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Conclusions & Future Research

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This vision report provides a foundation upon which sustainability activities can continue to grow.

The next phases (Figure 12) will include:

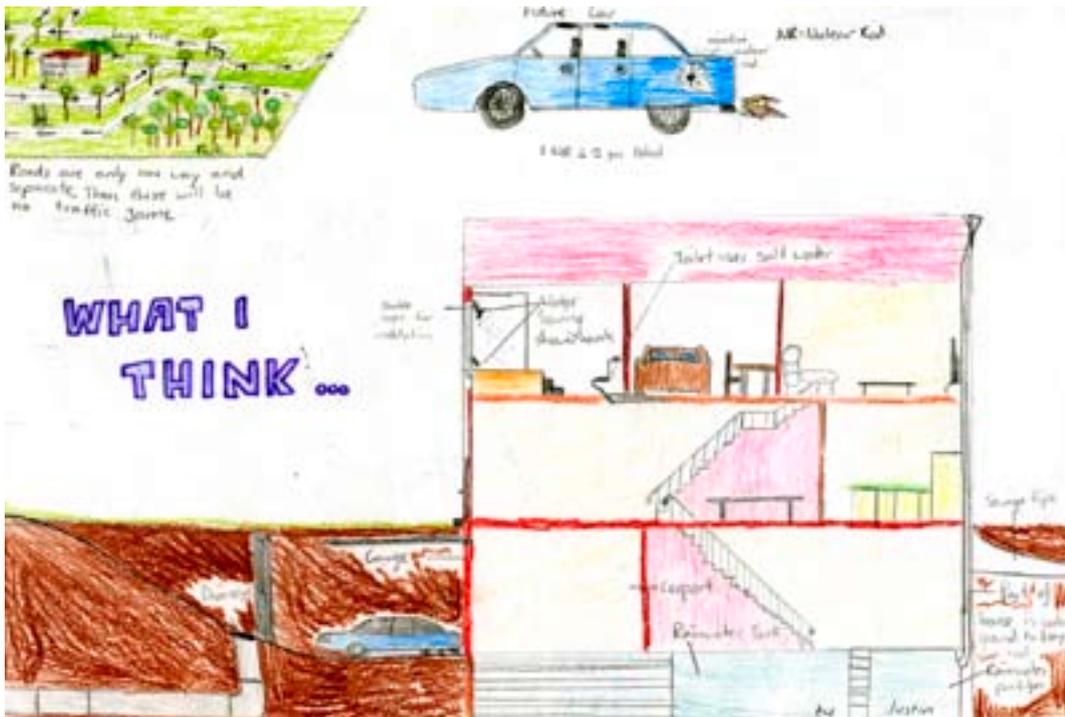
1. Developing a sustainability action plan to provide a framework for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of sustainability activities in Ku-ring-gai between the years 2008-2033. The new generational approach will be applied through aspects of future action planning, decision making and monitoring phases.
2. Commencing in 2008, a sustainability strategy for each suburb will be researched and written. These will focus on driving

sustainability at a local level recognising that each suburb has different identities, attributes and challenges.

A Community Sustainability Reference Group (SRG) has been formed to oversee the next phases of this project. It has representation of local people of differing ages with a broad range of expertise and includes two residents under 18 years of age. This group, together with the Council, community members, government agencies and other organisations will then oversee the implementation of sustainability programs.



Figure 12: Future sustainability Planning



'What I think...'
by Justin, Class 5/6F,
Wahroonga Bush School

On a corporate level sustainability is being integrated into all aspects of Council's Management Plan ensuring that it is embedded in the operational fabric of the organisation. The introduction of the Global Reporting Initiative and the formation of a Sustainability Reporting Team which has representation from all departments accompanied this phasing-in process which commenced in 2007.

The findings of this report present opportunities for future research especially in the areas of: young people and climate change, education and knowledge, governance, infrastructure, business, age based programs, gender, belonging and culture. A summary is as follows:

Young people and climate change

Young people outlined their fears for the future of the world they will inherit, especially regarding climate change. A larger sample and study would assist in identifying the scope of these fears and how to address them. Ku-ring-gai Council is including young people in its Sustainability Reference Group and could look at other methods of involving young people in decision making processes.

Education and knowledge

The lack of local knowledge was mentioned by all age groups but was seen as an important aspect of cultivating environmental and social care. To improve local knowledge for people of all ages, an education strategy would be beneficial involving the historical society, schools and educational institutions.

Governance

A review of policies and procedures is occurring as part of Council's response to the NSW Department of Local Government's *Promoting Better Practice* review checklist. This will reassess each of the plans and policies of Council and, where relevant, embed sustainability principles therein. The legal scope for this action is the Local Government Act which provides direction for local government as part of its need for long term, sustainable and participatory planning and service delivery.

Infrastructure

Access, services, transport systems, community halls, meeting places and community facilities were all areas requiring improvement as identified in this report. Reviews such as through the principle and comprehensive LEPs and Section 94 will address these areas of future need.



A community led by Council, but not overpowered by it. Councillors and citizens coming together to share ideas, enthusiasm and energy. Together moulding Ku-ring-gai Council (area) into a unique suburbia, rather than melting into the ever-growing metropolis.

Quote from a 16 year old Ku-ring-gai resident



Clockwise from opposite page: Children with an echidna; Sustainability Reference Group, Ku-ring-gai Council; Group discussions at the intergenerational sustainability forum, 2007. D.Wilks.

Business

Promoting local shopping and the role of town and neighbourhood centres as community hubs was identified through the research and requires further marketing and promotional planning.

Age based programs

The new generational methodology adopted in this research has enabled age based perspectives to be identified.

- Young people stated that they felt safe because elderly residents were at home. Conversely elderly residents described their loneliness and isolation. This social disconnect could be examined as a means to reconnect generations.
- Teenage participants described social barriers between public and private school and how they should have closer interactions.
- The need for volunteer programs to be designed on an age basis was highlighted to enable whole community engagement.

Future in-depth investigations, such as surveys and studies which focus on individual age groups would grow upon the foundation this report provides.

Gender

In past studies gender has proven to be a significant influence in terms of human environmental relationships and attitudes. While it was beyond the scope of this research to investigate gender in detail it would be advantageous to build upon the age based approach by examining gender coupled with age in terms of designing sustainability programs.



Belonging

The findings of this report raise an interesting question regarding residents' sense of belonging which was largely attributable to their social connections, while they most valued their surrounding environments. This appears to be an anomaly worthy of further investigation and may prove to be important when planning community engagement in future sustainability programs.

Culture

This research found Ku-ring-gai to be mono-cultural despite nearly one third of its population being born overseas. This is explained by many residents, regardless of their heritage, aspiring to similar values and behaviours. It is predicted that Ku-ring-gai will become increasingly multi cultural as its population grows, ongoing and deeper research will assist future planning required surrounding the influences of ethnicity.

The success of securing Ku-ring-gai's sustainable future requires ongoing investigations together with a collective effort by Council, local businesses, schools, community organisations, agencies, and individual citizens making a commitment.

