

From Fleurieu Newsletter – September 2014

NATIONAL LETS CONFERENCE

August 22-24 2014

The Local Exchange Trading System (LETS) is an international non-profit community based barter organisation with more than 100 LETS groups in Australia.

This year the annual National LETS Conference was held at MANGROVE MOUNTAIN, CENTRAL COAST NSW.

There were approximately 45 LETS representatives at the Conference from the Table lands in Queensland, from NSW, from Perth WA, Tasmania, Victoria, and SA.

The Conference was held at the Satyananda Yoga Centre on Mangrove Mountain near Gosford in NSW, a most impressive and beautiful retreat centre. The facility has double story accommodation, a large kitchen and dining room and many buildings for other purposes.

The Conference started on Saturday morning with a Smoking Ceremony performed by two invited aboriginal representatives, Kevin “Gavi” Duncan, founding member of Bara Barang and Phillip Bligh, co-founder of Five Lands Walk who, although not as LETS members, had been invited to participate by the Conference organisers.

The Conference started with Robin Krabbe from CENTS, a Lets group in Tasmania, who gave a talk on Positive Ecology & Community and Exchange Network in Tasmania. Robin is doing a PhD on the fore mentioned subjects and is a founding member of CENTS.

The next speaker was Adrian Doesburg from PCEX, a Lets group in WA, who spoke on what it means to be a LETS member and how to keep members to stay in LETS.

In the afternoon Tony Clark, also of PCEX (WA) spoke on “Pensioner Diesel” – The use of Biofuel as a renewable energy.

The next speaker was Keith Bourke from Dharmik Trading, not a LETS member at this stage but who is a social entrepreneur working with and for craft workers in Nepal. Keith’s presentation highlighted opportunities for LETS to assist in the development of ‘self help’ economies in Third World countries.

On Sunday Yvonne Lamont from Erina in NSW told the Conference about WOWGIRLS Wave of Wisdom, a group encouraging women to develop and explore their own lifestyle, through discovering joy and fun with other women. The group engages in activities such as bushwalking, yoga, surfing, Q Gong, Zumba, drumming, craft, bike riding, etc. (See their website www.wowgirls.com.au) WOWGIRLS is interested in joining LETS. ‘GIRLS’ stands for liberating the ‘little girl’ in all women.

Later in the morning Karel Boele and Annette Loudon presented an update on the Community Exchange System (CES) and LETS in Australia. The final speaker was Susanne Mueller-Byrnes who spoke on Community Repair Cafes, originated in the Netherlands but now spreading over many places in Europe. Repair Cafes are places one can bring items that can be repaired avoiding having to purchase costly replacements.

The National LETS Conference showed that LETS in Australia, as in other parts of the world,

is a viable and positive alternative to the federal cash economy.

Wil Heidt.

Secretary LETS SOUTH