

## NEWSLETTER EXTRACTS FROM THE EARLY DAYS

**2001** Way Back! Extract relating to visioning and community planning from the 2001 newsletter written by Craig as Goolawah's secretary.

### Site Selection And Community Planning Where to From Here?

The following discussion is presented by Craig Singleman as a member and not in any official capacity as Secretary or editor etc. and does not represent the thoughts or decisions of the Board.

The primary activity of the Co-op is to provide low cost rural land sharing. We have advertised Goolawah in Earth Garden and Grassroots as an alternative community based on Permaculture and the Arts. We already have an exciting and diverse range of members with, not surprisingly, just as many different ideas and needs.

A number of questions have been received about the process of zones / site maps / DA - and generally how do we get to the next step? Of course if there was only one simple answer - someone would have given that to you by now? We have the opportunity to actually communicate to each other our vision for the community and how we see ourselves living and interacting with each other.

A lot of the "nitty gritty" of community planning can only be done with people there observing the land.

Hiding in a box you call a house, with a fence to keep out the neighbours is not an alternative community. Composting dunnies and solar panels are just alternative technology. To me it will be the ability to resolve conflicts openly and honestly that will probably set us apart from the "normal/ outside" world.

**2001** - Tony Reis's Contribution, a quintessential Goolie character and hoarder.

### What May Be Goolyland

Tramping in unwanted biodiversity (weeds and pests), other pets (like blasted rabbits!), compost heaps that only feed rats, **(All rats must die – wait till they chew your solar electrical cables!)**, pools of water that breed squadrons of disease spreading flying hypodermics, abandoned fruit trees (and fruit flies) will all test our resolve to make this a futuristic showcase of a mainstream (and not an alternative) way to live!

Members should group to make gardens; they get more attention, they are harder for Roos or steers to wreck and everyone can still have their exclusive corner. There is no such thing as garbage – just wasteful, unthinking, lazy humans. If it looks hard to totally use, reuse or recycle – then don't bring it in! Start saving mirrors/glass, drums, iron, wood, wire, bike parts etc. - will make life easier for us and the environment.

This along with mutual respect, is my vision .... err some of it anyway!

Tony!

How we proposed to spend our annual levy income in 2001 which I think also speaks to our priorities for the community at that time. Note road and insurance costs.

Annual Running Costs (Raised by Members Levy)	\$\$\$	Initial Infrastructure (paid from leftover share capital)	\$\$\$
1) Rates	2000	1) Roads	57000
2) Roads and potholing	8000	2) Tractor and implements	12000
3) Tractor Maint. + Fuel	1500	3) EIS & DA	2000
4) Tractor Depreciation	1500	4) Road Engineers Report	2000
5) Administration	2800	5) Fire Protection Equip.	2000
6) Water – Bores, Dams, Tanks, Pumps etc.	2500	6) Community Sheds x2	6000
7) Fire Protection & Upgrade	2000	7) 2 x 10,000 Gal. Water Tanks	8000
8) Community Building Maintenance	1000	8) Electricity to West Gate Shed	11000

9) Fencing, Swales, Tools, Gardens/Permaculture	2000	9) ?? Any thing else ??	????
10) Liability Insurance	700		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
Divided by the number of shares/members ~ 80	<b>~\$300 each</b>	Which leaves about	\$8,000

**2002** - Craig he said he wrote this to fill up space on the last page of the newsletter. I guess to get our money's worth out of printing in hard copy in the "olden" days. There were not many people on the land at this stage, most people were still speculating about what Goolawah would and could be like from a distance.

If you are expecting or waiting to turn up when the SEPP 15 DA is approved and all the roads, fences, sites, dams and community facilities etc are done then you are either going to be waiting a long time or expect to spend a lot more money than \$7000. Even this is petty compared to the REAL VALUE of living in an intentional, sustainable community.

A sense of community is an unknown in most suburban developments. Anonymous neighbours, fences and commuter jobs encourage the development of alienation and anxiety that threatens to corrode our society and diminish the satisfaction in many peoples lives.

To establish a sense of community, people must know their neighbours, and they will get to know them only if they have reason to get together. The vision for Goolawah was to make getting together essential by setting up zones or hamlets, which are controlled by the occupants who are involved from design through to construction. After completion most of the maintenance is also done by the cluster members. This will not always be easy for those of us unused to sharing responsibility, but it will be effective in establishing communication and therefore community.

Working together on community and hamlet projects is encouraged, both to reduce costs and let people get to know each other. This will have the added benefit of giving the people the pride of ownership and empowerment which will then result in better care and protection of these community projects.

Finally, a community is weakened if most or all of the employment opportunities are outside the community. We should be aiming at providing as many jobs on the community as possible. This includes setting aside commercial/light industrial (workshops etc) space, agricultural areas for community gardeners and community facilities that are maintained by members for an income. I mention this as many members say that lack of work in this area is a reason for not moving here sooner.

Well that is it for spare space – if anyone has any articles or ideas they wish to contribute then send them in to fill the gaps and that way we will be able to keep Lachy's fishing photos and bad jokes out!

**2004** a book extract is included in the newsletter about community vision. At the end there is further references to permaculture books that challenge us to think about the impacts we have on our environment, particularly when we introduce new species (plants and animals) into our environments deliberately and accidentally. I have not read them but would be interested to hear more about them.

David Holmgren "Permaculture, Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability" (2002) page 219.  
**"Community Commonality and Diversity"**

One of the burning issues for intentional communities is the bond of common belief, values, experience, ownership and so on which hold successful communities together in the face of the individualistic atomising forces which prevail in the modern world. While it is clear that many people in mainstream society yearn for the missing sense of community, the energetic realities that continue to allow people to pursue more segregated and individual lives undermine any commitments to

collective endeavour. It is unfortunate that rapid growth in intentional communities is unlikely to occur until economic and social options in the wider society contract.

On first analysis, individualism appears to be a case of too much diversity, which needs to be constrained or culled for the common good. In practice, it may be the opposite. In response to the perception that difference is the source of conflict, many people have made great efforts to form communities with like-minded people. This has often resulted in communities of people of similar age, social background and wealth getting together, only to find that their expectations of commonality with others were rarely fulfilled. If they were all raising young children and building their own houses, sharing brought some benefits; but over time the need for social and economic relationships with people outside the community (distant parents, the mechanic in town) were often stronger than those within the community.

Experience has shown that intentional communities need diversity in age, interests, livelihoods – and possibly even wealth – in order to:

- provide a basis for economic exchange and interdependence
- allow for the emergence of natural authority in relation to different issues and fields of community activity. By “natural authority” I mean the recognition within a community of the particular ability of an individual in some field that justifies accepting their opinion as having greater weight (in that field). This natural authority is earned over time and is not necessarily dependent on formal position or qualifications.
- foster recognition that commonality and difference are in a dynamic tension.”

**Well if that doesn't get you thinking you might try “The new nature – winners and losers in wild Australia” by Tim Low (2003). Tim Low is infamous for his last book “Feral Future” which caused quite a stir amongst Goolawah members. Just when you think you are stating to get a grip on the issues of habitat destruction, conservation, bush regeneration, permaculture and ESD etc – this book will leave you wondering, be warned!**

No further search hits for vision until the 2011 and 2017 exercises.