

# newsletter



sustainable  
otautahi christchurch

Volume 1 No 11 May 2007

## **Genuine Progress Indicator** by Wendy Everingham

A good crowd gathered to hear Dr Garry McDonald speak about a new economic indicator for New Zealand called a GPI, the genuine progress indicator. Gary is an economist who specialises in ecological economics.

Most of us are familiar with the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) indicator. This economic indicator measures the economic output of a nation in terms of production and services. It was designed in the 1930's to address employment losses. It doesn't measure the wellbeing of a country and pays no attention to externalities such as environmental and social consequences of outcomes. In fact the GDP measures many things that are detrimental to our economy. For instance spending more on fuel is viewed as a positive outcome with this indicator when more spent on fuel equates to more traffic congestion. The GDP pays no attention to the resources that sustain life. Our air, water, soil and does not penalise an economy when we utilise our natural capital too much. It doesn't value our social capital either. The non monetary economy is never measured. So all the work you do on a voluntary basis is never measured. When these indicators become central to how decisions are made they need to reflect the realities of the situation. The GPI is an attempt to do this. It attempts to factor in many of the externalities both socially and environmental that have never been measured in the past. Whilst still evolving this indicator offers hope for a more sustainable future.

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## Annual General Meeting 7.15pm Tuesday 26 June 2007

At Waiau 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 Michael Theelen\* from CCC  
will speak on:

### **“How the Council’s Sustainability Policy will meet the Council’s obligations under the Local Government Act 2002”**



**\*Michael Theelen**

General Manager - Strategy and Planning  
Strategy and Planning leads and co-  
ordinates Christchurch City Council’s  
long-term planning and policy

development, and ensures that this is aligned to  
Council’s strategic directions and integrated across all  
Council functions and activities.

Everyone welcome. Supper will follow. Please send  
apologies to Dave Evans  
[dave.evans@alliedtelesyn.co.nz](mailto:dave.evans@alliedtelesyn.co.nz)

## **Farewell Chrissie**

At our last committee meeting Chrissie Williams  
announced her plans to step down as the Chair of SOC  
and as a SOC committee member. She has decided to  
stand for Council at the October elections, and she  
wants SOC to remain apolitical.

On behalf of the committee we wish her well and thank  
her for her leadership and hard work over the past two  
years.

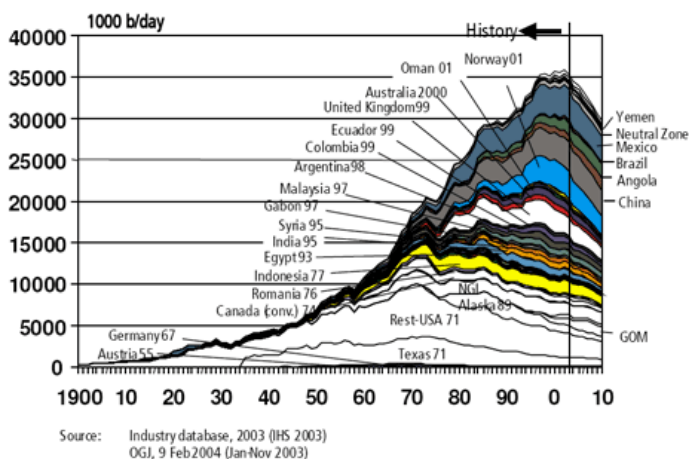
## SOC Members discussion on Peak Oil.

Tuesday 29 May 8-9pm

"The SOC Committee is going to try a new format for meetings so that they are of more interest to members. Every second month we will shorten the committee meeting so that there is space for discussion on a topic of interest.

On Tuesday 29 May there will be a short committee meeting from 7.15pm-8pm, and then from 8-9pm there will be a short presentation on Peak Oil followed by a discussion. The purpose is for all of us to understand Peak Oil better, and more importantly the consequences and actions required because of it.

Members are welcome at all Committee meetings but there are organisational matters that do need to be dealt with. We hope that this proposal will encourage more members to attend and to connect better with SOC. You are welcome to arrive either for 7.15pm or for 8pm. Venue will be the Waimakariri Room at ECan – use the eastern most door on Kilmore Street (knock on window if you need to be let in)



Graph courtesy of an article by Lester Brown, The Coming Decline of Oil. For more information see; [http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/03/the\\_coming\\_decl.php](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/03/the_coming_decl.php)

### **New Committee Members**

Are you interested to get more involved with SOC? We welcome any members who'd love to get involved on the committee. Please contact Chrissie Williams or other committee members for more information.

## **Not just communicating: how to share hard policy choices about climate change with the public. Excerpts from a lecture by Professor Tim O'Riordan by Komathi Kolandai (Prof O'Riordan visited NZ recently celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the PCE)**

In a public lecture at University of Canterbury, Professor Tim O'Riordan (British Sustainability Commissioner) asserted that the climate change agenda has moved out of science and onto the agenda of international policies, businesses and governments around the world. Polls indicate that the public are alerted, hence, people typically unexpected to be concerned, are expressing concern and are worried about the future of their children. He regarded this to be the first tipping point of social / cultural shift.

Earth may no longer have the capacity to deal with human induced changes of climate change, he says, as we are currently witnessing effects on the tundra and melting of glaciers. While Earth's capacity to absorb carbon has become less efficient, there are presently no models on how humans are to adapt to the changes, and the "future" where such adaptation would be necessary is not far away but within touchable distance. He noted this to be the second tipping point. He asserted that the adoption and implementation of effective policies are crucial at this point in time, and climate change should no longer be perceived as a problem to be addressed in the future.

He then provided three suggestions for effective climate change policy and its communication:

First, the traditionally held political position that solutions can be achieved by technology alone, needs to alter. Second, policies need to incorporate a "well being theme," in other words, what makes people happy in themselves. And third, the adoption of a "carbon debit card" whereby credit is taken off your card when you purchase anything with carbon implications, such as imported food or fuel.

The third in particular has a high potential for inducing behavioural changes. This has been done previously for water and energy whereby with sufficient incentives, people's behaviour shifted. However, such a scheme would need to take into account the social justice aspects. The poor may tend to be more carbon intensive because their houses tend to be poorly insulated and

they drive inefficient old cars. Hence implementation of the carbon debit card needs to be done cautiously, considering the adverse effects it may have on the vulnerable. Such a system should also recognise the carbon conscious, by providing them the opportunity to sell excess credits. In this way, the carbon debit card may be the ultimate key to change behaviour, outside regulation.

In addition, he says, there needs to be recognition of "civic virtue" – an inbuilt mechanism where people act for the public good. Carbon reduction should be perceived as an act of public good, associated with wellbeing, perceived as a joy rather than a chore. He concluded that debate around "civic virtue" would be the ultimate tipping point towards a carbon neutral society.

### Permaculture: retrofitting the suburbs for the energy descent.

Excerpts from a lecture by David Holmgren by Wendy Everingham.



Hosted by CPIT, this most interesting lecture focused on the role of permaculture to create sustainable outcomes for communities as energy supplies decrease.

For those of you that are not

familiar with permaculture concepts, David says it is, 'Consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs. People, their buildings and the ways in which they organise themselves are central to permaculture'.

Permaculture in an energy depleted world offers local communities a tool to ensure they live within the bounds of nature. When applied to a normal suburban household it means a reorganisation of spaces. Household lawns and ornamental gardens can be converted to food production. Homes can be made more energy efficient and more self reliant with water tanks and solar energy collection. Transport will change. Walking, cycling and public transport will be better options. Once car filled road space will become new communal areas. More

things will be recycled around ones home. Passive solar ideas will be added to homes.

To lead a permaculture lifestyle requires a retro fit of your current space. To read more about David's ideas and in particular this lecture see [www.holmgren.com.au](http://www.holmgren.com.au)

Lyttelton is experimenting with David's local garden concept. We are teaching people how to grow food in the community garden and encouraging others to grow food at home. In a recent survey of residents we also identified plots of land that people would be happy to put into food production. We have even approached the council to find out if there is vacant land that could also be turned into local gardens.

We enhance the performance of the gardens by returning our own organic waste to the system.

### 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 download a form from the web site or contact Dave Evans for a membership brochure to be emailed or posted to people who may be interested.

### Election Scorecard

Anyone interested in formulating a series of questions on sustainability to be forwarded to respective candidates on sustainability issues? With local body elections approaching quickly this is a good opportunity to find out how candidates feel about certain issues. Information gathered can be placed on the SOC website. Contact Kate Hewson if you have any suggestions or would like to get more involved. [kate.hewson@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:kate.hewson@canterbury.ac.nz)

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## Excerpts from an article by Katherine Peet : The Relevance of the Treaty Today.

"The Treaty was signed in 1840 - *but what has it got to do with today?*"

The Treaty is not widely seen as a framework for considering the future - more often it is regarded as the cause of grievances! The Waitangi Tribunal and the Office for Treaty Settlements were set up to address historical grievances but there is a growing number of people in this country who have taken the opportunity to understand what caused the grievances and to encourage the political will to deal with them fully, and to think about what the Treaty means today and into the future.

What is not so widely understood is what is at risk when, as at present, the Treaty is being undermined as a framework for the future in this country. +



A useful question to encourage discussion on this topic is to consider *what would be lost if the Treaty was taken away?* Another approach is to encourage people to think about their own stories, beginning with where they were born or grew up, and then considering their journey to the present time. They then share with each other:

*What do you want to pass on to the next generation?*

*What keeps you going when you are down in the dumps?*

*What really matters?*

Responses to these questions are remarkably similar, in our experience. As a group exercise there are occasionally some responses that are not shared - for

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example hunting and shooting is not something favoured by vegans. But usually people find it easy to develop a common list about what sort of future people want.

Recurrent themes are: respect for self and others, peace, family, whanau, friends, healthy relationships, achieving full potential, justice, wise sharing of natural resources and preservation of them for future generations, etc. Conversations extend into considering the limitations of the market approach to development, the value of gift relationships and that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. A good image to describe this latter point is that we are no longer "simply" dealing with complicatedness - we are dealing with complexity. This like the difference between a bicycle (complicated) and a frog (complex) - you break a bike down into its component parts and you can put it back together again but if you do that to a frog - oops!

In this way of working it is better to be approximately right than precisely wrong. The outcome of these conversations is often referred to by visitors to this land, as the common decency of people in this country - people do want to be honourable. This is not a new phenomenon, historically. The summary phrase of what the people of this country wanted in the work of Royal Commissions, both in 1972 and 1986, was a "Fair Go, for everyone". Common sense and conversation easily identifies what we value, yet we are vexed by the question *how to achieve steps towards this future?*

This is the essence of the relevance of the Treaty.

The Treaty gives everyone a place to belong - it is not just a Maori phenomenon. The right to be here for those whose ancestry is not from the local indigenous peoples stems from the relationship made with those peoples - the relationships outlined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is the Treaty that gives a framework for us *all* to be able to hold on to the things we value.



## Events

### **A Way Forward with the Treaty**

Hone Harawira will address the limits, constraints and possibilities for Pakeha committed to a Treaty based future.

**Date and time:** 9<sup>th</sup> May 6pm

**Location:** Oxford Terrace Baptist Church Lounge

**RSVP by 8am on Tuesday May 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Ph 384 1281 or [john.peet@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:john.peet@canterbury.ac.nz)**

A light meal will be provided at 5.30pm

### **Economics for Spaceship Earth**

Inspirational speaker: Peter Brown, Professor, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

**Date and time:** 18 May 12.30pm

**Location:** "Our City " (cnr Oxford Tce/ Worcester St

**Cost:** Gold Coin Donation

Prof. Brown will show that the current economic order rests on mistaken scientific, metaphysical, and theological assumptions. He will take five simple questions and show that current economic theory does not offer coherent answers to them. These are:

What is economy for?

Where is it?

How big should it be?

How does it work?

How to think about waste?

Prof Brown will talk about what a new economic order based on the idea of respect for life and the geophysical and biological systems on which it depends. To begin a glossary is offered in which many of its key terms of economics are redefined. These can include: budgets, resources, distribution, production, consumption, money, efficiency, and comparative advantage. It is shown why it is better to be in step with the universe rather than ignoring it. In conclusion, a definition of cosmic citizenship is offered.

### **SOC Members discussion on Peak Oil.**

**Tuesday 29 May 8-9pm**

**Venue** Waimakariri Room at ECan – use the eastern most door on Kilmore Street (knock on window if you need to be let in)

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## Waste Project

Under the direction of Rhys Taylor, SOC's waste project continues to take shape. Just to refresh your memories Rhys says this practical project aims "to increase public access to waste-related sustainability information and to boost action to minimize waste by households and businesses".

If you'd like to be involved, as an advisor, a source of contacts, focus group participant or more 'hands-on' in the project detail contact Rhys on 960 2656 or [anneandrhy@clear.net.nz](mailto:anneandrhy@clear.net.nz)

### **Next Edition**

This will be my last edition as newsletter editor and I am also stepping down from the committee. Two years in this role has passed quickly. I have enjoyed writing the articles and learning more about sustainability issues. Thanks to everyone on the committee for their support.

I plan to stand for a spot on the Lyttelton Mount Herbert Community Board and with the knowledge I have gained from SOC attempt to influence stronger sustainability outcomes within the council.

A new newsletter schedule will be compiled by the new committee after the AGM in June.

### **Next Committee Meeting**

Tuesday May 29<sup>th</sup>, 7.15 –9.15 at ECan in Kilmore St. All members welcome to attend to see what's happening at SOC.

