

# a marching we will go...

Prepared by Melissa – inspired by our little villagers

This month, while the adults went for a ramble in The Highlands to discover the hidden secrets of the Ecovillage, a group of junior villagers went on an adventure of their own with Melissa as tour guide.

They set off from the Interpretive Centre, ensuring all were watered and, after studying kangaroos were lazing in front of Taiji's House, headed for Kerry's Crossing. Down by the creek they were surprised to see water flowing over the stepping stones. Harry and Jordy (the 'lads' of the crew) took off with uncontained excitement, scurrying across stones with Jaimie hot on their heels. The little ones held their breath watching from the safety of the bank.

A little later, with soggy shoes, they set off for the lovely Terrace girls – the Hamilton's Chooks. The mud tried to thwart the trek on a couple of occasions with Kirra and Jaimie trying to avoid getting their shoes dirty, but they tiptoed their way to the Kooyan Hamlet. Once on the road it was smooth sailing indeed.

The hens were a source of amusement for about 5 minutes then the boys discovered the trees and attention was diverted to a large group of kangaroos hiding in the scrub. Callum and Brigitte happily continued feeding the chickens but a change of scenery for the more mature little walkers was becoming necessary.

Luckily, and out of nowhere, Eric arrived and offered transportation for tired little legs back to the Creek Ecohamlets to visit Holly, herself now a village resident. Holly tagged along for the speedy walk to the grass couch and during this fun our little group saw Olive's family doing their spring planting. The job was almost complete and so it was on with the walk.

Upon reaching the end of the greenway, oh-oh spaghetti, the first drops of rain were felt with shelter a long way away. Little legs ran as fast as they could carry cute bodies, with tiny Bridgette bouncing around on Melissa's hip.

Safe and sound inside the Interpretive Centre, the unanimous cry went out, "We're Hungry!!!" So all sat and had an inside picnic. After the picnic came games. Melissa insists that it's hard to say who had more fun – the kids or her!!



## From Clare and Denis (222)

"After the installation of our Ecovision 3010, we soon became addicts at watching the screen, and there were cries of joy as we watched the tank levels rising in the rain and the kW were being produced on the sunny days. Seriously, we find it a great feedback regarding the energy etc generated and used.

We refer to the electrical data, and have realised that we have left lights on, seen the spikes for the vacuum use (and changed to the broom) and have compared the amount of water used and pumping required for showers used by different people. It'll be a good way to show the grandkids how much they're wasting!!

Incidentally, our pump power usage is minimal. When we have had visitors and / or have had cloudy days, the water temperature meter has been helpful to determine whether the gas booster is necessary. All in all, we definitely think a useful tool, easy to operate and it certainly sparks interest with our friends visiting the house!"

EcoVision SOLUTIONSPTYLTD

**Caretakers Column:** Welcome to Eric's column.

Whilst only short this time, be assured, there will be much information in this part of the Village Well in future times.

**RECYCLED WATER:** last week saw the biological testing of the treatment plant over a two day period.

We expect the test results back in 2 weeks and barring any major concerns, we should be operating on tertiary treated sewerage with bore water supplements within that time.

There is still not the critical mass to rely on sewerage alone to run the system...

We have the irrigation system fully operational on the Creek Ecohamlets meaning that greenways and the Village Green are now watered on a regular basis. Times are set for 2am – 5am so if you're an insomniac and early morning walker – beware.

**NUT GRASS** by Pauline Behrendorf



On the back page of the Gold Coast Organic Growers' Group Newsletter, August 2007 a small article on Nutgrass amused me.

'Extraordinary tenacious garden weed. The only method of controlling it currently on the market is the lawn howitzer, a small turf mortar that fires a rapid projectile with a 10-ounce, charged thermite charge. If the root-piercing shell strikes the plant directly at its centre, it will kill the weed about half the time. The resulting crater can be turned into an attractive fish pond.'

A Gardener's Dictionary

Sept / Oct 2007

# Village Well

## The Highlands

Mcllwain Civil have joined the team again – this time for the exciting final stage of The Ecovillage – The Highlands. This precinct offers so much from sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean to nestled and private creek frontage lots to giant Tallwood treed home parcels.

As design and Council process come to a close, we are now able to begin the hefty task of construction of the Link Road – that wonderfully scenic track that transports from the beautiful Terraces through the Hoop Pine forest and to the secrets beyond.

Once again, Mcllwain Civil will provide their genuinely impeccable environmental efforts to collaborate with Landmatters to provide a safe, traversable road to access this final stage of Ecovillage lots. The task is no mean feat given the slope and sensitive nature of the area and the distance to cover.

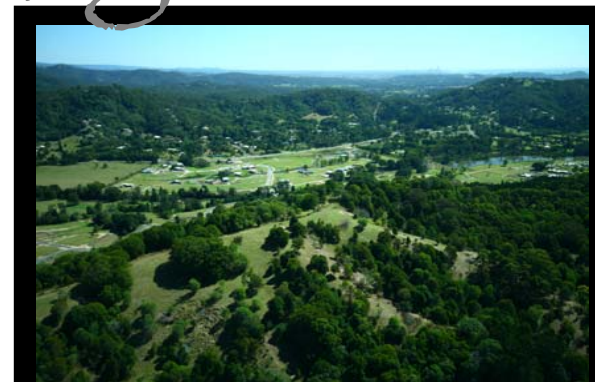
The beginning of the construction process saw Kombumerri Elders visit the site to supervise some excavating to determine any cultural heritage significance and induct for salvage of artefacts. Nothing of note was found but the Elders were excited yet again to see the ridgeline that would have been the 'pedestrian superhighway' to the rich estuarine land for their mobs in times gone by.

Martin recently hosted a walk for residents to experience the sights of The Highlands and comments such as "It's so beautiful – we feel really lucky that it's part of what we own" and "WOW, I never would have imagined there were creek systems, pools and such wonderful views of the ocean" and "There's lots of birds up there..."

The contract for the civil works is around 26 weeks (weather permitting). The presence of civil contractors is notoriously reputed for bringing on rain and it must be noted that within 2 days of Mcllwain staff arriving on site, we had our largest downpour for around 6 months which lasted for 4 days!!!

It is imperative that we consider the Workplace and Safety regulations that Mcllwains are bound by and keep away from this area and all surrounds. Martin and the sales team will offer guided tours of The Highlands but these will be organised and in strict direction from Mcllwain Civil at all times. We will endeavour to have another walk or two for those Ecovillagers who could not make the first.

So tell your friends and family about The Highlands lots – one has already sold without any public release! There are only 35 chances for this truly exclusive eco-living with the first 17 now on the market. Contact Martin or any of the sales team to get further details.



The Highlands viewed from the air



Beauty abounds with mature tree species



Creeks & ponds are so lovely



Currumbin beachfront comes alive from September 13-23 with the SWELL Sculpture Festival. With it's vision to 'Get Art Out There', creativity abounds in our very own backyard with this free community art event.

For the second consecutive year, The Ecovillage at Currumbin is proud to be a supporter of the event as the sponsor of the Environmental Award. This award will recognise outstanding attention to the types of materials used, the embodied energy needed to create the piece, transportation impacts, longevity, functionality and recycling possibilities.

SWELL is a cultural event that Currumbin and indeed the Gold Coast can be proud of. Locally conceived and managed, the event attracts some 150,000 visitors to the beachfront to view over 50 world class and spectacularly placed pieces of art in a truly superb location.

It's a time of year when all locals can be involved in some way. Visit as a spectator, volunteer (see the organisers at the tent) or sit on the beachfront and enjoy the ambience that occurs in local café's and shops. If you're a budding artist, submit for next years event! For more information visit [www.swellsculpture.com.au](http://www.swellsculpture.com.au) and just get out there.

## Exceptional Shots from the Village



Sunset from 222



Trees as Friends



Friendly Ponds Too



**COMING UP IN FUTURE ISSUES:** What detergents and other 'chemicals' will benefit our Waste Water Plan. Caretakers Column  
Community Formation – Ideas and Helpful suggestions for a 'functioning' community  
The Village Well is an opportunity for you to have your say too – contribute something to Kerry for inclusion.

**GRID CONNECTED SOLAR:** The Howard government, after only watching the existence of climate change for more than ten years, announced on 8 May solar rebates to make grid-connected solar power more attractive for householders. Rebate amounts are \$8 per kW for up to 1000watts or a cap of \$8000 regardless of whether you get more Kws than a 1kW system.

The cost of a 1000watt system has effectively been halved for consumers by the rebates and this is very timely for Ecovillagers. Of course, with the organised bulk discounts from BP Solar this makes our grid connected system very attractive.

Many residents have now installed their systems and have been through the process. Some owners are experiencing 'Nil Bills' as they generate the same amount of power as they consume. A great outcome. If you are near to or embarking on this process now – speak to your neighbours who have already been through the experience and can offer help about paperwork and the process. One of the great things about The Ecovillage is that everyone is so willing to share assistance whenever they can.

**AQUA TIPS**

- If your current home doesn't have water tanks, place a bucket under downpipes when raining and catch the precious water.
- If you own a pool now divert downpipes to your pool to keep it topped up and reduce reliance on mains.
- Hot water pipes can be insulated to prevent heat loss meaning you won't have to run the water while waiting for it to heat up.
- Keep your vege boiling / steaming water. Let it cool down and use to water plants or place in fridge and use as stock for future cooking.

# The E.V.E of Alex

by Alex Jakimoff



Thank you to all Tree Planters at last Saturdays Spring Fever Planting! Congratulations to you all for another fantastic successful morning (for all the incriminating photos, bums and all, check the Yahoo site.) Hopefully with all those heads down & bums up during the planting, everyone can recognise their own bums!

On a wonderful crisp morning I counted at least 22 men, women and children excitedly stamping the ground, wanting to release pent up energy. And away we went (please excuse the horsy words....equine words on the brain....) planting hundreds of mat rush, native sarsaparilla and palm lilies on the steep embankment adjacent to Joe's place.



Seemingly in no time we had them planted and were keen for more jobs, so into the weeds we dived, pulling out great clumps of invaders growing in the swale. Sweat and energy focused, what a powerful force!

Then the swale was cleared.....great piles of weeds were collected, admired and left to dry before being dispatched to heaven. The human locust swarm moved on.....To the fruit tree planting we buzzed, but first a little refreshment: smoko and a chance to catch our breath.

Jason Brown, our Ecovillage Landscape Manager, introduced himself, explaining the background of the waste water treatment area and its bunded pond. We were to beautify and screen the area with productive plants, what a wonderful idea. A brief explanation of planting technique in clay soils was followed up with a soil mixing exercise: a recipe of Landmatters compost & John O'Hehir river sand combined - rich and tasty, good enough to eat.



With wheelbarrows and shovels all the little dwarves went off to work, preparing our planting holes. And then in went the fruit trees – one two three. And in went the watermelons, rockies & pumpkin. What a feast is coming, What about a Watermelon Festival event this summer? Closely followed by a watermelon spitting competition of course!

By lunchtime it was all over with plenty of fun, lots of community spirit and worthwhile achievements to show. Ecovillage community in action mode! Comments included several "when is the next one?" so we'll certainly keep all informed of this.

Thanks to everyone it was another marvelous magic event, and lets get that Watermelon Festival happening!

## On Your Bike!

Riding a bike in your daily life makes you feel great, is excellent the environment and saves heaps of money.

Bicycle touring as a holiday ensures a truly green experience and despite the occasion hill or two it's the fun way to see things too. Riding a bike engages all the senses. Instead of travelling in a metal through the landscape you can ride with the breeze on our face, heady scents in your nostrils and birdsong in your ears.



Best of all, the only fuel needed for the journey comes from cooking pots and momentum is generated by your own energy (except when gravity can take over). It's satisfying to journey on your very own power with no motor support and no guilt attached.

There are many safe guided biking holidays in Australia and around the world. Visit rice paddies in Bali, scenic rides in New Zealand, cultural cycles in Thailand and plan your own east coast Australian ride. With cycling trips nature is with you every single revolution – your legs get the workout and your eyes get the benefit.

Travelling with only basic needs helps us see just how little we really need for daily life. Your diet becomes healthy to assist with energy needs and a wholistic body experience results.

As our world moves through climate change forcng us to change alongside, cycling wherever and whenever possible is another way we can do our bit. Check out [www.rideabike.com.au](http://www.rideabike.com.au) and [www.bicyclingaustralia.com.au](http://www.bicyclingaustralia.com.au) .