

SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING HAPPINESS

An Inquiry into the Quality of Life in two Australian Ecovillages

RESULT

The key result was

Ecovillagers in Crystal Waters and Aldinga Arts reported themselves happier than the suburban group of Port Willunga.

Crystal Waters residents reported themselves happiest. Next came Aldinga Arts residents, and the Port Willunga residents reported themselves the least happy (out of the three groups).

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

Why did the ecovillage residents report themselves happier?

Possibly

- Access to more natural areas to enjoy (Xu (2008), p.58).
- Higher level of formal education (p.50, Table 1).
- Lower unemployment rate (p.50).
- Less likely to compare themselves with high-income, high-status individuals (p.60).
- *Being centres of education. Dedicated leaders in both ecovillages are sharing principles and methods of living more sustainable lifestyles. Several Crystal Waters residents offers first-class international teaching and consulting services; Aldinga Arts opens its doors to the local community in workshops, open days and courses.*

This sharing of skills occurs only in the two ecovillages and not in the Port Willunga community, and may even encourage stronger ties within the sustainable villages.

DRAWBACKS

- Small sample size (just over 20 residents in each community).
- Respondents possibly respond higher level of happiness than experienced.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- More responses from a greater number of sustainable communities required.
- Preferably survey respondents across a period of time.
- Find former residents of ecovillages to contrast with current residents.
- Include ecovillages as part of national surveys into quality of life, especially HILDA studies over time.

*Thanks once again to all of you who made possible
my journey (one I am still very much on).*

*Fruitfully,
Scott Tsung Xu*