

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Kathy Biddlecombe

Transition Shire Wingecarribee (TSW) is part of one of the fastest growing community-scale initiatives in the world. Since the first (Totnes in Devon, England) was developed in 2006, about 100 official initiatives have emerged and many more communities are considering the idea.

Transition Initiative communities are committed to using less energy and mitigating climate change.

The days of cheap and abundant oil are over and we need to discover some new and rediscover some old ways of responsibly meeting our material needs. In our rush to globalisation, we have abandoned much of our local defence against external shocks. We need to reclaim it and the only way we can do that before peak oil really starts to pinch is by acting immediately as a *community*.

Areas to be explored include transport, waste management, education, health, housing, food, energy and entertainment.

A Transition Initiative is more party than protest. It takes a holistic view and works as a catalyst for community members to find solutions. The imminent challenges are too great for individuals to face, but there is no end to our collective innovation and energy.

*Areas to be explored include transport, waste management, education, health, housing, food, energy and entertainment.*

## FILM AND INFORMATION FESTIVAL SPRING 2008

The Transition Film and Information Festival has begun. Three films and a presentation will be shown across 10 locations between now and mid-November.

First up was *Australia Pumping Empty* at the Mittagong Playhouse Supper Room. The film was followed by a TSW presentation of positive solutions to the problems explored in the film.

Attendance was good, with some interesting discussion after the screening.

Other films showing are *The End of Suburbia* (back by popular demand) and *The Power of Community*, an inspiring film about Cuba's response to the energy famine of the 1990s.

Each screening will be followed by the opportunity for viewers to voice concerns and thoughts or contribute ideas.

See below for the full schedule. Entry to all events is \$5 donation.

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Date	Location	Event
Saturday 4 October 7pm	Mittagong Playhouse Supper Room	<i>Australia Pumping Empty</i> & presentation
Friday 10 October 7pm	East Bowral Community Centre	<i>End of Suburbia</i> & discussion
Saturday 11 October 7pm	Colo Vale Community Hall	Presentation & discussion
Friday 17 October 7pm	Civic Centre Theatre - Moss Vale	<i>Power of Community</i> & discussion
Saturday 18 October 7pm	Exeter Community Hall	Presentation & discussion
Saturday 25 October 7pm	Hill Top Community Hall	Presentation & discussion
Saturday 1 November 5.30pm	Uniting Church Hall Bowral	<i>Australia Pumping Empty</i> & discussion & pot luck supper
Friday 7 November 7pm	Robertson CTC	<i>Australia Pumping Empty</i> & presentation
Saturday 8 November 7pm	Berrima Courthouse	<i>Australia Pumping Empty</i> & presentation
Saturday 15 November 7pm	Bundanoon Memorial Hall	<i>Australia Pumping Empty</i> & presentation

# TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

## OCTOBER IN THE FOOD GARDEN Jill Cockram

Spring planting is off and racing, so get your seeds in for artichokes, beans, beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, kale, lettuce, peas, snow-peas, radish, spinach, sunflowers and turnips.

Tomato, capsicum, cucumber and pumpkin seedlings are still under glass in the coldframe and can go out around mid-October, after the risk of frost has passed. Check your favourite gardening book under *cool/temperate* for a comprehensive list.

Mulch the seedlings with old hay, lucerne hay or straw once they are big enough to

manage it. This will keep their roots cool and conserve water.

A generous application of manure or home-made compost around fruit trees followed by a good watering will encourage a magnificent crop.

Lightly prune established lemon trees and spray with white oil only if you notice an infestation of scale. Resist the temptation to bring out the pest sprays when you first notice an invasion of aphids on your old cabbage and broccoli plants. They will provide a food supply for the ladybirds and

other predator insects and birds. No aphids, no beneficial insects!

Plant new lemon trees. In the highlands, make sure you have a sheltered, sunny spot for them. Passionfruit can also be planted now - best on a warm, northern wall. Strawberries should be forming well, so give them lots of well-diluted compost tea and mulch them well with straw.

Manure and mulch your berry patches now and water them well - you will be rewarded with beautiful flowers followed by a generous crop of berries. YUM!



*A little effort now could bring you summer berry joy*

*Some people have been living in a localized way and providing for many of their own needs all along*

## TRANSITION IN THE COMMUNITY

There are lots of transition activities happening in the Southern Highlands. Luckily for the rest of us, some people have been living sustainably and in a localized way all along. We can participate and add to their effort while learning from them.

If you are interested in getting involved, you could join one of the following groups:

**Harmony Farm** organic fruit and vegetable farm in Canyonleigh. Working bees on the third Sunday of the month including instruction in various techniques. Call John Cranney 48771446 .

**Permablitz** join an enthusiastic bunch as they work on one another's gardens on occasional Sundays. Call Kathy 4877 1614.

**Moss Vale Community Garden** run by Anglicare. Join as a volunteer and help out in the garden on Wednesday mornings. Call Mathew Harden on 4868 1780.

**Southern Highlands Seed Savers** next meeting 11am Sunday 12 October in Exeter. Call Jill 4883 4399.

Do you know of a group practising Transition principles in the Southern Highlands? Do you have a Transition-friendly event that you would like to have listed here? Would you like to subscribe to this newsletter? Email [kathy\\_biddlecombe@acenet.com.au](mailto:kathy_biddlecombe@acenet.com.au)

## PETITION SUCCESS

CANWin's petition for a Transition Shire was a resounding success. Over 300 residents signed to show local council candidates and other residents their support for preparing for a low-energy future.

More importantly, those residents showed their understanding of the im-

pact of peak oil and climate change.

The Southern Highlands News was very supportive, running several articles about the initiative and even dedicating one of its few pre-election candidates questions to TSW.

We hope that the newly appointed Mayor Gair and

his team will be open to the Transition Initiative. TSW is a grass roots initiative, but Council would be doing us all a service by paving the way for locally produced alternative energy, providing public land for community gardens and generally being open to re-localisation.

*As a community, we need to make a planned transition away from high consumption of energy, water and resources*

# TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

## WHAT IS PEAK OIL?



*Pumping oil is getting harder and more expensive*

Peak oil is the point at which oil extraction reaches a worldwide maximum and we will be unable to increase production to meet increasing demand.

When it happens (best guesses are between 2005 and 2015), our lives will be changed significantly. Petrol prices, travel, freight, pharmaceuticals, food prices, manufactured goods and

inflation will all be affected.

Unfortunately, there is no other energy source that provides so much cheap output for so little input. Large scale alternatives need huge amounts of fossil fuels and accelerate unpredictable climate change.

Industrial scale biofuels lock up a lot of food producing land; natural gas is a finite

resource; coal requires energy for mining and distribution, is too polluting and won't power cars; nuclear poses disposal and contamination risks while uranium is a limited resource; hydrogen power requires more energy to produce than it provides.

Whichever way you look at it, we are going to need to change our energy expectations.

## HOME HARVEST

Think for a minute about the lettuce in your salad. Where did it come from? How much carbon was released on its way to your plate?

Chances are that you drove to a supermarket to buy your lettuce, which was trucked in from the city where it was refrigerated after being flown in from Tasmania where it was grown using fossil fuel-based fertilisers and pesticides, harvested and washed by machinery, and finally packaged in plastic (for freshness!).

How will this food production system continue to function as oil and energy supplies begin to diminish?

More people are facing these issues by reclaiming their food security and growing food closer to home.

Two years ago, Cathrin, Frank and Annika Sallie bought an old house on a quarter acre in central Bowral.

When we bought the house, the garden was well established with large rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias. It was very beautiful, Cathrin said.

But we couldn't grow fruit trees and vegetables with all

those plants in our yard, so they had to go.+

The Sallies replaced their ornamentals with fruit-bearing trees and built a chicken run. They recycled roofing tin to build raised garden beds and installed tanks to harvest rainwater.

Making the best use of their land, they have planted raspberries along their driveway and have plans to mulch out the front lawn to grow pumpkins and zucchinis instead!

Although Cathrin's food garden would have you believe she's had green thumbs her whole life, she freely admits that she is a novice.

Both my husband and I are new to this. My grandparents would have known what to do but we don't have them around to show us anymore. We've lost that knowledge, so we have to learn as we go.+

While Cathrin's initial motivation for food gardening was concern about climate change and peak oil, the enjoyment of harvesting what she has sown is well worth all the effort.

Our addiction to oil runs deep. If we don't start weaning ourselves off it softly, on our own terms, then we will

be forced to do it painfully. Growing our own food is our way of preparing for a future with less oil.

But you don't have to be worried about the environment to grow veggies. Anyone can do it, even little old ladies! It's fitness and fun rolled into one!+

As well as the role they play in relocalising our food, Cathrin feels that food gardens can reinvigorate the community.

It would be great if we had a Community Garden close by. People could go there to learn the skills they need to grow their own food and also meet lots of interesting people. We could swap seeds and share ideas. It would be a real hub in the community.+

And such a lively place would no doubt be where Cathrin would find some advice on possum deterrents.

Possums are a problem here, but I'd rather have a possum pee on my apples than eat ones from Woolies sprayed with pesticides.+

Who could argue with that?

Nathan Burke

*"My grandparents would have known what to do but we don't have them around to show us anymore."*

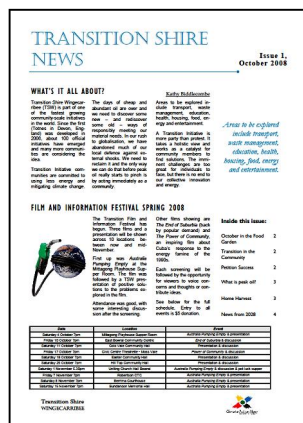


*Making the most of the space...strawberries beside the house*

# TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

## TO THE FUTURE: NEWS FROM 2028

Dr WuHoo



*From humble beginnings...  
The first issue of  
Transition Shire News*

"Thank God for the 2008 local elections+ said Mayor Larry Clarke, son of the first Greens Councillor Jim Clarke. Enough residents of Wingecarribee had finally realized that business as usual could not go on and voted for a change. Transition Shire Wingecarribee and Transition Shire News have helped make this the fantastic place we have today.+

He was speaking at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first edition of TSN, which has evolved into the Shire's most significant source of local news and networking. It operates as our 100% locally owned communication cooperative. 80% of households own the shares and elect the Business Committee to manage it.

Over the last 20 years features have evolved.

Each community contributes news as they move towards sustainability.

The forum enables anyone to put forward creative ideas to make Wingecarribee resilient to shocks caused by climate change and peak oil.

Anyone can connect with like-minded people through Link Up.

When they were young, many of our local leaders linked through TSN to Make A Difference (MAD) Youth, for mentoring and development.

The local Getup link gives people a chance to have their say about local issues to all levels of Government and key local organizations.

I love reading about all the positive and creative things people are doing and have got lots of practical ideas for how to manage the changes that less oil has brought.+ said Molly, a young mum.

It is such a change reading about the good news . so

inspiring and so different to most media. When there are problems, people share knowledge through TSN and you can check out a range of well researched links that give you the real story behind the news.+

I am really proud of how TSN has grown and contributed to the high level of knowledge about sustainable living and the amazing community cohesion here. I never imagined it would be like this when I started it in October 2008+ said Kathy Biddlecombe, founding editor.

It has not been smooth sailing over these last 20 years, but there have been so many special moments in Wingecarribee's transition to make it all worthwhile. One of the most significant moments was when the region began producing all of its own energy from sustainable sources in 2012.+

## TRANSITION IN ACTION



*Building a cob  
chook house*



### Five things you can do for Transition...

- Carpool
- Swap excess produce with neighbours
- Adopt some chickens
- Buy locally produced goods
- Plant a fruit or nut tree

Join the TSW forum!  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/T\\_S\\_W/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/T_S_W/)