

Carbon Conversations

EARTH FIRST

By Nick King

“Be the change you want to see in the world”

This is a well known quote from Mahatma Ghandi, and is extremely applicable to the environmental movement. Many members of our community have changed their lifestyles to embody sound environmental principles and have, to paraphrase the Mahatma, “practiced what they preach.”

There are, however, some of us who find it hard to be guided by the words of the Mahatma. We applaud such action from others. We urge government to make policy to reduce carbon emissions. We are aware of the latest technology and strategies for reducing our personal emissions, yet we continue to find change within ourselves and our lifestyles difficult.

Falling by the Wayside

Rosemary Randall, psychologist and author of Carbon Conversations acknowledges that if we look at carbon reduction in any society we need to consider the available technology, changes in policy and the efforts of the individual. The relationship of the three areas is like a three legged stool. Take one leg away and the others don't work.

For carbon reduction to work we need a society of individuals for whom personal environmental best practice is the norm to form the third leg of the stool.

The problem with carbon reduction is that awareness doesn't necessarily lead to action. Because people know about it doesn't mean they will change.

If you:

- *have bought a pushbike to reduce your transport emissions and it gathers dust in the shed
- *Know you have to turn off your computer at the plug to reduce standby emissions, but find it too much trouble to reach over the desk to turn it off
- *Vow to shop locally and seasonally to reduce “carbon miles”, but can't resist mangoes from North Queensland.
- *reach for the air-conditioning switch when the temperature gets to 28 degrees

You are not alone. There are many of us out there who want to “be the change we want to see in the world” but need help and support to change our ways.

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A way for individuals to gain support for change is engaging in carbon conversations. This involves individuals getting together in small groups to work together creatively to come up with ideas and plans for carbon reduction. The groups can be very small and can consist of friends, family, neighbours or workmates.

The aim of the group should be that of encouraging individuals to have their own plan and commitment for carbon reduction involving strategies which are acceptable to them. The group can continue to provide support for members through regular meetings, e.g. every three months. The long term goal is to make the proposed changes a lasting normal part of the individual's lifestyle. Start a carbon conversation today.

Future Environmental Events: Orange city Council stormwater harvesting tour. Saturday 29 (today). From 9am to 2pm. Buses leave from the Orange Civic Centre every half hour .

Walk against Warming December 12.