

We The People
Program 15



Sustainable Living

You may well have heard the phrase 'sustainable living' as part of the new paradigm emerging for life on this fragile beautiful planet. Like it or not, understand it or not it's here to stay or else we won't be around. To those who think it's only the domain of the greeny you are wrong and there are 7 billion good reasons to start thinking about sustainable living in your street here on the Gold Coast.

Gold Coast City Council quite rightly has a section on their web site about sustainable living and it's a start. It's worth going to but it's fairly basic and does not encompass the real tenet behind the name. In the end it's up to us, we the people, to get behind the idea and to teach our kids what needs to be done. Sustainable living is an amalgam of lifestyle choices made with the intention of adapting a world view down to a family household. Who would have thought just a few years ago we would become so conscious of power, water, waste and pollution so the issue has begun to claim our attention. The goal is to reduce the carbon footprint we leave and to only use what can be replaced. Some might see this as a low tech way of life but not so and in fact we need advanced technology to be truly sustainable.

Put simply we must lead a lifestyle in tune with the pulse of the planet after all it's the only one we have. There will come an end to oil and all the other natural resources and its getting mighty close now in some cases. Its madness to think we can continue to indefinitely supply resources to the Chinese to make junk to send back to us via Bunnings. Surely we have a longer term view than that although coal seam gas extraction is about as dumb as it gets regarding sustainability as we risk so very much in Australia. The danger is enormous and we ship the gas overseas to make more useless stuff.

Sustainable living requires attention to some critical factors including shelter, food, power, transportation, water, waste, health and happiness. These are very compelling issues and make common sense to our survival. Henry Thoreau was the first to write about sustainable living in 1854 so its not a new observation and yet he was ahead of his time. Modern day sustainability champions like David Suzuki and Sir David Attenborough are well known brilliant men alongside a host of unsung heroes. Here on the Gold Coast our own pre-eminent group called Gecko is based in Currumbin and does a sterling job run only by volunteers. Now there's something you can do. Become a volunteer at Gecko with your family and it's an excellent way to introduce kids in a meaningful way to the notion of sustainability and believe me you will feel the better for it. I have.

Imagine we all live in a small green-house and how important it would be to safeguard the air, plants and water within the structure. Well it's no different on a planetary scale and with a focus on infinite growth in a finite world we are on the wrong path. Capitalism's mantra is growth year on year and it's utterly unsustainable just like stuffing more and more people into the gold Coast. This is where the Council and the State government have the wrong idea as they try and expand the tax base. That's not sustainable and if we don't speak up we become part of the problem. Ask your local councillor about sustainable living and most importantly ask mayoral aspirants what they are going to do about real sustainability. I can assure you most don't have a clue. Make your vote count and demand action. Do it for your children and grand children. Now from 264 BC a voice said "The goal of life is living in agreement with nature". How very true.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley