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**Walk in Strickland Forest or Spot wildlife by torchlight!**

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**Network News** <network.news@neln.org.au@nararaecovillage.mg.lglcrm.net>

12 March 2019 at 18:30

Reply-To: network.news@neln.org.au

To: riverteller@gmail.com

**NARARA**  
Eco Living Network Inc.

Dear Liz,

## Network News

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**Next Village Open Day, Sunday 31st March**

Visit our beautiful site for an afternoon and learn about the vision for our ecovillage. On arrival enjoy walking tours around the site until 2pm.



Then there will be a short presentation by our founder, Lyndall Parris, and a Q&A session.

For safety, enclosed shoes are recommended (not thongs or sandals) and please leave your pets at home when you visit the ecovillage.

Dates: 31st March, 27th April, 29th June, 28th July, 25th August, 27th October.

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Cost to attend: Individual \$10, Family \$20

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### **Mad About Dirt, Saturday, 11th May 2019**



Meet some people who are really **mad about dirt**.

Virginia Mall from Grace Springs Farm will be at MAD.



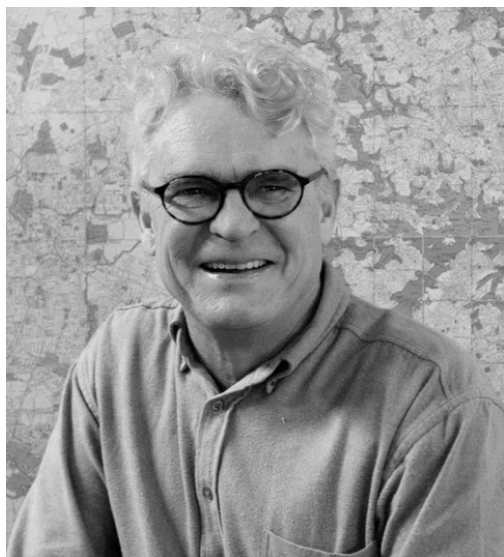
She says: "Soil is at the core of everything we do here on the farm. Our every decision is about improving soils, to be able to grow more pasture to feed more animals and produce nutrient dense food for our community". Grace Springs Farm practices and demonstrates chemical-free, regenerative agriculture. Photo credit: @joyandsparrow

Peter Rutherford, Senior Ecologist at Kimbriki Environmental Enterprises, will speak on 'Dirt is Good – Dirt is Healthy: why every kid, should be eating good soil!'.



Peter is a horticulturist and educator with an extensive knowledge of soils and microbes.

Simon Leake, Managing Director of the Sydney Environmental and Soils Laboratory (SESL), and co-author (with Angus Stewart) of *Grow Your Own*.



SESL were the first people to sponsor **Mad About Dirt** and are providing free soil testing for the Narara Ecovillage's greenhouse trials.

Dr. Paul Harvey: "My passion is in environmental contaminants / pollutants. My business, Environmental Science Solutions, helps to spread knowledge about potential pollutants in our 'dirty' world".

Joy Jago is a champion of composting, passionate about permaculture, a productive food-gardener, and a member of the Narara Ecovillage.



She will be helping to run the **Mad About Dirt** event.

Margo Parris and her volunteers will show off their work at one of the Narara Ecovillage greenhouses, where they have created five soil beds to compare five different soil preparation techniques.



Megan Wallace is developing soil-and-dirt-related activities for children for the day. She is passionate about children's nature-based education at Narara Ecovillage.





More information: <http://neln.org.au/mad-about-dirt-sat-11th-may-2019/> <https://www.facebook.com/NararaEcoburbia/>

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## Walk in Strickland Forest with John Seed, Thurs 21st March

Thursday 21st March is the International Day of the Forests and, more cosmically, the Autumn Equinox. That afternoon, Narara Ecovillage member John Seed will lead a walk from the village back-gate into the Strickland State Forest Arboretum.



This will be a walk through the splendid Autumn bushland strewn with this year's bunya nuts but it will also give us an opportunity to drop into the vast scale of the solar system.

John will be leading a process called "Earth as Peppercorn" which helps nourish our ecological identity as we construct a scale model of our solar system based on the Earth being the size of a single peppercorn. We will then walk from the Sun to Pluto reverently placing peppercorns and other appropriately sized objects as we learn to feel the scale of our Solar System home.

(The Autumn Equinox is a great time to celebrate our ecological identity. It has been a feature of this planet for about 4,400 million years. At that time of Great Bombardment, comets and meteorites were pelting the Earth. Finally, a Mars-sized body impacted the proto-Earth with such force that the whole mass became molten once more. The intruder plunged towards the centre of the Earth and the moon was born, popping out from the side opposite the impact. This also caused the Earth to tilt 23 degrees to the side, thenceforth giving rise to the seasons of the year. You are THAT!)

Cost: \$15 family, \$10 individual, proceeds to the [protection of the threatened forests of NSW](#). We'll leave the Visitors Centre at 3.45 and the Village back gate at 4pm sharp. Return by 5.30pm.

## Community Information Evening & Spotlight Walk, Thurs 28th March

5:30pm drinks & nibbles provided by Community Environment Centre (CEN)

6pm formal session CEN 3 talks ~15mins: Alf Britten on pigmy possums, Wildlife Arc & CWMWG on our work at NEV including Richard C on birds & boxes.

Followed by 1 hour Spotlight Walk <https://www.cen.org.au>



**COSS Connections & Rehabilitation Project**

**Do you need help managing bushland on your property?**



Eastern Pygmy Possum

Come along and find out how you can get free weed control services and bushland management to help conserve the natural bush and wildlife on your property

When: **Thurs, 28th March**  
6:00 - 8:00pm  
Where: Narara EcoVillage, 25 Research Rd, Narara  
Free (includes refreshments)

Find out more about:  
COSS Connections Project, Land for Wildlife, COSS, threatened Eastern Pygmy Possum, and Join us for a guided spotlight walk in Strickland State Forest

**Bookings Essential**  
For more information or to book  
[www.cen.org.au/events](http://www.cen.org.au/events)  
P: 43494756  
E: [habitatforwildlife@cen.org.au](mailto:habitatforwildlife@cen.org.au)

As a property owner you may be eligible to receive support from this project:  
Free and subsidised bush regeneration on your land.  
Free Workshops, Information and Training events.  
Membership of Land for Wildlife (including free property assessments and reports, and LFW sign for your property).  
Free training in wildlife monitoring and camera loan.

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## Kirtan at the village with Mark O'Brien, Fri 29th March, 7pm, Visitors Centre

"Kirtan" is a community form of uplifting chanting practice to lighten the heart and perhaps invoke wonder at the divine nature of the cosmos. Everyone is welcome.



This is NOT a concert and you're invited to join your voice to the chant in "call-and-response"... we might even make a Mantra Choir again where the harmony was only matched by the looks on people's faces as they realized they were responsible for the heavenly sounds and mood filling the room.

Kirtan (simple Sanskrit mantra chanting with music) is one of the easiest and safest methods of achieving inner peace which other methods of meditation may take years to achieve. It's meant to be particularly potent for the current "age of strife" (Kali Yuga) we live in now.

There is no requirement to be able to sing at all (...honest)

Simply join in the energy and rhythm and see what happens!

Bring a shaker or tambourine if you like. And a cushion in case we run out!

Kids most welcome.

Donations welcome on the door for use of the room.

## February Ecovillage Experience Weekend

Scilla Sayer explains: At Narara Ecovillage we like to try new things. Last month we celebrated Summer with our first seasonal 'ecovillage experience' weekend. It went well and Ecovillage Experience Weekends are now planned for 25/26 May (Autumn), 14/15 September (Winter) and 23/24 November (Spring).





The program will include the elements of our tried and tested Open Day format: presentation, tours, questions and a cuppa but with the bonus of an opportunity to get a real feel of ecovillage life through joining activities, sharing meals, exploring the land, learning together and celebrating.

Singing an Acknowledgement to Country with the children kicked off a weekend where we all got to know one another better. The program began with facts and figures of Narara Ecovillage history, membership, lot availability and plans for Stage 2. After tours came a talk on 'green kitchens', a bunya nut hunting expedition, a sumptuous shared summer feast, inspiring short films and, for a few, a night under canvas.

Sunday was less structured: visitors were simply invited to 'join in' with ecovillage life. While some of us enjoyed our new 'quiet space', activity roared around the chipping of a tree felled in the cluster house area. We gathered later to share ideas about creating a learning environment for ecovillage children and made progress on

Our sights are now set on our Autumn Ecovillage Experience Weekend. Mark the date (25/26 May), follow us on Facebook and watch the website for more details.

More: <https://nararaecovillage.com/open-days/>

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## Scribbly Gum Patch

A small group of Narara Ecovillage members has been beavering away to transform the area just north of the children's playground into a food forest. The site has been eroded by water running across the lower road from the Admin building. Efforts to preserve the grand Scribbly Gum on the site and to prevent further soil erosion are being made through the installation of three swales running across site. The swales, on contour, will catch the water to slow down its movement, allowing it to slowly soak into the soil to provide water for plantings.



At this stage, a top swale has been installed with overflow channels diverting water through two banana circles. The first bund (soil from digging the swale that is mounded up on the downhill side of swale to form a bund or garden bed) has been planting with three Myrtle trees (lemon, cinnamon and aniseed). Part 1 of three small swales which will run across the middle of the site was completed in January with the help of volunteers at a working bee. Swale 2A has been planted with a Davidson Plum, Moringa, Black Sapote and Burdekin Plum.

Plants and green manure crops have been added to both swale bunds to support the trees by attracting beneficial insects, providing nutrients and improving soil structure. Windbreak and habitat trees have been planted along the perimeter of the site and beekeeper member Lincoln's native bee hive has now made its home on the site.

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## Tiny House Presentation a sell-out!





Last Saturday's Tiny House event, featuring NZ's Tiny House advocate and actor, Bryce Langston, attracted over 100 people for his 5 hour presentation at the village. His marathon event kept most people spellbound as he spelt out and motivated them on how they could make their tiny house dreams come true with a plethora of useful advice on how to get started, the pitfalls and the rewards of living small. Bryce has a following of 1.3 million to his youtube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/livingbigtinyhouse>

Afterwards, Tiny House visitors and village members mingled during a community dinner, sharing food, dreams and camaraderie.

NB Serious tiny housers may be interested in Sydney Community College's "How to Build a Tiny House". The College has partnered with The Bower Marrickville to offer the only comprehensive tiny house building course in the country.

<https://www.sydneycommunitycollege.edu.au/course/tiny.house.building>

## Candy's Earthship progresses



Candy's strawbale wall raising workshop was held mid-February when over 20 natural building enthusiasts, plus several members of Candy's family, beavered away to raise and render walls, ready for the windows to be installed.

Earthship guru, Marty Freney, Earthship Eco Homes in South Australia (also a strawbale doyen), led the workshop and waxed lyrically afterwards!

*Straw, mud, food and fun, natural building is for everyone!*

*Upcycling waste, using the sun*

*Many hands gets the job done!*

"Thanks a ton Narara Eco Village, Candy Disch and her son Dave, Sean Bozkewycz, Linda Scott and all the amazing people who wrangled and rendered bales at Candy's strawbale workshop.

T'was a wonderful weekend".

Candy is planning a Big Push to get the earthship to lock up stage. If you'd like to join the crew next weekend (16/17<sup>th</sup> March), she would love to hear from you. Email: [candydisch@hotmail.com](mailto:candydisch@hotmail.com)

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## **Wainright's Strawbale workshop**

Steph & Rob's strawbale workshop run by Viva Homes over 4 days was well subscribed with 40 people attending from far and wide. Participants participated in bale wall raising, made clay render and applied to the straw walls, as well as rendering the upstairs straw panels.

For home owner's Steph and Rob, catering for over 40 people (including Viva crew) was a challenge well met, with workers appreciative of a range of nutritious food, drinks and treats (the white chocolate brownies are now legendary!). Viva's Simone was impressed with the facilities they provided which made very important communal meals run smoothly.



Last word from Hilary, who travelled from Bellingen on the NSW North Coast for the workshop: *"Fantastic experience. Fabulous people to work with, learn with; had fun, ate great food and developed amazing muscles."*

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## **Wildlife at Narara Ecovillage**

Our resident bird watcher Richard C, says: Gang gang cockatoos have been seen and heard around the property several times this week and last week. Member Rani saw three of them and our timber miller (amongst many other talents) Rob reckons he may have seen six. These delightful birds are some of the smallest Australian cockatoos; the male has a bright red head, the female is all grey.





They have a distinctive call like a creaking door. In the last 5 years they have been rare visitors to Narara, but this year they seem to be hanging around. No-one has managed to photograph them here, so this photo is from the excellent website, 'Birds in Backyards'.

Less welcome, but beautiful in continents where it belongs (like Europe and North America), is this red fox, recently seen one afternoon on the middle rural lot, hunting mice or insects on the grass.



A Black-shouldered Kite, which may be "Biskit", the bird that almost became a resident last year, is once again hunting rats at the village. Here it is in the front paddock last week, about to eat a rat.





A Square-tailed Kite was recently seen at the village. It's an endemic Australian species of raptor that used to be rare, but has turned up on the Central Coast in recent years. They look like a small eagle, but have a square-tipped tail (ie not wedge-shaped) and very long "fingers" at the end of their wings.

Diamond pythons seem to be on the move at the moment. These great rat catchers are not poisonous and should be left in peace. And don't keep pet rats, hamsters or guinea pigs- pythons cannot resist trying to eat them!

Richard is always interested to hear of your wildlife sightings: [cassels@ozemail.com.au](mailto:cassels@ozemail.com.au). He has kept weekly records since July 2013.

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## Farrell's Story of the Tank

The tank was an inherited structure on the site when it became Narara Ecovillage, originally built to store water for fire fighting.



It hadn't been in use for many years. The roof was rusted and falling apart but the tank itself was still solid.

We joined in November 2014, just as the selection process for the lots commenced. After much discussion, we landed on lot 29 and scored the tank!

Although the tank took up a considerable amount of space on the lot (5.5m diameter) we figured we could do something special to make it a feature: possibly cut a piece out of the wall and turn it into a partially covered outdoor entertaining area, etc.

Finally, in 2016 civil works commenced across the site to build the infrastructure for Stage 1 and the landscape changed dramatically. The roads and pipes for services went in and the markings of the lot boundaries dissolved into piles of dirt. We always knew where we were going to be because our tank marked our place on the land...but our plans didn't eventuate, fate intervened which saw us move to Lot 30, one up the hill.

Sadly, the new owner couldn't manage to incorporate the tank into the design for their house, so it had to go. One option was to smash it to a thousand pieces and tip it. It was then that a new plan was hatched!

With the help of the site manager and his newly acquired concrete saw, we set about cutting up our tank and taking it next door to adorn our new garden. Down it came piece by piece with the curved walls and the flat floor. What a job!! It was dirty and dangerous but two weeks later it was in pieces and stacked in piles waiting for its final resting place.

After building our house and transforming our site, the pieces of the tank have been placed in the garden and now acts as a soil stabilisation tool/ retaining wall/pathway/walls for our future fire pit.

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## Being an Owner Builder



Jazz Mozzi says: The people attracted to the ecovillage continue to amaze me. Such a diversity of passions and skills that stretch across all ages. House building has begun and some of our members have become Owner Builders. One person is Linda Scott, the Editor of this monthly newsletter. Linda is 73 years old and is project managing her house build. I asked Linda what brought her to the ecovillage?

*I've been attracted to living in a community after living in the mining town of Mount Isa when I first came to Australia from UK in the 1960's. It was a tight knit community and was hard to leave. Later I lived in Westleigh, near Hornsby, a small suburb at the time, very social, helping each other with babysitting and great community involvement in a theatre group that I co-founded. Since then, I'd been looking for my community, and I've found it!*

*Somehow I ended up on Lyndall Parris's mailing list in 2006. I was living back in London and attended meetings in Sydney on my family visits back here. My interest in permaculture, love of community and natural building all came together. I could see a future in Lyndall's dream of an ecovillage'.*

*I was attracted to natural building materials after being roped into a mini strawbale workshop in rural England. I loved it and shortly afterwards attended my first workshop in Spain, building and sculpting a strawbale wall. I was totally hooked!*

*Natural houses are healthy to live in with breathable walls and cosy interiors. The creative options are endless: glass bottle and stain glass, sculpted walls, cordwood and mud floors.*

*I'd be lucky if I found a builder who would take on my project (within my budget). Having attended workshops where I paid for the privilege of learning various skills, I've always planned that's what I'd do with me as Owner Builder. It has taken a chunk of years to get to this stage which is daunting but I'm as fit and healthy as ever, so I mustn't let a few advancing years stop me!*

Linda, we find you an inspiration tackling your Owner Builder's licence and getting a White Card. What does the Owner Builder's course cover?

*It's about being a responsible builder, with a safe worksite, planning the project, subcontracting, insurances, etc. It's given me confidence. I've organised hundreds of events in my life so why not do this? If I get into strife, I'll ask my community to help me!*

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## Mud Floors and Much More!

A few years ago our Natural Building Group visited Ourimbah resident Andrew Duncan's in progress, strawbale house (incorporating poured earth, rammed earth, etc). Still in progress, much advanced, Andrew invited us last week to learn more about laying mud floors.



Andrew, a boatbuilding shipwright, with a Sydney business involved for 20 years in wharf, bridge and floating marina construction/maintenance, is transitioning to spending more time working on the Central Coast. Which is good news for us natural builders as we are always looking for skilled specialists to work with.

Even better, Andrew plans to offer apprenticeships in carpentry (with natural building experiences) to his two workers, Michael and Reece using his prior building experience to obtain formal qualifications. In the meantime, Andrew is looking to employ someone to work on the marinas in Sydney to free him up more for other work. Know anyone? Contact: [aduncanmarine@gmail.com](mailto:aduncanmarine@gmail.com)

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## Striking for a Safe Climate

Last year tens of thousands of school students across Australia took the world by storm when they hit the streets and demanded action on climate change. It was an incredible moment that gave us hope and sent waves through parliament, across the country and around the world.



Now the students are asking for us to stand with them when they take to the streets again on March 15, just a week before the NSW election.



Help to tell our politicians to treat climate change for what it is: a crisis and the biggest threat to our generation and generations to come.

[Sign-up for a March 15 #ClimateStrike near you](#)

Sydney event

Town Hall, 12 midday - 2pm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/243027839925711/>

Gosford event

Gosford City Park, 10am - 12 midday

Corner of Dane Drive and Vaughan Ave

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2217949751866900/>

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## Colour & Light Exhibition



The Makers Studio Central Coast Inc members exhibition

### Colour & light Exhibition

14th March to 2nd April 2019  
Our talented members showcase their art in the  
Waterline Art Gallery 2019 launch  
Here we exhibit our wide range of art-making skills:  
Print-making, painting, sculpture, fibre/weaving,  
photography, collage.

### Opening Night Celebration

Thursday 14th March  
6pm-8:30pm  
Join us in our Opening Night Celebration  
where you can meet our artists,  
hear about The Makers Studio operations,  
find out more about Waterline Art Gallery and  
take the opportunity to see & buy art from local artists

**Waterline Art Gallery**  
located in  
**The Re:Publik Cafe**  
271 Ocean View Rd, Ettalong Beach, NSW  
Enquiries also be on our mailing list contact: info@themakersstudio.org.au or 0414 220 615

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## Wildwatch – Connecting Kids with Nature

An opportunity for children (and families) to engage in a program that promotes a love of nature, opportunities to observe nature and grow in knowledge, skills and understanding.

By signing up to Wildwatch, your children will receive:

A Wildwatch Pack - including a certificate, badge, a Wildwatch family membership card, our current newsletter and a set of Wildwatch Fact Cards

A Wildwatch Diary - to record your nature observations

A bi-monthly kid friendly newsletter; special invitations to family friendly events and activities (eg. tree planting events, bushwalks, citizen science events etc) invitations to participate in 4 Wildwatch "actions" each year – eg monitor the birds in your backyard. More information Wildwatch

<https://www.cen.org.au/resources/latest-news/471-wildwatch-connecting-kids-with-nature>

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See you at the ecovillage sometime soon!

Linda Scott  
**Editor**

- **Contacts and More Information**

- The Narara Ecovillage project currently comprises two entities. The Narara Eco Living Network Inc. is a not-for profit incorporated association that promotes sustainable living. It serves as a "Friends of the Narara Ecovillage". Its brief is both local and global.
- Membership is open to all, and costs \$20 an individual or \$40 a family for 12 months. Membership gives free admission to all Narara Ecovillage Open Day tours and talks, and provides discounts on special workshops and tours. The Network organizes regular talks, tours and events. You can join at any Open Day, or on-line anytime at: <http://neln.org.au/join-us/>. Narara Eco Living Network Inc. <http://neln.org.au> and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nararaEcoliving>
- The Narara Ecovillage Cooperative Ltd. Is a Co-operative formed to develop the Narara Ecovillage.
- Membership costs \$30,000, and requires the intent to purchase a lot at the ecovillage and to contribute a minimum number of working hours.
- Contacts: Narara Ecovillage Co-operative Ltd. <http://nararaecovillage.com>, and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/43471726786>, or email: [network.news@neln.org.au](mailto:network.news@neln.org.au)
- The Narara Ecovillage is located at [25 Research Road, Narara, NSW 2250](#).