



# NOTES FROM COUNCILLOR DAVID PLUMRIDGE'S DESK

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## PEAK OIL – OFF THE BOIL?

I regularly meet with a group of enthusiastic people who are committed to promoting awareness of the potential crisis confronting the world as we come to the end of the earth's supply of oil, or perhaps I should say, the end of the supply of oil at an affordable price. Already we are told that increasing demand for oil outstrips the level at which new reserves are being opened up but with some respite in petrol prices at the bowser and with increasing focus on climate change, not to mention the global financial crisis, our attention may have been diverted away from Peak Oil.

**The Council is continuing to work on its Carbon Neutral Action Plan which will see a 60% reduction of its own emissions by 2012 on the way to complete neutrality by 2020 – an ambitious but achievable target.**

## WALK21

One way to help to reduce emissions is to encourage walking and where better than in the city? Not only does walking reduce demands for oil, it also contributes to climate change mitigation by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and it enhances our health and wellbeing. **Dr Rodney Tolley**, who was recently in Adelaide at the invitation of the Heart Foundation, addressed a breakfast meeting of key Council staff and Councillors Yarwood, Clarke, Clearihan, Wilkinson and myself. **Walk21** has made many world cities more 'walkable' including even parts of New York!



By converting streets into **well-designed** public spaces with wider footpaths, more shade and the space shared equitably between cars and people, the quality of life in the street has improved dramatically. Contrary to expectations, replacing cars with people has increased business, made the streets safer and has encouraged the healthy practice of walking. It is particularly good for children and older people.



We need to remember that everyone coming into the city by whatever means, becomes a pedestrian and we must do all we can to make that experience more attractive. The Mall may be good but if walking from the car, tram or bus is not an inviting experience then we have failed. If the perception –and perhaps the reality – is that we are more interested in cars than in people, then we have failed and if we don't provide the very best facilities for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the city then we will have failed in our responsibility as city planners. **The city's future depends on the public and private sectors working together to create the very best public realm possible, from the simplest pieces of street furniture, intimate shady 'pocket parks,' retention of city character and showing design excellence in major places such as North Tce, Riverbank & Victoria Square.**

**Walk21 has developed a Charter which is aimed at increasing the awareness of the needs of walkers and the benefits that will result from a commitment to supporting the numerous benefits of walking.** It shows how to create a culture where people choose to walk. It identifies the needs of people on foot and provides a common framework to help authorities refocus their existing policies, activities and relationships to create a culture where people choose to walk. **Council can support the Charter by signing it and encouraging all interested parties to work with us to help create a healthy, efficient, vibrant and sustainable walking community for Adelaide.** See the Charter at <http://www.walk21.com/papers/International%20Charter%20for%20Walking.pdf>

## SWEDEN GETS SERIOUS ABOUT THE CARBON-FOOD CONNECTION

Studies conclude that agricultural methods and shipping food around the world contributes the largest measure of GHG emissions. Sweden has launched a comprehensive effort to bring the various parts of the food web together to begin untangling the complex web of emissions. The country is launching the world's first carbon label on foods along with nutritional advice, which could cut emissions 20-50%. Restaurant menus and grocery items are beginning to list the carbon emissions for each food item. Last year, the Swedish National Food Admin. was asked to create food guidelines that give **equal weight to climate and health.** Excerpt from [Sustainable Business News](#), 2 November 2009

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

Council has already supported 2 table-top gardens and has agreed to an in-ground area at Veale Gardens. Currently it is consulting on a licence for an operator of the garden. There are those who feel that it is wrong to use Park Lands for this purpose; a view which I do not share. In the light of **Peak Oil** and other pressures we surely must encourage more sustainable food production as close to home as possible. Community Gardens are just one way in which we can support best practice in communal food growing techniques, whilst reducing our carbon footprint.

