
Murrindindi Climate Network newsletter June 2012



The Murrindindi Climate Network (MCN) was established in the belief that there are many strategies that can be undertaken to reduce the impact of human activity on the environment, but this requires the support and coordination of many stakeholders under the umbrella of a united network. Here's a taste of what MCN has been up to recently.

Inspiring our young people – Jump Up and Generation Wake Up!

By Lee Coller

Jump Up is the eight-week primary school adaptation of the 'Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream' Symposium (www.awakenthedreamer.com), which a number of our MCN members have attended. The symposium is an educational program developed by the Pachamama Alliance in response to the accelerating degradation of our planet.

In early April 2012 the first ever Jump Up facilitator training was held, with five facilitators embarking on rolling out the program as part of a statewide action research trial this term! Primary students in Bendigo and Daylesford are the first two school groups experiencing the richness of valuing our young people in creating a sustainable, just and thriving human presence on the planet. We are still seeking

two or three schools to take part in the trial in Term 3 this year.

Generation Wake Up is the young persons' version of the Symposium, designed for university and high school groups. It is a three-hour student-led program igniting a generation of young people to create a just, sustainable and thriving world. Alexandra Secondary College students had the opportunity to attend a Wake Up being led by three young people from Mill Park Secondary College on Friday 18 May. Students heard stories of what young people are up to and how they can make a difference through group interactions and inspiring videos.

If you have any questions about either program, please call Lee Coller (Berry Street) on 0437 341 290.

Short Updates from MCN

Behind the scenes: The MCN Board has been busy reviewing the network's mission statement and are doing strategic planning under the guidance of facilitator Charlotte Bisset.

Green Business Assessors: The MCN team has successfully undertaken business assessments at Lake Mountain Alpine Resort, the Marysville RAC, the Marysville Stage 2 Community Building, Berry Street, the Murrindindi Training Institute, the Hazeldene General Store, Molesworth Hall, Murrindindi Shire Council Chambers and Hall, the Tower Motel, the Country Bakery in Marysville, Bartlett AG and Saladin Lodge in Narbethong. Next on the list are the Yea Library and Council Offices, and a number of private businesses that want to achieve energy savings and save money.

Alexandra Community Kitchen & Garden: The community garden is filling up quickly and the group has been doing activities such as being involved in Seed Saver workshops and visiting CERES in Brunswick. MCN committee member Nic Woolford has been attending a permaculture course, and there are plans to organise one for the community garden group. Read more on p2 of this newsletter.

Green Code of Practice for the Triangle and Yea: Based on the initiative of the Economic Leadership Group in Marysville, the green business assessments are part of a larger MCN program to assist local businesses in the Triangle and Yea areas to develop a Voluntary Green Code of Practice, in order to promote our region as an environmentally sensitive tourism destination.

Green business auditing in Murrindindi

Mike Wasley, member of the MCN Green Business Assessment Team

Being involved in the Green Assessors group formed by Rita Seethaler from the MCN has been a rewarding and enlightening process. While we as a group all hold an ethos of wanting to save the natural environment from the effects of humankind's growth, and none of us are too shy to speak up about how we think things 'should' be done, going out to the real world of business challenges and preaching to the unconverted for a change has enabled some of us to think outside the square.

Each individual in the group has a wealth of experience from different backgrounds, and our approach of more than one auditor meeting with the client on their premises for a green business audit has fostered a team approach, with great communication helping the client feel they are included in the process. Most of the audits initially involve a focus on the efficiency of the building structure, as it is usually the obvious 'in your face' issue, and most of the problems are solvable and fit the category of 'low hanging fruit'.

I believe the opportunity to engage the client in this way gives the group a second chance to approach

the longer term and chronic issues that the business may have in the categories of: 1. time and motion; 2. cleaning and waste; and 3. external green investment. As the Green Assessors project develops, it could very well produce greater results, for the challenge will be to engage the client further and work together in creative ways to keep reducing their carbon footprint.

One very difficult issue to address for both small and large businesses – and unfortunately beyond the scope of our initial training – is vehicles and fossil fuels. I believe we may gain greater credibility and increase engagement with new clients and the return of present clients if we highlight the cost savings possible with renewable fuels for transport. Most businesses in the region involve transport and freighting over relatively long distances, and fuel price rises and gloomy global projections all add pressure. I therefore feel that if the Green Assessor group were to include transport and fuel on a cost return auditing balance sheet, businesses would be able to get a more complete picture of how to make their businesses more sustainable in the long term.

Alexandra Community Kitchen & Garden

Sue McNair, founding member and facilitator

Community Kitchens & Gardens are unique in their ability to bring people together and foster healthy, engaged communities whilst creating learning opportunities and social interaction. Growing some of your own food is part of the move towards local foods. It is a practical, cost effective, sustainable and fun way to help reduce carbon emissions, water and energy used to deliver food from growers to consumers.

The Alexandra Community Kitchen & Garden opened on 15 April 2011, during World Creativity and Innovation Week – a week to celebrate communities coming together to make their world or their patch a better place. The project received support and guidance from the Anglican Church (particularly St John's Parish), Berry Street, Murrindindi Shire Council, Murrindindi Climate Network, Alexandra District Hospital and Rotary. These agencies and organisations have worked together to bring this wonderful creative project to fruition, with



↑ At the opening of the Community Garden on 15th April 2011, Member for Seymour Cindy McLeish with Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor (Deputy Mayor at time) John Walsh planted a lemon tree while operational manager George Evans looked on.

→ Geoff Olive and the U3A's Changing Seasons Program visited the Community Garden to conduct soil tests.



numerous hours donated by volunteers. Financial support was received from Regional Development Victoria.

As an organic garden, no pesticides are used. There are eight raised garden beds on location in the grounds of the Anglican Church in Alexandra, providing 16 plots. Currently, ten plots have been taken over by individuals or families and six plots are communal, with gardeners sharing the harvest of corn, potatoes, silverbeet and herbs. There are plots available if an individual or family would like to secure one for the coming year.

We have had two seasons pass and had success, with excess food being shared amongst gardeners and donated to the Berry Street Food Share Program and the Harvest Swap program. There was much excitement as relish and chutneys were made with excess zucchinis.



← The first workshop at the Community Kitchen & Garden brought young and old together to learn about no-dig gardening in small spaces.

The Community Kitchen & Garden Group has run four workshops so far:

- *April 2011:* Gardening in Small Spaces
- *July 2011:* Pruning Workshop
- *Feb 2012:* Trip to CERES Community Environment Park, East Brunswick
- *March 2012:* Seed Savers Violet Town

Recently we have had other groups and activities integrate into the Community Garden such as:

- **U3A's Geoff Olive and the Changing Seasons Program** visited the garden and conducted soil tests. I talked about the development and evolution of the Community Garden, and the group enjoyed a meal together with Jackie Ash cooking up quinoa in the Community Kitchen.
- **25 Karen men** (originally from the Thai-Burma border) and their interpreter visited the Community Garden and learnt about the processes of establishing a community garden. The men were up in Alexandra for the weekend at the invitation of the Anglican Church.
- **Vasilli's Garden magazine** made a visit to the garden and interviewed Chris Wasley and Sue McNair on the development and community input into the establishment and running of the kitchen and garden. Jan Radford was chosen as a Green Sage for an upcoming story in the magazine. Due to the time of year the Community Garden and Jan's incredible varied plot were not at their best, so we can probably expect another visit from the magazine team in spring.

I am confident the garden and kitchen will continue to flourish, be fruitful and provide a welcome to all who participate in and around these community spaces.

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ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY GARDEN & KITCHEN

nutrition and changes to a healthier lifestyle

reduced carbon footprint

sense of satisfaction

healthy organic food

social interaction

fitness



teamwork

exchange of ideas

community cohesion and development

sharing

laughter

knowledge