

# Sustainable lifestyles - what's our next step?

by Stuart Sexton

With the New Year just underway, how many of us included in our New Year's resolutions a commitment to starting, or further developing, a sustainable lifestyle for ourselves and our families? Have we:

1. Reduced our use of plastic bags?
2. Consistently switched off electric lights in vacant rooms?
3. Changed to using toilet tissue made from recycled paper?
4. Turned off appliances at power points (not just switched to standby power)?
5. Changed incandescent light globes to energy-efficient alternatives?
6. Reduced the number of short car trips – e.g. used more public transport or shopped less often?
7. Installed grey-water recycling equipment?
8. Switched to Green Power for household energy?
9. Replaced the car with a hybrid vehicle, or managed to sell a car without replacing it?
10. Installed solar power for hot water or other uses?

Most of us have done at least one or two of the above, but obviously some of these actions involve substantial cost, and illustrate the issues we all face in moving from the simple things (no plastic bags) to more costly ones (Green Power or solar power). So how much energy, effort and cost are we prepared to put into sustainability for 2010 and beyond? In the next Gazette, I plan to compile a list of the subsidies, grants and support available from State and Local Governments and industry for sustainable activities, but even with this help, we are going to have to work for our environment and a sustainable lifestyle.

The Copenhagen climate change conference

would have been a disappointment to many, with the lack of solid commitment or cooperation by nations to tackle the hard issues. One commentary I read posed the hypothesis that any international agreement that depended on all nations to cooperate was doomed to fail; the only practical way forward is for each country to address the climate and environmental issues that are in its own power to address. We need to impress on our politicians and industry leaders that we are committed to improving our habits and attitudes to conservation of resources and energy, and minimising waste. As a nation we should be doing the same.

So back to you and me: which items on the list above are we going to tackle this year? Perhaps you can add a few more ideas to the list; if you have some ideas and insights that you would like to share with the Artarmon Sustainability Street Group, you can email me at [stuartsexton@gmail.com](mailto:stuartsexton@gmail.com) and we would be happy to discuss them at our meetings or through the Gazette. Our first meeting for 2010 will be on Thursday 25th February, at 7:30pm in the Artarmon Library.

The Sustainable Living Collection in the Artarmon Library has been developed during the last three years by the Artarmon and Tulloch Street Sustainability Street Groups, with the support of Willoughby Council and with the aid of a grant from the NSW Environmental Trust. This grant has now finished, and Willoughby Council will take over responsibility for maintain-



*Solar commercial architecture (iStockphoto)*

ing and further enhancing the Collection. This ensures the Collection will continue to be an important part of the Artarmon Library. The success and high use of the Collection has also encouraged Council to include similar collections in other branch libraries.

The Sustainable Garden outside the Artarmon Library has been a source of enjoyment and inspiration to many people since it was first planted in July 2007. Although its future is uncertain, due to the planned library move to Tindale Road and the subsequent redevelopment of the Artarmon site, Willoughby Council is incorporating the garden into its Community Garden scheme. For the time being, our Sustainability Street volunteers will continue watering and maintaining the Garden with Council support, and we are confident that it will continue to give pleasure wherever and whenever it may travel.

**SUSTAINABILITY ST.**  
IT'S A VILLAGE OUT THERE