

“Kitchen Table Sustainability”
World Environment Day with Wendy Sarkissian
At the Victorian Local Governance Association, Melbourne

Notes from Evening Discussion Session with Community Leaders, June 5 2009

- The importance of engaging people not involved in the conversation or debate regarding the environment. Doing this effectively could lead to increased awareness and more informed choices.

When promoting an environment event:

- Giving something back to the participants for their time
- Recognising that people are stressed and anxious during this current period of uncertainty.
- The suggestion of using the university sector which is a highly untapped resource
- A need to know the participants’ motivation or trigger points for attending an event so the event will lead to change
- Very important to model good practice principles during education and information sessions.

There was much debate regarding the biggest obstacles to effectively engaging the community in the environment debate

- One view was highlighting the issues with *Governance* at all levels of government
- Government needs to take more responsibility for actions and the environment should be an issue that is not impacted on by the focus on elections by parties in government.
- A counter view was presented, highlighting that in these times it is easy to focus on obstacles. It is important that people with an interest in the environment not get bogged down in the present and look for opportunities to educate and engage society.
- This was supported by another participant, who highlighted the importance of empowerment and that the earlier the environment education starts in a person’s lifecycle the better.
- There was a frustration with all talk and no action approaches of government.
- The importance of “How to hold their (government officials) feet to the fire”
- How do we turn the QE2 around?
- The usefulness of vision as a personal motivation tool: “I want a future for my grandchildren.”

To ensure people don’t burn out in the community sector

- Set up a personal support network to ensure reflection and support is available at times of low energy levels.