

March 2024 Newsletter

We had a very insightful seminar on Tuesday evening 19th March based around our Community Energy focus area. The speakers were extremely knowledgeable, and the attendees asked many questions that indicated their great interest and also the large amount of knowledge that already exists with regards to energy efficiency in our suburb.

First we heard from Matt Chesnais, a local resident of The Gap. Matt shared with us his professional pathway working in the military and as a disaster management specialist, and how this influenced his personal observations and pathway towards resilience and planning. When Matt and family moved to the Gap, they used the opportunity of a renovation to improve the resilience of their home, and electrify their home including solar panels and batteries. Besides sharing his insights on the benefits of electrifying the home, with electricity bills and carbon output close to zero, Matt stressed the importance of being prepared for future local climate change. Matt recommended for The Gap residents to increase the protection of existing trees and increase tree coverage in The Gap again as this can protect their houses from extreme wind gusts in case of a future cyclone or Gap storm event. Trees break the force of the wind and help houses to withstand the impact better.

Then we heard from the CEO and Head of Solutions of [EnergyFlex](#), Garry Harding and Craig Phasey. EnergyFlex is an app that can show people how much electricity they use at different times of the day, whether it comes from renewable energy, and what actions they could undertake to improve their energy efficiency. We discussed the option for conducting a suburb-wide challenge to reduce consumption of fossil fuel generated electricity and increase solar generated energy. Craig and Garry explained that electricity price changes depending on the time of the day, and reducing electricity use in times of high costs would not only benefit those people that reduce their consumption, but the collective community as well. They discussed that [saved carbon could be collected](#), and could potentially be distributed for philanthropic purposes, for example to fund school projects or sustainability projects in the future. TGSi will liaise with the Brisbane Sustainability Agency who already have a carbon challenges program to see if there is an opportunity to leverage the EnergyFlex app as part of a community-wide carbon challenge in The Gap.

Member T-Shirts: If you are interested in a The Gap Sustainability Initiative branded T-Shirt, please email us at info@thegapsustainability.org. The t-shirt is free for paid members.

Upcoming events and activities:

- We will be doing street tree TLC every second Saturday morning 7.30-9, including this Saturday the 23 March in Arkana Street, The Gap, pls [email](#) us if you wish to join. See pictures next page.
- We will be preparing a submission to the new [Federal Government's 'Nature Positive' Environmental laws](#). The consultation closes on the 30th March. Please let us know if you want to contribute to the submission document.
- Our next working group meeting will be on the 16 April, 7pm at The Gap State School Library.

FUNDRAISING: TGSi now is an official fundraising team with **Containers for Change**. Please consider donating your refund to our cause by using our Member ID: C10826699.

SOCIAL MEDIA: For those not on social media, besides many other topics, we recently posted about the rainfall records over the last 30 years in The Gap; Australia's [National Packaging targets](#) with regards to the reduction of soft plastic and other difficult to recycle packaging; native bees that we can see in the Gap; and a [public seminar](#) coming up next Monday 25 March at UQ by the lead author

for the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. You can find all social media posts on our [website](#) just scroll all the way down and they are listed there. We now also have an active presence on [Facebook](#).

Yours sincerely, The Gap Sustainability Initiative Mgt Committee

Picture 1: Seminar 19th March 2024



Picture 2 and 3: Street Tree TLC before and after

