 **Landcare Broken Hill Inc**

***Greening the Hill Mk2***

ABC Radio interview No.41 – 4 March 2020

**Achieving Sustainability Goals Campaign**

At last week’s Landcare Broken Hill’s public meeting we launched our 2020 Speakers’ Programme that will see us have a guest speaker at every one of our monthly meetings on the last Thursday of each month. Our first speaker for 2020 was Broken Hill Council’s new Waste & Sustainability Manager, Kathy Graham. She came along and talked about Council’s waste management policies and plans for the City to put sustainability principles into practice.

Whilst Kathy was with us we relaunched our various existing sustainability projects under the banner of a new campaign, in order to better drive change in our community: **Achieving Sustainability Goals Campaign.**

***When Landcare’s Greening the Hill Mk2 initiative was launched ten months ago, many projects were focussed on changing our behaviour for the better – for us all to try and become more sustainable in the way we live***.

We set out to talk about ways by which we could be better at looking after the environment, both the broader environment, but also the environment in our own homes. It’s not difficult and, many people will be surprised, it saves us all money. We keep things rather than throwing them out; we find ways to reuse things; and so we create less waste. Everyone can do it!

Many of our Greening the Hill projects are aimed at achieving a more sustainable way of living. Amongst our projects are: our litter removal campaign; our mulching of garden waste project; our grey water use educational campaign; our water tanks uptake campaign; the renewable energy campaign; our sustainable living and house design campaign; and our planting efforts – all which will make our City more liveable.

Landcare Broken Hill’s **Achieving Sustainability Goals Campaign** is linked to a global initiative launched by the United Nations in 2015 when the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** were launched. There were 17 goals launched, adopted by nations around the world including Australia, **that provide a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for us all, addressing the challenges our world and the people in it face on a daily basis.  Landcare Broken Hill was pleased to see that Broken Hill Council had adopted these UN Sustainable Development Goals when it approved its own Sustainability Strategy 2018-2023**

Landcare Broken Hill is determined to work with the whole Broken Hill community to ensure we all become sustainable in the way we live. We are pleased that the Council is partnering with Landcare to work together to achieve many of these sustainability goals.

**Great example: railway sleepers from recycled plastic being made in Mildura.**

As an illustration of just one initiative to a sustainable use for waste, waste plastic, I’m going to focus on what’s happening with a standout new industry for our near regional neighbour Mildura. The making of Duratrack railway sleepers from waste plastic.

**In 2016 Sustainability Victoria gave a research grant to Monash University which enabled an analysis of flexible plastics in a railway sleeper environment. Sustainability Victoria are an invaluable partner and this grant was critical to the development of the Duratrack® sleeper. Duratrack® is a game changer and it’s our goal to create a new industry in Australia.**

The Duratrack® sleeper is a sustainable innovation that out-performs traditional timber sleepers, uses waste plastic that would otherwise go to landfill and saves our natural timber resources from being felled. The Duratrack® sleeper project is a great example of how government, industry, universities and rail authorities can work together to create a circular economy. These railway sleepers have a 50 year design like and then can recycled themselves to be reconstituted in accordance with ‘circular economy’ principles.

Duratrack® sleepers are manufactured in Mildura and made from a specific mix of rigid and flexible plastics and polystyrene products that have served their primary uses as pipes and drums, agricultural films and produce boxes. Many of these agricultural films are made by fellow members of the Pro-Pac Packaging Group (ASX:PPG) which are recovered and repurposed by Integrated Recycling to produce railway sleepers, bollards, outdoor furniture and landscaping products.

Rigorously tested by the Institute of Railway Technology, Monash University and in the field for over several years, Duratrack® sleepers are type approved and undergoing in-track trails for mainline operators Queensland Rail and MTM and are undergoing in-track trials with V/Line. Duratrack® sleepers are also deemed fit for purpose within the Tourist & Heritage railways operating parameters and are installed in several railways in Victoria (like the historic Mornington railway spur line) and Western Australia. Being a similar weight and characteristics to timber sleepers, Duratrack® sleepers handle like timber sleepers, utilise existing railway equipment and fasteners and can be drilled to adapt to different track gauges.

These railway sleepers, that have now been sold to railways across Australia are: Termite resistant; Fire tolerant; Rot resistant; Low water absorption; UV resistant; Resistant to fungal decay; Splinter free; reduce maintenance; are fully recyclable after 50 years use; are easy to drill & fasten – same as timber; and use less energy to produce than concrete or steel sleepers. In short, almost too good to believe.

**What a fabulous use of plastic waste and what a great industry to give a boost to a rural city like Mildura. Let’s see whether we can work towards getting something similar to start-up in Broken Hill.**

**The next public meeting of Landcare Broken Hill for 2020 will be Thursday 26 March**

**At the CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY, 200 Beryl St, Broken Hill**

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