Green Development Meeting 12th November 2008
Cairns Library Community Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes by Sarah Rizvi
Facilitation by Suzanne Jenkins from the Earthwatch Institute

Introductions

1. Sarah Rizvi- CAFNEC project officer working on planning and regional sustainability
2. Ghis Gallo- SALA homes
3. Sarva Keller- Ecosmarte Australasia water filtration and building materials
4. Elaine Harding- CAFNEC coordinator
5. Christine Doan- Malanda North development- property owner
6. Liana Hitchcock- Cairns resident that would like to see the city more sustainable
7. Peter Hitchcock – OCC Consulting, environmental consultant, CAST, wants to see Cairns as showcase of sustainable development, proponent of Cairns airport as carbon neutral
8. Josė Ruiz – GHD Architect accredited in Sustainable Design
9. Julie Fry- FNQISLA, interested in sustainable communities, skilled in community development. Disabled access and urban design
10. Shaun Hartley, Arup, consultant and structural engineer. Five star green star building in the tropics – William McCormack Place Green Building Council Green Star rating
11. Maya- GGI Architects and personal interest
12. Emma Thirkell- Beachcomber Building Solutions PL Building design business. Developed a website called www.greenbuild.com.au to support the use of green building material and www.nqbuild.com.auNQ build for recycled material
13. Andrew Barrett- Energy efficiency assessor, Ecostar homes, Queensland Energy Ratings and Cairns Plumbing.
14. Brendan Bryant- The House and Garden Co. - touch base with green design and builders. Practical input
15. Gwion Cain- The House and Garden Co.
16. Maree Grenfell- Sustainability Officer CRC
17. Nicky Swan- First Project south of Port Douglas to showcase green technology
18. Jason Van Ballegooyan – TAFE, seeks to integrate sustainability issues into their courses
19. Charles Formosa- Formosa Constructions and FAB PL, building new homes with an insulated panel- new product.
20. Patrick Winter- Tropical Trend Home, intends to change the building industry in FNQ
21. Di Creasey- Enviromart - Green Building material retailer
22. Sarah Douglas- Environmental Science student at JCU

23. Peter Zeith- Arhitect with GHD, interest energy efficiency, green building council Australia
24. Peter Collins HIA – Supporting the HIA Greensmart initiatives.
25. Daryll Douglas- Alternative Technology Association

Potential Directions and Projectsto tackle

Five minutes to read the priority areas and asked to rate them and ask any questions.

Any comments?

Maree- Would like more Texts/ books written specifically for the tropics (most written about temperate climates)
Di- EPA's "Your home" is totally out of date- book is as applicable to Hobart as is to Darwin. Energy efficiency resources is sponsored by BHP etc and then makes it available to community; however things are no longer available through EPA as sponsorship funding dries up.
Sarva- Good examples are missing that the community can be excited by. Get a few projects up and running as examples.
Suzanne- and retrofitting old homes- showcases.
Brendan- Generate a demand through educating people.
Sarva- encourage demand, and work on design side (architects and industry leaders) simultaneously.
Ghis- Misconception about sustainable building design- it is mostly about solar passive design and not just solar panels etc. Educate and generate demand
Suzanne- Two aspects – education through literature and actual examples.
Peter H- Need some good showcase examples- look at local, state and federal to help us get some high profile green precincts.
Peter Z- Perception of cost and not value, 3-4% more costs with a pay back of 4 years etc, and then the savings come and that is what is selling sustainable design on commercial buildings overseas.
Nicky- her project will showcase tangible things like grey water within a context which is understandable. Examples will be relevant to a contemporary home= no point telling people without display and practical demonstration.
Andrew- Sustainable design doesn't cost you any more on passive solar design- maybe $1500 more at construction, it is the tanks and solar panels that makes it expensive. Energy Efficiency Rating Software designed for cooler climate
Elaine- is the cost higher or not- depends on how far you go- where do you draw the line on the budget.
Andrew- Wife has come out from working at Chris Van Dyke studio– high end homes- her concept is champagne taste on a normal budget. Very functional- bring those design principles to a standard home
Elaine- Heard that there wasn't enough demand, market driven, industry would *prefer* if it was regulated. Should we wait for regulation or the market?

Patrick- it won't work to wait for regulation- it takes to long.
Peter Z- Energy efficiency is a minimum (this is the worst house you can permissibly build); BC in America will pay a premium for sustainable houses and they say it is good business.
Peter Z- Higher star rating than mandatory- most say it is too much extra work
Christine- push pull, carrot stick, if you can't build a climate controlled home in the Tablelands then the world is in trouble. But Hedley is building homes up there with no eaves with a 5 star air conditioning unit and calling them green. We need to Build a cool box (instead of hotboxes) - retrofit a Tom Hedley house.
Di- Green wash on new development with solar hot water system, a house prominently positioned where there is drive by traffic in new housing estate has two PV panels. The non-visiable houses have only one PV Panel relying on the boost system.
Patrick- best not to have switched on solar hot water systems
Di- Has CRC ever approved a grey water system in Cairns?
Maree- can divert grey water but can't store it.
Di- CRC water rebate- tank plumbed into house- incentive not working- plumbers made to buy for $900 a pump to fill tank up with town water- fees and extra costs are more than the rebate.
Suzanne- Maree why is this happening?
Maree- non sensical
Peter- water saving target code, can only assume to bring to new standard
Andrew- Health reason- stagnation. Mains water pumped in when levels drop below a certain point to allow year round use.
Peter Z- Doesn't apply in wet season
Di- Plumbers just go 'I don't want to go near it'.
Peter H- Disjunct with SEQ
Nicky- Peoples ideas about what green buildings are, are tranished by 'Greenwash' - and one bad experience of an eco paint or eco aircon turns people off if it is not up to standard. Product choice is difficult.
Maree- That is why this group is about dissemination of information- to get past tiny tokenistic gestures and get to the guts of the issue.
Sarah D- JCU Buildings are not 'green' Uni should have people supporting this issue and lead by example- but people say no- it is too expensive.
Suzanne- JCU people wouldn't listen to getting lights on separate systems to allow more efficient use
Elaine- this is where regulations have values
Andrew- JCU laggards and cost cutters
Elaine- needs to be at a council level or state level to make institutions make a short term cost for a long term gain.
Patrick- Showcased Elysian Stage 2 of the Bluewater development at trinity Beach. Propose to build a large scale showcase of green display homes. Multiplex wants to educate builders, and do the education through a display home at Bluewater.
Peter Z- Pick the low hanging fruit, that the client doesn't even know about such as building orientation, passive ventilation, low VOC paint, building material

choices. Then scale up to cost premium items for the clients that can afford it for long term benefits. Market really hard for a product that exceeds minimum buiding code requirements by 40% (i.e. 8 star rating). Find the clients that are educated for the product. These clients are setting the bar.
Ghis- how does this compare with Green smart accreditation?
Peter Z- Similar
Ghis- Plaque for $350 – HIA Greensmart accreditation works. Only got 4 houses in Cairns
Peter H- Perception of Greensmart being expensive- cost association.
Patrick- Meeting with Greensmart- brand attachment with credibility. Multiplex could take this up on a whole estate level – Bluewater stage 2.
Peter H- Greensmart houses is a great idea, but would suggest not to develop it just in consultation with industry, but try and access community knowledge.
Emma- great task retrofitting community centres like sports facilities etc. Cairns always seems to not be organized to secure the funding for these projects. i.e green precincts funding and solar cities funding.
Nicky- because it is hard to sell houses in current climate so refurbishment and retrofitting in some way is important.

Forming the Group

Ghis Gallo- Australian Green Development Forum
AGDF don't know if it is the platform for this group. AGDF is a larger body which is in the business of facilitation. They need to be told what we want and they will try to facilitate. It is a membership based organization. Not huge up here and would be good to get more profile here.

Comments
Sarah R- There was a Cairns chapter but there were issues with it. People felt they didn't get value for money and the people who initiated it felt they were excluded and itbecame a green washing exercise.
Sarva- Got resistance from TRC to get far superior technology for sewage treatment, a organization negotiating with them may have more clout.
Peter Z- Is this an environmental agenda or is it social and economic agenda also?
Ghis- board has changed substantially of AGDF

Elaine Harding- Regional Sustainability Framework
Initiative out of Chamber of Commerce (Cairns) and Advance Cairns, John Rainbird is pushing this along. Aim to create a model for sustainability in region. Had a link up with council officer from Seattle about their experience.
Number of groups and individuals involved as follows:
Representation by Cairns Chamber of Commerce, CRC, Advance Cairns, FNQ Area Consultative Committee, Arup, Terrain, Tropical North Queensland Tourism, TAFE, Steve Wettenhall, Val Schier, Jim Turnour

What is the framework trying to achieve:

- To bring a sustainability agenda to the region, what is sustainability and what are priorities and outcomes?
- Urban design and transport and community development.
- Looking for sponsorship to bring some projects forward.
- Val will support it and Anna Bligh may too.
- Start defining roles and create representative committee
- Advance Cairns (which will be Advance TNQ) is the interim host organization
- We need an organization with a triple bottom line focus.
- Trying to get a draft term of reference.
- Goals- to get a green built environment in the region.
- A lot of opportunity to have a green building focus within this group.

Comments

Daryl- Should partner with other cities like Darwin who may have a similar situation in tropics. Should go to Mackay, not just FNQ- but all North Queensland.

Emma- Centre for Tropical Design- exciting agenda. Centre backed by Ergon, JCU, Townsville City Council, Project Services, Architects Institute.
They helped secure Solar cities for Townsville.
People here today are more grass roots, but a partnership with them would be great. CTD is looking very broadly at all tropical cities like Cairns and Darwin, Broome.

Elaine- Regional Framework- invites presentations, so this group could present. Lack of representation from Tablelands- only Christine.

Christine- No point being just a little group – but the regional sustainability framework has political clout.

Peter H- I sense that what is happening here is to change the culture and encourage uptake of change. If it gets too big then you can loose the community.

Suzanne- Potential date to meet again on Wed 4 February 2009. Sense that this group would like to meet again.

What potential roles would the group have?
What should be the sequence of events?

Nicky- Strong marketing and PR push. Different PR approach otherwise just be another of the same thing.

Peter H- There is a state election next year- opportunity to think about what are issues for uptake.

Julie- Keep the broad section and not get bogged down in lobbying and marketing.

Emma- builders need to have the support of other sectors if they want to undertake greener building practices.
Peter H- Tropical expertise consortium supported by the state government. Expanded to incorporate design and architecture.
Brendan- get on the phone- not everyone wants to sit on computer after they get home from work
Andrew- Greenbuild website tries to create links for NQ green business and consumers.
Daryl- ATA, all Balinese style, but no NQ style. Nothing up here for the people up here.
Ghis- all move in different circles and should share the information that comes to us.
Sarah R- Fortuitous that regional sustainability framework is happening should step into that niche.
Emma- Don't want to be captured, still need to take on prickly issues.
Patrick- So what are we going to do?
Emma- getting Multiplex to get behind a green display village.
Daryl- Sustainable housing forum was only attended by green builders, need greater representation.

Emma- between now and Feb think about it all. The minutes will be distributed along with the results of the list of priorities. The next meeting agenda will endeavour to resolve for projects to be tackled. Thank you all for being here.

Meeting closed.