17th Australian National LETS Conference 2010

Queensland

SESSION PAPERS – First Day

Digging up the past to aid the future - the history of LETS & conferences

In early 1987 a friend of my sister (Jill Jordan) was doing a Permaculture Course in USA when a new "community currency" was being talked about. This had been designed by Michael Linton, a Scottish economist living in Canada. Lea sent a set of the Landsman disks to Jill, who had been instrumental in setting up the Maple St Co-op (wholefoods) and the Maleny Community Credit Union. Jill and another guy who was a computer whiz went to Canada to see the system in action. When they came back a public meeting was organised and Maleny LETS was started in Nov. '87. From here LETS spread (word of mouth) to Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and Richmond Valley (Lismore based).

Jill went traveling and LETSystems mushroomed in her wake – she was a great networker and into community development. By the mid 90's there were 200+ LETS in Australia – in every state except NT. Links with the Permaculture and "green" movements were very strong.

New LETS have started up, some have folded (usually for reasons we'll explore in another session at this Conference) – some have crashed spectacularly!! - with the estimated number of systems remaining stable at about 200. These range from some with just a few members, being run from someone's home, to large systems with their own office space, from very regulated systems to loose arrangements of friends, and in some cases no records being kept at all. The original Blue Mountains LETS had some 1500 members on its books. They actually got involved with Government departments (Social Security – now Centrelink and Employment). In another show of support for LETS the NSW state government employed a Community Development Worker to set up LETS through the Hunter Valley in the aftermath an unemployment crisis when the mining & steel industries were in trouble there. One of WA LETS "leading lights" was quite high up in the State Development Dept of the WA Government and got funding to start up several LETS in that state too.

In these heady days we all thought that LETS would grow to gradually become a real alternative to the conventional money system, but over the years I've come to realise its true function is within local communities – and lately (GFC) as a safety net if the economy goes down.

Maleny LETS were discussing how we could make contact with other Australian LETSystems, so we organised the first National Conference in 1992 at Yarrahappini on the northern NSW Coast. We had to transport everything down with us; all the food, cooks, clunky computers, papers and all!!! Michael Linton was flown out by Conference organisers as special guest "star". We had a great time. The "boys" talked computers (they were going to write the ultimate program!), while the "girls" workshopped the nuts & bolts of running a successful LETS and grow it. The same problems came up then that are still being talked about now – and at every Conference in between, but it's the philosophy that binds us all.

From 1992 – 2002 we had a Conference every year. Then they fell into a hole until 2006 when Melbourne DiamondValleyNS talked the fledgling Gippsland LETS at Bairnsdale to host it.
The list with highlights:

1993 - Adelaide Hills. Great food & wine, exploring Adelaide night-life (very quiet then!), seeing a scale model of inner city eco-village + talk with architect.

1994 – Deloraine TAS. Meeting Christine Milne – Greens Senator – playing new LETS Play.

1995 – Hervey Bay NSW. Whale-watching

1996 – North Sydney. Yet another computer program, the Harbour, lots of high profile "pollies" as guest speakers.
Sydney saw the idea to form a National "peak body" - much argument over name & logo and it didn't happen. Nor did the national database of LETS which disappeared into the ether too. We did however begin networking more closely within the states leading to the formation of QLETS, SWALETS and VicLETS. After anything from a couple to a few years, they went the way of some LETSystems due to lack of energy/commitment/time, etc.
The quarterly QLETS meetings (in a different town from Maryborough/Hervey Bay to Mt Tamborine) and the National Conferences give a real "shot in the arm" to the host LETS, and "home" members gain an awareness of the bigger picture.

1997 – Shoreham VIC. I couldn't get to this one.

1998 – Maleny QLD

1999 – Wollongong NSW. The energy

2000 – Moruya NSW. Another one I didn't attend.

2001 –Melbourne. A huge Conference organised by 3 LETSystems. CERES. Aboriginal component. Conference dinner (Lebanese)

2002 – Maleny QLD. Lots of work!

2006 – Bairnsdale VIC. Trip to Raymond Island, staying at Caravan park cabin on river.

2007 – Newcastle NSW. Seeing the historic town and lovely coast.

2008 – Brisbane QLD. Old friends, Conference dinner in West End (Vietnamese).

2009 - Sydney. Exploring Newtown/Redfern
They have all been more about the people than the actual Conference, though. I always, even after all these years, come back inspired and with new energy & ideas.

Ann Jupp

Three books off the press – with the help of LETS Isabell Shepard.

Isabell has had a Herb Farm in Nambour for many years, and has been a member of LETS almost since it started there – member #29. She does postal orders from the Farm, Farm walks and gives out a lot of information on the healing qualities of herbs as well as the culinary use. She set out to write a book in 1993 and had her hand-written notes typed, proof-reading and editing all with help of willing LETS members and family involvement.

She then discovered the magic of sprouts and wanted to share that knowledge, so wrote the first ever book on sprouts and sprouting. This included the testimonials she was receiving in great numbers by then. The third book she published was "Self Sufficiency & Survival", also with volunteer typists and help from LETS.
She has had 40,000 books printed. Her website has inspired people to seek better health. The positive effects go on and on.

Isabell feels that her indirect influence on Nambour/Sunshine Coast LETS is also that the workers she pays in Rays then go on to spend them with other members. She loves to share the healing and cleansing properties of herbs to ensure better health for people. She also sees how herbs can help chronic pain. She can't say that everyone will be cured – there are too many variables.

She has had an overwhelming response to her books – phone calls, emails, letters and testimonials. Multi health problems can be helped with herbs.

Some of Isabel's favourite herbs
Gotu Kola – arthritis, menopause, pain (prevented the need for a neck brace in one client), works on animals too, extreme watering eyes, age-related mental decline, skin.
Chickweed (not tropical variety) – Mouth ulcers, heart disease, cancer, tendons, bones, age retardant.

Plantain – Candida/thrush.
Herb Robert – energy giving, hypertension, cancer, toxin remover (Isabell has seen a complete recovery from terminal cancer in one client), gout, irritable bowel syndrome, skin conditions, chronic fatigue, diabetes, heart & kidney problems, liver cancer – have it first thing in the morning.

Chili poultice - whooping cough, swollen legs.
Aloe (Candelabra) – 200 X strong cancer treatment, teeth cleaning, add to compost, use as egg replacement.
Nasturtium, salad mallow & nettle – good source of protein.
Ginseng – cure-all.
Licorice – Respiratory, kidney, liver & nervous/mental conditions. Good as a sugar substitute & for cessation of smoking.
Cranberry (hibiscus) – anti-inflammatory.
Acerola – Vit C, anti-ageing.
Pomegranate – Anti-ageing, nerves.
Allspice (aromatics) – toothache.
Herbs have been used since ancient times. We need to share the value of them. Need to make our gardens edible and useful.
Website – www.herbsarespecial.com.au

Murder or Suicide - What kills LETS?

Problems

People who are takers only – or givers (don't trade both ways). Single person "owns" the LETS. People who join and don't trade. Power trippers/dictators/control freaks running the system. People who confuse LETS with $$$. Committee who don't share info. People's dramas. Burn out. Huge energy, then overdo it and back off. People who make promises of action and don't deliver. Members who overcharge for services. Members who change their offers and don't update on listings. Members who don't answer phone/return calls. Excessive charges on trades. Too few members. People who can't spend their units. Assumptions that only the committee can do things. Lack of social, too much emphasis on admin. Lack of people connection. Annual fees. Not local enough. People too busy. Falling $$ bank balance. Too business-like. Insurance $$ requirements. No succession planning.

Solutions: Community.

Good facilitation. Openness strongly built in to structure. New blood, consensus, talk, amalgamate if not enough members. Be clear about wants/needs. Agreement that everyone is equal. Give support with heart. Transition to sharing roles. Self-regulation. Brochure that clarifies standards, tells people to update contact details, offers/wants. Ring members back. Encourage debit trading immediately. Welcome email to start trading. Buddy system for new members (Warranwood, SC LETS do this). Email asking what do you love to do, what do you want? Assist members to InterLETS too. Social contact. New blood – ideas, broaden horizons. Google/location maps. Compassionate communication. Own your own "stuff". Form teams to work with/for dictators. Facilitation/mediation. NLP – auditory/visual/kinesthetic learning. Creative marketing of LETS. Encourage people to see the potential in what's there – system and individual. Picnic in park. Rotating positions on committee. Abolish positions/titles – multi-skilling. List the ways to kill growth & display it e.g ""I've tried that before", "It won't work", "No-one wants to.....". Committee members to have no more than two "hats". Scan instantly for your replacement when taking on a position. Invite members to monthly dinner/movies night/home movies. Pamper days – hair/body/feet/lunch (bring plate to share). Get involved and be happier. Levies on transaction only. Don't charge fees when dormant. Festival stalls, community events – brochures. People supporting people. Members can donate stamps, paper, etc. Life membership for $20 joining fee. Assess bank balance annually. Get more new members. Get new blood on committee. Two years is enough in a job – recruit, allow someone else to stand up, then step back. Do personal work on self. Every member should feel responsible (and capable!!) Do jobs in small chunks – time & skills. Job share. Limit office bearers tenure. Mandate someone after this time. Role/job rotation. At some point in membership people should be encouraged to contribute to the group. Some people would like to be involved – define the job, preferably shared/mentored – less intimidating. Replace word committee with mentor group. Black hole theory. Get over FEAR – public liability, tax, Centrelink, etc. (national tax policy IT 2668 1992, Centrelink/DSS regional rulings -? individual). Centrelink defines community work in a way that would seem to include work for LETS office.

Symptoms of LETSystem in decline

Not much trading. Criticism, negativity, declining membership. Nip it in the bud – energy, enthusiasm.

Anne Wensley & Ann Jupp.

LETS Connect: Social Networking in LETS

Aim is to recreate community/village. Gives a sense of power – building houses (e.g. religious communities). LETS is a sense of community, not just about trading. It is empowering – people click and friendships grow, relationships and bonding are developed.

People can be members of more than one LETS – more like-minded people to meet. World wide connections can be made. Accommodation with friendly locals – Jenny's friend in Perth, Ruth's London story examples). Also Julie's story with billeting for this Conference. Feedback: LETS guests are "charming & handy!!" "Fred & Adrian are good value". James Taris travelled the world on LETS. Traveling members is good for cross-pollination of ideas. LETS travel and be aware – of inputs, visitor's responsibilities, contribute to food, be considerate. Make the effort to offer accommodation if you can – short-term stays. Couch Surfing sites give good tips. Feedback – rate people's services, comments ("not so suited", etc). Also make your expectations clear. Our big world – like e-bay ratings. Could also include In-home care, palliative care. Social conscience is important. Remember to ask – be valued. Sensing personality, face to face is very essential. Call people – it's powerful. Get local knowledge – synchronicity, tips & tricks.

Can do festivals - "wicked" Christmas. Working bees (Perma-blitzes) are another good way to connect. Meetings in the park = new members. Trading days at people's houses. Newsletters are good – triggers, reminders, share info & introduce members, share between groups. Join the global group on CES. Communication is like mushrooms. Three monthly picnics and trading days at a member's home stimulate trading & communication – Tennis Club was popular. Have a mini-meeting before. Connect with Transition Towns group – monthly "Bike Awareness" day, organic foods. Multicultural dinner & Sunshine Coast Environment Council. Encourage Markets – monthly, 100% LETS, 2 hours. Auction days, raffles, movie night, shared meal, progressive dinners. Monthly trade table (regular 3rd Sunday of month). Art & Craft day. Back yard swimming pool could be offered for get together. Calendar of local events – advertise in this. Woodford Bush House have events that CabLETS attends. Get passing trade & $$$ from non-members. Core members were friends prior to LETS. Should be not-for-profit & collaborative. Maleny has recently appointed new Market coordinator – regular Market at Neighbourhood Centre (who are LETS members) on 4th Sat of each month. Fun, vibrant, encouraged 100% LETS. Monday nights at Upfront Club – 100% Bunya meals. Fund-raising – Worthy Cause, Kimnat. Bollywood nights. AGM's – more a gathering than anything else. Ready volunteers for charities, fund-raising. Fred runs tours to Vietnam - "Tight Arse Tours" - accomm $US5/night, breakfast $US1. Chai Tent at Woodford Folk Festival trades Bunyas – vouchers.

Need to recruit younger LETSers. Options – e-bay payment. Healthy. Appeal to their interests, media. "Gumtree classifieds" strong in Sydney. Freecycle. Get demographics assessed – Universities. Part of educational program/material. Jill Jordan Legacy – youth leadership sponsorship. Create mentors - "how can we support you?".

Adrian Vos.

Staying Alive - Lets breathe life into LETS

BrisLETS: Big problems when their book-keeper died and records difficult to retrieve. Transition to CES also problematic. Some members didn't want it. Has been great for being able to email info out, and has cut admin work significantly. Rotating Presidency revitalises the system.

Hunter LETS: No real troughs but meetings often poorly attended. Markets OK. Newsletter had a lull when the editor left. Now do only essential news (one page).

Sydney: "Old" Sydney LETS died. Jackie (Ex Illawarra), Eve & Annette got together. Heard about CES. Stripped the system back to basics. Don't currently put out a Newsletter. Co-coordinators – gentle with each other. Joined up Permaculture group. Tonia's Vegan dinners brought amazing people together. Lots of media coverage during time of frenzy about Global Financial Crisis. Have a Media "officer". Any conflicts are resolved by mediation person. Committee hands out positions as they're needed.

Swan Hills (WA): People are using the system, but there are high debtors and less trading. It has been a challenge. Contacted close LETSystems (Rockingham – environment centre, etc). Printing business cards, thinking about T-shirts. Committee won't take on new ideas. (De Bono "6 hats" principle suggested to counteract this). Would be worth a try.

DVNS: "Down" in 1999. One person doing it all, then was hospitalised. Others on committee didn't get to do anything. Six new people on Committee. Got info off computer over three years. Shared a room in Neighbourhood House, then thrown out when they got too busy. Now housed in lean-to at Living & Learning Centre. Saw the injustice in the conventional economic system. Every unit spent keeps $$ out of the hands of multi-nationals.

Moreland: Swapping & sharing was normal in Cheryl's family and their country town. Moreland LETS operates out of CERES (an environment centre with alternative energy systems, community gardens, etc. built on the site of Brunswick tip). They have Markets, Festivals and LETS Mingles. Signage for LETS could be better. Have their difficulties – volunteers should love it or leave it. Not very friendly office people, "closed" committee, "secret" documentation & finances.

Sunshine Coast: At a low ebb around time of 2nd/3rd AGM. Paid staff and had "black hole" which was "forgiven each year. Some members didn't agree with this. Debt now paid back with auction, raffles. Now strong and thriving. Great Markets. Lots of face to face contact with members.

Maleny: No real dramas over the years. Good position in room in Maleny Credit Union in main street. They got so big that LETS had to move. Invisible – trading & memberships fell. Now "office" at Upfront Club two days a week and growing again. Great staff. Anything Jill started attracted good volunteers. Doing more publicity. Markets all over the place – not regular, at various member's homes. Now at Neighbourhood Centre with energetic coordinator, and regular. Markets are fun. LETS is an opportunity to help people.

CabLETS: Seems to be cyclical in terms of energy/growth. Run by volunteers on paper at first, then LETS Assist computer program. Volunteers were not valued. Office Manager was the only person who could access the system, then she went "off shore" and the computer died. Continually no quorum at AGM, so people took on jobs without loving it. Nancy attended Brisbane Conference and

CableLETS joined CES. Good idea – Caboolture Permaculture rewarded its Community Gardens volunteers with LETS units. Created a great relationship with both groups. Markets, Cob oven workshop, Open/info days with piggy-backed stalls. Keeping the energy flowing & generosity alive. Had a "black hole" to pay workers. Permaculture earning points to reduce this.

Beaches LETS: one third of members moved to SC LETS. They ended up amalgamating. Too good to lose!

Comments: Important links with Permaculture & LETS. CES supposed to balance positive and negative balances. Reconstructed records showed huge debit in admin a/c. Acknowledged and working to redress this. Sydney inherited 20,000 Opera debit on merger. Remember credit "hoarding" is just as bad as debit – this is the difference between LETS and conventional $$. "Black hole" could be seen as "white hole" - shows the community is putting in huge hours. Number of transactions is more important than balances. Admin could do auctions and ask for donations to earn units. Jenny reports that figures show almost equal credit/debit trading after 10 years. Maleny has traded 553,000+ Bunyas since joining CES in Feb 2002. Moreland is 240,000 Bacs in credit.

POSITIVE STORIES FROM 2010 LETS CONFERENCE.

BrisLETS
Friendships have arisen from LETS. Fred organised a trip to Vietnam of 5 LETS people – excellent trip and we became very good friends and have traveled together to Vietnam, USA (twice) and parts of Australia. Adrian.

The concept & philosophies of helping people with no obvious receipt can in itself be very rewarding. Recently a BrisLETS person migrated to England. Before she left she had a trading day at her home, to share & actually "rid" herself of her Aussie "things". In England she needed 1 particular night for accommodation. I emailed (cc'd) a London north-ish LETSer and the ex-BrisLETS person, and lo and behold the North London member arranged a bed with her next door neighbour. Ruth.

Byron-Tweed
I have saved myself so far, approximately $40,000. I do not know why more people aren't on the system. Bev.

Cable LETS
I have met some interesting and resourceful people in LETS and now that the system is computerised I can see it becoming more popular. Allan.
LETS people come to life when together, either in a small local way or regional Markets or at a national conference. LETS people can be anyone and everyone – so LETS just keep growing and surviving. Angie.
I have met beautiful people, had lots of fun and enriched my life through being a member of CabLETS. When a system was set up to reward Community Garden volunteers with points, that was fantastic for me. I still have points from that which I'm gradually spending. Every time I went to a Market day and spent my points, I felt thoroughly rewarded for helping my community and teaching local kids to grow & enjoy healthy food. I donated the points I made at Markets from value-added herbs, etc to the Permaculture Club to reward other volunteers. It was immensely satisfying and kept lots of energy flowing for both LETS and Permaculture Caboolture. We've been less active with

Trading Days lately but I still love being a member and trading. LETS keep the good energy flowing! Carol.

DVNS Vic

LETS supports elderly & sick people in their time of need. Provides love and friendship and reassurance. Glenda.

Lovely people & wide variety of skills. One member contacted me about LETS accommodation in WA as her son was in Aust Archery Championships [there]. I went on the web & found contact for a Perth LETS man & gave it to her. She emailed him but he was no longer in LETS but he was going overseas for 2 weeks and wanted house-sitters at the exact time she needed accommodation. So my friend had a HUGE house, a pool and use of a car – all for free!! Not for LETS points but all because of the LETS network. Jenny.

Hunter NSW

After deciding to walk the 1000km Camino across Spain we had Spanish language lessons.
Phillip came every Monday for one year. Then when we decided to walk across France, Katherine (a French teacher) came once a week for a year, then kept coming when we came back. Thanks LETS. My children had English tutoring, history tutoring and piano lessons. I have had housework, gardening, massage, painting and much more. But the friends I have made are more precious than everything else. Gaynor.

Maleny

As coordinator I continue to learn about the system and meet very interesting people. I have seen peoples health turn around as they realise that others care. LETS gives us the power to change negative situations to the positive. Carmel.

I joined in 1991 – [it was] wonderful in the honeymoon period of the system when LETS was available at Crystal Waters. They accepted 100% LETS in annual Body Corp fees. They stopped because of Fringe Benefits Tax (what they were paying LETS workers was [considered] illegal). I love the connection with others in trading – the wonderful way that buyers bargain the price UP and give me more than asked – so generous and unlike “money”. I love the potential of [LETS] in our society. New currency doesn't have to be controlled by private interests for their own profit. It mobilises original ways of earning points, and everyone can do or sell something. It is a kind and caring way to give and serve and trade. Yay LETS. Ella.
I joined LETS as soon as I moved to Maleny in 1990. Soon after this they needed office staff. Having no experience I took it on and learned computer, desktop publishing and heaps of other skills. I met a lot of great people – half the town, certainly all the alternative folk. I still meet so many interesting people both in Maleny and all over Aust (via Conferences, of which I'm a committed “junkie”). I love the way that LETS builds community too. Ann.

Moreland VIC

Turning up regularly at Mingle & Trading Market days with a lot of fresh organic produce like fresh herbs, fruit in season, plants of all kinds, honey, comb honey, flyers with information about various rare or useful plants, bee by-products, books with documentary content about the produce I brought. Recently worm tea, worm castings, earthworms and seeds (true seeds). I proposed [tom the Committee that we] join the CES and finally we succeeded in this, by revealing the advantages of that system. Monica.

South Coast NSW
20 years as a member with wonderful memories of people assisting at the Herb Farm and helping with publishing three books. Isabel.
I am a long time LETSer – Illawarra, Genoa on South Coast – these groups were not successful in surviving. I enjoy memories of LETS transactions from 1986 or so that I still use in my garden today. LETS "family" is still strong when we have gatherings such as this wonderful Conference. Annie.
I love to recycle clothes. Meet lovely and innovative people. Alison.

Sydney NSW
I have been in LETS for about seven years. Over this time I have done administration. I have gained confidence and met many people. Josie.

[I] love all the positive and varied people I've met. Extended family and community are so important.
Cheryl – Moreland Vic
P.S. Synchronicity in the Universe WOW! Being billeted with Julie & Delphi – Julie happened to have a reel of 16mm film of the first big CONFEST (Conference/festival) at Cotter River back in 1976/7? Over 15,000? people believing in a different economic [way], people & ecology (world) gathered and started so many of the now "alternative" groups, businesses and interests around Australia.
[*Julie gave this historic archive to Cheryl, who works with Down to Earth Coop in Melbourne – they ran the Confests that changed a lot of peoples ways of thinking - Ed]

NATIONAL LETS CONFERENCE 2010.

SESSION PAPERS – Second day.

LETS in the e-age - The potential of CES.

Www.community-exchange.org
Has been around for a number of years now, with new developments and improvements to operation. Any difficulties have been sorted out by Tim Jenkins (overall administrator). He is very helpful to individual LETS administrators – it only takes an email.

Australia is the biggest user of CES in the world. Going to the home page shows how international it is. The potential is mind-boggling!! You can search the world for accommodation, goods unavailable here, etc. Extensive listings from overseas. Exchanges are broken up into countries.

Basics – go into the system, enter exchange prefix, membership number (must be 4 digits) and password. New members get a welcome letter (email) with instructions on how to use. First is to create your own password. You can make it part of toolbar or favourites. Password is case-sensitive. It will come up to other people as .... or **** so is protected. Major actions are divided into buyer or seller actions. Only seller can enter/record transactions. The seller has the choice of what to charge - ?extra for postage, etc. Buyer can send transaction reminder to seller. You can delete an incorrect trade within a certain time. Traders get an email to confirm transaction. You can contact other LETS members, see their offers/wants and profile. The member is in total control of their own profile. There are options for other languages. Members need to update offerings/wants as they change. Levy is up to individual LETSystems. You can put your offers or wants in another CES listings.

The site is in South Africa. It has an International Board and Trust, so is safe. Individual LETSystems need to back up their own data to ensure their security. Backups can be put in XL sheets then documents. You can export – to CES is probably best. Thinking about future data exchange. Data could be uploaded to another system if it crashed or had problems. Privacy concerns – it's the same as ATO, Government departments, etc.

Announcements – Trading Days, events, etc. can be put up as an announcement which is emailed to all members. Make sure you make it a “safe sender” when you get first email from your LETS. There is an icon “Groups” so you can see what's around – or form a group of your own if you want to list special interests. “Statistics” - individual's trading can be checked and look at other systems. Admin can check every member's trading and many other stats about the system itself. There is a conversion for international exchange rates. All applications have a “help” button. You can download the “User Guide” from the home-page. There are also chat groups on home page – you can download to Facebook or Twitter. You need to have an email address to use CES – and keep it updated!! Individual LETSystems have to make arrangements for people who don't have computer/internet. They can have paper records, Newsletters printed for them (if this is possible).

Tim will do all the transfer of data from a LETSystem to CES. Files can be cleaned up before sending – good idea to remove members who've died or not traded for many years. Tim has been working from donations only so far and each Admin has usually been getting the levies on transactions. Time is asking for cash donations – whatever individual LETS can afford. An automatic levy (1% of units traded) will be deducted from Admin a/c's from now on. If a LETS

wants to keep their levies coming in from member trades, the levy amount can be altered in Admin Control Panel. You can set it up as a shortcut to go in or make it a favourite.

InterLETS trading is made very easy if both systems are on CES. If one is not, it has to go through the "old" way. The seller is credited from their InterLETS a/c in their system and the buyer has to debit themselves from InterLETS a/c in their system or vice-versa.
Harry Slorach & Carmel Givens.

Public Liability Insurance
There is a problem with LETS Markets and info stalls at shopping centres and other public places. LETS could go with another group as "umbrella". As individuals people should have Public Liability insurance. Difficulty with groups who don't make money to be able to pay the premiums. Even as an Administrator you have exposure to public liability. Public liability cases identifies all of those possibly involved, then starts to eliminate. Legal fees begin immediately the defense or establishment of liability starts. If the group has no funds – if incorporated they have protection from public liability claims, if not they have no protection. LETS groups and individuals should both hold P/L cover – approx $200/year for individual. Various types of cover. Householders can have P/L cover in their house insurance. Need worker's cover. Suggest "master" policy - ?cover groups ideally.

Jenny - DVNS: Can't organise Market stallholders cover, but participate in 20+ stalls/year. $190 for 1 year's cover. Harry – CabLETS: Need to find out cost. Broker has put out questionnaire to be filled out re number of systems, number of members. Get proposal and costs. Harry will liaise with broker. Nancy will do individual questionnaires. Everyone should have work cover (WorkCover – Qld ?? other states).

Marketing Markets
- Identify the need.
- Venue – convenient, insured/insurable
- Continuity – same day each month
- Essential items being sold on stalls – vegies, etc. Food a drawcard, massage & haircuts
- Socialisation – people who go to Markets are often LETS best traders
- Willingness of workers – convener, stallholders
- Can do some $$ if materials/ingredients costs in $$ - no more than 50%
- Stock to suit all ages and gender
- Ask "experts" for help or advice
- Keep people happy – stallholders & traders
- Have a black/whiteboard to record wish list
- Keep the reputation of Market firmly in mind
- Don't clash with other events
- Have a goal for the proceeds if fundraising
- Get more stock from others – relatives, tip
- Have a coffee & talk table/area
- Have cover (marquees, etc) if outside
- Keep a list of items needing to be replenished
- Good to have a policy on refunds

- Have fun!!!

Fred Olsen & Adrian Vos – followed by a GREAT Market and a MAD Auction!

The Final Curtain - Where to from here?

NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE

Much discussion on this topic. Could be a chance for WA to shine – they have never hosted National Conference. Sharryn (Swan Hills) very keen to host it, but will need to gauge support from Committee and other WA LETS. Jenny Millar (DVNS) will also talk to Melbourne LETS groups to take it on if WA isn't able to. Ann has compiled a "Hints to prospective Conference organisers" list and will give to Jenny & Sharryn.

WEBSITE

lets.org still being managed by Pascal Goux (ex BrisLETS, now in Maleny). It was agreed at the 2006 Conference in Bairnsdale that he be paid units for the updating and keeping of the domain name – 10 units/system/year. Ann J. talked to him recently and found out that BrisLETS has been paying him in the role of Webmaster for the last few years. A few donations have been made to BrisLETS – BCLE0000. A sheet for donations is being passed around to cover the coming year. Pascal is happy to update addresses, contact details, news, etc. when he gets any information on this. Annette (Sydney) is hoping to pay someone Operas to update contact list of LETS in Australia. Could liaise with Pascal when this is done.

LETS TRAVEL GUIDE

Pascal also forwarded an email re the LETS Travel Guide which was produced by Dandenong Ranges LETS with help from a Yarra Valley LETS member in 1997. The plan was to update it every year or so – another grand plan that went nowhere!!

With the advent of internet and CES it was thought that a website would be better. It would need to be secure, able to be changed/updated (by the people offering accommodation). Might it be linked to the lets.org site?? LETS admins need to ask any of their members who are prepared to offer accommodation on LETS to contact them, then info can be passed on to someone who may be willing to compile an online directory.

2010 LETS CONFERENCE – EVALUATION.

SCORES:

Venue	5/5 = 18	4/5 = 4	6/5 = 1	
Program	5/5 = 13	4/5 = 7	3/5 = 2	6/5 = 1
Content	5/5 = 14	4/5 = 6	3/5 = 1	3/5 = 1
Food	5/5 = 15	4/5 = 3	3/5 = 1	3/5 = 1
Timing	5/5 = 14	4/5 = 5	4/5 = 1	1/5 = 1

23 responses received.

COMMENTS

Hard to keep to time! Opportunity for everyone to add feedback. Bless the cooks!! Shouldn't be on footie Grand Final weekend. More salad greens. Accommodation GREAT. Thanks. Congratulations.

SUGGESTIONS

A venue with LETS component in fees would be nice. A bit more time for social interaction and networking (don't have a solution for this as there is so much to talk about). Organisers mentor future conference organisers. Other organisers to get inspired by the good energy – not boring or formal just hands on work. Billet people on site (*WE DID). Video-conference with members at remote locations. LETS signage outside buildings. Map to venue. Amplification for hearing impaired. More free time to absorb session content – this happened once. Hints for future organisers (*DONE). Session on attracting new members (*MENTIONED IN "STAYING ALIVE"). More play time – games, swimming, etc. Soup – LESS food. Waiver on attendees taking full responsibility for themselves to get around Insurance & FEAR (*WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HIRE ANY VENUE). Lunch (wraps) make own & save work. Ask early attendees to contribute ideas/concepts to consider for program. Noise from outside (kitchen & dining area) was distracting, and planes – beyond our control. Speakers need to stop background talking and people talking over each other in sessions.

WHAT I REALLY LIKED

Socialising, networking. Gentle, happy directed energy – combination of people, groups & talents showcasing how a good community functions. Loved it all. All – congratulations & thanks for the hard work & organisation. Aravindhas music, debate, bonfire, excellent company & positive energy. Additional activities – beach walks, meditation (effective & relaxing). Fun & humour. Sharing/networking. Warmth & supportive atmosphere. Herb (fresh) tea & herb information. Relaxed atmosphere & decorations. Food variety & decoration. Social networking & friendliness. On-site accommodation – groups together & builds energy. Campfire. Prompt airport pick-up, dancing, meditation, Market. Beautiful energy. Beautiful set up & deco/design. Flow of sessions to kitchen & dining area. Mixing & mingling – useful for networking/connecting.

Recycling – conference bags & hand-made name badges. Ambience of Birthday dinner, harp, people/connections. Debate. Good fellowship, wonderful food, great forum for exchange of ideas/views.

Feedback about LETSytems - Strengths

Brisbane QLD
Continuity of regular gatherings - Park in West End. Everyone is welcome. Convenience of IT/CES. No annual fees/charges. Good social group. Monthly meetings & trading.

Byron Tweed NSW
150 members. Full time person in office. No committee – management team instead.

CableLETS
Good core members. Going into CES. Generous, talented, diverse people.
Networking – kept up to date with emails. Great group of people with like minds.
Long & continuing LETS group. Fun, creative, well-meaning people.
Regular communication & CES.

Diamond Valley VIC
Networking. Friendships. Sharing.
Permaculture, Transition Towns, Food Connect, etc.

Hunter NSW
Member complaints about LETS dealt with by 1-2 other members – no significant "waves". Low on hierarchy. Good leader.
Wide variety of skills offered. GREAT group of people. Strong connections with other groups – Continuing & great friendships. Very caring members.

Maleny QLD
The people running it. Core group harmony & passion. Regular Market venue now & coordinator. Cooperative. Fun. Sharing.
No vouchers needed.
Long term. Lots of members trading. Community is evident.
Free & easy atmosphere. Built on trust. Now on CES. Public face in town.

Moreland VIC
Good location. Council funding & support. Multi alternative systems at CERES.
Exceptionsl position. Council funding & support.

SouthCoastLETS NSW
Longevity. Flexibility. Recycling.
Networking. Personal face to face gatherings. Committed admin staff.
Wonderful, strong committee. Some great, friendly members.

Swan Hills WA Welcome new members. Good friendships.
Anonymous Camaraderie. Like minded rebels. Supported feeling.
Sydney Many members. Enthusiastic & large committee. Variety of skills.

Feedback about LETSytems - Weaknesses

Brisbane QLD
Geographical distances for trading on face to face basis. Not enough skills available.
My absence from the area. My lack of time. Secrecy – what do people try to hide?

Cable LETS
No currently regular Market days. Some people not generous spirited. People criticise committee and don't nominate themselves.
Lack of trading. I am my own weakness by not listing all I can do.
Lack of trading. Lack of communication between members. Always in transition/growth.

Diamond Valley VIC
Problems handing over coordinator role. Problems with encouraging trading. Members don't treat
Not knowing all members' skills. Not able to contact people. Not local enough for some members.
LETS professionally – don't reply to messages, don't turn up, don't notify changes of offerings or contact details.

Hunter NSW
Not much presence outside of picnics & friends of members. Not a good turn up to some picnics.
New members unsure about trading & being in "debt" - more intro needed.
Lack of office bearers & space. Not much follow up of new members. No succession plan.

Moreland VIC
Perhaps [needs to be] more people/heart-centric. More socialising. Can't be bothered thinking about it – apathy.
Lacking enthusiasm. Lacking motivation. Inability to keep members in system.

Maleny QLD
Seems to be acceptable that people are takers, not giving back. Transient population – people leave with credits they can't spend. Huge debit limit. Fringe Benefits Tax problems.
Not a lot of attendance at meetings. Nil or little response if we call for volunteers.
Some members don't update offers. Some don't read newsletter.
Transition to CES. Some members are unaware/unmotivated to spend/trade excess Bunyas.

South Coast NSW
[Need] more people to list gardening & learn new skills. [Need to] encourage people with trade skills to join. No night market/connecting/trading time.
(Byron/Tweed). Members don't know how to InterLET. People not updating their records. People will not take the time to look. People not reading the info on the exchange.

Swan Hills WA
Some traders not available. Me not using the system enough. Committee not following through. Committee not [open to] trying new ideas. Meetings drag on. Hard to locate other LETS in WA.

Sydney NSW
Half members not trading – discourages others. People wait for credit before they spend. Members don't share handy skills.