

## Gecko's "12<sup>th</sup> Hour" Workshop No. 2

### The Case for the Steady State – Civil Action on Climate Change

By Rod Weir

The second in this successful workshop series took place at Griffith University on 6<sup>th</sup> August. An enthusiastic and responsive audience considered the case for zero growth based economies, and a fairer and sustainable distribution of the world's resources.

Our first speaker was Andrew "Wilf" Wilford, Associate Professor of Project Management at Bond University's School of Sustainable Development. Wilf inspired the audience with a strong message based on managing climate change using engineering project management skills. His presentation covered a wide range of concepts and ideas, leaving us with the view that we can adapt and adjust to climate change in a planned way, or continue on the present path and deal with increasing amounts of chaos as it arises.

Neil Sipe, Associate Professor, Head, Urban & Environmental Planning Discipline at Griffith University then followed with a discussion of the Steady State in Europe, where several countries, particularly in Scandinavia, now have developing models of the Steady State. The practical difficulties of achieving Steady State outcomes in western democracies were outlined, and questions posed as to how we can address our dependency on growth.

The audience then broke up into four workshops to consider two questions:

- "When is enough growth enough?" and
- "If the Steady State needs to be underpinned by resilient communities, what are the characteristics of resilient communities?"

The groups were enthusiastic and quickly involved in active debate. Our speakers, working with the groups, were impressed with the level of commitment and interest, particularly from the many students attending.

Most groups agreed that better leadership, a reduction in consumption, and a fairer distribution of the worlds resources are a prerequisite.

A strong theme from several of the groups was the need for a spiritual reassessment – what are we here for on the planet?

“Enough growth” was considered to have been passed, and that the question is now about distribution and sustainability.

The characteristics of resilient communities are strong and visionary leadership, a fundamental understanding of the world as a system and our place in it, and our willingness to recognise our dependence on each other and assist other communities as needed.

The involved and lively discussion was still in full flow as the organisers turned out the lights and closed the doors of the venue.