
LETS Community NEWS © 2006

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The Future of LETS

Recently there have been several bouts of email discussion around the issue of renewal of LETS in New Zealand and if it is even worthwhile pursuing our activities. Several exchanges struggle with the question of "Is it worthwhile to continue at all?" or "What do we need to do in order to attract new members again?" It looks like the first of the two questions need to be addressed first, because without a clear commitment and vision of what we'd like to achieve we will not be able to answer the second question properly.

Currencies for the 3rd Millenium

There have never been as many new local currency projects globally than during the last 10 years, they now number in the thousands. There is a worldwide trend and movement under way to reclaim the freedom to create financial tools for local economies and communities.

What is needed in today's society? Recently released statistics show that New Zealand still sports a growing gap between the rich and the poor, and many other social indicators are worsening, too. Also we face never seen environmental challenges like climate change and peak oil.

How do we expect to solve those problems with the same kind of economic tools (money system!) that was good for the industrial revolution, financing the world wars of the 20th century and the enslavement of the third world in a perpetual debt crisis?

Einstein said something to the effect that we can never solve problems with the same mindset that created them. The conventional interest charging debt money system has been instrumental in getting humanity where it is now – therefore a new paradigm of thinking is essential. P2P (peer to peer) applications and system's theory/thinking are new approaches becoming more and more popular recently. In both, interaction happens on a direct contact level between participants, without big institutions providing and controlling what is happening. The approach that LETS takes is 100% in keeping with those principles and it is an excellent model to provide local solutions to global problems. Yet, having a tool like CES still allows us to undertake worldwide trading without being restricted to local exchange only.

How to go about it?

In a recent discussion on revitalising LETS I was prompted to ask the following questions:

- Has there been any thinking about why the decline has happened, and are the reasons for that understood?
- Is there (or has there been) any thinking about the message we are putting out – or is it just the same old Green\$ message that is repeated?

- What is our core constituency – and can they be reached by 1 or 2 page spreads in newspapers – or might other forms of marketing be more effective?
- What are the concrete aims and goals that we are trying to achieve – in respect to the current economic, social and environmental situation – not the one in the 1990's?
- Is Green dollars operating in a vacuum – or who are possible partners that could be approached?
- What have you learned from other similar projects around the country and the world?

Those are questions you can apply to your exchanges – and that hopefully will give you some useful answers. There is no final recipe that can be applied – because by its nature LETS is local – and can be adapted to local needs and solve local problems.

Please recognise that we have an excellent tool at our disposal – promote it, use it and make it work for situations we now encounter at the start of the 21st century!

Christoph Hensch

MO\$\$

MOSS had its "AGM" last Saturday with four enthusiastic members. We were pleasantly surprised at how much trading had occurred since joining CES. The Group Report site gave us a great picture of our reasonable activity. We decided to try to organize a stall at our local public Motueka Market inviting members to bring along their wares for trading in Mo\$\$es and NZ \$\$.

We agreed to sign the LCNZ Inter-trading Convention. May our evolutionary trot build up to a canter. Trade well.

Ron Sharp

(The Inter-trading Convention has been sent out to the exchanges for review and comments only. Please send either your agreement or suggestions for change of the current text to Dave Robbie. When the committee has assembled all the comments, then the final version will be drafted and put out for approval and signature.)

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TSCT Taranaki

Taranaki has its next market on 26th August. Everyone welcome. Email Taranaki_letsnz@yahoo.co.nz for more details.

I see that the South Island are having joint markets. What a great idea! Come on North Island, they are leaving us behind. I am going to the South Island regional conference to get some more great ideas. We don't want to be left behind here in the north, do we???

We have 2 more new members but need heaps more with

new skills for our system in order to get folk really spending their credits.

Anne

S.I. Regional Meeting

Have you registered yet for the Regional Meeting in Golden Bay? Need some additional information? Please email Joanna Piekarski of H.A.N.D.S. at rojoanna@ihug.co.nz!

Living Economies AGM

24-26 September 2006 in Golden Bay

The AGM is being held following the South Island Regional Meeting. Sunday afternoon will be a public forum and Monday and possibly Tuesday morning we will have workshops and discussions. If you are interested in the work of Living Economies and would like to participate you are welcome to join the sessions. For more information and to register please email info@le.org.nz.

Offerings on CES

CES, besides providing the essential platform for keeping accounts and entering transactions, has also another important function: it is the **virtual market** place for our exchanges, locally and nationally.

As a market place it is an important networking tool. Have you ever taken the time to browse the online directory and looked at what is on offer? There is actually quite a **wealth of goods and services** that you can purchase through LETS.

How do you access the offerings? Once you logged in with your account number and password, you'll find that there is a menu bar across the top of the screen. The 4th item from the left is called "Offerings". Clicking it will take you to an overview page, that allows you to choose the exchange (or own will come up by default). Below that

you find several options, like lists of recently added new offerings, or an overview of all the different categories. There are also options to print or download a complete list of what is on offer.

When registering your offerings, please **make them attractive**. You have the opportunity to input little adverts and even complement them with small photographs. You can also advertise outside of your own exchanges. Please note that all offerings have a time-limit. After 12 months the latest, the adverts will be deleted if you don't renew them.

What to do if you cannot find what you are looking for? No problem: there is also an option to input **'Wanted' ads!** Click on 'Wants' in the top bar ...!

Now, didn't you say you wanted to travel through the South Island and stay in LETS accommodation?

Upcoming Events

19 Aug: Inter-group Market, Timaru
 3 Sep: PLEBS Market and AGM, Christchurch
 22-24 Sept: S.I. Regional Meeting, Golden Bay
 23 Sept: HANDS market
 11 Oct: PLEBS Market at Waltham School, Chch

(If you like to have your events listed, please inform the editor of the NEWS.)

Inter-trading Balances

All inter-trading balances are now available online on CES. Please consult the 'Group Balance' report.

Exchanges that need to buy (as of 14 August):

WEST Westcoast:	+2,421.90 (y)
TATS Timaru:	+2,211.70 (y)
WAIS Wairarapa:	+2,198.40 (y)
MOSS Motueka:	+1,802.45 (y)
TSCT Taranaki LETS:	+1,712.30 (n)
IBES Invercargill:	+764.71 (y)
WINGS Blenheim:	+288.75 (y)

Exchanges that need to sell (as of 14 August):

Thames GDE:	-4,074.90 (n)
REBS Wanganui:	-2,969.99 (y)
PLEBS Christchurch:	-1,039.25 (y)
H.A.N.D.S. Golden Bay:	-933.45 (y)
WTE Wellington:	-350.90 --

Exchanges that haven't traded (as of 14 August):

WEBS Wanaka	(y)
NZCE NZ Community Exchange	--

('y' and 'n' refers to who has paid yearly sub to LCNZ)