

# Sustainable Health and Wellbeing, LETs/CE and Living Well Tasmania

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LETs conference

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# Summary

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- Sustainable Health and Wellbeing
- Basic needs – what makes us happy, gives us life satisfaction?
- Imagine unlimited resources
- Work for the dole/social enterprise
- ‘Sustainability politics’/sustainability by stealth
- The End of Growth and the ramping up of re-localisation
- Living Well Tasmania

## Sustainable Health and Wellbeing

- The fantastic news is that the best thing we can all do for a sustainable world is to strive for our own health and wellbeing! This is because the conditions of human health and wellbeing also promote environmental health and cooperative relationships between people to allow society to function optimally
- = happiness/life satisfaction
- The conditions of human health have been inherited as hard wiring (however we have had inadvertent soft wiring changes which discourages healthy behaviours)
- *Our brains are wired for small group living with a wariness of strangers*

# Basic needs – triggers happy hormones

- Shelter, protection from extremes of temperature
- Exercise eg 30 minutes a day, mix of cardio and weight bearing
- Diet low in fat and sugar, wholefoods, variety of fruit and vegetables
- 7 to 8 hours sleep, regular rest and relaxation, meditation
- Positive social interaction
- Use a range of skills
- Have control over life- control over work
- Contact with nature
- Music?
- = importance of balance
- = able to handle stress, well adjusted, emotional intelligence

# Why do we sometimes find it hard to do healthy things?

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- Our brains are wired for pleasure seeking and to avoid pain – we have inherited basic needs that motivate us to behave towards satisfying these needs
- Feel good hormones (eg oxytocin, dopamine) are released when engaging in these activities
- ‘Discomforting’/stress hormones are released when we don’t engage in these activities
- “Use it or lose it” – when we don’t engage in these activities, eg when we associate bad memories/negative feelings with these activities we lose the motivation to engage in them, particularly exercise and meaningful work
- We become “imbalanced” - reliant on a narrow range of often unhealthy need satisfiers (includes workaholics and exerciseholics!)

# Regaining motivation - synergic satisfiers

- Satisfy a number of needs at once
- “Sustainability by stealth” – eg engaging in a community garden because you like gardening inadvertently gives you social interaction and some exercise via mere exposure can increase motivation for neglected needs
- Community initiatives
  - Experiential learning, learning/reawakening by ‘mere exposure’
- Local food projects
  - Community gardens – good nutrition, contact with nature, with people, exercise
- Community exchange/LETs
  - Multitude of synergic satisfiers
- Intentional communities

# Some of the Big Questions...

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- What can I offer (what skills do I want to develop, what do I want to with my life? What am I naturally drawn to?)
- What are my needs? What is good to do myself and what can I ask others to do for me?
- How much do I trust other people? Can I find the balance between blind trust and no trust?
- Redistribution- how much should we provide for people who can't provide for themselves? For coordination?
- Measuring success – number of trades (can be dangerous)? Import substitution? Number of social events? Satisfying basic needs?

## Imagine your admin team had unlimited resources...

- Comprehensive induction for new members
- Train/find mentors for unemployed as house renovators, builders, mechanics, book keepers
- Develop reputation/feedback system
- Give grants/no interest loans for micro-enterprises
- Run social events regularly in each major and minor location
- Public meetings – eg “what does our town need?”
- Workshop calendar - eg sustainable health and wellbeing
- Regular face to face meetings of local area coordinators
- National network/body to coordinate resources, lobby etc
- Lots of promotional material, including you-tubes/DVD's
- Other – use your imagination! And try and work towards them anyway!



# Work for the dole

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- One barrier to large scale provision of food via LETs/CE is the lack of time/lack of growing area/lack of funds
- Work for the dole pays a supervisor plus operating funds to start a market garden, because basically all costs are paid for, can make produce available via LETs/CE
- = veg boxes? - but since can't depend on govt funding need a level of subsidisation
- Wynyard – two market gardens, possible 3<sup>rd</sup> in July
- Doubling of 'mutual obligation' requirements 1<sup>st</sup> July

# LETS/CE can do more than:

- Increase social connectedness
- Increase individual and community self-sufficiency and capacity
- Provide a parallel currency
- Increase experiential learning eg encouraging synergic satisfaction of needs

⇒ *it also has the potential to contribute to the kind of (political) change we need before we can hope for any sort of sustainable world*

## The End of Growth and the End of Politics as we know it???

- Ideological bipartisan commitment to economic growth as the solution to all problems: economic, social, environmental
  - Interest bearing money as the major driver of accumulation
- The benefits of growth go disproportionately to those who already have higher than average levels of resources- inequality
- Ongoing and deepening economic recession is an inevitable result of the maturing of capitalism
  - Huge challenge (increasing unemployment, poverty and austerity)
  - BUT huge opportunity – 1. decreasing support for current systems, openness to change 2. reducing consumption
- Localisation is inevitable (peak oil, climate change, peak money, peak growth)
- Politics has become a dirty word but in fact is about making decisions together
- *We are becoming the experts on localisation, why would we leave decision making on localisation to our elected politicians who are wedded to the dying growth model?*

# Sustainability by stealth – two avenues

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- Increased H&WB frees resources for deliberating together, increases capacity to handle the stress of social interaction
- Focussing on increasing peoples health and wellbeing can increase sustainability (eg by reducing the health budget), but we don't have to specifically promote the message of sustainability (which is a turn off for many people, is often equated to job loss) can instead promote message of health and wellbeing
- Political change towards sustainability by stealth
- = links between the two – can change social norms to then change legal norms

# Living Well Tasmania

- Living Well Tasmania (LWT) is a new (starting August 2015) community initiative to promote the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanian residents
- improves cooperative behaviours and the capacity of communities to satisfy everyday needs of food provision, transport, shelter and other basic needs within the local area.
- aims to reduce concerns about a lack of employment and a lack of money that is currently causing uncertainties
- recognises that economic insecurity is a barrier to sustainable health and wellbeing eg concern about not being able to bills, provide enough for needs of children etc
- Community Exchange (people can be employed on a non-profit basis without relying on for-profit employment),
- strengthening individual and community capacity, partly by changing policies that affect both of these
- guaranteed basic income

# LWT – demonstrating policies that can make a difference

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- Politics normally involves parties forming policies, then if/once they get into government they demonstrate (or more commonly fail to demonstrate) their capacity for delivering on their promises
- LWT will reverse this – it first will demonstrate that it has a vision and **can** deliver new approaches to addressing social dysfunction, increasing unemployment (especially youth unemployment), economic recession etc
- = will rely on initial funds which are available to set up the pilot, but resources required for other LWT will be much less

# Living Well Hubs/Centres in every town

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- Similar to Transition Towns – provide for basic needs
  - Food, shelter, clothes, then health, educations, “jobs”, economic security
  - Definition of job – helps provide material and non-material goods, provides meaning and purpose/structure/social interaction (disconnecting income from meaningful work)
  - Initial focus on local food – SSA (school supported agriculture), WFDSA (work for the dole supported agriculture) and CENTs
- Informal and formal education re balanced basic needs/SHAW/Living Well
- Majority representation first on council and then state level

# Living Well Tasmania

## Two phases

- 1. Education phase towards sustainable health and wellbeing

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  - Physical centre – membership based – satisfy needs for sociality/meaning & purpose, promote exercise, mindfulness, healthy eating/cooking etc
  - Wynyard pilot – August 2015
- 2. Policy change phase
  - Local government eg local food production, multiple residency (intentional living), participatory budgeting, new health care models, social enterprises, CENTS
  - State government – guaranteed basic income etc
  - Commence - July 2016 (4 years to council and state elections)
- Overall planning and policy guidelines, each town adapts to own circumstances



## Links between CENTs and LWT

- LWT aims to achieve progression of CENTs not so much via direct promotion but gradual education, start of with LWT centres, then introduce CENTs
- Each LWT centre will also be a CENTs hub
- Aim for CENTs (and timebank?) to be main vehicle for satisfying as many needs as locally as possible
- Establishing social enterprise's (eg initially within work for the dole, then via CENTs) will be an important aspect of LWT
- Social events could be combined LWT/CENTs
- = need to address concern about political affiliation and CENTs – by addressing association of politics with dogma, self-interest and corruption?

# Conclusion

- Critical time in history – people disillusioned with current politics, but if/when monetary collapse occurs people go into complete self-protection mode, lose cooperative momentum
- Increasing community/individual self-sufficiency is important, but until we change the laws that are currently controlled by those benefiting from inequality, sustainability is unlikely to happen, eg preventing irreversible changes from climate change, leaving resources for future generations etc
- We can do it- if we are patient, persistent and passionate!!
- Talk to us if you want a Living Well Tablelands/Melbourne etc (and/or wait to see how the pilot goes in Waratah-Wynyard, Tas)!

# Questions?

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