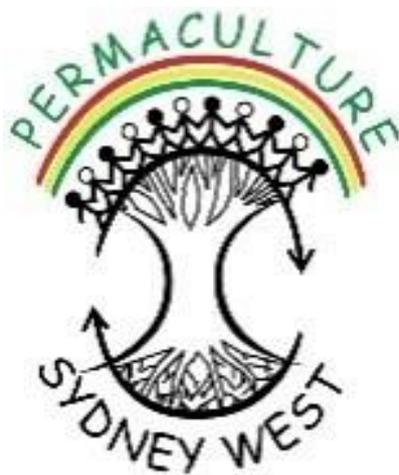


# Starting and Running a Permaculture Group: what we tried and found worked



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(I realise my records are not complete, so if I have missed you I do apologise and invite you to contact me so I can include you in the next edition)

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## Foreword

Where does true success at the community level begin? How and why do some local organisations seem to thrive and others burst on the scene with the flurry and bravado of a weed popping up after rain, only to wilt, shrivel and die when the heat is turned up and the first obstacle is met. It tends to be cyclical and somewhat predicable. I have travelled the country and seen the full spectrum of community groups with every combination of track record. What I haven't seen is an honest and down to earth 'how to' compilation that can help those interested in starting up and more importantly running a successful community group. Well this humble e-manual is it. Brutally honest and brilliantly basic, it walks the excited and even the sceptics down a supported road toward doing what many people may have once thought about but not known where to begin.

Let's face it. The hardest task in any project is more often than not the start. Drawing a line in the sand and saying let's give this a crack. All the intention in the world does not mean that even the best conceived ideas are a certainty to make it into three dimensional reality and the light of day. Who do I speak to? What is the first step involved with setting up the group, a committee or the organisation as a whole. And most importantly what are the steps required after you take the first step. What is step number two and step number three just to get you in the swing of things? How do we plan to keep this yet to be named entity alive?

Creating a community group is all about life. Like us, groups are living things. They are made up of individuals but with common ground and an umbilical that keeps them breathing as a collective in waiting. Like new parents leaving a hospital with their new born in the capsule all bets are off. You are suddenly into the real world of caring for the needs of this living thing. And it is the exact time where you need a walking talking voice activated hands on manual you can refer to at any point 24/7. Some cats eyes on the road in the dark, lane markers in the day to help guide you down the road. Because we are all not good at everything. Everyone has their Achilles heel which is why the inner accountant for some is best kept inside the petty cash box while they perhaps exercise their networking and organisational prowess as perhaps a meeting convenor and membership manager.

Equally you may not be interested in or capable of making evening meetings due to work timings or the demands of young children and family. But you are more than willing to coordinate the monthly working bee or permablitz planning when the children have gone to sleep and you have time to yourself. On the other hand It could well be that a weekend gathering is your chance to get out and communicate with adults and friends as a break from the business of your weekly routine. Either way there is a place for everyone and everyone in their place if we have a proven structure and format to follow. This ebook is exactly that. It is a go to reference that is humble in its offerings and its honesty.

Success in any field comes with a balanced source of growth and as permies we know

that the best source of growth in a garden is a rich organic layer at the surface made up of all different types of minerals. The same applies to community building; a layer of different people with a diversity of interests breeds a stable ground on which to grow the group. I have seen groups grow up quickly around an idea, an issue or a communal threat only to dissolve when that unifying bond is no longer present. That's not to say that groups have to endure forever. It's more a case of the group being given the best foundation on which to build its own capacity, to grow and change with a resilience to carry on the work originally planned but be flexible to changing needs and visions.

From taking minutes in a meeting to running a trivia night, planning a yearly meeting schedule to setting up a resource library, running an AGM to running a seed savers group...everything you need to know to build a community group on sound foundations is contained in this e-manual. But most of all the information shared is tried and true and enables roles and responsibilities to be passed on from one contributor to the next. Life changes, people come and go, but when a structure is sound then any waves of change do not rattle the whole ship. Captain Nev sails you through these waters with the caring detail of a parent or mentor. He is honest, down to earth and like an experienced traveller packs only the essential equipment needed to ignite a journey of opportunity.

This manual puts the gods of procrastination on notice. It gives the doer in all of us the tools required to boldly step up and turn intuition into action by creating momentum down easily replicable and proven pathways. The recipe is here. Collect the ingredients and let the Pavlova of community potential rise and thrive beyond your sweet dreams. This is the real deal.

## *Costa Georgiadis*



(Costa, the author and Greg Meyer a previous PSW president)

## Introduction

The concept of permaculture was developed by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in Australia in the 1970s. The original idea was to develop a series of ethics and design principles so practitioners could develop a “permanent agriculture”. However, over time it became clear that the concept had a much broader applicability and the term is now considered to refer to “permanent culture”.

The first permaculture group (The Permaculture Institute) was started in Stanley, Tasmania by Bill Mollison in the mid-70s and in 1976 permaculture pioneer Max Lindegger formed what was probably the second permaculture group, Permaculture Nambour. From then onward permaculture groups have sprung into existence throughout Australia and the world, with Permaculture Sydney West (PSW) being formed in 2005. (see the next section for a detailed history of PSW)

I have been interested in the permaculture idea for many years, have had permaculture books in my library and read widely about it, all the time developing our own small suburban property along permaculture lines. In 2008, after opening for sustainable house day for a couple of years, a friend of mine in the ATA suggested I come along to a PSW meeting and I have been a member ever since.

I have served on the committee as part of the education team, librarian, Treasurer, Vice President and President. I have found just being a member of PSW has been very rewarding and serving on the committee has given me even more opportunities to learn and to help the group grow.

The governing committee labours on behalf of the members, in a voluntary capacity, to ensure that the high quality of our meetings, workshops and activities is maintained. It has been through their efforts in the past and continuing into the future that has allowed permaculture Sydney west to not only survive but flourish.

If you are part of an existing Permaculture group, or wish to start your own, I hope that our experience will be of use to you, and be able to help you with the endeavours of your own permaculture group.

## Section 1: Permaculture Sydney West - how we started

In the 1990s the permaculture group Permaculture Hills to Hawkesbury Inc. was run by John Bourke (who with others did the permaculture design for Fagan Park). However by 2001 he was looking to move onto other things. At a Sydney wide permaculture meeting a decision was made to divide Sydney up into 4 divisions which would become Permaculture Sydney East, West, North and South. Permaculture North was already in existence and so renamed themselves Permaculture Sydney North.

In the west, Robyn Williamson was running a seed bank at Bidjiwong. This was a contract position for 18 months to set up and run the seed bank. When the Hills Council did not renew her contract, she continued working there as a volunteer. She ran workshops as well as a teacher's seed saving course (with Jude and Michel Fanton, authors of the "Seed Savers' Handbook) and the community group known as Bidjiwong Seed Savers was born. The Council's seed bank has since evolved but only deals with local natives, not food.

Robyn was provided with the database for the members of the original Permaculture Hills to Hawkesbury group to get a Permaculture Sydney West group going. She put an advertisement in the Baulkham Hills Council newsletter asking for expressions of interest from members of the public to be involved in the group. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 a meeting was held at the Bidjiwong Community Nursery to discuss formation of the new group. Twenty people attended that meeting.

The idea of the meeting was to plan things out for the fledgling group based on the agenda in Box 1.

Box 1 Agenda for meeting leading to the formation of a Permaculture Sydney West group

*"This meeting will set the future course for our group.*

*At this meeting we will:*

- *Take expressions of interest in joining the group*
- *Discuss website content for [www.permaculturesydneybasin.org.au](http://www.permaculturesydneybasin.org.au)*
- *Raise other issues for discussion at this or future meetings*
- *Set time, date and venue for next meeting*
- *Share home-made food specialities provided by volunteers*
  
- *Are we happy to be an informal local group working in each others gardens, or are we going to form the beginning of an action group that will pursue definite objectives?*
- *If so, what will those objectives be? Attend trade shows, expos and the like to spread the word, start community gardens, etc.*
- *How should we make decisions? Unanimous minus one?*
- *Should we incorporate?*

- *Will we have a vision and mission statements?*
- *Should we form partnerships with other local organisations?*
- *Should we pursue/accept funding? from government? business entities?*
- *Should we lobby government?*
- *Are you willing to commit time and energy to move us forward?"*

That meeting resulted in the new group being formed, with 20 very active members and more to come. The group incorporated in May the following year and became Permaculture Sydney West Inc (PSW). This was done so that the group became a legal entity rather than just a bunch of people who got together to do permaculture. In NSW, information about how to incorporate can be found on the NSW Department of Fair Trading [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations.page?](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations.page?).

In the years since then PSW has had three presidents, each holding office for 2 to 3 years and membership has grown. Various places have been used for meetings over time (see Box 2).

The group started early to partner with local councils in the western Sydney area, starting with Blacktown and that activity continues right to this day with Penrith, Blacktown, Parramatta and Cumberland councils. We partner with councils to provide sustainability related workshops and to provide technical input around projects such as community gardens.

#### Box 2 Locations used for PSW meetings

Bidjiwong  
Members' homes  
The staff room in one of the local public schools in return for work designing and establishment of a community garden close by  
A school hall  
Several community centres

## Section 2: How we run our meetings

In line with our constitution, PSW holds general and committee meetings.

### General meetings

Our main contact with most of our members is at our monthly general meetings. These are held on the first Monday of the month, public holidays included from February to December each year.



Boxes 3 and 4 contain summaries of what we have found works (and occasionally doesn't work) for our monthly general meetings.

### Box 3 Setting up for a typical PSW monthly general meeting

1. Venue – we have found that community centres work well for us; they are a great resource and available at reasonable rates in all council areas. The things to look for are:

- Room size – is there a room available which will fit all the members comfortably?
- Facilities – are tables and chairs, toilets and kitchen facilities (for the all-important tea and coffee) available sufficient to suit the number of members?
- Parking – it's no fun having to park on the street at night and during inclement weather, lots of parking makes things much easier.
- Proximity to public transport – can members get to meetings by public transport if they wish?

2. Meet and greet – It is very important for the meet and greet person to have a welcoming attitude and be easy to deal with, particularly for visitors because this person sets the first impression for the group. Our meet and greet person:

- Sits at a table just outside the door to the room (or inside if there is no room outside)
- Greets everyone, members and visitors alike, to make everyone feel welcome
- Signs everyone in and provides a name tag
- Ordinary members have a “convention card holder” type name badge in white; committee members also have a lanyard with their title in a card holder attached. Visitors have a yellow card in a convention card holder so they can be easily identified for welcoming to the group.

3. Setting up – the meetings are due to start at 7:00pm but someone with a key gets there at 6:30pm or a bit before so that the building can be opened up. The set up process is as follows:

- Set up meet and greet table before people start to arrive.
- Set up the chairs in rows across the hall, usually 4 or 5 each side with a 500mm or so aisle in the middle to make access easier. Around the edge of the room tables are set up for seed savers, the library, recycle roundabout and the food.
  - Seed savers – we have an active seed savers group run by two very experienced women; they sell seed to members at a reduced rate as well as answering any questions about the seed they are selling.
  - Library – this is a library of permaculture related books available for members to borrow. The loan period is 1 month.
  - Recycled roundabout – This is where members bring in their excess items and leave them on a table so that anyone who wants them can take them. If no-one claims an item the person who brought it in must take it home again.
  - Food table – everyone brings food to share after the meeting. Bringing a table cloth is a good idea and so is setting it up on a non-carpeted area to make cleaning easier.
- Arrange and plug in computer, projector, screen and speaker system (when required) ensuring that the cord is not in an area where it is a trip hazard or

tape it down to the floor.

- Set up tea and coffee facilities in the kitchen area, ensure boiling water supplies are plugged in and turned on if required (fair trade/organic tea and coffee of course!)



Box 4 Agenda for a typical PSW monthly general meeting

The meeting agenda – the format that seems to work well for us is as follows:

1. Welcome – The president is the MC for the night, or when the president is unavailable, the vice president steps in. The first part of the welcome is an acknowledgement that the meeting is happening on Dharug land, and pays respects to past and present elders. There is then a short explanation of what will happen during the night for visitors and new members and an introduction of committee members in case people have any questions. The rest of the welcome only goes for a couple of minutes and is generally around things going on at that moment: courses running, discussions with councils or any outside events attended by PSW members etc.
2. Monthly summary - this is a short presentation with powerpoint slides, generally from the secretary, which covers off the activities of the previous month. Things discussed in the presentation may include, for example, workshops run by members for councils or other bodies, living skills activities, permablitzes and any special items such as if a member gets mentioned in the local paper.
3. The main event – This is advertised to all members a few days before the meeting via email. It can be a speaker from outside the group (over the years we have had talks on

transitions towns, beyond zero energy, alternative farming, brewing and fermenting, microbats and ethically produced meat. We also have a number of presenters within the group who conducted discussions on permaculture related subjects. We have more physical activities like what we call 'round robins' where a series of (4 or 5) stations are set up with an activity on each one and small groups move through all of the stations one at a time, taking about 10 minutes at each. Round robins we have done previously include making components for a bug hotel, things to make from a PET bottle and different techniques of plant propagation. We try to mix things up so there is a variety of activities and speakers throughout the year. (an example of our schedule can be found in Appendix 7 )

Every year in June or July we have our annual 'soup and movie' night where everyone brings a pot of soup to share and we run a short movie. Examples include 'A simpler way', 'The story of stuff' and Geoff Lawton's 'Urban permaculture'.

Each December we have our Annual General Meeting (AGM) to elect the office bearers for next year's committee. This is followed by another activity; these have included a trivia night and a 'where are they now' (a series of presentations put on by people who had received a blitz during the year to show the group what they have achieved since the blitz). More detail on the AGM and trivia night is available later in this e-book.

4 Permaculture principles – one of our permaculture trainers would spend 10 or 15 minutes talking about a permaculture principle which applied to the meeting subject, usually one from David Holmgren's book Permaculture: Principles and pathways beyond sustainability.

5. Other announcements – the members are given an opportunity to make announcements regarding activities or events coming up which they are involved in, providing they fit within permaculture ethics.

6. Closing remarks – the president closes the meeting with any final points, a quick discussion of any upcoming events and a reminder to check out the library, recycled roundabout and the seed savers table.

7. Convivial social interchange (getting together to talk and eat) – after the formal part of the night is completed the members all get together to share food brought in by everyone and placed on a table for that purpose and talk.

A couple of things that we tried but are no longer part of the format are:

- Book of the month – the idea was that someone would get up and give a review of the book they were reading or had read, but we had too few reviewers for it to be viable.
- Plant of the month – our very knowledgeable seed ladies put together a 10 minute presentation on an edible plant, talking about its history, growth habits, how it is propagated and uses for it, including some recipes.

Our membership is continuing to increase and everyone enjoys the meetings, so we must be doing something right!

## **The AGM**

As an incorporated body, we have to hold an AGM every year; ours is held as part of the last general meeting for the year (ie the first Monday in December). The AGM allows us to accomplish two things: Conduct a review of the year that was, and elect the office bearers for the committee for the coming year.

### *Conducting the review*

The president welcomes everyone and then the secretary, treasurer and president each give a report. The minutes of the previous AGM are reviewed followed by a motion that they are a true and accurate record. Sending the minutes to members before the meeting can hasten this process.

The treasurer provides a summary of the finances, including how much money came in and how much went out during the year. Graphs and pie charts can be used to illustrate these numbers. Financial statements (including a profit and loss statement, and balance sheet) are provided. Following any questions, the treasurer's report is moved and seconded as being accepted by the meeting.

The president's report generally consists of an overview of the activities of PSW over the preceding year. The following seems to work:

- PowerPoint slides with pictures of the committee members and thank them for their efforts during the year
- Talk about the 12 committee meetings which happened during the year (11 monthly meetings and one planning meeting)
- Talk about the permablitzes which happened during the year including a slide or two from each one
- Mention the living skills events held during the year with a slide or two from each one
- List all of the workshops conducted by PSW personnel for councils and other community bodies, with information about the subjects covered
- Talk about where we are with the Grow Our Own Food/ Future (GOOF) workshop series
- Mention all of the meetings with councils and other community groups which PSW committee personnel attended.
- Go through the subjects, activities and speakers for all of our Monday night general meetings for the year
- Talk about PSW special events, the seed savers team and media watch, ie, PSW personnel who have been in print over the last 12 months.

All of this takes about 20 minutes. With the review out of the way we move on to the Election of the committee office bearers.

As an incorporated body, the constitution specifies 4 the office bearers (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer) to be elected and that each of these people may only serve for 3 consecutive years.

To orchestrate the process we need a returning officer, they must not be a part of the committee but can be virtually anyone else. In our case it is usually one of the members with a lot of experience in this area. To assist this process we have developed a PSW AGM Order of Proceedings (See Appendix 3).

A special secretary is also nominated to record the decisions reached at the AGM, ie, who moved a person be accepted for a position and who seconded the motion, to record them in a minutes document. Other salient details of the meeting are also recorded. They are usually a person from the floor who agrees to act as secretary in this instance, not the usual committee secretary.

The president hands the meeting over to the returning officer who thanks the committee members for their work during the year and declares all positions vacant.

The returning officer asks if there are any nominations for each office bearer position, starting with the president. This process was repeated for the non-executive committee positions ie the team leaders for membership team, education team, living skills team, seed savers etc. and then library coordinator.

Prior to the meeting a list of all our executive and non-executive committee position holders and their position descriptions are emailed out to all members along with a nomination form. Any member can nominate themselves or anyone else for a committee position but it is up to the person themselves whether or not they accept the nomination.

Where there are two or more nominations for a position a vote must be held to determine who the members want to carry out the office. To this end the returning officer asks for two volunteer scrutineers to assist with the election process if required and their names are recorded.

At the end of the process the returning officer thanks the committee members and then hands over to the president who declares the AGM closed. Following this we move on to the next activity, which this year was a Permaculture Trivia Night (see section 3 for details).

## **Committee meetings**

While the monthly general meeting is for all of our members, our monthly committee meetings are used to decide how things are to run. If you are running a permaculture group of some description a good committee can improve the effectiveness and ease of operation of your group markedly. The following is how the PSW committee is run and some insight on what we have found to work (and on occasion, not work!).

### *The committee members*

The committee members are elected at the AGM. There are 4 positions on the executive committee (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) but the leaders of our various teams (garden team, education team, living skills team etc) also attend each meeting where they can. We also encourage members of the various teams to attend if they want. All PSW members are welcome to attend.

### *Committee meetings*

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month, usually starting at 7:00pm and finishing at 9:00pm nominally. If you are just starting up it may take more than 2 hrs to get through everything you want to talk about but eventually efficiencies will improve and the 2 hours should be fine. These meetings are held at a member's house and while it is rotated around the committee members to a certain extent, one of our committee members has a room and table big enough to seat the entire committee (which may number 12 and up). So it quite often winds up being at their place.

It is important to be punctual starting the meeting so time is not lost at the start which then has to be made up at the end, when people are tired. Most of us get there just before 7:00pm so we can say hello to other members and get ourselves seated. We all bring snacks with us some of which goes on the table for during the meeting, and water/tea/coffee is also available. We usually stay after the meeting is finished to chat and have some more food and hot or cold drinks.

### *Agenda*

The agenda is a fairly simple one:

- Make sure everyone has read the previous minutes and that they are an accurate representation of the meeting – approved and seconded
- Review of any carry over action items from the previous minutes if they have been completed or not (if not they remain on the minutes)
- Review of correspondence both in and out, usually electronically these days but also any snail mail sent or received, usually by the secretary and president.
- Reports from the management committee, president, vice president (where applicable) and treasurer, are tabled. The president's report is verbal and the treasurer lets us know how the finances are doing verbally followed by a written or electronic copy to the secretary for inclusion in the minutes.

- Reports from other committee members, including the membership secretary, librarian, IT support person and seed bank coordinator(s). Most reports are verbal with any statistics noted (eg membership secretary giving current numbers of members, attendees at last meeting etc) by the secretary and included on the minutes.
- Last of the reports are the team reports, where the team leaders of the various activities carried out in the last month bring us up to date on what is happening. These include reports from the living skills, education and garden (blitz) teams, usually by the team leader. These are verbal as well.
- New agenda items are up for discussion next; there may be lots or hardly any. They may be about things which have cropped up between meetings which need to be discussed. They should be submitted a week before the meeting. Any remaining items such as last minute issues can be discussed as general business.

A sample agenda is in appendix 1.

### *Minutes*

The secretary attends the meeting with a laptop and records all the points at the time of the discussion. Minutes are emailed out to all committee members as early as can be managed before the next meeting.

### *Chairperson*

We rotate the chairperson position each meeting. If the committee is longstanding and everyone knows each other, this approach works but if it is a new committee, it takes someone with a strong will, tempered with tact, to keep the meeting from being taken off track by one or more committee members. So it is worthwhile taking the time to appoint the right person as the chairperson; if they have had experience in a similar position elsewhere, so much the better.

### *Convivial social interchange*

Most of our meetings end by our 9:00pm shut off time, but a good proportion of attendees don't leave until after 10:00pm. This is because it does become a great social opportunity for a coffee, biscuit and a chat. We usually get kicked out a bit after 10:00pm so the hosts can sleep.

## The annual planning meeting

I have seen both the organisational and technical side of our permaculture group steadily improving over the years and one of the organisational improvements we started up a few of years ago was a yearly planning meeting.

One day early each year the committee gets together at a member's place and we go through what we have achieved over the last 12 months and what we want to do over the next 12 months. We will also discuss where we want to go over the longer term as well.

Because the meeting is early in the year it can be difficult to get everyone there at the one time. More often than not you just have to go with the date where most of the committee can attend. Some time on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in January usually works for us.

The meeting theoretically runs from 10:00am to 2:00pm (although it sometimes runs later), everyone brings something to share for lunch and we take half an hour in the middle of the meeting to eat together. In reality we could probably spend a week if we wanted to discuss everything that came up during the planning meeting so to make sure we use the time efficiently we identify the priorities and work on them.

This is how we ran this year's meeting.

An email was sent to all committee members giving them a couple of weeks' notice. For the committee's review last year's minutes were attached along with a draft schedules of topics for the year's general meetings and living skills courses. Additionally committee members were asked to think about, and come to the meeting prepared with: one thing that was not working for us (and how to fix it); one thing that was working for us; and one new idea. The email was resent a couple of days before the meeting as a reminder.

2. Work out who is going to be the chairperson – this is an important decision because the chairperson can make or break a meeting. The chairperson has to be a strong enough personality to keep the meeting on track with enough tact so that they don't alienate anyone.
3. Put up some butcher paper – with 3 sheets of butcher paper taped to the wall or wherever, we have a place to make things visual, written up where everyone can see them. Not only is this a visual representation of the discussion, it acts as a record, which can be typed up later. We labelled each of the sheets, the first one was for the stuff that wasn't working and we called it "issues". The second was for stuff that was working which we labelled "working well"; and the third sheet was for new ideas which we labelled, predictably enough, "new ideas". In the end we needed two sheets for issues.

It is important to get a good scribe, someone who can write stuff down that contains the essence of the discussion and **is legible** afterwards. Different coloured pens can be handy to highlight specific notes if required.

4. Review of previous minutes – it is really important to have good records at any formal meeting so you can revisit previous decisions if required and that goes for the planning meeting as well. In our case there was not much still relevant from the previous year but we had set some targets around things we wanted to happen during the year and we had developed a vision statement. During the review it turned out that we had a better than 50% completion rate on our targets. Anything which came up as still needing to be addressed was written onto the “Issues” sheet.
5. Issues – after a quick review of the previous minutes we had a general discussion around issues and things which were not working in various facets of the organisation, with each one being written down on the issues sheet. Here is where it is important for the chairperson to keep the discussion focussed on identifying the issues rather than identifying one issue after which everyone goes into “solution mode” and a lot of time is consumed in discussions on how to fix that particular issue. Time gets away and other potentially more important issues don’t get identified.

There is a fine line, however, between keeping the discussion on track and shutting someone down, after which they may not contribute again. Speaking respectfully to everyone can help immensely.

The main thing is to identify as many issues as possible in a given time and get them recorded so they can be evaluated for significance later.

6. Lunch – When sending out information prior to the meeting it is good to specify that people bring food which is easy to prepare and share for lunch. Food which needs to be cooked or needs extensive preparation can erode meeting time.

Bread, cheese, salad, or something pre-cooked and easily reheated like soup or pizza can be good choices. One option is to have a working lunch, but we have found a short break (15 to 30 minutes) works well. Having non-alcoholic drinks available throughout the meeting is a good thing to have too.

7. Things which are working – we generate a list of things that the group agree are going well. Another side benefit of this process is when one of the things going right has had a particular driver or champion it is a great opportunity to appreciate that person for the work they have put in.
8. New ideas – some of these may have been percolating for ages without the right forum in which to bring them up or action them. This is the right forum. Everyone gets the opportunity to make suggestions and have them written down so they can be discussed at a later stage.

9. Schedules for general meetings and living skills – draft schedules sent out beforehand are finalised at this meeting. The topics of our monthly meeting used to be ad hoc which meant that sometimes we had to scratch around at short notice to find a topic and presenter, but now we agree the topics at the start of the year and line them up with the living skills schedule. This is the first year we have developed a living skills schedule for the year.

With the completion off all this work and a chat about the website with our IT guru our allocated time is generally up.

What happens next?

There are a number of places where all this information is going to go:

- All meeting notes are typed up and emailed to the committee members
- Everyone gets to vote for the three issues which they consider to be the highest priorities The issue with the most votes gets discussed and acted on first as part of the next monthly committee meeting; the one with the second most votes gets discussed at the following meeting and so on.
- The new ideas are also discussed and a driver will volunteer (usually the person or persons who suggested the idea) to champion that idea as the year goes on..

Over the last couple of years we have found the planning meeting to be a great aid to smooth running of the permaculture group. We like to do it early in the year before things kick off but in reality it could be run at any time of year and still be beneficial.

## Section 3: Our activities and events

PSW holds various activities and events, many on a regular basis. This section provides information about six which are an important part of their annual calendar of events.

### Hosting a 'blitz

What is a blitz, I hear you ask? A blitz, or to use its full title “permablitz” is where a group of our Permaculture group members get together at someone’s place and hack, chop, dig, construct, shred and generally do stuff to your garden to help you live more sustainably. We hosted one and it was a great thing. Stuff that would take you a couple of weeks to do by yourself (or you couldn’t do by yourself) is accomplished in a couple of hours. We got trees trimmed, shredded and mulched, firewood (next years’) cut, the old cob pizza oven deconstructed and the herb spiral redeveloped, all in a matter of hours.

It is wonderful to have all these people get together to help you out and hopefully learn something into the bargain, and it is traditional for the host to put on lunch to thank them. To get the most out of your permablitz experience for the least stress, here is what we found helped.



**Plan** – This is your blitz and to get the most out of it a plan is necessary, vague instructions to fit in a banana circle “over there” or a mandala garden “somewhere in your back yard” will only frustrate and reduce the effectiveness of your willing helpers.

In the best of all possible worlds you would have your Permaculture design in your hand so you could pick two or three projects to kick off. In any case make sure YOU know what you want done and where you want it done and you can communicate it to the other permies.

**Prepare** – Falling out of the plan is what you need to do to prepare for the blitz. This mostly means having any needed materials on hand. If you want a herb spiral you will need materials like bricks, stone or tiles to build it out, fertile organic material to fill it with, herbs to plant in it and mulch to finish it off. You may also need to get hold of any special tools that are not likely to be part of the average tool kit, such as a brick saw if you will be cutting up bricks for borders or to build a herb spiral, a chain saw if heavy duty cutting is required or a shredder to handle organic material trimmed off trees or cleaned up out of the garden. If it is likely to be one off use it would be best to borrow or rent any big stuff.

**Supervise** – You are likely to get a mix of people with different levels of knowledge, skill and physical ability to any blitz so supervision is important. We find you get the best result from your people if you split them into teams and have at least one experienced person in each team who is capable of keeping people focussed in the right direction. You (the host) need to be free rather than getting down into the nitty gritty work (as hard as that is!) so you can keep an eye on all the teams and make sure they are sticking to your plan. You also need to be available to answer questions on how, where or what you want done.



**Safety** – Before starting out it is always a good idea to check tools, especially power tools, to make sure they are okay before use. If the group does not have their own first aid kit it is a good idea to have one of your own within easy reach (just in case) along with some spare sunscreen, gloves and safety glasses which always go down well with your willing workers.

**Food** – As mentioned earlier it is traditional for the host to put on a feed to thank everyone for helping out with all the work. This was a little problematic as we are used to feeding 2 people not 20 and our garden production is geared towards that. However, what we did do was make up a large lasagne and 4 quiches (the quiches contained some of our own produce) the day before. The day of the blitz we made up a couple of large bowls of salad and I cooked a wok-full of fried rice on the rocket stove. We bought some bread rolls and wraps and that rounded out the lunchtime feed.



We must have had about 18-20 people working at one stage but some left before lunch so I figure we fed 12 to 14 people for lunch. We reheated the lasagne but served the quiches cold. Afterwards we had almost two full quiches left over as well as a bit of lasagne and some rice. Catering will always be problematic because you are never totally sure how many will turn up, but in general terms we tend to over-cater and then freeze the leftovers or eat them the next day.

**Drink** – Blitzes can be hard work and it is important that people keep up their hydration levels whatever the weather, so a constant supply of cold water is good and freezing a load of iceblocks the night before makes this easier to supply. We didn't get too fancy with the drinks at lunch time either; it was a case of either cold water or home-made lemon cordial and water. It is important to make everyone aware that the cordial is not made up if you are supplying the neat stuff for guests to dilute as one of our number got a mouthful of neat cordial before he realised it was undiluted. It was funny for the rest of us but unpleasant for the recipient.

#### *A general itinerary*

The day starts at 9:30am with a tour around the host's yard to show what they have been up to, give everybody a general introduction to the yard and to point out the work areas. This also gives some time for any stragglers to turn up before the actual work starts in earnest.

A more detailed walkthrough of the work to be undertaken is given by the host so that everyone knows the objective of the works and how they are to be carried out. Once

that is done everyone splits into teams (the number depends on the number of projects, in our case three), and starts work. Work carries on until about 11:00 to 11:30am when a short morning tea is called and the workers can share what bits and pieces they have brought along in addition to anything that the host provides.

Work re-starts after 15 to 20 minutes and continues until it is finished or you hit 1:00pm to 1:30pm. The host then provides lunch and everybody gets together to eat. After everyone has eaten, hopefully all there is left to do is clean up any bits and pieces; make sure everyone has their own tools back and thoroughly thank them for their efforts.



Once everyone has gone you can stand and marvel at the work that has been completed and bask in the pleasure of a job (or three) well done.

### *Other general points that work for us*

The way PSW works is that you have to attend three blitzes before you are entitled to one of your own, thus preventing someone turning up to the group, getting a blitz then you never see them again (it has happened). Also, you have to be a paid-up member of the group to participate in the blitz so that you are covered by the group's insurance in the event of something going wrong (hasn't happened yet). Obviously this rule does not apply to friends, relatives and other loved ones of the host who turn up to watch or help.

It is also possible to have a "Design Blitz". In this case everyone gets together at the host's abode, gets the tour and then spends an intensive half an hour to an hour working in groups to come up with a Permaculture design for the host's yard. The groups or individuals present their design to the host, who can then pick the bits they like out of each one. Due to the reduced time required for a design blitz you can usually accomplish two within the allotted time, assuming that they are geographically close enough to not spend all day travelling. The first host provides morning tea the second provides lunch. This gives everyone practice in developing a Permaculture design quickly and gives the host several different sets of ideas to pick and choose from.

A permablitz is a wonderful way to meet and work with new people, get a sense of achievement from a job well done, give someone a helping hand and pick up a new skill or experience along the way.

### **Hosting a Permaculture Open Day**

Some years ago we realised that while we were trying to live more sustainable lives and encouraging others to do so, the impact we were having outside our own family group was negligible. The neighbours were tolerant of our foibles but not really interested and apart from that the only record of our efforts was the odd article in Earth Garden magazine. We were at an eco-show and I talked with a gentleman from the Alternative Technology Association who suggested we open for Sustainable House Day and since then we have opened on Sustainable House Day for over 10 years and we now open every year for National Permaculture Day as well.

While it would be quite within the realms of possibility to hold an open day yourself, just for your local area to showcase what you have been doing, there are a couple of advantages to being part of a larger organisation.

**Insurance** – Unfortunately we live in a very litigious society and if someone hurts themselves on your property you could be liable for their injuries. That is not a reason to avoid having an open day, but it is a reason to make sure that you are protected and if your open day is under the umbrella of a larger organisation you will be covered by their public liability insurance. Having said that, we have not had one injury since we started opening to the public but having the protection is wise. Most household insurance policies have some

public liability insurance attached to them as well, but if you intend to open stand-alone it would be worth asking your insurance company whether you are still covered under those circumstances.

**Promotion** – You can bet that any umbrella organisation you become associated with will have a much bigger budget for marketing and advertising the day than you will. Local leaflet drops and posters in your local library, shops and doctors' offices is a cheap way to publicise your open day as well as telling all your contacts on the net, but advertising on buses and taxis, magazine and newspaper articles and radio and TV ads are a much more sure fire way to get people to come. We have had over 70 people come in a day and less than ten; I know which I would prefer!

So let's assume that you are ready to put yourself out there and open your home to visitors from the public, what happens next? Well, from our experience, here are some of the issues you might want to think about.

*What are you going to open?*

This comes back to your level of comfort with having the public snooping through your stuff; you may want to restrict people to the front yard only, give them free reign all over the place or somewhere in between. We open the front yard, garage and backyard and have a process that we take people though covering each area in turn. We do not take the public through our house, which is reserved for invited guests only, but I know of people who do take tours through their house and do it very successfully. It is a decision you will have to make and in part it will be driven by where the interesting stuff is that you want to show people.



### *How long are you going to open for?*

The hours that you open for may be set by any umbrella organisation you are dealing with or you may have some say in what hours you open. We generally open between 10:00am and 4:00pm. If we get a good day, after 6 hours of walking and talking I am absolutely shattered and while there may be a lull around lunch time there may not be, so it is good to arrange your significant other to prepare some walk and talk food for you just in case. You may elect to open only for the morning or afternoon and if the umbrella organisation has stuff going on all weekend you may want to open only one of the two days. The important thing is to make your decision early so it can be put on any promotional material and communicated so that your visitors know when to turn up. Although you should be prepared for people to turn up late, early or on the wrong day, not many do thankfully but it does happen!

### *The clean up*

You will want your place to look its best when you open so allow a day or two prior to the day itself to preen. Mow the lawns (if you have them), pick up the crap that most of us put up with for the rest of the year and make sure everything looks tidy. If it is possible that your open day will attract children as well as adults it helps to look at the open area at a child's level and see if there is anything that they could hurt themselves on or that they could inadvertently destroy. In our experience most kids are well behaved and their parents keep an eye on them, but all you need is one to do something unspeakable while everyone's back is turned to sour your whole experience. There is no need to be paranoid but just have the thought in the back of your mind when cleaning up, or is there an area from which kids will be banned to save you the trouble?

### *Helpers*

If you expect to get more than half a dozen people through in a full day you will need people to help you, even if all they do is provide crowd control. The best helper is the one who knows something about your set up, can give a bit of commentary during the tour and can answer questions, although it is fair enough to defer to you for the curly ones. Fortunately for me my wife and son-in-law are ready, willing and able to help me out on open days and they lighten my load somewhat. It is quite possible that the larger organisation may allot you helper(s) and if this is the case be grateful and get them to arrive at least an hour before the day is due to start. This is so you can give them their own private tour if they have not been there before and so you can let them know what you expect of them. If you have to supply your own helpers, then friends and family are the best pool to draw from although one year when helpers were unavailable I got several people from one of the forums we are on ( Aussies Living Simply) and we all had a great day.

### *Labelling*

If you have intentions of doing this more than once, or even if you don't you may get sucked in and having some labels on your creations and a little bit of blurb about what they are and how they work this will support your unskilled helpers and give people something to look at

and read until you become available to talk to them. We do it fairly simply using Microsoft Word, a large easily read title, a smaller sentence or two of information and a bit of appropriate clip art to add colour all on a piece of A4 paper. Print it out in colour and laminate it so you can use it year after year; these days for the cost of a small A4 laminator and some pouches you can do it all at home.



### *Unfinished projects*

Don't hide these, let people know that you are on a journey too. Showcase the works in progress as well as those finished masterpieces that you are rightfully proud of because sometimes seeing the process you are following will make it easier for someone to repeat what you have done than by just seeing the finished product. You may even deliberately keep an unfinished work to demonstrate how something is made or how it works. We did this with the latest open day by keeping a self-watering vegetable growing container that is not filled with potting mix, so when we got to that area of the garden I could pull it apart and show how it was constructed. This makes it much easier to demonstrate a concept and hopefully helps people remember what they have seen.



### *Take-away material*

Do you want to have material on offer for people to take away with them? It is easy for us now, we had a stack of business cards printed up with our web address on it and when I am talking to people, particularly those who take notes, I can tell them that what they will be seeing is covered on our website. Back in the days before we had a website I would photocopy some of the articles that had been published in Grass Roots for people to take. We get quite a bit of material from the sponsors of Sustainable House Day, including free ReNew magazines, to give away as well. You might want to download stuff from the net about what you are doing if you don't have any written material of your own or you might not want to bother with any take away stuff and that is fine too.

### *Photographs*

There are two issues with the taking of photos – yours and someone else's. If you want to have your own record of the day, and it can be fun to look back on, don't plan on doing the photography yourself; you will be too busy walking and talking. This is an ideal job for one of your helpers, preferably one of the ones who will be doing crowd control rather than one who could be pressed into service if a busload of people arrives. That way you can get a complete record of the day. The other issue is do you want to allow visitors to take their own photos? I don't see a down side to this and we always let people take any photos they want but you should think about this and not be forced into a decision the first time someone asks if it is okay to take photos and decide what you want.

## *Weather*

One of the things that you can't control is the weather. The open days we have are in May and September when the weather in Sydney is very changeable, so we are constantly looking at the weather forecast and praying not for rain! We have had all kinds of weather for open days from cold, wet and windy all the way through to the best weather imaginable. As the old saying goes – hope for the best but plan for the worst. We have a number of tarpaulins that we can set up including one over the washing line and one over a frame in front of the garage to provide cover for static displays of gear we have made and areas out of the weather for visitors to stand. On hot days the cover we have up also provides room out of the sun, so have a look around your place and work out if there are covered areas you can erect for the day to make the experience more comfortable for you and your visitors. You may also want to have some cheap umbrellas to lend to visitors in case they do not bring their own.



If you are a bit nervous about talking people through what you have been doing that is understandable, but just remember that you will know more about your activities than them and they are there to learn. When it comes to public speaking nothing is more satisfying than talking about a subject you are passionate about to an attentive and motivated audience. If someone does ask you a curly one the response is simple – “I don't know the answer to that but if you leave your contact details with me I will find out and get back to you”. Then do it!

Another thing is not to be put off if you feel that you haven't got enough to put on a show. There are people out there from all parts of the spectrum including the absolute beginners and sharing with them where you are on your journey is also worthwhile. We all have to start somewhere and by showing them what you have achieved you may just prove to them that they can do it too, so that they will go home prepared to give it a go.

There is some work involved in setting up and running an open day but don't let that put you off, it is a hugely fun thing to do and very satisfying when you are relaxing at the end of a hectic day spent walking and talking to all manner of people. We have certainly made friends out of some of the people who have come to look so if you are in any way interested in getting involved with an open day or setting up your own don't delay – go for it!

### **Running a living skills workshop**

PSW members like to share the skills that they have developed over their lives. While we are just a group of ordinary people, it became obvious that the membership had lots of skills that they could pass on to interested people and the passion to do it. The person who suggested the idea became the first coordinator and set up the sessions, but this responsibility has now been passed on to others in the committee.

There are a lot of things out there that our parents and grandparents knew how to do as a matter of course, but we of the modern world do not have the skills to do. It is great to see a resurgence of interest in things like knitting and crocheting, food growing and preserving but it makes things so much easier if you can find someone to show you how and then give you a chance to practice rather than just learning out of a book. What we were after was a format that would allow a small number of people to learn and practice a new skill in a relaxed informal atmosphere which would not cost a lot of money.

We set the workshops up according to the following format:

- Each workshop is on a practical skill that could be tried out, if not mastered within the workshop time frame.
- The workshop is usually held at a member's house
- If there is a charge it is only on a cost-recovery basis, the facilitator does not charge for their time.
- While in the main one person facilitates, others could assist, particularly if there is a large number of people.
- Numbers are kept low, usually 6 to 10 per sessions.
- Sessions usually run for around 2-3 hours.
- Sessions are run on an ad hoc basis that has worked out to roughly one a month, depending on availability of the facilitator and level of interest from the PSW membership.
- Unless it is a food based skill (and sometimes even if it is!) everyone brings a plate of finger food to share and the host provides tea and coffee etc.

Over the past 12 months living skills workshops have been run on the following subjects:

- Making tomato pasta sauce
- Introducing your sewing machine
- Bicycle maintenance
- Soap making
- Making a rocket stove
- Raw foods
- Vegetarian cooking
- Introduction to spinning
- Edible Christmas gifts

The session on spinning was facilitated by me and I will use it as an example of how a living skills session is run.



The coordinator and I discussed what we wanted to run and I had concerns that with only a couple of spinning wheels (which is all I thought I could get) some people would be standing around doing nothing so we decided to include an intro to felting as well. After setting the date and venue I had to think about what I wanted to cover and I put together a session guide. I also bought in enough wool top (the easiest fibre to learn on) for everyone to be able to have a go at spinning wool and some coloured wool to use in the felting; I was able to buy this very cheaply from Virginia Farm Wool Works.

Fortunately, I had a reasonable collection of spinning paraphernalia to take along that included hand carders, niddy noddy, spare bobbins, my cotton gin, spun cotton and cotton bolls for spinning as well as some of my books about spinning and felting and a couple of borrowed spinning wheels as well as my own. I set up the felting gear and books on the table out on the host's back patio then placed enough chairs for everyone in a circle to make demonstrating easier. As luck would have it enough people turned up with a spinning wheel that they had begged or borrowed but not stolen which meant everyone could concentrate on the spinning and the felting was left for a dedicated felting workshop some other time.



Everyone arrived and arranged themselves; as they were all from PSW there was no need for introductions, ice breakers or stuff like that. Once everyone was settled we got started with an explanation of the names of the parts of the wheel and how they worked; I handed out a diagram with all the parts of the wheel named because every new activity has its own jargon associated with it. Spinning is certainly no exception and because of its long history it has a very rich and varied language so we covered off that first. One of the people who came along brought a lazy Kate and drum carder so I was able to demonstrate those as well the other equipment I had brought along to show.

Strange as it seems, one of the hardest bits of spinning for the beginner is to get the wheel going in the right direction and then keep it going. The first activity then is to get everyone to just spend time treading their wheel and getting used to the action which I then got everybody to practice for 10 or 15 minutes.



Once everyone had had some practice I called a break for tea, coffee or whatever and once we got back from that I demonstrated the long draw spinning technique with the wool top and the let everyone have a go. Most of the rest of the workshop was given over to practice at spinning the wool, while I wandered around providing assistance to those who were having some problems. One lady was spinning pretty well early on but most of the others were moving along and improving slowly. Towards the end of the workshop I demonstrated the techniques for plying using a lazy Kate and how to spin cotton from the boll.

Running the workshop didn't take very much effort and involved little cost. It is amazing the skills that people have, so if you are part of a Permaculture or other similar group, consider making living skills workshops part of your activities.

### **Running a permaculture trivia night**

The December general meeting for PSW is when we hold our AGM. Rather than have a formal talk to end our year with, we decided to have a trivia night. I can't take credit for the idea, it came from our hard working secretary and then was fleshed out by her and couple of the committee members, with all of us contributing ideas for questions and activities. It turned out to be a hugely fun night.

### *Hall set up*

Normally, when we have a general meeting the chairs are set up in the middle of the hall and the tables are left around the outside so that we can fit more people into the central open area of the hall. To run the trivia night though we needed to have tables for people to sit around, both so they could write answers when required but also so we could break them up into small groups, because most of the activities were group activities.



When we did the set-up, the tables were laid out in a herringbone fashion so that most (if not all) people would be able to see the quiz master from their seat and there would be a minimum of jockeying for position required. Fortunately some of the members came along early so they enabled us to get the chair and table pattern set up before the majority of people turned up. To make running things easier, each table was given a number.

### *The prizes*

You can't have a trivia night without prizes! But having said that this is a permaculture group so we had to be a bit circumspect about what we were offering. In the end, we came up with the following:

- George Foreman grill – This was second hand from one of the members but it good condition, in fact rarely used. It was to be as a lucky door prize, so everyone was given a ticket when they signed in, prior to entering the room.
- Bags of compost and bottles of worm juice – these were provided by the garden team leader.
- Seeds and seedlings – provided by the seed saving team.
- Bottles of wine –provided by members.
- Movie tickets – paid for out of PSW funds , most of which came from memberships or presenters fees, so it was just giving back to the membership a bit.
- Books on gardening/permaculture related themes - obtained from the local St Vincent de Paul op shop.



*The personnel*

It helps if your quiz master is a bit of an extrovert. Our vice president does corporate training for a living and knows his way around a crowd so it was generally agreed that he should MC the night. That proved to be the correct decision!

To make it easier a running sheet for the trivia night was put together for the quiz master, which also included the answers, making the job easier. A copy of this sheet is available in Appendix 12.

There was also a score keeper who wrote the points gained from each round on a white board against each table number so that they could be tallied up at the end to

determine the overall winning table. Two committee members also assisted the score keeper and quiz master by collecting completed answer sheets. Where an activity required a participant to get their hand in the air first to answer a question they also helped determine who was first.

### *The activities*

There were a number of activities enjoyed on the night, and after drawing the lucky door prize, which I pulled out of an organic yogurt container, we moved on as follows:

**Round 1 questions** - 8 “what is....?” questions (eg What is hugelkulture), **Round 2 questions** - 8 “number” questions (eg how many queens in a bee hive)

The people at each table were allowed to discuss the questions for a few seconds before entering their answer on the table’s answer sheet. The quiz master read out the answers after each round and the tables were allowed to score their own answers. After scoring, the score keeping assistants collected all the answer sheets and passed them on to the scorer keeper, who entered the results onto the whiteboard, keeping a running tally of the results. The people on the winning table from each round were allowed to collect prizes from the prize table.

**Table game #1** - This was a sheet of paper left on each table, which the participants could fill out after discussion with everyone at the table. The table game was broken up into 3 parts, the first part required the group to write down as many movie or song titles with a permaculture reference as they could think of (eg, how green was my valley). There was a point given for each title written down.

The second part of the game was unscrambling 8 words or phrases, with a permaculture flavour of course, and writing them down on the sheet for 2 points each. For example, “r i e o n m t t f a n e” became “fermentation”. The third and final part of the game was a series of 8 multiple choice questions. Once the sheets were completed, the answers were read out by the quiz master, the sheets corrected by their table and then collected and tallied.

**Novelty game #1** - This was an individual game with no points accrued. Everyone stands up and the quiz master explains that this is a game of heads or tails. The quiz master asks a question and then has two answers, if a participant thinks the first answer is correct (heads) they place their hands on their head, if they think the second answer is correct (tails) they place their hands on their bum. The participants who got it wrong sit down and the process continues until only one person is still standing, they are the winner and got to pick a bottle of wine from the prize table.

**Table game #2** - This game used images projected onto a screen and was again divided into 3 parts. The first part was a series of pictures of seeds for 10 vegetables and the tables had to match which seeds were from which vegetable name, each correct answer getting one point. The second part was a slide of 8 different national flags and the participants had to match the flag with the country for 8 points. The third part required

participants to match 8 faces of well-known permaculture people with their names on the sheet, also for 8 points. On completion slides with the correct answers were put up, the sheets scored and then collected for a tally.

**Novelty game #2** - Again, no points for tables but a lot of fun. The winner was the first person to stand up with: a green item; a recycled item; wearing something made out of hemp or bamboo; and if required there could be a 4th item, which had been made by the participant.

**Round 3 questions** – 8 “true or false” questions (eg lavender is a perennial, true or false?) followed by,

**Round 4 questions** – 8 “finish this sentence” questions (eg the mustard plant family is commonly known as \_\_\_\_\_).

These were run in the same way as rounds 1 and 2 above, each correct answer being worth one point for the table.



**Table game #3** - Again, a sheet was handed out with three sections, the first was 4 well known proverbs which had to be matched up with a permaculture principle (worth 4 points), 4 pictures of unusual fruits which had to be named (worth 4 points) and 10 multiple choice permaculture related questions. The sheets were picked up and tallied after each table scored their own.

**Novelty game #3** - This game had only one part. It was based around the old song – “Old MacDonald had a farm, E I E I O, and on that farm he had a....”. At the end the idea was to put in an element or function of a permaculture garden eg water tank, banana circle or herb spiral. The team who could come up with the most ideas was the winner.....then they had to sing it! This was mercifully short.

This was the end of the night, all of the scores were tallied up and the overall winners were announced and the table who won had their pick of the books on the prize table. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and told we looked forward to seeing them all again in the New Year.

Prior to the meeting, everyone was asked to bring in some Christmassy food for the food table, we provided a Christmas table cloth and some Christmas themed plates and after the trivia quiz was completed everyone shared the assembled food and the usual tea or coffee and a chat.

### **Starting and running a permaculture group library**

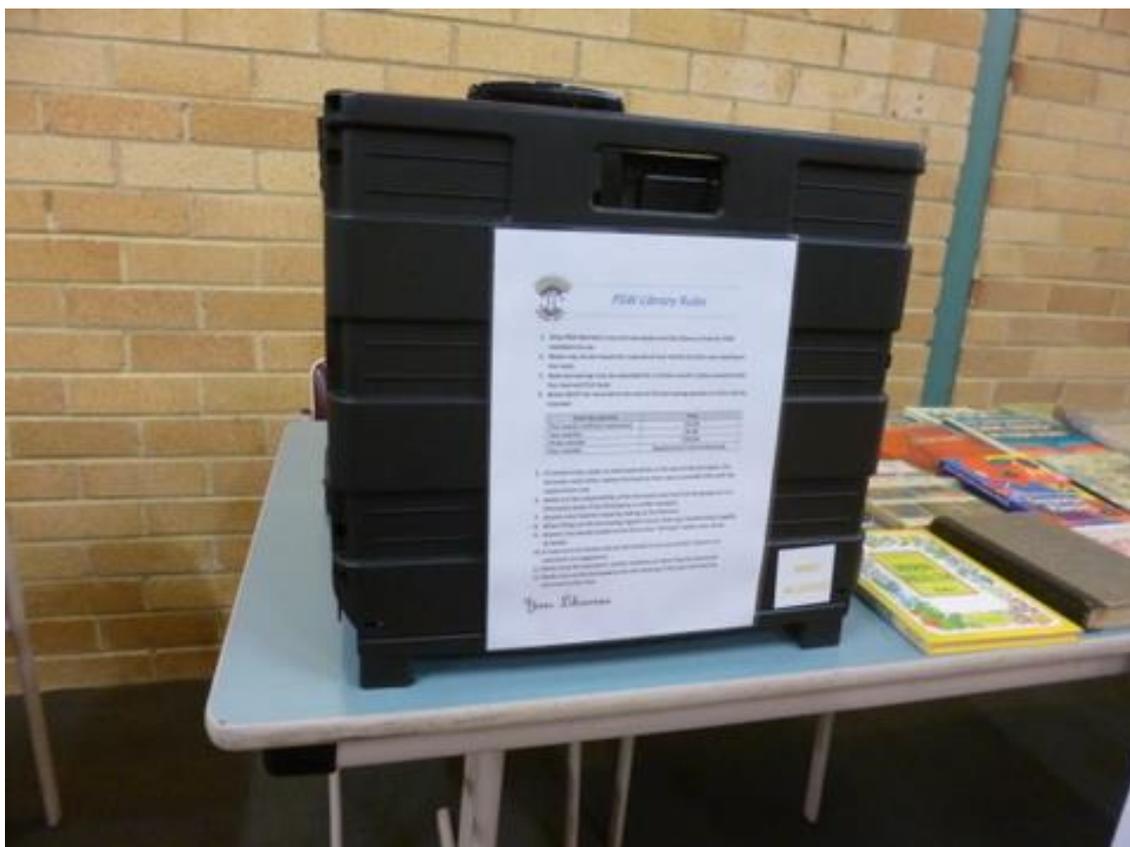
There are times where having a special purpose library to support a group’s interest and learning can be a handy thing to have. We have been running a small permaculture library (less than 100 books) at our local permaculture group so that obviously revolves around books on permaculture, food growing and sustainable living.

#### *Starting out*

When you are starting out it can be handy to consider the following issues.

**Decide who is your target audience and what sort of books they need** - In most cases if you are developing a special purpose library this will be pretty self-evident, as it was in our case – we needed books on permaculture, growing food, sustainable living etc. although you may need to make some hard decisions if you get too many “off topic” donations. In our case we got some general gardening books covering ornamentals and while a couple is okay, we didn’t want to be hauling lots of that type of book all over town. Keeping in mind who you are collecting books for can make those decisions easier.

**Establishing library rules** – These are the ground rules which anyone who borrows a book must abide by, and may include such issues as who can borrow books, how long for and what should happen if a book is not returned.



**Appointing a librarian** – The first librarian for PSW was the gentleman who had the idea for a library and set it up first, with backing from the PSW committee. Ideally the librarian should have some knowledge of books and how to catalogue, store and care for them, but in reality you could get anyone and let them learn on the job. It helps if they understand what they are letting themselves in for, so a job description or responsibility statement is a good idea. The responsibility statement developed for the PSW librarian is available in Appendix 15.

**Housing the books** – Books need to be accessible to members but also kept in a secure and appropriate storage place so that they are not stolen and remain in as good a condition as possible. In practice this may mean they are looked after by the librarian unless there is a secure permanent meeting place where the books can be stored. PSW meets in a room in a community centre which is run by the local council and used by other groups, so no permanent storage is available there. This means that the librarian stores and transports the books.

**Administering the library** – I am assuming here that it is not just you, but there are a group of interested individuals behind you. In this case it may be worth forming a committee to oversee the library. In my case PSW already had a committee and the librarian reports through to them at each monthly meeting and any decisions relating to the library are ratified through them.



### *Obtaining books*

Unless you are in the position of having a wealthy sponsor, there will be some financial burden in providing books for the library, however, here are some low cost ideas for getting your library collection started with pre loved and new books.

#### Pre-Loved Books

**Members** - If your library is being developed to service the members of a select group, then it is highly likely that they will have books of their own which will relate to your special interest topic which they may wish to donate. If they are at all like me, they will pick up a book that looks good (forgetting they already have it) then buy it and bring it home and then find out it is a double! It should be an easy matter to talk them into donating the double for the good of the group. They may also have books when they started out learning about the subject which are now a bit basic for them, these are also ideal donation fodder!

**Op shops** – The Salvation Army, St Vinnies and the Smith family etc. run “op” (Opportunity) shops which are places where you can get books really cheaply. On the downside, they may not have many books covering your particular specialty and can’t exactly order them in for you. The trick here is check widely and often, every time you go past an op shop drop in for a quick look. It can really be surprising what you can find.

**Second hand book shops** – These are commercial enterprises so the books will be more expensive but they will be well catalogued and you will find a wider variety including

perhaps some about your particular specialty. If you have a good relationship with the proprietor they may look out for specific books or book within the range of your interest and let you know if any come in, it after all another sale to them.

**Markets** – “Trash and Treasure” style markets can provide an interesting range of books for sale cheaply. I once found a book which I had been looking for for 10 years at the local markets, I bet there was only ever one copy of it in Australia and it turned up at my local markets.

**Book sales** – Various organisations such as universities, libraries and charitable organisations have book sales throughout the year. There is almost one every month within the greater Sydney area. An internet search on book sales in your area may turn up a website like this one. They can have a very wide range of books and the prices may vary from a dollar or two up to almost full retail price.

#### New Books

**Retail book sales** – Retail outlets, particularly the book selling chains, will occasionally sell off old, remaindered or damaged stock at considerable saving. In Sydney, Dymocks generally have a sale after Christmas/New Year which has enabled me to get brand new books at anything up to 80% off the retail price.

**Remaindered tables** – Rather than have a big blow out sale at a specific time of year (or in addition to it) book retailers will sometimes have either tables of remaindered books at reduced prices or a “cheapie” section of their shelves which they maintain throughout the year. Again, titles can be patchy but it is worth a quick look to see what is there and you may pick up a bargain.

**El cheapo book sellers** – These guys classically get heaps of remaindered books and sell them from an unoccupied shop front in a shopping centre or from tables in an open space in the shopping centre. Sometimes their prices can be not much lower than retail so it is handy to know how much you are prepared to pay for a particular title you are looking for, but they are always worth a bit of a browse.

**On-line** – I am not sure of the sustainable credentials of these, but sites like Booktopia or Fishpond can allow you to get new books at greatly reduced prices. Again, sometimes the prices are not reduced at all and with postage they can be dearer than buying from a local bookshop so know how much you are prepared to pay. Every so often they do have special offers with extra cheap books or low (or no) postage costs. Mind you, once you have bought something from one of them, they will keep your email in box over flowing with “special offers”!

One down side of the on-line bookseller is that you do not get to browse the book before buying. If you can, stick to getting books you have perused elsewhere and know to be good.

**Shows, expo's** etc – An example of this is the *Working with Wood* show that is on every winter in Sydney. They often have specialty bookseller who may offer “Show Specials” that are cheaper than retail.

**Traditional book shops** – Yup, I'm suggesting that at some stage you may have to pay full price. In your area of interest there may be a classic book or standard text that you just don't see for sale anywhere but through normal retail or even from a specialist bookshop, and always at full price. If your committee can spring for it, paying full retail price may be the only way to get that class of book.

### *Classifying & cataloguing books*

If it is intended that your small library contains a wide variety of subject matter, it may be worth classifying them and grouping each class together on the shelves. There are a number of existing classification systems, the best known one being the Dewey Decimal System but you could also classify using the books' International Standard Book Number (ISBN) or the US based Library of Congress Number. I have even seen suggested using the number Amazon uses to classify the books for sale on their site.

I suppose the big hint is that there is no need to reinvent the wheel and that there are a number of systems already in existence if you want to go that way. For our small library, the subjects we have books on are only a small slice out of the universe of possible subjects so early on it was decided there was not much point in applying classification system to our books.

On the other hand, it is a good thing to know what books you have in your library so presumably it would be worth cataloguing them in some form or fashion and there are a number of simple processes available.

**A paper or electronic spreadsheet** – This is probably the simplest option . Since most people have access to a computer with Excel on it, it is a simple matter to put the salient required information across the top of the columns then enter the information on each book in a line down the page. It would be possible and almost as easy to draw up a paper spreadsheet then enter the information into it manually, but altering it to take into account changes in the system could be difficult. Another advantage of an electronic over a paper system is that an electronic spreadsheet is searchable on all fields.

**A card index** – When I was a kid this was how libraries were catalogued. Wooden drawers stack one on the other with each book recorded on at least one card. To facilitate searches there would have been at least two card indexes, one with the cards indexed by author, the other with the cards indexed by subject or by title and there may have been others as well. This process is still used in countries which have reduced access to technology and if you have a growing library you may wish to use this technique as well.

You can either buy the cards and 100mm x 150mm index cards are a readily available along with alphabet index cards and boxes to make a cheap card index system, or make your own recycled cardboard file cards and index cards plus an old shoe box to keep them in would

work just as well. Once you have your cards and work out how you will index them (by author, subject or something else) on each card write in the title of the book, author, copy number (if you have multiple copies) and any other information you consider important such as publisher, year published, price, ISBN etc. If you were really keen you could include a short summary on each book. Once that major job of work is done file the cards in alphabetical order by title or author or whatever and you're ready to go.

**A database** – There are open source library database programs available on the internet but as I have no experience with them I can't say too much so in this case be aware they are out there, and do your own research!. If anyone in your group is computer savvy they may be able to write you a searchable database using Access.

### *Storing and transporting books*

The needs for storing books are pretty basic; keep them secure so they can't be stolen and keep them away from pests and damp so they remain in good condition. It also helps if the books are stored so that they can be retrieved easily. If you have a dedicated library this is all easy of course, a couple of bookshelves and away you go. We don't have this, so someone has to transport the books to and from each meeting and possibly to and from blitzes and other activities if required.



We have also developed a system which allows us to transport the books comparatively easily and which maintains the books in good condition. We pack them into "pack and roll" trolley carts which are folding boxes on wheels with extendable handles. The idea is to pack

most of the books into these rolling boxes with the spines uppermost so that they can be browsed by borrowers without the librarian needing to remove them from the cart. Any excess books then get put on top to be removed and placed on the table for borrowers to look at. You can just lift the carts directly into the car for transport and then out again at the other end; they can then be wheeled inside the venue and placed on top of the library table.

In that way all the books can be transported in a couple of carts without having to fool around loading and unloading books then setting them up so they are accessible for borrowers.

One suggestion has been to negotiate with the venue to leave the books there, set up in two bookshelves that are hinged together, mounted on wheels and can be locked shut to secure the books against theft. This depends on who is running the venue and whether there is a place to wheel the bookshelf off into a corner somewhere so it will not get in the way when the area is in use by another client. This would mean the books have a semi-permanent home, are kept in good condition and will not have to be transported to and from the meetings. It would make things difficult if the books are needed at another venue (eg blitz).

Our group has a website and another suggestion has been to bring a selection of books only to each meeting but have the full list on the website so our members can peruse the list then email the librarian to ensure their book(s) of interest are brought to the meeting. I don't like that idea myself; I prefer to have the full collection available at all meetings so that people can browse the books and pick something that looks interesting.

### *The borrowing process*

The borrowing process is pretty straightforward and simple. The borrower selects up to three books and then fills in the borrowers sheet with the name of the book, their name, their phone number and email, date borrowed and date due. You might consider filling it out for them to ensure that you can read it. It is important to have legible contact information because when people forget they have a book you need to know how to contact them. When the book is returned it is crossed off the list and away we go again.

### *Library rules*

You need to have a set of ground rules as to how the library operates which can be communicated to everyone so that borrowers and others understand how things work. The rules will generally address how the books may be borrowed, how they should be treated and what happens in the event of a breach of the rules. Once a set of rules is drafted they should be reviewed and agreed to by the committee, accepted and minuted as part of a meeting if the committee feels it is required.

Our library is quite a simple one to operate but we still have a few rules (see Appendix 14). They are displayed in a clear sleeve on the table where the library books are displayed. A copy of the list can be found in the appendices.

## *Identifying the books*

To prevent people mixing up the books in their library at home with the books they have borrowed from your small, special purpose library it is a good idea to identify your library books in some way. This also can be simple or complex. If you have the time and energy, covering all of the books with plastic and placing a sticker of the cover of each book (under the plastic cover) with the name of the library, logo etc. is one way. Alternatively a small self-inking stamp with the name of your organisation on it is a low cost, low time consumption option. Just stamp the fly leaf, title page, a couple of pages through the book and the top edge of the book (so it is visible even if the book is on a bookshelf) and this will identify all your library books.

If you use second hand books you will inevitably wind up with some ex-public library stock. If this is the case just make sure to stamp over the top of the libraries identification stamp with our stamp. Ex-library stock usually has "WITHDRAWN" or some such similar stamp all over it anyway so it should be obvious that it is not part of current public library stock.



## Running a seed savers group

There are a whole stack of reasons why it is good to have a seed savers group or activity associated with a Permaculture group, for example:

1. So the members will have access to local, open pollinated seed
2. You're not giving money to international conglomerates trying to control the world's seeds
3. You can help to develop and maintain local varieties of fruit and vegetables
4. The members can be upskilled to be able to save their own seed
5. There is a local seed bank which can be drawn from as needed, when people are unable or unwilling to save their own seed.
6. The number of varieties can be maintained and expanded for fruit and vegetables
7. It can feed money back into the permaculture group which can be used to fund permaculture related projects.

In our case, the seed savers group was in existence prior to the formation of PSW. That worked well in that it did not need to be set up later, but access to it could be an immediate benefit of membership.



When starting out with a seed saving group, particularly when it is to provide for a group of people, such as a permaculture group, it can be difficult to provide the number and variety of seed required. In such cases (and this has been the case with PSW seed

bank in the past) it can be wise to buy in open pollinated seed for a reputable source such as Eden Seeds, Green Harvest or Phoenix seeds.

### *Start up*

Our seed savers group meets on the fourth Saturday of the month from 9:00am to 1:00pm at a community nursery set up by The Hills Shire council in Ted Horwood Park in Baulkham Hills called Bidjiwong. The community nursery has space and facilities like work tables, cleaning apparatus, sheds, greenhouses as well as consumables like soil mix, tubes and flats for planting. These are available for use by PSW free of charge.



The community nursery focuses on natives for supply to the council planting schemes and for residents, who can take 4 free plants per year. PSW swaps food plants with the council people running the nursery and are able to take some of the natives when they have been propagating bush tucker.

We usually get somewhere between 19 and 24 members attend each seed savers day. Generally the day is run as follows.

For insurance purposes and because you need to be a member of PSW to be able to access the seed savers group, everyone must sign in on arrival sign out when they leave. On arrival our seed ladies unload the seed saving materials and gear such as sieves, small plastic bags to package the seeds for sale, plants, seeds and fruit for seed

extraction and labels/instruction to be included in the seeds for sale. These are placed on the area designated as the seed saving benches.

All the plants which were sown/propagated the previous month are inspected and any that are excess to those required for projects can be taken home by members or they are taken along to the next general meeting to be sold.

### *Hygiene*

The nursery has a well-designed hygiene station, where the flats, tubes and anything else which is to be re-used can be washed, disinfected and rinsed. In this way disease organisms like those responsible for damping off are removed before they can become a problem.



The hygiene station has two trays or troughs, the first and larger trough is filled with water plus a small amount of detergent and some household disinfectant. All materials are washed here, it is a great place to start the kids who come to seed savers off because it is an easy task and they can play in the water while still performing a useful task. Once the flats and tubes have been washed they are handed over to the smaller rinse sink where any residual detergent and disinfectant is rinsed off.

The washed materials are then placed in the sun to dry, after which they are ready for use. All of the water from the hygiene station is captured and re-used later in the process.

### *Sowing and potting on*

**Filling the flats and tubes** - The soil mix put together by the nursery staff is available for use by the seed savers group, but it is designed for natives and so is not particularly rich in nutrients, especially phosphorus. Vegetables require a more nutrient dense mix so the seedlings potted on using the mix need to be given a liquid feed of seaweed or fish emulsion to keep them going. Also, at this point, any seeds which need to be soaked before sowing are placed into cups of water.



The soil is dug from the stockpile into a wheelbarrow and taken over to the propagation area used to fill all of the flats and tubes used for sowing seeds and potting on. Cleaned flats and tubes (with holders) are taken over to the propagation area and filled with soil mix, then left for the people sowing or potting on. The flats are tamped down to flatten and consolidate the surface. The appliance used to do this is a flat piece of timber with a handle on one side and ridges on the other, so that as the surface is being flattened out, furrows are being pressed into it to receive the seeds.

Those not on the cleaning team now gather around the propagation benches. The seeds to be sown are gotten out (under the watchful eye of our principle seed lady) and helpers are instructed as to the depth the seeds require to be sown at. One person has responsibility for labelling to make sure no sown flats “fall through the gaps” as it were and miss out on a label. This is also handled by our principle seed lady.

Seedlings well grown in flats from last month's efforts are teased out and potted on into freshly washed tubes and the emptied tubes are passed on to the hygiene team for washing and disinfecting, so that they can be used again by the seed sowers.

Once labelled, the sown flats and potted on tubes are placed on a wheeled trolley made of galvanised mesh and wheeled into the greenhouse area. PSW has an area set aside for their seedling flats and tube stock.

All of this is usually run from 9:00 to 11:00am, however, there is a tendency for people to drift in during the day. At 11:00am morning tea is called, there is an amenities hut close to where the seed saving is carried out so people can make tea or coffee as required. All the attendees bring some food, which is then shared for morning tea, which runs from about 11:00am to 11:30am.

### *Seed saving*

After morning tea the seed saving bench is cleaned off and everyone gathers to extract, clean, label and package seed materials provided by the seed ladies or other seed saving participants. For the following processes, methods will vary depending on the seed being saved.

**Extraction** - This involves removal from the other plant material surrounding it, generally fruit or flower material.

**Cleaning** - This involves removing extraneous seed materials which may carry disease. When the seeds and associated materials are dry, they can be sieved through progressively finer sieves until only the seeds are left. While a full set of professional sieves is great to have, seeds can still be saved by using a number of kitchen sieves and colanders using the same process. Obviously the larger sieves will be able to process more seed quicker when there is a lot to do.



In some cases where the seeds are an odd shape and do not go through the sieves well, another technique is to run them past a current of air, say by blowing on them, and the lighter trash is blown away and leaving the heavier seeds in the container.

**Packaging and labelling** - The seeds are packaged for sale into small individual plastic zip lock plastic bags, with each one having a small label giving the name of the vegetable and any cultural notes, including how long the seeds will take to germinate.

**The permaculture garden –**

Over the time that PSW has been using the garden, we have put in a small permaculture garden which illustrates some permaculture principles. As well as being a nice spot to sit, it also provides fruit and vegetables which can be taken home as well as contributing some seed.

## Section 4: Ideas for the future

This section presents a few ideas we are still developing.

### A permapod

Similar to a permablitz, a permapod (or more usually abbreviated to just pod) is a local, less formal association of members who get together to help each other out. Ideally the people in these pods would be local to each other, ideally on the same street but at least in the same community.

But where do you start? It seemed to me that likeminded people who you get along well with should work. About the same time discussions were being carried on about pods, I was working on the “learning circle” program with two other couples in our permaculture group. It seemed fairly obvious that we could form a pod. The whole “Learning Circle” thing is discussed in the next section.

The downside was that one family was over 30km away from us and the other was almost 25 km away in another direction. In the end another family not part of the original program also came into the pod and they were closer still but not quite at 20km away. This was not local! In the end we decided to give it a go.

My concern that just selecting people by locality would be too “artificial” and the social dynamic would be missing, the end result being that the pod would not endure. So to that end we created a pod with permaculture friends, which I believe will be more long lived because we already have a relationship with them.

Once we decided to form our pod we got together at one of the “podders” houses on a Saturday afternoon to work out the logistics. After working out how things would work, we ate together, which is a nice thing to do and a good thing to create community.

What we came up with was pretty simple:

- We would get together on the third Sunday of the month.
- It would be for a couple of hours (in practice it could be anywhere from a couple of hours to most of the day)
- We would get together on a rotating roster at each other’s place in turn.
- The work would consist of whatever the resident pod members required at the time.
- There would be food supplied by the resident pod member after work was completed (morning or afternoon tea, lunch or whatever.)

We have now been operating for about a year and in most cases we have been getting together monthly, but sometimes the date has had to be changed when someone is unavailable. The work has been varied, from cleaning out a shed to moving firewood, assisting with planning a tiny house and even running a water line to a garden area and cleaning out garden beds.

The social aspect has also been important. We are getting work done for the resident pod member but it is also lots of fun working together to help out other people. We also get to see things finished that would be difficult for a single person or family and the mix of skills which we have in the pod can mean a better finish to the job.

All in all it has been a very successful and rewarding experience which we all intend to carry on into the future.

## **The Learning Circle Experience**

### *Sustainable study circles – Theory and practice*

#### *Part 1: The theory*

Study circles, also called learning circles are a form of folk school or community education where a group of people discuss their experience of and plan actions around a particular issue or subject. The group uses their collective experience to discover new insights through conversation. In this setting everyone is equal (denoted by the term “circle”), rather than as in formal training or education where a group gets together to be taught by a teacher who has special knowledge. The conversations are coordinated by a facilitator, who may or may not have training and who also takes part in the conversation process along with everyone else. The output of these conversations, in addition to new insights discovered during the process, is an action or actions to be carried out and reviewed at the next meeting.

They are generally run on a small scale, with the best size being 6 to 8 people and while they can be held in an external venue convenient to the members of the group, it is also common to hold them in one of the member’s homes. The life of a study circle can be limited to a specific number of meetings or open ended, carrying on for as long as the members want it to. It is a good idea to get together regularly, every week or two, so that the impetus is not lost. Each session runs for about two hours, long enough for everyone to contribute but not so long as people become tired.

**Running a session** - The first session will be a bit different in that there should be some discussion about the study circle process, ground rules for the group dealing with each other should be set out and what the participants expectations of the process are. Once this has been carried out each session will follow roughly the same format:

- Meet and greet, check in and review of any actions from the previous session.
- Discussion of the topic based around three questions related to the topic and participants’ experiences of the topic.
- Review and summary of the discussion followed by any actions to be carried out during the week.

**The questions** - My intention is to run our learning circle based around sustainability issues, but you can run a learning circle based around a wide range of subjects.

**Question 1** – aspect of subject applied to your life, when have you had experience of the issue in your life and what does it mean to you/how do you feel about it?

**Question 2** – what barriers are there which prevent you and/or your family from improving activities around the subject under discussion?

**Question 3** - what actions can you take to improve your performance around the issue being discussed, what actions will you commit to doing?

For example, if the issue being discussed is around eating more sustainably the questions could be phrased as follows:

Question 1 – what does eating more sustainably mean to you?

Question 2 – what is stopping you from eating more sustainably now?

Question 3 – What action(s) do you think you can carry out over the next week to help you eat more sustainably?

**Ground rules** - As with any discussion involving a number of people, things can run more smoothly if a series of rules are formulated by the group that regulate how people relate with each other. These rules would generally be agreed at the first meeting, preferably written down and then posted in a place where all participants can see them. Everyone in the group has the right to call someone on them if they feel that person is not playing by the rules. Some examples of ground rules might include:

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Share “air time.”
- Conflict is not personalized. Don’t label, stereotype or call people names.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.

In her book “Living Room Revolution”, Cecile Andrews identifies a number of rules of good conversation. If everyone bears these rules in mind when conversations are happening, the experience will be a positive, uplifting and informative one for all the participants:

- Take the risk of saying what you think or feel
- Listen
- Be congenial
- Speak with enthusiasm and energy
- Appreciate others
- Ask good questions
- Be an equal
- Tell your own stories

**Where learning circles don’t work well** - Research here in Australia has shown that generally learning circles don’t work well where:

- There are no pre-existing social networks from which an interested facilitator can form a study circle.
- There are pre-existing social networks but they don’t see any relevance in the study circle subject.
- The facilitator acts as a “teacher” rather than a facilitator of group learning.
- Group members perceive that facilitation is 'too much work' when previous facilitators are no longer available, ie, no-one is prepared to step in and facilitate the

meeting if the regular facilitator doesn't show up or becomes permanently unavailable.

**Note taking** - It is up to each individual group as to whether they wish to take notes about the discussion as it happens or not; this decision should be made at the first meeting. If a decision is made to take notes throughout the process, it can be handy to have an external person who does not contribute but is there to act as note taker and record the discussion. If this is not possible one of the group should become designated not taker when they are not making their contribution. The facilitator can be note taker but this can take the facilitator's attention away from their primary role.

Should you decide to do it, note taking performs several functions: it helps group members stay on track and move the discussion along; it provides a way to capture the wisdom and common themes that develop in the discussion; and it creates a group memory of the whole dialogue.

If notes are to be taken, the note taker may find the following advice useful:

1. Capture big ideas and themes, not every word
2. Use the words of the speaker as closely as possible, being careful not to alter the intended meaning
3. Check with the speaker or the group to make sure your notes are correct
4. Write neatly so everyone can read the notes
5. Number each page at the top and identify each set of notes with a clear title
6. Be low-key. Stay in the background and don't distract people from the conversation. Be aware of times when recording is not appropriate (for example, when people are sharing personal stories)
7. Create a sheet called "Parking lot" To capture and park ideas that come up in the conversation that the group wants to return to later
8. Post the ground rules each time, along with any notes or sheets of paper that the group will need to refer to during a particular session

The study circle approach has many applications, but it is my intention to explore the methodology by inviting a half a dozen friends and colleagues into our home to try and increase our knowledge and understanding of how to live a more sustainable life. I also intend to share the journey with you.

### *Part 2: The Practice*

This is the practice of how a learning circle works.

**Attendees** - To give this a go it seemed that 6 participants would be a good number initially. Two of those participants would be Linda and myself (obviously) and I approached two other couples who were friends of ours through PSW. Both couples were interested and seeing as we all knew each other that would reduce any time required on introductions etc. Being active in PSW also meant that all couples had at least a baseline knowledge of sustainability issues.

The meetings - My initial thought was to set up the meetings to be held weekly, but after some discussion we made the decision to get together fortnightly. This was far enough apart to be able to follow up on any actions agreed by members of the group but close enough together to be able to keep the thread of what was going on. Also, we were all busy so the difficulties associated with committing to one night a week for 8 weeks were made easier by giving us a week off between each meeting. By and large we were able to keep to this schedule with only one of the meetings needing to be put off for a week or two due to outside circumstances.

We set up the meetings so that each couple would host a meeting at their home each successive fortnight, starting with us. This worked well as we lived at fairly similar distances from each other and it meant the hosting couple only had to do it once every three weeks. We got together usually in the hosting couples lounge or dining area. There were to be a total of 8 meetings, one for each issue to be discussed and a final one so we could do a wrap up of the series, find out how everyone felt about the process and where the group felt they wanted to go from there.

I opened the first meeting with a summary of what learning circles were about, how they worked and what issues we would be discussing. The meetings were generally structured so that I gave a quick introduction; we then discussed each of the three focus questions in turn and then agreed if any actions were to be carried out by the attendees. The meetings took about two hours and at the end the hosting couple provided tea, coffee and supper; the other couples also bought some food to share.

**The questions** - In developing the questions I first needed to work out what the sustainability related theme of each meeting would be and came up with the following headings:

1. Food
2. Energy
3. Water
4. Transport
5. Waste
6. Consumption and
7. Community.

Under each heading I developed the three discussion questions.

**Question 1** – aspect of subject applied to your life, when have you had experience of the issue in your life and what does it mean to you/how do you feel about it?

**Question 2** – what barriers are there which prevent you and/or your family from improving activities around the subject under discussion?

**Question 3** - what actions can you take to improve your performance around the issue being discussed, what actions will you commit to doing?

Once I had developed the questions I emailed them through to the other couples so that they could review them before each meeting and consider what their responses might be.

A copy of the questions I developed may be found in Appendix 17.

**Review** (so how did it all go?) - After the seventh session we got together an eighth time to discuss how everybody felt the process went. The first question was around what went well or what “worked”.

The general consensus seemed to be that the entire process worked pretty well. It was worthwhile to remind some participants of what they knew but also by committing to the group, actions arising were carried out that may have fallen by the wayside otherwise. Some permanent changes were made in the areas of food and transport but other areas such as community were a bit more “woolly” and longer term although a couple of ideas brought out during this particular discussion made it onto my personal “to do” list.

The fact that it was a small group and partners were involved was good because discussions involved everyone and both partners were part of the discussion. Meeting as a group also allowed us to recharge with like-minded individuals and focus on our needs rather than the larger PSW group. A dedicated time for discussion also meant that time was given to considering each subject and everyone was able to get something out of each discussion.

The headings and the process of focussing on one heading per meeting using the questions was good in generating discussions and acting as points of reference when the discussion wandered off topic. The discussion wandered of course somewhat frequently but we always made it back onto the topic and this generally contributed to a relaxed atmosphere. The social aspect of having a relaxed atmosphere and being welcomed into each other’s homes was also appreciated as resulting in a pleasant experience for all.

While the feeling of the group was that my facilitation was good in general terms, my feeling was that it was a difficult call to pick when to guide the conversation back into the area to be covered. I think that perhaps I erred on the side of not guiding things enough but in the end we seemed to get where we needed to go.

The list of things which didn’t work is thankfully much smaller. We had no note taker and so some of the points we pondered would escape due to busy lives and/or poor memory. Providing everyone with a pen and paper and the time to record any insights would remedy this shortfall.

It was also noted that some of the questions were a bit broad, particularly when discussing the big subjects like food and energy. A refining of the questions would be worthwhile for any subsequent learning circles. There was also some overlap between the areas but to a certain extent this is inevitable for example food waste can be covered under “food” or “waste”, etc.

## Running a “One Day a Week Challenge”

A few years ago I came up with the idea of a “one-day-a-week-challenge” which gives people an opportunity to make small but (hopefully) lasting behavioural changes in the way they do things, to live more sustainably. I had made the members of our permaculture group aware of the idea so they could use it if they wanted to, but after thinking about it for a couple of years, I decided I wanted to do something a bit more formal.

I wrote up my idea and discussed it with the PSW committee and they were behind it, basically what we came up with was this;

### **Aim and Objectives**

Aims and objectives had to be developed first so everyone understood what we were trying to achieve by doing this:

Aim:

To encourage people to make and maintain small behavioural changes to help the environment.

Objectives:

1. Stimulate behavioural change by providing easy meaningful steps anyone can take.
2. Set up a collaborative challenge structure where people can support each other's efforts and not feel they are doing this alone.
3. Use the one-day-a-week challenge to start off movement of members towards sustainable behaviour.

### **The Set up Process**

I was starting mid-year, mainly because that's when I dreamed up the idea, and we would finish things off at the December general meeting. The December meeting is also our Annual General Meeting (AGM) so it would make a great end to the year. What I did, once the idea was ratified by the committee of course, was –

1. I developed three alternative activities under each one of five headings: food, energy, water, waste/consumption and transport.
2. I discussed the idea at the next general Monday night meeting, spending 5 minutes going through a presentation which provided information about the challenge and invited people to take part, starting at the next (monthly) meeting after the idea was ratified so they had time to think about it.
3. At the second meeting after the idea was ratified I re-ran the presentation and then invited members to participate. I organised for someone to be at a table ready with

forms to take details of the persons wishing to take up a challenge, who was available at the end of the meeting (a copy of the form may be downloaded here). They could choose one challenge as worked out below, or come up with their own if it was more doable for them, provided it sat within the intent of the challenge.

4. Monitor at monthly meetings – the idea was that any of the participants could stand up at one of our regular (first Monday of the month) meetings and talk about how they were finding the challenge.

5. At the last meeting of the year, prizes were awarded.

### **1-Day-a-Week-Challenge Specific Challenges**

After some thought and discussion I came up with 5 topics for the challenge, with 3 challenges within each topic. The ones we settled on are laid out below.

#### Topic 1 – Food

- No meat day
- Organic only day
- Made from scratch day

#### Topic 2 – Energy

- Cook with alternative fuel day (solar, stored heat, biomass)
- Cook with low energy techniques day
- Lights off day (you can use solar appliances)

#### Topic 3 Water

- If it's yellow let it mellow day
- Use only rainwater day
- Shower in a bucket day

#### Topic 4 – Waste/Consumption

- No buy day
- No packaging day
- Shop from local retailers (no national chains)

#### Topic 5 – Transportation

- Bike to work day
- Public transport to work day
- Walk to the shops day

## Rules

While I wanted the challenge to be fairly self-explanatory and simple to run, I figured we would need a few basic rules to ensure fairness –

- The participant must select at least one challenge from at least one category,
- The challenge they select cannot be something they are already doing – it must be new,
- They must complete the challenge every week to be in the running for the prizes at the end of the year,
- Each participant would nominate a “challenge partner” to help support them through the challenge and keep them participating.

## Prizes

We selected three prizes, and since it was not a “first, second and third” type of challenge, all participants completing the challenge would have their names placed in a hat, and three drawn out. Also, because everyone was equal, all the prizes would be worth about the same in monetary terms (about \$40) with the costs covered from the group bank account. Accordingly the prizes we came up with were:

- A Bokashi bin and a supply of bokashi material,
- A \$40 Book gift card from Florilegium (a gardening/permaculture bookshop in Sydney), and
- A Good quality garden tool, spade or fork etc which in the event was a spade.

We also decided to award a selection of seeds for every person/family that entered, from our seed bank.

## So..... How did it go?

Bearing in mind that this is the first year it ran, not too bad, although I was hoping for better!

While the announcement resulted in much interest and a considerable amount of discussion, only four people actually filled out a registration/entry form so that we only had four bona fide participants. Of those four participants only two actually attended the December meeting to go into the prize draw.

During the meetings between the announcement of the challenge and the prize giving, a couple of people did talk briefly but in general terms there wasn't much to catch up on. This was partly due to the small number of participants.

What we did do was to stimulate discussion and get people thinking about their behaviour around sustainability related subjects.

## **What about next year?**

We will definitely be running the challenge again in 2018.

After some thought, the changes I would make are –

- Start the publicity earlier. We talked about it for two months and ran it for three, but I will start the communication sessions and build up sooner, probably with a focus on why behaviour is important in improving sustainability and reducing environmental damage.
- Have a number of people at the meeting with registration sheets and immediately sign up anyone who is interested rather than waiting to the end of the meeting and letting the interested parties find the person with the sign-up sheets.
- Make sure that participants understand that at least one report back over the time the challenge runs will be required.

## Section 5 Appendices

Appendix 1	Committee minutes/agenda Template
Appendix 2	Constitution
Appendix 3	AGM Order of Proceedings
Appendix 4	Committee role descriptions
Appendix 5	AGM nomination form
Appendix 6	Sample Living skills workshop program (2016)
Appendix 7	Sample Monday Meeting Program (2016)
Appendix 8	Sample Living skills run sheet (Spinning)
Appendix 9	Trivia night answer sheets – rounds
Appendix 10	Trivia night table game sheets
Appendix 11	Trivia night bonus questions/deciders
Appendix 12	Trivia night MC copy/run sheet
Appendix 13	Trivia night prizes and points
Appendix 14	Sample Library Rules
Appendix 15	Responsibilities of the librarian
Appendix 16	Library list – blank
Appendix 17	Sustainable Study Circle Questions

Appendix 1 – Committee Minutes Agenda Template

**AGENDA**  
**Permaculture Sydney West**  
**Committee Meeting: ..... 2017**

**Time:** 7:00 pm start – 9:00 pm finish

**Address:**

**Welcome :** President

**Chairperson:**

**Attendance :** see above

**Apologies:**

**Confirmation of previous minutes**

Motioned:    Seconded:

**Matters from previous minutes - mentioned**

**President’s Report and Correspondence**

**Vice President report**

**Secretary’s report**

**Management Committee Reports**

**Treasury Report**

**Membership Report**

Month	Current Members	Adults	Kids	New members	Attendance last meeting

**IT report**

**Library**

**Living Skills**  
**Education Team.**

**Garden Team**

**Seed Savers**  
**General Business**

**Closing time: 21:00 pm**



## Appendix 2 – Committee Constitution

### Constitution of Permaculture Sydney West Inc

Based on Model Rules for Incorporated Associations, 2016  
NSW Office of Fair Trading

#### Part 1 – Preliminary

##### 1 Definitions

1. In this constitution:

**‘Commissioner’** means the Commissioner of the Office of Fair Trading

**‘Team Leader’** means a member of the committee who is not an office-bearer of the association, as referred to in clause 13(2)

**‘secretary’** means:

(a) the person holding office under these rules as secretary of the association, or

(b) if no such person holds that office – the public officer of the association

**‘special general meeting’** means a general meeting of the association, other than an annual general meeting, which is duly notified in advance

(Note: the Permaculture Sydney West monthly public meeting is not ordinarily a special general meeting)

**‘the Act’** means the Associations Incorporation Act 2009

**‘the Regulation’** means the Associations Incorporation Regulation 2016

2. In this constitution:

(a) a reference to a function includes a reference to a power, authority and duty, and

(b) a reference to the exercise of a function includes, if the function is a duty, a reference to the performance of the duty.

3. The provisions of the Interpretation Act 1987 apply to and in respect of these rules in the same manner as those provisions would so apply if these rules were an instrument made under the Act.

#### Part 2 – Aims and Objectives

The association shall have the following aims and objectives.

##### 1. Aims

(a) Care for the environment

(b) Care for people

(c) Share the surplus

##### 2. Objectives

(a) To work with local councils and others to promote awareness among the residents of western Sydney about sustainability and urban food production.

(b) To provide information, education, training and experience to the association's members and others, as deemed appropriate, about permaculture, its methods and techniques.

(c) To conduct general meetings 11 times per year, blitzes and living skills workshops at least 8 times per year.

(d) To develop and conduct workshops on permaculture related subjects to the association's members and the wider western Sydney community

## **Part 3 - Membership**

### **1 Membership generally**

1. A person is eligible to be a member of the association if:
  - (a) The person is a natural person, and
  - (b) The person has applied and been approved for membership of the association in accordance with clause 2.
2. A person is taken to be a member of the association if the person was one of the individuals on whose behalf an application for registration of association under section 6 (1) (a) of the Act was made.
3. Upon payment, the Membership Secretary shall enter the applicant's name in the register of member

### **2 Term of membership**

The membership runs for 12 months from the date of joining. Applicants will receive notification by email, or as appropriate, 30 days prior to the renewal date

### **3 Cessation of membership**

A person ceases to be a member of the association if the person:

- (a) dies, or
- (b) resigns membership, or
- (c) is expelled from the association, or
- (d) fails to pay the annual membership fee within 3 months of the renewal date.

### **4 Membership entitlements not transferable**

A right, privilege or obligation which a person has by reason of being a member of the association:

- (a) is not capable of being transferred or transmitted to another person, and
- (b) terminates on cessation of the person's membership.

### **5 Resignation of membership**

1. A member of the association who has paid all amounts payable by the member to the association in respect of their membership may resign from membership.
2. If a member of the association ceases to be a member under clause (1), and in every other case where a member ceases to hold membership, the secretary must make an appropriate entry in the register of members.

## **6 Register of members**

1. The secretary of the association must establish and maintain a register of members of the association specifying the name and address of each person who is a member of the association, together with the date on which the person became a member.
2. The register of members must be kept at the principal place of administration of the association and must be open for inspection, free of charge, by any member of the association at any reasonable hour.
3. If a member requests that any information contained on the register about the member (other than the member's name) not be available for inspection that information must not be made available for inspection.
4. A member must not use information about a person obtained from the register to contact or send material to the person, other than for:
  - (a) the purposes of sending the person a newsletter, a notice in respect of a meeting or other event relating to the association or other material relating to the association, or
  - (b) any other purpose necessary to comply with a requirement of the Act or the Regulation
5. If the register of members is kept in electronic form:
  - (a) it must be convertible into hard copy, and
  - (b) the requirements in sub clause (2) apply as if a reference to the register of members is a reference to a current hard copy of the register of members.

## **7 Fees and subscriptions**

1. A member of the association must, on admission to membership, pay to the association the appropriate annual fee, as determined by the committee.
2. The association will maintain 1 July to 30 June as its financial year.

## **8 Members' liabilities**

The liability of a member of the association to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the association or the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the association is limited to the amount, if any, unpaid by the member in respect of membership of the association as required by clause 7.

## **9 Resolution of internal disputes**

1. Disputes between members (in their capacity as members) of the association, and disputes between members and the association, are to be referred to a community justice centre for mediation in accordance with the Community Justice Centres Act 1983.
2. If a dispute is not resolved by mediation within 3 months of the referral to a Community Justice Centre, the dispute is to be referred to arbitration.
3. *The Commercial Arbitration Act 2010* applies to a dispute referred to arbitration.

## **10 Disciplining of members**

1. A complaint may be made to the committee by any person that a member of the association:
  - (a) has refused or neglected to comply with a provision or provisions of this constitution, or
  - (b) has wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the association.
2. The committee may refuse to deal with a complaint if it considers the complaint to be trivial or vexatious in nature.
3. If the committee decides to deal with the complaint the committee
  - (a) must cause notice of the complaint to be served on the member concerned;and
  - (b) must give the member at least 14 days from the time the notice is served within which to make submissions to the committee in connection with the complaint, and
  - (c) must take into consideration any submissions made by the member in connection with the complaint.
4. The committee may, by resolution, expel the member from the association or suspend the member from membership of the association if, after considering the complaint and any submissions made in connection with the complaint, it is satisfied that the facts alleged in the complaint have been proved and the expulsion or suspension is warranted in the circumstances.
5. If the committee expels or suspends a member, the secretary must, within 7 days after the action is taken, cause written notice to be given to the member of the action taken, of the reasons given by the committee for having taken that action and of the member's right of appeal under clause 11.
6. The expulsion or suspension does not take effect:
  - (a) until the expiration of the period within which the member is entitled to appeal against the resolution concerned, or
  - (b) if within that period the member exercises the right of appeal, unless and until the association confirms the resolution under clause 11 whichever is the later.

## **11 Right of appeal of disciplined member**

1. A member may appeal to the association in general meeting against a resolution of the committee under clause 11, within 7 days after notice of the resolution is served on the member, by lodging with the secretary a notice to that effect.
2. The notice may, but need not, be accompanied by a statement of the grounds on which the member intends to rely for the purposes of the appeal.
3. On receipt of a notice from a member under clause (1), the secretary must notify the committee which is to convene a general meeting of the association to be held within 28 days after the date on which the secretary received the notice.
4. At a general meeting of the association convened under clause (3):
  - (a) no business other than the question of the appeal is to be transacted, and

- (b) the committee and the member must be given the opportunity to state their respective cases orally or in writing, or both, and
  - (c) the members present are to vote by secret ballot on the question of whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked.
5. The appeal is to be determined by a simple majority of votes cast by members of the association.

### **Part 3 - The Committee**

#### **12 Powers of the Committee**

Subject to the Act, the Regulation, this constitution and any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, the committee:

- (a) is to control and manage the affairs of the association, and
- (b) may exercise all such functions as may be exercised by the association, other than those functions that are required by this constitution to be exercised by a general meeting of members of the association, and
- (c) has power to perform all such acts and do all such things as appear to the committee to be necessary or desirable for the proper management of the affairs of the association.

#### **13 Composition and Membership of Committee**

1. The committee is to consist of:
  - (a) the office-bearers of the association, and
  - (b) the Team Leaders - those members who are appointed to lead the association's Teams (see clause 20 (8) and 45), each of whom is to be elected at the annual general meeting of the association under clause 15.
2. The office-bearers of the association are to be:
  - (a) the president
  - (b) the vice-president
  - (c) the treasurer
  - (d) the secretary
  - (e) representatives of local subgroups (if any) as approved by the committee of management.
3. Each member of the committee is, subject to this constitution, to hold office until the conclusion of the annual general meeting following the date of the member's election, but is eligible for re-election.
4. A committee member may hold up to 2 offices (other than both the offices of president and vice-president).
5. A person has a maximum term of three years in any one position before they are ineligible to stand for that position for a minimum of one year. Team leaders are exempted from this requirement.
6. In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the membership of the committee, the committee may appoint a member of the association to fill the vacancy and the member so appointed is to hold office, subject to this constitution, until the conclusion of the annual general meeting next following the date of the appointment.

## **14 Election of members**

1. Nominations of candidates for election as office-bearers and as Team Leaders of the association:

(a) must be made in writing, signed by 2 members of the association and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of the nomination), and

(b) must be delivered to the secretary of the association at least 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

2. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates nominated are taken to be elected and further nominations are to be received at the annual general meeting.

3. If insufficient further nominations are received, any vacant positions remaining on the committee are taken to be casual vacancies.

4. If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated are taken to be elected.

5. If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot is to be held.

6. The ballot for the election of office-bearers and Team Leaders to the committee is to be conducted at the annual general meeting in such usual and proper manner as the committee may direct.

7. A person nominated as a candidate for election as an office-bearer or as an ordinary committee member of the association must be a member of the association.

## **15 Secretary**

1. The secretary of the association must, as soon as practicable after being appointed as secretary, lodge notice with the association of his or her address.

2. It is the duty of the secretary to keep minutes of:

(a) all appointments of office-bearers and members of the committee,

(b) the names of members of the committee present at a committee meeting or a general meeting, and

(c) all proceedings at committee meetings and general meetings.

3. Minutes of proceedings at a meeting must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting or by the chairperson of the next succeeding meeting.

4. The signature of the chairperson may be transmitted by electronic means for the purposes of sub clause (3).

## **16 Treasurer**

It is the duty of the treasurer of the association to ensure:

(a) that all money due to the association is collected and received and that all payments authorised by the association are made, and

(b) that correct books and accounts are kept showing the financial affairs of the association, including full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the association.

## **17 Casual Vacancies**

For the purposes of these rules, a casual vacancy in the office of a member of the committee occurs if the member:

- (a) dies, or
- (b) ceases to be a member of the association, or
- (c) becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth, or
- (d) resigns office by notice in writing given to the secretary, or
- (e) is removed from office under rule 19, or
- (f) becomes a mentally incapacitated person, or
- (g) is absent without the consent of the committee from all meetings of the committee held during a period of three months.
- (h) is convicted of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty for which the maximum penalty on conviction is imprisonment for not less than 3 months, or
- (i) is prohibited from being a director of a company under Part 2D.6 (Disqualification from managing corporations) of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth.

## **19 Removal of Committee Members**

1. The association in general meeting may by resolution remove any member of the committee from the office of member before the expiration of the member's term of office and may by resolution appoint another person to hold office until the expiration of the term of office of the member so removed.

2. If a member of the committee (to whom a proposed resolution referred to in sub clause (1) relates) makes representations in writing to the secretary or president (not exceeding a reasonable length) and requests that the representation be notified to the members of the association, the secretary or the president may send a copy of the representations to each member of the association or, if the representations are not so sent, the member is entitled to require that the representations be read out at the meeting at which the resolution is considered.

## **20 Committee Meetings and Quorum**

1. The committee must meet at least 3 times in each period of 12 months at such place and time as the committee may determine.
2. Additional meetings of the committee may be convened by the president or by any member of the committee.
3. Oral or written notice of a meeting of the committee must be given by the secretary to each member of the committee at least 48 hours (or such other period as may be

unanimously agreed on by the members of the committee) before the time appointed for the holding of the meeting.

4. Notice of a meeting given under clause (3) must specify the general nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting and no business other than that business is to be transacted at the meeting, except business which the committee members present at the meeting unanimously agree to treat as urgent business.

5. Any six members of the committee constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a meeting of the committee.

6. No business is to be transacted by the committee unless a quorum is present and if, within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting is to stand adjourned to the same place and at the same hour of the same day in the following week.

7. If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting is to be dissolved.

8. At a meeting of the committee the president or, in the president's absence, the vice president is to preside, or if the president and the vice-president are absent or unwilling to act, such one of the remaining members of the committee as may be chosen by the members present at the meeting is to preside.

## **21 Use of Technology at Committee Meetings**

8. A committee meeting may be held at 2 or more venues using any technology approved by the committee that gives each of the committee's members a reasonable opportunity to participate.

9. A committee member who participates in a committee meeting using that technology is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

## **22 Delegation by Committee to Sub-committee**

1. The committee may, by instrument in writing, delegate e.g. in the minutes, to one or more sub-committees (consisting of such member or members of the association as the committee thinks fit) the exercise of such of the functions of the committee as are specified in the instrument, other than:

(a) this power of delegation, and

(b) a function which is a duty imposed on the committee by the Act or by any other law.

2. A function the exercise of which has been delegated to a sub-committee under this rule may, while the delegation remains unrevoked, be exercised from time to time by the subcommittee in accordance with the terms of the delegation.

3. A delegation under this section may be made subject to such conditions or limitations as to the exercise of any function, or as to time or circumstances, as may be specified in the instrument of delegation.

4. Despite any delegation under this rule, the committee may continue to exercise any function delegated.

5. Any act or thing done or suffered by a sub-committee acting in the exercise of a delegation under this rule has the same force and effect as it would have if it had been done or suffered by the committee.

6. The committee may, by instrument in writing, revoke wholly or in part any delegation under this rule.
7. A sub-committee may meet and adjourn, as it thinks proper.
8. In Permaculture Sydney West Inc. there are distinctions between sub-committees and Teams. See clause 45.

## **23 Voting and Decisions**

1. Questions arising at a meeting of the committee or of any sub-committee appointed by the committee are to be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the committee or sub-committee present at the meeting.
2. Each member present at a meeting of the committee or of any sub-committee appointed by the committee (including the person presiding at the meeting) is entitled to one vote but, in the event of an equality of votes on any question, the person presiding may exercise a second or casting vote.
3. Subject to clause 20(5), the committee may act despite any vacancy on the committee.
4. Any act or thing done or suffered, or purporting to have been done or suffered, by the committee or by a sub-committee appointed by the committee, is valid and effectual despite any defect that may afterwards be discovered in the appointment or qualification of any member of the committee or sub-committee.

## **Part 4 - General meeting**

### **24 Annual General Meetings - holding of**

1. With the exception of the first annual general meeting of the association, the association must, at least once in each calendar year and within the period of 6 months after the expiration of each financial year of the association, convene an annual general meeting of its members.
2. The association must hold its annual general meetings:
  - (a) Within 6 months after the close of the association's financial year, or
  - (b) Within any later time that may be allowed or prescribed under section 37 (2) (b) of the Act.

### **25 Annual General Meetings - calling of and business at**

1. The annual general meeting of the association is, subject to the Act and to clause 23, to be convened on such date and at such place and time as the committee thinks fit.
2. In addition to any other business which may be transacted at an annual general meeting, the business of an annual general meeting is to include the following:
  - (a) to confirm the minutes of the last preceding annual general meeting and of any special general meeting held since that meeting,
  - (b) to receive from the committee reports on the activities of the association during the last preceding financial year,

- (c) to elect office-bearers of the association and Team Leaders,
- (d) to receive and consider the statement which is required to be submitted to members under section 26(6) of the Act.

3. An annual general meeting must be specified as such in the notice convening it.

## **26 Special General Meetings – calling of and business at**

1. The committee may, whenever it thinks fit, convene a special general meeting of the association.
2. The committee must, on the requisition in writing of at least 5 per cent of the total number of members, convene a special general meeting of the association.
3. A requisition of members for a special general meeting:
  - (a) must state the purpose or purposes of the meeting, and
  - (b) must be signed by the members making the requisition, and
  - (c) must be lodged with the secretary, and
  - (d) may consist of several documents in a similar form, each signed by one or more of the members making the requisition.
4. If the committee fails to convene a special general meeting to be held within 1 month after that date on which a requisition of members for the meeting is lodged with the secretary, any one or more of the members who made the requisition may convene a special general meeting to be held not later than 3 months after that date.
5. A special general meeting convened by a member or members as referred to in clause (4) must be convened as nearly as is practicable in the same manner as general meetings are convened by the committee and any member who consequently incurs expenses is entitled to be reimbursed by the association for any expense so incurred.
6. For the purposes of sub clause (3)
  - (a) a requisition may be in electronic form, and
  - (b) a signature may be transmitted, and a requisition may be lodged, by electronic means.

## **27 Notice**

1. Except if the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary must, at least 14 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, give a notice to each member specifying the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.
2. If the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary must, at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, cause notice to be given to each member specifying, in addition to the matter required under clause (1), the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution.

**NOTE:** A special resolution must be passed in accordance with section 39 of the Act.

3. No business other than that specified in the notice convening a general meeting is to be transacted at the meeting except, in the case of an annual general meeting, business which may be transacted under clause 25(2).

4. A member desiring to bring any business before a general meeting may give notice in writing of that business to the secretary who must include that business in the next notice calling a general meeting given after receipt of the notice from the member.

## **28 Procedure**

1. No item of business is to be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of members entitled under these rules to vote is present during the time the meeting is considering that item.

2. Twenty members present in person (being members entitled under these rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a general meeting.

3. If within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of a general meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting:

(a) if convened on the requisition of members, is to be dissolved, and

(b) in any other case, is to stand adjourned to the same day in the following week at the same time and (unless another place is specified at the time of the adjournment by the person presiding at the meeting or communicated by written notice to members given before the day to which the meeting is adjourned) at the same place.

4. If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour after the time appointed for the commencement of the meeting, the members present (being at least five) is to constitute a quorum.

## **29 Presiding member**

1. The chairperson for each meeting shall be agreed upon by the committee members present prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## **30 Adjournment**

1. The chairperson of a general meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of the majority of members present at the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place, but no business is to be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.

2. If a general meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, the secretary must give written or oral notice of the adjourned meeting to each member of the association stating the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

3. Except as provided in clauses (1) and (2), notice of an adjournment of a general meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting is not required to be given.

### **31 Making of decisions**

1. A question arising at a general meeting of the association is to be determined on a show of hands and, unless before or on the declaration of the show of hands a poll is demanded, a declaration by the chairperson that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or carried by a particular majority or lost, or an entry to that effect in the minute book of the association, is evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of or against that resolution.
2. At a general meeting of the association, a poll may be demanded by the chairperson or by at least five members present in person or by proxy at the meeting.
3. If a poll is demanded at a general meeting, the poll must be taken
4. the resolution of the poll on the matter is taken to be the resolution of the meeting on that matter.

### **32 Special Resolution**

A resolution of the association is a special resolution:

- (a) if it is passed by a majority which comprises at least three-quarters of such members of the association as, being entitled under these rules so to do, vote in person or by proxy at a general meeting of which at least 21 days' written notice specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution was given in accordance with these rules, or
- (b) where it is made to appear to the Commissioner that it is not practicable for the resolution to be passed in the manner specified in paragraph (a), if the resolution is passed in a manner specified by the Commissioner.

### **33 Voting**

1. On any question arising at a general meeting of the association a member has one vote only.
2. In the case of an equality of votes on a question at a general meeting, the chairperson of the meeting is entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.
3. A member or proxy is not entitled to vote at any general meeting of the association unless all money due and payable by the member or proxy to the association has been paid.
4. A member is not entitled to vote at any general meeting of the association if the member is under 18 years of age.

### **34 Appointment of proxies**

1. Each member is to be entitled to appoint another member as proxy by notice given to the secretary no later than 24 hours before the time of the meeting in respect of which the proxy is appointed.
2. The notice appointing the proxy is to be in an appropriate signed form.

### **35 Postal or electronic ballots**

1. The association may hold a postal or electronic ballot (as the committee determines) to determine any issue or proposal (other than an appeal under clause 11)
2. A postal or electronic ballot is to be conducted in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulation.

## **Part 5 - Miscellaneous**

### **36 Insurance**

The association may effect and maintain insurance.

### **37 Funds – Source**

1. The funds of the association are to be derived from entrance fees and annual subscriptions of members, donations and, subject to any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, such other sources as the committee determines.
2. All money received by the association must be deposited as soon as practicable and without deduction to the credit of the association's bank account.
3. The association must, as soon as practicable after receiving any money, issue an appropriate receipt.

### **38 Funds – management**

1. Subject to any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, the funds of the association are to be used in pursuance of the objects of the association in such manner as the committee determines.
2. All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments must be signed by 2 authorised signatories.

### **39 Alteration of objects and constitution**

The statement of objects and these rules may be altered, rescinded or added to only by a special resolution of the association.

### **40 Distribution of property on winding up of association**

1. Subject to the Act and the Regulations, in a winding up of the association, any surplus property of the association is to be transferred to another organisation with similar objects and which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.
2. In this clause, a reference to the surplus property of an association is a reference to that property of the association remaining after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the association and the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the association.

**NOTE:** Section 65 of the Act provides for distribution of surplus property on the winding up of an association.

#### **41 Change of Name, Objects and Constitution**

An application for registration of a change in the association's name, objects or constitution in accordance with section 10 of the Act is to be made by the public officer or a committee member.

#### **42 Custody of Books**

Except as otherwise provided by this constitution, all records, books and other documents relating to the association must be kept in New South Wales.

- (a) At the main premises of the association, in the custody of the public officer or a member of the association (as the committee determines), or
- (b) If the association has no premises, at the association's official address, in the custody of the public officer.

#### **43 Inspection of books**

The records, books and other documents of the association must be open to inspection, free of charge, by a member of the association at any reasonable hour.

#### **44 Service of Notices**

1. For the purpose of these rules, a notice may be served on or given to a person:

- (a) by delivering it to the person personally, or
- (b) by sending it by pre-paid post to the address of the person, or
- (c) by sending it by facsimile transmission or some other form of electronic transmission to an address specified by the person for giving or serving the notice.

2. For the purpose of these rules, a notice is taken, unless the contrary is proved, to have been given or served:

- (a) in the case of a notice given or served personally, on the date on which it is received by the addressee, and
- (b) in the case of a notice sent by pre-paid post, on the date when it would have been delivered in the ordinary course of post, and
- (c) in the case of a notice sent by facsimile transmission or some other form of electronic transmission, on the date it was sent, or if the machine from which the transmission was sent produces a report indicating that the notice was sent on a later date, on that date.

#### **45 Permaculture Sydney West Inc. Teams**

1. Permaculture Sydney West Teams are set up to achieve specific ongoing functional goals of Permaculture Sydney West.
2. The purpose of each Team is defined in writing by the committee of management.

3. Teams are open for any member to join.
4. Team members (or others) may propose a Team Leader who is confirmed by election at the AGM.
5. Teams act within the powers given to them by the committee of management.
6. Each Team Leader occupies a position on the committee if determined by the committee of management. Teams report, raise issues and make recommendations to the committee through their Team Leaders.
7. Teams may be dissolved by the committee of management.

(6) Each Team Leader occupies a position on the committee if determined by the committee of management. Teams report, raise issues and make recommendations to the committee through their Team Leaders.

(7) Teams may be dissolved by the committee of management.

### Appendix 3 – AGM Order of Proceedings

## Annual General Meeting Permaculture Sydney West Date

### Agenda

Opening remarks by President:

President invites Secretary to present minutes of previous AGM

9. Minutes of previous year's AGM : Secretary

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> by: \_\_\_\_\_

10. President's report:

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> by: \_\_\_\_\_

President invites Treasurer to present annual report

11. Treasurer's report:

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> by: \_\_\_\_\_

12. President introduces Returning Officer: (who continues from this point)

13. Returning. Officer thanks outgoing position holders

14. Returning. Officer declares all positions vacant.

15. Returning. officer calls for 2 scrutineer volunteers:

8. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

16. Announces that voting is for all financial members

17. Election of Office Bearers for 2017 (President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary)

18. Gives brief summary of each role before each vote

19. Announces received nominations for President (reads from nomination forms)

20. Asks for further nominations

21. Calls for vote if more than 1 nomination

22. Asks for show of hands.

23. Scrutineers count and give tally

24. Declare position filled & congratulates new person.

25. Continue same for remaining positions

President:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
VP:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Treasurer:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Secretary:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:

26. Thank you to new Office Bearers

27. We are now going to elect Team leaders for our sub groups. The leaders are responsible for coordinating the people and the jobs, not necessarily doing all of the work themselves. If you would like to be a part of these teams please see the Team Leader over supper. I'm sure they would love to hear from you. You can join teams at any time throughout the year.

28. Election of Committee Members for 2016

Membership Team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
IT/Web Team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Marketing / Media:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Garden Team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Education Team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Living Skills Team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Seed Savers team:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
Library Co-ordinator:	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:

29. Election of Support Committee Members (hopefully 2)

_____	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
_____	Nominated by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:

30. Thank you to new Office Bearers

31. General Business: New President presides.

32. AGM Meeting declared closed: New President

#### **Appendix 4 – Committee Role Descriptions**

# Permaculture Sydney West Committee Structure and Functions

## ***Management Committee***

### President

General spokes-person. Convene and chair meetings. Collect correspondence and present at Exec meeting. Ensure groups/ committees run smoothly. Supervise achievement of aims and objectives. Keep communication lines open. Represent PSW at meetings with local councils, NGOs and other organisations.

### Vice President / Grants officer

President's support person and stand in.

Gather content for newsletter.

Liaise with Councils regarding grants. Keep track of available grants and submit applications.

Grant procurement and oversee other fundraising.

### Secretary

Take minutes at Exec meetings. (Template already exists.)

Edit and distribute to Exec team within 10 days.

Collect Treasurer's report and IT reports before exec meeting and add to Exec meeting minutes.

Maintain and update PSW Workshop Register and send updated copies to Exec members, especially Treasurer.

Distribute correspondence – first point of contact (emails, general enquires, phone calls).

Request agenda items for exec meeting, forward correspondence to relevant committee member (e.g. media contact forwarded to publicity person, workshop enquiries to education team) Maintain correspondence records.

Notify members of public events and handle all group email distributions

### Membership Secretary

Process applications for new members (receipt of payments, update and maintain members list. Send out renewal email. Print badges for new members. Record statistics (attendances etc) and present at each Exec meeting.

Arrive at Monday meeting 30 minutes early: Desk set up. Sign in books. Application forms. Set up cash register for new member payments.

The Front desk is the Welcome Desk 

### Treasurer

Banking, handling cheques, budgets, oversee insurance, raise invoices, produce monthly finance report and bank balance at monthly Exec meeting.

## ***Support Committees***

### IT Support

Manage website; Coordinate and set up equipment (PSW Computer + digital projector + stand+ screen) for guest speakers and presentations. Produce monthly website statistics (Google analytics) for the Exec minutes.

### Education Team

Develop and implement a program of monthly meeting presentations, including but not limited to guest speakers, in-house speakers and round robin skills workshops of up to 60mins for each PSW meeting. The program will aim to cover most of the Permaculture Design Principles throughout the year, empowering members to increase and improve their knowledge and implementation of Permaculture.

This team works well with three people, particularly competent or emerging teachers! Great chance for mentoring if you are an aspiring teacher!

Hours required: 1/2 day Planning & development in January; 1-2 hours / month, more if you are teaching that month.

### Library /Resource Manager

Maintain register for books on loan, cover books, maintain information folder, catalogues, advertising material. Follow up non-returns.

### Media / Marketing Coordinator

Social media contact. Local paper community announcements

Print flyers / business card renewals.

Make members aware of public events,

Engage members for support, and liaise with exec team to organise materials and equipment for events.

### Seed Saver Team

This growing team, led by our own experts, Annette and Karlene gets you involved in all aspects of seeds and seed saving and packaging.

Meet once a month at Bidjiwong Nursery.

Assist with Seed sales at Monday night meeting.

### Living Skills

One person can do it. Works better with 2.

Be on the lookout for skills which members may have. (Liz Moore's Skills List will be invaluable here!)

Approach people and invite them to teach what they know to a small group.

Organise a date, time, venue with them. (If it's not their place, then it's yours!)

Create a flyer invitation (Template already exists) Send to the Secretary for Email Distribution. Take photos. Give photos to IT person for uploading on the website.

### Exec Team Support Members

Support is needed with the following

- Recycle roundabout supervision

- Meet and greet sub-committee at monthly meetings.

### Tea / Coffee supply at monthly meetings.

This involves bringing the picnic basket with tea/coffee, milk, sugar, mugs, spoons to each monthly meeting. Collect the gold coin donations and manage the petty cash raised.

## Appendix 5 – AGM Nomination Form

Permaculture Sydney West Inc.  
Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Permaculture Sydney West will be held on Monday 5th December 2016 at Wentworthville Community Centre - 2 Lane Street Wentworthville, NSW 2145 Meeting commences at 7.00 pm, followed by the AGM.

The business of the meeting shall be to:

- 1] Confirm the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in 2015.
- 2] Receive the President's, Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports and activities throughout 2015.
- 3] Announce the nominations for committee positions for the next 12 months.
- 4] General Business.

---

Nomination

Position Title:

Signature:

Name of Nominee:

Signature:

Proposed by:

Signature:

By signing, I the nominee, agree to my nomination and accept my commitment for the above position, if I am elected for the term.

---

All positions will be declared vacant at the meeting. Positions to be filled are:

• President **	• Marketing Team
• Vice President **	• Garden Team
• Treasurer **	• Education Team
• Secretary **	• Living Skills Team
• Membership Team	• Seed Savers Team
• Web Team	• Library Team
• Media/ Marketing Team	• General Support Team (includes tea/Coffee person)

\*\* Office Bearer Positions that must be filled at the AGM.

Please refer to specific job role descriptions. (Available on PSW website)

Positions are from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2017 [12 months].

If there is more than one nominee for a position, a majority vote may take place.

Nomination forms for a position on the Committee must be signed by a nominee who is a financial member of Permaculture Sydney West Inc.

Nominations close on Friday 2nd December 2016.

Please complete this form, scan or print, and then return to the Secretary by:

Email: [informationpsw@gmail.com](mailto:informationpsw@gmail.com)

Thank you for your Nomination.

## Appendix 6 – Sample living Skills Program (2016)

When	What	Who	Where
February 20 10am	Soap making		
March	Preserving		
April	Clothing swap Making new clothes from old		
May	Grafting		
June	Natural cleaners		
July	Grandma's skills for today		
August	Chinese cooking		
September	Foraging		
October	Sewing for garden, kitchen and shopping		
November	Christmas gifts – various small projects		
December			

## Appendix 7 – Sample Meeting Schedule (2016)

	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Event	Microbats	Tomato Fest	Hidden Costs of Consumption	Indira Naidoo	Making Household Products	Film Night	Guilds	Care and use of tools	Making garden beds and soil testing	Guest speaker	Christmas + Trivia
Speaker/Organiser											
Type	Guest speaker	Round Robin	In house speaker	Guest speaker	Round Robin	PSW annual event	In house speaker	Round Robin	In house speaker	Guest speaker	PSW annual event
Domain	Land and nature stewardship	Land & nature stewardship	Land & nature stewardship, Tools & technology, Finance and economics	Culture and education	Land & nature stewardship, Tools & technology, Health and wellbeing, Finance and economics		Land & nature stewardship	Tools & technology, Finance and economics, Land & nature stewardship, Built environment	Land & nature stewardship, Built environment		
Ethic	Earthcare	All	All, esp Fairshare		Earthcare, People care	People care	Earthcare	All	Earthcare		People care
Principle	10, 11	1, 2, 3, 4, 10	4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12		5, 6, 8, 11	1, 4, 8	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11	2,4,5,6,8,9,10,11	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 20, 11		1, 4, 8, 10

## Appendix 8 – Sample Living Skills Run Sheet (Spinning)

### Living Skills

**Session title:** Introduction to Spinning and Felting **Time:** 2 Hours

**Outcomes:** By the end of the session the attendees should be able to -

- Identify the parts of a spinning wheel
- Describe the process of spinning
- Describe the process of felting

Structure	Time	Details
Introduction to session	3:00pm – 3:15pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q: What spinning or felting experience do you have?</li> <li>• Q: What do you hope to learn from today's session?</li> <li>• History – drop spindles; wheels</li> <li>• Context – fibre production; treatment; spinning; dyeing; use</li> <li>• Fibres – cotton and wool (staple)</li> <li>• Overview of the spinning process</li> </ul>
Segment 1 – Spinning Theory & Practice	3:15pm – 4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parts of the wheel</li> <li>• Setting the wheel up – tension the wheel; tension the spindle, lead in yarn</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing the fibre – cleaning &amp; scouring; carding – hand carding, drum carding, flicker; ginning cotton; combing wool</li> <li>• Using a niddynoddy;</li> <li>• Plying with a lazy Kate</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spinning techniques – long draw (woollen) &amp; short draw (worsted)</li> <li>• Spinning practice – setting up, drafting and running on</li> <li>• Spinning practice - treadling</li> <li>• Spinning practice - spinning</li> </ul>
Break	4:00pm – 4:10pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Segment 2 – Spinning practice & Felting	4:10pm – 4:55pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spinning practice - spinning</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felting – Equipment &amp; materials</li> <li>• Fibres</li> <li>• Process</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felting demonstration</li> </ul>
Conclusion	4:55pm – 5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have we achieved our outcomes?</li> <li>• Have you achieved what you wanted?</li> <li>• Review main points</li> </ul>

**Appendix 9 – Trivia Night: Answer Sheets – Rounds**

**ANSWER SHEET ROUND 1**  
**ROUND 2** (8pts)  
(8pts)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

TABLE # \_\_\_\_

**ANSWER SHEET**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

TABLE # \_\_\_\_

**ANSWER SHEET ROUND 3**  
(8pts)

(8pts)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

TABLE # \_\_\_\_

**ANSWER SHEET ROUND 4**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

TABLE # \_\_\_\_

## Appendix 10 – Trivia Night Table Game Sheets

### TABLE GAME # 1

TABLE # \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_

How many Movie or Song titles with a Permaculture reference can you think of?

e.g. How green was my Valley (film)

(1 pt for every title)

A. Unscramble these words.

(16 pts)

1. rieonmttfane      \_ E \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ O \_
2. sooilbnmill      \_ \_ L \_ M \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (2 words)
3. Rsssoohhppu      \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ \_ S
4. cinagro      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
5. tnnooaiipll      \_ \_ L \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ N
6. ngooippraat      \_ R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ O \_
7. adbcimoiny      \_ I \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ I \_ (2 words)
8. resiltiref      \_ \_ \_ T \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_

B. 'Multiple choice' questions (put on screen)

(8pts)

1. Phyto plankton can be found in  
a) your garden b) the ocean c) the air d) most of your food \_\_\_\_\_
2. Bicarb soda is also known as  
a) diatomaceous soda b) baking soda c) washing soda d) baking powder \_\_\_\_\_
3. "Trace" is a word which comes up in the process of  
a) fermentation b) desertification c) saponification d) compost building \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which major company did Bill Mollison work for?  
a) Nestle b) CSIRO c) Yates d) BHP \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which of the following is not an Australian innovation?  
a) Chiko Roll b) Lawn Sprinkler c) Plastic bank notes d) Dual flush toilet? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sunlight + water + carbon dioxide is called  
a) plantisynthesis b) photonucleus c) photosynthesis d) chlorosynthesis \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which of these garden animals is NOT a leaf eater?  
a) butterfly b) caterpillar c) slugs d) snails \_\_\_\_\_
8. Bio-degradeable plastic bags should be:  
a) Used all the time because they break down in landfill  
b) Used only sometimes, as they still take up space in landfill  
c) Avoided where possible,  
d) Used occasionally as they are very expensive. \_\_\_\_\_

**TABLE GAME # 2**

**TABLE #** \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 26

All questions viewed on screen

- a. Match plants with seed pictures (write the matching letter)  
(10 pts)

Lettuce \_\_\_\_ Tomato \_\_\_\_ Onion \_\_\_\_ Basil \_\_\_\_ Cucumber \_\_\_\_  
Pea \_\_\_\_ Watermelon \_\_\_\_ Beetroot \_\_\_\_ Coriander \_\_\_\_ Pumpkin \_\_\_\_

- b. Match flags with the countries where these eco-villages are located  
(8 pts)

(Write the letter only)

1. Peru : Eco Truly Park \_\_\_\_\_      2. Costa Rica :Finca Bella Vista \_\_\_\_  
3. Argentina: Bliss Centre \_\_\_\_\_      4. Scotland: Findhorn \_\_\_\_\_  
5. Indonesia: Misool Eco resort \_\_\_\_\_      6. Turkey: Hermes Project \_\_\_\_\_  
7. Chile: Ecopueblo Pualafquén \_\_\_\_\_      8. Spain: Taldea \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Permy personalities (view screen)

Match these Permaculture Personalities with their pictures  
(8 pts)

Sep Holzer	_____	Geoff Lawton	_____
Russ Grayson	_____	Joel Salatin	_____
Bill Mollison	_____	David Holgrem	_____
Linda Woodrow	_____	Rosemary Morrow	_____

**TABLE GAME # 3**

TABLE # \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_/18

a. Proverbs & Principles

(4 pts)

Match the Permaculture principle with a Proverb which carries the same message.

PROVERB	PRINCIPLE
A. "You can't work on an empty stomach"	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <i>Produce no waste</i>
B. "A stitch in time saves nine"	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. <i>Use and Value Diversity</i>
C. "Slow and steady wins the race"	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. <i>Obtain a Yield</i>
D. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket"	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. <i>Use Small and Slow Solutions</i>

b. What Fruit is this?



1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

c. 10 Multiple choice questions

(10 pts)

1. Which of the following is NOT a variety of tomato?  
a) sweetie b) early chief c) Tiny Tim d) Roma \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which profession would you expect to make use of the capsicum plant?  
a) accountant b) fireman c) policeman d) pilot \_\_\_\_\_
3. When a plant takes in CO<sub>2</sub> from the air, what element is produced? \_\_\_\_\_
4. The underground edible parts of the potato are commonly called  
a) bulbs b) rhizomes c) stolons d) tubers \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was the co-author of Bill Mollison's book: "Permaculture One"?  
a) Geoff Lawton b) Joel Salatin c) David Holgrem d) Jackie French \_\_\_\_\_
6. What percentage of the total cost of production of goods goes into packaging?  
a) 10% b) 2% c) 1% d) 0.1% \_\_\_\_\_
7. How much energy will 1 recycled aluminium can save? Enough to power  
a. a microwave for 30 minutes b. the average American home for 4 days  
c. a computer for 15 minute d. a TV for 3 hours \_\_\_\_\_
8. Recycling plastic saves \_\_\_\_\_ as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.  
a. Twice b. half c. triple d. None, it takes more energy to recycle  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How many years to decompose a typical glass bottle?  
a. 20 years b. 150 years c. 4000 years d. Never break down \_\_\_\_\_

10. E-waste is being sent to landfill at 3 times the rate of general waste.

What kind of appliances make up the greatest % of E-waste?

- a) Computers, mobiles, printers & faxes
- b) refrigerators
- c) TVs
- d) washing machines, dryers, air conditioners vacuum cleaners & other small appliances. \_\_\_\_

## Appendix 11 – Trivia Night Bonus Questions and Deciders

### Bonus Qs / deciders for the MC

1. Why is polystyrene separated from other plastics in Clean Ups?  
It's toxic and shreds into tiny particles
2. What's the best type of soil for growing parsnips? Sandy
3. What does GM stand for? Genetically modified
4. Spell diatomaceous.
5. How many layers in a forest garden (according to Permaculture?) 7
6. Which layer of the Forest garden does the rhizosphere refer to?  
Root crops
7. What do we call the tallest / highest layer of a forest garden?  
Canopy
8. Name a chinese green: tatsoi, gai-lan
9. To which plant family does broccoli belong? Brassica
10. To which plant family do pumpkins belong? Cucurbitaceae
11. To which plant family does capsicum belong? Solanaceae
12. What does PETE stand for? Poly ethylene terephthalate
13. What does HDPE stand for? High-Density Polyethylene
14. What is the name of an indoor composting system? Bokashi
15. What does PVC stand for? polyvinyl chloride
16. What is mycelium? The vegetative part of a fungus or fungus-like bacterial colony,
17. What are the 3 main elements in air? O C02 N
18. What does anaerobic mean? Without air
19. What's the common name for A: a worm
20. What's the opposite of antibiotic? Probiotic
21. What does phototropic mean? Seeking light
22. One word for decomposed litter and animal remains? Humus
23. Which animal urine has the highest Nitrogen content? Humans
24. Green materials in your compost are high in which element?  
Nitrogen
25. Brown materials in your compost are high in which element?  
Carbon

## Appendix 12 - Trivia night MC copy/run sheet

Make sure you all have a ticket for the lucky door prize!

Hand out Table Game Sheet #1

### 1st Round x 8 questions (8pts)

'What is...' question set

1. A companion plant for the tomato plant? (basil)
2. The chemical symbol for Potassium? (K)
3. The preferred flower colour for Australian bees? (yellow)
4. A vegetable in the Solanaceae family?  
(Tomato, chilli, eggplant, capsicum, potatoes – night shade)
5. The chemical symbol for Sodium (Na)
6. The name of a plant known as a dynamic accumulator  
(thistle, comfrey, dandelion, borage, nettle, vetch, clover)
7. The name of the scale we use to measure acidity/alkalinity? – (pH scale)
8. What is Hugelkultur? (use logs / tree trunks to build bed base)

### 2nd Round x 8 questions (8pts)

'Numbers' question set

1. How many queens in a bee hive? (1)
2. How long before you can expect peaches on a peach tree, root stock.  
(After the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.)
3. How many kernels on the average corn cob? (range between 300-500)
4. What's the planting distance between espaliered fruit trees? (3-6 m)
5. What percentage of all food crops are annuals? (80% ).
6. In which decade of the last century did HJ Heinz produce the first tomato firm enough to be harvested by a machine? (70s – 1971)
7. Permaculture is based on how many principles? (12)
8. How much of Australia is classified as desert (35%)

**TABLE GAME # 1**

**TABLE #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Score** \_\_\_\_\_

How many Movie or Song titles with a Permaculture reference can you think of?

e.g. How green was my Valley

(1 pt for every title)

C. Unscramble these words.

(16 pts)

9. r i e o n m t t f a n e    \_ E \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ O \_ (Fermentation)  
10. s o o i l b n m i l l i    \_ \_ L \_ M \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (Bob Mollinson)  
11. R s s o o h h p p u    \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ S (Phosphorus)  
12. c i n a g r o    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (Organic)  
13. t n n o o a i i p l l    \_ \_ L \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ N (Pollination)  
14. n g o o i p p r a a t    \_ R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ O \_ (Propagation)  
15. a d b c i m o i y n    \_ I \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ I \_ (Bio Dynamic)  
16. r e s i l t i r e f    \_ \_ \_ T \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ (fertiliser)

D. 'Multiple choice' questions (put on screen)

(8pts)

9. Phyto plankton can be found in  
a) your garden b) the ocean c) the air d) most of your food      B
10. Bicarb soda is also known as  
a) diatomaceous soda b) baking soda c) washing soda d) baking powder      B
11. "Trace" is a word which comes up in the process of  
a) fermentation b) desertification c) saponification d) compost building      C
12. Which major company did Bill Mollison work for?  
a) Nestle b) CSIRO c) Yates d) BHP      B
13. Which of the following is not an Australian innovation?  
a) Chiko Roll b) Lawn Sprinkler c) Plastic bank notes d) Dual flush toilet?      B
14. Sunlight + water + carbon dioxide is called  
a) plantisynthesis b) photonucleus c) photosynthesis d) chlorosynthesis      C
15. Which of these garden animals is NOT a leaf eater?  
a) butterfly b) caterpillar c) slugs d) snails      A
16. Bio-degradable plastic bags should be:  
a) Used all the time because they break down in landfill  
b) Used only sometimes, as they still take up space in landfill  
c) Avoided where possible,  
d) Used occasionally as they are very expensive.  
  C

## Novelty Game # 1

Head & Tail sequence – winner is last one standing  
(answers are either Heads or Tails)

1. How much of Japan's waste stream was recycled in one very effective program?

**Heads.** 20%    **or**    **Tails** 50%

2. Which country has 6% of the world's population and produces half of the world's garbage?

**Heads.** USA    **Tails.** China

3. How many times can glass be recycled?

**Heads.** Indefinitely    **Tails.** 20 times

4. Tomatoes originated in

**Heads.** Africa    **Tails** South America

5. The first Permaculture Institute was set up in

**Heads** South Australia    **Tails.** Tasmania

6. A Jack-O-Lantern is made out of

**Heads** pumpkin    **Tails** potato

7. One tonne of recycled paper will save how many trees?

**Heads** 17    **Tails** 35

8. The country which has the highest proportion of recycled household waste is

**Heads** Australia    **Tails** Austria (70%)

9. Seeds are best stored a) warm wet light b) cool wet dark

**Heads** cool, dry dark    **Tails** warm, dry, dark.

17. What is Australia's largest non-salt lake?

**Heads** Lake Mackay, WA    **Tails** Lake Eyre, SA

18. The best type of soil in which to grow parsnips is

**Heads** heavy clay    **Tails** sandy

19. How long does it take (approximately) to recycle an aluminium can?

**Heads** 2 months    **Tails** 6 months

Collect Table Game Sheet #1

Hand out Table Game Sheets 2 and 3 now.

**TABLE GAME # 2**

**TABLE #** \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_ / 26

All questions viewed on screen

d. Match plants with seed pictures (write the matching letter)  
10 pts)

Lettuce **\_C\_** Tomato **\_F\_** Onion **\_E\_** Basil **\_A\_** Cucumber **\_H\_**  
Pea **\_D\_** Watermelon **\_G\_** Beetroot **\_J\_** Coriander **\_I\_** Pumpkin **\_B\_**

b. Match flags with the countries where you find these eco-villages (match the letter) (8 pts)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Peru : Eco Truly Park <b>_F_</b>        | 2. Costa Rica :Finca Bella Vista <b>_D_</b> |
| 3. Argentina: Bliss Centre <b>_E_</b>      | 4. Scotland: Findhorn <b>_H_</b>            |
| 5. Indonesia: Misool Eco resort <b>_C_</b> | 6. Turkey:_ Hermes Project <b>_A_</b>       |
| 7. Chile: Ecopueblo Pualafquén <b>_G_</b>  | 8. Spain: Taldea <b>_B_</b>                 |

c. Permy personalities (printed in colour)

Match these Permaculture Personalities with their pictures (view on screen) (8 pts)

Sep Holzer	<b>_5_</b>	Geoff Lawton	<b>_4_</b>
Russ Grayson	<b>_6_</b>	Joel Salatin	<b>_3_</b>
Bill Mollison	<b>_2_</b>	David Holgrem	<b>_7_</b>
Linda Woodrow	<b>_8_</b>	Rosemary Morrow	<b>_1_</b>

Lucky door Prize  
from front table

Winner selected.

Choose

## Novelty game # 2

First one to stand up holding the nominated object.

- a. a green item;
- b. a recycled item;
- c. wearing something made out of hemp or bamboo

Extra question if needed: wearing something you have made/sewn/knitted yourself

Announce winner of Round 2

3rd Round x 8 questions

(8pts)

10 T/F questions

1. Rhubarb is an annual (F)
2. Lavender is a perennial (T)
3. Cheese is a fermented product (T)
4. Gravel is used in the bottom of a wicking bed. (T).
5. You only need one apple tree to bear fruit. It self-pollinates. (F)
6. You collect seed from a plant while it is still green. (F)
7. Rosemary Morrow developed the idea of strategic Permaculture principles. (T)
8. Organic gardening and Permaculture are the same thing. (F)

4th Round x 8 questions

(8pts)

'Complete this sentence' question set

1. High alkaline levels are indicated by the colour.... (blue/purple)
2. The Mustard Plant family is commonly known as..... (brassicas)
3. A plant from the Gourd family is ....  
(Cucumbers Zucchini Melons Pumpkins Squash)
4. Sydney is in a ..... climate zone (temperate / sub tropical)
5. SCOBY stands for.... (symbiotic community of bacteria and yeast)
6. A medicine which inhibits the growth of or destroys microorganisms is called..(antibiotic)
7. 2 natural cleaning products are.. (bicarb soda, washing soda, eucalyptus oil, tea tree oil, borax, white vinegar)
8. Bronze citrus bugs are also called...(stink bugs)

Announce Round 3 winner

a. Proverbs & Principles

(4 pts)

Match the Permaculture principle with a Proverb which carries the same message.

PROVERB	PRINCIPLE
E. "You can't work on an empty stomach"	5. <i>Produce no waste</i> B
F. "A stitch in time saves nine"	6. <i>Use &amp; Value</i>
G. "Slow and steady wins the race"	<i>Diversity</i> D
H. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket"	7. <i>Obtain a yield</i> A
	8. <i>Use small &amp; slow solutions</i> C

e.

What Fruit is this?



(4

1.pomegranate \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. rosehip \_\_\_\_\_

f. 10 Multiple choice questions

(10 pts)

11. Which of the following is NOT a variety of tomato?  
a) sweetie b) early chief c) Tiny Tim d) Roma
12. Which profession would you expect to make use of the capsicum plant?  
a) accountant b) fireman c) policeman d) pilot
13. When a plant takes in CO<sup>2</sup> from the air, what element is produced?  
a. Nitrogen b. Carbon c. Potassium d. oxygen
14. The underground edible parts of the potato are commonly called  
a) bulbs b) rhizomes c) stolons d) tubers
15. Who was the co-author of Bill Mollison's book: "Permaculture One"?  
a) Geoff Lawton b) Joel Salatin c) David Holgren d) Jackie French
16. What percentage of the total cost of production of goods goes into packaging?  
a) 10% b) 2% c) 1% d) 0.1%

17. How much energy will 1 recycled aluminium can save? Enough to power ...
- a. a microwave for 30 minutes      b. the average American home for 4 days  
 c. a computer for 15 minute      d. a TV for 3 hours
18. Recycling plastic saves \_\_\_\_\_ as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.  
 a. twice b. half c. triple d. None, it takes more energy to recycle
19. How many years to decompose a typical glass bottle?  
 a. 20 years      b. 150 years      c. 4000 years      d. Never  
 break down
20. E-waste is being sent to landfill at 3 times the rate of general waste.  
 What kind of appliances make up the greatest % of E-waste?  
 b) Computers, mobiles, printers & faxes      b) refrigerators    c) TVs  
 d) washing machines, dryers, air conditioners vacuum cleaners & other small appliances.

Announce Round 4 winner

### Novelty Game #3

60 seconds game

(10

Pts)

Old MacDonald had a farm, E I E I O. And on that farm he had a...

10 points to the table which comes up with the highest number of substitutions for the next word.

The substituted word must be an element or a function of a Permaculture garden.

(Give example ONLY if they ask for it.e.g. water tank)

Time starts NOW!

Hands up for which table got the most substitutions.

Then... the table has to sing it!  
 prize= points

Table

Overall Table Winner announced  
 prizes on table

Book

**Bonus point questions** x 4 (2pts each = 8pts) (Question mix)

1. Name 4 ingredients of a Kombucha  
 (Green or black tea, filtered water, sugar, a scoby)
2. Which chemical makes plants green? (chlorophyll)

## Appendix 13 – Trivia Night – Prizes and points

### Prizes:

Lucky Door Prize tickets	(George foreman x 1)
Hand out Table Game Sheet #1	
1st Round x 8 questions 'What is..' question set	
2nd Round x 8 questions 'Numbers' question set	(bags compost / worm juice x 10)
Announce Round 1 winner	Seeds & seedlings x 10
1 <sup>st</sup> Table Game	No prize – just points
a. Permy Movie and/or Song Titles	
b. Scrambled words	
c. 10 x MC Qs	
Novelty game #1 Heads/ Tails	1 winner x bottle of wine
Collect Table Game sheet #1 (no prize just points)	
Hand out Table Game sheet 2 & 3, both now!	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Table Game	No prize, just points
<i>Viewing slides together - self correct immediately after</i>	
A. Match Seeds to Plants (view slides)	
B. Match flags with eco village locations (view slides)	
C. Permy Personalities	
Lucky Door Prize Drawn	George Foreman Griller
Novelty game # 2 First one to stand up with nominated 'Permy' object	3 winners :bottle of wine / massage set / handbag - pick from table bags compost / worm juice x 10
Announce Round 2 winner	
3rd Round x 8 questions	
4th Round x 8 questions	
Announce Round 3 winner	movie tickets
3 <sup>rd</sup> Table Game sheet	No prize – just points
A. Reasons for a guild	
B. Principles and proverbs	
C. What fruit is this?	
D. M/C questions x 10	
Announce Round 4 winner	movie tickets
Novelty Game #3	10 bonus points
Overall Table winner announced	Vinnies books – choose from table
Bonus Point Qs	

## Points

Round 1 winner	(8pts)
1 <sup>st</sup> Table Game	Points – open ended
Novelty game #1 Heads/ Tails	(5pts)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Table Game	(28pts)
Novelty game # 2	3 pts to each winner's table
Round 2 winner	(8pts)
Round 3 winner	(8pts)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Table Game sheet	Points – open ended
Round 4 winner	(8pts)
Novelty Game #3	(10pts)
Overall winner announced	Table with highest score
( Book prizes- select from table)	



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## *PSW Library Rules*

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1. Only PSW Members may borrow books and this library is free for PSW members to use.
2. Books may be borrowed for a period of one month (ie from one meeting to the next).
3. Book borrowings may be extended for a further month unless someone else has reserved that book.
4. Books MUST be returned at the end of the borrowing period or a fine may be imposed.

Over due period	Fine
One month (without extension)	\$2.00
Two months	\$5.00
Three months	\$10.00
Four months	Replacement cost of the book

5. If a book is lost, stolen or destroyed while in the care of the borrower, the borrower shall either replace the book at their cost or provide PSW with the replacement cost.
6. Books are the responsibility of the borrower and must not be passed on to a third party (even if the third party is a PSW member).
7. Anyone may reserve a book by talking to the librarian.
8. When filling out the borrowing register ensure that your handwriting is legible
9. Anyone may donate books to the library but “off topic” books may not be accepted.
10. A maximum of 3 books may be borrowed in any one month. (There is no restriction on magazines).
11. Books must be returned in similar condition as when they are borrowed.
12. Books may not be borrowed at the last meeting of the year and must be returned at that time.

*Your Librarian*

## Responsibilities of the librarian

---

1. Opening and closing the library on time.
2. Helping readers to find books.
3. Transporting books to and from meetings
4. Explaining and enforcing the library's rules.
5. Organizing the books in a clear and consistent way.
6. Taking inventory.
7. Acquiring books.
8. Keeping track of borrowed books/ keeping records.
9. Tracking down overdue or missing books.
10. Evaluating the library.
11. Making status reports at PSW committee meetings.



## **Appendix 17 – Sustainable Study Circle Questions**

### **Food**

Question 1 – what does eating more sustainably mean to you?

Question 2 – what is stopping you from eating more sustainably now?

Question 3 – What action(s) can you carry out to help you eat more sustainably?

### **Energy**

Question 1 – What is your experience of using energy more sustainably?

Question 2 – What limits you using energy more sustainably at the moment?

Question 3 – What can you do to support your efforts towards more sustainable energy use?

### **Water**

Question 1 – What is your experience with sustainable water usage?

Question 2 – What are the barriers to you using water in a more sustainable way?

Question 3 – What can you change that will help you use water more sustainably?

### **Transport**

Question 1 – What is your experience of sustainable transport?

Question 2 – What prevents you from using more sustainable modes of transport?

Question 3 – What actions can you take to travel more sustainably?

### **Waste**

Question 1 – What issues around unsustainable waste practices have you experienced?

Question 2 – What prevents you from reducing waste at home?

Question 3 – What actions can you take to prevent waste being generated?

### **Consumption**

Question 1 – What does sustainable consumption mean to you?

Question 2 – What are the barriers to more “sustainable spending” that you have experienced?

Question 3 – What can you do to modify your spending habits?

### **Community**

Question 1 – When in your life have you experience community and what does it mean to you?

Question 2 – What are the forces in our culture that make community difficult?

Question 3 – What actions can you take to increase community in your life?

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