



## **SEE-Change (Society, Environment, Economy) Incorporated**

### **Chairman's Report to the AGM (2008-9)**

*"SEE-Change Centres are places where individuals can come together to share ideas and information about the health of the planet and the health of their small patch on that planet. They are places where ideas can germinate and take root, where communities can have a say about the kind of communities of which they want to be a part, and the kind of communities they want to bequeath to the future."*

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister ACT in the Foreword to "SEE-Change Centres, grey power and hope" 2006

*"When the people lead with vision, governments will follow. Above all, the SEE-Change Centres will show the people of Australia that the path to sustainability is the greatest adventure for the twenty-first century and one we can all join — for our children and the planet."*

Deb Foskey MLA, Cover of SEE-Change Centres, grey power and hope" 2006

**SEE-Change: (Society Environment, Economy)  
Mission: To inspire, inform and support action to reduce  
Canberra's ecological footprint  
[www.see-change.org.au](http://www.see-change.org.au)**

**Downer Community Centre, Frensham Place Downer  
PO Box 7025, Watson ACT 2602. Tel 02 61612320**

## Contents

Background and context.....	3
Objects.....	3
The switchover from a committee of NSF Inc to SEE-Change Inc.....	4
Review and planning days.....	4
The Business Plan for SEE-Change Inc.....	5
How do we see the organisation evolving?.....	5
Linking to an ACT Roadmap and other sustainability agencies.....	6
Funding arrangements for SEE-Change Inc.....	7
Membership and its benefits .....	8
Activities of SEE-Change Groups.....	8
Jamison .....	8
Woden SEE Change Inc.....	10
Inner North .....	11
Inner South .....	12
The role of community development students from the Australian Catholic University.....	13
Paid Staff and Volunteers.....	13
Communication .....	14
Newsletter .....	14
Website.....	14
The Public Relations institute of Australia Student Challenge Report .....	14
The SEE-Change Faith groups Initiative .....	15
SEE-Change Inc and the ACT Government.....	16
A high level advisory group for SEE-Change.....	16
Conclusion .....	16

## **Background and context**

The challenge now confronting human societies across the world is our incapacity to sustain the current growth in human populations and their use of non-renewable resources.

Climate change and the massive destruction of our human habitat, together pose a threat to the very survivability of humanity. The firm scientific consensus is that human activities are contributing to a rapid change in temperature of the globe which, if it is not constrained, will, in the lifetimes of our children, make large areas of the planet unfit for habitation by humans as well as many of the flora and fauna on which we depend.

This is my first Chairman's Report for SEE-Change (Society, Environment, Economy) Inc., (SEE-Change Inc, for short), which was formed in July 2008 as a non-profit community body, which seeks to **inspire, inform and support action to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint.**

About half of the world's ecological footprint is due to carbon dioxide emissions. Australia's per capita carbon dioxide emissions are the highest in the world and Canberra's are amongst the highest in Australia.

The ecological footprint is an estimate of the area of biologically active land and water that is needed to support each human in the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed. As a result of the exponential growth in human numbers and the growth in each person's demands on the environment, the total human footprint has already exceeded by at least 20%, the planet's available stock of biologically active land and water. The planet is operating in deficit already and our population and standard of living are still growing.

The production of greenhouse gases in excess of those which can be sequestered and absorbed by plants and the sea, is destabilizing the climate, melting glaciers and ice caps, reducing water availability to huge populations, inhibiting food production and contributing to rising sea levels. Unless we can make profound changes in the way we manage our lives and our use of resources, our descendents face a catastrophic future.

## **Objects**

The constitution of SEE-Change Inc. commits us:

- 1.To promote processes and development of groups in local Australian communities that are broadly inclusive and open to people of all ages and from all societal groups in local areas.
- 2.To provide access through these processes and groups to accurate and valid information about the relationship between humans, their health and their environment, including issues relating to ecological sustainability.
3. To foster the development of supportive local networks of people that are built on respect, friendship and a shared understanding of the challenge of sustainability and the need to take democratic action to improve society in ways that are enjoyable, cross-generational and build community cohesion
4. To encourage and support people through these groups and processes to take practical actions in their daily lives, which can reduce the size of their ecological

footprints.

5. To promote exchange of information on these matters across the various processes and groups.

### **The switchover from a committee of NSF Inc to SEE-Change Inc**

This new organization was developed to take over the activities of a committee of the Nature and Society Forum Inc (NSF), which had provided the administrative framework for the ACT SEE-Change Movement from its inception in June 2006 to the establishment of SEE-Change Inc. two years later.

The original NSF committee had supported the development of separate community groups in Jamison and Woden, (both of which are currently independently incorporated) and an un-incorporated group in the Inner North of Canberra. In recent weeks a new group has formed in the Inner South.

The decision to separate SEE-Change from The Nature and Society Forum Inc was prompted by the need for an independent coordinating body that could promote the development of new SEE-Change initiatives in other parts of Canberra; manage funds and membership and communication facilities for the rapidly growing SEE-Change Movement across the ACT, and would also manage relationships with government and other funding agencies on behalf of each of the local groups.

(Note that we tend now to use the terms “Groups” and “Movement” rather than “Centres” which was the term used following the Roundtable in June 2006 that led to the establishment of this initiative in the ACT. Our experience has been that people are ready to work together in groups on sustainability activities without necessarily developing a geographically identifiable “centre” as the focus for their activities.)

A new membership process has been developed for the new body, and members are able to nominate a local group, to whom 40% of their subscription is available.

There is also a category of corporate membership that enables, churches, schools, businesses and other agencies to become members of SEE-Change Inc. Each local community group is represented on the committee of SEE-Change Inc., which provides a forum for exchange of ideas across the movement.

Prior to the formation of SEE-Change Inc, a series of philanthropic and ACT government grants, administered by Nature and Society Forum Inc helped to sustain and support the development of the new movement and enabled the NSF committee to employ Mr Tom Sloan (Jan 2007-June 2007), Ms Robyn McKay( Dec 2008-May 2009) and Ms Vanessa Morris( Jun 2008-Sept 2009) in part time posts.

### **Review and planning days**

In November 2006, April 2008 and July 2009, leaders of the SEE-Change groups came together to review progress and develop plans for the year ahead. At each review meeting, participants engaged in critical analysis of what had been accomplished and strategic thinking about the way the movement could most effectively progress.

At the meeting in July 2009, we had the benefit of a professional facilitator, Mark Spain who helped us to clarify our mission and vision and to develop a business plan for the coming year. This was a high tech affair. The 40 participants in the planning day worked

around a series of networked computers to share their views and arrive at forms of words which could pull together the ideas and plans that bubbled from the enthusiastic participants. SEE-Change is particularly grateful to Mark Spain and his partner, Steve Colman from Global Learning who provided their highly professional expertise and equipment *pro bono*.

### **The Business Plan for SEE-Change Inc**

As a result of discussions at the 2009 planning and review day the **vision** for SEE-Change Inc has been formulated as:

- ***“Communities creating a sustainable Canberra”***

The mission has been agreed to be:

- ***“ To inspire, inform and support action to reduce Canberra’s ecological footprint”***

A series of working groups formed at the planning and review day is currently working on seven elements of the business plan, focussing on specific objectives, strategies and actions.

- Events
- Website
- Publicity
- Administration and Governance
- Organisation Growth
- Membership
- Funding

It is expected that the products of these groups will be built into a business plan in the coming weeks, that will assist the incoming committee in its planning for the next two years

### **How do we see the organisation evolving?**

The evolution of SEE-Change will depend on grassroots community interest, support and action in relation to sustainability issues. Our aim is to help facilitate a **transition to sustainability**, that transforms ACT society and its ecological and carbon footprints very rapidly. SEE-Change is one of many organisations and agencies which are promoting this transition and we expect that its activities will complement rather than compete with these.

Progress in the transition to sustainability to this point has depended upon the activities of a number of highly motivated, energetic and well-informed individuals, who still constitute a relatively small proportion of the ACT population.

If the kind of change referred to above is to occur, a much larger proportion of the population needs to engage with the footprint challenge. It is clear from surveys that the majority of Canberrans now recognize the seriousness of the climate change threat. But many remain confused about the most constructive way forward.

Our aim in SEE-Change is to work with other groups to engage all residents of Canberra in an understanding of the challenges outlined above, while also promoting

new opportunities for them to take action. This will necessarily mean, reaching them in their existing regional and neighbourhood networks and activities which tend to be built around schools, faith groups, clubs, sporting, hobby, entertainment and recreational groups, service clubs, U3A, and local streets and neighbourhoods.

As well as developing events and information exchange opportunities within existing local SEE-Change groups, and developing new identifiable groups in other parts of Canberra, there is also a need for this sustainability transition to be embedded into all of Canberra's networks. For this reason, SEE-Change Inc has created a new corporate category of membership, which is open to faith groups, schools, businesses, and community agencies which share the aims of SEE-Change Inc

### **Linking to an ACT Roadmap and other sustainability agencies**

In the closing session of the September 2009 "Switch to Green" conference, organised by the ACT Branch of the United Nations Association of Australia, representatives of business, the planning industry, academia, community, government and NGO's came together to discuss the development of an ACT roadmap towards sustainability and carbon neutrality.

A few days after the conference the ACT Legislative Assembly committee that has been charged with developing recommendations for endorsement by the ACT Legislative Assembly on ACT's CO2 emission targets, tabled its interim report, which recommended that ACT should seek a 40% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and that its emissions should cease rising by 2013. The interim report with its many recommendations is available at the following site:

<http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees/index1.asp?committee=112&inquiry=753&category=19>

This targets report, if endorsed by the full Assembly, will provide the destination for an ACT roadmap. I have written to participants in Switch to Green Roadmap discussion, suggesting the formation of a Task Force with representatives from business, the planning industry, academia, community, government and NGO's who would work together:

1. Preparing a definitive roadmap and timetable to sustainability and carbon neutrality for the ACT community from now to 2113.
2. Promoting public comment and discussion on the proposed targets for greenhouse emissions that emerge from the current federal and ACT processes and the Copenhagen meeting.
3. Involving the entire ACT community in an urgent consideration of the roadmap and it's targets.
4. Providing quarterly reports to the ACT Legislative assembly on progress.
5. Developing a media presence for the roadmap and its targets.

It seems possible that such a group will be convened by The Conservation Council, the Peak Environmental body in the ACT.

If this happens I would hope that SEE-Change will both play an active role in the development of the Roadmap and in working with other groups to implement it.

## **Funding arrangements for SEE-Change Inc**

In July 2008, one of our Inner North members Ms Jenny Clement, prepared. for consideration by SEE-Change Inc, a resource mobilization plan which suggested that the new organization would need a minimum budget of \$260,000 pa as soon as possible to enable it to fulfil its charter. That plan was examined by the committee and broadly endorsed. It was on that basis that an approach was made to the ACT government for ongoing financial support of \$200,000 pa. In the constrained economic climate, the ACT government has been able to make a little less than half of that available to us for the coming financial year.

At the September meeting of SEE-Change Inc, a fund-raising subgroup appointed by the planning day, proposed a number of strategies to complement the core funding provided by the ACT government. It is doubtful that these strategies can be implemented in time to expand the SEE-Change budget to \$260,000 for the current financial year.

A central recommendation by the fund-raising group was the need for SEE-Change Inc. to be gazetted federally as an organization with gift tax deductibility status and registration with the Australian Tax Office and the Australian Department of Environment. This process is currently being set in train but it cannot happen immediately.

During the year under review, NSF and SEE-Change together administered two grants totalling \$90,000 from the ACT Government for SEE-Change activities.

For the financial year 2009-10, for the first time, SEE-Change is receiving funding on an ongoing basis through the ACT budget. The government has made a notional commitment of approximately \$93,000 per annum over the next four years to support SEE-Change infrastructure. The service agreement that we have signed as part of this arrangement contains the following deliverables.

<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Details of service</b>	<b>Timeframe for completion</b>
1	Develop a business plan for SEE-Change that incorporates a vision, mission, objectives strategies and plans for 2009-10.	31 January 2010
2	Continue to develop the SEE-Change movement in the ACT to involve residents in their local communities in exploring and taking action on climate change and their ecological footprints. The particular focus in 2009-10 will be on continuing to develop the groups in Jamison, Inner North, Woden and Inner South whilst exploring the of feasibility of developing one other group in another part of Canberra.	30 June 2010
3	Continue to develop infrastructure to underpin the growth of the SEE-Change movement, focusing on enhancing the SEE-Change website and newsletter and formalizing new family and corporate membership arrangements.	30 June 2010
4	Work collaboratively with other environmental and sustainability groups in the ACT in order to contribute to the	30 June 2010

	Territory achieving zero net carbon emissions.	
5	Partner with the ACT Government as appropriate, subject to requisite resourcing focusing on sustainable schools and community councils.	30 June 2010

This Schedule will be reviewed annually and details of services agreed for 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 prior to commencement of that financial year.

### **Membership and its benefits**

Currently the SEE-Change newsletter is sent to about 800 e-mail addresses across Canberra. The two incorporated SEE-Change groups have between them about 500 people who have paid a subscription to join that group over a year ago.

Under the new membership arrangements, it has been agreed that SEE-Change Inc. will administer membership records and subscriptions for all groups and will pay 40% of each membership subscription to the group nominated by the member.

A membership fee of \$25 for household membership(\$10 concession) and \$50 for corporate membership has been set and membership records are being maintained by SEE-Change Inc for the whole movement.

Currently, SEE-Change Inc under the new membership arrangement has about 120 financial members. A membership drive is now under way to invite all newsletter recipients to become financial members of SEE-Change inc

Membership of SEE-Change Inc offers the following benefits

- Shared involvement in the challenge to launch Canberra on the path to sustainability, " *the greatest adventure for the twenty-first century*"
- Voting and nomination rights at AGM's and special meetings of SEE-Change Inc
- Electronic access to newsletters and updates provided by the secretariat of all SEE-Change activities across the ACT
- Notification of all bulk-buy activities and entitlement to participate in bulk buy initiatives on special terms available to SEE-Change members

### **Activities of SEE-Change Groups**

#### **Jamison**

The first of the local groups to form and incorporate in 2007, the Jamison SEE-Change Footprint Challenge Inc has been the pioneer ACT SEE-Change group in a number of fields.

1. School community activity. During the year under review, a regular monthly meeting at the Macquarie Primary School on "Sustainability in the suburbs" has brought school parents and interested community members together around a meal (and child activities led by teaching staff from the school) to consider aspects of the footprint challenge and ways individuals and families can act to reduce it. Topics considered have included food choices, energy efficiency, cycle

maintenance, house retrofitting and gardens. This activity has been coordinated by a group of teachers and parents from the school with the assistance of a small ACT government grant. Attendances at these meetings have ranged from 30 to 70.

2. Six public and members' meetings on Solar energy, Photovoltaic Cells, Retrofitting, Food choice, Farmers markets, Carbon neutral Canberra, held in the Macquarie Wests/Southern Cross Club, which have drawn audiences ranging from 15 to 150.
3. Introduction of a monthly electronic newsletter under the inspired leadership of Jamison committee member, Bill Gresham which now circulates to about 800 email addresses and for which editorship has now passed to Ria Johansen and Peter Marshall . The newsletter now contributes to the needs of the entire SEE-Change Movement.
4. Solar panel and solar hot water bulk buy. Coordinated by Bill Gresham and Vanessa Morris, this initiative also attracted ACT-wide interest. The group called for tenders from photovoltaic system suppliers and facilitated a discounted arrangement between SEE-Change members and the successful tenderer. This took place while the ACT feed-in tariff was still under consideration by the ACT Legislative Assembly, and while there were uncertainties around the commonwealth subsidies and the global financial crisis. These difficulties notwithstanding, there are now 58 household photovoltaic cell installations and approximately 28 solar hot water systems in SEE-Change members homes, resulting from the initiative, mainly, but not exclusively in the Western suburbs of Canberra.
5. A successful grant application to the ACT Department of Environment, led to the BERT scheme, a trial of bicycle trailers for shopping and child transport. The grant has enabled the group, co-ordinated by Guy Cassis and Stephen Palethorpe to purchase a group of trailers and hire them out for trial to members who are prospective purchasers. This initiative has attracted considerable community interest in greater use of cycles in the area.
6. A household monitoring initiative to assess the community's attitude to climate change and action over their ecological footprint. With leadership from, Judith Bailey, Don Traquair, Nola McKeon and Ted Griffin and the involvement of 23 members who each door-knocked on 10 randomly selected homes in the Jamison area a baseline picture of community attitudes to climate change and efforts to mitigate it was obtained. ACTEW/AGL also provided the committee with baseline information about electricity and water usage for the area. A failed attempt to monitor Ecological footprints over time through use of a household expenditure diary was found to be logistically beyond the resources of the voluntary body. The project revealed strong community concern about climate change and a readiness to work as a community to mitigate it.
7. Considerable effort from Jamison members has gone into providing a presence at community events such as the Corinbank Festival, Switch to Green Expo, school and community fairs and a Harvest Festival event at the Canberra

## Environment and Sustainability Centre in late 2008

8. In a review of its progress, in preparation for the SEE-Change Planning day in July 2009, a group of members met to consider ideas for future SEE-Change development. They proposed to the Review that consideration should be given to the following:
  - a. Communal solar projects
  - b. A Cross-Canberra sustainable food project
  - c. Establishing ties with local business and community groups
  - d. Working with the ACT government
  - e. Practical retrofitting demonstration series
  - f. Precinct parties
  - g. Consolidation of governance structures
  - h. Comparative information on utility bills

### **Woden SEE Change Inc**

Prepared by Audrey Severino Chair Woden SEE Change Inc.

From a kernel of an idea in November 2007, much has been accomplished to establish our group and lay the foundation for continued growth and engagement in our community.

In November 2007, 70 people from five suburbs in the Woden Valley attended a public meeting to support a proposition that we in the five suburbs represented (Torrens, Curtin, Lyons, Pearce, Chifley) reduce our ecological footprint by 30% over the next three years. The first Woden SEE Change committee was immediately formed to commence planning and implementation activities to action this resolution.

In April 2008, Woden SEE Change became an incorporated body, whose objective is to encourage actions aimed at reducing the ecological and carbon footprints of the suburbs of Woden. In early to mid 2008, our key activity was to develop and promote our Eco Challenge, an activity that seeks people's commitment to reduce their ecological footprint by implementing change at the household level. The key components are to use the Australian Conservation Foundation's on-line eco calculator to calculate household footprint and identify three actions that will be implemented over 12 months to reduce that footprint. The eco calculator can be used to track progress over the 12 months.

In July 2008, the Woden SEE Change committee launched the Eco Challenge at a public meeting attended by close to 100 people. While there was some interest and uptake of the Eco Challenge, it has become apparent that the majority of people attending Woden SEE Change events are interested in learning how to reduce their ecological footprint via workshops, practical demonstrations, tours of homes and gardens and networking with others in their community, and not necessarily in "signing up" to an Eco Challenge. There may be several reasons for low uptake of the Eco Challenge but Woden SEE Change has focussed on what people have been saying interests them.

Since late 2008, Woden SEE Change has been addressing interest in community learning via our 2008-09 ACT Environment Grant. The funding we received has allowed us to bring monthly workshops and 'over the back fence' tours to the Woden and Weston Creek area. These events have addressed each aspect of our ecological footprint

including energy use, water use, transport, food production, consumption patterns, and waste management. To complement these activities we have conducted monthly social eco-chats at the Southside Farmers Markets. We are hopeful that these eco-chats can become an event for many to look forward to extend their knowledge and circle of people that can be drawn on for practical and moral support in making changes in our lives to reduce our ecological footprint.

Our success in the last year is apparent in consistent attendance at our workshops and tours and our ever-increasing list of people interested in knowing what Woden SEE Change is doing. We have gone from an email contact list of approximately 50 people in early 2008 to over 300 in late 2009.

The Woden SEE Change committee plans to continue to host workshops and tours addressing our ecological footprint next year and to promote the aims of our group at local forums and events. The key ingredient to expanding much beyond where we are today is the active involvement of our members and others in planning and implementing activities that link to Woden SEE Change's objectives and are meaningful to them and others in our broader community.

I would like to thank Vanessa Whelan as the inaugural Chair of Woden SEE Change for her work in supporting and guiding Woden SEE Change's establishment.

This Woden SEE Change Inc report is dedicated to Mike Clancy, a founding member of Woden SEE Change, who so ably established the structures that brought Woden SEE Change Inc. into existence

---

## **Inner North**

Prepared by Jenny Clement

The Inner North See-Change group began in early 2008 over cups of coffee at Tilley's in Lyneham. The group continued to meet at people's houses over the next few months, friendships formed and a vision for how we could best operate began to emerge.

As part of the broader Canberra See-Change family, we decided we would like to work towards raising our own understanding and awareness and in turn encourage the community of the Inner North to reduce its ecological footprint. Since our beginnings just over a year ago we have aimed to do this by sharing ideas, information and resources.

As a central activity the group has organised guest speakers each month who talk on topics around how we can be more sustainable in our daily lives. The key message is often that small steps and behaviour changes all contribute. Speakers have provided information on how they personally have made their homes more environmentally friendly – from insulation, double-glazing, better curtains, to simply changing the thermostat on their heating. Other speakers have given information on how best to select and install water tanks and water wise gardening. Even the topic of trash was well received as we learnt strategies to reduce and recycle our waste.

These talks – even in the dark, cold depth of winter - have attracted between 30 to 60 people. After the talk there is pizza and a chance to talk more informally. Special thanks go to Landcare and Australia Post who provided a small grant to the group to host these forums.

In addition to the talks Inner North See-Change organised two extremely successful events. In November 2008 we ran a public showing of the documentary "Telling the Truth" which traced seven Australian Al Gore Ambassadors.

The second event was the Spring Sustainability Fair held in O'Connor at the site of the planned Banksia Street Wetlands on 20 September, held in collaboration with the ACT Government's Urban Waterways Program and the Ginninderra Catchment Group. It was a glorious Spring day attracting 60 stallholders and performers – including Dalics with environmental messages. An estimated 3,000 people, including not only inner north residents but many from other parts of Canberra enjoyed the Fair. Many signed up to volunteer on the wetlands construction.

The Fair was possible thanks to the hard work of a core group of visionaries, and to the financial support from the ACT Department for Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water and the North Canberra Community Council. Plans are to make this an annual event.

Reflecting on the past year, it is important to be part of a web of people working for change. Members have their fingers across many pies, and have been active in related activities such as the main See-Change committee, the Sustainable House Day, and the Electric Vehicle Group. Another heart-warming lesson has been that people are amazingly supportive and generous – they often just need to be asked. Finally, we have found that many, many people understand the need to make changes to reduce our environmental footprint, yet they have a thirst for practical information on how best to do this, and they enjoy meeting and celebrating with others who share the same vision and have the same questions.

### **Inner South**

Prepared by Gill King \

On 4 August 2009 SEE-Change hosted a public meeting at Manning Clark House, with a view to forming an Inner South SEE-Change group. Will Steffen spoke on 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge: A Vision for Canberra and the Region'. Bob Douglas introduced SEE-Change and posed some questions to start discussion within the group. This focussed on what a carbon-neutral Canberra might look like and what would it take to bring it about, noting the need for people to lead governments on this.

An informal Inner South SEE-Change group has now formed and has held two meetings, each attended by about eight people (with several apologies). Eighteen households have now expressed interest in the group, and some of these are formal members of SEE-Change.

The first meeting (17 August) concentrated on getting to know each other and possible work of the group, such as:

- community learning and information exchange, focussing on practical experiences (eg of retrofitting houses and other SEE-Change groups), the specific needs of the Inner South, and brokerage between business and the community
- bulk buys for local schools and churches
- policy influence

The group has subsequently:

- made a substantial and constructive submission to the ACT government on the ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan
- held a second meeting (29 September), mainly comprising a tour of an ex-Government brick veneer home that has been sustainably retrofitted (house and garden) on a budget
- learnt more about the environmental interests of the Inner South community

Future actions under consideration are:

- holding a membership/information stall at the Griffith Shops spring fair
- next meeting involving tours of two other nearby members' retrofitted homes
- a possible sustainable house day (complementing the work of the Australia and New Zealand Solar Energy Society) around the March equinox

### **The role of community development students from the Australian Catholic University**

It is important that we recognize the role played by 4 groups of students (10 students in all) from the Australian Catholic University. They have played an absolutely seminal role in the development of the SEE-Change groups and structures. These students are allocated to SEE-Change as part of their final year of training in social work and community development and have each contributed about 400 hours of their time between July and November to the development of the organization. In 2006, Crystal Fox, Ruth Hill and Elise Woodman helped us to initiate the organization. In 2007 Kate Haughey, Robin McKay and Ivan Stojanovic played this role. In 2008 Claire Callaghan worked with us and since July 2009 we have had the services of Peta Sparty, Tyne Gough and Stephanie Pollard.

All of these students have brought to SEE-Change, their community development skills as well as their vitality, energy and enthusiasm. All of this began because of the support of Ms Mary Ivec, who was a member of the Roundtable that established SEE-Change and was on the academic staff at ACU at that time. Mary has provided academic supervision of the students for the past three years and this year, Elise Woodman, one of the founding students, who now works at Radford College, is providing the necessary academic supervision. Ruth Hill, another of the founding students is also supporting the current trainees.

We are grateful to the Australian Catholic University, to all of the students and to their supervisors for the vital they have played in the development of SEE-Change. Without their input it is doubtful that SEE-Change would exist today.

### **Paid Staff and Volunteers**

SEE-Change has set itself a huge task which will only be accomplished by massive voluntary action. But to be effective this action depends upon a basic infrastructure and focal and continuing presence through the establishment of an office and a small number of paid staff.

I am extremely grateful to the very substantial voluntary efforts that have gone into SEE-Change during the past 12 months. It should be noted also that our paid staff have contributed well in excess of their paid time to the development of the organisation.

Elsewhere I have acknowledged the contribution of the students and supervisors from the Australian Catholic University and the volunteer managers of our website and newsletter.

Here I also wish to pay special tribute to the chairs and committees of the regional groups, the committee of SEE-Change Inc. and the large army of volunteers who run local meetings, man booths at SEE-Change events and events at which SEE-Change has a presence, to those who write submissions to government, and maintain our membership rolls. During the financial year, 2008-9, Vanessa Morris, (Executive officer )and Susan Butler, (Development officer) our two paid staff, have served us with great distinction and effect. In farewelling Susan and welcoming our new short- term administrative assistant, Anne Clarke, I want to underline the vital interdependency of the paid and voluntary effort.

Thankyou one and all

### **Communication**

Communication is central to our charter. The best forms of communication in this field of endeavour are word-of-mouth and existing networks. There is clear evidence that the footprint challenge is now being transmitted in various informal ways across Canberra networks. More formal communication channels include the media, newsletters and our website.

During the year under review, the executive officer Vanessa Morris has played an important role in elevating SEE-Change issues to media attention. Her involvement as an Al Gore ambassador has also kept her in the news on climate change and sustainability issues.

### **Newsletter**

But we have also been a particularly fortunate in the volunteers who have managed and disseminated the electronic SEE-Change newsletter. Throughout 2008, Bill Gresham was newsletter editor. During 2009, the role has been shared by Ria Johansen and Peter Marshall. The quality of these newsletters is repeatedly remarked upon by our members and outside readers. I am aware of the huge time investment our editors and contributors make to this activity and believe that the SEE-Change Movement is greatly in their debt for this entirely pro bono contribution.

### **Website**

Many hundreds of hours have also been invested by a number of people in the development of SEE-Change website, most of them professional and unpaid. We are especially grateful to Matthew Driver and Peter Marshall for their immense pro bono effort on redeveloping the website platform which is now has very diverse website capacities.

I am grateful also to Susan Butler who, during her time as Development Officer has maintained the content of the website in a timely and professional manner.

### **The Public Relations institute of Australia Student Challenge Report**

As a result of an initiative by Development Officer, Susan Butler, SEE-Change was successful in attracting, through the Public Relations Institute of Australia Student Challenge, a team of four students in Communication at the University of Canberra to undertake an audit of the SEE-Change communication strategy.

The four students, Tegan McGrath, Anita Brabham, Alyce Parker and Renee Lambert presented their report at the University on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009 at a session which I

attended and have made their final report available to SEE-Change Inc. An extract from their report follows:

*A communications audit was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of current and past communications tools and to identify internal and external communications issues and opportunities within SEE-Change. Research consisted of focus groups and interviews, client meetings, evaluation of communications materials and an analysis of previous research undertaken. Research revealed a number of issues and opportunities to be addressed in a communications strategy. From our findings, it is recommended that SEE-Change:*

- *Implement clear communication from the board to its members, volunteers and contributors*
- *Empower willing and able members and supporters of SEE-Change to promote the organisation by providing them with communications guidelines and resources.*
- *Adopt a consistent „Look and Feel“ image and messaging.*
- *Continue to maintain and improve the website and that it reflects the key messages and adopts the agreed „Look and Feel“.*
- *Implement our recommended communication strategy to help address issues such as low membership numbers and inactive members including those that fail to pay membership dues on time or at all.*

*The communication strategy includes communication goals and objectives which address key issues and opportunities we found in our research. They focus on educating and inspiring current and potential members to become active in social, economic and environmental issues, to develop a consistent and recognisable „Look and Feel“, to position SEE-Change as an organisation dedicated to a more sustainable future and to increase accountability and transparency between SEE-Change its members and contributors*

We are grateful both to the students and to the Public Relations Institute of Australia for this important analysis and for assistance in the redesign of the SEE-Change brochure. The recommendations are being considered by the committee of SEE-Change Inc

### **The SEE-Change Faith groups Initiative**

SEE-Change Inc is developing an initiative across faith based groups in the ACT that seeks to involve them in the sustainability transition through possible collective action to be facilitated by SEE-Change. In the first instance

The ACT Government has recently passed legislation which provides strong incentives for change, through its feed-in tariff for clean, renewable energy created by means of photovoltaic panels. The level of the feed-in tariff is such that income can be generated in a reasonable time frame after the purchase and installation of the panels. SEE-Change is offering to assist all faith organisations in Canberra to be able to purchase photovoltaic panels at a discount rate, through bringing together those faith communities who would like to form a consortium and use the power of group buying.

It is being suggested that the benefits to the faith groups could include the following:

- *Obtain a discount for the purchase and installation of photovoltaic panels on any of your buildings*
- *Drastically reduce (or negate) the cost of your electricity bills*
- *Earn income from your panels for the life of your panels*

- *It would be a source of renewable energy to heat and cool your religious and functional buildings*
- *Be informed by SEE-Change of the rebates paid by government*
- *Work with other faith groups to negotiate a group discount and find you the most respected, reliable and cheapest supplier of photovoltaic panels for your community.*
- *It would be a means of generating renewable energy for the grid.*
- *It would be an excellent collaborative venture across faith borders.*
- *It could help to engage your group in discussions of the current climate change crisis and their personal and collective response to it.*
- *It could help to energise your community to take action on other environmental issues eg insulation, water tanks, changing light bulbs.*
- *It would be a signal to policy makers in Canberra that the faith based organisations are working together on this problem and expect our political leaders to do so also.*

The business case for this development is being prepared by a voluntary group of SEE-Change members. The convenor for this initiative is Ms Helen Palethorpe.

### **SEE-Change Inc and the ACT Government**

Since the formation of SEE-Change, we have been fortunate in the support we have received from the ACT government at the highest levels both from the Chief Minister and the Minister for Environment. Both are sensitive to the need for a grassroots body that can work in a complementary fashion with the agencies of government. Our new service agreement commits us to exploring ways of working closely with schools and community councils. We look forward to discussions about ways in which these collaborations can be most effectively developed.

### **A high level advisory group for SEE-Change**

At its most recent meeting, the committee of SEE-Change Inc agreed to explore the development of a high-level advisory group that could meet once or twice a year to consider progress in the SEE-Change movement. We see the possibility of linking high level representatives of industry, business, church groups and other agencies into the grassroots sustainability enterprise. A working group to develop this proposal will be reporting back to the new Committee

### **Conclusion**

This, the first year of operation of SEE-Change Inc as an independent entity has been busy and productive. The organisation is now well placed to assist in the transition to sustainability and carbon neutrality for the Canberra community. To do this however will require a significant expansion of resources over and above that which is available to SEE-Change Inc. even with its very committed volunteer group.

Canberra is now well-placed to take the Australian lead on this transition to sustainable living and carbon neutrality and SEE-Change is ready to play its part. The international discussions to be held in Copenhagen in December will of course establish what can be accomplished globally in the next few years. It now seems inconceivable that the world's political leaders will fail to rise to this challenge. Assuming that they rise to it, I believe that the population of Canberra is ready to commence the journey.

Bob Douglas

6/10/09