

PEIG Newsletter #3 October 2008

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1- Introductions

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.

Welcome Paul Saunders

Paul H Saunders – Psychologist

Paul H Saunders is a psychologist who started his work in the environment industry when in 2001 he was asked to help out in a federally funded leadership development program for the environment industry. This led Paul to work closely with the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) and he has helped them establish a sustainable business model that has allowed them to grow and expand their services and environmental projects. Paul is now the President of AMCS and it is the peak organisation in marine conservation in Australia.

Paul has his own company, LN Consulting Australia Pty Ltd, and has worked with business leaders, sports leaders and Franchise groups for several years. He is based in Melbourne and works with several of Australia's top corporations – e.g. Australia Post; Fosters Australia Group; Cadbury; NAB; and Medibank Private.

Paul has a strong passion for helping people and our community. “I have first hand experience in how psychologists can offer great value to the environment industry. The industry has many passionate people with expertise in conservation; expertise in climate change; and expertise in animals and nature. Our expertise in human behaviour, community behaviour, organisations and change management can be a great asset in helping the environment industry grow and influence Australian society”.

“I look forward to being the convenor of the group and help facilitate positive and constructive meetings for psychologists to become involved in climate change and the environment movement”.

Paul H Saunders - Psychologist

2 – PEIG Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

**Psychology and the Environment Interest Group
Conference Call Meeting
12 midday
Thursday 23rd October 2008**

1. Welcome

Attendance at the meeting were:

Torrey Orton, Karen Spehr, Robert Rich, Judith Homa and Paul Saunders
(Convenor)

2. Apologies

Joanne Brooker, Joe Reser, Susie Burke

3. Agenda topics of the Teleconference Meeting

This was the first meeting of the group in its new format.

Topics covered were:

1. Proposal for a Sustainable Officer role for APS.
2. Reducing APS's environmental footprint
3. Feedback on the National Conference
4. Non APS members involved in the interest group
5. Psychology and Environmental Education programs
6. National workshop
7. Newsletter & In-Psych Magazine
8. Membership
9. Next meeting and agenda

Topics:

1. Proposal for a Sustainable Officer Role for APS

Karen Spehr presented a proposal that has been developed by her and Susan Burke to establish a sustainable officer, one day a week, fully funded, cost neutral for the APS national office and its members. We discussed some of the duties of the office and the benefits it can have to the APS national office and psychologist across Australia.

Action: It was agreed that the proposal and job description be sent out to all PEIG members for their consideration and feedback prior to submission to the APS Board. In this way the new role will have received consultation from APS members and clarified its value prior to being presented to the Board. Karen Spehr to co-ordinate the action with support from Paul Saunders

Topics:

2. Reducing APS's environmental footprint

Rob Rich presented an idea to help APS to reduce its environmental footprint. The plan would be for APS to develop a policy and system for its staff to have the flexibility to do some work from home or even operate from another state and use modern technology – video conferencing etc, rather than travel and as such able to reduce office space.

The idea was discussed and it was identified that this is a policy in some corporations in Australia and is in operation in organizations overseas.

Action: It was agreed to circulate Rob's idea to all PEIG members for feedback and to include it in the next PEIG newsletter.

It was agreed that this is an action that can be picked up by the new APS Sustainability Officer, once approved.

3. Feedback on the National Conference

The feedback about the interest in the environment topic at the conference was good. Over 300 people attended the open forum at the conference and the discussion was very healthy and encouraging.

4. Non APS members involved in the interest group

Torrey Orton put forward the idea of having non APS members involved in the PEIG. He was referring to a person who recently contacted him and has a strong commitment to the environment. The group were unclear as to the policy of the APS in such matters.

Action: Paul Saunders will follow up with the APS to clarify the policy of non members being involved.

5. Psychology and Environmental Education programs

The group discussed the different environmental education programs that psychologist conduct. It was identified that it may be helpful to catalogue the list of psychological environmental education programs available in Australia and share this information with APS members.

It was agreed that the catalogue needs to be specific and focus only on environmental education programs that address attitude, perception and behavior – our fields of work as psychologist.

It was agreed that psychological environmental education will be one of the key themes of the PEIG – helping to promote programs and share research and ideas on how best to educate children, communities and organizations about influencing human perception, attitude and behavior on the way we live with our environment effectively.

Action: It was agreed that we will have an article in each newsletter on education programs. Judith Homa will put forward the first article for the next newsletter. The psychology environment education catalogue is an activity that can be picked up by the new Sustainability Officer, was approved.

6. National workshop

It was agreed to have a national workshop in March 2009.

Action: Paul Saunders to put together a plan for a national workshop to be conducted in March 2009 in Melbourne.

7. Newsletter & In-Psych magazine

We discussed the information relevant for the newsletter. The newsletter will include:

- Articles on education,
- Psych environmental research,
- Different roles and activities psychologists are doing in the environment industry,
- Tips on what we can do to save the planet,
- Links to great websites and relevant environmental online forums etc
- What's happening and new ideas
- Stories on EIG members
- Reference and links to books and articles

A key theme of all communication is how we can influence psychologists to be more aware and actively involved in the environment.

Action: All EIG members to regularly send articles, book references and links to Torrey to include in the newsletter. Paul to follow up with In-Psych to have save the planet section kept going as an ongoing feature section of the magazine.

8. Membership

It was agreed that we need to increase the level of membership of the PEIG over the next twelve months. An agreed action is to increase communication of the PEIG and increase stories of how psychologists can get involved in the environment and to influence the APS members to become members.

Action: Torrey to measure interest in the newsletter and Paul to regularly measure hits on the APS web pages and to report on membership numbers at each meeting.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th December at 12 midday via teleconference – same time same place same station!!

Close of Meeting – 1.00 pm

Paul Saunders
Convenor
PEIG

3 – Article Review -

Flannery, T. (2008). “Now Or Never: A Sustainable Future for Australia?” In *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 31, 2008. Melbourne: Black Inc. \$15.95

Professor Tim Flannery, Australia's leading thinker and writer on the natural world, investigates the latest climate science and the challenges facing Australia and the world. This essay, currently in Australia's top 10 non-fiction books, looks at what the Rudd government needs to do if the nation is to play its part and argues that what is missing is vision, far-sighted government regulation and leadership to rise to the challenges. He proposes a number of inspiring strategies, ranging from farming approaches proven to reduce carbon emissions to the use of geothermal heat energy from the Cooper Basin in South Australia which would potentially supply all Australia's energy needs.

Although the essay pulls no punches in the gloom and doom department, it wastes little time there. Instead, most of the piece outlines large scale scientific solutions to the problem. It is the first time in recent years I have felt optimistic and excited after reading about global warming. Tim Flannery for Prime Minister?

Karen Spehr

4) For EIG members information: Reducing APS's environmental footprint – by Bob Rich

17th October, 2008

Susie Burke
APS

Dear Susie,

After the 1973 oil crisis, three Dutch government departments instituted a system by which some 30% of their employees only came in to work 2 days a week, and worked at home for 3. This was before the existence of the internet.

In the 1990s, I worked for a telephone counselling service. Quite a number of qualified psychologists worked part time. I was rostered on for 2 8-hour shifts a week. We were located all over Melbourne and in nearby small towns. Calls to a central number were automatically forwarded to the person on duty. When a counselling call came in, the phone rang with a different rhythm, so that other family members wouldn't pick it up.

Technology has hugely improved since. Now, it should be perfectly possible for some of the 90 or so APS employees and senior office bearers to work full time 'at' APS head office, and yet to live in Queensland or Western Australia. A high proportion of others with the need for some face to face contact could follow the Dutch pattern and work from home a proportion of the time.

There are a number of Australian businesses and organisations that do this already.

Advantages to the person

- Knowledge of causing less environmental damage;
- More flexibility in chosen home location;
- Reduced or eliminated travel time;
- Significant cost savings.

Advantages to the APS

- Knowledge of causing less environmental damage;
- Wider choice of employees without requiring them to move to Melbourne;
- Large reduction in floor area needed, with reduced costs;
- Similarly for associated costs such as insurance, electricity, furniture etc.

I hope the EIG can discuss this and get it flying

Bob Rich - Counselling Psychologist

Bob is the Secretary of the College of Counselling Psychologists, and a long-term conversationalist. Look around his web site <http://mudsmith.net/> where among other things you'll find a quiz. See how good your knowledge about energy conservation is. Bob will reward you with a short story for having a go.

5) A hand out across disciplines – Eco-labelling – from Tim Edwards

As discussed I would be happy to participate in the work of the EIG. In principle, in my view, the APS and the EIG have a fundamental role - to guide the nation to better management of environmental issues in view of the psychology of the situation.

My company is a small strategic consultancy for the purpose of developing environmental policy. We aim to assist industry, government and NGOs to embrace the need for change in view of the impact they have on the local, national and global environment.

My interest in the APS is to recognise that human attitudes and behavior are at the centre of change management. We (defined as individuals, groups, cities, countries, a species) face

the need to change in important ways and in ways that need to happen now and continuously for the foreseeable future. The APS can make an important contribution - or not.

I am attaching a talk I gave recently to one particular segment of the environmental movement - the Global Ecolabelling Network. This focussed on the role of government but served to frame the issues that this organisation is seeking to address. For the keen reader - presentation notes are included. Feel free to lodge this on your web site.

I would also ask the EIG to pay attention to the recent book called *Code Red* (see Greenleap) - being a publication authored by Australians that raises important national and global psychology questions. I would also encourage all to read Tim Flannery's recent book - *The Weather Changers*. This provides a comprehensive explanation of the urgency of the matter.

Best Regards,

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6) Information: Local

APS COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS
Victorian Section
Professional Development Seminar

Getting social movements up and grassroots initiatives going:

The food security experience

Speakers: Peter Streker and Bev Wood

Thursday 13th November, 2008

7.30pm-9.30pm (refreshments from 7.15pm)

Venue: Treacy Conference Centre, 126 The Avenue, Parkville

(Parking and public transport is easily accessible)

Cost (GST incl): \$20 Community College members, \$30 non-members, \$10 or donation students/concession

Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximises community self-reliance and social justice. This will be an interactive seminar using the experience of food security as an example of how to get social movements going and grassroots initiatives up and running. There will be plenty of time for a lively discussion.

Peter Streker is a Community & Health Development Coordinator at the City of Port Phillip. Peter worked closely with Bev to conduct research at the City of Port Philip which has since been used to develop local initiatives and actions to address food security now and into the future.

Bev Wood is the Food Security Officer at the Victorian Local Governance Association (www.foodsecurity.vlga.org.au) and has been working in the field for quite a while. Bev will speak about local food access and food security, and the growing movement to get it on to a whole of government agenda.

Professional Development points applicable: Generalist – APS members; Specialist – Community College members

Bookings preferred, by **Thursday 6th November**

For more information or to register, contact Harriet Radermacher

Email: harriet.radermacher@med.monash.edu.au Phone: 0421 441 427

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) 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

www.thebigswitch.org.au -

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

7) 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

Judith Homa

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/ - “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/ “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

NB – if you got this far please email me to say so.. and anything you would like me to do differently~!!

Thanks

Torrey

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