

Permaculture Cairns Newsletter

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR 10 YEARS



Care for the Earth, Care for people, Fair share the excess

Permaculture Cairns Incorporated Web Site: www.permaculturecairns.org.au

Contact is via email at info@permaculturecairns.org.au

MAY MEETING

Tuesday 18th MAY 2021 6pm for 6.30pm start.

Members free, please bring some nibbles for cuppa break, non-members \$5

**Venue: Endeavour Living & Lifestyle Building
Entrance via 37 Hoare Street Manunda**

There are procedures required for Covid19 which include taking temperatures and recording of names and phone numbers on entry. If you have any flu like symptoms please stay home.

AGENDA

Welcome - Local events EcoFiesta, Malanda Movie, Mission Beach, Mareeba Field Day

Electric Ants in Cairns – to be confirmed
Microgreens and Baby greens Demonstration
Weeds and ideas on control

Plant of the Month - Tropical Vegetables see article in August 2018 Newsletter

Meeting close 8pm now time for a cuppa and a chat with like-minded people

NEXT EVENT

MUSHROOM WORKSHOP SUNDAY 9.30 TO 11.30 - 30TH MAY

37 Hoare Street, ENDEAVOUR Living & Lifestyle Building

Grow your own Oyster Mushroom on Paper Pellets

You will create and take home 2 Mushroom packs of 2kg each including spawn

Everything supplied. Number of participants essential by 23rd May

Register for workshop at - info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Cost: \$40 please pay into Bank account by 23rd May

Permaculture Cairns at Cairns Bank BSB 704966 A/c 10009440

Report on the April Meeting

Satya did a great job demonstrating how to Prune, Spinter, Pleach and Marcott our trees.

He brought a tree and lashed it to a table and proceeded to demonstrate the various methods of pruning and propagating for trees, hedges and fruit trees. Followed by Information on equipment and tools.

A big thank you for your wonderful demonstration and coming out in the very inclement weather. He told me he had the chain saw to be sure he would get home to Kuranda. Thanks heaps Satya.

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PERMACULTURE CAIRNS

CALENDER OF WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

February Survey results and responses.

Can you help with any of the Topics please contact a Committee member. Justin Brennan, Jennifer Trezise, Craig Phillipson or myself- at info@permaculturecairns.org.au

Topics chosen by Members and Actions taken by Committee to inform

Tropical vegetables will be introduced at each meeting as plant of the month

Oyster Mushroom growing – May 30th, Sunday 9.30am to 11.30am at Endeavour

Small Space Gardening – come visit our display at EcoFiesta 13th June

Beneficial and other insects – June 20th 2pm at Manoora Community Garden. Free event

Aquaponics – July 20th Permaculture Meeting

Solar energy - Local news on Solar storage - August 17th Permaculture Meeting

To come

Seed Saving & Propagation, Soil fertility, Crop rotation, Garden Design, Worms, Pest management

Food Preserving & Fermenting & Cheese making,

Small Space Garden, Companion Planting, Verge Planting

Tropical Fruit, Beneficial Plants

Chickens & Native bees

Australian Rainforest Plants ID key usage

Demos and/or Presentations completed:

Weeds – March meeting - Weed Identification presentation.

Pruning trees and shrubs – April meeting

Aquaponic Gardener

Unlock your Ability to Harvest an Overabundance of Fresh, Organic, Spray free Food in 30 days or less from your own Backyard.

CLICK HERE



ROD WILL BE OUR PRESENTER FOR THE JULY MEETING, HE WILL EXPLAIN HIS NEW APPROACH TO AQUAPONICS AND ADVISE ON UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Permaculture Cairns has previously had workshops run by Rod and he has all the information you need to know about growing your own food. Don't miss his talk, be at the July Meeting

Mr. Rodney Ingersoll, OBE, B. App. Sc (Hons), CenvP

Rodney has multiple qualifications in Environmental Resource Management from Southern Cross University (SCU), won the alumni of the year award for Science & Engineering in 2017, volunteers as a SCU student mentor, is a Certified Environmental Practitioner and has **received several medals of honor** for his heart felt 20 years' practical work in the Community Development & Sustainability. (Food Security, Climate Change Mitigation, Protected Area Management, biodiversity, ecology etc.

Some of Rodney's greatest achievements have been teaching and assisting thousands of Papua New Guinea villagers through Community Development projects and courses including village water supply, land management, chicken farming, duck farming, fish farming, aquaponics, carpentry, village leadership, hygiene and sanitation, literacy, sewing, vegetable, potato, coffee, vanilla farming & establishing micro finance schemes and markets to sell their produce. Rodney has worked with the Salvation Army, Save the Children, Rotary International, Local, State and Federal Governments, and the big corporate mines.

Recently, Rodney was awarded with an unexpected honor- **The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire medal from her Majesty the Queen of England** for Community development, rural health and environmental conservation efforts in Papua New Guinea. Rodney has over the years also been awarded several other medals of honor for His commitment serving the community, remote health, environment and Sustainable Agriculture.

EVENTS THIS MONTH

SATURDAY, MAY 22, 2021 AT 2 PM UTC+10

Kiss The Ground Movie Screening

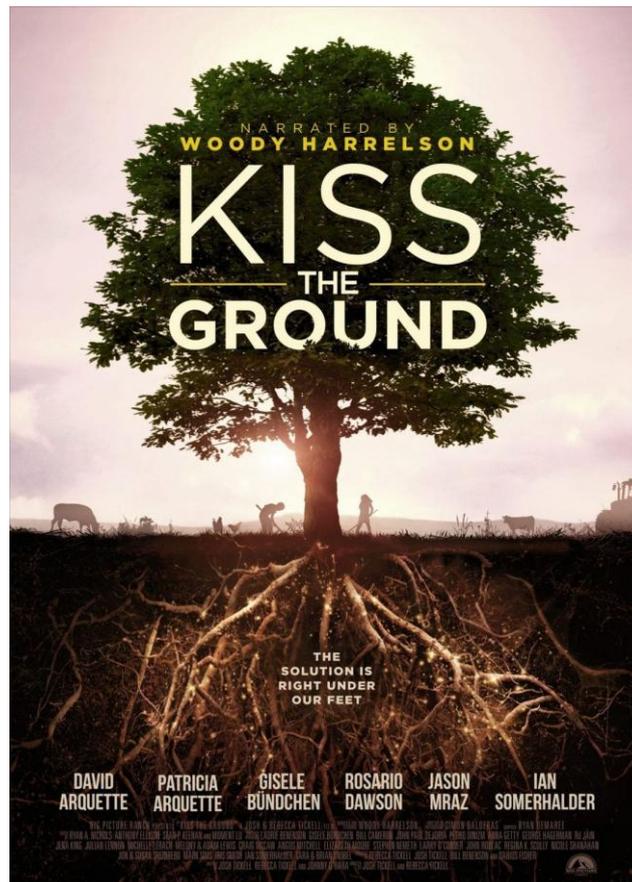
Majestic Theatre Malanda

Tickets · \$6 - \$12

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/kiss-the-ground-community-movie-screening-fundraiser-tickets-151581326829

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

The Malanda Chamber in collaboration with Wet Tropics Soilcare Inc are hosting a movie screening of Kiss the Ground. This is a community screening and a fundraising opportunity to raise money for Moyamoya Australia and Wet Tropics Soilcare Inc. Please come along, spread the word and be enlightened by regenerative farming and what simple steps you can take.



May 2021 Calendar of EVENTS

FNQ Community Exchange – LETS: Local Energy Trading System



Frog Safe Inc. - aka the frog hospital - 2 working bees - DATES: Sat May 15th & Sun May 30th
Location is in the Carmoo suburb of Mission Beach: 9:00am start would be great
Participants can be paid in books/dvd's or bartles (25B per hour of work)

The frog hospital (run by Frog Safe, Inc.) has been receiving sick and injured frogs since August 1998. Over 3,200 adult/sub-adult frogs have been turned in with all sorts of diseases and injuries plus hundreds of thousands of tadpole rescues. But the President's extensive experience with frog conditions means that she is called upon regularly to assist with cases all around the country plus some overseas countries! Now that the group is on acreage, they are working on cleaning up the invasive weeds and planting cassowary food plants. But they still need a lot of help with the ground's cleanup. If tree planting isn't your 'bag', there is also easy washing up of small items and buckets. Even housecleaning would be great since the President just doesn't have the time and is allergic to dust. - A suggestion is for a small group to carpool together to come and give a hand. A veggie/vegan lunch will be supplied. Beautiful Mission Beach is known for its many beaches so you can spend some time on the beach once the working bee is finished.

Contact Deborah at email: admin@frogsafe.org.au to RSVP and an info sheet will be sent back to you with directions and useful info for the day

RAVENSHOE – SATURDAY 8th May 12 – 2 pm - BBQ & TRADE AFTERNOON - Millstream Reserve behind IGA in Ravenshoe. There's a BBQ and sheltered area so bring a sausage etc. and items to trade. All essentials will be provided ie: baking paper for cooking on, utensils, sauce.

Contact Host Melinda Mahon: for further info and to RSVP: 0458 667 458

What to bring to Trade Events where not specified above:

food/drinks for yourself or to share, money at some venues (though 100% Bartles is encouraged), friends, Trading Record Sheet and pen or smart phone to enter trades directly, any goods you wish to trade, table/rug to display them and a chair at some venues, promotional material of any services you are offering if applicable, \$20 if you don't yet have an FNQ CES account (one-off fee).

Contact us if you are unsure about anything!

Do you want to host a workshop, working bee, trade event, film night, market stall, or other Community Exchange event? Contact us soon to discuss the possibilities!

May 20th Deadline for JUNE calendar.

Details to admin@mareebasands.com.au.com to be included in Calendar,

Website, Facebook, and other Promotions OR – 0419 729 732

- www.fnqces.org - www.communityexchange.net.au

From Admin (Bel, Katrin, Sharyn, Jenni)

Rotary FNQ Field Days

Held over three days - 26th, 27th & 28th May 2021 at Mareeba Rodeo Grounds.

The multi award-winning field days is the largest field days in Northern Australia - and it's all for charity!

A really interesting event, so check out the website for more info, [FNQ Field Days :: Home](#)

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Tropical Veggie Patch

Gardening in the hot, wet, humid Tropics

After all that rain: The soil in your garden beds has been very well watered and this can mean a lot of nutrients have been washed away, especially if there isn't any humus or clay in the soil. These two soil conditioners help hold nutrients, so when making compost be sure to add some clay to your mix. Check your pH, aim for 6 – 6.5, this is the sweet spot for all or most of the nutrients to become available to your plants. If plants look yellow or weak and spindly give them a drench of seaweed fertiliser and a hand full of manure to a square yard to boost nutrients. Some plants will be beyond redemption so start new plants.

What to plant now: Try direct seeding or seeding into pots for later planting out, amaranth, bok choy, pak choy, Darwin lettuce, rocket, corn, beans, Asian greens, cucumbers, radish, melons, mustards, Timor lettuce, tropical lettuce, watercress. Herbs to plant, all the basil, parsley, tarragon, mint, garlic chives, chives, coriander, lemon thyme, thyme, oregano and spices, turmeric, ginger, galangal, cardamom, vanilla, Pandan, bunching shallots and Five in one the substitute for Oregano. Seedlings are best started in full sun, but protected from heavy rain.

Composting: Compost all kitchen scraps, but be sure to have some hay, dried leaves, wood chips or sugar cane mulch to cover the wet scraps each time you add to the compost bin. Store shredded paper and torn cardboard for when you have nothing else. Turning is possible inside the bin with a Gardenmate or a garden fork. Insert into compost and lift and shake the contents to incorporate air for the microbes. It is possible to turn the contents if it is no longer than 100mm. Worm farms are good for small households with small amounts of waste. Keep mix moist but not wet.

Tropical Perennial Food Plants: Tropical perennials can be planted anytime in Cairns and district. These produce lots of greens without any troubles, try growing some as ground covers under fruit trees, Sambung, Brazilian, Okinawa, Ceylon spinach, are all good plants to us in the garden. Plants for shaded areas, Rungia, Lebanese cress and Water cress. Taller plants are Tree Lettuce, Timor Lettuce and Sweet Leaf, grown for the new tips and young leaves which taste like peas, the Moringa tree and three variety of Aibika shrub are easily grown. Root crops, cassava, taro, cocoyam and sweet potatoes.

Grow some flowers for the birds and bees: salvia, portulaca, marigold, coleus, sunflowers, basil all sorts, dianthus, five in one herb, bees also love flowering native plants, flowers on palm, pawpaw especially the males, bananas, shrubs and trees. I have native bees and they love salvia and portulaca and the butterflies love Pentas and Ixoras.

Carol Laing

Our Permaculture Cairns Patch *Manoora Community Garden*

Our first garden was started in December it was a fresh patch with weeds removed, after the first lot of rain it was infested with NUT GRASS. The garden was started by removing weeds, applying dynamic lifter, watering well and covering the bed with cardboard topped with wood chips. The nutgrass had germinated under the cardboard and come right through in great luxury on the dynamic lifter. All nutgrass was pulled and removed. The decision was to take on the nutgrass challenge and try planting heavily with groundcovers, shrubs small and tall and lots of Pigeon Pea, some pruned to grow straight up and provide shade and some pruned to become bushy and shade out the nutgrass.

During January and February, March the nutgrass was removed and mass plantings of tropical vegetables were carried out, including basil, sweet potato and moringa seedlings. Si kindly placed some pavers as stepping stones strategically through the patch, the gaps will be filled with wood chips.. In March

I pruned the pigeon peas either for overhead shade or to shade the ground the Brazilian spinach was spreading beautifully. Everything was growing really well.

If you are in the patch at any time you are welcome to remove any nutgrass. The garden is open every day until approx. 4pm.

Our next visit will be on the last Tuesday May 4pm to whenever we finish, we will organise the shutting and locking of the gate on that day.

A MUST READ

PERMACULTURE ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES EXPLAINED IN A RECENT ARTICLE EXPLAINING WHY A BUSINESS COULD NOT USE ONLY THE PRINCIPLES TO ALINE ITS BUSINESS WITH PERMACULTURE.

New post on SMARTER THAN CROWS

[Permacultural Appropriation](#) By Meg McGowan

Popularity comes with problems. Recently I have started noticing the word 'permaculture' turning up in places it was never meant to go. As with all things popular there are those that seek to leverage it for profit, and those that would attempt to attract the considerable support and credibility that alignment with permaculture might bring them. If you want to, you can align just about anything to the permaculture principles, but this won't legitimise it. Here's an example. See if you can guess which industry I'm describing against the Holmgren principles:

Observe and interact: Our business is based on careful observation and exploration with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of people. We interact with our environment and our customers.

Catch and store energy: This is our core business

Obtain a yield: Our yield is primarily composed of natural products put to their highest use.

Apply self regulation and accept feedback: We are in constant communication with our customers about their needs and wants and we are changing our business towards more sustainable practices as a direct consequence.

Use and value renewable resources and services: Our staff our our greatest resource and we leverage human potential to grow intellectual and social capital for our business. We are increasingly incorporating renewable energies into our business model.

Produce no waste: Our goal is a zero waste model with any byproducts from our activities being redirected, repurposed and reused. We are industry leaders in finding innovative uses for our waste products.

Design from patterns to details: We are constantly observing and mapping patterns in nature to identify new business opportunities and to maximise the efficiency of our existing business. We extensively use spirals and dendritic patterns.

Integrate rather than segregate: Our business integrates with rural communities and provides secondary employment as a consequence of our presence. We contribute significantly to social programs designed to build community, generate goodwill towards our business and to demonstrate our commitment to the environment. Examples include school gardens and community gardens.

Use small and slow solutions: We recognise that changes to bring us into better alignment with our sustainability goals need to happen slowly so that we can monitor for unintended consequences. We also seek to minimise any reduction in staffing levels or loss of secondary employment in the towns where we currently operate.

Use and value diversity: We support a diverse workforce that includes a higher than average number of immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Use edges and value the marginal: We have found ways to maximise efficiency on marginal sites that previously would have been considered unsuitable for our core business. We use 'edge effect' as part of our main method of operation to ensure efficiency and productivity.

Creatively use and respond to change: We are aware of a significant shift towards the need for more environmental visibility and we are responding accordingly. We also recognise the essential nature of our core business and the significant value it brings to people across the globe, particularly those in the majority world.

Nice language isn't it. Keen to support or invest in this business? What if I tell you that it's open cut mining? If you doubt me, go back and read through it again.....

This might seem like a bit of verbal trickery, but I recently saw a presentation where someone attempted to align their business with permaculture by doing exactly this: matching the principles to various aspects of the business while at the same time talking about 'early markets' and 'potential profits'. The presentation included slides showing underwater cities for human habitation. The arguments supporting the business reminded me of similar pitches I have heard for establishing colonies on Mars. There was no discussion of whether or not we might be better off just staying on the land. We are terrestrial animals and our energy can surely be better invested in restoring and rehabilitating the land we have already damaged. Haven't many of our problems been caused by humans redesigning things to suit themselves at the expense of the natural world?

So what went wrong? Well, the first problem was starting with the principles and not the core ethics. If the foundation of all design is care of the earth, care of people and fair share then this model is immediately on shaky ground. Much like a lot of what is happening in the 'social permaculture' sphere, there was plenty of talk about 'people care' but not much else.

We don't get to choose from the ethics. They are a framework that is meant to underpin everything we do. It's a tenet of systems thinking that humans will design systems to suit themselves if they are not constrained by an ethical framework. We're a selfish lot and inclined towards anthropocentricity at every turn. I read a popular 'social permaculture' book recently and was dismayed by the absence of any real commitment to earth care, or to placing limits on growth, shrinking our environmental footprint or sharing the earth's natural resources with all other living things. But apparently it was a recipe for human fulfilment so that's okay.

The ethics of permaculture are our DNA. There is a huge diversity in the way that DNA is expressed, just as there is huge diversity in the human family, but in the same way that an ape will never be mistaken for a human, calling something 'permaculture' will not ring true if the ethical DNA has been compromised. It's not just alignment we're going for here. The ethics can be practiced at a minimal level where they are nothing more than a hat tip to permaculture. Our challenge is to make those choices that BEST align with the ethics. Consider these examples:

Jana wants to grow her own food to reduce her ecological footprint and to improve the health of her family. She has already decided to avoid synthetic chemicals and to only use organically approved chemicals if it becomes absolutely essential. She has a choice between plastic irrigation tubing and establishing a sunken furrows as a pathway which will naturally catch and spread moisture. Which choice would be better aligned with the ethics?

Seth has back trouble and can't bend to ground level so he wants to install some raised beds. His choices include repurposed roofing metal, treated pine or hardwood. He also can't decide whether to leave the beds connected to the soil or whether to create wicking beds using geotech cloth and plastic piping. His mate, Gaz, says he should just plant directly into the soil and get himself one of those kneeling pads with the metal arms on it so he can get up and down more easily. Which choice would be better aligned with the ethics?

Markita has joined a permaculture craft group and notices that a lot of the craft activities involve using newly bought materials and result in purely decorative items being made. She wonders how she could shift the group to better align what they are doing with the core ethics. Her friends tell her that the group is just fine because it's very social and building community, and is therefore a great example of people care. Do you agree?

All of these scenarios need context and there are not always simple answers. That's the territory when it comes to ethically based decision making and it is one of the core challenges of permaculture. On a regular basis I revisit previous choices and find improvements, or discover that new information now makes my previous choices questionable, as has happened with the emerging news about micro-plastics. I also note that all three choices come with wealth and privilege. In the majority world you use whatever is to hand. Somehow you cope without plastic irrigation, wicking beds or craft activities.

We have added a definition to our teaching that doubles as a goal statement;

Permaculture is an ethically based design system for creating integrated systems that rebuild ecological health while providing for all living things

We are finding that this definition is also helping students to align with the core ethics. Notice that it doesn't specifically mention 'people'. That was a conscious choice. I wanted to use the phrase 'all living things' as a reminder that we are just one of the many animals sharing this planet, and to hopefully remove the false dichotomy of deciding between what people need and want and what the planet needs. They are one and the same. Every time we trade off against the needs of the planet we are operating outside the first ethic. Earth care is first for a reason.

I don't know anyone that manages to live in total alignment with the core ethics and I don't think that's their point. Much like the way great religions call upon us to hold ourselves to a higher standard of personal conduct, permaculture calls us to be better inhabitants of the planet. We must beware those inclined to permacultural appropriation. They will twist the framework to justify a conclusion they have already reached.

And this brings me to what I think is the final requirement of anything wanting to call itself permaculture; it must be able to demonstrate that the permaculture design process has been applied and that the outcomes proposed have been genuinely reached by applying that process. Starting with the outcome and working backwards is surprisingly easy, as you can see from the strip mining example above, but no legitimate permaculture design process would ever result in strip mining.

All good design starts with returning to those challenges facing humanity and with renewing our commitment to find the best ways to respond to them. This is the big pattern that guides all our work. The next stage is an appreciation of the particular context for our designing, and this might be anything from a balcony to the entire planet. Deciding where to draw these artificial design boundaries makes a difference. If I am only designing for my site then all kinds of choices seem defensible. When I design within the context of my broader community then sharing resources, time, energy and labour result in economies of scale that I could never achieve on my own.

Ultimately, nobody polices the word 'permaculture' and we must each decide for ourselves if anything truly aligns with the ethics first, and then with the principles. This is best done skeptically, where we seek and require clear evidence rather than relying upon opinions or anecdotes. The proof will always be what matters. Is there real, actual evidence of earth care, people care and fair share or are these just words used to push someone's personal or corporate agenda? And even if there is alignment, could anything be better aligned?

I think these questions are essential to the future credibility of permaculture. If we're not careful it will become just another shade of green wash.

News Roundup

The EV sector is on fire

Remember how in those old, classic James Bond movies a car would hit a bump [then explode like a bomb](#) and burn like the Hindenburg? Well, it seems reality has caught up with fiction after a Tesla hit a tree in Texas and burst into flames so persistent that a team of rescue workers using 30,000 gallons of water over four hours still couldn't extinguish them. The [news story](#) focused on whether the Tesla in question was self-driving when it crashed, killing two occupants. But surely the battery that an entire fire department can't put out using a swimming pool deserves some attention on the question of environmental as well as personal safety.

Please **PRINT – SIGN – SCAN and RETURN by email to** info@permaculturecairns.org.au.

Permaculture Cairns

Membership Form 2021

One year's membership fee - 1 Jan – 31 Dec:



- Household membership \$30 Renewing Member
- Individual membership \$20 New Member

Name(s) of all applicant(s) & DOB if under 18yrs:

.....

Postal Address:

..... Postcode:

Phone(s):

Email:

Signature:

Payment may be made at Meetings, at Cairns Penny or Online Direct Deposit to Permaculture Cairns A/c at Cairns Penny in Grafton Street. BSB704-966 A/c No. 100009440 please include your Surname as reference.

If you have a Permaculture Design Certificate could you please complete the following survey.

YOUR NAME:.....

Who was the Course Presenter:.....

When did you do the Course:.....

Where did you do the Course:.....

Enquiries

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You can join online and pay into our account or join at our meetings, third Tuesday of the month.