 **Landcare Broken Hill Inc**

***Greening the Hill Mk.2***

ABC Radio interview No.23 – 1 October 2019

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESOLUTION – WHY LANDCARE BROKEN HILL SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION**

Throughout Landcare Broken Hill’s ***Greening the Hill Mk2*** Initiative we have spoken of the dire straits our City and its region has found itself in environmentally.

Starting with our launch introduction back in April we said the purpose of ***Greening the Hill Mk2*** was about:

**Revitalizing the Broken Hill community to do it again!**

**To be in the vanguard again – to show Australia how it can be done**

**Combating the drought / fighting climate change**

**– a role for everyone – for a more vibrant & resilient region**

We explained that **the primary reason** for the need for the ***Greening the Hill Mk.2*** *Initiative* now is the continuing drought and the urgent need to redress the unpleasant manifestations of it. The extraordinarily hot recent summers we’ve had; the constant concerns about water and the sustainability of the Murray-Darling River system; the large increase in the number of dust storms Broken Hill has experienced; the general browning of the City as more and more gardens are disappearing into gravel alternatives; and as plants and trees are seen to be dying all over the district. The urgent reasons for this Initiative are many – all of which provide Landcare with a duty to act now – to enlist the widest community support across all of Broken Hill.

**So let us review this enlisting of the widest community support across all of Broken Hill -** the uptake has been extraordinary: significant membership increase; partnerships with organisations and groups across the City; This all represents **a repeated and firm reinforcing of this community’s concern about what has been happening to their lives within the context of extreme environmental change**. People want action – they want these issues addressed.

**Is there any point in having our Broken Hill community voice heard? History shows us that it is in the blood, in the genetic make-up of this City to have its voice heard. It has never been fearful of being heard:**

There was criticism from one quarter of the Mayor's climate emergency resolution, saying that it is not Broken Hill's responsibility or role to take action to tackle climate change but rather it's for the Federal Government or others to do something about Climate Change.

* That criticism is the antithesis of the Broken Hill approach it has historically taken to concerning issues.
* **It ignores that all great movements for change began somewhere, often with a single voice**. When Gandhi set out to bring change to India he was at first alone; when Nelson Mandela spoke out against apartheid; when people first questioned slavery; when the suffragettes first protested for women to be given the vote; when Greta Thunberg started her first school strike in August 2018, **just 13 months ago**, was she concerned at being the one lonely figure on the steps of the Swedish Parliament?
* Broken Hill has a proud tradition of being in the lead: Broken Hill miners were first heard globally calling for OHS reforms. They were a voice in the wilderness. They had to go on strike. But their voice was heard, first in NSW, then nationally, then globally. **They didn't shrink from the issue and weakly say it was someone else's problem**. They stood up, were heard, were counted and were shown to be right.
* That proud tradition was reflected in the Mayor's Climate Emergency resolution. **And if you think about it – doing nothing about climate change and not being heard about it – is an OHS issue**.

**There was also criticism that the Major’s Climate Emergency would do nothing for Broken Hill business – nothing to help the shrinking local economy. Well Landcare Broken Hill disagrees!**

* First, from a personal local business perspective, let me put on my hat as a pastoralist in this district for the last 20 years, one of the nearest with a pastoral enterprise close to Broken Hill. Let us reflect on the dependency that regional centres like Broken Hill have on the farming / pastoral businesses. When the pastoral businesses are suffering, so do the regional centres. There is less economic activity, less expenditure, the town suffers.
* So how is it out on the land? – on the pastoral properties which are part of the life blood of a regional City like Broken Hill? It is rough; it is terribly challenging; and the land is deteriorating with no sign of improvement. There are farming movements all over this country and others whose voices are increasingly being heard about the ravages of climate change they are experiencing. Movements like Australia’s Farmers for Climate Action are now significant voices calling for action.
* So it is in the interests of regional centres like Broken Hill, who have a dependency on the well-being of farming and pastoral industries that surround them, to be concerned about that constituency – to share their concerns and support moves to bring about change.

**Then there are the new opportunities that must arise and be pursued in the face of a changing world. If we accept that climate change is having the impacts we see, then do we simply follow the same old course – do the same old, same old, same old things, over and over again? Landcare Broken Hill says No!**

* In the face of serious change, we must innovate and look for new ways of doing things, new ways of surviving, new ways of sustaining a viable economy. We need to have a vision to sieze new opportunities.
* Does this City wish to intelligently plan for a new future in a changed world, or does it want to be tied to the perspective of the **troglodytes** amongst us?
* We can learn from history – we have missed opportunities in the past, let it not happen again. Look at the early history of renewable energy in Australia. Eg Dunlite wind generators (1920s – 1950s) eg White Cliffs solar power farm (1981-1996, 1996-2004, 14 parabolic dishes, constructed by ANU)
* Recognising the emergency of climate change should focus all our attentions on finding alternative ways of organising the way we live, work, generate economic activity and safeguard the environment. We should not be afraid. **We should look to science and opportunity**.
* What are the opportunities? Scientific research gives us the clue to opportunities of the future. Reading the ASX reports about Cobalt Blue – the green energy technology company – with its cobalt deposits just beyond the edge of the City, on Thakaringa Station. Is this a new industry Broken Hill should welcome with open arms? Is it not possible for this City to become a hub for cutting edge industries associated with this new renewal energy source? Is not this an opportunity for this City to encourage? The City could become an exemplar by embracing the opportunity.
* Yesterday I was exploring recycled products being manufactured from plastic waste. I was reviewing the range of products made by RePlas, an Australian company converting soft plastics into garden benches, seats, garden bed panels etc. I then thought of this Nation’s huge waste problems – we were actually exporting recyclable waste to China and Indonesia, until recently stopped by those countries. And I wonder why we don’t better pursue the opportunities that our waste offers us.
* 7 Eleven Stores have set the pace with their convenience stores – recycling coffee cups into useful products.
* Look at history, Silicon Valley began in California in the 1970s because a concentration of research entities specialising on silicon-based transistors & circuit chips – in both universities and in business started to work cooperatively on scientific research. It began at some point in time and grew to become the world’s largest concentration of high-tech technological science and development with San Jose, for instance, becoming a mega city.
* Look at the history of recycling waste paper to produce cardboard – 100% recycled packaging – Pratt Industries opened a new cardboard factory last week with Trump and PM Morrison – where? In Wapokoneta – where??? An Ohio town of just 9,800 people – half the size of Broken Hill. A thought: given Broken Hill is on the national transcontinental railway line, might it be possible for the City to explore attracting a new sustainable recycling industry here? Six months ago we were shipping our waste to China, surely a train to Broken Hill is a more sustainable option?
* And farming, there a new sustainable farming industries emerging.

**The Climate Change Emergency resolution was a recognition of changed times and a call for the Nation to live more sustainably – to re-organise the way our society interacts with the environment.** It begins at home – in every home – with the way we generate waste, use of power, allocate our resources. It rests with every business, every farmer, every school and club: to manage their lives more intelligently. Because every action counts. It is not futile for us in Broken Hill to act, because the world over, people are changing. Countries like China are massively changing and are becoming leaders in so many fields of environmental management. **Australia has got a choice – we can be left behind, or we can strive to be in the vanguard. Broken Hill has decided to lead.**

Landcare Broken Hill has set out to **re-green this City**, that will be part of our task – but helping to open the communities’ eyes to the problems with the old ways of unsustainable living and concurrently to foster an understanding of the opportunities that lie ahead – are also our tasks. **We can all do so much** **more**. The old ways have cursed our environment; new research, science and opportunities are the way of the future.

I’ll close with a description of the **Red Flag Law** – the law that was introduced when the first motor cars were invented.

In the United Kingdom, the [Locomotive Acts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locomotive_Acts) was a policy requiring self-propelled vehicles to be led by a **pedestrian waving a red flag or carrying a lantern to warn bystanders of the vehicle's approach**. In particular *The Locomotive Act 1865*, also known as *Red Flag Act*, stated:

“Firstly, at least three persons shall be employed to drive or conduct such locomotive, and if more than two waggons or carriages he attached thereto, an additional person shall be employed, who shall take charge of such waggons or carriages;

Secondly, one of such persons, while any locomotive is in motion, **shall precede such locomotive on foot by not less than sixty yards, and shall carry a red flag constantly displayed**, and shall warn the riders and drivers of horses of the approach of such locomotives, and shall signal the driver thereof when it shall be necessary to stop, and shall assist horses, and carriages drawn by horses, passing the same”

**Think about it ……….**

**The next public meeting of Landcare Broken Hill will be its ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**at the Centre for Community, 200 Beryl Street, Thursday 31 October 7.00pm**

**when we will present the 6 month Report on *GREENING THE HILL MK2***

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