



PAN-COM
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PAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

We live in a time when it seems there are enormous pressures to be "individuals" in a material world. The major cost to pay for this unravelling of our social fabric is alienation and isolation.

The Pan Community Council (or Pan Com) is a group of people living on communities in the Northern Rivers region. We believe strongly in the values around intentionally living with other people. Pan Com does not determine what is the preferred model of community, accepting communities with all levels of interdependence. We believe that MO communities can make a significant contribution to showing society how caring communities can function harmoniously. Pan Com assists communities in dealings with councils and government bodies. We produce a newsletter, hold community meetings, lobby the Government and issue media statements on policy matters.

We have most recently been actively pursuing a reinstatement of the State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 15 relating to the planning provisions for Multiple Occupancy Communities for Local Governments in NSW, originally introduced in 1988 by the ALP when Bob Carr was

Minister for Environment and Planning. The aim of this policy was to encourage collective ownership of low cost dwellings and generally to provide an environmentally sensitive approach to community based rural settlement. In 1994 Robert Webster, Minister for Planning, repealed SEPP 15. The ALP at the time of the 1994 State Election promised to reinstate SEPP 15 but have so far not done so despite Pan Com's continual lobbying. We feel its time that we did more than the straight political struggle with Macquarie Street. We would like to know more about the concerns of communities and importantly how we can satisfy those concerns.

Lismore City Council currently wants other North Coast Local Governments to join them in lobbying the State Government to encourage existing MO's to convert to costly Community Title Communities. We feel that this action will reduce people's choices.

So please write/phone/fax the Mayor, Councillors, General Manager and Planning Manager of your Local Authority and the relevant State Government Authorities expressing your views on the positive aspects of living on MO's, especially your first hand experiences. Hey you beautiful kids, this means you too if you enjoy your MO lifestyle!

Next Meeting - Saturday August 31, 1996 at the Forest Meditation Centre, Wallace Rd, The Channon.

STOP PRESS

Byron Shire Council this week resolved to repeal their MO provision in their Local Environment Policy on the grounds that it be re-instated in the context of their Rural Strategic Planning Review. It is expected that this review will take at least 18 months and all the re-zoning applications for Rural Residential Development and Community Title applications have been frozen until next year.

This review is one component of Council policy to introduce Ecologically Sustainable Development in all their planning instruments. This is the first Local Council in Australia to attempt to introduce ESD in this amount of detail.

Peter Hamilton - Pan Community Council

UNITY IN DIVERSITY - A PAN-COM MEETING

By Roni Starr and Sam Madeley

We met in the forest along Wallace Road, a dozen or so of us at any one time coming and going around a well used fire. What diversity there is among us as we've gathered to find our common purpose.

We have been welcomed for the weekend by members of the Pan Community Council (Pan Com) whose pioneering efforts have helped to develop Multiple Occupancy land use in the Northern Rivers region. MO's have been recognised in this area for 25 years. Pan Com believes this lifestyle, where people agree to share land and live in some degree of interdependence, has made a significant contribution to society by living in healthy, caring and sustainable communities.

Legislation SEPP15 is about to be reintroduced into State Parliament to make Multiple Occupancy a recognised form of rural land use. People from MO's in the Nimbin/Channon area were meeting to discuss this and many other issues they held in common.

Their collective experience of living intentionally in groups spanned from 6 weeks to 25 years and from urban to rural global experiences of great and wondrous potential.

Much discussion took place over the basic needs of a successful community. The continued development of communication skills was most common on the list as was the need to consider futures for our youth. Northern Hemisphere experience shows there to be a second wave of interest in this lifestyle and Peter Hamilton of Sustainable Develop-

ments asked the group if we were ready or prepared for this.

Pan Com guest speaker was Bill Metcalf, author of "From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Cooperative Lifestyles in Australia" (UNSWP 1995). It has ten chapters about ten international communities across Australia including Tuntabule Falls and Dharmananda. He reported on the state of communities in other countries. Apparently those started 30 years ago as part of the New Age movement are now an aging population looking at all the ramifications of surviving into a new century as elders. To date the young of this population are learning from other lifestyle experiences but the news is that as they mature, they start to come back. What form their idea of community will take is still a mystery but it is a hopeful sign of a future for MO's.

There is a need for more information to be made available. One suggestion is making a Communities Directory which will list each community in the area along with the requirements of shareholders and whatever is necessary to be able to join and leave them. Hopefully this will be just one of the outcomes of the Pan Com meeting.

A Heart Politics seminar in Lennox Head in August will provide another forum in meeting. Other issues and meeting times will be announced in the Nimbin News.

More information about Pan Com can be found by contacting:

Allan Hill, PO Box 347 Nimbin NSW 2480 e-mail ahill@nor.com.au Phone (066) 897 464.



Around the fire were:

Allan Hill
Nimbinge
Saskia and Russell
Emi Shan
Laurel and Penny
Lillyfield
Robin
Robb Rd Community
Peter
Bodhi Farm
Pritam
Paradise Valley
David
MacKeller Range
Sam, Roni, Julie,
Owen, Anna, and
Sulian
Siddha Farm
Simon and Carol
Dharmananda

COMMUNITY AND FUTURE

The beginning of the information age and the end of the "Cold War Era" are two main factors that have caused societies, nation states and cultures to begin a fundamental rethink. Many say that capitalism may not be with us much longer. For Nimbin the vision of creating a social alternative is alive and well and is developing in a way that is compatible with this fundamental rethink. This alternative vision like, many others, could play a significant role in forming our planet's future.

At a recent Pan Com meeting participants not only talked about the day to day running of communities but also tried to envisage the future of communities. We looked at how communities fit into a global picture and raised philosophical and social questions. And what about our future? - the youth? I proposed to write an article as a first in a series to encourage a wider debate on where our communities could be heading. This wider question will also be further explored during one of the workshops at the next Pan Com meeting on the 31st of August.

There are many popular writers and academics writing about social movements, "civil societies" and grassroots groups at the moment. I will mention three western academic writers in regard to these questions - The first, Wallerstein a pro-capitalist who talks about the end of capitalism and hence the end of the nuclear family. The other two are Frieberg and Hettne who, taking an activist point of view, determine that while there are no mass social, political or peace movements at present there are many parallel activist groups that play a role in determining our future.

The End of Capitalism

Wallerstein says that our capitalist system will perhaps be no more by the year 2050. He based this on the view that capitalism requires a constant expansion and has -or will soon- reach its limits. It requires spatial expansion, externalisation of costs by individual producers and in some areas its resource base is limited. A capitalist system also has to pay to keep the workers from rebelling. The cost of restraining rebellion puts an enormous burden on state budgets and creates unstable systems.

What I find important about this concept for Nimbin is the change it will have on the nuclear family. The consumerist nuclear unit has been THE ideal for the capitalist system but as this changes society will also adapt and change to a more communal neighbourhood society. Communities around Nimbin already live an alternative lifestyle. We could become an important example for determining how societies would find constructive communal alternatives for the future.

Social Movements

Frieberg and Hettne believe there is a crisis in the West that is not only economic but also about the environment, exploitation of poor nations, militarisation and war, marginalisation, social disintegration and a spiritual crisis. They state that these problems cannot be solved by applying the old liberal or socialist recipes of the 19th Century. Frieberg and Hettne write that it is the **new social movements trying to articulate an alternative vision** of the world where much of the momentum for change is coming. These movements are single issue and are more movement than organisation. They include ecological, solidarity, peace, feminist, *communal living*, regional, youth, social justice, personal growth, new age movements and a host of others. It is no coincidence that at present there are more members of ecological groups in Australia than there are members of political parties.

The new movements are not restricted by nation states. They are "sub-national" creating alternative sub-cultures and they are "trans national" above the state and relate to the world as planetary citizens. Governments are beginning to talk about these people as the global civil society. A recent "Commission on Global Governance" comprised of 20 countries has requested the United Nations form a "Forum of Civil Society" to help restructure and determine the character and functions of the United Nations.

These new social movements threaten the vested interests of the nation state. For example the old peace movements believed in better state relations while the new peace movements see the nation state as part of the problem. The communities around Nimbin also represent a threat to the model of the state. It may well have been this psychological fear that caused the removal of Sepp 15 (this is the state wide planning policy that had allowed the development of rural communities) hence the illegality of starting new (low cost) communal housing alternatives.

By emphasising the positive role Nimbin plays - or could play- in this worldwide movement I do not want to gloss over the problems. They are obvious and we certainly hear enough about them. I feel however it is also important and exciting to be discussing the potential that this area has for the future both locally and globally.

To continue this alternative tradition it is of utmost importance that Sepp 15 is reinstated and hence the possibility for low cost alternative communities. We also need to speak out more about the successes and how we are dealing with or have dealt with problems. The Aquarian vision is not over yet as we move into a new era.

Russell Anderson.

FAX DOCUMENT FROM PETER HAMILTON

1/50 Paterson Street, Byron Bay, 2481 (066) 858 648 (F/T)

✓
TO: Bill Kidd

FAX No: DATE: 9-9-96

Number of pages (including this sheet): 4

SUBJECT: Pan Com

COMMENTS:

Herewith extracts for your information and
use.

Regards
Peter.

P.S. Do you have your own FAX number?

FAX DOCUMENT FROM PETER HAMILTON

1/50 Paterson Street, Byron Bay, 2481 (066) 858 648 (F/T)

✓
✓ Graham.
TO: ✓ Tom Jagtenberg

FAX No:

DATE: 1-9-96

Number of pages (including this sheet): 4

SUBJECT: Intentional Communities

COMMENTS: Herewith as discussed copy for your information.

Russell A. is currently engaged in a Masters in this area at S.C.U. He plans to continue this theme at the PhD level. Please let me have flyers of your new book when available. The Gungil Jindibah Centre is about to introduce a Bachelor course Indigenous Studies.

Regards to yourself & Becky
Peter.