



Householders' Options to Protect the Environment Inc.

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Tuesday, 2 August 2011

Report on HOPE's 2011 Pathways to Sustainability Expo

Overview

HOPE's inaugural *Pathways to Sustainability Expo* was held on Sunday 5 June 2011 at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

Major aspects of the Expo were:

- Free admission, free showbags, and several children's activities;
- Environmental information displays, demonstrations and workshops;
- Youth Sustainability Forum hosted by the Queensland Youth Environment Council and Condamine Alliance;
- Speakers program (12 scheduled speakers); and
- Trade exhibits

On the day there were fewer than 500 visitors to the Expo. This was a most disappointing response given the advertising and promotion leading up to the event; and for the amount of time and effort that the organising committee had put into planning and preparation of the event.

Expo participants thanked us for organising the event and they too were disappointed at the low attendance figures.

Other events in Toowoomba on 5 June included Queensland Day Celebrations at Picnic Point (organised by Toowoomba Regional Council) and the World Environment Day fair at Lake Annand Park. These well-established events obviously had greater crowd-pulling capacity than our inaugural event.

Review of event

Feedback received from the organising committee, participants and volunteers covered points including:

- the concept of the expo was sound
- there was good media coverage leading up to the Expo with regular radio announcements and interviews on 4GR, advertisements in The Chronicle newspaper and a feature article in the Chronicle's special Sustainability supplement (see attachment)
- disappointing response from the public – fewer than 200-300 people
- perhaps the June date was not the best option
- re-assess venue, as USQ is not a familiar venue for community events
- attract a major sponsor
- allocate more funds to marketing and promotion

Other concerns raised include:

- Lack of formal partnership with USQ – i.e. some in-kind support was given, but we had to pay for venue hire, on-site security and first aid support.
- Confirmation of venue access at USQ was not received until March, making a shorter time available for formalization of Expo plans
- Lack of school participation - due to exams and holidays
- Layout of outdoor area could have been tighter; and indoor area looked cramped
- Perhaps holding the event in Spring rather than Winter

After the event

A review of materials and equipment returned to the HOPE office highlighted the need to quickly disperse the leftover literature and showbags. Twelve boxes of literature have been collected by teachers for use in several schools in Toowoomba and Warwick. The 1,500 showbags and remaining literature will be distributed at the *Toowoomba Languages & Cultural Festival* being held on 14 August.

Banners, signs and displays boards produced for the event may be utilized at future events.

Financial Report

Despite missing out on a \$10,000 *Natural Resources Awareness Grant* from DERM, we were able to attract approximately \$9,000 through sponsorships and donations. Our expenditure for the expo was some \$7,600. It was pleasing to see that we came in “under budget”. A copy of the full Expo financial statement is attached.

In gratitude ...

A big thanks to our sponsors and in-kind contributors whose support and efforts enabled us to stage the event and to come in under budget. Thanks also to the organising committee and volunteers who helped with so many aspects of the event. Special thanks to Yarramine Environmental for developing the Sponsorship Prospectus and substantial input into the Risk Assessment Plan; Joyclyn Orme (banners & signs), Glennie School boarders (assembling showbags), Rick Sharp (our traffic warden), Donnell Davies (our announcer/emcee), Wayne Ole, Hussein Haj Ahmed, Bruce Llewellyn and the Harristown State High School *Green Team* for their voluntary contributions.

Organising Committee and supporters:

Frank Ondrus, Nigel Kimball (Yarramine Environmental), Andrew Nicholson, Miriam Sharp, Joy van der Wyk, Cath Leask (Lifeline), Alexandra Kennedy (Condamine Alliance), Ali van der Graaf (Queensland Youth Environment Council), Heather Peirce, Howard Nielsen (NACC Sustainability-People), Kay Lembo, Keryn Donnelly, Lyn Andrews and Trevor Mpofo (Harristown State High School *Green Team*)

Sponsors:

Toowoomba Regional Council; Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM); Excel Solar; Packaging Stewardship Forum (PSF); University of Southern Queensland (USQ); USQ Student Guild; Yarramine Environmental; Condamine Alliance; and Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)

Providers of showbags filler items:

Westpac; Bunnings Warehouse; Suncorp; Officeworks; MDBA (Murray-Darling Basin Authority) and Ian Macfarlane, Federal Member for Groom

Demonstrations:

Ian Simons' mobile Chook Tractor; and David Allworth's - Cycle Plant

Environmental information display stallholders

Ali van der Graaf (QYEC); Amanda Kimball - Clothes Swap; Chris Leslight – DERM; Clem Campbell – Earth Charter Initiative (Qld), Donnell Davis – FoSEQ; Eddie Dowd - Eco Hero Series; Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE); Jane O'Sullivan - Sustainable Population Australia; Karen Allen – Friends of the Earth (Brisbane); Patrick Walsh - Transition Ipswich; Ramona Rohwedder – Conservation Volunteers Australia; and Rob McCreath - Friends of Felton

Presenters at Speakers Program

Patrick Walsh - Transition Ipswich; Clem Campbell – ECI; Dave McRae - Climate Change Qld; Eddie Dowd - Eco Hero Series; Ian Darnell – Building Designers Association of Queensland (BDAQ); Jane O'Sullivan - Sustainable Population Australia; Justin Russell - Freelance Journalist; Rob McCreath - Friends of Felton; and Terry Davis - Excel Solar

Trade Exhibitors

Chris Withers (mecu); Colin Purnell - Earthlife Pty Ltd; David von Pein - The Meter Man; Excel Solar; Nigel Kimball - Yarramine Environmental; Ross Campbell – BDAQ; and Bevan McLeod, McLeod's Agricultural Products

Workshop presenters

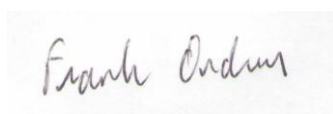
Howard Nielsen - NACC Sustainability-People; Heather Peirce; Allan Morrison - QLD Museum; Ali van der Graaf - DERM (QYEC) and Alexandra Kennedy – Condamine Alliance

Looking ahead ...

Although some on the organising committee have expressed reservations about staging the expo as an annual event, I believe we have gained sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to try again – albeit with a more stream-lined proposal and sub-themes.

Lastly, on Tuesday 19 July, I met with Mike Jeffries and Chris Withers of mecu who expressed considerable interest in sponsoring the next *Pathways to Sustainability Expo*. That's confidence inspiring!

Yours sincerely,



Frank Ondrus, President – HOPE Inc.