

## **Green Drinks for Orange**

**Earth First**

**Stephen Nugent, ECCO**

Talk of green drinks is likely to conjure up images of St Patrick's Day, however, it's perhaps not surprising to learn that the term also has an environmental reference. Green Drinks is actually a world-wide movement involving informal networking events where environmentally-minded people meet over drinks.

And now Orange has its very own regular Green Drinks chapter. It's one of the new activities that ECCO Orange is initiating in 2010. Led by ECCO's Orange Climate Action Now, Orange's Green Drinks kicked off quietly on February 11 at the Union Bank.

There have been two other gatherings since, with organisers Nick King and Brian Phillips planning to hold the event once or twice a month. Over the next couple of months, they will be experimenting with the timing, location and format to determine what works best for those keen to be involved.

### **A Short History**

According to that renowned online repository of information on all things, Wikipedia, Green Drinks was started in London in 1989, by Edwin Datschefski, Paul Scott and friends. It has since spread to 51 cities in the United Kingdom, 223 in the United States and more than 251 other cities across the globe.

The [www.greendrinks.org](http://www.greendrinks.org) website lists 62 countries with Green Drinks groups. Australia has groups in 13 different cities including regional centres Albury-Wodonga and Dubbo. In February 2007, Melbourne, hosted the world's biggest Green Drinks, when more than 1700 people attended an event held on the first evening of the 2008 Sustainable Living Festival.

This easily surpassed the largest Green Drinks event held in New York City, the December 2007 Holiday Party, attended by more than 900 people. However, the New York City Chapter is the largest global chapter with more than 12,000 members and has an average attendance of 400 people.

Held at different venues around Manhattan Island, the NYC Chapter was founded in July 2002 by Margaret Lydecker. Lydecker has made significant contributions to the growth and expansion of Green Drinks chapters around the world, personally helping to start or influence more than 200, including a chapter in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Details of the next Green Drinks event in Orange will be available in this column as well as on the ECCO website, and anyone with an interest in climate change or local environmental issues will be very welcome to attend.

### **Earth Hour Tonight**

While not a Green Drinks event as such, tonight's Earth Hour 'Picnic Under the Stars' certainly offers the opportunity for people to participate in some green-themed informal networking.

ECCO is inviting its members and other environmentally-minded people to gather at Rotary Park on Mount Lindsay (off Dalton St) from 7.30pm tonight to celebrate the

fight against global warming. Participants are asked to bring a picnic dinner and rug, and to enjoy the live entertainment provided, including music and some star viewing courtesy of the Orange Planetarium group's telescopes.

Mt Lindsay is a prime location to watch the lights of Orange turn off (or stay off) between 8.30 and 9.30pm, as a symbol of the city's commitment to this year's theme, "Earth Hour Every Hour".

#### **Green Dates for the Calendar**

April 18, World Heritage Day – see [http://www.gdrc.org/doyourbit/18\\_4-heritage.html](http://www.gdrc.org/doyourbit/18_4-heritage.html) for details.

April 22, Earth Day , 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – visit <http://www.earthday.org/> to find out more.

April 28, ECCO General Meeting – the ELF, Orange Showground, from 730pm.