

## **PEIG Newsletter #1 / August 2008**

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### **1- Introduction**

Welcome to PEIG News, one vehicle for relationships in the PEIG. The sudden recent rise in membership (now at 82) has prompted this newsletter. Our intent is to provide a venue for information and opinion exchange among members. Our primary operating assumption is to be inclusive, within the normal APS parameters of politeness, relevance and responsiveness.

We solicit contributions roughly in these areas. Contributions could include suggestions for other areas of priority focus for PEIG. Please keep to 750 words max.

A first contribution appears below (3). It expresses the opinions of the author only.

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### **2 – PEIG at the 2008 APS conference: what’s happening is (partly) up to you!!**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> 9-10.30**

**Keynote address THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE; THE CHALLENGE FOR PSYCHOLOGY** by David Uzzell, Professor of Environmental Psychology in the UK, and consultant in the area of sustainable development for the European Union, the UN Government, local and regional governments.

**Environment Individual Papers 11-12.30** Reser, J., Rathzel, N, Bagot, K., Burke, S.

**Environment Interest Group AGM 12.30-1**

**Free public forum “Urgency and Agency – How crucial is psychology in addressing the challenges of climate change?”** being held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 5:15pm.

Featured speakers include Professor David Uzzell (UK), Dr Barrie Pittock (author of *Climate Change: Turning up the Heat*), Professor Beverley Raphael and Dr Joe Reser.

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September**

#### **Workshops: Full-day - Uzzell, D. Environmental Attitudes and Actions in Context**

David Uzzell is the featured keynote speaker at the conference, and the author of the lead article in the current issue of *InPsych* that has been devoted to Climate Change issues.

This workshop will provide a review of research methodologies and findings on environmental behaviour change, including social marketing techniques, identity theory and social norms. There will be interactive sessions to collect data from workshop participants on their perceptions of environmental issues, followed by analyses of this material using co-orientation analysis, discourse analysis, and Boal's conflict resolution techniques to understand socially situated environmental attitudes and practices. The workshop will especially interest psychology researchers; psychologists working in policy settings (e.g. national, federal and local government); psychologists working on behaviour change programmes; and doctoral students especially from environmental, social and political psychology.

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The APS Interest Group on Psychology and the Environment is holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM), details of which are:

Date: Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

Time: 12:30 - 1:00pm

Venue: Concert Hall, Grand Chancellor Hotel Hobart

If you have any queries regarding the Annual General Meeting please contact Anna Terrington on (03) 8662 3300 or on [a.terrington@psychology.org.au](mailto:a.terrington@psychology.org.au)

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### **3 – Opinion / Info**

This article was prepared at SPLICE Foundation by Shannon Anderson, 3rd year undergraduate student on placement from RMIT under the supervision of Judith Homa M.A.P.S and EIG committee member

Ecopsychology can be described as the connection between the individual and the Earth. This perspective recognizes that the needs of the planet are the needs of the person, and the rights of the person are the rights of the planet (Roszak, T. 2001).

Important work is already being done by psychologists in the community to implement the philosophies of ecopsychology theorists. For example, the SPLICE Foundation founded by APS registered Psychologist Judith Homa is an independent not-for-profit organization which provides a variety of individual and group workshops and programs, entitled 'S.P.L.I.C.E. of Life' programs, with ecopsychology as the primary focus. The SPLICE Foundation not only encourages a connection to nature, but also educates the individual and the community in understanding this process within a professional Psychological framework.

In a time where many people are suffering anxiety over the state of the environment and in particular climate change. Ecopsychology offers a positive approach to the real concerns of climate change issues, by focusing on how people can make changes within themselves in order to act in a more environmentally conscious manner.

Ecopsychology, in the context of health promotion, is a model of health that works on prevention and includes intervention when required. This is based on the understanding that we require harmony with nature to feel balanced in mind, body and spirit. Ecotherapy, which is an application of ecopsychology, works as a two-stage model that improves personal wellbeing and increases positive conservation behaviour through connection with the natural environment. First, health and wellbeing is derived from an ecological perspective (i.e. benefits gained by being involved with the natural environment).

Second, as a result of this reconnecting with nature we are more likely to increase our conservation behaviour and act responsibly in minimizing our contribution to climate change.

Developed and facilitated by an experienced psychologist, SPLICE of Life programs cater for a variety of individual, group, family and organizational needs.

In addition to the above, ecopsychology includes a human rights and social justice perspective, which can encompass the plight of existing and future climate-change refugees . These refugees' rights to a safe and healthy environment and continuation of their culture, is an area of interest that SPLICE Foundation is beginning to research. Currently the research focus is on Australian indigenous communities and the peoples of islands such as Kiribas in the Pacific region.

[www.splicefoundation.org.au/](http://www.splicefoundation.org.au/)

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**Member assistance requested:**

"I am planning to have an eco-psychology display during APS Week as World Water Week in Australia occurs in the same week- 19-25th October this year. This is happening at the QUT Carseldine Library. Half of my time is spent working with the Murray Darling Irrigators/Farmers. The original plan was for water week only until I found out there was also an APS week display organised as well - just to put this email into focus.

If possible if any of our members have Abstracts relating to research on eco-psychology or in any way relating to the environment or if any posters deal with water issues in any way that would be great to follow up.

Regards

Kathryn Gow"

[k.gow@qut.edu.au](mailto:k.gow@qut.edu.au)

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4) - **Teleconference minutes – August 6th , 2008**

**Minutes of PEIG meeting 6/8/8**

Present: Susie Burke (chair), Joe Reser, Neil Welch, Debra Rickwood, Torrey Orton  
Apologies Rob Hall, Joanne Brooker, Bev Ernst

Agenda:

- Future of group
- Sponsoring Barrie Pittock to come to Climate Change Forum at conference
- Elections?

Future of group:

Joe – thinks it's very important that the group keeps going, particularly given history of folding a few times. Having EIG is very helpful to work of APS and public interest team at APS – to be able to say that there is a group.

Judith – main problem for her has been difficulties around timing of meetings, being out of the loop, Wed was a better time. (Joe commented that lots of people had difficulty with time).

Neil - important for group to continue, for symbolic reasons if anything else. Would help to clarify what we want to achieve. What are our clear objectives?

Debra – bit of a sense of déjà vu. When she was convenor they reached a point where they were losing membership; people weren't sure what the group meant, what were its objectives, what was it trying to achieve? Thinks it's v. important for group to keep going. 'Particularly at this point in time, time tragic if APS didn't have a group.

Torrey – Happy to carry something, but not interested in driving a group – involved in own practical projects, eg with Environment Victoria. Something perhaps quite wonderful about nature of environment group, that it keeps dying and rebirthing! There is no doubt about individual member's efforts and energy. Maybe it's something about the mix with APS.

**Conclusion:** Group very resolved to keep going. Will try to make it clearer about what we want to do, achieve. What can we tell psychologists who are interested in becoming members? What do we do?

Group discussed some simple aims of the group. Came up with the following list:

Who are we? Group of psychologists with a shared interest, different views, different approaches

What do we do?

- 1) Disseminate information – newsletter, website
- 2) Forums – getting together to talk about environmental issues, challenges
- 3) Heighten awareness of work by other psychologists in environment field around the world
- 4) Mobilise action on the environment

**Newsletter:** Torrey offered to collate, coordinate and send out newsletters. First one due on 20<sup>th</sup> August. Send info to Torrey by 18<sup>th</sup>. Newsletter to have a section dedicated to reporting on what psychologists are doing in other parts of the world.

**Diverse approaches** – Discussion around different interests. Judith wondered whether her interest in eco-psychology has a place. Group agreed that it did indeed, and that group would be better being inclusive of different approaches. The diversity of approaches could be listed on the website.

**websites.** Judith suggested we look at Doctors for the environment. Useful framework.

**Climate change forum at conference.** Group agreed to co-sponsor Barrie Pittock to attend the conference, together with psychs for peace.

**Forums, face to face meetings.** Neil – sees the need to have a workshop or conference, lots of people not going to APS conference. Meeting with Torrey was important (and entertaining). Need more face to face meetings. Torrey suggested making an offer for an event involving good winery's! Susie suggested finding more local members from own state to easily meet. Joe suggested having an event based around a specific topic. We could all think about what we would like to happen, accomplish with such an event.

**Election:** Hopefully we don't have to have one! Would like Terry to continue as convenor.

**Conference:** We have an hour meeting at lunch time on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>. Could have a general discussion. Agreed to invite forum participants to a dinner on the Tuesday night. Guess that Susie will organize that...

Neil will re-send email about possibility of heading into the wilderness at the conference.

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NB – We encourage you to submit further additions to these starter information access lists by email to the Newsletter Editor:

[torreyo@ozemail.com.au](mailto:torreyo@ozemail.com.au)

Names of the source persons have been added after each entry (or group). Items are not recommended as the correct, better or even best views of their respective domains. They reflect part of the virtual world of climate-related thinking and acting

## 5) Information: Local

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) [www.dea.org.au](http://www.dea.org.au)

Judith Homa

Plus, an article from George Monbiot that a colleague has passed on as a 'must read!'

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2008/08/05/coal-scuttled/>

Suzie Burke

Here's a mostly Victorian collection of sites – some will be replicated in other states esp. the government department ones like Sustainability Vic. Have a look.

<http://www.envict.org.au> - Environment Victoria is the peak **non-government, not-for-profit** environment organisation in Victoria.

<http://greenlivingpedia.org/> - "Welcome to **Greenlivingpedia**, a free resource for sharing information on green living, now and for the future. This is a **wiki**, so you can create and edit content to share information and collaborate with others on how we can lighten our footprint on the planet..."

<http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/>

[www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au)

[www.thebigswitch.org.au](http://www.thebigswitch.org.au) -

[www.ata.org.au](http://www.ata.org.au) – "The ATA (Alternative Technology Association) is Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation, promoting sustainable technology and practice. The ATA provides services to members who are actively walking the talk in their own homes by using good building design, conserving water and using renewable energy..."

Torrey Orton

## 6) Information : International

These are mostly various English language climate change sites for a quick visit to what's happening OS – not merely things psychologists are doing. They may give you some ideas about other things to do, or be.

Here is the contact I have made with the ISDE. International Society of Doctors for the Environment.  
[www.isde.org](http://www.isde.org)

Judith Homa

[www.arlingtoninstitute.org/tai/home-test](http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org/tai/home-test) - “The Arlington Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research institute that specializes in thinking about global futures and trying to influence rapid, positive change. We encourage systemic, non-linear approaches to planning...”

[www.energybulletin.net/](http://www.energybulletin.net/) - “Mission Statement: [EnergyBulletin.net](http://www.energybulletin.net/) is a clearinghouse for information regarding the peak in global energy supply. We publish news, research and analysis

<http://transitionculture.org/about/>

[www.transitiontowns.org/](http://www.transitiontowns.org/) “It all starts off when a small collection of motivated individuals within a community come together with a shared concern: *how can our community respond to the challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change?*”

<http://www.worldchanging.com/>

Torrey Orton