



Animal Management & Public Open Space

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A thought or two.....

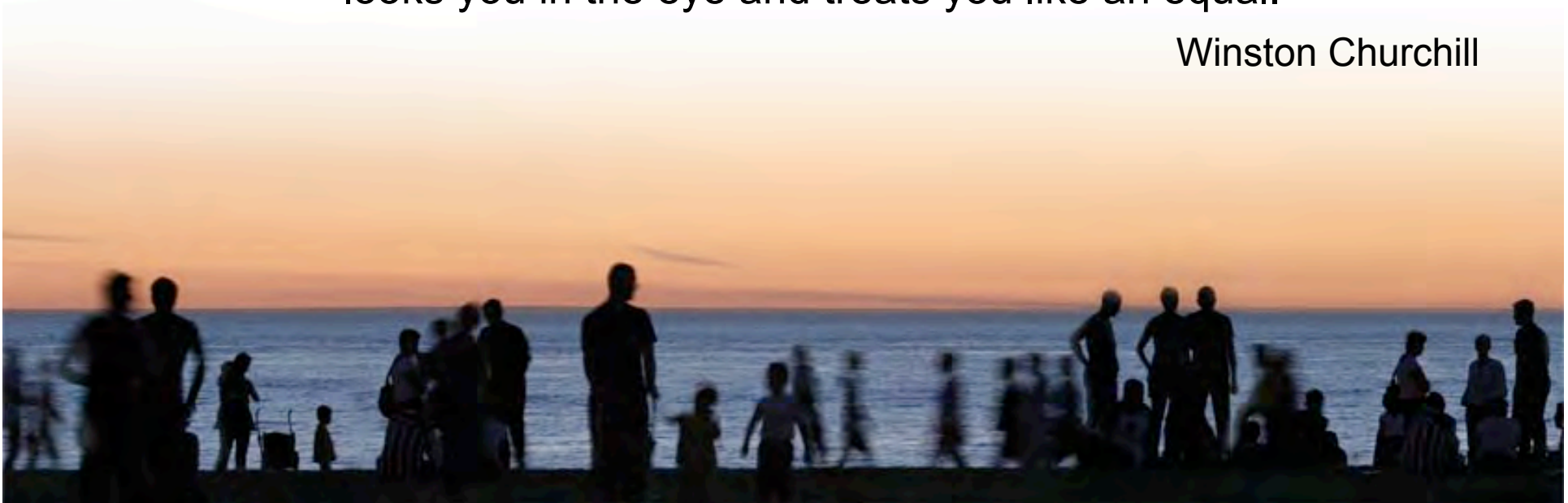


Heaven goes by favour. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

Mark Twain

Dogs look up to you. Cats look down on you. Give me a pig. He just looks you in the eye and treats you like an equal.

Winston Churchill



City of Port Phillip



- Three former cities – St Kilda, South Melbourne & Port Melbourne
- Area of 20.62 km² :Population of 81,540 people
- The whole package – Secret Life of Us, street sex & prostitution, entertainment, great restaurants, live music, telecommuters, etc, etc, etc
- 26% (21,000) on welfare benefits
- Enormous cultural & socio-economic diversity - large transient population
- Flats, units & apartments represent over 50% of dwellings
- Housing mix also includes many residences valued at \$1mil+
- Approx 3900 dogs registered



Animal Management



- The 'response and patrol' component of the service returned to internal delivery mode in December 2001
- \$420K budget funds a Coordinator, 3 x Animal Management Officers & Business Support
- Weekday coverage – 7AM - 6PM and Weekend Coverage 9AM to 5PM
- Association with RSPCA for pound and emergency services



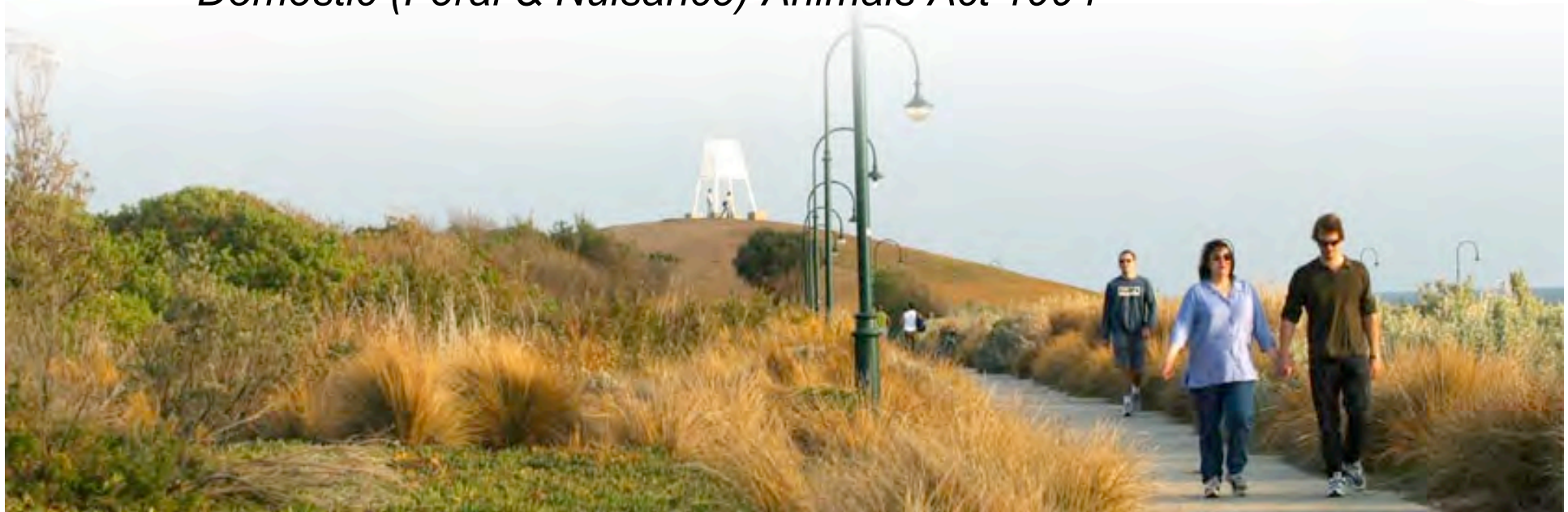
1999 Review of Dogs in Public Places and Off-Leash Areas



Background / Context

Several existing problems including:

- dog owners not picking up;
- public health & safety issues from dogs not on a lead in public places, including children's playgrounds, public BBQs and environmentally sensitive areas.
- First major review in response to the enactment of the *Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*



1999 Review of Dogs in Public Places and Off-Leash Areas (cont.)



Key Issues

- To review Council's requirements in relation to dog off-leash areas
- To consider community responses to proposals for dogs in public places and for off leash areas; and
- To develop a strategy which aims to balance the needs of dog owners with others in the community



1999 Review (cont)



Consultation

- External consultation included 350 individuals and organisations
- Information about the proposed changes contained in public notices inviting comment.
- Dog Forum attended by 90 people. Participants responded directly or via a questionnaire distributed on the evening.
- Telephone survey conducted to explore community reactions - 100 dog owners and 100 non-dog owners interviewed.
- Discussions also held with the CEO of the Victorian Canine Association and Virginia Jackson – national expert on dogs and public open space.



1999 Review (cont)



Conclusions

- The survey results indicated that the proposed changes were generally supported with the exception of prohibiting dogs from using shared pathways.
- Hundreds of comments and suggestions were received – providing Council with a clearer view of the critical issues for dog owners and non dog owners.

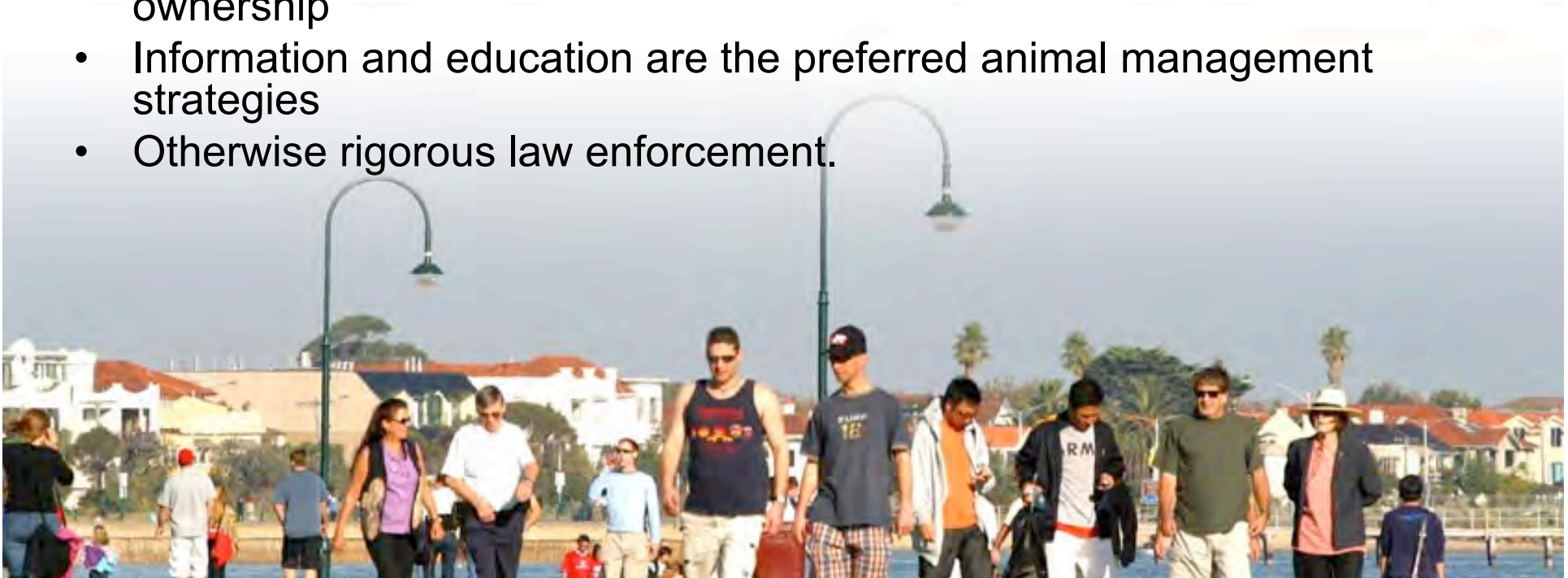


Principles for CoPP AM Policy & Practice



Council adopted the following principles:-

- Acknowledge the health and social benefits of pet ownership
- Dog owners are legitimate park users
- Dog owners should be involved in the planning and development of any public open space proposals
- Dogs need access to off leash open space to socialise
- Council will partner the dog groups to promote responsible pet ownership
- Information and education are the preferred animal management strategies
- Otherwise rigorous law enforcement.

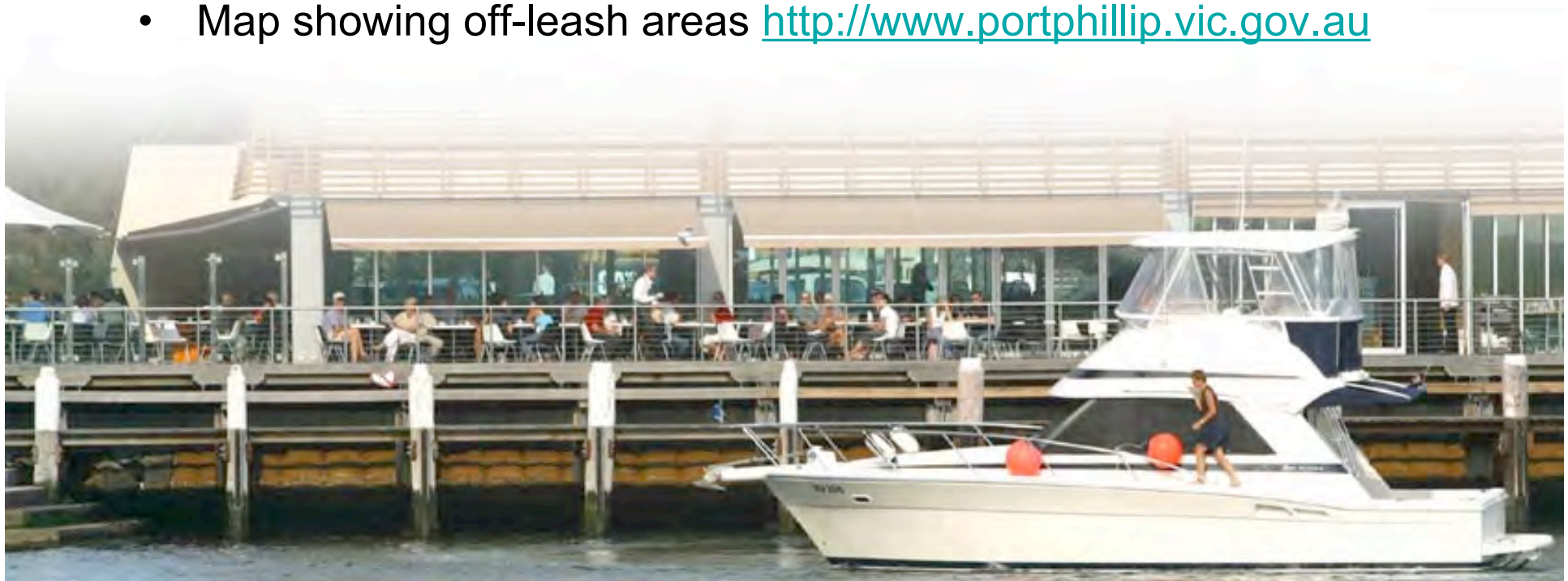


Off Leash Areas



Off-leash locations

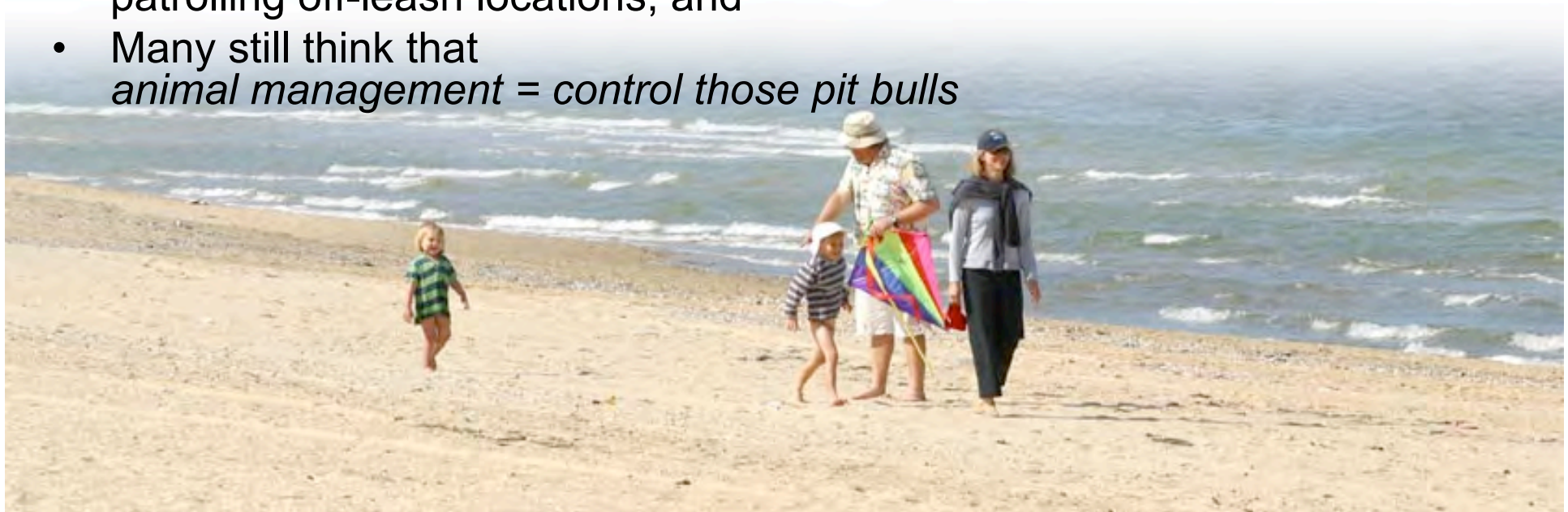
- 24 designated off-leash locations including parks, reserves and beaches
- Early morning dog beaches during summer period
- Reviewed annually by Council
- Would be a good basis for an episode of “Grass Roots”
- Map showing off-leash areas <http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au>



Does it work?



- We have been deliberately 'high-profile
- Media hungry, extroverted ex-Mayor loved doing dung beetles, DNA and talking to Faine & Mitchell about poo, but
- We still experience non-compliance
- We still struggle to get empirical data on effectiveness of campaigns
- Our signage constantly requires upgrading
- Our animal management team have to make a real effort to spend time patrolling off-leash locations; and
- Many still think that *animal management = control those pit bulls*



9. Does it work? (cont.)



Yet,

- We see more and more walkers carrying a bag and picking up poo
- We engage with local community groups on their needs and future plans
- They tell us they want to self-regulate – and some do!!
- Registrations are rising; and
- We still vigorously prosecute as required



9. Does it work? (cont.)



- Our approach reflects advice from animal behaviourists
- It aligns with the social and cultural pillars of the Council Plan (That is, it matches the way we do things at Port Phillip)
- Reflects a 'small enforcement' approach to creation of regulation
- Encourages local communities to connect and determine activities appropriate to their neighbourhoods
- Is evolving a model of 'responsibility' for responsible pet ownership
- Clear message – 'off-leash dogs need to be in off-leash areas'



11. The future



No evidence of change in the number of pigs as pets.

Dogs will continue to look up to us.

Will our communities do the same??
What do these people think??

