



The Gloucester Project



The Gloucester Project (TGP) is an initiative of a group of Gloucester-Stroud region residents who are concerned about the impacts of climate change, and the economic future of our community. Membership is representative of town and rural dwellers, of workforce participants and retirees. Significantly, many members are already engaged in specialist food production, and are eager to promote energy efficient and sustainable farming practices.

TGP was formed early in 2008, and is incorporated under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act as a non-profit community organisation. Membership currently stands at over 120. Details of the current management committee are given on the back cover.

Worldwide, more and more responsible individuals and governments are accepting the evidence that global climate change is a reality, and one that cannot be ignored. Immediate action is required, both to control the causes, as far as this may still be possible, and to adapt to the consequences where change is unavoidable.

In parallel with this is the shrinking supply of the energy forms on which electricity generation and transport rely, which at present are almost exclusively oil and coal based. One implication of this is that, in certain ways, our focus will become more local. The problems are global, but adaptation will have to be tackled at the community level, where we all live and work.



Major Goals

The members of The Gloucester Project have identified and adopted two overarching goals, which will jointly provide the framework for action in coming years. These are.....

- ***To have the region centred on Gloucester designated by both State and Federal Government as a Model Climate Change Research and Development Area***

and

- ***To promote the Gloucester district as a recognized NSW Food Bowl.***

Gloucester as a Food Bowl

The Gloucester - Stroud Valley can boast of a long history of intensive food production, going back to the 1830's, when the AA Company set up its operations here.

Over the past century farm production has become almost exclusively specialised in beef and dairying, with the most fertile land being sown to lucerne as a direct stock feed input. By selective utilisation of relatively small parcels of highly productive land, there is a potential for the Valley to become a significant producer of fruit, vegetables, and associated specialty food products. The extensive varieties of vegetables, fruit and poultry already produced attest to the further potential of the area.

Climate Change Research

Scenarios derived from climate change models indicate that the central section of the north coast of NSW should be more favoured with rainfall in the future than the rest of the State, and recent experience has certainly supported this claim. The varied topography and soils of the Gloucester-Stroud Valley, and the headwaters to the west, present an ideal laboratory for research into climate change adaptation, and the more effective use of available land, water, and energy resources.



Current Initiatives

During 2010 TGP is pursuing a number of initiatives. Each of these is firmly based on active involvement by the membership in a voluntary capacity. Our members bring with them a broad spectrum of skills and experience, and contribute to our projects in ways which best match their individual skills and the focus of the initiative.

The Tucker Garden Patch

• Experimental and Demonstration Site

TGP has leased an acre of land from Hillview Herb Farm and is now developing examples of intensive market garden growing and water management techniques for small farms and suitable portions of larger properties. This site is being used to test various regimes of crop management, and temperature and irrigation control, and to disseminate information to the community. Already a number of workshops have been well attended and an active website (www.tuckergardenpatch.com) has been established as part of communicating knowledge with community members and other interested people.



• Orchard & Berries

Gloucester's climate is predicted to be favoured under climate change. While some of the country's important fruit and vegetable areas become casualties of increasing dryness, reduced water supply, and urban spread, Gloucester's potential is excellent. With support of an ABC/ FRRR grant TGP is already establishing an orchard to research varieties of fruit best suited to our region. Different varieties of berries are also being monitored to check their suitability for a new industry for the region.

Local Growers Market & Community Stall

As fuel costs rise, transporting products both in and out of the region adds to the cost of food. Research indicates that major economic gains for the community and the nation result from giving more emphasis to local production, distribution and consumption systems. TGP has welcomed and is promoting the initiative of our Council's economic development program in establishing a local growers and producers' market. TGP has actively been working with other local organisations to get this up and running. Already TGP's community stall is providing an opportunity for small producers to participate in the local market along with the larger growers. An on-selling system to serve markets in the adjacent large population centres is also being prepared. Our community and visitors from other areas have been fully supportive of this initiative with both stall holders and customers equally satisfied with the marvellous atmosphere and quality of product.



Grants

With the support of funding from the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA and the FRRR/ABC (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal), a research programme was commenced in April 2010. This will have the twin objectives of encouraging the adoption of sustainable farming practices through increased productivity, and establishing a Gloucester based system to give producers efficient access to metropolitan markets.



'To champion the economic and social strength of Australia's regional, rural & remote communities through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and governments.'



TGP Committee Members

Supportive Community Networks & Businesses

AGL
Barrington Tops Organic Retreat
Bucketts Community Radio
Crystal Creek Products
CRS Australia
EFP
Essentially Barrington
Friends of the Tucker Garden Patch
Gloucester Environment Group
Gloucester Garden Club
Gloucester Health Foods
Gloucester High School
Gloucester Machinery
Gloucester Mowers
Gloucester Neighbourhood Centre
Gloucester Public School
Gloucester River Wines
Gloucester Shire Council
Gloucester Town & Country
Gloucester U3A
Great Lakes Landcare
Hillview Herb Farm
MidCoast Connect
Misty Ridge Products
NTP Health Products
Taree U3A
Waterwatch
(WEPP) Work Experience
Placement Program
Yates & Twomey

Volunteers & Members

Ken Johnson (President)

Ken holds a degree majoring in Geography and Education. Prior to retirement he was a Principal in the NSW Department of Education, a part-time lecturer at a number of Universities and a representative on government working parties. He was the principal designer in a program to combine multiple professional inputs to individual cases. Adaptation of this model to the needs of a community is the basis of The Gloucester Project. He was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his professional contribution to Special Education.

Peter Pfister (Deputy President)

Peter holds a number of degrees including Psychology (BA,BSc(Hons), PhD). He has carried out research both in Switzerland and in Australia. Over the last 30 years he worked at the University of Newcastle where he has held various positions in teaching, research and management. Since his retirement he has become a full-time beef farmer and advocate for sustainable farming systems.

Marianne Johnson (Secretary)

Marianne has a degree majoring in Psychology and Education. She worked in the Department of Education before entering private practice; has done part time lecturing; and was also a co-director of Learning Foundations Australia. She is now operating a small organic horticultural business in Gloucester.

Gerald McCalden (Treasurer)

Gerald holds postgraduate degrees in Geography and Information Science. He has worked as Associate Director of the Hunter Valley Research Foundation; Director of the Datex Co-operative; and Regional Economist with the Geelong Regional Commission. Subsequently, until

his retirement, he operated as a private consultant.

Pierre Louys (Natural Resources Consultant)

Pierre has worked as an IT specialist in various government agencies both in France and in Australia until 2002 when he joined the Hunter Landcare movement. He was recently employed by the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA and held the position of Landcare Project Officer. Pierre operates a consultancy business which provides a range of services including standard management and irrigation systems development and implementation.

Lyn Hancock (Communications Officer & TGP Newsletter Editor)

Lyn has a degree majoring in Chemistry and a postgraduate diploma in Computing. She has worked in laboratories, as a technical assistant for the CSIRO's Solar Division of Radiophysics and as a programmer/analyst implementing applications in the commercial arena. In retirement, Lyn's interests include self sufficiency using sustainable gardening methods.

Terry Hardwick TGP Community Stall Co-ordinator (Gloucester Market)

Jocelyn Colleran Contact person for Friends of the Tucker Garden Patch

Mr K J Hughes FCPA (Honorary Auditor)

John is a practising accountant with an auditing practice based in Mona Vale, NSW. He has worked as an external and internal IT auditor in project implementations for a number of companies, including most recently Country Energy.

How to Contact Us

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