



**University of Western Sydney/  
Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living  
Regional Environmental Innovation Network**

**Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability  
Conference,  
Christchurch NZ 2008**



# **“Campus to community engagement, environmental innovation and networking: A University of Western Sydney practitioner's perspective”**

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## Findings

- The major discovery from this research is the ongoing development of the partnership between the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living Inc and the University of Western Sydney exemplified by the Regional Environmental Innovation Network.
- This partnership is a response to the need to facilitate institutional, commercial and societal change necessary to address the challenges of sustainable living in an era of climate change and economic uncertainty.

How and why did these partnerships develop?



## Beginnings

- 1990s Early beginnings MACROC/Macarthur Waste Board \$10,000 seed funding – public meetings and the formation of a community- based steering committee
- 2000 - CERES Brunswick (Eric Bottomley) inspires formation of CERES Macarthur
- 2001 - UWS Office of Regional Development involvement
- 2002 - Federal Dept of Transport & Regional Services SUSTAINABLE REGION PROGRAM



## New partnership

- Mt Annan Botanic Garden (MABG) & CERES Macarthur submit similar proposals to Sustainable Regions.
- Development of trust through cooperation and open discussion – 18 months of working together to develop business plans and the development of MOU
- Development of friendships and new learnings – acknowledgement of skills and contributions from all parties



## Project Underway

- 2004 Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living is incorporated – A partnership between Mt Annan Royal Botanic Gardens and CERES Macarthur with power sharing on the Board of Directors with the community representative as the Chairperson.
- Sustainable Region funding received. Project commences

# What is it?

macarthur centre for  
sustainable living





Site map

**COMMUNITY  
GARDENS**



The Education Centre



## ESD PRINCIPLES

- Close Water and Nutrient Cycle
  - Carbon Positive
- Sustainable Material Selection
- Sustainable Technology Selection
  - Benign Air Quality
  - Bio Diversity Positive
- Community, social, economic



**Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living received the Public Building Award at the inaugural BPN and Environmental Sustainability Awards**





## The role of the University of Western Sydney

- 2001 - 4 - UWS Office of Regional Development involvement in CERES Macarthur committees
- 2004 - UWS Regional & Community Grants Scheme funds Macarthur Agritourism Project in partnership with Camden & Campbelltown Councils
- 2005 - Innovation at the Edges: The role of innovation drivers in South West Sydney identifies opportunities for environmental innovation in the Macarthur Region.
- 2005 - Regional Environmental Innovation Network (REIN) - a partnership between UWS and MCSL is formed.



# UWS/MCSL Regional Environmental Innovation Network

The mission of the UWS/MCSL  
Regional Environmental Innovation Network  
is to:

Contribute and communicate ideas, initiatives, research,  
and strategies for achieving a sustainable Macarthur  
region through environmental innovation.

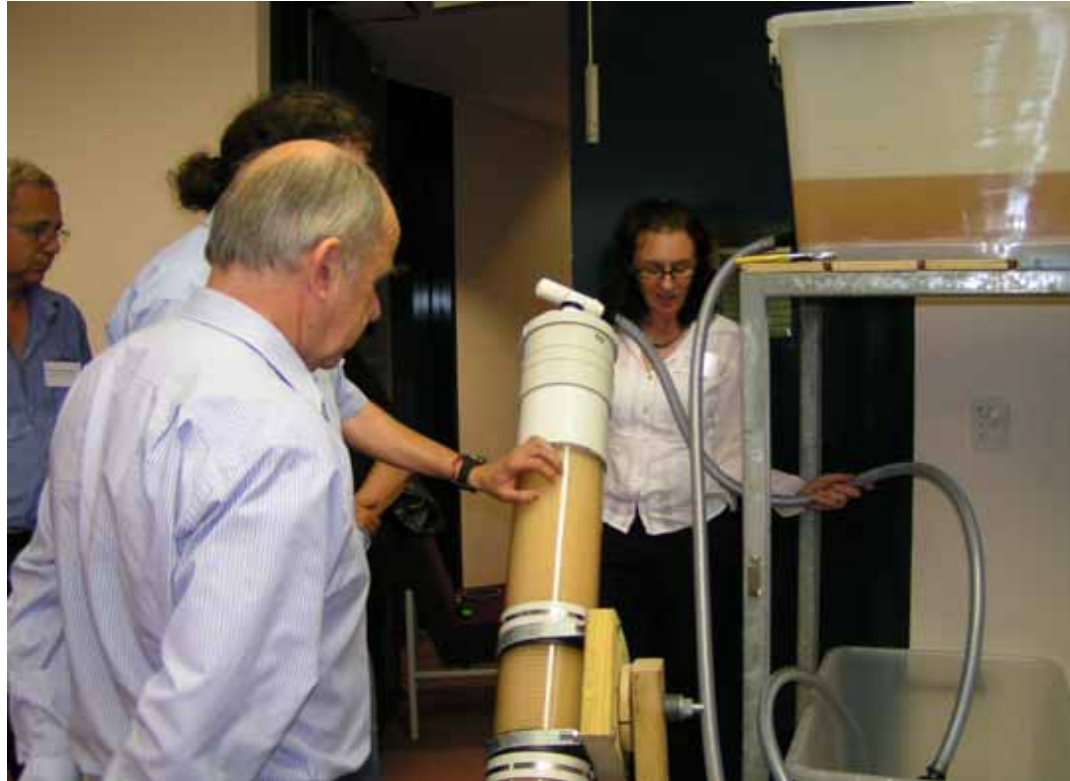


**Presentations include**  
**Michael Mobbs – Sustainable Housing**





## Water reduction, reuse and recycling





## Valuing Biodiversity



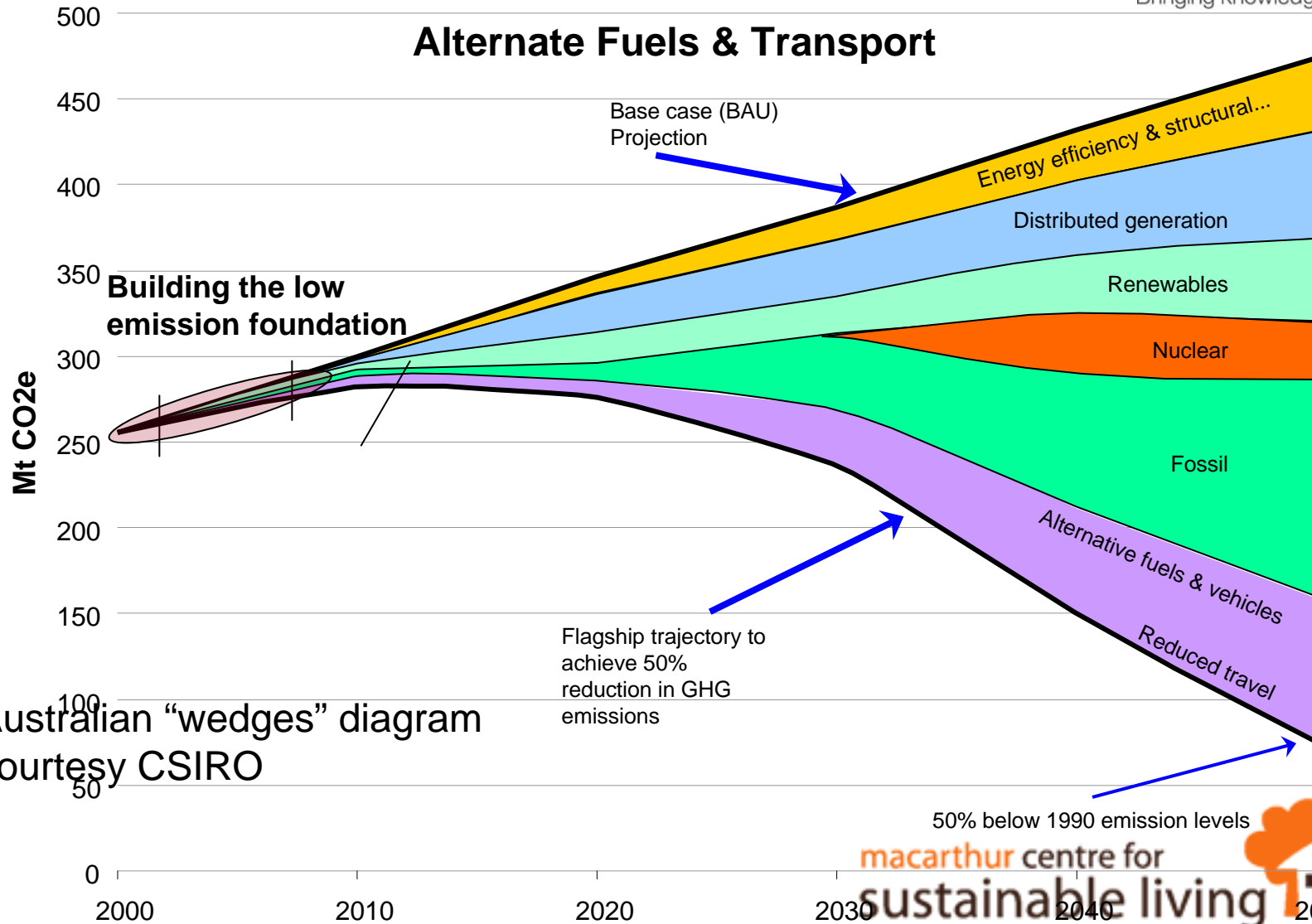


## Urban Agriculture





## Alternate Fuels & Transport



Australian "wedges" diagram  
courtesy CSIRO



## Feedback surveys from a recent REIN meeting.

- Expectations - 20% somewhat met, 25% exceeded, 65% met (ie. 100% somewhat met, met or exceeded - no one disappointed!)
- Understanding increased re urban ag - 60% A lot, 30% quite a lot, 10% a little (ie. 100% had increase of understanding)
- Application of knowledge - Immediately 35%, near future 60%, Not sure 5% (95% will act on this new knowledge)



## UWS funded research 2006

Mr Christopher Derry (Ecology and Environment Research Group (EEREG) with Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living

- A study of wastewater treatment in small urban reed bed systems, to develop guidelines for safe community operation - \$22,709



**Reed beds for  
water filtration**



## Other UWS involvement

- 2006 – Strategic Planning Workshop – UWS Tourism staff and School of Social Science students
- Various academic presentations at Network meetings
- Chris Derry assisting negotiation with LGAs re water recycling
- REIN Steering Committee
- Liaison re other engagement, research and student opportunities
- OUE providing admin support for REIN
- Ongoing liaison with the Eden Project, Cornwall UK



## Taking the Next Step

- 2007 – Negotiations between UWS, MACROC and MCSL to work towards a MACARTHUR CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY
- 2008 – Signing of Memorandum of Understanding to establish Macarthur Centre for Excellence in Sustainability



## Signing the MOU



Professor Barbara Holland (UWS), President Rob Elliot (MACROC) & Chairperson Dell Cotter (MCSL)



## MOU Characteristics

- Identify opportunities and the critical success factors for a Centre for Excellence in Sustainability in Macarthur drawing upon regional and community strengths such as MCSL, Mt Annan Botanical Gardens, MACROC and UWS.
- Identify and work with other appropriate organisations to assist existing industries to enhance their environmental sustainability.



## “The Symmetry Project”

Duration: 2 years to 31st December 2009

Partners: MCSL, UWS, MBEC and MACROC

Funding : \$322,000 (Ausindustry)

Scope: Training and mentoring of small businesses –  
Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly

Target: 210 businesses



**symetry**  
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



macarthur centre for  
sustainable living 



## Project Objective

Build capacity of small business owners and managers to improve their environmental practices, leading to:

- Improved profits
- Reduced carbon footprint through better use of water energy, waste minimisation and reduced air pollution
- Enhanced state of the regional environment





## Success so far

- Symmetry Workshops - 233 local businesses have attended the information sessions and 29 Macarthur companies have participated in Bronze Level Workshops. Bronze is the first level in an accreditation that can see businesses progress from Bronze to Silver and finally to Gold Level.
- Fifteen local businesses were formally presented with certificates to indicate that they have achieved Bronze Accreditation as a Symmetry Sustainable Business. The second group of companies who have attained Symmetry Bronze accreditation are due to graduate shortly.





## Conclusions

- The partnerships between UWS and MCSL through The Regional Environmental Innovation Network continues to grow with mutual benefit.
- UWS academics and students are continuing to find new opportunities for community engagement, research and presentation of relevant research progress and outcomes.
- There is a growing demand for accessible, transferable knowledge in many aspects of sustainable living and 'green business initiatives' that is being addressed by organisations such as MCSL, REIN and Symmetry.





## Conclusions continued

- Suburbs can be viewed as a laboratory for emerging “green networks” - Green Governance. Collaborative arrangements between government, business, community and academia focusing on sustainability is a recent phenomena. **Suburbs are where much of the community lives works and plays!!**
- Green networks act as the “missing link” in sustainable regional innovation.
- Green business initiatives contribute to the development of sustainable regional innovation





## Conclusions continued

- There is an increasing role for universities as civic entrepreneurs.
- These partnerships assist the community and business's desire to influence the institutional, commercial and societal changes necessary to address the challenges of sustainable living in an era of environmental and economic uncertainty.





## References

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- Potts, T 2004 Triple Bottom Line Reporting – A Tool for Measuring and Reporting Change in Local Communities. In: Cheney, Katz and Soloman (eds) Sustainability and Social Science Roundtable. Institute of Sustainable Futures and CSIRO Minerals. Available: <http://www.minerals.csiro.au/sd/pubs/>





## Acknowledgements

- The staff and committee of MCSL, Mt Annan Botanic Gardens and CERES Macarthur and MACROC
- The REIN Steering Committee
- The many community, local government, business and industry partners who have contributed to the ongoing nature of the partnerships through their participation in projects, programs and events.
- PVC Engagement Professor Barbara Holland for her ongoing support of the OUE involvement with these projects.





**ANY QUESTIONS??**



**symetry**  
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils  
Camden, Campbelltown, Wollondilly

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**THANK YOU**

