



## **We The People**

Program 37

While I live I Grow

A wonderful story about life today and how you can choose to be a part of a miracle and do something for our beautiful fragile planet. Fortunately Australia is maturing beyond the sarcasm and cynicism of those who genuinely care about the earth. Once a 'greeny' was a long haired hippy and often those on the land treated them with anger and suspicion. Today however we now realise without healthy landscapes we have nothing and the natural world will fail. In Queensland land clearing has been wide spread and our record is appalling as the country has been made desolate and salinity ruins the earth because of clearing. At the heart of caring for the land is the tree and its shade and soil stabilising properties. Trees reverse the effects of salinity and erosion and provide food and cover for wildlife and shade in summer while we use the timber in our homes to make fine furniture.

What I find curious though is the dislike for trees in Gold Coast suburbia. So many people refuse to plant a tree and so great swaths of our city are almost canopy free and desolate. I love to see an avenue of trees or the majesty of a tree in the back yard for kids to climb and shelter from summer's heat. Trees absorb sound and add value to homes and cost almost nothing to plant and grow. Areas like Southport, Pacific Pines, Parkwood, Labrador, Upper Coomera, Palm Beach and Varsity lakes are just some suburbs where there is barely a residential tree. What's wrong with us where we see the need to cut them down and never replant and what does Gold Coast City Council do about. Well not a lot, especially where there is high density living, Koala habitat or the opportunity for development.

Now let me take you to London England and the year is 1819 and the Hordern family celebrate the arrival of a new son Anthony Hordern. Named after his father, young Anthony was to make a significant impression in Australia years later after the family migrated here aboard the Phoenix in 1825. In turn Anthony Hordern's own son carried the name again and in 1860 joined the family firm of Anthony Hordern and Sons which was to become the biggest department store in the world in 1905. I remember going there on trips to Sydney in the 60's when I was young and it offered a massive 52 acres of retail space with over 4000 employees. The family crest featured a spreading English oak tree which was adopted as the department stores iconic symbol with the statement "While I live I grow". People from NSW and specifically Camden south of Sydney will remember a massive Morton Bay fig perched high on a hill by the highway. The public called it Hordern's Tree because it closely resembled the spreading oak of the stores iconic logo.

What a fitting passage for a tree to carry, "While I live I grow" and how vital we do the same. That means we too must treat the earth with care, maybe plant a tree on your block to embrace the meaning carried by the largest and longest living species on earth. The tree endures if we let it and only brings good and grows while ever it lives, as we should too. As I write, this the notion seems far from modern day life full of stress and so alienated from the bureaucracy that governs through greed and power. The tree is long lived and yet for all its worth we just cut them down through ignorance and stupidity. I encourage everyone to plant a tree and start to transform the Gold Coast suburban landscape for the good of future generations. Who knows we may even be able to claim carbon credits back from our Council rates for every tree we have so take that on board Mr Mayor if you have a real desire to make a difference. Make decisions which expand our future and meet a new world head on where people are helped not hindered by a bureaucracy out of control. I'm not sure this new Council has the ticker for it Mr Tate so we wait and watch. "While I live I grow", it could be a powerful credit for you too Mr Mayor.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**