

# "Green Energy" co-operatives in the sustainable fuel debate: potential and discussion for Australia

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# Overview:

- “Green Energy” is a label for an environmental movement which is becoming increasingly a political agenda
- Biodiesel as a fuel alternative
- Co-op structure
- Social movement ideology
- Marrying of green energy values, alternative fuel, concerned members of social movements and the local community

# "Green Energy"

- Fundamentally- using natural resources to generate sustainable, clean energy
- The environmental sustainability debate has been discussed for decades, although Australian Environmentalists are not fairing as well as the Europeans or Americans.
- Substituting current sources of fuel- such as crude oil is required for environmental, financial and political purposes.
- Resources are available- particularly in QLD, so why not use them?

# Sustainability

- Ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources
- A “buzz word” used frequently, yet behaviourally, Australia appears to be behind Europe, America and the UK

# Biodiesel

- “... is the only alternative fuel that runs in any conventional, unmodified diesel engine.”
- “...can be made from domestically produced, renewable oilseed crops such as soybeans”
- “... is a proven fuel with over 30 million successful US road miles, and over 20 years of use in Europe.”

# Co-op Structure

- Engagement in knowledge through sharing
- Awareness of need for change and participation
- Social responsibility
- Concern for community
- Solidarity and group belief affirmants

# Social Movement (SM) Ideology

- Theorists discuss SM as often marginalized groups identifying shared interests and concerns and behaving collectively to achieve outcomes of solidarity and practice.
- SM is of interest in “Green Energy” movements, as the environmental concerns have not yet been mainstreamed in policy, legislation and community behaviour

# Marriage of concepts

- Attitudes of concerned individuals need an avenue for collective action
- Collective action requires a framework for action ie. A co-op
- Co-op can provide a sense of engagement and achievement for members and then expand when local community and government also participate

- Social and environmental responsibility is region specific with resources varying from State to State
- Eg. Macadamia co-op in QLD to address surplus of waster. The conversion into natural energy is proving successful

- Pollution reduction and its associated benefits. Possibility to co ordinate participation from local health groups for promotion purposes
- Fuel is an ongoing concern for health, financial and natural resource reasons. The sooner the issue is addressed in terms of sustainable, healthy outcomes- the better.

# Case study

- Hypothetic research conducted by American researchers- Missouri
- “If biodiesel is used for metropolitan public transportation systems in the region, it will improve air quality, help the region comply with federal air quality standards...”
- And assist with creating local jobs

# Conclusion

- Green energy knowledge and technology currently exists and works well in communities already utilizing it
- Australia is already behind with alternative fuel usage
- There are crops and facilities available in Australia to use natural energies, we just require structures to facilitate them into local communities
- Support is needed from local government, business and the community to act and consume in an environmentally friendly way