

Permaculture Victoria

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Australia

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Permaculture Victoria Annual Report 2020-2021

President's Report

Greetings to all members of Permaculture Victoria. 2020-2021 has been another challenging year for our permaculture groups and community based permaculture activities in general. This year we gained two new Permaculture Victoria Local Groups, these are Permaculture South West Victoria, and South Gippsland Permaculture.

The permaculture year was beset by the pandemic response, with lockdowns and all too brief reprieves, just when it was looking good for activities ramping up Delta put a stop to all practical activities.

With the onset of pandemic response, the world jumped to a state of shutdown leading to lower global emissions and reduced oil consumption for travel, things we could have wished for, although the serious aspects of the pandemic effects and response we would not.

The pandemic response has seen a move to zoom for online presence and activities. Some groups have embraced the online video meetings platform to keep social interactions moving, however a huge reduction in on-site social permaculture activities. Community gardens across Victoria, most of which have a connection to permaculture, have had varying success in keeping moving in these times, with some continuing to operate within the guidelines, whilst others have had unworkable restrictions. Community Gardens produce food, and have proven benefits to mental health, so should be classified as a essential service, as appeared in our September Buzz, The Australian Food Network organised an open letter to all federal and state health ministers and the Prime Minister, calling for community food gardens be declared essential services

Thanks to the dedication of all our Trunk committee members, we have maintained and strengthened our communication and management in 2020-2021

We have our member communications running smoothly and at this time have delivered 10 Buzz newsletters via our website and newsletter team. We deliver our newsletter via MailChimp and continue to strive to solve issues affecting readership. We wish to thank Heather Elliot, Meg Platte and Karen Cheah for their efforts through the year managing the newsletter, website and bringing the Buzz to the readership in fine fashion with the super editing skills from Heather. Heather Elliot is the Buzz editor with backup support from Meg, Karen and Mal. In addition Karen continues making improvements to the website.

Our central management team has been busy planning and organising the 2021 AGM . Our Grants policy was finalised and announced to members this year. All of the this year meetings were all held as online video meetings via zoom in keeping with the COVID travel & group numbers rules. Zoom also serves well for our geographical spread for the longer term ease for more committee members to be able to attend, we welcomed to 2 more LG reps to committee meetings. PcV committee is a happy, cohesive and productive team.

See the membership report below for all membership information. It has been great to see all the group's activities including the very active and regular Urban Harvest events, up to the lockdown, we do hope we can see all these on-site activities return but look to the online social engagement also enhancing our

activities. I congratulate those groups who have stepped up to the challenge and jumped onto zoom for their meetings and speaker sessions to keep their groups energy and connecting.. This is a real permaculture principle of seeing the challenge and making an opportunity of it and harvesting the benefits to wellbeing of our members by keeping them inspired and active through this new medium. Our facebook group is very active and has now grown to over 6700 members.

This year we have received reports from a range of our local permaculture groups, see below, our groups are: NERP, The Bee Group, Permaculture Out West, Benalla Permaculture, Eastern Suburbs Permaculture Group, Greater South-East Permaculture Group, South-East Suburbs Permaculture Group, Mornington Peninsula Permaculture Network, Mountain Districts Permaculture Group, Outer Eastern Permaculture Swap and Permaculture Carrum Carrum, Otways and Coast Permaculture Group, West Gippsland Permaculture Group, Permaculture South West Victoria and South Gippsland Permaculture

It is great to see all the groups coming along so well with their wide range of activities so do make sure to keep in touch with all their activities at www.permaculturevictoria.org.au and via the emailed Buzz. And well done! to all of you keeping your groups aloft in these times, we aim to have more engaging incentives down the line.

This year we approached Cenrelink to have Permaculture Victoria member activities registered as volunteer activities under Centrelink. For this to be considered we needed to take out Volunteer insurance which has become standard for all volunteer activities. This effort continues this year.

It is worthwhile to restate our mission at this point to ensure we are acting in accordance with it.

- Promote the application of permaculture principles in the design of communities and the landscapes that support them
- Support our members in the pursuit of those goals
- Network with like-minded organisations

I wish to thank all our committee and support role members who have dedicated their time so willingly this year, John McKenzie (Vice President, Permaculture Carrum Carrum Rep), Simon Walters (Secretary + Acting Treasurer),), Meg Platte (Group Liaison and Buzz Team), Heather Elliot (Membership Officer/ Buzz Editor), Liz Rivers (committee member) and for the last 2 meetings Michelle Fischer (LG Rep: Permaculture Out West, Terry Avery (LG Rep: West Gippsland Permaculture),

I hope all members had a great permaculture 2020-21 as we go from strength to strength & support each other to build our sustainable communities living in harmony with the environment.

Mal Boyd
President, Permaculture Victoria 2021

Membership report

New members receive a welcome email and the PcV *Food Growing Guide: Temperate Climate*, encouraging them to connect with their chosen or nearest Permaculture Victoria sub-group and also with our Permaculture Victoria Facebook group. Once ratified by Trunk, new members are officially welcomed in The Buzz newsletter.

In December 2020, recognising that most of us have endured hardships of some kind due to the Covid pandemic and lockdowns, we granted all members 6 months' free membership by updating their renewal due dates automatically. This followed our earlier (opt-in) offer of a year's free membership for bushfire- or pandemic-affected members, which was taken up by only one member.

Numbers

At 30 June 2021, Permaculture Victoria had **302** financial*

members, an increase of 30 over last year.

(*includes members who are up to 4 months in arrears)

Year	Financial members at 30 June
2020–21	302
2019–20	272
2018–19	270

The number of people joining as new or returning members was similar to last year, and lower than the year before.

Year	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	All year
2020–21	5	3	11	9	4	2	8	9	11	7	5	5	79
2019–20	9	5	5	12	6	2	4	11	3	11	8	4	80
2018–19	9	13	11	3	5	2	4	6	5	7	9	12	86

Group affiliation

At the end of June 2021 West Gippsland was the largest PcV sub-group, followed by Eastern Suburbs.

Eight groups grew in terms of member numbers during the year; three shrank.

All groups have a Facebook group except Mountain Districts, which has an e-newsletter.

Group	2020–21	+/-	2019–20	2018–9
Benalla Permaculture	22	+	11	12
Eastern Suburbs Permaculture Group	42	+	30	31
Greater South-East Permaculture Group	11	-	14	16
Mornington Peninsula Permaculture Network	29	+	27	23
Mountain Districts Permaculture Group	25	-	28	29
North-East Region Permaculture	32	+	28	15
Otways & Coast Permaculture Group	13	+	9	15
Permaculture Carrum-Carrum	23	-	29	29
Permaculture Out West	33	+	24	24
South-East Suburbs Permaculture Grp	9	+	8	8
West Gippsland Permaculture Group	46	+	36	39
Bee Group (currently in recess)	91	+	88	86
<i>Dual group members</i>	99	+	84	77
<i>Not affiliated with a PcV Group (most because there is no PcV group nearby)</i>	15	-	17	22

Bee Group is currently in recess, with no committee, but active on Facebook.

About one third of members are affiliated with two groups, two thirds with only one group, and a small number (15) with no group, in most cases because there is currently no PcV group near them – for example in Central Victoria and East Gippsland.

Reported by Heather Elliott, Membership officer, 30 June 2021

Officeholders

Committee

Mal Boyd	President
Leharna Black	Vice President (resigned March 2020)
Simon Walters	Secretary & Acting Treasurer
John McKenzie	Treasurer & Carrum Carrum representative
Liz River	Ordinary Member

Group representatives & other non-committee positions

Megan Platte	Group Liaison Officer & GSEP representative
Fleur Baker	Mornington Peninsula PG representative
Lucinda Flynnne	North East Region Permaculture (NERP)
Michelle Fisher	Permaculture Out West (POW)
Terry Avery	West Gippsland Permaculture (WGPG)
Heather Elliott	Membership officer

Committee Attendance

<u>Month</u>	<u>AGM</u>	Dec	Feb	Mar	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Mal Boyd	E	X	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
John McKenzie*	E	X	E	A	E	E	E	A	E
Simon Walters	E	X	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Liz River	E	X	A	E	E	E	A	E	E
Lehana Black	E	X	A						E
<u>Group representatives</u>									
Megan Platte	E	X	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Heather Elliott	E	X	E						E
Terry Avery									E
Michelle Fisher	E								E

X - Present

E – Present Electronically

A - Apology

* Both committee and group representative

Treasurer's Report

Permaculture Victoria Incorporated

P.O. Box 3020

Auburn, Vic 3123

Statement of Financial Position - PcV Only

As At 30th June 2021

<i>Assets</i>	Notes	30-06-2021	30-06-2020
Current Assets		\$	\$
Cash on Hand			
Bank Accounts			
Membership Account	1	20,765.46	22,784.06
Term Deposit	2	20,258.98	20,147.07
Total Cash On Hand		41,024.44	42,931.13
Merchandise for Resale		0.00	0.00
Total Current Assets		41,024.44	42,931.13
Property and Equipment			
Library Books	3	841.75	841.75
Computer Equipment at Cost	4	1,494.25	1,494.25
less accumulated depreciation		(1,494.25)	(1,494.25)
Total Property and Equipment		841.75	841.75
Total Assets		41,866.19	43,772.88
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Rebates held for groups without bank account	5	4,249.36	3,305.61
Rebates payable to groups with bank account	6	10.75	2,496.60
Grants & Committed Funds			
Clarkson Fund	7	5,947.74	5,947.74
Special Projects Fund	8	5,947.75	5,947.75
Total Grants and Committed Funds		16,155.60	16,934.62
Subscriptions paid in Advance	9	1,464.00	1,404.00
Other current liabilities		0.00	0.00
Total Liabilities		17,619.60	19,101.70
Net Assets		24,246.59	23,142.93
Members Funds	10	24,671.18	23,142.93
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit)	11	(424.59)	1,528.25
Total Members Funds		24,246.59	24,671.18

Permaculture Victoria Inc

Statement of Profit or Loss & Other Comprehensive Income - PcV Only

For period 01 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

		This Year	Last year
		\$	\$
<i>Income - Membership, and Sales/Donations</i>			
Memberships - current year	12	3,655.21	5,406.65
Memberships - paid previous year		1,404.00	1,544.00
Donation – PCV		235.20	317.40
Donation – Local Group		100.00	262.00
		5,394.41	7,530.05
<i>Income - Events and Grants</i>			
Festivals		0.00	0.00
Local Group Grants		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
<i>Income – Other</i>			
Miscellaneous Income		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
<i>Total Income</i>		5,394.41	7,530.05
<i>Cost of Income</i>			
Rebates paid to Local Groups		851.75	1,575.25
Rebates/Membership accrued or held over		560.75	210.75
Overpaid membership refunded		80.00	36.00
Local Group Grant		0.00	0.00
Stripe commission		221.87	79.99
		1,714.37	1,901.99
		3,680.04	5,628.06
<i>Gross Profit</i>			
<i>Expenses</i>			
Festivals		0.00	0.00
Communications (Telstra & Zoom)		233.63	72.00
Buzz editing		750.00	0.00
Depreciation		0.00	0.00
CAV annual statement		59.20	59.20
Insurance		3,500.00	3,480.00
Meeting Expenses (AGM)		0.00	0.00
Postage, PO Box & Shipping		136.00	0.00
Printing & Stationery		0.00	0.00
Payment on behalf of Local Group		0.00	0.00
Website		228.40	71.40
		4,907.23	3,682.60
		(1,227.19)	1,945.46
<i>Operating Profit (Loss)</i>			
<i>Other Income</i>			
Interest Income		111.91	75.49
Adjustment		0.00	0.00
		111.91	75.49
<i>Other Expenses</i>			
Bank Fees		(16.80)	(18.75)
Adjustment	13	707.49	473.95
		(16.80)	492.70
		(424.59)	1,528.25
<i>Net Surplus/ (Deficit)</i>	11		

Permaculture Victoria Incorporated

*P.O. Box 3020
Auburn, Vic 3123*

Notes To The Accounts

As At 30th June 2021

1. Current cash holdings of all accounts.
2. Term deposit set up in order to gain some interest on moneys held in reserve funds.
3. Library Book as detailed on the PcV website for borrowing
4. Computer purchased for the position of Secretary for PcV – fully depreciated
5. Monies held on behalf of:
 - Bee Group \$611.25
 - Benalla Permaculture \$581.25
 - Permaculture South West Victoria \$60.00
 - South Eastern Suburbs Permaculture \$2996.86
6. Monies owed to groups other for rebates and donations (as at 30 June 2020):
 - Eastern Suburbs PG \$6.25
 - Mornington Peninsula PN \$4.50
7. Monies available to expend via the rules of the Clarkson Fund as set down
8. Monies available to expend via the rules of the Special Projects Fund as set down
9. Membership fees paid in advance.
10. Members funds accumulated from prior years activities
11. Current year surplus +ve / (deficit –ve)
12. Current year membership \$3,797.08= \$5,315.21 banked add back \$80 refund & \$221.87 Stripe fees, less (\$1464 membership paid in advance 2020-21 & \$100 PcV donations & \$176 LG donations)
13. Adjustment to reconcile accruals mismatch bank account

Group Reports

Bee Group

The Bee Group is in recess and looking for new committee. Bee group made a \$4500 donation last financial year to beekeepers affected by bushfires.

Claire Coutts
Former Bee Group Treasurer

Benalla Permaculture

No report

Eastern Suburbs Permaculture Group

Melbourne's intermittent and unpredictable lockdowns have impacted our ability to organize and attend events for the past 18 months. However, we are fortunate that our membership numbers have remained stable, increasing from 35 (Oct 2020) to 43 at the last count, despite the lack of tangible benefits from financial membership. New members have joined, old ones have drifted away, but it is comforting to note 232 members have signed up to our Facebook page. Many of these people are starting their journey into permaculture and keen to find hints and resources, so we hope to provide a sense of community and connectedness to support their learning.

The ESPG Yahoo! Group that was for so many years our main conduit for meetings, discussions and sharing recipes, photos and so on, is no more. As many will know the Yahoo! Online groups were shut down in 2020. We did apply to retain our content, many reports, recipes and photos had been stored in the group files but to my knowledge this did not happen. Maree managed the admin of this group for many years but declined to continue the role when the platform changed. Huge thanks to Maree for many years of quiet support and keeping the group safe from scammers, spammers and the like. The old saying that not making a decision was a decision itself applied here, and despite reservations of some members, by default we have ended up with Facebook as our main avenue of communication. Most active members have followed the transition to FB despite their concerns and we appreciate their ongoing involvement. The Facebook page is ably managed by Heather, with support from Mal. Heather is an ESPG stalwart who keeps the group on track and engaged, with entertaining posts such as "Crops with a sense of irony", welcoming new members and linking in items that are interesting to permies old and new.

Events:

Obviously, organising in person events was a struggle this year due to ongoing and changing restrictions, so some events were held via zoom and we often piggy backed onto other groups. Online events such as "Gardening with Nonno", "Home mushroom cultivation", "Reading the Landscape" were shared amongst members.

Online/zoom gatherings included an invitation to join a Whitehorse Urban Harvest Group presentation on sowing seeds direct in Spring (November). We held our own session with Kat Lavers on Permaculture Kitchen Garden Design (September). City of Monash hosted a session by Jonno on Permaculture Fundamentals in July, and August was an ESPG only zoom gathering where members were asked to share one thing in their homes or gardens that would show a permaculture approach. This was a great success, and we can't wait to visit each other's homes to see the ideas in the flesh.

In April, a real-life Edible Forest Yarra Valley tour was organised, as was a group visit to the Ashburton Food Forest. And Mooroolbark Permaculture Food Swap celebrated its 5th birthday.

In March, a garden crawl was held. Members were invited to visit five different gardens during an afternoon and join in a coffee at the end.

Cat's garden in Narre Warren hosted a garden visit on a February weekend. Two small groups rather than one were required to comply with number restrictions and we really appreciate the extra time and effort this required from Cat and her family.

December saw ESPG Christmas lunch celebrated in a park in Box Hill, attended by several longer-term members and much appreciated as a rare chance to get together in person.

We were also invited to participate in two cob-building workshops by a member.

ESPG continues to auspice community groups such as harvest swaps in Ashwood, Bayswater North, Box Hill South, Forest Hill, Heathmont, Mooroolbark, and Warranwood. These groups have managed to stay connected during lockdowns, although their actual gatherings have been limited. They have used various strategies – such as contactless setups outside their homes - to comply with government lockdown constraints while sustaining their community food sharing networks. Sharing surplus fruits, preserves and other items is a bonus for locals doing it tough.

Two members have taken a different path and created community corners where they promote the concept of take what you need, share when you can from stalls outside their homes. These two women have also been very generous with recipes, hints and knowledge and our FB page has been enriched as a result.

Thanks to Heather, Petra, Meg and Mal for continuing their efforts to further permaculture knowledge and positive community connection in times where social gathering has become very difficult, and the online

community very noisy and competitive! We are also grateful to for the support of those groups, councils, and so on, who have continued to promote sustainability and provided zoom sessions for anyone who is interested.

Until we can meet face to face, we wish you all a happy and safe time enjoying the productivity of your gardens and good luck in finding new ways to connect.

Leanne Mason

Greater South-East Permaculture Group (GSEPG)



10.11.20 Zoom Monthly Meeting, Paul M took us on a virtual tour of his garden and recent backyard poly tunnel project.

9.12.20 End of year picnic meeting at Wilson Park, shared some vegetable seedlings as gifts.

10.2.21 General Monthly Meeting, tour of Brendans garden (& avocados trees)

28th Feb GSEPG hosted our first Avocado Grafting Workshop, very successful for those who attended.

14.4.21 General Monthly Meeting – Jenny S talked on ferments, eg kefir and vegetables.

17.4.21 a few of our group visited Meg and Mal at Garfield Community Garden ‘Hello Neighbour Day’

How to build a wicking bed talk by Mal

1.5.21 IPD small group tour at Yarra Valley Edible Forest, Dixons Creek

12.5.21 General Monthly Meeting, Susan spoke on Medicinal Plants

14.7.21 General Meeting – Members Night

No Jun, Aug, Sep meeting due to lockdowns, possibly a Zoom Oct meeting and in person one in Nov?

We have had several lovely new visitors attending our group meetings over this last year. So looking forward to come out of lockdown soon, fingers crossed and keen to keep the permaculture teachings and stimulation of ideas happening in the year to come.

Alison Chatfield
GSEPG convenor

Mornington Peninsula Permaculture Network

The Mornington Peninsula Permaculture Network aims to facilitate sharing, networking, and support among members across the Mornington Peninsula, which features a diverse range of micro-climates, urban and rural properties, and unique local flora and fauna. Our meetings are informal social and educational events that often feature guest speakers and property visits. New members are welcome.

Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/159394281245193/> (members only page)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/655657554566247> (page for ‘friends’)

Areas covered: The Mornington Peninsula, from Portsea to Frankston and anywhere in between.

The admin team of The Mornington Peninsula Permaculture Network (MPPN) consists of Fleur Baker and Nikki Best (co-conveners) and Vanessa Ecroyd (treasurer-secretary), with one position currently vacant.

There are currently 31 paid members of the network (up from 28 a year ago). The ‘Friends of MPPN’ Facebook group has grown from 590 to 682 members, mostly local to the area, reflecting the ongoing interest in permaculture.

Covid restrictions in Melbourne have significantly affected the group’s capacity to meet in person. Despite being a semi-rural area, and very few Covid cases, the Mornington Peninsula is “Metro” under the Local Government structure, so we have been in lockdown alongside the rest of Melbourne for much of 2020-21.

Activities over the last 12 months have included:

December 2020 – Pre Christmas gathering at Fleur’s place. It was great to catch up with new and existing members after a challenging year.

January 2021 – Evening gathering at Nikki’s in Dromana around the fire to meet new attendees. Discussion around low-cost housing options and the impact of Covid on housing prices, and the increasing and often-hidden issue of homelessness on the Peninsula. There have been significant increases in house and land prices on the Peninsula as people move out from the city, effectively locking out many locals from the market and reducing rental availability as investment properties are sold, or ‘weekenders’ become more permanent residents.

April 2021 – Sunday morning gathering at Nathan’s in McCrae to look at small space permaculture garden options in a rental setting on a steep block, with a fabulous view across the bay.

A local PDC was successfully completed by 14 attendees with a mix of zoom, in-person, outdoor and some creative public space meetings, in between ‘circuit breaker lockdowns.’

The facebook group has remained active with conversations, advice, and sharing of seeds, seedlings, produce and useful bit and pieces, all at a safe distance! The resilience of the permaculture community continues to stand out as an example of how communities can work together constructively and proactively in the face of ongoing challenges.

While the last 12 months has been quiet, the group is ready for some rejuvenation and renewed purpose, and we look forward to meeting together in person throughout the coming year.

Fleur Baker
Co-convenor

Mountain Districts Permaculture Group

Well with COVID dominating our year and our members spread over about a 150km² area, then 5km travel limits meant even if we were allowed to meet then only probably one member was within the limits

So for the year we had only one meeting in Heathmont.

No other events were held

Our MDPG newsletter is the only communication tool for our group, so many of us have not had much contact this last year with each other.

Peter & Silvia who have convened the group between them for nearly 25 years have had a particularly hard year with Peters stroke in Dec and then 5 heart bypass in April, plus 2 big storms bringing down more than 20 trees flattening one of the big netted enclosures.

Both Peter & Silvia missed the Australian conference for the first time since 1996.

Thankfully we had been working on a new expanded Interns program for Telopea Mtn Permaculture

So our 3 interns grew to 10 from Feb, we now have 4 mentors leading the interns in tasks with many skills already covered for the year from fencing for deer to grafting to advanced pruning and building skills as well as all things nursery. It has been a saviour for us and inspired Peter to be back outside as much as possible but fully active again by July outside.

Many changes will have to happen in 2022 for both the Permaculture Business and for MDPG leadership following these events

One positive in all the Covid stuff was we had time to call and have long talks with Permie friends in the group.

Peters PDC 3 of them had to run until May 2021 to finish the 2020 classes with Silvia presiding over final presentations and issuing the PDC certificates for the last of the 3 classes with Peter in Hospital skiving off, a few past Permies also came along for support and feedback to those students, hopefully the 2021 classes might finish within the same year taking the total qualified to 800.

Silvia Allen
MDPG Convenor

North-East Ranges Permaculture (NERP)

Despite COVID we've been steadily gaining in PermaVic memberships, as well as members of our google group. There have also been some wonderful off-shoot activities in the NorthEast region that have taken off, led by members of NERP who are involved in other community groups, such as the 'Food Swap' 'and Food is Free' tables at Hurstbridge Hub. One local council funded the creation of some gorgeous Seed Banks that have been placed around Nillumbik shire and enable us gardeners to donate and acquire our saved seeds, which is has been really exciting.

MEMBERSHIP

Late in 2020 we welcomed some more NERP members to our organising committee. Spreading the workload and having more voices and input has been great for the group.

- NERP Googlegroup membership is now over 100, with 45+ joining since the beginning of 2020
- NERP Facebook Group has grown from 28 members in July 2020 up to 117 in July 2021

QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY

There has been a fair bit of conversation and sharing of resources regarding Queensland Fruit Fly strategies. Several of us have had it in our home produce. Our group organised a bulk buy of Vegetation Net which our members were able to access for a good price. It was snapped up pretty quickly. We have intentions to organise a face-to-face information session and some hands on trap making. Nillumbik Council have been helpful and have been running their own bait and trapping projects.

GARDEN TOURS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Dan and Liz's garden - Saturday 28 November 2020

1400m2 sloping suburban block with early mud brick home, young family. Since we moved in nearly five years ago, we've started developing productive gardens, healthy soil, water systems. The home includes gravity-fed drip irrigation system, terracing, four year old orchard area, chooks, berries, grape covered pergola, modest solar array with battery backup system, wood oven, wicking vegetable beds, greywater dispersal via splitter system. Plenty of berries to eat and observations, successes/failures to discuss.

HomePatch - Sunday 6 December 2020

Lucinda and Sean's garden "Home Patch" in Hurstbridge is the result of a 14 year love of permaculture and offers a surprise in every corner. On a standard 1/4 acre residential block in Hurstbridge, Home Patch is a great example of the productivity that can achieved in a small 'urban' space. You will see densely and very diversely planted veggie gardens, mainly in above ground container gardens such as baths (due to gum trees), composting systems and mushroom growing.

Jules and Robins permaculture farm - Saturday 12 December 2020

Jules and Robin live on 18 acres of pasture and bush in Hurstbridge. They have netted orchards, extensive vegetable beds, perennial food garden, native ornamental gardens, greenhouse and seed propagation areas, bathtub worm farms, and multiple composting bays. The family keeps cows for beef, mowing and manure, bees for honey, and a variety of poultry for meat and eggs. The property has good examples of zoning, water collection and storage, house orientation, solar power, heat pump hot water, and integration of animals and plants.

Leah and Leo's garden - Sunday 7 February 2021

Our urban garden in Eltham is still new: the first beds were built in May 2018, and some parts are still being built. We use permaculture principles and recycled materials where possible, but I believe that a garden can be beautiful as well as useful, so with an artistic background I am creating a haven that feeds both my belly and my soul. It's a garden full of whimsy including chickens that live in a Tardis, a pool to billabong conversion, and a new possum/bird free cat enclosure.

Diane and John's garden - Sunday 14 February 2021

This hillside acre block in Eltham has been transformed from a paddock into a productive ornamental edible garden over the last 20+ years. We have established an orchard on a steep rocky slope. Mixed herb and veggie gardens are terraced with bluestone and sleepers. We have natives and deciduous trees, chickens,

bees and an array of worm farms. Happy to share a cuppa and chat about the challenges of creating this large bee friendly garden, propagating natives and perennials, what's worked, what hasn't.

Mary and Robert's garden - Saturday 20 March 2021

Over the past 16 years we have transformed the back lawn of our Heidelberg block into a food forest using permaculture principles. We continue to experiment with wicking beds, compost bays, a berry garden, 26 fruit trees including avocados, fig, tamarillos, persimmons, apples and stone fruit, and a greenhouse with bananas actually fruiting. The front garden has bees, aquaculture and native habitat. We'd love to show you our garden and have a chat on the deck over a cuppa.

Hedley and Lauri's garden - Sunday March 21 2021

Lauri and Hedley have lived in Eltham for 12 years and their 1250m² garden has seen big changes. They planted a lemon tree and thyme back in 2008. They now have 11 wicking beds, a 40,000L water tank, chickens, fruit trees, berries, herbs, and indigenous edibles. Many of the plants have been added to the garden over the last 5 years so fruit production is only just starting to ramp up. Hedley has been busy building a pizza oven and although it is not quite finished, it looks fantastic!

Nina and Perrins garden - Saturday 27 February 2021

We live in a multi-generational household on my parent's-in-laws property in Eltham and have set up a backyard veggie garden operation. A year in we have harvested 250kg of veggies and keep developing the perennial planting, adding fruit trees & berries. We have 40sqm raised beds, fully irrigated, in a mixture of apple crates, set up as wicking beds or raised beds built from the recycled hardwood frame, salvaged when half the house was knocked down to enable ageing in place and disabled access.'

Retrosurbia 2 day workshop plus additional 'Trainers' day, May 1st-3rd 2021

We were thrilled to offer this 2/3 day workshop and we had many NERP members attend, most of whom also did the third 'facilitators' add on day. Looks like there are lots of NERP people wanting to do more in the Retrosurban space.

Two day RetroSuburbia Workshop

Participants will undertake activities and exercises to help them assess their current situation and plan for a future that includes a more sustainable and resilient household, knowledge of how to retrofit your current home or circumstances, grow more food, reduce energy use and enjoy a more satisfying, fulfilling life.

Trainers and Facilitators add-on day

Participation in this add-on day allows attendees to become registered retrosurban trainers with access to extensive training resources. This day will explore further methods and tools for supporting people to create fulfilling, abundant and sustainable lives through retrofitting their homes, gardens and behaviour patterns.

Geoff Bryan's garden - Sunday 23 May 2021

Five years ago, this ¾ acre block was run down and overgrown. When it rained very little water was retained on site. The garden has been overhauled in stages: level areas were created using large retaining walls of rock gabion construction or concrete and water run off diverted through creek beds and pond holding areas. We now have chickens, bees, wicking beds and fruit trees. Veggies are also grown hydroponically in a hot house. I have planted out over 1500 plants with still many more to go.

And last but not least, just this last weekend we have had an olive grove tour, tasting and olive picking day at 800 Trees Olive Grove in Hurstbridge.

Tour, tasting and picking day - 800 Trees. Sunday 11 July 2021

800 Trees is a small olive grove in Hurstbridge. Their main olive varieties for producing oil are frantoio, corregiola and manzanilla, with giant kalamatas sold fresh for making table olives. Melissa and Sam will conduct a walk and talk tour of the farm and you can pick your own olives to take home. There will be olive oil tasting on the day, and oil for sale, either in pre-packaged casks or you can bring a refillable container. Be sure to bring a bucket or similar container for olive picking.

Additional garden tours – partnership between NERP and LFC (Local Food Connect).

NERP partnered with LFC to put on a series of garden visits as part of the Harvest Festival. Many of the gardens were of NERP members:

- 6th February Dan and Liz Milne Montmorency
- 28th February Dianne Wollaston Research
- 6th March Stuart and Christine Rodda Eltham
- 7th March Paul and Robin Gale-Baker Macleod
- 13th March Julie French Montmorency
- 20th March Mary Stringer Heidelberg
- 23 March Beales Road Farm Greensborough
- 27th March Dan and Liz Milne Montmorency
- 13th April Beales Road Farm Greensborough
- 17th April Jules Jay Hurstbridge
- 28th April Denise Whimpey Coburg

It's been harder than predicted to maintain momentum with some unexpected lockdowns happening, but we are looking forward to continuing our activities in 2021/2022 and in particular adding some more skills type workshops to our offerings.

Lucinda Flynn & Nicole Johnston

Co-Convenors

Otways & Coast Permaculture Group

OCPG had another year book-ended with cancellations, but we managed to put on a couple of events over summer and autumn as restrictions allowed. We held a tour and morning tea at The Green Acre market garden in February, looking at veggie growing systems, soil preparation, and useful tools. The event was pay-as-you-feel and raised over \$500 for the Asylum Seeker's food bank in Geelong.

In March we held a free afternoon gathering for around 40 people at the Apollo Bay community garden, which included a tour of the garden, afternoon tea, produce swap, seed-saving and fruit-tree pruning workshops, and a gardening roundtable discussion.

At both events it was wonderful to gather again as a group and re-connect over our shared interests in permaculture and local food production.

We received a community grant from the Colac Otway council to subsidise our 2021/22 program, and we're hoping a number of workshops will go ahead as restrictions allow. Berry growing, backyard chickens, and fruit-tree grafting are areas of interest we're keen to explore further. We continue to work closely with the Apollo Bay community garden, and are hoping to collaborate with our local Men's Shed on an upcoming garden tool repair workshop.

Jodie Lawson

Convenor



Permaculture Carrum Carrum

No report

Permaculture Out West

Permaculture Out West (POW) has, during the time of COVID, tried to continue meeting monthly - most often online rather than in person - with mixed success. Planning community activities and projects has continued to be a challenge throughout the year, with the ever-present threat of a (snap) lockdown. Yet, we persist!

Pollinate the West

We're quite proud of delivering our first contactless COVID-safe seed swap, affectionately called "Pollinate the West", over two weeks in November 2020. The aim of the initiative was to enable people living, working or playing across the inner western suburbs to participate in an event that promoted sharing our seeds and growing our gardens while (through a companion bike ride) getting people socially connected and physically active.



Invitations went out through social media and the local community newspaper to invite people to drop off surplus seeds and seedlings at community hubs ("hives") on 8 November. Our volunteers ("worker bees") then catalogued these and compiled them into an order form which was sent out to interested growers over the following week. We received donations of 42 types of seeds (herbs, vegetables, fruit, flowers and indigenous/native), and 49 types of seedlings - including 23 different varieties of tomato seedlings!

Then, on 15 November, the seeds and seedlings were distributed to interested growers by bike (our "pollinating cyclists"). Or at least that was the intent. On the weekend of 14-15 November, lockdown lifted and many across Greater Melbourne fled the city to visit seldom-seen relatives and regional places. So too our cyclists! We nevertheless managed to distribute the seeds and seedlings, some by bike (on what turned out to be a very hot and windy day), but mostly by car - with coverage extending from Moonee Ponds, to Taylors Lakes, to Altona and Hoppers Crossing.

Map of growers participating in Pollinate the West 2020

with deeper connections across the community, with a view to potentially rolling that out in future years to other areas across the west.

In fact, planning for the next event began in May 2021. By the end of June 2021, we'd successfully applied for a small community grant from Bendigo Bank to fund another Pollinate the West seed swap and bike ride to take place in August 2021. This time around, we planned to also host an in-person event with talks, workshops, kids' activities and more - pending lockdown recurring. The project would look to pilot a more connected and local engagement with community centres, local traders, community gardens and others within the City of Maribyrnong while still being open to the wider west in exchanging seeds and joining the community bike ride.



We foresee some challenges as Melbourne goes in and out of lockdowns, with the fourth lockdown imposed at the end of May and only just lifting on 10 June 2021. So, this year, we're being more considered in making our COVID-Safe plan alongside backup plans to try and ensure seeds get swapped and gardeners engaged in growing, come what may.

Urban agriculture strategy

In May 2021, POW members reached out to local councillors in the City of Maribyrnong to initiate discussions about developing an urban agriculture strategy to address food security and advocate for food systems change in the municipality. Together with other community groups and Sustain: The Australian Food Network, we were able to secure a commitment in the Council Plan that council would investigate urban agriculture strategies as part of council's strategic objective to "proactively identify opportunities to create a safe climate and healthy environment and work with community to respond to climate emergency challenges".

Council land - opportunity to design and grow

This engagement with council, community groups and Sustain led to a broader collaboration over activating an under-utilised site in West Footscray which had formerly been used as a Council Nursery but was now being made available for community use.

In June 2021, representatives from POW, Friends of Stony Creek, Green Guerrilla Group, BikeWest and Sustain - together with local residents living in the immediate vicinity - gathered together at the former nursery site with the mayor and local councillors to initiate the journey. A Welcome to Country was performed by a member of the Bunurong people, followed by attendees offering their ideas of how the site might be reimagined. Ideas included utilising the land to host a community garden, a community nursery, a sustainability education space, and as the home of a frog bog adjacent to the Stony Creek (which had been severely impacted by the West Footscray industrial fire in 2018).

We've collectively called the site "Stony Creek Commons" and look forward to ongoing engagement to co-design the site for the benefit of the community and the surrounding environment.

Online platforms

POW continues to maintain a website (pow.org.au), a Facebook page (@powland) with 1600+ likes and has an active Facebook group with 1300+ members. POW has also begun posting on Instagram (@permacultureoutwest) with a modest 80+ followers.

Michelle Fisher
Convenor

Permaculture South West Victoria

Permaculture South West Victoria has reformed with Kirsty Williams as convenor and Roslyn Small as treasurer

South-Eastern Suburbs Permaculture

Due to COVID-19 SESPAG has nothing to report

Miriam Baxt
Convenor

South Gippsland Permaculture Group

The South Gippsland group has been admitted as a new Local Group in August 2021 with Lucinda Young as Convenor and Bob McLeay as Co-Treasurer

West Gippsland Permaculture

Our group meets on the first Wednesday of the month. In 2020 we met at the Goods Shed, adjacent to the Warragul train station which has ample parking. Our meetings open at 7pm with presentations starting at 7:30pm. We have a seed box available for anyone wanting to share seeds and a library box with some books and several magazines. We usually have a produce swap table for anyone who has any excess in their gardens to share with the group.

In 2020 – 2021 we ceased holding a swap stall at the Rokeby Market north of Warragul. Although it had been a success with many locals and stallholders bringing produce from their gardens to swap, we just couldn't get enough people to volunteer to setup, man the stall and pack up at the end of the market.

It had been an annual activity in August each year to hold a pome and stone fruit grafting workshop using heritage varieties as well as an avocado grafting workshop in February. Both workshops had to be cancelled due to the lockdowns.

Monthly activities of 2020 - 2021

From July through to December 2020 the group was unable to meet

January 2021 we are in recess and do not hold meetings but two of our members, Terry and Tira Avery participated in the Creative Harvest over the weekend 23/24 January. Productive and inspirational food gardens in West Gippsland are opened to the public, teaming up with local artists and food artisans. The event is designed to show people gardens that grow food well, so they can learn from the experiences of others. It's a great opportunity to meet like-minded people to share ideas. The gardens range from suburban house backyards to large acreages. Gardens feature working artists and food artisans with their work for sale.

February Due to the lockdown we were unable to hold a physical meeting, so an online webinar was held. On 18th February Garlic Guru Letetia Ware of Tasmanian Gourmet Garlic shared her knowledge on soil preparation for garlic growing as well as giving some suggestions on cultivars suitable for West Gippsland. Our thanks to Letetia for donating her time and hosting the webinar on her own Zoom account.

March In lockdown so no meeting held.

April Nathalie of 'Living the Dream Permaculture' gave a talk on her lovely organic farm/garden and how it contributes to her family living self-sufficiently! This will be followed by a catch up on what each of us has been doing this past year and an opportunity to reconnect.

May Nathalie gave a presentation on hot composting and Terry Avery gave a presentation on Korean Natural Farming and the making of fertilisers for the growing of fruit and vegetables.

June Our venue was cancelled at short notice due to Covid so no meeting was held in June.

July Jason and Marg Alexandra from Hazeldean Forest Farm spoke on how they integrate and make use the many resources from their farm. While largely producers of fresh apples much else follows: apple cider and vinegar, trees for timber and firewood, mushrooms from the oak plantation, and habitat for birds and bees are some examples of the permaculture philosophy they employ on their farm.

Looking forward we are hoping to hold some Zoom meetings to allow members to stay connected. We still have a healthy level of financial members and our Facebook group has over 800 followers so we are hopeful for the future.

Terry Avery