the strategy and that their views have been taken into account before any decision-making has taken place.

Seasons Greetings

The Committee wishes all SOC members and families a safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.



Next Edition

Members are encouraged to send contributions for the next newsletter to wendy.everingham@xtra.co.nz or by mail to 1-4 Harmans Road, Lyttelton.

The next deadline for contributions is March 2nd.

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Tell your friends and Colleagues about SOC.

Anyone with an interest in sustainability issues should be encouraged to become a member of our organisation.

Membership rates are:
Students/Unwaged \$10
Households \$15
Organisations \$30

Please contact John Stocks jstocks@free.net.nz for a membership brochure to be emailed or posted to people who may be interested.

Next Committee Meeting

Tuesday January 24th, Waimakariri Room, 7.15 –9.15 at ECAN in Kilmore St. All members welcome to attend to see what's happening at SOC. Meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Sustainable Households: New Courses in Christchurch



Sustainable Households evening class series starts at Hornby High School in February 2006, Mondays 7-9pm. Pre-book with Jill Husband, Community Education organiser: hd@hornby.school.nz or 349 5396. Similar class at Riccarton High School from May 2006. Daytime series, probably Wednesdays, proposed at Strickland Street Community Gardens house, plus Saturday seminars at Mairehau High School and other venues across Canterbury: Little River, Kaikoura, Ashburton. More info: Rhys Taylor 337 1662 anneandrhy@compuserve.com and website: www.sustainablehouseholds.org.nz

