

Progress

Ten years of serving up sustainability on the streets



The Sustainable Living Festival is taking sustainability to the streets, again. Sustainable Living Foundation

The annual Sustainable Living Festival is probably the only place in Australia where you'll find the Reverend Tim Costello rubbing shoulders with sustainable clothing fashionistas, or singer Paul Kelly on the same program as a sustainable gardening seminar.

It's this cultural diversity that has made the event a magnet for tens of thousands of people, who find their way each Melbourne summer to the city's Federation Square and Birrarung Marr public spaces to educate themselves about making more sustainable choices.

Last year, the three-day festival attracted more than 129 000, many coming from outside Victoria to sample the markets, interactive displays, demonstrations, talks, artworks, exhibits, designs, films, multimedia and live performances.

This year, the festival – which runs from 20–22 February – celebrates 10 years since its inception as a much smaller solar fair in the regional town of Daylesford, Victoria.

Festival Director, Luke Taylor, says he has noticed a rapid growth in patronage over recent years.

'There is no doubt that mainstream interest and awareness of sustainability has increased significantly over the past two years,' he says. 'The hunger for information has grown significantly.'

But Taylor would like to see an even broader uptake of sustainable living, which is why this year's theme is 'Taking sustainability to the streets.'

'The aim is to inspire all Victorians to embrace sustainability and move it from a concept to a way of living – taking it to their streets, neighbourhoods and homes.'

The 2009 program will feature more than 100 presenters talking about sustainability in everyday life – such as the home, garden, food, travel, finance, waste, water, renewable energy and economics. Visitors will also be able to browse the 150 exhibits showcasing programs, products and services aimed at helping them reduce their environmental impact.

A highlight of the festival is the Schools Education Day, attended last year by 670 students.

The festival is hosted by the Sustainable Living Foundation, a not-for-profit community organisation once described by Australia's first federal environment minister, Dr Moss Cass, as 'a vital necessity'.

Dr Cass saw an important role for the SLF and similar organisations in circulating environmental and sustainability knowledge to the whole community. 'Only in that way will attitudes change and action be taken at all levels in society,' he concluded.

● **Mary-Lou Considine**

More information:
www.slf.org.au/festival

2009 Australian museum Eureka Prizes

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Mike Young
Winner 2005

The Land & Water Australia Eureka Prize gave me the confidence I needed to develop new ways of communicating my research. This, in turn, led to my appointment as Executive Director of the University of Adelaide's Environment Institute. A life fulfilling journey!



Jim McColl
Winner 2005

Winning the Eureka Prize for water research in 2005 with Mike Young provided an important personal late career incentive to continue my involvement in water policy research and communication.

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