

Green Street: Australian case study of strategies for engaging, educating and acting on sustainability

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Section A: The rationale for adopting the Green Street approach

1. *Short story of salt*

The heavy sprinkling of salt on the ground was clear for all to see.

As a ten year old living during the 1960's on a fruit property in a major irrigation area of South Australia I wondered what the salt was doing on the surface.

It turns out that salinity was well and truly on the rise and scientists knew it.

Yet the grapes, stone fruits and citrus kept getting irrigated, the then great Murray River kept getting drained and the salt kept coming. And I simply went on with my life.

This story is not alone.

Then, as now, it appears the problem is not one of having good knowledge about how to act sustainably. ... more so it is about how we find it hard to shed the unsustainable habits we have formed in our lifestyles and workplaces. More on that later.

This paper is about what a few of us involved with Green Streets are working on to see if we can write a different story for the future. We're finding that some of the tactics needed are quite different to those tried in the past.

How is this so?

First, what are the basics about sustainability?

2. *What do we know about sustainability?*

The world's most eminent scientists and environmentalists agreed in the early nineteen nineties on the four system conditions for a sustainable planet. In simple terms, The Natural Step system conditions tell us that to live sustainably we should:

- stop ripping into the earth's crust to use non renewable resources and to access and use fossil fuels which emit high levels of greenhouse gas
- make and use goods efficiently and renewably and manufacture them in a form which will recycle easily and safely into the earth.
- use the earth's surfaces wisely so that we no longer over-use land and water resources.
- be fair in the way we treat all people in the world, being mindful of enabling all in the world to have the capacity to live a sustainably good lifestyle and to self-determine on an equal footing.

These are the conditions affecting our sustainability as a planet. Many of the world's smartest agree that this is so and the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirm that the planet is changing for the worse as a result of us ignoring the compass for sustainability.

So, the science is agreed. But this is clearly not enough.

3. *What needs to change?*

It is clear from a myriad of sources that the mainstream populations in the most 'developed' nations are addicted to the consumption of 'stuff', most of which is produced in unsustainable ways. Even more concerning is that 'developing' nations are hurtling headlong into a similar trap in the pursuit of what they see as the best of western ways.

The main purpose of this presentation is to articulate the why's and means for attitudinal and behavioural change of those in the mainstream who believe 'sustainability' is not their thing.

Such change is important not just for the gradual difference it will make to daily greenhouse gas emissions but also for the potent difference it could make to the leadership and decision making of our elected representatives and to those who produce the goods we consume.

A community which knows little about sustainability - and cares even less about it - is not going to exert any upward pressure on the political and corporate process, no matter what scientific facts and logic may be available from the researchers and experts.

The lack of political leadership is as much a product of the lack of mainstream community pressure as it is any other single factor.

Those in the community and organizations already committed to action on climate change are doing their bit and are rarely discussed here, even though they have vital roles to play in facilitating the changes required.

The main focus is on the mainstream's addiction to consumerism and 'stuff' - how it has come about and what can be done about it.

Two significant approaches are proposed. One relates to targeting the mainstream population in a whole-of-community approach. The other relates to the interactive processes we use when we're engaging with that group.

4. *Why is the mainstream so important?*

By definition, the mainstream is the largest segment of the population and exhibits behavior perceived to be normal practice. It also votes and consumes. It is that simple.

If current unsustainable mainstream attitudes and behavior remain then there is little chance of achieving the tipping points around political leadership and human action needed for the transition to a more sustainable society.

The mainstream are active participants in the living community. Shops, schools, neighbourhoods, services, recreation, community groups, transport modes are all stopping off points for the mainstream. Their engagement in much of this is productive socially and economically so there is no point in stopping that engagement.

More so we should target each of those sites within the community in our efforts to change behavior about sustainability.

Targeting any of these sectors in isolation is inefficient and often ineffective. People live in the whole community, not just one part of it and if the messages about sustainability are coming from multiple sources then the effects are likely to have more impact.

Getting to those who are assumed to have no particular interest in changing the sustainability of their lifestyle is a difficult task.

Indeed, even when we do get to them we need to be aware that different people respond in different ways – we should not homogenize the approach, or the people. Some will change because it is mandatory, others because its cheaper, others out of fear for the future and others because they see it as the trend. Feeling good by having stuff is another reason... as is the want to do the right thing.

This leaves us with questions about the things we know that will help us to tackle the mainstream?

What new knowledge can we draw on?

The work of addiction theorists, neuroscientists, change theorists, learning practitioners and community developers give us some direction.

5. *The addiction to 'stuff.'*

The addiction to 'stuff' is directly related to our criteria for success. Our criteria for success have emerged from the simple process by which our natural world has been hijacked by our social system's obsession with the economic system and its trappings.

The almighty obsession with growth and its great allies of production, consumption and profit is at the root of our addiction to 'stuff'.

Our criteria for success has for some time revolved around the notions of big is beautiful , more is better, faster is fantastic and excess beats sufficiency. Convenience, comfort and what we call 'lifestyle' win out.

How have we become so addicted? This addiction has crept up on us and has turned into a raging gallop since the industrial and technological revolutions have enabled us to make, buy and use things in the blink of an eye.

Having a bigger house and car and 'everything that opens and shuts' has become the badge of success. Sufficiency is not, well, sufficient. Excess is just fine. We rationalize this in so many ways and our capacity to pay for 'stuff' has improved or at least so the purveyors of credit cards and bank loans would have us believe.

From our early years we've seen that our parents want us to 'be successful' and we interpret that as having more things and more money to buy more things. The addiction has become embedded in the game of life and the mainstream has some of the most willing and best players.

We have allowed ourselves to be seduced by the construction of success as the possession of stuff. As illustrated in Figure 1, (Why we are who we are) in life our beliefs, values, aspirations, attitudes and experiences lead us to have a window on the world which reflects those personal constructs and which frames up how we see events and issues.

As an outcome of the way we view those events and issues we develop knowledge bases, skills and strategies which enable us to live true to our personal constructs.

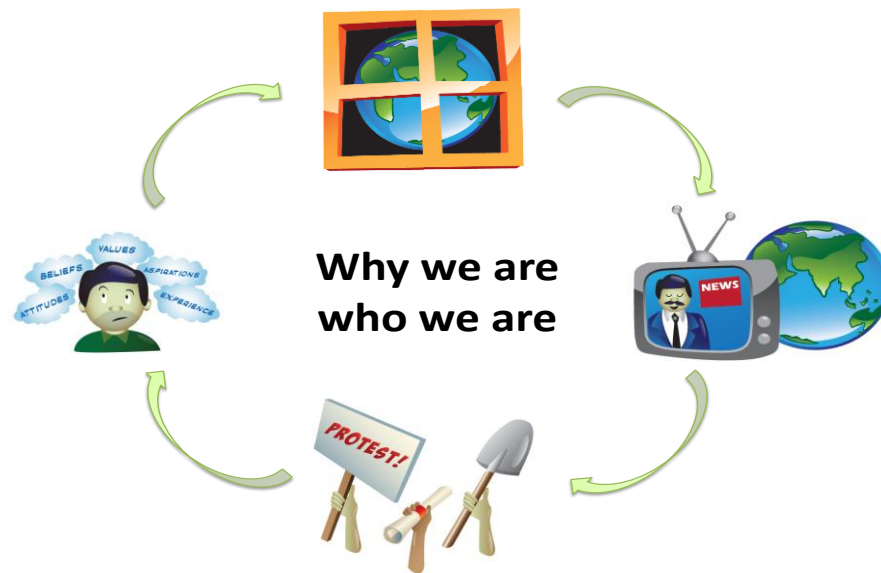


Figure 1: Why we are who we are

So if our personal constructs are steeped in the belief that success is badged by owning everything that opens and shuts then our window on the world will be framed by those aspirations. Little wonder then that when the issues of sustainability, sufficiency, excess and growth are put before us we invent skills and strategies for not listening, rejecting and carrying on with our obsession with stuff.

We have no wish to deny that what we have spent most of our life working toward is now no longer acceptable. We don't want to know that 'green is the new black.'



Figure 2: Constructing our rejection of sustainability

And, of course, there are many out there who have an interest in us purchasing 'stuff' in seemingly never ending queues of consumers. The more people buy the more profits are made.

Once the cycle of growth, consumption and the inevitable waste has started it's not easy to stop the treadmill. Indeed, to be fair to the addicts, the dealers have to see things differently for there to be any change.

The dealers are the courage-light politicians, the voracious company boards and CEO's and those who earn a living out of making, marketing and selling unsustainable products and services.

Addiction to stuff is different to addiction to drugs, alcohol, caffeine, adrenalin or even watching TV in that it is not as clear and in-your-face. Indeed, that is part of the problem - at a surface level people find it hard to see the negative results of their addiction to stuff. However it's the scale of the addiction to stuff which is of concern for the planet.

Indeed I am a participant in the shift from being addicted to 'stuff' to being less addicted. My own upbringing in a well informed and aspirational working class family saw me as the recipient of the very values and criteria for success which breeds the 'stuff' addiction. I am still, at least in part, a member of the 'mainstream' I speak of here.

What do addiction counsellors know that can help the planet in ways they may never have contemplated?

There are two highly relevant facets in the addiction literature – stages of change and principles.

The stages of change (Figure 3) tell us that people addicted to anything, whether it be drugs or alcohol or work or eating, are part of a process which includes:

Pre-contemplative stage:

People are unaware that a problem exists and therefore have no intention of changing their behavior

Contemplative stage:

People are becoming aware that a problem exists and may be considering behavior change but have not made a commitment

Preparation stage:

People have an intention to change but have not set a specific goal.

Action stage:

People set a goal and make changes in their behavior and their environment to attain their goal

Maintenance stage:

People consolidate their actions and try to prevent relapsing into their addictive behavior.

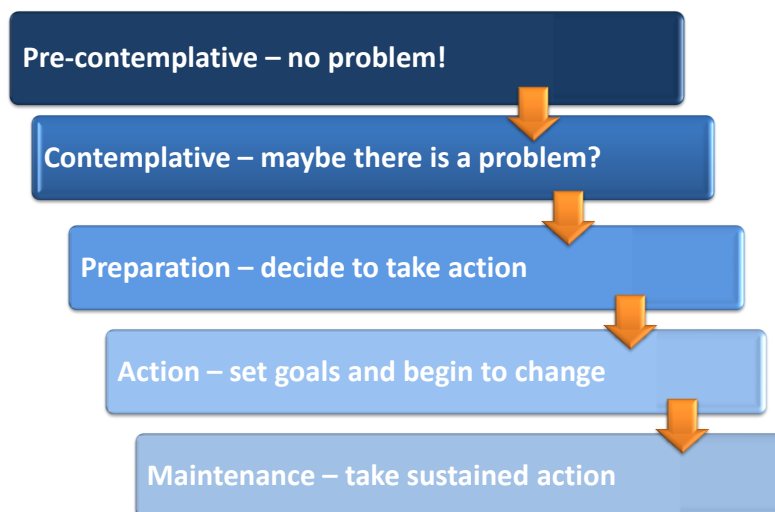


Figure 3: Stages of change for moving out of addictive behaviour

The critical stage here is the Pre-contemplative stage. It tells us that logical argument, researched knowledge, pervasive evidence simply sits outside the bubble blown by those addicted. Their constructs around sustainability create this bubble and they have no sense that they need to change.

For people to burst their pre-contemplative bubble and begin to take action they need to go through a process where a set of principles is established by those working with them.

The principles applying to addiction therapy can be summarized as below and in Figure 4:

1. Express empathy – show true understand through reflective listening
2. Develop discrepancies between people’s goals and values and their current behavior
3. Avoid argument and direct confrontation
4. Adjust to people’s resistance rather than opposing it directly
5. Support people’s self-determination and optimism



Figure 4: Principles enabling change from addiction

In modern counselling of addictive behavior there has emerged a process named Motivational Interviewing which takes the principles and stages of change and adopts a process of conversation designed to take individuals out of their addictive behaviour.

What has emerged in our work on behavioural change around sustainability is a similar process which is oriented toward groups rather than individuals. Motivational Community Conversations is a tag which may fit. For the process to work it rejects a range of assumptions that appear to underpin previous practice on behavioural change. (Figure 5)

Guilt: Very occasionally people will change behavior out of guilt. However, guilt relies on people having a strong personal construct about what should be done! It is only if we have personal constructs which reject the ownership of stuff as a badge of success that we are likely to feel guilty about acting unsustainably.

Material rewards: By themselves, material rewards are not sufficient to have a long lasting effect on behavior change. They may effect some short term change on occasions but unless that change is sufficient to move people out of their pre-contemplative stage there is no long-term value.

Indeed, some people who are in the contemplative stage may be put off by the idea that their behavior can be bought and are therefore likely to resist change because they feel somewhat belittled.

Some will be enticed by lower power bills, cheaper cost of living and perhaps prizes for reducing carbon emissions but there is little evidence to suggest that this is a game changer unless accompanied by other strategies.

Knowledge and logic: By themselves, knowledge and logic are not sufficient to shift people from the pre-contemplative stage. Drug addicts know their addiction is counter-productive – they know it affects themselves, their families, their friends and the community in a negative way. Their reasons for staying addicted are not to do with a lack of knowledge or logical information.

This is not to say that access to consumable knowledge is unimportant. Far from it. It has a vital role so long as it is communicated in a language and medium that befits the audience and is accompanied by an opportunity for worthwhile conversation about that knowledge. Most people do not learn and change behavior merely by knowing something ... they usually need to engage with others about it in order for it to have meaning.

Telling: When was the last time we changed our behaviour purely because someone told us to? Not often for things that are significant behaviours. The ‘telling’ approach can come over as an assumption that people are stupid and this raises the barriers to constructive communication. We will often resist because we feel patronized and because the things we *are* doing are not being recognized.

Arguing: There’s a difference between arguing and questioning. Arguing tends to be accompanied by people holding entrenched positions. Questioning is more likely to open the conversation and expose positions which may take a different direction. Of course, this presupposes that people are prepared to keep an open mind about their starting positions.

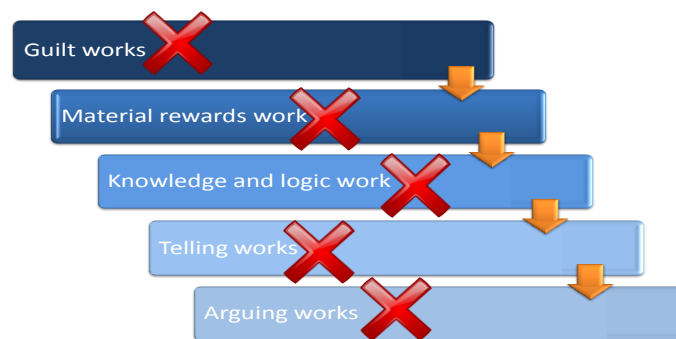


Figure 5: What doesn't work – in isolation

Which brings us to the field of change management.

6. Appreciative approach to change

The work of David Cooperrider and others around a model of Appreciative Inquiry provides significant guidance on facilitating behavior change in the mainstream. .

He discovered that one of the main reasons people choose not to change their behavior is because they feel that no-one acknowledges their strengths. People feel that change agents are so busy focusing on all the reasons for change and on the problem that they forget to engage in meaningful conversation about some of the things people are already doing to solve the problem.

If we adopted an Appreciative Inquiry methodology to facilitate a whole-of-community approach to sustainable living we would need to assume that:

- In the community there are things being done that already demonstrate sustainable living
- The way we go about questioning ourselves will influence the sustainability building process in a significant way
- Most people get out of bed each day wanting to do positive things in their life
- The language the community may use will create a reality which is shared

- People will have more confidence and comfort to journey toward a challenging and sustainable future when they carry forward the best parts of past sustainable practice with them
- A community can take on new ideas about its sustainable future if it consults well, has a high regard for its past and is prepared to be innovative and well informed about what else it may do.

In short, the model is based on positives and on recognising that new ideas about what individuals and the whole community may do will have greater chances of adoption if the current strengths of the community about sustainability are acknowledged. It can be represented as in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6: Appreciative Inquiry process model for building sustainable communities

7. What the neuroscience tells us

A number of neuroscientists, and particularly Rock (2009) have contributed useful models for shifting people’s thinking and behavior to develop more sustainable communities. Rock has developed a framework for understanding the five primary social dimensions within which our brains react to perceived threats and rewards. It seems that most of the motivation driving our social behavior revolves around minimizing threat and maximizing reward.

Rock’s SCARF model frames these threat-reward themes around five domains of human social experience: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness - which have been shown to be applicable in a broad cross-section of social settings.

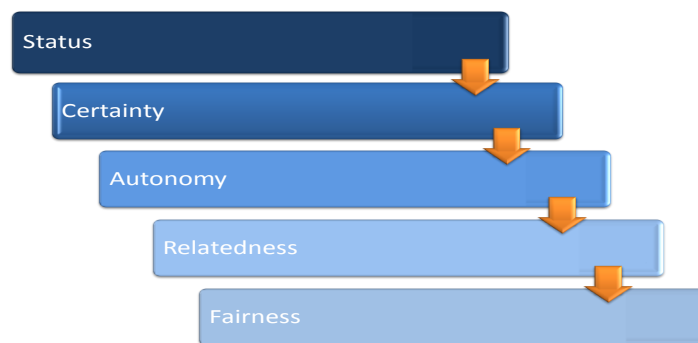


Figure 7: The SCARF model

According to Rock, “Status is about relative importance to others. Certainty concerns being able to predict the future. Autonomy provides a sense of control over events. Relatedness is a sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe. And fairness is a perception of fair exchanges between people.”

These domains stimulate either the 'primary reward' or 'primary threat' circuitry in the brain.

This framework is critical to the work to be done on sustainability with the mainstream in our communities.

If we want changed behavior we need to activate the ‘reward’ mode rather than the ‘threat’ mode.

This means, for example, that the following actions may be applied to each of the five domains.

Status:

If the mainstream sees that their status is linked to the possession of stuff then the notion of owning less stuff is likely to drive the threat element and people would move away from the notion of sustainability. However, if being ‘green’ really can be marketed and accepted as the ‘new black’ then the status button will push the actions of the mainstream population into a more sustainable mode. People have no wish to be seen as outcasts – they will want to belong, to not have to explain their unsustainable actions to their friends and people they see as important-others, including their children .

Certainty:

The mental energy required to handle uncertainty is significant. The neuroscientists tell us that if we are put in a position to make decisions (say, around changing long-standing consumerist behavior) we will likely put off that decision because we cannot be sure we will not need that energy for something more important in the very near future.

In other words, if there is not a clear and present and urgent need to make a decision we will conserve our mental energy.

It is not difficult to see why those addicted to stuff are likely to procrastinate on decisions around their behavior change. Their uncertainty about sustainability and the mixed media messages about such issues create the right environment for pre-contemplative stuff addicts to remain in their bubble.

At the same time, if there is mild uncertainty as different to excessive uncertainty then that may be just the right circumstance to get the adrenalin to flow so that curiosity kicks in and for the pre-contemplative bubble to start to feel the pressure.

This implies the need for a subtle and creative approach to drawing the best from people by highlighting the high level need for change without scaring people off.

Autonomy

The world appears to go around a whole lot better when people have a high level of control over their own lives. The extent to which we feel this autonomy reduces our levels of uncertainty and increases our feelings of resilience. Which draws us to make significant decisions and act on them.

This implies that we should use highly inclusive and inductive approaches to the way we engage with communities about sustainability. The community conversations we set up need to be designed so that people really do feel the self efficacy required to burst their pre-contemplative bubble.

This also means that the moves toward using renewable resources in the manufacture of goods will give people the choice to continue to consume stuff yet do so in a relatively more sustainable way. However, the manufacture and transport of goods remains a sustainability issue, regardless of the use of renewable resources, so the question about excess versus sufficiency retains validity.

Relatedness

Rock's words are particularly pertinent here: "the ability to feel trust and empathy about others is shaped by whether they are perceived to be part of the same social group... When [a] new person is perceived as different, the information travels along neural pathways that are associated with uncomfortable feelings (different from the neural pathways triggered by people who are perceived as similar to oneself).

When we begin to talk to each other and make a strong connection our brains disarm the threat response and enable the reward response and we begin to see others as 'just like us.'

This is especially important knowledge for those who already are taking significant action on sustainability but cannot see why others are not. Their 'green' presence, the language they use, their confidence about their perspectives and other trappings can sometimes lead others to feel uncomfortable in their presence. In much the same way as 'greenies' have sometimes felt like the odd ones out in a room full of 'suits.'

This knowledge directs us to the need to create conversation spaces where people can interact in an atmosphere which says 'friend' rather than 'foe' and contributes to a sense of trust and empathy which in turn leads to people being more likely to take on challenging changes of behavior.

They will do this if they feel related and safe.

Fairness

If people are part of an event where they feel unfairly treated they are likely to feel hostility and a lack of trust. This can be as simple as being involved in a community meeting where the airspace is hogged by a select few and where the opinions of many are disregarded.

People need to feel their opinions are valued and that they have equal opportunity to present them, reflect on them and question them without being judged.

This has significant implications for the way in which we design and facilitate community conversations.

8. *Community development and the art of conversation*

Conversation has been the driving medium for new ideas, new ways of being, new ways of doing and even starting revolutions.

Good conversation is usually accompanied by simple conditions like: exploring a question that really matters; having the commitment to creating the space and time to explore it; having shared listening and a spirit of discovery and collaboration.

A certain type of "magic" will often emerge with a creative collective intelligence arising from the minds active in the conversation. The wisdom is already within the circle of people who hold the question and is merely awaiting the trigger of conversation.

As Stewart states in “Clues on Conversation” (Nielsen, Stewart, Mochelle et al, 1999)

“These webs of conversations and the action commitments that naturally arise from them can serve as the energy generator, the amplifier, for co-evolving a sustainable future.

Conversation is funny stuff. It is a way of creating a shared place that can be used for many different purposes. How we use language, and other means, to communicate with those around us makes the world, for us, the way it is.

It is one of the main ways by which we learn from each other. We engage in it to inform ourselves and others that it's time to do things differently. Through conversation we can also know that we are doing things OK. We can also come to a sense of “We're in this together.”

It is much more than ‘just talk’ for it is in and through conversation that we ask the questions that help us work out what is important. Questions that lead us to experiment and take good risks. For if we are to remain alert to opportunities to undertake ‘change for the better’ we may have to ‘let go’ of beliefs and patterns that hold us back.”

9. How people take in information

The long-standing work of Honey and Mumford provides some simple and valuable insights into how people take in information and learn.

Essentially, people adopt one or more of four main learning styles:

- Reflector style learners – need time and space to take in information and reflect on it. Value data and the opportunity to analyse and converse about it prior to drawing any conclusions.
- Theorist style learners – like to think things through in a logical, step by step process. Value logically sound theories and like to analyse and synthesise. Like models and systems thinking.
- Pragmatist style learners – like to hear stories about what works and value the opportunity to experiment and test things in practical situations before accepting ideas as useful.
- Activist style learners – like to immerse themselves in learning experiences and practical activities which enable them to understand things better.

While we all adapt as well as we can to the varying ways information is delivered to us, most of us tend to learn better in one or two of the styles indicated.

Not to forget that some people are equally at ease with circumstances which involve a cross section of theoretical framing, reflective conversation, storytelling and active involvement.

One thing is clear, if we are to facilitate changed learning and behavior in people we need to be very mindful of the methods by which information is shared.

10. What does all this mean and where does it take us?

The knowledge and insight coming from the work done by researchers and practitioners on addiction, neuroscience, change facilitation and community conversation invites us to rethink our strategies.

For me and others with whom I work it has taken us down a Green Street.

Section B: Green Street in action

11. How Green Street is trying to tick the boxes

Green Street is an integrated on-line and face-to-face approach to stimulating and supporting changed behavior regarding sustainable living and working. It has been established and used primarily in the Samford Valley in Queensland Australia. Samford is a community of nearly ten thousand people about twenty kilometers from the heart of Brisbane which is a city of about two million people.

Samford has a busy Village precinct with about three hundred small housing lots and about one hundred and twenty businesses. The Valley has another two thousand semi-rural residences built on large blocks of land – from 1 acre to 20 acres in size.

Prior to the deliberate intervention of the Green Streets process Samford had been relatively active with a number of sustainability initiatives taken on by people already seeing the need to act sustainably.

Projects on bushcare, tree planting days, Land for Wildlife, forest farming, bird protection, weed eradication, university environmental research centre activity, street scaping, bushfire protection, public transport and a major biosphere proposal have been part of the Samford Valley scene for many years. The work of ViVa Samford in using a Kitchen Conference approach to establishing Development Principles for the Village Precinct was a significant step in community ownership over the sustainability of the Village and the Valley.

The Samford Green Streets initiative recognizes the need for the continuation of a multi pronged approach to carbon reduction which recognizes that integrated strategies aimed at carbon reduction are likely to be more efficient, more effective and less costly than those which are not integrated.

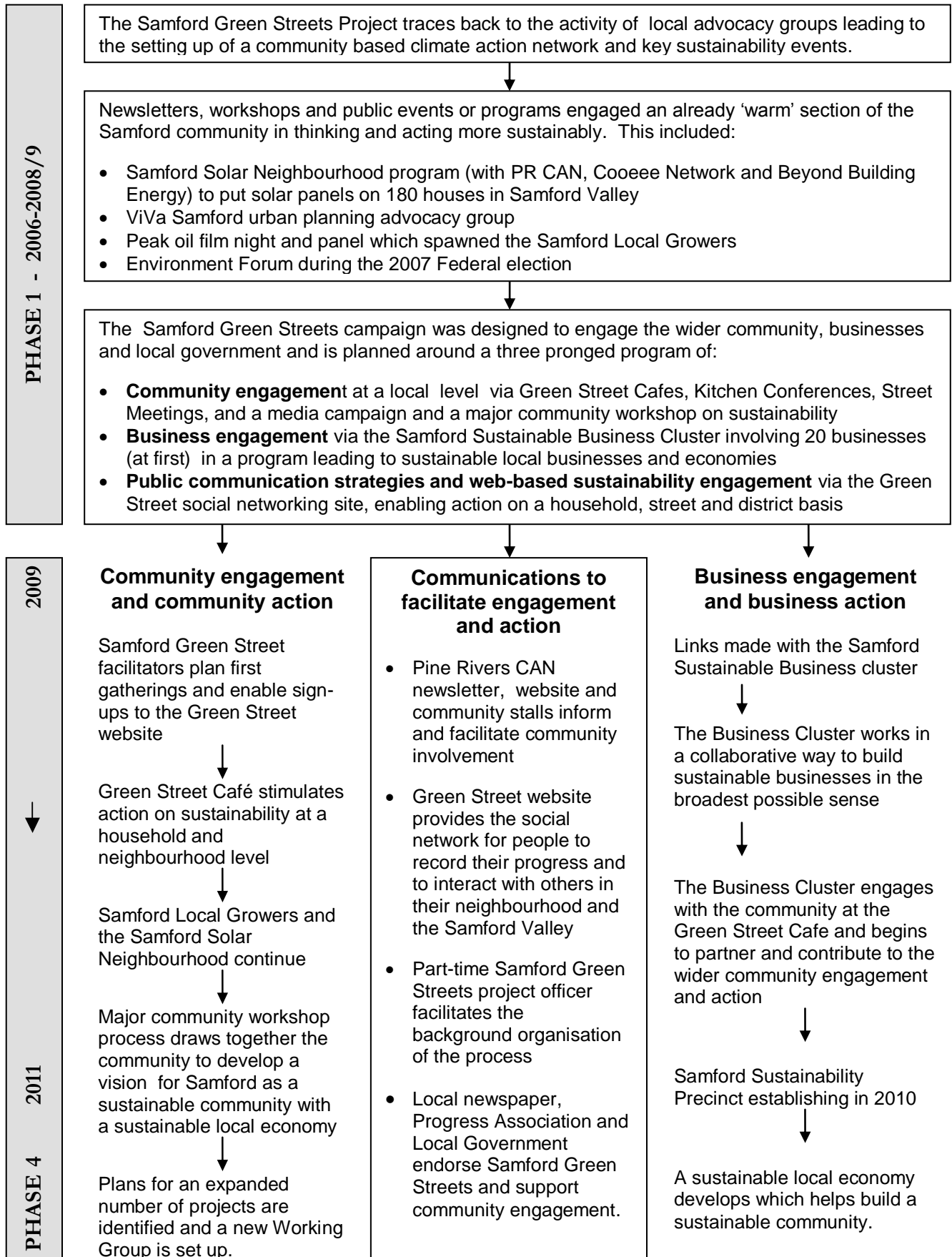
Samford Green Streets enables parallel action for carbon reduction to be taken in a whole-of-community approach which focuses on the mainstream population through households, schools, businesses and community groups. A number of assumptions and research findings as outlined earlier in this paper underpin the approach.

This has resulted in a checklist which reflects an interpretation of the research that people are more likely to change behaviour on sustainability if:

- They feel others are coming with them;
- They receive consistent messages from a variety of credible sources in more-or-less the same timeframe;
- Any good things they are doing currently are acknowledged personally and publicly;
- They have good, easily consumable information about what to do to reduce carbon emissions;
- They are helped personally, without outside judgement, to identify discrepancies between what they are doing currently and what they aspire to do, and how to do it;
- They have regular opportunities to converse with others about what they are doing and how they are doing it;
- Their higher order human aspirations are assumed;
- Their core assumptions about the link between ownership of goods and personal success are challenged in a respectful way;
- Positive outcomes and success stories are shared in face-to-face and online situations;
- Optimistic language, supportive processes and non-judgemental approaches are used; and,
- A mix of face-to-face communication and online communication and social networking is used.

The activities as outlined in Figure 7 below (Organizing framework for the Samford Green Streets program) and in item 12 below are designed to meet the expectations of the checklist and it is anticipated that reflections on current outcomes will enhance the checklist as well as future practice.

Organizing framework for the Samford Green Streets program (Figure 7)



12. Whole-of-Community approach to sustainability by Samford Green Streets

Samford Green Streets grew out of continuing and unmet concerns in the community around urban development, water management, transport, environmental sustainability and questions about who decides what is best for a community.

The shift in thinking and action came from a number of sources and has found its centre in a process titled *Samford Green Streets – a Valley in transition to sustainability*. The initiative is facilitated by the Samford Green Streets Team www.greenstreet.net.au/samford which is part of the regional Pine Rivers Climate Action Network www.pineriversCAN.org.au the national Green Street Team www.greenstreet.net.au and other local citizens.

It is endorsed by the Samford Progress Association and its community advocacy arm ViVa Samford www.vivasamford.org.au

Samford Green Streets, the Pine Rivers Climate Action Network and the national Green Streets Team (which is a co-operative venture of consulting business NACC www.naccsustainability.com.au and web design company Caboodle Web www.caboodleweb.com both of which reside in Samford) have been the catalyst or partner or facilitator for a number of activities, including;

- **Samford Solar Neighbourhood** – bulk buying solar panels by the Samford Community, with about 200 households now having renewable energy sources on their rooftops (2008-10)
- **Samford Green Street Cafe** – over 100 members of the community overcrowded the local café to sort out a number of priorities affecting the sustainability of Samford, including improved bikeways, better public transport and the establishment of a Local Sustainability Hub (2009)
- **Samford Green Street web group** – community members and businesses sign up to Green Street www.greenstreet.net.au to find out their level of sustainability with a Green Street Score and become part of a social network which communicates with its own group and others in similar groups, including other Transition Initiatives (2008-10)
- **Sustainable Shopping Tours** - conducted at the local supermarket to give community members some improved insights about sustainable shopping tactics (2009-10)
- **Samford Valley Green Streets Schools Challenge** – four local schools engaging a number of their families in household sustainability activity where they login to check their Green Street Score and challenge themselves to live more sustainably (2010)
- **Samford Community Group Cafe** – over 35 local community groups joined together in cafe style to sort out better ways to become more sustainable in the broadest possible sense – increased membership, more engaged membership, improved eco efficiency and more environmentally sustainable organisations (2010)
- **Film Events and Forums** – peak oil, water management and food production have been the focus of film nights and forums in the community (2006-10)
- **Samford Sustainable Business Cluster** – 20 businesses working on their eco-efficiency with a local consultancy, NACC. (2009-10)
- **Samford Valley Low Carbon Diet project** - implemented in the Valley with support from the Department of Environment and Resource Management www.derm.qld.gov.au This enabled significant community interaction at a number of levels as well as the capability of using call centre facilities to contact and support residents. (2010)
- **Samford Local Growers** – more than 55 householders meet regularly in each other's gardens to share ideas and fruit and vegetables. Was initiated by a local community member who runs City Food Growers on a worldwide scale www.cityfoodgrowers.org.au (2008-10)

- **Samford Green Street Business Precinct** – grew out of work with the Sustainable Business Cluster (funded by the Department of Environment and Resource Management and NACC) which has resulted in a partnership between the Samford Chamber of Commerce and the Green Street Team to establish a promotable Green Street Business Precinct in Samford. www.greenstreet.net.au (2010)
- **Samford Tennis Club** www.samfordtennis.net and the Moreton Bay Regional Council adopting sustainability policy and practice in the design and construction of a new tennis centre (2007-10)
- **Regional Sustainability Roadmap** – representatives helped to develop a Sustainability Roadmap and Sustainability Forum for the wider region within which Samford sits.
- **Media coverage** – over forty media stories included in three local newspapers (2007-10)
- **Green Street promotional products** – local business Promotional Products provided 2,500 items to promote Green Street locally.
- **Green Street website** - created by local businesses NACC www.naccsustainability.com.au and Caboodle Web Design www.caboodleweb.com (2008-10)

A good sign is that other new ideas keep emerging from within the community with a Green Kitchen project starting up in late 2010 and individuals in the community becoming more proactive about inappropriate tree clearing that happens from time to time.

13. The Green Street website

The Green Street website is an integral part of the Samford Green Streets Program and it has an aspiration to improve the sustainability of communities through reducing the impact of greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

The action takes place via an interactive website where people sign on to Green Street as individual households or collectively as part of a business precinct, school community or other collective.

People login each month with updated information on the outcomes of their endeavours to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Changes to energy use, waste disposal, water use, buying trends, packaging, food consumption and other factors will be represented on the Green Street graphs.

This progress compares with others locally, statewide and nationally.

Everyone gets a Green Street Score

This information will enable the calculation of a Green Street Score (GSS) for each household or workplace. The GSS will appear as a user friendly graph on the website showing the progressive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions locally and more broadly.

Green Street icons are also achievable and these are posted to each person's profile as a user friendly representation of the positive things being done and as signposts to inspire others to follow.

Learning and connecting

Green Street provides practical ideas through its 'Green Tips' section to enable people to find out more about what they can do to improve the sustainability of their household, school, business or organization.

The 'Green wall' enables people to communicate with each other about what they are doing and communities of interest such as schools or business precincts or suburbs can connect via a group clustering capability on the site.

Face-to-face events such as Kitchen Conferences, Green Street Cafes and the like are promoted on the site and downloadable printed material is provided to help with facilitation processes, marketing and promotion of events at a local level.

Outcomes of Green Street action

The Green Street website enables people to:

- Find out their current level of contribution to emissions of greenhouse gases
- Find out the actions available to them that will best reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Access the Green Street Scores for themselves and their street and other locations
- Access 'you tube' coverage of what other people are doing and will create a greater sense of community, inspiration and fun
- Access providers of resources, ideas and equipment that will help them become more sustainable by reducing their emissions
- Work together as neighbourhoods, schools, business precincts and organisations by using both information technology and face-to-face techniques as a means of connecting and learning

The attraction

Doing good - People like to engage in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as their contribution to improving the sustainability of our communities. This is attractive to people as it is an opportunity for them to demonstrate their autonomy and their capacity to 'do good'. They will also form a growing community of interest with others of similar aspiration.

Local action and fun - The collective nature of the activity prompts more cohesive neighbourhoods via a fun-based approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, using schools and community groups and businesses as a springboard for learning and participation by students and families alike.

Partnership and sponsorship - Businesses want to be associated with Green Street to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility in a practical way which reaches into households and businesses via a professional, supportive, educative and modern medium.

14. Future of Samford Green Streets

An affirmation of the action being taken so far is that the 2010 Queensland Premier's Community Sustainability Award was presented to the Pine Rivers Climate Action Network for the achievements of the Samford Green Streets program.

However, while a significant number of people are engaging with the process it is estimated that 60-70% of the community remain at relatively low levels of engagement.

The carbon reductions necessary on a global scale will not be met by this level of engagement at a local level.

It is anticipated that activities likely to be undertaken in the near future include:

- An action research project to uncover strategies likely to enhance this level of engagement.
- Wide-scale community interviewing and conversation process to develop insights about what to do to stimulate and support sustainable activity
- Development of businesses which adopt fully sustainable practices
- Engagement with community organizations as a way of involving previously uninvolved people
- Enhancement of the Green Street website to meet emerging needs

- Participation in a Community Planning process being undertaken by the local government authority and which may integrate with the essence of the Regional Sustainability Roadmap to form a Sustainability Ascent Plan.
- Continuation of current activities which are found to be working

A seven minute video “Samford Green Street community conversation” is accessible on utube.

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Utube: Samford Green Street community conversation