

The Gloucester Project NEWSLETTER

28 JAN 2012

ISSUE 13

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT THE GLOUCESTER PROJECT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well. The good news has come at last. We have just received an email from Taree Crown Lands Acting Manager, Cam Cocchini, to let us know that we will be getting access to the former Travelling Stock Reserve on Cemetery Rd Gloucester. The access arrangements should be formalised within 2-3 weeks.

Under the conditions of the Community Builders grant the demonstration market garden could only proceed on public land. Marianne had tweaked the proposed program for the first period so that we could get on with the job whether we had the land or not. However, access to public land means we can now focus on our aim of setting up a practical market garden model.

Funds from the Community Builders grant have started to flow in.

Our Food Production Sub-Committee has been preparing site plans for the first beds. We are ready to transfer materials from the old Tucker Patch and there will be some rebuilding to do.

We are getting great support from Mid North Coast TAFE, who have been offering technical support and participation in the training programs that are being planned. We were invited on to the Building Australia's Future Workforce (BAWF) committee, and there are a number of great contacts there.

We have advertised for appli-

cants for several casual positions to support Tucker Patch operations. There has been a good response and we will be conducting interviews over the next few weeks.

As soon as we have settled into the Cemetery Road site we will have an Open Day to thank members and supporters. This will give everyone an opportunity to have a look at our new site. It is intended that we will be able to develop our whole program from this site. The current grant will help fund the growing, training and demonstration part of the program. We will be looking for funding to help set up the marketing and distribution aspects.

An interesting development gives us heart. At our first meeting of the BAFW committee, we gave a presentation of TGP's model. As members know, we have developed a Regional Development model which envisages establishing a range of small businesses that will help grow employment and the local economy. Food production and distribution is seen as the most suitable industry for this region. TGP's model attracted immediate interest from Regional Development Australia members in the Mid North Coast and the Hunter regions. We will be holding discussions with these representatives to ex-

plore possible co-operation.

So, there are busy times ahead. It is important that everyone who has helped, and everyone who wants to be part of the project, participates in whatever capacity that they think appropriate. We want to increase our membership. Land usage principles are still an issue. Elsewhere you will read about our activity to try to ensure that there will be no damage done to our region's water supplies.

Council's survey confirmed that the majority of our citizens want an agricultural future for our region, so when we speak, we need to have confidence that we represent increasing numbers of fellow Australians. So see what you can do to bring in members, so they can be informed and can play a part.

A happy 2012 to everyone. We have certainly started the year well. We will build on that great start.

With best wishes,
Ken



Planning the future at
Cemetery Road

The establishment of a demonstration market garden has long been TGP's "Stage 2" plan. The means to achieve it came about last year when we were granted almost \$300,000 over 3 years by Community Builders. Part of this grant will be allocated to fund Stage 2. The remaining obstacle was to find suitable public land in the Gloucester area to set up the garden. It was never going to be an easy task given the unique history of the Australian Agricultural Company which was granted the land in this region. But thanks to the persistence of Gerald and Ken the almost impossible finally happened and

WE GOT THE LAND!

Planning is well advanced to establish the growing areas and watering system, set up a nursery to propagate seedlings and construct facilities.

The following casual paid posi-

tions have been advertised:

- a Tucker Patch Coordinator to manage the Tucker Patch operations
- an Events Coordinator to organise workshops and events
- a Tucker Patch Growers Coordinator to liaise with local growers and
- a Nursery Hand to assist with propagation.

Appointments will take place within the next few weeks.

Casual labourers also will be employed as necessary.

One of the first events will be a Welcome Day at Cemetery Road to introduce members and supporters to the Stage 2 Tucker Patch.

The operations of the Tucker Patch will be supported by workshops. These workshops will be designed to comply with the purpose of the Community Builders Grant to support and strengthen the local community.

Workshops will be affordable and open to all. The first of the workshops will begin in February. They will cover soil preparation, erosion issues and watering systems.

There are some interesting and exciting times ahead as the Tucker Patch is established. No doubt there will be more hurdles and obstacles to overcome. However, we have come this far against the odds and we remain positive and optimistic about the future.

WORKSHOP IDEAS WELCOME

Sustainable horticulture practices, water management, seed saving, propagation, market preparation, and grant-seeking are just a few workshops already mooted.

If you would like to learn new skills or have suggestions for workshops please let us know.

VEGETABLE BOX TRIALS

As part of our research for the Tucker Patch market garden, TGP (through Marnie at Misty Ridge) trialled a direct marketing vegie box system for about 8 weeks at the end of 2011.

Five Gloucester residents agreed to participate and 4 of our Tucker Patch growers contributed to the boxes. It was a very valuable exercise for all concerned. We were able to establish quality of product, estimated quantities required to meet demand, and types and amounts of vegetables customers preferred. The logistics of collecting and delivering the produce and methods for keeping the vegetables fresh were trialled. The feedback was excellent and we thank those who

gave us very helpful comments. Although the trial has finished Marnie has started her own vegie box system using Misty Ridge organic produce. As soon as we are able to procure public land we will be commencing the new Tucker Patch Market Garden. Meanwhile Brad Bowden is co-

ordinating the Tucker Patch Growers network and we hope to have that up and running before too long. If anyone is interested in being part of the growers network (no amount of produce is too small) please contact our Secretary Marnie (65583191).



**Fresh
nutritious
produce
from local
growers**

The Gloucester Project congratulates the local growers who have just completed the food growing projects for the Women's Gathering and the garlic trials. The growers are all small-scale producers, many growing for the first time, and are pleased to have achieved over \$1000 in sales of fresh local food for the Women's Gathering.

Hot on the heels of these two successful ventures, the Gloucester Project will soon be launching our network of local growers, called the Tucker Patch Growers. This is an exciting stage for the

Project, as this new group will become part of Gloucester's food future, a vibrant future with a network of local growers with ethical principles and far-sighted community values, and building the local economy as they go. Specifically the Tucker Patch Growers will look at the increasing requests from town businesses for locally grown produce and the potential for continued group growing for upcoming significant events: Taree Food Festival, Shakespeare Festival, and food events around the proposed Gloucester Food Festival. Other

opportunities discussed included a community-based green box system for fruit and vegetables, either in Gloucester or participating with adjoining systems in Nabitac and Dungog.

With so many opportunities, the food future in Gloucester looks bright and we're ready to move to this next stage of coordinated growing. The Tucker Patch Growers will be launched in the next few weeks.

Look out for the membership brochure coming soon.



TUCKER PATCH GROWERS

Back: Jocelyn Colleran, Lyn Stewart, Lucy, Terry Hardwick, Juen Van Hand, Ken Johnson, David Hare-Scott, Marnie Johnson
Front: Lyn Hancock, Brad Bowden, Aled Hoggett, Denise Gilbert

COMMUNITY BUILDERS GRANT

TGP will utilise the funds from this grant to provide horticultural encouragement and support for landholders to become food producers. TGP will be dedicated to providing growing and marketing support systems. The grant will also provide employment opportunities and skill development for under-employed and isolated rural community members, while also developing a user friendly support and infor-

mation network. A program will also be designed to attract displaced and refugee growers to join the Gloucester community.

The first year's performance will be assessed at the end of September. If satisfactory, funding will be extended for a second year. This process will be repeated at the end of September 2013.

While a substantial part of this funding will go towards establishing the model market garden

other projects will also be supported. The Tucker Patch Growers group will benefit by having a funded coordinator and a product collection system is planned in the future.

Another project underway will inform locals about using seasonal produce and encouraging them to buy from local growers.

More information about funded projects will be available in future Newsletters.

GARLIC SYMPOSIUM



Gloucester's Garlic Cluster held a Garlic Symposium on 14th and 15th January. It was the culmination of the garlic growing trials conducted last year.

A well-attended workshop took

place on Saturday 15th January. Susan Harwood spoke about grading and storing garlic and participants saw a presentation on the Hastings Valley compost tea trials. The results of the Gloucester trials were discussed

and this led to a lively information exchange between growers. This was followed by a garlic dinner at Roadies. Yes - every course featured garlic!

Sunday was devoted to garlic



sales which provided growers with an opportunity to sell some of their garlic as seed stock to other growers.

THE WOMENS GATHERING



Left: Workshop at Misty Ridge

Right: Food tree display in the Rec Hall.

Below: The Dinner prepared by Perenti from produce supplied by local growers



TGP was a Silver Sponsor of the 2011 Rural Women's Gathering in Gloucester in October last year.

TGP organised local growers to provide produce that was used to prepare food for the Gathering. The Saturday night dinner menu was pumpkin or potato and leek soup, followed by a chicken or beef pie with asparagus, carrots and baby beets. Dessert was lemon tart with kiwi fruit coulis or orange cake. Other meals also

featured Gloucester's local produce.

TGP volunteers assembled a Food Tree - one of the displays in the Rec Hall. The 3 metre high tree highlighted Gloucester's food products, the growers who provided the food for the event and displayed the growers' personal stories.

TGP volunteers set up and staffed the Community Stall to enable local people to sell their products.

TGP ran one of the most popular workshops of the Gathering entitled Food and fun, worms and weeds, chooks and chillies. It was held at Ken & Marnie Johnson's property, Misty Ridge. Participants were shown around the property and impressed by the innovative ideas and productive gardens. They were shown propagation techniques and introduced to permaculture methods. To complete their afternoon they were treated to a delicious afternoon tea made from local produce.

WORM FARM DONATION

TGP has been the recipient of a purple people eater (oops!) worm farm. At the Women's Gathering in October last year Mid Coast Waste presented us with a purple wheelie bin which has been converted to a worm farm. It will be set up at the new Tucker Patch as one of a number of demonstration worm farm techniques.

Worm facts

- There are about 2700 types of earthworms worldwide.
- 1 kg of worms can eat and convert ½ kg of waste into valuable worm castings each day.
- There can be more than one million earthworms in just one acre of land.
- Earthworms are hermaphrodites; that is they have both male and female sex organs. They re-

produce by exchanging sperm then both worms produce a fertilised egg capsule.

- It is not true that when a worm is cut in halves it will become two worms. However, some types of worms have the ability to regenerate lost segments if not too badly damaged.
- Earthworms have no eyes, ears or lungs. They take in oxygen through their skin which is coated in mucus.
- Earthworms typically live from 4 to 8 years while some species can live up to 10 years.
- The largest native Australian worm is the giant Gippsland earthworm. It can grow up to 3m, and is about 2cm in diameter. The longest worm on record was 4m long.



The worms in this photo were found while harvesting jerusalem artichokes.

The soil had previously been improved with a mix of nutrients including compost, dry mulch (paddock grass), blood and bone, molasses, crusher dust, fish emulsion and even a layer of waste alpaca wool.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

TGP has received notification that the applications for the 3 awards offered under the NSW/ACT Regional Achievement and Community Awards umbrella did not win.

TGP, under the leadership of Ken and Marnie Johnson, was nominated for Gloucester Shire Council's 2012 Project of the

Year award. Media reports of TGP's achievements since 2008 were collected and submitted along with this nomination. They show TGP's involvement in many community projects since inception. They also highlight the recognition and acceptance that TGP's ideals have achieved locally and further

afield. The Gloucester Project was not proclaimed "Project of the Year". That honour went to Gloucester Police - Gloucester Blue Light Branch for their admirable work fostering relationships between the police, youth and community. We congratulate Gloucester police on their well-deserved award.

WHOLESALE NURSERY

To support growers in our Gloucester area TGP is facilitating the establishment of a wholesale nursery. Initially the plan is to grow vegetable seedlings and sell them at a reasonable cost to vegetable growers in the area (TGP members will get discounts).

We will be offering women the opportunity to train in nursery

skills and as the nursery grows we hope to offer at least some casual employment. The nursery will be located at the new Tucker Patch but we will be starting training during February using Misty Ridge nursery facilities until land becomes available. Mid North Coast TAFE has expressed interest in assisting and TGP reps are discussing possible

training and courses with them. We are also seeking some specific funding for this project but we can start the nursery with some funding from the Community Builders grant. This will be an interesting and worthwhile project with the potential to become a significant stand alone business and employer.

Marnie Johnson is TGP's representative on the AGL Gloucester Community Consultative Committee (CCC). This is her latest report.

TGP has taken a neutral position on the CCC since inception. That means TGP is neither opposed to nor in support of coal seam gas. Our participation has been to obtain as much information as possible and to relay our members concerns about the possible impacts of gas extraction on the Gloucester Basin's water and food production. I have been your representative during this time. I have found the last 6 months a very stressful time on the CCC due to increasing pressures from AGL and the responsibility of remaining objective.

Over the years, as more and more information has become available about the impacts of CSG extraction, it is clear that it is not a benign process and can have devastating impacts on ground water, aquifers and surrounding land. TGP has consulted various independent experts about the geology of the Gloucester Basin and the interrelationships between aquifers. The advice we have received has indicated that the Basin is geologically unstable with much tilting of strata and with a marine-based geology especially in the southern part of the Basin. Although the water being extracted from the current Stage 1 exploration sites has somewhat manageable saline content, as AGL heads further south, the marine-based geology has disturbingly high levels of sodium and sulphur. I have had verbal confirmation from an AGL officer that this could cause major problems

for water disposal during later extraction. There is also a real possibility that the pressure differential caused by the necessary extraction of millions of litres of water can cause land subsidence around the well areas and pollute water aquifers. This is already happening in Australia. We have also raised our concerns of the accumulative impacts of the combination of coal and gas extraction. AGL has not responded to our multiple enquiries about how close coal extractors can operate to gas wells.

The recent blockade action by Gloucester community members highlighted the concerns of many of us. At the time AGL appeared to respond to the Barrington Gloucester Stroud Preservation Alliance's (BGSPA) concerns but AGL's manipulation of the CCC made it clear that they do not want to have open and transparent procedures. It is essential that a full, independent hydrogeological study of all Stages (that is the whole of the basin, not just a small part of it) be completed before any approval is given for the gas project to proceed. Any conclusions based on Stage 1 only, will not take into account all the potential problems. It is clear that AGL would prefer to keep the investigative process limited so that costly and high risk industrial processes are not brought to light. It is these industrial processes that appear to put our water supply and purity at risk. AGL is trying to concentrate on the appointment of the peer reviewer. This avoids the real issue of the conditions that must be assessed by the studies of the whole of their expanding

program. How do we, the food-producing and water-using occupiers of the land, learn about all these risks and have the chance to say, "No, this is a risk that we cannot accept", or "OK, this seems reasonable and can go ahead under certain conditions"? To be in a position to accept these conditions, we, the Gloucester community, must be full partners in the setting up of the studies and in setting up the terms of reference that the specialists must look at and report on. This is not just AGL's business, it is our future, so we are fully justified in our assessment of AGL's strategy and our reaction to it.

It is my opinion and that of TGP's management committee that the GCCC members should not be manipulated into a position where they are used to support AGL's desired position. I am also personally concerned that any member of this CCC who formally participates in the recommendations of appointing a peer reviewer will be potentially liable to future litigation from people whose land or earning capacity has been adversely affected by the gas impacts. I wish to make it clear that although I will do my best to represent TGP members I will not participate in the current AGL process for recommending a peer reviewer. That is, I will attend CCC meetings but withdraw from any participation in flawed processes which compromise TGP's clearly stated independent position.

I encourage you to ask questions of AGL through the GCCC, also send letters to the newspapers, radio stations, Facebook, blogs and any other media.



**SATURDAY
7 APRIL 2012
9am-1pm**

at Julie's Garage
Opposite Roundabout Inn
Church Street Gloucester



VOLUNTEERS



People will be needed to help set up on Friday 6 April 2-5pm. As well as people to run the sale on Saturday 7 April 8am-1pm. If you can help please contact the organisers.



TGP WILL COMBINE WITH THE GLOUCESTER ENVIRONMENT GROUP TO RUN THIS EVENT. PROFITS WILL BE SHARED BY BOTH ORGANISATIONS.

DONATIONS

Please bring donations to Julie's Garage

at 2-4pm Friday 6 April or
8am Saturday 7 April.

GARAGE SALE ITEMS

Unwanted gifts, household goods, tools, books, DVDs, toys, art and crafts, jewellery, furniture, etc, etc.

PLANTS

Pot plants now so they are well established by March. Please label.

Contact the organisers for more information.



ORGANISERS

Kate Fry
6550 2556

Carol Bennett
6558 4333

carol.bennett@optusnet.com.au



TGP RAFFLE 2012

Drawn on Saturday 7 April at 12 noon

DONATIONS NEEDED

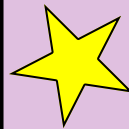
Local produce, art and craft etc.

Please contact Lyn Hancock if you can assist with donations, selling or buying tickets.



TICKETS

\$1



MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE SUPPORT TGP

Even if you are not able to help with any of our programs or attend meetings, you can show your support for TGP by renewing your Membership each year.

Encourage your friends and family to join.

MEMBERSHIP \$10 BENEFITS

- * DISCOUNTS FOR TGP WORKSHOPS & GROWERS CALENDAR
- * LOWER COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY STALL SALES
- * QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS
- * COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Membership Secretary is Andrea Sage: 6558 9960 or normandy@skymesh.com.au. Please contact Andrea if you are uncertain of your membership status.

To pay membership fees:

- Hand subscription to Andrea Sage or a Committee member;
- Post a cheque to TGP PO Box 224, Gloucester 2422 or
- Direct Credit to the Holiday Coast Credit Union:
BSB: 802-214 Act :100123354.

If you pay by direct credit please advise Andrea that you have done so. Receipt will be acknowledged by email (if applicable) to reduce postage costs.

Please note that the TGP Constitution requires a separate application for each person joining.

SAVING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

Reprinted with kind permission of the author, Pierre Louys.

There is a little known book titled "Saving Our Natural Heritage" which was published by Halstead Press in 1997, back in the days when the name of Peter Andrews was unknown and the term biomass was only used by a selective group of people. Despite the date, it is still relevant to those landowners who wish to make a significant contribution in saving Australia's (and perhaps the world's) natural heritage. The editors of that book (Craig Copeland & Damian Lewis) have an interesting quote in the concluding chapter: "Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Can scientists be accused of the same?" The answer is NO, but scientists have done – and continue to do - their work and have provided more than enough information but **this information remains 'locked up'** due to one missing piece of the integration puzzle...**the local community.** By involving the local communities in ecosystems management and research projects, hypotheses may come from land managers (Peter Andrews again) rather than scientists alone and in isolation. The local community (usually represented by a leading non-profit group) then acts as an information broker between the community, researchers and

government agencies. A practical example is given by the Willow Biomass Project www.esf.edu/willow the information brochure says that the project was *driven by concerns about global warming, air pollution, rural development and national security* and that it has *teamed up with 20 organizations to facilitate the commercialisation of willow crops and other woody biomass for bioenergy*...another example closer to home is the Janahn Forest Biomass Project www.janahn.com.au located in Jimbour QLD. This project implements a range of 'revolutionary' land management principles grouped under the label "Biomass Farming". It could also be under "NSF" or "permaculture" or all the above.

The important aspect here is not what land managers use to label their methods and principles but rather that they use them effectively to restore or maintain our natural heritage. One of such principle is the use of waste. In Australia, the potential value of organic waste as an energy source is only just starting to be tapped, with the sugar industry leading the way. Making better use of our waste could contribute significantly to our energy needs and save our natural heritage. In some cases biomass is grown specifically for energy

production (like the willow project). The use of farming land for biomass can create competition for land for food production. The Gloucester Project has its own solution to combine food production and energy on the same land, however like many pioneers and pace setters it is challenged by existing commercial interests and government policies. Another important principle is mixed farming (as opposed to single crop farming), Victoria's "Greenhouse in Agriculture (GIA)" research team is investigating nitrous oxide emissions from dryland cropping systems and irrigated pastures, particularly the impact of the growing trend of converting pasture only systems to mixed grazing and crop rotation systems. The project also investigates how management practices like fertiliser application, pulse crops and different stubble management techniques can modify emission processes and rates in the more traditional cropping regions. Saving our natural heritage will not be possible unless valuable scientific information is integrated by the local community and the land managers.

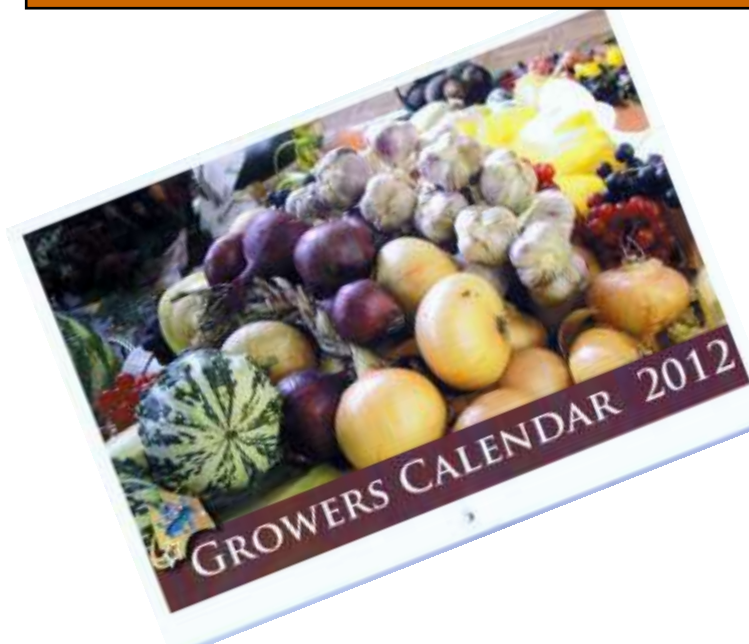


ROCKMELON POWER.

Rockmelon seedlings make a concerted effort to push their way into the world.

These seeds were saved from a rockmelon grown at The Patch in 2011.

CALENDARS FOR SALE



TGP CALENDARS 2012

TGP's popular Growers Calendar is still available. It is bigger and better than before with new and extended growing information on a range of subjects.

PRICE NOW ONLY \$5

Available from Visitors Information Centre Gloucester Health Foods, the Community Stall at the Gloucester Farmers Market or contact Gerald McCalden on 6558 8273.

INVITATION TO MEMBERS

Members are reminded that they are welcome to attend committee or sub-committee meetings.

Committee meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Monday of each month at 10am.

If you wish to attend please contact the Secretary beforehand to confirm the date and venue.

If you wish to attend a sub-committee meeting please contact the convenor for meeting details.

CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMITTEE

- President:** Ken Johnson 6558 3191 thejohnsons@ipstarmail.com.au
Vice President: Lyn Hancock 6558 8181 glenhaven@ipstarmail.com.au
Secretary: Marianne Johnson 6558 3191 thegloucesterproject@ipstarmail.com.au
Treasurer: Thomas Davey 0408 277 443 13moons.gloucester@gmail.com
Members: Brad Bowden 0418 663 357 13moons.gloucester@gmail.com
 Pierre Louys 0410 464 957 pierre.louys@optusnet.com.au
 Gerald McCalden 6558 8273 mccalden@tpg.com.au

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Community Stall Coordinator:

Terry Hardwick 6558 8104 terryhardwick@gmail.com

Membership Registrar: Andrea Sage 6558 9960 normandy@skymesh.com.au

Newsletter Editor: Lyn Hancock 6558 8181 glenhaven@ipstarmail.com.au

TGP BUSINESS ADDRESS: PO Box 224 Gloucester NSW 2422

TGP EMAIL ADDRESS: thegloucesterproject@ipstarmail.com.au

TGP WEB SITE: www.thegloucesterproject.org.au