

Goolawah CO OP Goolablah

Journal of Goolawah Co-operative Limited

May 2025

First Goolawah Market Day a huge success

To celebrate the Equinox, we had our first ever Market Day and it was a huge success!

There was something for everyone and it was great to see the kids taking part on several of the stalls.

The cafe was abuzz with coffee and brewed chai tea, and out on the deck there were goodies galore of home-made lemonade and ginger beer, jars of pesto, cake, veggies, fruit and herbs, plus popcorn served in a banana leaf!

There were plants and other bric-a-brac too... and if you were brave enough to make an offer, you could have gone home with some second hand underpants, lol.

Face painting was also a big hit amongst kids and grown-ups alike!

Many thanks to everyone who came along and joined in the fun, whether as a stall holder, patron, or both.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next market on Saturday 28th June.

Narelle



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Calendar

Please check our website and phone tree for updates.

May

- | | |
|------|------------------------|
| 3rd | Working Bee |
| 10th | Bundagen Visit - Lexie |
| 17th | Community Dinner |

June

- | | |
|------|---|
| 7th | Working Bee |
| 14th | Community Meeting |
| 21st | Community Dinner / G-25 Poster Exhibition - Trinh |
| | Winter Solstice Bonfire |
| 28th | Winter Solstice Market Day - Narelle |

July

- | | |
|------|--|
| 5th | Working Bee |
| 19th | Community Dinner / Goolie Archibald Exhibition - Trinh |
| TBA | Open Garden Tours, Music Night & Grand Finale Party!!! |

From the Editor

Thank you Goolawah for helping me to remember how to belong. Every night I have the privilege of viewing a million sparkly stars to sing me back to the land - along with koala grunting, owl hooting, bat screeching, possum wrestling, quoll attacks, dingo howls and the array of bird calls and squawks.... I am surrounded by magnificent trees that beckon me to dare to dream of a better future for all. I am a hop, skip and a jump away from sandy beaches that I can sing across as I fossick on foreshores and swim in pristine waters, with waves that compose only for the moon.

And I DO hold hope, as I know many who reside here do too. Although we may not always feel it, I believe we are way-showers with our chosen lifestyles and look forward to witnessing this Community's potential in the years to come! How blessed am I to live in this beautiful pocket of paradise.

Tanja Awen Tree-Fern

*"It's been a long sleep and I forget how to belong.
There were darker Winters than this, resting far from the
gaze of a thousand eyes;
The trees taught me that dreaming leads to growth.
What will it take to find new words, coax the sleeping sap
to flow?*

*Could I write your scent into the first bursting buds of the
magnolia and your attention into the skipping circles that
ripple onto the pond?*

*Write your eyes into the silver bar along the boardwalk path,
your questions into the birdsong peppering the morning?*

*Could I write myself into the singing sands, join the waves
that only compose for the moon?*

*Could I write hope into the next histories, bury the ones
who trade life for power in the loamy bog
And raise soft voices high into the exuberant sky
A million new stars to sing us back to the land."*

Erin Poettcker

Wisdom from Dave's SANCTUARY

"What ever gets you through the night
is alright, is alright" John Lennon

"Everything is good for you,
unless it kills you" Split Enz

"Laughter is the best medicine"
Reader's Digest



Goolawah Great Good Friday Film Festival

The 2nd annual Goolawah Great Good Friday Film Festival (GGGFFF) was held recently in the gently lit Last Resort. We had a great turn out for the event that hosted 9 films featuring the theme of 'play' as a protagonist. Filmmakers were also asked to incorporate '25' as an ode to Goolawah's 25th birthday!

Thanks to all our filmmakers and special call out to Shanti and Tjala, two teenage entrants sharing their skills! Hot chocolate and popcorn filled the bellies and the films filled our hearts, again! Looking forward to next years event!!

Marc Rosenstein



Summer's Symphony: Cicadas of the Mid North Coast

As we head into autumn, cicadas are already a faint summer memory. But just a few months ago, the unmistakable chorus of cicadas heralded the arrival of summer heat across *Goolawah*. I'd already encountered cicadas in a Sydney childhood, when for a few weeks each year cicadas became playthings, and I delighted in the exoticisms of names like Razor Grinder, Double Drummer, Black Prince, and Floury Baker. The most common of all though were Greengrocers (typically green), but fascinating colour variations also occurred – so yellow individuals lacking blue pigment are known as Yellow Mondays, and rarer yet are ones missing yellow pigment, giving them a blue appearance, and known as Blue Moons.

I've found most of these species on *Goolawah*, but the Double Drummer (*Thopha saccata*) is perhaps the most common, and it reigns as Australia's largest cicada and is considered the loudest insect in the world, capable of producing sounds reaching 120 decibels (that's jet engine loud, and crossing the pain threshold!). Its name derives from the enlarged timbals - sound-producing organs on the male's abdomen - allowing for extraordinary volume.

Another remarkable *Goolawah* resident is the Razor Grinder (*Henicopsaltria eydouxii*), whose harsh, metal-grinder-like call can be utterly deafening when performed in chorus. While more common in Brisbane, this large cicada with distinctive zigzag wing markings ranges from Gladstone, Queensland, to as far south as Narooma, NSW. What makes cicadas particularly fascinating is their extraordinary life-cycle. While the adults live just a few weeks aboveground, their nymphs spend years developing underground. Australian cicadas typically remain underground for 6-8 years, though some American species can stay buried for up to 17 years. The cycle begins



© Narelle



© Griff

as female cicadas lay eggs in plant stems. The hatched nymphs drop to the soil, attach to plant roots, and feed on sap until ready to emerge. On the first hot days of late spring or early summer, especially after rain, they climb vertical surfaces, shed their shells, and transform into winged adults ready to continue the cycle. Often cicadas seem to have a bumper year, with huge hatching breakouts, thought to be governed by the sugar content of tree sap in wetter years. Here's one that Narelle and I found on lot 76, still trapped within its shell (*below left*).

Cicadas are a food source for so many animals, so no wonder they breed in such massive numbers. They are prey for rodents, marsupials, reptiles, birds, fish, insects, and spiders. They can come to a particularly nasty end if they are spotted by a Cicada Killer Wasp (*Exeirus lateritius*). The adult female wasp will paralyse the cicada with her venomous sting and carry it to her nest and lay an egg under the cicada's leg. When the egg hatches, the larvae begin to eat the cicada alive.

Over the last twenty years, cicadas have become important indicators of climate change, with shifting distributions and altered emergence times providing valuable data on our changing environment.

Nick Reid

Interview with retired director Wayne Skinner

Recently I did an interview with freshly retired Wayne Skinner who completed 5½ years of sitting as a Director in the Board.

When did you first join the Board?

In 2019. I started building at Goolawah in 2017. I've worked in business for a long time - I've been a Director on a strata project and also with other companies for many years, so I felt like I had experience to bring to the role. At one point I was a Chief IT Architect. I have skills in giving a lot of attention to the finer details.

What does it mean to you to be a Director on the Board?

I felt like I could help the Co-op achieve things. I felt I could offer some stability. I had certain skills that I could contribute. I understand finances and can create a budget. I feel like one of my strengths is an ability to look at the longevity of projects in terms of growth for the Community. This is an area that I am very familiar with.

I think it's important you bring your best skills and strengths to the Board and then it is a matching of those skills to tasks. This is what makes a good Board.

It's good to have a range of different opinions to strengthen the Board.

What is the function of a Board in your eyes?

The Boards function is to run operations of the Community. eg: budget, membership etc.

We have 7 different portfolios so there is a Director assigned to cover each Portfolio.

Craig is a wonderful historian of the Board and how it's changed over the years.....

What is a highlight for you?

Creating a budget that anyone can follow. Projects are important because they are something tangible for the Community to celebrate together. To see our progress....

I worked many hours on a Council DA to prevent a big fine to the Community. The DA elements included the disabled toilet and ramp at the Camp Kitchen. The Last Resort was another one....

But the biggest project has been dealing with Council about our roads.

What words of advice do you have for someone considering going on the Board?

- go along to Board meetings and get a feel/ experience it without the pressure of being a Director
- I think it's wise if you are a new member to live in the Community for a couple of years before trying a role on the Board
- Take it as an experience rather than a mission to try and change the world



- Bring your own skills to it
- I feel a steady approach based on experience is the best way to proceed forward

How much time were you spending being a Director?

By choice I was spending a LOT of time being a Director, especially negotiating with Council as a Project Manager.

In the past a Finance meeting could be 2 hours and we would meet 2-3 times a week! We have committees to help with such matters and delegation of tasks.

What wishes do you have for Goolawah moving into the future?

That Goolawah is financially successful. eg. where we didn't have to pay any levies at all. That we were sustainable.

With the change of circumstances, how are you now spending your time?

Less time on the iPad! I'm still involved in doing finances til June this year.

I'm spending more time with family and considering some travel in the future. We currently have a build on our site and I'm creating a Blacksmith workshop! I've also got a space set up for an Art Studio.

Art and bike riding are things I enjoy especially for relieving stress.

Thank you Wayne, for your valued contribution.

Fencing on Goolawah

Among many other wonderful attributes, *Goolawah* is distinctive for its lack of fencing, and it is this feature that really sets us apart from urban and rural residential developments where the instinct to fence the perimeters of every block of land remains as strong as ever.

Of course, most of us have small, fenced plots to try and keep wallabies and vegetables apart, but it remains generally true that nearly all 78 *Goolawah* lots have no perimeter fencing.

Our general lack of fencing leads to several benefits that support biodiversity conservation and the protection of wildlife. The absence of fencing on *Goolawah*:

- allows animals to move freely across our lots without getting trapped or injured. This aids in maintaining natural migration routes and access to essential resources like food, water, and shelter.
- helps prevent the fragmentation of habitats that can isolate populations and dampen genetic diversity within populations.
- reduces the risk of injury. Wildlife can get trapped, injured, or killed by fences, especially if they are not visible or easily navigable. Absence of fencing decreases these risks, leading to fewer incidents of animals getting entangled or injured.
- promotes ecosystem health. Unrestricted movement of wildlife helps in natural ecosystem processes like seed dispersal, pollination, and predator-prey interactions, which are vital for maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- preserves natural behaviours. Fencing can interfere with migration, foraging, and territorial movements. The absence of fences allows animals to exhibit their natural behaviours, contributing to healthier populations and ecosystems.

The lack of fencing here on *Goolawah* is really a happy circumstance that was originally gifted to us without much conscious planning – we just happened to buy properties that had no internal fencing. However, while we've had no specific rule or bylaw that disallows fencing, I suspect it has also been a point of some pride to most members that our lack of fencing is somehow emblematic of our deliberately non-suburban values. So, it's worth asking "How should we value and protect this remarkable asset?". At some point we could decide that it would be valuable to enshrine a 'few fences as possible' bylaw. Or, if that's not necessary, how might our fenceless culture be best conveyed to prospective members? This article could be a prompt to discussions around that (please let me know your thoughts), but here I want to just touch on what is known as 'wildlife-friendly fencing'.

A lot of the 'wildlife-friendly fencing' promoted by the agricultural sector is not particularly relevant to us. It includes advice like 'have your bottom fence strand at least 50 cm above the ground', which is obviously intended to help roos negotiate the kind of fencing that keeps cattle contained. Here on *Goolawah*, our needs are more for the kind of fencing that protects plants we value from those who would eat them, notably wallabies and bandicoots. For our situation, the WIRES organisation provides the following advice:

- Decide if you really need a fence? How will a fence affect the wildlife? If there are no animals to keep in or out, could a hedge or tree line do the job?
- Avoid placing wire fences on ridge lines, near feed trees, across wildlife corridors, over or near water bodies.
- Never use barbed wire.
- Use chicken mesh rather than individual strands – most roo hang-ups result from their back legs getting caught between the top and 2nd top strand.
- Make the fence more visible - white tape that flickers in the breeze catches roos' attention. Covering the fence-top in bamboo or polypipe defines it more clearly. Most importantly, keep the fence free of long grass – it's the inability to see a fence that is the biggest problem for fast-moving macro-pods.
- Fruit tree netting is also a form of fencing, and some choices provide for fewer hang-ups by birds, gliders, and bats. White is more visible than black, and the mesh size should be under 5mm - ideally something you cannot poke your finger through! Netting should be tight over a frame rather than hanging limply, so birds bounce off it rather than get tangled in it.
- Check fences and nets regularly. If an animal is caught up, and you need help, visit www.fauna.org.au to find a wildlife carer in your area.

Some useful links:

<https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-information/wildlife-friendly-fencing>

<https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-information/wildlife-friendly-netting>

<http://www.lfwseq.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Wildlife-Friendly-Fencing-and-Netting.pdf>

<https://www.wildlife-rescue.org.au/uploads/11/8/3/0/118305629/fencing.pdf>

<https://wildlifefriendlyfencing.org>

Nick Reid



ALBY'S WEED NOTES

Giant Rats Tail Grasses

They form large tussocks that can live for 10 years and can grow 200cm in height. Most Goolies know this grass too well, these persistent and invasive grasses are drought and fire proof, also invade open woodland, conservation areas and wetlands, unfortunately it's spreading seed throughout warmer temperate regions of Australia via machinery, stock feed, mud and water on cars, wildlife, etc. It came from Africa and has been in Oz since 1960s. Anyhoo, How To Manage It? Maintaining pastures in good condition reduces the chance of invasion, so the Red Hill ride on mowing days and slashing are one of the best ways to keep in check. Small infestations or isolated plants can be dug out (back breaking work though). It's a good practise to cut any seed heads and put them somewhere that they cannot germinate. I've had success in the past burying seed heads. Also, regularly whipper snipping the grasses to ground level with a bull horn blade for the thick clumps and normal whipper snipper for the smaller stuff as low as you can go seems to be effective in controlling them in gardens / food forests. If you do regularly snip smaller infestation areas of grass as low as the ground, consider a No Dig garden by smothering with thick newspaper and cardboard then placing mulch on top, after several months the grass will be dead and you can plant into this area. Cut grass can be used as mulch (minus the seed heads) and one can add dolomite to help decompose in a compost bin. Apparently.



This grass can be outcompeted by thick, shade giving plants like an established food forest canopy and burning can help (be careful burning, of course) You have to be careful with your back and knees dealing with this grass, maybe stretching, warm up and practice posture before digging out, snipping or using cut grass for mulching. A long handled shovel, mattock or hoe can be used to dig out / slice growing tips from roots depending on size of grass. I got given a small, handheld, electric chainsaw and keen to see if it works on the thick rats tail grass clumps. If you've worked out methods that work, please consider sharing on Phone tree. For more info and proper ID look up weeds AUSTRALIA GRTGrass on weeds.org.au. These are all non chemical practices mentioned. Safe gardening!

Regards Alby



If you haven't already checked it out, the **Goolawah G25 Cookbook** is now available on our website. There is also a hi-res version if you would like to get it printed. (Officeworks are very reasonable).

There are 25 recipes to celebrate 25 years of Goolawah Community, so a great opportunity to have fun trying some new recipes!

Mindful Moments: The Simple Power of Meditation

In the midst of our busy days growing families, tending gardens, caring for wildlife and managing our shared land, taking time to quiet the mind might seem like a luxury. Yet meditation—a practice as ancient as agriculture itself—offers profound benefits that can enhance our connection to the land, each other, and ourselves.

The Science Behind the Stillness

Research shows that regular meditation, even just 10 minutes daily, can significantly reduce stress and anxiety while improving focus and emotional resilience. For our older community members, meditation has been shown to support cognitive health and may help with age-related memory concerns. For our younger crew, it provides valuable tools for managing the unique pressures of modern life.

Brain scans reveal that consistent meditation actually changes our brain structure, increasing density in areas responsible for attention, sensory processing and self-awareness. Meanwhile, it reduces activity in the amygdala—our brain's alarm system that triggers stress responses. This could explain why long-term meditators often report feeling more centred during challenging situations, whether it's a disagreement at a community meeting or an unexpected problem with our water system.

Connecting to Country Through Contemplation

What makes meditation particularly valuable for our community is how it deepens our awareness of the present moment—the very same awareness that helps us notice subtle changes in plant health, wildlife behaviour, or shifts in our ecosystem. When we cultivate stillness within, we become more attuned to the natural rhythms around us. Many cultures and traditions worldwide have developed practices for mindful connection with the natural world. In our own context, we can develop meditation practices that enhance our relationship with the land we're privileged to care for. Try a walking meditation through our regeneration areas, observing without judgment how the landscape has changed over seasons and years.

Simple Ways to Start

The beauty of meditation lies in its simplicity. No special equipment needed—just a comfortable spot under a favourite tree, beside a dam, or in your own home. Here are a few approaches that might suit you:

- Breath awareness: Simply notice your natural breathing pattern for 5-10 minutes. When your mind wanders (as all minds do), gently return your attention to the breath.
- Body scan: Progressively relax each part of your body



from toes to head, releasing tension from muscles tired from physical work.

- Nature connection: Focus on one natural element—a leaf, the sound of birds, the feeling of wind—and explore it fully with all your senses.
- Gratitude practice: Spend a few minutes reflecting on what you appreciate about our community and land.

Meditation as Community Care

Just as we share work responsibilities, we can support each other's meditation practice. Consider finding a "meditation mate" to commit to regular sessions together. The accountability helps establish the habit, and there's something powerful about sitting in silence with others that deepens both the practice and our communal bonds.

As we work together to nurture our environment, perhaps taking time to nurture our inner landscape might be one of the most sustainable practices of all. After all, the mindfulness we cultivate helps us make more thoughtful decisions about resource use, conflict resolution, and land management—all crucial aspects of our cooperative lifestyle.

Getting Started Together

If you're interested in learning more, there are many of us here on Goolawah who have been practising meditation for many years and who will be happy to share resources suitable for beginners.

Let me know if you would like to join me for a regular early sit. We can meet in the *Last Resort* and sit in silence together.

Remember: Like tending a garden, meditation is a practice that grows with patience and regular attention. The fruits - greater peace, clarity and connection - benefit not just ourselves, but our entire community.

Anna

Out on the tracks with Jac (Episode 5)

I'm parked on the front deck, basking in the early autumn sunshine. Those crisp, dewy mornings have finally arrived, giving the macro-pods a fighting chance to get on top of the grass. It's been a relentless few months of break-dancing with whipper snippers, cursed ride-ons, and neck-biting ticks. Do they ever hibernate?

This summer, the insects have well and truly claimed the spotlight. In the sticky humidity, they're all over the Lilly Pillies, Hibiscus, and Lomatia flowers—buzzing, licking, and pulling off the weirdest mating dances imaginable. It's been a full-on insect rave out there.

Still, I'm grateful for the critter crowd here on the Co-op. Their presence is a sure sign of a healthy ecosystem, even if some of my trees would strongly disagree. But it's not like this everywhere. Globally, we're losing our precious bugs, flies, and bees at a worrying rate—and it's becoming a real threat to pollination. No bugs, no food. That's the short version. The decline is tied to climate change, habitat destruction, pesticide use, and even windscreen collisions (remember that?). Without insects, decomposition slows, natural pest control vanishes, and entire food chains are left hungry. Not good.

Here's a wild stat: there are over 5.5 million insect species thought to exist worldwide, but we've only identified about 1 million of them. In Australia alone, we've given names to around 200,000 insect species—so who knows what's still creeping about, unnamed, right here on Goolawah. Intrigued? You should be.



In fact, I've captured six local insects during my travels Out on the Tracks, and here's your challenge: **if you can correctly identify them all, you'll be crowned 'G-Citizen Scientist 2025'.** Glory awaits.

Here's a nifty graphic showing ways to get involved in citizen science. These projects are legit, and scientists love getting sightings from regular peoples. You could even help discover a new species and be forever famous.



The **iNaturalist app** is the easiest one I've used—just snap and upload. The AI does a decent job, and the boffins jump in to help identify the bounty.

Now Starring This Season: The Spiders

This edition's star goes to the spiders, who've been busily rigging up silk tripwires across every path I ride. My current favourite (for today, anyway) is

the Golden Orb-Weaving Spider. Her shimmering golden threads span the tracks, forcing sudden bike stops and prompting full-body shudders while I do frantic face-pats searching for hitchhikers.

After the panic subsides—and you remember the trees are watching—you see her. Calmly centred in her concentric masterpiece, round abdomen glowing, golden-jointed legs elegantly poised. She's magnificent. *Exhale.*

Back at home, we've unofficially adopted our own backyard beauty—*Spinderella*. She's survived multiple clean-up sweeps thanks to my love of gold threads (note to self, fellow spiders). It's definitely a "she"—Wikipedia told me so—and the cluster of tiny males lingering on the edges often become a midnight snack after date night. Over the past couple of months, I've watched her golden booty grow with a mix of awe and horror, wondering just how many suitors she's devoured for the cause.

Golden Orb-Weaving Spider — *Nephila plumipes*

- **Size:** Females up to 4–5 cm body, 15 cm leg span; males are tiny and are often eaten after mating
- **Colour:** Golden-brown body with dark, tufted legs
- **Web:** Huge, golden silk webs (over one metre wide), incredibly strong—being studied for use in things like bulletproof vests
- **Habitat:** Gardens, forests, urban spaces — between trees, fences, even deck chairs
- **Behaviour:** Non-aggressive, prefers to stay in her web
- **Bite:** Rare and mild - more of a surprise than a problem
- **Diet:** Flies, mozzies, beetles - all the annoying stuff
- **Season:** Visible in late summer through early autumn
- **Bonus:** That shimmering golden silk - both spooky and stunning



Weed Watch @ Goldmine: Amaranth Species

On recent visits to the Goldmine site, I've noticed two things: an ever-growing number of green waste piles... and the increasingly prolific plumes of **Amaranth**.

This plant had a nostalgic moment on *Gardening Australia* (March 2025), where Costa Georgiadis recalled it as a staple from his childhood. The young leaves were often steamed with a drizzle of olive oil and lemon or thrown into a wild weed pie - like the one in Anna's recipe from the latest G-25 cookbook. Costa's grandfather always had it growing in the garden, and it's easy to see why:

Amaranth is hardy, edible, and fast-growing.

But — and this is the important part - **it also spreads rapidly**. Each plant produces a huge number of seeds, which, while useful in baking, can travel far and wide. Its success here on Goolawah is a strong indicator of its **potential to become a weed of concern**.

I've already chopped back a few, but it's proving persistent. So, here's a call to action:

- If you planted it (or know who did), please **eradicate it now** before it spreads further and requires more serious intervention. That includes collecting and properly disposing of the seeds — either by **cooking, baking, or solarising** them to prevent germination.

Need help or advice? Reach out to someone from the GECO group - we're here to help manage these situations before they get out of hand..

Jac



A commonly grown ornamental vine and some native alternatives.

WISTERIA - *Wisteria sinensis/floribunda*

Many plant Wisteria for the large clusters of fragrant flowers which appear in drooping racemes before the leaves.

Wisteria is a vigorous long lived twining woody climber which requires a sturdy support. They can grow to 20 metres high and 10 metres wide: although the world's largest Wisteria in California measures over one acre! It was planted in 1894 and is still going strong.

The lessons here are:

- Be sure you want this plant as it will live longer than you!
- Unless managed well it can escape your garden and invade surrounding bush (you may have noticed it growing in the gum trees on the roadside opposite Berrys Lane when in flower)
- Dispose of prunings carefully as they can propagate from cut off stems
- Seeds are toxic to humans and animals



NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

NATIVE WISTERIA - *Callerya megasperma* - Native to Northern NSW, Southern Qld, evergreen glossy leaves, bee and butterfly attracting, flowers late winter to spring. Tolerates light frost.

FRASER ISLAND CREEPER - *Tecomanthe hillii* - A rare native to SE Queensland, it thrives in a warm subtropical environment but will tolerate cooler temperatures and even light frost. A twining evergreen climber with glossy leaves and showy pink bell-shaped flowers in winter and spring. Thrives in full sun to part shade but prefers protection from afternoon sun. Pollinated by bees and nectar feeding birds.



BOWER OF BEAUTY - *Pandorea jasminoides* - Native to the East Coast from Port Macquarie to Cairns although it will grow well outside this range. Beware! It is a useful screening plant as it's a vigorous spreading climber but requires pruning to keep under control. Glossy evergreen leaves and clusters of large trumpet shaped flowers in spring/summer attract bees and butterflies.

Lee

Getting to know you:

Tjala Rosenstein

Parents: Christina and Marc

How old are you?

I am 16, nearly 17

When did you come to Goolawah?

We came when I was 13 years old in 2021

What are 3 main areas of interests for you?

1. Mountain Bike riding
2. Socialising - hanging out with friends and meeting new people
3. Gym/ Working out. Trying to better myself. Self Improvement

What do you like best about living at Goolawah?

After moving around a bit, it's nice to have a permanent place to call home. My favourite thing is that the property continually evolves and there are always things to do to develop it.

What do you find challenging about living at Goolawah?

The distance away from town and friends.

What is something you would like to see get developed at Goolawah?

A surf group. So a group of us can all jump in one vehicle and go surfing together

What are 3 hopes and dreams you hold for the future of Goolawah?

1. To see more young people here. To have more teenagers to socialise with.
2. A swimming pool to train in.
3. A Tennis court. I like that we have a volleyball court.

What is something you've done you feel proud about?

Sticking to the thing I love doing - Mountain bike riding and training.

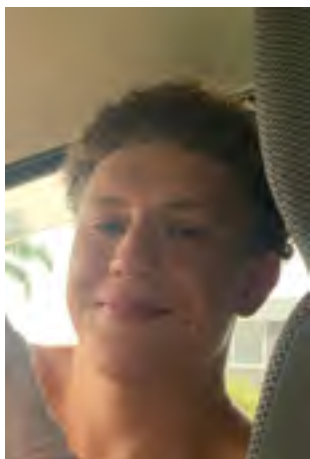
I am proud about the accumulation of achievements I've made and where I am at today.

What is it about Mountain Bike riding that you love?

I've loved it from a young age and looked up to others....

And now I'm becoming the person others look up to!

The Adrenalin is pretty mental. I love the travelling and have been to some pretty special places. I was in Europe for 2 months last year between October and December. I was riding some of the best bike parks in the world. It was exciting to see these places on TV and then the reality of actually riding them.... I definitely want to go back.



What is something you would like to get better at?

I've been working on trying to have more sympathy and empathy towards others

What is your favourite style of music?

It changes all the time. I have a wide range of music that I listen to. I like alternative - Australian Indie. Stuff that Dad listened to in the 80s and 90s. I try to choose music depending on how I am feeling.

Who are your favourite Artists?

• Old Mervs • Royel Otis • Skegs

If you were to create a special social event, what would be the theme?

Food from around the world. A multicultural theme. I like trying different types of food.

What is your favourite native animal?

A Koala comes first to mind. A big part of naming Koa has to do with the word Koala.

Also we have had a koala come right up to the back door of the house!

Where would you like to travel?

I'd love to go to the States - to witness the culture and mountain bike riding of course!

What makes you laugh?

A good joke. Mucking around with my mates.

Who is someone you really admire and why?

Two older friends were a big part of my life a few years ago. I feel like they have shaped the way I see the world. I admire my Grandad. I like how he sees the bigger picture. What matters the most at the end of the day. I can get stuck on the smaller details.

If you weren't concerned with what other people thought, what would you be doing with your life?

I'd be doing the exact same thing I'm doing now. With bike riding I am fully committed. It takes focus and hard work with training and building up skills. I want to be a professional bike rider and have it as my career!

If you had to write a book - what would you write about?

I'd write about what it feels like to be a teenager. The feelings and emotions that you go through.

When was the last time you left your comfort zone? How did you grow?

Asking my girlfriend out. I was pretty nervous but it was a good result! How I grew- if someone means a lot to you, to be able to express it and make it known to the person. Having confidence in myself and to think about what I say and how I say it.

ACTIVISM through ART:

Interview with Lee Albert by Tanja Tree-Fern

Can you tell me about your Artistic journey and how you came to be an Artist?

I think I've always been an Artist. As a child I used to do lots of drawing- quite realistic. I can remember drawing things for different Primary School Teachers....

My Mum was artistic so it's in our genes. She was going to do Commercial Art but then she fell pregnant and eventually had me. I am one of 8 children. My eldest sister paints and does photography.

It's only been recently that I've called myself an artist. I did a Diploma of Visual Art in 2021.

Did the Diploma change the kind of art you do?

Yes - I'd always done fine, intricate, realistic drawings. Exploring different mediums in the Diploma course opened up a whole new world to me ...

Oil paints totally captured me. I like the lushness of the paint. I'm also trying to be more expressive in my work.



What inspires you to paint?

The Australian bush - I have a deep love of it! My art is an endless search to articulate how I feel about it.

When I moved to Tasmania in 1991, I was really drawn to the uniqueness of the Tasmanian bush. It really opened my eyes to wilderness....

I don't in any way compare my love of the bush with Indigenous peoples belonging to country - but I do feel like I understand the connection.

Do you have a favourite landscape?

I love the dry open forest landscape - a dry sclerophyll forest! So I love the big old gum trees on Goolawah.

I want my process to be to spend more time painting outside IN the landscape....versus working directly from photographs.

What is your actual process?

At the moment I do work from my own photos and edit to get a good composition. Then I sketch out onto a blank canvas. I do gesso the canvas in a colour beforehand. And I actually prefer to work on wood rather than canvas. I've been trying to paint "Alla Prima" (at once), using wet on wet technique with oils.



Do you have a colour palette that you prefer?

I do have certain colours that I tend to use but it really depends on the scene I am using as a focus. At Goolawah, I use a lot of greens for eg. I really want to extend myself and become more experimental with colours.

What are your favourite tools?

I do like a palette knife.

I like it because it loosens me up and I can't fuss too much about finer details.

My wrist issues have taken me back to using a brush now and doing more mixing on the canvas rather than the palette....

I also love using charcoal and getting messy with it!

What is it that you love about Charcoal?

I like using the side of a stick - the big loose sweeping strokes I can make! I enjoy subtracting (erasing) with it as well to make highlights.

What subject matter do you like doing with charcoal?

- Portraits, Animals, Birds etc,



Can you share a pivotal moment in your career that had significantly influenced you?

At the end of the Diploma, I exhibited 2 paintings for a special exhibition at Coffs Harbour TAFE. It was a pivotal

moment because I felt from the feedback that I got, that I really could call myself an Artist.

How would you describe your style?

Impressionistic but representative. I'm trying to lean more towards Impressionism.

When you look at a scene, what are you trying to draw from it in your painting?

I am trying to convey a feeling I have when I'm in the bush.

My favourite painting is road side trees near a town called Moree. It's a small painting 10cm x 15 cm. I did it with a palette knife. I like how loose and expressive it is.....

I find some of my favourite works are when I haven't thought about it too much and something happens where it just works!!!

If I try to over direct it, I can actually lose my direction and it gets tight and lifeless.

How do you handle creative blocks?

Trying to get out into the bush more, taking photos, drawing. I want to spend much more time painting and really refine my process.

Who are people that influence you?

Mandy Martin was an Australian painter that lived west of the Blue Mountains. She made me realise that you can use your Art as a vehicle for Activism. One of her paintings is in Parliament House! She collaborated with scientists and Indigenous Peoples. I find her work very powerful, textured and dramatic.

Where would you like to see your art take you in the future?

I don't have any grand goals. I'd just like to spend more time painting and sell my works. Maybe have an online space and exhibit. I'd just like to be happy with what I am painting.

Do you have any other interests that influence your art or vice versa?

Yes - I love native plants in my garden. You can also see earthy, neutral colour choices in my interior decor...

How do you collaborate with other Artists?

I try and find people who think the same or have similar values to connect with. A theme can unite a group eg. the "Walking Together" exhibition in Bowraville that I was involved in. The art was responding to the referendum in Parliament to have a specific *Indigenous Voice*. The art was varied; mixed media, sculpture, painting etc. it is definitely something I would like to do again.

I'm interested in collaborating with scientists and environmentalists on a particular cause.

What inspires you most at Goolawah?

Having access to the bush, right at my doorstep. Being able to share art and artistic experiences with others.

February Working Bee

It was AWESOME to see soo many turn out for work at the Pump Track, Last Resort and Boomerang Garden!

Thank you Dennis for the wonderful job you have done with Red Hill's new letterbox!!!!



Article presented by Natalie Lawler as part of the 2025 TEDx talks in March.

Dementia is not a single disease, but a term used to describe a set of symptoms caused by various neurodegenerative conditions, such as Alzheimer's, Lewy Body Disease, and vascular dementia.

The number of people living with dementia is set to soar globally from 57 million in 2019 to an estimated 153 million by 2050. The absolute number increase is due to the aging population; however, the proportion of people living with dementia is decreasing due to improved vascular health and early education.

Only 1% of dementia cases are due to genetic mutations, so your great-aunt's dementia doesn't necessarily mean you're next. Growing evidence suggests that 45% of dementia cases could be prevented or delayed through changes to lifestyle and managing specific risk factors. Education, or rather the lack thereof, is a notable risk factor for dementia. People with lower levels of education are more likely to develop dementia later in life. By ensuring quality education from an early age, society can provide an effective shield against cognitive decline. Similarly, lifelong mental activity, such as engaging in cognitively stimulating occupations or hobbies, or attending Goolawah Tedx talks, helps maintain brain health well into old age.

Hearing loss, which is often overlooked, has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia. Hearing aids, therefore, are not just a tool for hearing better but a preventive measure against cognitive decline and probably numerous domestic arguments.

Treating depression effectively and addressing social isolation can significantly reduce dementia risk. Low social engagement is a risk factor for dementia, and high social engagement is a protective factor. So, the next time you hesitate to attend a community event, remember; it's not just good for the community, it's good for your brain too.

The role of physical health in dementia prevention cannot be understated. Obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol all increase the risk of developing dementia. Regular physical activity, including a mix of aerobic exercise and strength training for at least 150 minutes per week, is one of the best defences. Exercise has a direct impact by increasing blood flow to the brain, changing biomarkers, enzymes, hormones, and increasing brain volume, and indirect impacts through cardiovascular improvements and psychological wellbeing. The good news is that even if you have been sedentary in the past, becoming more physically active later in life can reduce your overall risk.

A reduction in smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can also contribute to a decrease in dementia incidence. However, my research found inconclusive evidence that long-term cannabis use

elevates the risk of dementia later in life.

Environmental factors, particularly air pollution, are another significant, yet often ignored, risk factor. Research shows that cleaner air correlates with better cognitive health and a reduction in dementia risk. Living in Goolawah, surrounded by nature's best air filters, we've all got this risk factor well covered.

A life-course approach to dementia prevention shows that the earlier we intervene, the better. However, it's never too late to make changes. Midlife and even late-life interventions, such as managing blood pressure, treating diabetes, and maintaining social engagement, continue to offer significant benefits. New research also suggests that tackling untreated vision loss can reduce dementia risk, so don't put off buying a new pair of glasses.

In 2023, dementia accounted for 9.1% of all deaths in Australia, just behind is ischemic heart disease at 9.2%. For Australian women, it's already the leading cause of death. With no cure in sight, prevention is our strongest weapon.

We need to think of our brains as a muscle. Exercise it and feed it well. Engage in activities that challenge you. Socialize, move your body, and prioritise what's good for your heart, because what's good for your heart is good for your brain.

Goolawah provides an ideal backdrop for taking control of our cognitive futures.

Whether it's by staying connected with each other or trying to keep up with Larry jogging or playing cards, we can reduce our risk of dementia and live out our years with clarity and purpose.

In summary the 14 modifiable risk factors are;

1. Less education – so engage in cognitively stimulating activities
2. Hearing loss – ensure you decrease your exposure to harmful noises and see if you need hearing aids
3. Visual loss – visit the optometrist regularly
4. High LDL cholesterol – Detect and treat
5. Depression – Detect and treat
6. Traumatic brain injury – wear head protection on bicycles or when playing contact sports
7. Physical inactivity – get moving
8. Diabetes – avoid excess consumption of dietary sugar
9. Smoking – reduce or cease
10. Hypertension – detect and treat
11. Obesity – maintain healthy weight
12. Excessive alcohol – reduce intake
13. Air pollution – reduce exposure
14. Social isolation – live in a supportive community

Thank you.

This event was so well received that there are plans for it to be an annual event! Thank you Natalie for organising it.

Griff turns 70

What a really special event this was - not only to celebrate a milestone birthday with friends and family but also the beautiful acoustic performance by the *Goolawah* vocalists from our band. It truly was the perfect afternoon and a big shout out to Narelle for all her time and effort in organising this momentous occasion...



Goolawah's Inaugural 'Nearly' Half Marathon

The first-ever *Goolawah* Nearly Half Marathon was held on Easter Monday, with participants running, walking, or riding between 1 and 7 laps through the Outback and along Forest Way, starting from the camp kitchen mailbox.

Narelle set a cracking pace from the start, running two strong laps and nearly keeping up with the cyclists. Tjala and Marc made an impressive jogging duo, showcasing their athletic form the entire way. Tjala went the full distance—literally—completing an additional 8th lap to clock a full half marathon.

James demonstrated sheer determination, pushing Lilyanna in the cart and graciously picking up a few extra passengers along the way. Meanwhile, in the mature division, Larry's consistent daily training paid off as he confidently completed multiple laps.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined in—whether on foot or wheels. Let's lock it in for next Easter Monday!

Natalie



Being vegan in a non-vegan world

TEDx TALK

Article presented by Narelle Allison as part of the 2025 TEDx talks in March.

Good evening everyone,

All vegans are different, and have their own reasons and stories about how and why they became vegan. I don't speak for any other vegans. This is just my story...

I haven't always been vegan. Before the 29th of May 2014, I would have told you that some of my favourite meals were lamb roast, chicken burgers, and fish'n'chips...

So what changed?!

Some might describe it as having an epiphany... or a light-bulb moment... I would describe it as... this sudden overwhelming awareness of...

Seeing. Animals. NOT. As. Food.

Seeing. Animals. NOT. As. Food.

Have you ever had a sudden change of a life-long held belief?!... It can be quite a shock!... For me, this was a life-changing moment.

No. Longer. Seeing. Animals. As. Food.

Instead of seeing a pig and saying "mmm bacon" - it becomes, seeing bacon and saying "that used to be a living being".

When we see ALL animals as living beings who feel fear and pain just like we do... just like our beloved pets do... suddenly the avalanche of questions start...

Why do we think it's OK to eat a select group of animals such as chickens, cows, pigs, and sheep. But want to protect other animals such as koalas, whales and dolphins?!

Why do we think it's normal to drink milk from another species, such as cows milk, but we would think it was reeeally weird if our own species of milk was being served at the local cafe?! Would anybody get that latte?!

Why do we think it's cruel to hurt this group of animals over here, such as our pets - but OK to kill, and then eat, that group of animals over there?!

Obviously, there were many more questions, but I've only got 5 minutes!

When this shift took place for me, it was huge, and I was moved to tears... I went through all the stages of grief...

Suddenly my circle of compassion expanded. It expanded out beyond people... and beloved pets... and select wildlife... and the animals that we use for entertainment... and those that we conduct medical experiments on.

It expanded just that bit more to now include those who were previously excluded - the animals that we eat - aall the billions upon billions of animals, whose voices and cries don't get heard.

I decided to not just stop eating animals that day. I also decided to stop eating anything else that comes from an animal such as eggs, milk and cheese. This is because each of these industries violates the animals - and their babies - in some way or other, in order to get that product, and then they are all sent to the slaughterhouse anyway.

Even if animals have had a good life and been humanely slaughtered - their life has still been cut short so that we may eat them - and I decided that I didn't want to eat them anymore.

Being different in society for whatever reason, can be a challenge. However, I'm thankful I have been able to make the decision to be vegan in a time where there is... abundant food available... so many vegan options to choose from... and so many ways to veganise pretty much any meal you can think of.

If you've ever found yourself wondering about veganism, or you've asked yourself those same questions that I did - there are a lot of resources out there where you can find out more:

There's a TEDx talk by Dr Melanie Joy - plus various books of hers including one called 'Why we love dogs, eat pigs, and wear cows', where she coined the term Carnism... Carnism is defined as a prevailing ideology in which people support the use and consumption of animal products, especially meat... Carnism is presented as a dominant belief system supported by a variety of defence mechanisms and mostly unchallenged assumptions.

There's a book called 'Vystopia - The anguish of being vegan in a non-vegan world' by Dr Clare Mann, an Australian psychologist who coined the term Vystopia... A noun used to describe 1. An existential crisis experienced by vegans arising out of an awareness of a trance-like collusion with a dystopian world. And 2. Awareness of the greed, ubiquitous animal exploitation, and speciesism in a modern dystopia.

There's also loads of other vegan public figures such as professionals in the medical and sporting fields, authors, artists, and activists that you can easily find on social media platforms.

There's documentaries such as *Earthlings*, *Cowspiracy*, *Lucent*, and *Forks over Knives*.

Plus, sooo many vegan cookbooks.

Be aware that the documentaries can be confronting and hard to watch. Then again, if we can't watch where our food comes from - should we even be eating it?! Just asking another question...

I don't miss my old favourite meals, because I have new and better ones, and my only regret is that I didn't become vegan sooner.

Thank you for listening!



Goolawah Alphabet

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

This fun reflection of Goolawah surrounds in an Alphabet format is a continuation of Peter's work from Nov 2021!

N for

NATIONALS - the locally rusted-on, short-sighted political party that defends coal mining forever and pretends to care about our environment .

NEVERTIRE - our newly-sealed (two-thirds) pride and joy access road, which will hopefully live up to its name.

NOBBY - DELICATE, local beach and ocean rock formation, and what a racy name!

NORTHGATE - northerly internal road leading to Co-op boundary and cattle grid, denoting the limit of Goolawah civilisation as we know it.

O for

ORANGES - like LEMONS, grown all around the Co-op, so vitamin C intake of Goolies is assured, and no scurvy cases reported so far.

ORCHIDS - growing wild and in abundance in our forest, Flying Duck is a favourite.

OPPORTUNITY - for the Co-op to showcase world's best practice low-cost land sharing!

OWL - boobook, sometimes heard at night, around dawn or nightfall.

P for

PARROT - GREEN, with their wonderful, subtle plumage, occasional visitors.

PLOVER - or MASKED LAPWING - the most annoying bird ever: ground dwellers, a couple will take possession of some turf and raucously attack any other being that dares to come by, even at night they aggressively squawk at the world to stay away!

PORT - MACQUARIE, our sophisticated shopping town at the south end of Maria River Road, with its scenic Hastings River ferry crossing, major hospital and mega-Bunnings.

PYTHON - DIAMOND - beautiful patterned skin, non-venomous snake, sometimes seen on our land.

POH

Kevin's Goolawah sketchbook

The Co-op Concrete Mixer.

Must be a 1950's or 60's build that has been used by many Goolwarians on many jobs. Despite its derelict appearance it still works quite well.



Community Living Study

Savannah Fishel came to Goolawah in February. She chaired an afternoon meeting in the Camp Kitchen attended by about 30 Goolies.

Her findings can be found on her website: thinkitforward.net

Care, conflict and collaboration: insights into community living from the US and Australia



The new Red Hill Letterbox superbly crafted by Dennis with Denise's support

“What Are We Able to Sustain?”

Article presented by Jac Larsen as part of the 2025 TEDx talks in March.

Bang! It's all over. No more light. No more life as we know it. The end. Or so we think.

Because, of course, every ending is also a beginning. Science says so. Religion says so. Even that weird old guy at the bus stop who smells like onions and wisdom says so. Death begets life, and life begets death, in a cycle as relentless as bad reality TV.

Which brings us to the real question:

What are we able to sustain?

Oh, we love that word—sustainability. We slap it on everything from dish soap to economic policies. “Sustainable energy,” “sustainable growth,” “sustainable relationships” (ha!). But let's be honest: we humans have the attention span of a goldfish on caffeine. We struggle to sustain eye contact, let alone an entire planet.

But let's zoom in. Imagine a place, let's call it *Goolawah*. A community. A little microcosm of life itself. People here talk about two groups: the happy ones and the not-happy ones. But who decides? Happiness isn't a status. It's a mood swing on a cosmic scale. One minute, you're in blissful ignorance; the next, you're staring into the existential abyss, wondering why wallabies keep appearing from the asset protection zone!

Goolawah is, in reality, one thing: a collective hallucination. A womb-like cave where we pretend we are separate but, in truth, we are bound—by gossip, by myth, by the stories we whisper to ourselves about who we are and why we matter.

And we do love a good story.

We tell ourselves we own our lives, as if life were a *Netflix* subscription that expires when we forget to pay the bill. We say things like, “This is my life,” or, “I could lose my life,” as if we weren't simply borrowing it for a brief, messy moment in time.

But let's take a breath. Literally. Do it. Inhale. Exhale. That air? Not yours. Never was. It's been breathed by millions before you. By warriors and poets. By Shakespeare and Angelou. By prehistoric kangaroos and ancient eucalyptus trees. It moves through all things, weaving us together in an unbreakable thread.

So, again, **what are we able to sustain?**

Ourselves? Barely. We are self-destructive by design. We build institutions to control our chaos, only to rebel against them. We create rules just to feel the thrill of breaking them. We hoard wealth and resources, forgetting that no one takes their bank account to the grave.

The planet? Well, that's cute. We talk about “saving the Earth” as if the Earth were a fragile rabbit in need of rescue. But the Earth does not need us. We could vanish tomorrow, and the forests would grow over our concrete skeletons, the oceans would swallow our cities, and the cockroaches—oh, the cockroaches—would throw a housewarming party in our honour.

So perhaps sustainability isn't about keeping things as they are. Maybe it's about embracing change—understanding that everything dies everything transforms, and everything continues, just in a new shape. Maybe, as Einstein suggested, we don't really die. We just shift, our energy scattering into the next great story.

And maybe—just maybe—our job isn't to sustain. It's to surrender. To let go of the illusion of control and simply participate. To be here, truly here, and laugh in the face of impermanence.

Because we all die someday. But our energy? That's another story. And who knows what wild, beautiful thing it will sustain next?

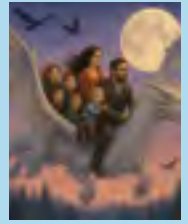
Thank you.

Words by JJ el-Max & CI 2025

Living with Bipolar

Article presented by Aliya Tribe as part of the 2025 TEDx talks in March.

Hello, I'm standing here today not just as a speaker, but as a mother, a wife, a maker, a dreamer, a gardener, a homeschooler... and a person living with Bipolar I.



That last part, bipolar, often gets framed as the headline. Like it defines everything else. But in truth, it's just one thread in a very intricate tapestry. One thread, yes, but it's bright, it's intense, and sometimes, it tangles everything else.

For me, bipolar isn't just a diagnosis. It's a lived rhythm. A fluctuating dance between extreme light and deep shadow. There are days when I feel like I'm flying, like I'm tapped directly into the source of all creativity, all joy, all life. Ideas pour out of me, game concepts, kids' book characters, business visions, spiritual insights. I can feel the whole universe pulsing with meaning.

It can be intoxicating. It's not just feeling good, it's feeling transcendent. But that high always comes with a cost. Because the energy that lifts me so high can also unravel me. It can push me past healthy limits of sleep, of routine and of reality. The bright light of mania doesn't just illuminate, it can burn.

And after the light... comes the dark.

The depressive episodes feel like someone pulled the plug on my soul. It's not just sadness, it's flatness, fatigue, the sense that all that vibrant connection has vanished. In those times, routine becomes my lifeline. Anchors like brushing my teeth, getting dressed, putting a load of laundry on, making lunch and dinner, those are victories. And in the middle of all that, I parent five children.

I homeschool. I cook meals. I plan little adventures, and I teach my kids about mindfulness, because I know, deeply, what it means to live with a storm inside you, and how important it is to find stillness. I live on a shared property with no cloven-hooved animals allowed, yet I'm dreaming up ethical ways to keep sheep. I bake sourdough bread. I'm designing a floating sauna wellness business. I'm exploring assistance dogs for mental health and asking how I can turn every challenge into something beautiful and useful.

I'm also spiritual. And that adds another layer to this journey. Sometimes what looks like mania from the outside, racing thoughts, spiritual visions, a sense of cosmic connection, feels like something sacred from the inside. A Kundalini awakening. A door cracking open to something greater.

And then I ask myself, is it possible to hold both truths?

Is it possible that some experiences are both clinical and spiritual, both disruptive and divine?

I think... yes. But it takes discernment. It takes grounding. And it takes support.

Living with bipolar means learning how to navigate extreme states while keeping my feet on the earth. It means knowing that sleep is sacred. That medication can be a gift. That routine isn't boring, it's essential. And that asking for help is not weakness, but wisdom. It also means learning how to channel that incredible energy, that fierce life force, into meaningful, sustainable, gentle action. Not burning bright and crashing hard. But burning warm. Burning wise. So what is it like to live with bipolar?

For me, it's like riding a dragon and raising a family at the same time. It's building a life that can hold both fire and gentleness. It's learning, every day, how to dance with something wild, not by taming it completely, but by building a relationship of respect.

I'm not broken. I'm complex.

And I believe that our stories, messy, luminous, real and raw, are part of what will change how the world understands mental health. Thank you.

What does Permaculture mean to me (Part 1)

Permaculture to me is a way of thinking (designing) and living (doing). Permaculture is about evolution!

It is about maximising the inputs of energy (sun / fuel / your labour), resources (water / organic material / your \$\$\$) and using them in as many ways or for as much time - before they are lost from the system or become waste products. Over time, the goal is that the system (your site) evolves - it survives, by becoming more resilient and more self sustaining.

All these concepts can best be understood by reading Mollison / Holmgren and the host of other permaculture contributors. After 20+ years of implementing the permaculture principles to our site, I would like to focus on the observations, in particular some of the transformations that could take a while.



As a picture tells a thousand words, I will start with the one of a much younger (and thinner) Laz. We are standing on what is now Judd and Leah's site, looking across ours - note the sole large Blackbutt in the background which

is on our border with Steve and Justine. We had just slashed the whiskey grass (*andropogon virginicus*) - that gave Red Hill its name.

I was looking forward to developing a blank canvas (site). The first task was to improve the soil, and the most obvious problem was - no shade. It is fair to say that I became obsessed (Rebekah's words actually) with the many 'Permaculture' leguminous pioneers.

Although I tried nearly all of them - it was the wattles



Green (*A decurrent*), Black (*A melanoxylon*), Silver (*A dealbata*) and Fringe (*A fimbriata*) that really transformed our site.

Along with the trusty caravan and shipping container (Photo 2), we set about planting well over a thousand wattles - most of which were struck from seed and planted as tube stock (see Photos 3 and 4). All of them were planted in a circular 'Mandala' pattern rather than straight lines. The system evolved, depending on where paths formed, what died or what survived (for many reasons).

As the canopy spread, happy (shaded) worms transformed the soil with all the bird / wattle 'droppings'. Over time, we harvested the dead wattles for firewood, and they are replaced as the years of seed drops spout after any wet season. You only need to plant one *Fimbriata* on your site and you will probably have them for life!

Finally, the photograph of now (Photo 5) some 23 years later - we replaced the wattle canopy with bangalow palms, native trees (bush tucker) and fruit trees. I let the odd wattle pop up... because I like them (and they are great firewood).

So what does Permaculture mean to me? It means - IT WORKS!!! And we have the before and after photos to reflect on. We are grateful that over the past 25 years, Goolawah has provided us with a home, a place to raise a family, a community and to evolve with Permaculture (that will have to be Part 2).

by Craig



Article presented by Griff as part of the 2025 TEDx talks in March.

Good evening everyone. Thank you Natalie for organising this event. I hope it is a big success. It's a great honour to be the first TED talk speaker at *Goolawah*. It's another first for me, personally, having been the first music performer on this very deck.

My subject tonight is something we are all very familiar with. MONEY. Money is always a problem, mainly because we feel we never have enough. What is money? Who invented it? Why does it play such a major role in everyone's lives. The most basic quality of money is that everyone wants it. When I was growing up back in England from 1955, money was on the list of subjects that were taboo. Nobody talked about money, sex, politics and religion. It was too vulgar to ask anyone how much they earned. In 2016 I went back to England to visit my daughter Rose who was doing the Aussie thing, working and living in London. I also caught up with my cousin Simon, who gave me a book called *Sapiens* by Yuval Harari, a Jewish history professor. He pointed out that money was an intersubjective reality - where subjective means in your mind. Inter means many minds. Money isn't a material reality, it's a psychological construct. Money and the value of it only exists in our collective consciousness, it's a figment of our imagination. This statement bothered me greatly, so I've been trying to make sense of it for the past 9 years. How can something so central to all our lives not be real? We just made it up and all agreed.

I have always been interested in the truth, and what is real. In the dictionary something is real if it is true, existing or occurring as fact, having an objective existence, genuine.

Of money, truth and reality are measured in purchasing power, rather than nominal value.

We use money as a measure for almost everything. Things that are described as being priceless have been given a monetary value, just to satisfy the accountants. This is reductionism at its worst. We believe that we can fix anything just by throwing enough money at it. But I would say to you, that money is the problem, not the solution.

Money is what motivates us, it gets us out of bed in the morning. We don't know how to live without it. Money is the most universal and most efficient system of mutual trust ever devised - hence trust is the raw material from which all types of money are minted.

We may not trust a stranger or a neighbour, but we trust the money they hold. If they have no coin, we have no trust.

As the human population increased, the rise of towns, cities and kingdoms meant people could specialise. Before coins became popular, people used shells, cattle, skins, salt, grains, beads or cloth. Up until the 1920's you could pay taxes in Uganda with cowrie shells.

Nowadays, the sum total of money in the world is \$60 trillion but coins and notes are only \$6 trillion. 90% of all money exists only on computer servers, a very fragile state of affairs.

This all worked reasonably well until the Industrial Revolution when more factory workers were needed, when more goods were created and hence more wealth. This led to a human population explosion. It took until 1800 for there to be 1 billion people, 1930 - 2 billion, 1960 - 3 billion, 1974 - 4 billion, 1987 - 5 billion. During the 20th century it grew from 1.65 to 6 billion and today is 8.2 billion.

In this time pigs, cows, sheep, chickens, cats and dogs numbers have increased substantially, whereas every other species has gone backwards towards extinction. Global life expectancy is now 73.5 years, in 1900 it was 32 years. So there are now 3 times as many people on this planet living half as long again as when I was born in 1955.

Coupled with our belief in money and its value, is that we have to grow our economy so that everyone can claim a larger share of the pie. This capitalistic belief in perpetual economic growth flies in the face of almost everything we know about the universe. The resources available are limited, so it's an impossible dream. Our politicians, whose only job is to pull economic levers, would have us believe this nonsense, yet we all fall into line, keep voting in the mistaken belief that they will fix it this time. They won't!!

To have growth, you need more people and more stuff for them to buy. What we do is relentlessly manufacture stuff that has short-term use and ends up as landfill, purely to make a sale and hence grow the economy. It is a mindlessly destructive exercise that we are all part of and responsible for. I put it to you that we are stuck between the rock and the hard place.

We were all born into this system and can't see a way to function without money. To grow our economy, we have to rip up, reshape and generally mess with our environment - all for something we invented, remember?

It can't go on indefinitely. The effect of our busyness is to overheat the planet. We discovered the CO² problem back in the 70's and knew then that action was urgently required. Since then, we have identified the culprits, had lots of talks and conferences but little concrete action. We are now emitting about twice as much CO² as we were in 1970.

Growing the economy destroys our environment. Our belief in growing the economy is our biggest problem. As long as we all want a bit more, as long as we are not satisfied with what we've got, it will be a BIG PROBLEM. And throwing money at this problem will not work. When money was solely a medium of exchange, it worked fine. Somehow it has become a commodity. Some of the problem is because we also invented CREDIT, a system that enables us to build the present at the expense of the future.

So our beliefs in money and economic growth have led to many advantages. But it's impossible for all 8 billion of us to have even the kind of cheap lifestyle that we have here at *Goolawah*. So we all have a problem in that what sustains us, money and the economy, will ultimately wipe us out.

How can we be part of the solution when money has become our measure of nearly everything.

So what are you, but the money you believe in...?



One of Lee's bush paintings

G25 Community Dinners



Throughout the year the Community Dinners have been well attended, with a wide range of delicious dishes based around a different theme each month. These events have been a huge success.



Roger Ball Memorial

To celebrate the anniversary of Roger's passing an event was held at the Bonobo Bar.

The occasion was marked by drinking some of the remainder of Roger's beer, kindly donated by Belinda.

The bottles featured a drawing of Roger by Trinh.



© Lee

Another beautiful piece by Lee

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