

Relocalisation

Urban case studies, trends and local government role

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Disclaimer: The interpretations and conclusions contained in this report are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Municipal Association of Victoria or RMIT University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. BACKGROUND	4
3. RESEARCH METHODS	7
3.1. SCOPE	7
3.2. SELECTING CASE STUDIES	7
3.3. DATA COLLECTION	7
3.4. ETHICS.....	8
3.5. ANALYSIS	8
4. CASE STUDIES	8
4.1. CASE STUDY: YARRA COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM PROJECT	9
4.2. CASE STUDY: CERES.....	13
4.3. CASE STUDY: SEAC	17
5. DISCUSSION	21
5.1 GOING LOCAL	21
5.2. BENEFITS OF RELOCALISATION	21
5.3. ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL RELOCALISATION INITIATIVES	22
5.3.1. <i>Systems Focus</i>	22
5.3.2. <i>Community Ownership</i>	23
5.3.3. <i>Tangible solutions</i>	23
5.3.4. <i>Achievable solutions</i>	23
5.3.5. <i>Effective Local Government involvement</i>	23
5.3.6. <i>Stimulating action</i>	23
5.3.7. <i>Relationships</i>	24
5.3.8. <i>Advocacy</i>	24
5.3.9. <i>Risk taking</i>	24
5.3.10. <i>Skill building</i>	24
5.3.11. <i>Resources</i>	24
5.3.12. <i>Access</i>	24
5.3.13. <i>Managing Community expectations</i>	25
5.4. CELEBRATING DIVERSITY	25
6. CONCLUSION	26
7. REFERENCES	27
APPENDIX 1: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANCE LETTER	29
APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDY ASSESSMENT PROFORMA.....	30
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	31
APPENDIX 4: RESEARCH ETHICS LETTER.....	32

1. Introduction

It is a time of uncertainty as communities around the world consider the implications of climate change and peak oil. Debates over responsibility and appropriate responses to climate change may be turbulent, but one thing is certain; we each need to reduce our impact on the earth's atmosphere and move away from our reliance on polluting and non-renewable energy sources.

Communities across the globe have started responding to these pressing issues by acknowledging the importance of acting locally to reduce global impact. Local economies, local food production and local energy production are all strengthened in a grass-roots movement called relocalisation. This is a diverse movement, which comes in many forms and under many names, but the essence is always the same: we must re-embrace the local.

Recognising the importance of relocalisation as a rising trend, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has instigated this research report into the movement. This timely project will assist MAV in ascertaining the value of relocalisation and assessing the plausibility of Victorian local governments taking up such initiatives. Relocalisation is seen as a potential way forward to assist local councils to become more sustainable, adaptive and resilient in the face of global issues.

The aim of this research report is to provide MAV with a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the emerging relocalisation movement. This has been achieved through the analysis of prominent relocalisation examples in both Australian and international contexts. Case studies of best practice relocalisation initiatives with local government facilitation and involvement have been identified through the research. This research will aid MAV in establishing a clearer picture of how such projects could be implemented by Victoria's urban municipalities in the future.

This report assesses the drivers and barriers of local government participation, and provides examples of practical, viable, positive initiatives that can be replicated throughout Victoria's urban councils. Findings from this body of research should be seen as a stimulant to further research, rather than a finite research result.

2. Background

'If the gap between supply and demand for oil out paces mobilisation of new fuel sources, fuel scarcity could severely jeopardise food security'.

(Larsen, Ryan & Abraham 2008; 16)

Two major challenges facing humankind at the beginning of the 21st century are climate change and peak oil. These are twin pressures that require far-reaching actions to mitigate against their potentially catastrophic effects.

As succinctly put by United Nations body the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 'warming of the climate system is unequivocal', and '*very likely*' due to human activity (IPCC 2007; p72 *their emphasis*). Global effects of climate change include rising sea levels due to warmer temperatures, increased severity of weather conditions and loss of biodiversity. Climate change is predicted to impact upon food production, water resources and current energy usage. There is little doubt that to reduce the onset of climate change, carbon emissions must be drastically lowered, thus requiring a change to our current way of life.

Peak oil is a term used to describe the time when the world's oil supply becomes less accessible. Scientists have predicted we are nearing a turning point where we have extracted half of the recoverable oil, thus the oil becomes more expensive to extract and supply decreases. As global demand for fossil fuels continues to increase, we have decreasing amounts of oil to fuel our industrialised way of life (Heinberg 2004). While Scientists debate when peak oil will occur, there is little denial that peak oil is a reality that will challenge our social and economic stability unless we prepare appropriately.

Climate change and peak oil are closely related to the rise of food security becoming a global challenge. There has been an increase in food prices worldwide due to a range of causes including a rise in energy prices (a factor which will only worsen as oil reserves deplete), an increase in biofuel production, recurrent bad weather and environmental degradation in agricultural zones (United Nations World Food Programme 2008). This is leading to food shortages in developing countries and higher costs on our supermarket shelves here in Australia as developing countries reduce exports in attempt to feed their own populations.

Awareness of climate change has grown rapidly in Australia and talk of it pervades many aspects of the media and social discourse. The economy is often first priority in politics and is a key criteria of assessment as Australia establishes medium to long-term policies and policy frameworks in response to climate change (Garnaut 2008).

From a local government context, responding to climate change may seem daunting. Globalisation has led to community control over food, economies and energy resources being diminished, meaning that power to reduce environmental impacts has also diminished. From

a Victorian perspective, a growing population in a drought-ridden state is a difficult prospect when considering food security. Car transport, a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, is also a point of contention. Melbourne's urban sprawl means that public transport is not an option for many, and those who can access it struggle through a crowded system that is failing to meet the demands of increased patronage. Although petrol prices have risen increasingly, there are now 500,000 more cars on Victorian roads than 10 years ago (Das 2008).

These multiple pressures make local government's role a complex one. Urban local governments in particular face several challenges as population trends are increasingly towards urban areas. Currently 80% of Australians live in cities, compared to 50% worldwide (Adams 2008). It is estimated that by 2030, city populations will increase and 60% of the world's population will live in urban areas (Girardet 2004). It is obvious that local communities need to band together to regain their independence and such change requires community building and local government input. Relocalisation is one movement which may provide the framework for reduced environmental impact at a local level.

Relocalisation (also often referred to as 'localisation') is 'a strategy that aims to build societies based on the local production of food, energy, employment and goods, along with the local development of currency, governance and culture' (The Relocalisation Network 2008). It promotes greater security and self-reliance in terms of energy, food and water systems and aims to dramatically improve environmental conditions. In doing so, it rebuilds and reconnects community and strengthens local culture and identity (The Relocalisation Network 2008).

Relocalisation focuses on an upcoming era which has been termed 'energy descent'. This term describes a period of contracting energy supply, or 'the continual decline in net energy supporting humanity, a decline which mirrors the ascent in net energy that has taken place since the Industrial Revolution' (Hopkins 2008a). It also refers to a future scenario in which humanity has successfully adapted to the declining net energy availability and has become more localised and self-reliant (Hopkins 2008a).

Many of the sustainable elements of relocalisation can be linked back to permaculture; an evolving ideology that began in the 1970's. Co-founder of permaculture, David Holmgren, defines it as 'consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs' (Holmgren 2002; xix). In this framework a sustainable culture (which would ideally have no net negative impact on the environment, and reduced reliance on oil) is one in which people and their cities are in harmony with nature.

At about the same time that permaculture arose, so did the term bioregionalism. Like relocalisation, this movement focuses on 'living in place', and is 'characterised by practices that adopt processes of balance between the social, cultural and ecological features of a

region' (Nicholls 2004). Similar to the goals of relocalisation, it highlights the importance of local identity and culture.

Another movement which encompasses elements of relocalisation comes under the umbrella term 'intentional communities'. The most environmentally friendly variations of these communities are eco-villages; groups of people who live together in the aim of living ecologically sustainable lifestyles. The urban versions of these are co-housing initiatives and urban group housing. These initiatives focus on community building and resource sharing (FIC 2008).

A prominent example of relocalisation is Cuba's response to its own peak oil crisis in 1990, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Cuba's economy was devastated when imports of oil were cut by more than half and food by 80 per cent (The Community Solution 2006). The Cuban people were forced to transition from a highly mechanised, industrial agricultural system to one using organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. This example heeds warning for societies reliant on fossil fuels for food production. 'Oil underpins food security most obviously through transport through long supply chains, but also through agrochemical production and on-farm machinery in industrialised systems' (Larsen *et al* 2008; 15-16). It also illustrates the positive outcomes to community health and well-being that followed Cuba's relocalisation (The Community Solution 2006).

Kinsale, an Irish Town in West Cork, was the first to develop an Energy Decent Action Plan (Hopkins 2005). This report, prepared by permaculture students under the tutelage of Rob Hopkins, looks at how Kinsale can navigate a smooth transition to a lower energy future. The Energy Decent Action Plan (EDAP) seeks to localise the town's food production and consumption, along with that of other basic needs and resources, and minimise its energy requirements by the year 2021 (Hopkins 2008b). The energy descent framework was the first attempt of its kind in the world and was formally adopted by the local government in 2005.

Utilising the framework from Kinsale, Rob Hopkins has since developed the Transition Town Initiative, which takes an integrated and inclusive approach to reducing the carbon footprint of an entire town, region or city. Hopkins has created the Transition Model to assist and support other towns and localities to implement their own Transition Initiatives. Hopkins' '12 steps to Transition' offers a blueprint for communities to follow and underlines the importance of working with local government. Hopkins describes the role of local government as 'supporting, not driving' (Hopkins 2008b). The Transition Town Initiative has now been replicated by fifty towns and localities in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia (Transition Network 2008). Australia's first EDAP was developed by the Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre, and may prove to be a strong example of effective relocalisation in the Australian context (Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre 2008).

In North America, at least 18 local governments have taken actions specifically in response to peak oil, with the majority of responses occurring since the oil price highs in 2004 (Post

Carbon Institute 2008). A local government relocalisation initiative which particularly stands out from North America is the Toronto Urban Agriculture program which was seeded in 1999 (Food and Hunger Action Committee 2008).

In Victoria, many urban Councils have already taken up initiatives which incorporate elements of relocalisation. City of Yarra is developing a thriving food security program, Moreland City Council has provided long-term support of CERES, a Community Environment Park, and Darebin City Council has released a new transport strategy based on relocalisation. These initiatives are indicators of dynamic locally-based responses to emerging global issues.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Scope

This research is focused on projects and initiatives which incorporate elements of relocalisation. Such projects must feature involvement from local governments and be applicable within an urban setting. Initial research involved a broad exploration of relocalisation themes and an examination of many projects from around the world (see Appendix 1). This gave definition and context to the relocalisation concept and led to identification of leading projects that were deemed important to focus further research on.

3.2. Selecting Case Studies

Potential case studies were then analysed under three main criteria; the availability of information, the level of 'best fit' with the overall research aims, and the project relevance to MAV (see Appendix 2). In consultation with MAV, three leading case studies were chosen for further research and are presented in Section 4 of this report.

3.3. Data Collection

For the purpose of providing MAV with a relevant and useful research design, a comparative case study approach was undertaken based on a qualitative analysis of the characteristics of each selected study. This approach utilised the descriptive and exploratory nature of the subject matter while contextually exploring real life relationships.

The primary data takes the form of results from semi-structured interviews with local government representatives and proponents of relocalisation projects within the three case studies. Interviews enabled the opportunity to tailor questions to the identification of key relationships between local governments and respective relocalisation initiatives. Secondary data (such as literature and web based research) was also utilised in order to gain a broader understanding of the current context in which the chosen relocalisation projects exist.

The interview design included exploratory questions to identify themes and operational information specific to each case study (see Appendix 3). These questions were structured heavily around the case study assessment themes, to ensure that the responses to questions provided meaningful data to enable correlations and trends to be highlighted.

Representatives from both the local government and the community organisation in each project were interviewed separately to lessen any potential bias.

3.4. Ethics

Prior to conducting interviews, a letter was sent to interviewees outlining the ethical guidelines for the interview and research process (see Appendix 4). These letters ensured the informed consent of the research participants.

3.5. Analysis

Analysis of the data has followed the framework provided by MAV. The key themes of analysis were:

- Drivers for the initiative
- Barriers/Difficulties
- Outcomes and benefits
- Lessons learned

A further criterion the research team deemed relevant:

- Local Government Role

The correlations between the projects are easily identifiable due to the common case study report structure. Once case studies were conducted, analysis was performed to identify relationships between local governments and communities in administering relocalisation initiatives. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such relationships have provided examples of what has worked in certain circumstances and where a need for more communication and clarification exists.

Based on these case study results, the team brought together individual learnings to highlight key areas for discussion. The report discussion addresses key interest areas of MAV, including:

- Identification of any trends within the relocalisation movement;
- The evident positive or negative effects;
- The degree in which local governments are involved in relocalisation projects;
- The identification of which areas of relocalisation are easily implemented, or more common than others.

4. Case Studies

The following section outlines three case studies which incorporate relocalisation elements and feature prominent local government involvement. These are:

- Yarra Community Food System Project - City of Yarra
- CERES - Moreland City Council
- SEAC - Sunshine Coast Regional Council

4.1. Case Study: Yarra Community Food System Project

The Yarra Community Food System Project is a timely example of the ability of community and local government to work together to strengthen local communities and make them more resilient in the face of peak oil and climate change. The project complements other sustainability initiatives within Council, and can be seen as the food security element of a broader relocalisation framework.

Information within this case study had been obtained from interviews with the City of Yarra's Coordinator of Social Planning (referenced as COY Social Planner), and Cultivating Community's City of Yarra Community Food Systems Project Worker (referenced as CC Project Worker). Please note that opinions expressed are those of the interviewees and are not necessarily reflective of the organisation they represent.

Outline of the initiative

Established in 2007 under local government funding, the Yarra Community Food System Project aims to build the capacity of Yarra residents to have greater control over their local food systems. This project was developed and is run by Cultivating Community, a not-for-profit community organisation that promotes and supports community garden projects across Melbourne (CC Project Worker).

The project evolved from extensive research into overseas developments in urban agriculture and food security (see Christensen 2004). Focus areas include developing strong food system networks, strengthening community, developing food systems policy, and providing education regarding food choices, food cultivation and food preservation. 'If we understand food

Snapshot of Yarra City Council

Location: This inner-city municipality is situated immediately North-East of Melbourne's Central Business District.

Size: 19.5 square kilometers

Population: 73,500

General features: One of Australia's smallest inner-city municipalities, City of Yarra incorporates arts and entertainment precincts, shopping and café strips, and a range of sports and recreation facilities. Demographic makeup represents extremes at both ends of the income spectrum, whilst almost half of the population privately rents (COY Social Planner).

as a system, it can be a lot more sustainable. Everybody is looking at food in one capacity or another, and if we could bring all of those elements together into cohesive networks we could develop a more sustainable system for our community' (CC Project Worker).

Three key networks have been formed by Cultivating Community under this project.

- The City of Yarra Community Food System Network holds bi-monthly meetings of key stakeholders, including NGO's, dieticians, community groups, members of Cultivating Community, and social and environmental planners from Yarra City Council. This network is establishing a local food-purchasing guide to educate the broader community.

- The Yarra Urban Agriculture Network brings community gardeners, growers, farmers and the likes together for seasonal gatherings, to share seeds and information. This network has developed initiatives such as the neighbourhood orchard monthly fruit swap, fruit tree mapping, and developing food donation systems for those who are food insecure.
- A new policy formation network is focusing on designing a food systems policy for the City of Yarra. This has received a lot of community interest, and has strong representation from within council.

Partnership Outline

Yarra City Council has funded Cultivating Community \$77,000 over two years, as part of the 'Emerging Issues' section of the Yarra community grants program. In line with the direction of its Municipal Public Health Plan, Council flagged food insecurity and poor nutrition as priority areas for the program.

The community grants system highlights the value that Yarra City Council places on community driven initiatives. Both parties acknowledge that the ownership of this project sits firmly with Cultivating Community and that locally driven projects are important to their success. Cultivating Community brings passion, expertise and knowledge to the project, and enriches the project with strong community connections and networks. Cultivating Community have committed \$20,000 worth of in-kind support to the project (CC Project Worker).

Local Government Role

Local Governments play an important advocacy role in projects such as this, because they are the closest level of government to the community. 'If they've got the relationships with communities of interest right, they are able to provide a voice for those communities' (COY Social Planner).

Yarra City Council contributes to this project in various ways beyond funding. They provide access to themselves as a body, providing information and links to people within other areas of council; this access to Council networks provides Cultivating Community with information about other initiatives which they can cross-fertilise with. Council also provides resources such as meeting rooms, forum facilities, photocopying and special vehicle hire (CC Project Worker).

Local government has the opportunity to make significant changes through policy which affects projects such as meals on wheels, and food options in schools. Local governments can effect change through these big institutionalised programs (CC Project Worker).

Drivers

Yarra City Council does not use the term relocalisation, but has started to recognise that with such a diverse community, they need to 'look beyond the municipal and look at the local levels, so adopting a local neighbourhood planning approach' (COY Social Planner).

Research has highlighted 'pockets of disadvantage' within the municipality,

particularly in the housing estates. Gentrification of the area means less availability of cheap healthy whole foods, and has contributed to the context in which 9% of the population of the City of Yarra has experienced some form of food insecurity over the past 12 months (COY Social Planner).

Council recognises that food security isn't just about health; global issues are also drivers for the project. 'Production, distribution and consumption of food are just as important as the ability to access food in the first place... we're going to be forced into that thinking in the future with the impacts of peak oil and energy descent, and there are going to be some social equity issues in the future about who's going to be best placed to respond to those changes. These are important issues for Yarra' (COY Social Planner).

In many ways, for Cultivating Community this project is a direct response to the drivers of climate change and peak oil. 'We are getting ourselves ready and preparing people with those skills that we know we are going to need. We are strengthening our local communities to be more resilient and to be more self-sufficient' (CC Project Worker).

Barriers

The very nature of government can be a barrier to initiatives such as this. Political election cycles of Federal, State and Local governments can all affect the direction of funding and support for projects. At the same time, changes within council means that new relationships need to be built to keep projects such as this one running. The City of Yarra's Social Planner highlighted

that upcoming council elections may impact on continued funding for this project and similar initiatives.

This highlights the importance of the project having a sustainable community base, with council involved as a partner rather than driver. The COY Social Planner believes that it's important the project be considered a municipal wide initiative, recognising that City of Yarra is not just the council but all communities of interest. 'It's about ensuring the sustainability of the network... Council does play an important part, but council is not reflective of the broader interests that need to be involved' (COY Social Planner).

A barrier highlighted by Cultivating Community stems from the fact that 'sometimes community organisations can undersell themselves' (CC Project Worker). The City of Yarra Community Food Systems Project Worker is funded for only 14 hours per week, a time constraint which limits some project initiatives.

Benefits

A holistic response to food impacts is evolving within council. The project 'has been raising awareness across council about the broad impacts of some of these trends, and some of the less obvious areas where council can take a role through urban planning, infrastructure development as well as the social planning and environmental aspects' (COY Social Planner).

The project is also proving a catalyst to look at what Council does in this area. 'If there are opportunities or areas within council who are working against objectives of the

community food system, then we can start having that dialogue within council... It is making us look at our own operations' (COY Social Planner).

Key measurements of the project's success will be:

- development and implementation of the food systems policy;
- continued success of the project Networks;
- development of a local purchasing guide for Yarra residents; and
- attendance and outcomes of a Food Network Forum, to be held later this year.

The Yarra community is given a voice through strong representation within the established project networks. The CC Project Worker believes that there is further scope within this project to foster community projects, giving them an umbrella under which to become formalised.

Lessons learned

A strong and successful partnership has been built between Yarra City Council and Cultivating Community. The CC Project Worker observed that the key to a successful partnership is each party understanding the strengths, resources and experience of the other and knowing how to utilise the relationship by communicating needs to each other. Ongoing partnerships require continuity, commitment and recognition that it is an important project for both parties and maintained as a priority for both.

There is a recognised need for community groups to have a strong understanding of

the powers and limitations of council (COY Social Planner). This is a direct reference to the need to develop sustainable projects, which do not rely on ongoing financial support from councils and can withstand political cycles.

This project has been effective in its mix of council and community. Sitting within community control gives the project independence from Council, but also gives community groups the ability to participate in local government decision-making and resource allocation through direct connections with council representatives within the developed networks. This meets council objectives of engaging with local communities and interest groups, raising awareness and creating education around issues such as food security (COY Social Planner).

It has been timely that this project has coincided with the development of the City of Yarra sustainability strategy, due to be released for public input later this year. Similar goals of both has meant better awareness and uptake within council, providing more support for the project than it otherwise may have had.

For further information:

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4.2. Case Study: CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies)

CERES is a community led environmental park that showcases affordable renewable technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, and broader social initiatives such as community gardens and volunteer networks. CERES mission is 'to initiate and support environmental sustainability and social equity, with an emphasis on cultural richness and community participation' (CERES 2006).

The following case study is based on interviews with a Councillor at Moreland City Council (referenced as Moreland Councillor) and a Team Leader at CERES (referenced as CERES Team Leader). Please note that opinions expressed are those of the interviewees and are not necessarily reflective of the organisation they represent.

Outline of the Initiative

CERES is a large-scale community project that represents a broad all-encompassing relocalisation case study. The concept of CERES was developed in the late 1970s. In 1982, CERES was established on an inner-urban site, seven kilometres from Melbourne's City Centre. Since this time, the four hectare property has been transformed from a landfill site to a community environmental park that showcases affordable renewable technologies, sustainable agriculture and broader social initiatives such as community gardens and volunteer networks. The site attracts more than 300, 000 visitors a year, with over 70,000 school children attending on site educational programs.

The overriding mission of CERES is 'to initiate and support environmental

Snapshot of Moreland City Council

Location: The City of Moreland is located in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne, with major centres at Coburg (8 kms from Melbourne CBD) and Brunswick (5kms From Melbourne CBD).

Size: 51 Kms²

Population: 144,311

General Features: Moreland City Council is a highly urbanised setting with intermittent parklands, many of which stem off the Merri Creek. The population of Moreland incorporates and eclectic mix of demographics. There are many active centres throughout the municipality incorporating shopping centres and public transport networks.

sustainability and social equity, with an emphasis on cultural richness and community participation' (CERES 2008). The individual projects within CERES demonstrate solutions in the areas of food security and renewable energy technologies, the building of localised economies and social capital.

Some projects within the broader scope of CERES include:

- CERES Sustainability Centre
A green community building project that incorporates ecological best practice design and collaborative community processes. The Centre will feature a multi-purpose group of buildings comprised of a reception, a nursery, a performing arts hall, a large café, an exhibition space and community workshop spaces including a

community kitchen. It will eventually be the headquarters of CERES staff and volunteers (CERES 2008).

- **Eco-House**

This retrofitted display house demonstrates renewable energy technologies, energy efficient devices and sustainable design principles that can be applied to houses within the wider community. It is one of several functional displays across the site utilised by the CERES Education Team to deliver a range of experiential sustainability programs to school groups.

- **CERES Organic Farm and Market Garden**

The CERES site features an urban city farm that provides locally grown organic food, education in community food systems, an ethical market place and employment for farmers, teachers and market workers. The Harding Street Market Garden, located 2 kms from CERES, is certified organic and is used for training, farm and enterprise programs by a range of students and community groups.

Partnership Outline

Moreland City Council and CERES have had a close and long-standing relationship. Initially, Moreland City Council gave the founders of the CERES project the site under a 10 year leasing agreement. Currently, CERES is into the second year of a further 20 year leasing agreement for the site. The Council has provided an additional land leasing arrangement and supported the CERES proposal to manage the Harding Street Market Garden.

CERES is overseen by a Management Committee that is comprised of staff members, community members and two officials from Moreland City Council. This ensures that the priorities of all parties are

represented and that a continued link between CERES and Council exists.

Moreland City Council regularly contributes financially to CERES, although for the initial 10 years of the project, CERES received very little financial support. From 1992, Moreland City Council has given \$30,000 per annum to CERES for capital improvements and \$85,000 per annum for administrative costs. CERES also received \$70,000 for Stage One of the Sustainability Centre. Stage 2 and 3 of this development are currently under design and are almost at the construction stage. These stages have received a total of \$500, 000 from Moreland City Council (CERES Team Leader).

Historically, Moreland City Council has also offered political support to CERES in obtaining further funding. During a period of financial hardship, Moreland City Council supported CERES through lobbying both State and Federal funding channels to ensure that the education programs would be sustained into the future. Today, CERES is primarily sustained by its on-site enterprises and partly reliant on government and philanthropic grants (CERES Team Leader).

Local Government Role

There are mutually beneficial reasons for the relationship between CERES and Moreland City Council. Both CERES Team Leader and the Moreland Councillor agree that the site and the projects at CERES are widely popular and deliver to the community positive environmental and social outcomes. CERES offers the council a tool in which it can physically express examples of sustainable practices and relocalisation themes that can be adopted by the wider Moreland community. In today's political climate, it is becoming increasingly more important for local

governments to become proactive in response to looming environmental problems, and projects such as CERES are a fantastic expression of shared local and Council priorities (Moreland Councillor).

Drivers

The historical context in which CERES was developed is of importance when identifying drivers of the initiative. In the late 1970's, Brunswick was struck by a significant wave of unemployment. Community leaders identified the need to explore solutions in a broader range of social and environmental issues in the local community. This increased awareness led to the creation of a community space in which solutions could be formulated. The result was the creation of CERES, in which employment opportunities were created concurrently with a space for innovation.

The groundswell of support for the CERES initiative by the local community was the greatest driver in the implementation of the project (CERES Team Leader). In 1980, a proposal by local residents was formulated and supported by the local government due to the targeted approach the CERES project outlined in administering positive outcomes to growing social and environmental problems (Moreland Councillor).

The current drivers for Moreland City Council in supporting CERES include the local and global environmental context and the outcomes CERES can deliver. The innovations and projects within CERES act as a benchmark for other communities. Another key point in the local government's ongoing support of CERES is that it has been successful in meeting its collective aims for the past 25 years (Moreland Councillor). It is now a social and cultural hub entrenched in the community. The continual drive of

the CERES community has maintained the success and viability of the project. Collectively, the community and Moreland City Council are becoming steadily more aware of the importance of acting on issues such as climate change through relocalisation projects. Through CERES, the community has identified the significance of less travel, less reliance on fossil fuels and reduced consumerism. A local hub of resources that lessens community dependence on fossil fuels is a key method of CERES addressing such issues (CERES Team Leader).

Barriers

There have been few difficulties in the operations of both the CERES project and broader community, and between the organisation and Moreland City Council. Both groups see the need for CERES to adopt significant changes in the business operation aspects of the organisation. In particular, Moreland's Councillor identified financial planning, whilst CERES' Team Leader noted a general lack of business operation skills as a key area to focus on for improvement. These factors may be the means of building a stronger relationship via the Council's provision of expertise and skill exchange. This would also aid CERES to overcome another identified barrier, which is a general lack of knowledge of local government structures and functions (CERES Team Leader).

Another barrier is the vastly differing operations of the group. The Team Leader at CERES believes that innovation inherently requires a level of risk, while local governments in general would seek to minimise the chance of such risks. 'CERES is useful in taking risks that councils simply can't. Bureaucracy doesn't have such flexibility in delivering such outcomes' (CERES Team Leader). This has never posed

a significant problem, but the fact that this divide exists is important to recognise in future relations.

Benefits

One of the major achievements of the CERES project is maintaining a sense of optimism and instilling this value into others within the community (Moreland Councillor). This has been facilitated through the creation of realistic environmental and social projects that have been able to inspire the wider community and to prompt individuals to think about aspects of relocalisation and sustainability. The fact that CERES has been creating a means of education and participation for the community for 25 years is an achievement in itself. Another major benefit to the council is the creation of an aesthetically pleasing environmental site within an urban setting (Moreland Councillor).

The cultural inclusiveness of the project is also important. CERES has been successful in creating a community hub that has in turn formed employment opportunities. It has delivered education programs and sustainable solutions to the wider community, but further, has created its own strong community of visitors, employees and volunteers. CERES succeeds in formulating social equity, by adopting multicultural influences, creating jobs for refugees residing in the local area and providing local cultures with a platform for community engagement (CERES Team Leader). If we compare these successes with the initial aims of CERES, both social and environmental objectives have been met.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons have been learned by both Moreland Council and CERES around

organisational planning and financial risk taking. Moreland's Councillor sees the need for CERES to adopt a more structured long-term plan. This should include a clear written agreement outlining which party is responsible for specific actions and roles within the partnership. The CERES Team Leader also identified the need to focus on business strategies and general planning. In the past CERES has taken some financial risks that have been destructive. However, with variable funding, these risks are at times justified in their support of the overall CERES project. CERES aims to develop improved business planning to avoid such outcomes in the future (CERES Team Leader).

The positive aspects of the CERES project include a functional relationship with the local government and a thriving local community support base. The project goals are contributed to by local government involvement and facilitation. CERES is a longstanding relocalisation project created by community, for community. Moreland City Council have respected and supported this popular entity consistently.

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4.3. Case Study: SEAC

SEAC stands for the Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre. This organisation has initiated a plan to reduce the region's carbon footprint, a catalyst for the Sunshine Coast to be recognised as Australia's first Transition Town. SEAC has several projects underway in the community, regionally and internationally, providing a leading case study of positive, community-led relocalisation action.

The following case study is based on interviews with a Strategic Project Officer from the Environment and Planning branch of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (referenced as SCRC Planner), and Co-founder and Coordinator of the Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre (referenced as SEAC Coordinator). Please note that opinions expressed are those of the interviewees and are not necessarily reflective of the organisations they represent.

Outline of the Initiative

The Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre (SEAC) offers a creative and positive response to peak oil and climate change by providing education, information, planning and action strategies. The Centre was established in 2007 by two founders: experienced permaculturist and educator Janet Millington, and Sonya Wallace with a background in State Government emergency services and communications. SEAC ('seek') offers outreach and training programs on climate change, peak oil, energy descent planning, relocalisation and permaculture.

SEAC is a hub and networking point for key groups in the region to develop and implement practical and effective solutions. SEAC's Co-founders designed and delivered the 12 week 'Time for an Oil Change' course, which generated Australia's first Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP); a

Snapshot of Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Council: Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) formed in March 2008 when Noosa Shire, Maroochy Shire and Caloundra City amalgamated.

Location: Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Size: 3,127km², includes 200 kilometers of coastline

Population: 300,000

Natural features: Broad coastal plains and foothills, a focus for agriculture and urban development

strategic framework for the region to move towards a low impact, low emissions future. SEAC has been a catalyst for the Sunshine Coast to be recognised as Australia's first Transition Town. The Transition Town Network links towns and cities around the world that are reducing the carbon footprint of their entire locality in conjunction with their local Council (see Transition Network 2008).

Partnership Outline

In establishing SEAC, its Coordinators have aimed to engage community and council simultaneously. Extensive letter-writing and networking with local groups, local University and Council members, led to a cross-section attending the Time for an Oil Change Course. The invitation from SEAC timed well with the Council's strategy development stage and an Environmental Planner was resourced to attend the course and participate in the group development of the EDAP. The course was also attended voluntarily by a Town Planner, Landscape Architect and Sustainable Building expert

from Council, as well as community members including nurses, teachers, financiers and entrepreneurs (SCRC Planner).

The Council's participation and support of SEAC's ideas represent the early stages of a potentially successful partnership (SEAC Coordinator). The Council is funding a retrofit of the Centre at the Yandina Community Gardens where SEAC and other groups operate, in order to showcase ecologically sustainable building principals. Members of SEAC have delivered presentations on their project to Council members. Their leadership and pioneering work has been well received across the Council (SCRC Planner).

Local Government Role

The Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP) is currently being finalised by SEAC for presentation to Council. Both parties are confident that it has the potential to be recognised as a key document and by incorporating organisational/peer review, believe there is scope for an appropriate level of endorsement. SEAC's Coordinator hopes that a joint Council and Community task force will be appointed to actively work on implementing the EDAP. SCRC's Planner envisages that the EDAP may require some 'corporatising', but that it should remain with the community. In order to be effective the EDAP would need to integrate with other existing sustainability plans and be linked to the Council's Corporate Plan. Pre-presentation ground-work has been conducted to create the right climate and awareness in Council to build political and managerial support of the EDAP (SCRC Planner).

The EDAP is written in council language and aims to easily feed into existing council plans. The SCRC Planner attending the course perceived her role as providing 'the voice of realism about governmental systems knowledge'. The group needed 'greater clarity over what was and what was not the Council's role and the cost implications of some of the actions discussed'. The EDAP identifies current Council programs and ways to compliment these. For example, extending Council programs to include the local sourcing of food and services. It recommends a top-down approach (such as policy changes to preserve prime agricultural land), combined with a bottom-up approach from the community (such as establishing community gardens and supporting local food producers), as a cooperative solution to the problems of climate change and peak oil (SEAC Coordinator).

Councils are predicted to play a significant future role in leading and building community resilience. This may involve Council lobbying State Government and using the EDAP as leverage for policy change and support (SCRC Planner). The Council has an opportunity to be pioneers by planning cooperatively with the community. Another key driver is the moral and ethical responsibility of all levels of government, not just Council, to prepare and protect the community for climate and energy uncertainty in the future (SEAC Coordinator).

Drivers

SEAC was established to generate positive solutions to bring about community empowerment and action in response to the twin pressures of peak oil and climate

change. The SEAC project has been driven by the voluntary commitment and expertise of its Co-founders. The initial stimulant was a presentation on regional sustainability and the Kinsale model of action planning presented by permaculturist David Holmgren. This inspired the Co-founders to apply the concept to the Sunshine Coast. They have brought the work of David Holmgren, Richard Heinberg, Rob Hopkins, the Kinsale EDAP, the Post Carbon Institute and the Transition Movement into the Time for an Oil Change Course. The course focuses on oil and energy dependent areas such as food production and distribution, waste water and energy use, infrastructure and transportation, the built environment, health systems, communication, education, employment, economics, community governance and attitudinal changes. Course attendees identified the expertise, strengths and vulnerabilities of their region and then created policies and actions based on the top-down, bottom-up framework to address each issue (SEAC Coordinator).

The need to mitigate and adapt to peak oil and climate change from a planning and policy perspective is driving Sunshine Coast Regional Council to develop strategies. The Council is examining the community's physical and social infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability and greenhouse abatement. 'It's not just about a suite of projects; it is an entire cultural change' (SCRC Planner).

In certain projects, such as Town Centre Planning, initiatives are incorporating relocalisation principles in an effort to become more sustainable. Rising fuel and food prices and media coverage are seen to be stimulating community interest in

sustainability. A new Council was recently voted in on green credentials. A further driver is the need to preserve local identity to harness the valued characteristics of towns and areas (SCRC Planner).

Barriers

Establishing and running SEAC has required voluntary time, energy and expertise. There are limited resources for the community group to meet the increasing public interest in sustainability and the Transition Initiative. There is also concern that the public may take the view that 'since SEAC are doing something about it, they don't need to' (SEAC Coordinator).

A barrier to community groups is their general lack of experience in designing business plans. This can be overcome through Council providing professional guidance to assist groups in establishing governance and financial plans (SCRC Planner).

Barriers to Sunshine Coast Regional Council's endorsement of the EDAP may stem from the economic and lifestyle implications of energy descent. Even though lowering consumption and fossil fuel usage will result in greenhouse and cost benefits, the EDAP may be viewed as yet another load on the Council's stretched resources. 'Large infrastructure changes do present bigger challenges, but overall it's really not difficult to address. It's about creating more healthy, efficient, functional communities that have great social infrastructure such as sustainability hubs and community gardens for resource and skill sharing and fresh food distribution systems such as a strong farmers market

network - all of which create cooperative social networks' (SCRC Planner).

The first Sunshine Coast EDAP is recognised to have weak points, such as in the Health area, as it only reflects the skills and expertise of the trial course attendees. However, it is a 'living document' which will be regularly reviewed and shaped by the next course and by Council's contribution (SEAC Coordinator).

Benefits

SEAC's status as the first Australian Transition Town (or Region) has boosted the Council's profile, stimulating national and international interest. SEAC's pioneering role in generating the EDAP demonstrates that the necessary skills, knowledge and power are within the local community to address these issues. 'SEAC has had a dynamo effect stimulating great interest and awareness around Peak Oil. By generating a mother action plan, it is creating an opportunity for building community capacity' (SCRC Planner).

The project has strengthened social networks between local groups, the local University and local council. Within council, an informal network has formed called EPOC (Examining Peak Oil Challenges) with staff across departments meeting to discuss issues (SCRC Planner). The project has proven to be a motivator of the community and has led to the first regional Transition Town display, which was part of the annual Sunshine Coast World Environment Day celebrations (SEAC Coordinator).

Lessons learned

SEAC are developing tools to offer both councils and community groups. A Train the

Trainer Course and Interstate Roadshow training program are planned. SEAC offers a framework for relocalisation, however due to the regional scale of its EDAP, there may be limited transferability to urban contexts. SEAC's Coordinator advises that, 'This is where the Transition Town Initiative fits in - it supports local grassroots action house by house, community by community, within the larger regional framework.' Transition Cities such as Totnes in the United Kingdom demonstrate urban application.

The project has illustrated that the necessary expertise can be found within the local community. 'Council are not always the most appropriate resource to be delivering programs. It's about empowering community groups to be more efficient and effective at delivering these programs' (SCRC Planner). Community groups have greater opportunity for continuity and responsiveness to change. Council has a role in forming partnerships and can assist community groups through start-up funding grants. Council can also provide advice on where to gain the necessary expertise and guidance to assist with business plans and strategies (SCRC Planner).

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5. Discussion

5.1 Going Local

The term relocalisation is broad and encompassing. The very idea of 'going local' is one which celebrates diversity. Every locale is distinct as every community has its own unique strengths, goals and ideals. Therefore the diversity within relocalisation initiatives should be celebrated and encouraged, rather than 'walled in' to the thinking that there is one 'right' approach.

This is highlighted in the distinctly different approaches to relocalisation found within the reported case studies. The term relocalisation is not commonly used by those leading these projects, although the goals of the projects are closely aligned with relocalisation. The outcomes in all instances are working toward more secure and self-reliant societies by strengthening local knowledge, identity and culture.

Each of the case studies illustrates local community responses to the global issues of peak oil and climate change. In each example, the community groups have initiated, driven and retained ownership of the projects. Through this process these initiatives have strengthened community bonds and established strong networks that emphasise resource, skills and information sharing. A common thread between case studies is the goal to build community resilience by lessening fossil fuel dependence, building local hubs for resource sharing, empowering community participation and improving environmental conditions.

A holistic, systems approach is apparent in all of the case studies. The goal of CERES is to improve environmental and social sustainability by demonstrating solutions and projects that build food security, energy security, local economies and social capital. The SEAC initiative takes a different angle. SEAC has facilitated a joint council and community group to generate a regional strategic plan to move towards a low impact, low emissions future. The holistic framework focuses on local food and energy production, employment and goods, local identity, community resilience and preparedness. The Yarra Community Food Systems Project may initially appear to have a singular focus, yet further inspection highlights that local economy, energy reduction and social capital are all improved in food security systems. Although the term relocalisation is not explicitly used to describe these initiatives, it is implicit in their design. All of these case studies aim to generate practical, effective solutions to mitigate and adapt their communities to the impacts of climate change and peak oil.

5.2. Benefits of Relocalisation

All of the case studies presented have a strong sense of optimism. They illustrate direct community action focused on solutions rather than problems. These actions aim to spread awareness that our lifestyle choices have far-reaching impacts. The projects empower community members by providing alternative choices that have direct local benefits. This instills values such as stewardship, cooperation and respect in the community.

The initiatives within these case studies are commonly seeking greater energy security by lessening fossil fuel usage. Locally sourced food, goods and services are easily accessible and

require less transportation. Each of the projects work to improve environmental conditions through lowering greenhouse gas emissions, reducing fossil fuel depletion activities and improving land management and agricultural practices. By dramatically reducing their community's carbon footprint, these case studies provide a twofold response to climate change and peak oil by adaptation to and mitigation against their effects.

These projects indicate that individuals and local groups are being supported to take action through strengthened networks and direct involvement with local government. In return, these projects have allowed councils to have extensive community contact and engagement.

Council representatives have highlighted internal operational benefits to their council from these projects. The holistic approach of the Yarra Community Food Systems Project has encouraged staff from various areas within Council to come together to work on projects, share information and align goals. This is bringing recognition within council of the value of a whole systems approach. The volunteer aspect created through community involvement also makes these projects more financially sustainable and allows council funding to go much further.

In the case of both the Yarra project and SEAC, the aim of council involvement is to create community-driven council policy. The Councils have benefited from working with community representatives to generate innovative solutions that respond to the locality's strengths and vulnerabilities. This can assist Council to design local policy and strategies that address prevalent social and environmental issues. Community input into policy development is likely to result in more sustainable and community supported strategies.

Relocalisation initiatives provide a means for councils to take positive local action in response to the global issues of climate change and peak oil, as councils are predicted to play an important role in preparing and protecting their communities. Such initiatives not only assist councils to fulfill societal obligations, but also highlight these councils as leaders and innovators in the sustainability realm. This is evident in SEAC's status as the first Australian Transition Town, boosting the Council's profile and stimulating national and international interest. In this way, councils have an opportunity to be pioneers by planning cooperatively with the community.

5.3. Elements of Successful Relocalisation Initiatives

An urban context for relocalisation provides challenges and benefits. Densification of urban areas is leading to increased pressure on open community spaces and infrastructure. Such density can be beneficial, as populous communities can provide support for local businesses and can make changes through unified buying choices and cooperative schemes.

5.3.1. Systems Focus

The essence of all of the case studies is a systems approach, which allows elements such as food, energy and economy to be viewed in a holistic manner. CERES Local Food Network creates and supports urban city farming, an ethical market place, provides opportunities for farmers, benefits the local environment and community health. The Yarra Community Food

Systems Project focuses on fresh food which improves health, reduces energy reliance and supports the local economy.

5.3.2. Community Ownership

All council representatives interviewed were confident that community groups were better able to drive these projects than council. Community groups have greater opportunity for continuity and responsiveness to change. Community ownership ensures that local priorities are upheld, and such ownership may make projects more sustainable, as they are relatively independent of political cycles. It was also perceived by some council representatives that by placing projects in community control, community groups are able to take greater risks than likely to be taken by councils.

Community groups also operate in less hierarchical ways and are potentially more approachable for community members. In this way they can be responsive to changes in the community and may keep projects relevant. Ongoing community support and participation can determine the viability of the project and its future direction.

5.3.3. Tangible solutions

A key driver behind the projects has been the aim of achieving greater food security. Food is a tangible resource that we interact with every day, and which has health, environmental, social and economic impacts. This tangibility appears to be an engaging factor for the community. This suggests that food is a particularly accessible element of relocalisation and may be an effective way to engage community members in the broader process of relocalisation.

5.3.4. Achievable solutions

The broader concept of relocalisation may be initially daunting for local governments. CERES demonstrates an effective model in which a range of teams manage different initiatives, aligned by a common vision. Projects include sustainable enterprises, community education, community gardens, local food networks and energy and water technologies. Each individual area can be modeled to support similar relocalisation projects.

5.3.5. Effective Local Government involvement

All of the case studies highlight the importance of local government involvement. As mentioned above, it is important that ownership of the project lies with the community. However, in recognising the imperative of locally driven community initiatives, local governments can deliver the necessary support for project stimulation, advocacy, skill building, resources and access. In this way the local government plays a key partnership role in supporting relocalisation initiatives.

5.3.6. Stimulating action

All of these projects were driven by community organisations. This shows how important it is that councils recognise the ability of communities to generate effective solutions to pressing social and environmental issues. Such recognition of the value of community initiatives is found in Yarra City Council's Emerging Issues grant system, which stimulated the Yarra

Community Food System Project. Grant systems such as this may prove to be an effective way of discovering the potential of relocalisation initiatives within municipalities.

5.3.7. Relationships

Council and community representatives have highlighted that effective relationships between council and community groups need to be established. Key elements to successful relationships are maintaining the project as a clear priority, input from council into shaping the initiative (through representation on management boards or system networks), shared goals between council and community groups and commitment to the future of the project.

5.3.8. Advocacy

A fundamental role of local government to these projects is the advocacy they can provide to state and federal government. This was particularly highlighted in the CERES case study, which recognised the importance of Moreland City Council's political support in gaining ongoing funding.

5.3.9. Risk taking

As identified in the CERES case study, community organisations are more prepared to experiment with initiatives that may or may not result in success. In contrast, local governments tend to be risk averse. Having community organisations willing to experiment in mutually beneficial projects enables local governments to avoid risk, while identifying key concepts and strategies for successful implementation.

5.3.10. Skill building

Community groups and councils generally operate in very different ways, so the strengths and weaknesses of both need to be considered. This arose in the CERES case study where Moreland City Council expressed concern over the community group's lack of business planning and structure. Council representatives from the other case studies also believed that councils can provide professional expertise and guidance to support community groups in financial and strategic planning.

5.3.11. Resources

Funding is a necessary requirement for relocalisation initiatives. Such funding must acknowledge the scope of the project, to ensure that the amount of funding given is sufficient to meet project goals - taking into account the tendency for community groups to sometimes undersell themselves. Other resources highlighted as important to such initiatives were supply of council spaces for meetings, and the provision of council representatives to attend meetings and offer professional guidance to groups.

5.3.12. Access

Strong partnerships between local council and community groups provide these groups access to different areas of local council. This allows community groups to meet their objectives more efficiently by benefiting from council networks and professional staff, leading to more effective outcomes. Such broad access across council may also help to align council goals, or encourage communication between different areas of council.

5.3.13. Managing Community expectations

Council representatives highlighted a lack of understanding within community groups regarding how councils operate and what can be realistically achieved. This highlights the need for councils to increase communication with community groups about what can be provided. More realistic expectations may also ensure that these initiatives can eventually become self-sustaining and not have continued reliance on council resources.

5.4. Celebrating diversity

Under a multitude of guises, relocalisation initiatives are gaining strong interest from local governments across Australia. Within the case studies provided, both CERES and SEAC have experienced a surge of calls for assistance from councils nationally. CERES is currently in consultation with several councils and community groups seeking to replicate its model. Meanwhile the Transition Town movement, which requires partnership between council and community, is growing worldwide. It is clear that councils are looking for frameworks and successful strategies to follow.

A comparative analysis of the case studies has shown that these initiatives are taking different approaches towards similar goals. CERES provides a physical model and benchmark of sustainable living and in doing so educates the wider community and stimulates sustainable actions. CERES illustrates a bottom-up approach of community-led action, supported by its local council. In contrast, SEAC's Energy Descent Action Plan provides a strategic policy framework for the region. It demonstrates a combined bottom-up and top-down approach by bringing community and council members together to collaboratively move towards a low impact, low emissions future.

These case studies offer models that can be adapted to local situations depending on the level of council interest, commitment and funding. The appropriateness of different frameworks is also dependent on the cohesiveness of the community. It may be that community building strategies are needed before relocalisation is considered. The level of community awareness of issues such as climate change and peak oil needs to be taken into account when choosing the framework; Ensuring the community is engaged is a fundamental part of the project through all stages of development.

It is clear that communities are calling for change and that there is a trend towards 'going local'. The case studies provided highlight examples of frameworks for such change, however it needs to be recognised that each community has its own solutions and expertise. It is this diversity which leads to locally appropriate solutions that can harness the valued characteristics of each local community, and create sustainable and successful strategies.

6. Conclusion

The broad movement towards 'going local' is leading to relocalisation networks and groups forming throughout the world. Increasingly, these initiatives are attracting local government support and endorsement. Although the term relocalisation is not explicitly used to describe these initiatives, it is implicit in their design and collective goals. The members of SEAC, CERES and the City of Yarra project aim to generate practical, effective solutions to adapt their communities to the impacts of climate change and peak oil. These projects all seek to promote greater security and self-reliance in terms of energy, food and water systems, whilst rebuilding local community networks and reducing their environmental impacts.

Relocalisation projects are instrumental in increasing broader community awareness of environmental problems and in generating positive solutions to address these issues. The case studies have illustrated that the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise are within the local community. Community groups can offer greater continuity and responsiveness to change that can lead to more sustainable and locally supported projects.

Local governments are searching for successful relocalisation models to replicate. The case studies presented offer effective frameworks for positive localised action. Such projects offer benefits to local council by strengthening social networks and relationships with community organisations. In many cases, community organisations are better able to take risks than are likely to be taken by councils. Local governments can play significant roles in stimulating projects and providing advocacy, skill building, resources and funding. In this way local governments provide a key partnership role in supporting, not driving relocalisation initiatives.

This body of research can serve as an initial stimulant for local governments to further explore the rich and diverse opportunities within the relocalisation field. Future research could focus on identifying other effective models of relocalisation and their ability to be replicated within Victoria's urban municipalities.

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Appendix 1: Request for Research Assistance Letter

Hello (insert name),

On behalf of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), I am conducting social research into the relocalisation movement, also referred to as localisation or bioregionalism. Relocalisation is a strategy which supports local food, local industries, local energy production, local economies and the local development of currency, governance and culture.

I am searching for national and international examples of urban relocalisation initiatives that have local government participation and support.

This research aims to identify the drivers and barriers to local government participation. It will provide MAV with positive solutions for Victoria's urban councils to both mitigate against and adapt their communities to the effects of climate change, peak oil and to increase community wellbeing.

Can you recommend any urban relocalisation initiatives (it may represent a component of relocalisation) or suggest any contacts to assist this research?

Thank you for your assistance,

(Student name)

RMIT Social Science and Planning

Appendix 2: Case Study Assessment Proforma

<p>Project name: Location: Contact person: Contact details:</p>
<p>Information Available Is your contact person 'giving' with information? ie, enough to give us some contacts? to be interviewed?</p>
<p>Relevance - local government Is there local government involvement? If so, do we have a contact in local govt? Do we know the extent of the involvement? Human resources / facilities / money given? Do you think this will have relevance to MAV? Why/why not?</p>
<p>Relevance - relocalisation What aspect(s) of relocalisation is this project representing?</p>
<p>Tangible outcomes Has any research been done on the effectiveness of the project? If so, how accessible are the results? Do they show anything that can be linked back to local government involvement? What is the extent of achievement / scope of influence? ie has this project been replicated by others? Any other outcomes? Anecdotal stories? Photographic evidence?</p>
<p>Barriers What do you see to be the barriers to local government uptake?</p>
<p>X-Factor Interest / excitement / sexiness. What is there about this one that will sell it to MAV and local governments?</p>

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Introduce self, the research project, MAV and how the research may be used.

Ask to record interview.

Discuss ethics: Interviewee is able to withdraw at any time and able to decline answering questions.

Describe outline of interview: begin with their role, general questions on relocalisation, followed by specific questions on the achievements of the project, drivers and barriers, and the bigger picture of relocalisation.

Encourage interviewee to expand on any topics covered or not included in the interview format.

General

1. Could you describe your role within your local government/organisation?
2. What are the key reasons behind your council/organisation's uptake of relocalisation?
3. Do you use the term relocalisation? (other terms used?)

Specific project description

4. Moving on to the xxx project - could you describe the key features of this initiative?
 - key project stimulants
 - aims
 - initial local council involvement
 - extent of local council's current role/involvement
 - facilitation/stimulation of community uptake
 - community's role/extent of ownership

Project Analysis

5. What have been the main achievements (or projected achievements) of the project?
 - (Is this opinion or specific research? See if there is any specific research)
6. What were the main barriers and drivers in local government's contribution to these outcomes?
7. Are there any lessons learnt that would influence how you would do it differently next time?

Bigger Picture

8. Do you see any trends emerging in this area?
9. Would you recommend your project to other local governments? Why/why not?
10. What do you see as the key elements to a successful partnership between government and community organisations for future relocalisation initiatives?

Wrap-up

Would you be a willing contact for further information?

Do you have any images that we could use in the report (referenced, of course!), or any research results that we could access?

Is there anything further you would like to add?

Appendix 4: Research Ethics Letter

Dear [Interviewee name],

On behalf of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), I am conducting social research into the relocalisation movement, also referred to as localisation or bioregionalism. Relocalisation is a strategy which supports local food, local industries, local energy production, local economies and the local development of currency, governance and culture.

This research aims to identify the drivers and barriers to local government participation in relocalisation initiatives. It will provide MAV with positive solutions for Victoria's urban councils to both mitigate against and adapt their communities to the effects of climate change and peak oil, and to increase community wellbeing. Although this research is being carried out for MAV, it needs to be stated that this is a student project through RMIT University within the Bachelor of Social Science/Environment Degree.

The research project design incorporates the use of interviews as a means of data collection. During the interview process, you as a participant have the right to close the interview at any time, or omit answers to any questions that you do not wish to answer. It would greatly benefit my research if I were able to take a recording of the interview proceedings to make sure that I capture your responses to questions in full. The recordings will be destroyed on the completion of our final report. If you do not wish for the interview recording to occur, please let me know prior to the commencement of the interview.

MAV have outlined the potential uses of the research as both internal and external, in that the report will be used by MAV initially, but further down the track they may publish the report and make it available to member organisations and broader, interested members of the public. In addition to MAV's uses of the report, the student research team may also be interested in delivering the report findings to interested community groups or local governments. This will be conducted independently of MAV.

In providing MAV with ideas and initiatives that may be of interest to other local governments and community groups, I would also welcome the chance to include your name and contact details in the final report as a means of further information for interested parties. Again, if you do not wish for this to occur, please let me know on the day of the interview and we can work out an alternative.

Please feel free to contact our research supervisor, Dr Ruth Lane, or myself if you have any queries.

Ruth can be contacted on Phone: 9925 3578
 Email: ruth.lane@rmit.edu.au

Thank you for your ongoing assistance,

[student name]

RMIT Social Science/Environment Student