



Volume 1 No 13 Oct/Nov 2007

## Editorial

Welcome to this edition of the SOC newsletter. I'm the new editor and while this edition basically follows the same format of the previous one there are a couple of changes.

Organisations focussed on sustainability are often tackling issues at a range of different scales, from the very personal to the global, all at once. It is normally not possible, and probably not very healthy or personally sustainable, to be focussed on all these levels all the time. Recognising this I've colour coded the titles of articles in this newsletter to reflect which ones focus on which 'scale', so that you can focus more on the sets of issues that interest you. These in their respective colours are:

**Personal (and Domestic)**

**Local (Neighbourhood level)**

**Town and Around (City and Region wide)**

**National**

**Global**

Sometimes an article covers an issue at more than one scale, in which case the title will be multicoloured. Submission of articles is welcome from all members to me here at [ian-burn@actrix.co.nz](mailto:ian-burn@actrix.co.nz). If an article is too much for you however, how about a piece of advice or a tip about sustainability, or a joke? I've been struggling to find jokes about sustainability or the environment generally, beyond the obvious political ones e.g. Michael Cullen's commitment to

sustainable transport, so anything you've got would be welcome.

The other change in this newsletter is that there is now a Committee Actions section so that you can see what we've been up to.

Finally if you do have any feedback on content, or ideas for articles this would be much appreciated.

Ian Burn

## Chrissie Williams - City Councillor

On 13 October former SOC Chair Chrissie Williams was re-elected to the Christchurch City Council. This is Chrissie's second time on Council after losing her seat in 2004 when the number of seats available were reduced from 24 to 12. Chrissie has been elected to the Burwood-Pegasus ward and spoke to us recently about Council, Sustainability and Christchurch and what progress she sees being possible over the next few years. This is the first of a series of interviews with local body politicians that we will be presenting in this newsletter in the coming year.



Chrissie sees sustainability in terms of our living within our means, reducing resource use, and not overloading the ecosystems on which humanity

depends. She sees work to achieve these outcomes needing to be supported by the four pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and cultural.

Chrissie believes that 'people are at the heart of sustainability', and that sustainability needs to start at the household level with people's choices in regard to such matters as: storm water disposal, travel options, shopping, and using gardens to produce vegetables. From this level community wide sustainability schemes can be developed in a context of people caring for each other.

In terms of the City Council Chrissie sees this organisation being able to further sustainability objectives through work in such areas as:

- Good urban and suburban design
- Influencing the building and retrofitting of houses so that they are warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.
- Waste reduction
- Water use reduction
- Better access to facilities to reduce people's need to rely on unsustainable forms of transport.

In this coming Council term Chrissie sees herself having roles in terms of:

- facilitating activities around sustainability issues;
- furthering the Council's energy policy – particularly in terms of connecting this with key stakeholders, and with regional and national statistical trends
- working to ensure that the Long Term Council Community Plan Community Outcomes Policy process is effective, and community driven, and that outcomes arrived at are sufficiently concrete to be meaningful.
- Increasing the level of financial scrutiny of Council activities
- Improving Council consultation processes.

Chrissie believes that SOC should be involved with Council staff and elected members as early as possible in working on key projects, and become recognised as a network of people with useful skills that they are prepared to share. She sees SOC as having a key role in connecting various groups and individuals with sustainability concerns, with Council, ECAN and other Government agencies. She also sees SOC, other NGOs, and other stakeholders working alongside, rather than under, the various levels of Government.

### One Minute

A short film that encourages us to realise the immense impacts we all have in our everyday decision-making.

[http://www.futerra.co.uk/auto.php?inc=case&site\\_cat=5&site\\_sub=13&case=32](http://www.futerra.co.uk/auto.php?inc=case&site_cat=5&site_sub=13&case=32)

### "Weaving the people together"

This was the title of a recent address by Tariana Turia MP to the Association of Non-Government Organisations in Aotearoa (ANGOA) of which SOC is a member.

Mrs Turia was the first Minister of the Community and Voluntary Sector and in this speech she reflects on the influence of the sector in knitting together a consortium of national, regional and local NGOs.

She referred to the focus on communication, networking and accessing relevant information, highlighting the value of the regular media releases "ComVoiceS".

In aligning the work of the sector alongside Mahi aroha - the unpaid activity under tikanga and kaupapa Maori - she noted the importance of maintaining mana of all those involved rather than focussing on monetary or personal gain.

Noting the immense amount of unpaid work that goes largely unacknowledged, she sought feedback from ANGOA on four aspects

- Genuine Progress Indicator - How the skills and expertise of the sector are being recognised in a financial sense, in order to acknowledge the value of policy advice the sector provides to government?
- Strengthening whanau participation - starting from the security, strengths and assets that exist within whanau, how to encourage and support enterprising thinking and action?
- Removal of obstacles that confront communities - making particular reference to gambling, de-normalising family violence, and speaking out against poverty. Would a way forward be that organisations in the sector would contract with one government agency, which then reports to other government agencies?
- Treaty responsibilities - referring to the parties to the Treaty as tangata tiriti and tangata whenua she referred to her commitment to supporting the aspirations and dreams of tangata tiriti.

In working together to achieve shared outcomes she expressed absolute commitment to ensuring that the respective worldviews are valued and asked for any ideas in an ongoing search for Treaty justice.

In concluding she referred to the way these ideas and policy priorities impact on our sector and at the very basis of our cultural and national identities.

Synopsis by Katherine Peet  
Full address available from  
[www.angoa.org.nz](http://www.angoa.org.nz)

### SOC's Local Body Sustainability Survey 1. Learning from the process

Hopefully all SOC members voted in the recent local government elections?! Leading up to the elections, SOC in partnership with cycle advocacy group Spokes and Living Streets Christchurch ran an on-line candidates' questionnaire to help our members and other voters learn more about where candidates' interests and priorities lay regarding sustainability and how candidates might approach sustainability-related issues if elected.

Over two-thirds of all candidates running for the mayoralty, city council, community boards and regional council responded to our questionnaire, although disappointingly none of the key mayoral candidates attempted it. We were particularly pleased that candidates responded from right across the political spectrum, with 93 % of all respondents saying that sustainability (as outlined by SOC) is very important.

Most interesting I thought were the comment responses, which reflected considerable variation in the understanding candidates had about sustainability and how they would address sustainability issues.

Invariably, particularly as this is the first time SOC has run a questionnaire like this, there are plenty of things we would do differently in future (hindsight always being a wonderful thing). SOC, Spokes and LSA-Christchurch reps are having a 'debrief' shortly to discuss in detail what we thought worked well with

the questions and the process of engaging with candidates, local media, and the general public – and what didn't work that well. If you have any feedback on what questions you found useful, what weren't useful and/or what were hard to interpret, please let me know ([kate.hewson@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:kate.hewson@canterbury.ac.nz)).

Overall, I think the questionnaire had the following beneficial outcomes:

- We got a very good response rate from across the political groups and from independents;
- We helped impress upon candidates the importance of sustainability to local government;
- We hopefully helped SOC members and others to vote with sustainability in mind;
- We raised the profile of SOC, Spokes and Living Streets with people who are now our local government representatives;
- We have a better knowledge of the interests and priorities of many of the people who are now our local government representatives;
- For those candidates who responded to our survey and were successfully elected, SOC has the opportunity to hold them to the answers and commitments they made!

Kate Hewson

### SOC's Local Body Sustainability Survey 2. What did the successful City Councillors say?

This is the first in a series of pieces analysing the results of the survey. This article looks at the responses of the new Christchurch City Councillors and Mayor. The information below gives percentages in regard to both the 9 successful candidates who responded to the survey ("respondents"), and also the total 14 Councillors ("Councillors").

**- How important to you is Sustainability (as defined in the survey): Very important**

**Respondents: 88.9% Councillors 57.1%**

**- Do you think the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy sufficiently integrates a sustainable development**

**approach to long term urban planning for Greater Christchurch as opposed to just managing urban growth?**

|                     | Yes  | No   | No Response<br>Unsure |
|---------------------|------|------|-----------------------|
| <b>Respondents:</b> | 66.7 | 22.2 | 11.1                  |
| <b>Councillors</b>  | 42.9 | 14.2 | 42.9                  |

**- If elected, will you support the Central Plains Water Scheme?**

|                     | Yes | No   | No Response<br>Unsure |
|---------------------|-----|------|-----------------------|
| <b>Respondents:</b> | 0   | 55.6 | 44.4                  |
| <b>Councillors</b>  | 0   | 35.8 | 64.2                  |

**- If elected, will you support the increased expenditure (or greater) recommended for cycling, walking, public transport, and travel planning in the Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Statement (the 20-year statement of direction for Christchurch's transport system approved by the City Council in 2003)?**

|                     | Yes  | No | No Response<br>Unsure |
|---------------------|------|----|-----------------------|
| <b>Respondents:</b> | 88.9 | 0  | 11.1                  |
| <b>Councillors</b>  | 57.1 | 0  | 42.9                  |

**- Do you support no road through the Christchurch City Mall?**

|                     | Yes  | No   | No Response<br>Unsure |
|---------------------|------|------|-----------------------|
| <b>Respondents:</b> | 55.6 | 22.2 | 22.2                  |
| <b>Councillors</b>  | 35.7 | 14.3 | 50.0                  |

**- Do you want more pedestrian-only areas in central Christchurch?**

|                     | Yes  | No   | No Response<br>Unsure |
|---------------------|------|------|-----------------------|
| <b>Respondents:</b> | 66.7 | 22.2 | 11.1                  |
| <b>Councillors</b>  | 42.9 | 14.3 | 42.9                  |

Respondents were also asked to prioritise 1-5 a list of topics to take action on. The following scores out of 100 were calculated by imputing 5 points to priority 1 down to 1 point for priority 5 and making calculations

relative to a possible maximum score of 45 (5 x 9 Councillors) for each topic.

|                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Drinking Water                 | 85.0 |
| Transport                      | 53.3 |
| Urban Design                   | 40.0 |
| Biodiversity                   | 37.8 |
| Freshwater Ecosystems          | 35.6 |
| Energy Efficiency & Renewables | 35.6 |
| Public Participation           | 33.3 |
| Te Tiriti                      | 31.1 |
| Air Pollution                  | 31.1 |
| Healthier Housing              | 31.1 |

Further detail on all of the above can be found at:

<http://www.sustainablechristchurch.org.nz/re-sources/surveyresponses>

### **Rhys and Anne's South Canterbury Project**

SOC member Rhys Taylor has been travelling more than usual across Canterbury in recent months. What could justify this keen cyclist's carbon burning, at the wheel of the family car on several weekends a month? The car-boot-full of native trees, furniture and recycled housewares are establishing a new home in Geraldine, although he and Anne continue to rent (and work) in Christchurch during the week. The first phase of their earth-sheltered passive solar house, designed by another SOC member, Roger Buck, has one bedroom, a shower room, galley kitchen and living area plus a roofed open workshop space, the area of a garage.

The roof is concrete, waterproofed, insulated, and now earth covered, to support low-growing drought and frost-tolerant native plants. "We are noting what we plant where, and whether it survives, as a contribution to research on green roofs in New Zealand, where most of such projects have been in the warmer North Island." says Rhys.

The high thermal mass of the design means temperatures fluctuate very little overnight. This should also mean that it avoids summer over-heating and that in winter, once a solar air heater is added to the north wall, the sunshine may provide much of the space

heating, leaving only a few degrees to boost using the under-tile electric circuits. Rhys and Anne are monitoring the power use of underfloor heating, home appliances and low-energy lighting, and the performance of a Thermocell solar water heating system, by taking various temperature measurements and meter readings on each visit. The optional electrical water heating boost is not often required. "It's still interesting, rather than a chore, to do this monitoring whilst the place is new to us" says Rhys, "but I can see the appeal of automated monitoring longer-term, such as used on the Beacon Project NOW homes in Rotorua and New Lynn."

(<http://www.nowhome.co.nz/home.aspx>)

"When we have paid for most of phase one we plan to add a second phase, again with eco-house features. It's at early design stage. Meanwhile we have plenty of landscape planting to do, a heritage pipfruit orchard and organic vege-garden to keep us busy!"



There are several interesting and different house projects in South Canterbury that might together make the subject of a future SOC coach excursion - perhaps for Solar Homes Day in September / October 2008? Contact Rhys if this idea appeals: [anneandrhys@clear.net.nz](mailto:anneandrhys@clear.net.nz)

### Community consensus building in South Canterbury

Following the SOC committee meeting on 28 August Julia Laming (of ECan) and Shelley Washington (NZ Landcare Trust) gave a presentation on the Orari Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Process. The Orari is a South Canterbury river passing close to Geraldine. The purpose of an ICM process is to draw together the diverse range of groups, individuals and organisations with an interest in the

catchment, and to facilitate the development of a management strategy or plan that reflects these interests. The Orari process, which began in 2005, is community driven and facilitated by ECan and the NZ Landcare Trust. The aim is to produce a non-statutory plan that accurately reflects the needs and wants of the entire community. This is done through building a group of local people representative of the whole community who have relevant local knowledge and are provided with the results of scientific research. This Orari Group is a strong voice in representing the community in directing statutory agencies like ECan, District Councils and other organisations in their various responsibilities as they relate to the Orari River.

Key to forming the group was a series of public meetings to explore the issues, review scientific information and share points of view. Over time mutual understanding among the diverse interest groups was built, and common ground reached. Two bus tours were organised so that everyone involved had a clearer view of the entire catchment. At the 16th meeting a Steering Committee of 10-12 representative members was elected to review the plan. Once the management plan has been reviewed, the draft will go back to the larger group for approval. The reasonably consistent turnout at meetings to date indicates a commitment to the process and a general willingness to stay involved. The Orari community now has a wealth of combined knowledge and is prepared to talk together, and engage with the council. The ICM process is more cost effective and less divisive than fighting battles in the Environment Court, and builds understanding and capacity in the community so that it is capable of making submissions to councils, that carry the weight of broad community backing.

### New Zealand Energy, and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategies

The government has recently released these key strategies. Helen Clark's speech notes for the launch of these can be found at:

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=30956>

## The Urban Design Protocol and SOC

SOC is a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol (UDP). In broad terms this is a commitment by SOC to help advance the Protocol's objective of raising the quality of the urban environment.

But the UDP is silent on Peak Oil and Climate Change, and I think most of us would regard this as an extraordinary omission. Our signing up to it therefore might be seen as being questionable, but we can be generous and work on the assumption that Peak Oil and Climate Change were not mentioned because they were taken by the authors of the UDP as 'givens' (even though they weren't).

Signatories to the UDP are required to nominate an Urban Design Champion (which is me), and undertake one or more tasks, and I think I have a good idea for one.

But before saying what it is let's look briefly at what we've got coming. Massive global and local economic implications lie ahead of us as competition for a dwindling supply of cheap oil leads to social and political destabilisation as costs rise and availability falters. And as time passes we will find ourselves also having to deal with the diversion of resources away from customary uses in order to manage climate change impacts.

If we look at the human side of all this we end up with the urban environment being a critically important element – more than 80% of New Zealanders live in a town or city. Our towns and cities therefore must find ways of managing the transition from being oil-hungry to becoming oil-frugal, and, ultimately, being oil-free.

The answer, in my view, lies in 'localisation'. Communities are encouraged, firstly, to come together. Then they work towards increasing levels of self-sufficiency – across the board: water, food, shelter, energy, entertainment....



*Successful Town Centre Revitalisation (UK)*

Already we have in Christchurch a number of existing models to work from – Project Port Lyttelton is the most complete example, but there is also Addington Bush, the Salisbury Street co-housing group, Community Gardens, and even where I live – all are examples of local self-help, community-centred initiatives.

My UDP task proposal, then, is that SOC brings all this together as a proposal for Christchurch becoming a Transition Town. In short, we prepare a Transition Plan, which will point the way toward the city's evolution into a conglomerate of partially self-sustaining small communities which, together – and in conjunction with surrounding rural communities – will make for a completely sustainable city.

This is already happening elsewhere, see: <http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionNetwork>

Roger Buck

## Events & Deadlines

1. Lecture Series by Professor Ed Weber  
7/8 Nov at 5.15 pm in the Waiau Theatre, University of Canterbury.

Professor Weber will share his experiences about how to harness the potential of stakeholder collaboration to address deep seated environmental and development conflicts in water catchments. He will draw on his experience internationally and in the western USA, and outline what may be of interest in a NZ context.

2. EcoExpo is an event focussed on sustainable living at which a large number of products and services will be on display as well as a range of lectures and workshops

on a wide number of topics. SOC and Sustainable Living are having a stall at the EcoExpo on *10-11 November* at Pioneer Stadium, 75 Lyttelton St, Spreydon. Please contact Rhys on [rhys@sustainableliving.org.nz](mailto:rhys@sustainableliving.org.nz) 960-2656 if you'd like to help.

3. In early 2008 the Otago Polytechnic will be launching **SHaC 09 (the Sustainable Habitat Challenge)** to tertiary organisations around New Zealand. This involves researching, designing and building a high impact home that creates little impact on the planet – using less resources and more sustainable practices, in an 18 month period. Information sessions open to all will be held at the following locations:  
 CPIT - November 5, 12pm, Room V136, Sullivan Avenue Campus  
 University of Canterbury - **November 5**, 3.30pm, Law Room 105 - off University Drive  
 Lincoln University - November 5, 3.30pm, Room H3, Groundfloor, Hilgendorf Building  
 For more information contact [info@shac.org.nz](mailto:info@shac.org.nz), 0800 762 786 or see, [www.otagopolytechnic.ac.nz/shac09](http://www.otagopolytechnic.ac.nz/shac09)

3. Registrations are open for the **New Zealand Association of Environmental Education Conference** on **16-18 January 2008**. Contact [tania.mclean@otago.ac.nz](mailto:tania.mclean@otago.ac.nz) for more information.

4. Applications are due for the **Ministry for the Environment's 2008/9 Sustainable Management Fund** by **22 January 2008**. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz>

## Committee Actions

### Completed

- **Local Body Sustainability Survey**
- **Regional Policy Statement Change no.1 Submission** See <http://soc.onlinegroups.net/r/file/706807-2007-10-31T061535Z>

### In Process

- **SOC Action Plan**
- **Christchurch City Council** has asked SOC to be part of its Sustainability Working Group, and to comment on its **Sustainability Policy** by **26 November**

<http://soc.onlinegroups.net/r/file/706806-2007-10-31T061146Z>

- **Response to Regional Land Transport Strategy** by **20 December** see <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Our+Environment/Transport/>
- Response to demotion of importance of sustainability in the **Tertiary Education Commission Strategy**

### Upcoming SOC meetings:

SOC committee meeting (all members welcome):  
 Tuesday 27 November, 7.15-9.15 pm,  
 Waimakariri Room, Environment Canterbury.

SOC end-of-year social get together!  
 Sunday 2 December, 6pm  
 17 Denvir St  
 (off Lees Rd, off Idris Rd)  
 Ph. 351-1232 (Kate)  
 BYO something to share for a pot-luck dinner.  
**ALL SOC MEMBERS WELCOME!**