

Information for members



Some of the PSN team who put together our exhibit at the Gardening Australia Expo 2008. The murals of the PSN Permavans are in the background. This exhibit won first prize for Best Feature Display Garden – we've won a major prize nearly every year since 2003!



Welcome!

Congratulations on joining Permaculture Sydney North. You have become part of a lively group of people who are getting active about solving the world's problems through learning, sharing and practicing permaculture.

There are a lot of 'big picture' things happening in the world today, and many of us have grown tired of waiting for governments to direct us onto a better course. More and more people are turning to Permaculture as a sensible, practical and immediate way to care for the earth, care for its people, and re-connect with our community.

Permaculture Sydney North is run and managed completely by the work and dedication of our volunteers. Our aim is to share sustainable solutions with community. We run a huge range of different activities every month, and I encourage you to get to know our members, and get involved in some of our great projects and teams. PSN is evolving all the time so we welcome your suggestions and creativity.

On behalf of Permaculture Sydney North, welcome to our community group - we look forward to getting to know you. Enjoy your membership!

PSN President

Permaculture Sydney North

Permaculture Sydney North Incorporated (PSN) is a non-profit environmental community group, formed in 1992. Our area covers the eleven councils in the northern region of Sydney; Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Ryde, Warringah, Willoughby. This area is made up of 360 suburbs covering 905 sq kms, with a population of 800,000 people.

This booklet has been put together to help you understand our background and structure, what we do and how you can get involved.



PSN: benefits of membership

Membership to PSN costs \$30 per year for an individual (or \$36 for a household). Your membership fees pay for the following things:

Guest speakers – we bring inspiring speakers from around Australia to share permaculture projects and techniques from around the world. These include specialists in Permaculture aid work, sustainable farming, urban permaculture, waste avoidance, sustainable population, clean energy and sustainable architecture.

Living skills workshops – your membership entitles you to attend Living Skills workshops to re-learn the skills that western communities have lost, including bread and cheese making, pickling and bottling, weaving, repair, bicycle maintenance and soap making from scratch.

Garden workshops – learn basic skills in urban food production through permaculture. You will learn practical elements of permaculture design, and practical ways to build them. Projects can include constructing wetlands for greywater treatment, garden bed design, basic surveying, swale construction, pest control through companion planting, pond construction, pruning and planting. Seed Savers has also run monthly meetings through the year, where members have learned the essential practical skills needed to select and promote edible species that flourish in our region.

Affordable tours – most of us dream of a tree change, and we run annual weekend tours of permaculture projects, homes and broadacre properties around NSW. These are great opportunities to learn and be inspired, and for our members we can offer weekend tours (including transport, accommodation, food and farm visits) for less than \$200.

Advocacy for a saner world – the PSN Advocacy Team writes submissions promoting permaculture solutions for a huge range of issues, including climate change, population policy, urban land planning, water management, food security and tax. And, prior to every election, the Advocacy Team cuts through the waffle by writing to every candidate and publishing where they stand on the issues that we care about.

Permaculture Education – where others charge thousands of dollars for permaculture education, PSN has developed and delivered quality, affordable Permaculture Design Courses and Introduction Courses for PSN members. We also offer affordable workshops on a wide range of topics, including compost tea, balcony gardening, bamboo construction, and how to build a cob oven.

Spreading the word – the PSN Shows Team gets our message out to the masses, with displays showing how intensive backyard food production can be achieved in a small space. Our permaculture displays win awards every year, and last year's Easter Show display won the 1st prize in the Great Aussie Backyard division.

Your membership also includes...

Connecting people – your membership can connect you with like-minded people who care about the big picture, and are ready to take action at a local level through permaculture projects and education. You can meet people with similar interests through a range of PSN Team activities and projects. You can also get together with your local neighbourhood through PSN Local Groups.

Continued learning – through PSN courses, workshops, library, projects and guest speakers. The PSN Library you can borrow permaculture books, DVDs, gardening tools and other resources.

Practical help – Through PSN you can visit other people's gardens and get ideas for your own. Through participating in the Garden Team you can also become eligible to have a working bee on your own property, as well as get advice and information about care of chooks and other animals.

Seedsavers – The PSN Seedsavers group is putting together a seedbank of plants that grow well in our local conditions. Through participating in Seedsavers, you can access and share plants, seeds and other resources. This dynamic and active group meets once a month to learn the fundamentals of plant propagation, and share the most valuable resource we have – open pollinated, heirloom seeds!

Insurance – your membership provides insurance cover for your participation in all PSN events.



You can achieve much more as part of a group than you can on your own.

What's on?

Regional monthly public meetings

We meet on the third Monday of every month (except January). Each meeting usually includes a guest speaker and then a brief general meeting for PSN members where we can talk about what's happening for the month. We then follow it up with a supper, which gives us a chance to catch up with each other, buy raffle tickets, visit the PSN library, hire a garden implement, and share resources such as surplus food, plants, seeds, skills and other household items.

Local group meetings

We have set up Permaculture groups in each council area so that members can get local projects happening with their local community. These groups meet monthly, and are a great way to connect with active members and projects in your area. Contact your local group co-ordinator (see contacts list) if you would like to attend.

PSN team meetings

PSN has seven activity teams that operate across the whole of PSN's region, and meet monthly (see the calendar on our website).

PSN Communications

Our PSN website and Facebook page will let you know what's happening in the various parts of our community group. It has a continuously updated calendar, and details of the projects and events happening in various parts of the organisation. Our website address is:

www.permaculturenorth.org.au

We also publish an e-newsletter once a month (except January) to pass on stories, photos and highlights from the month.

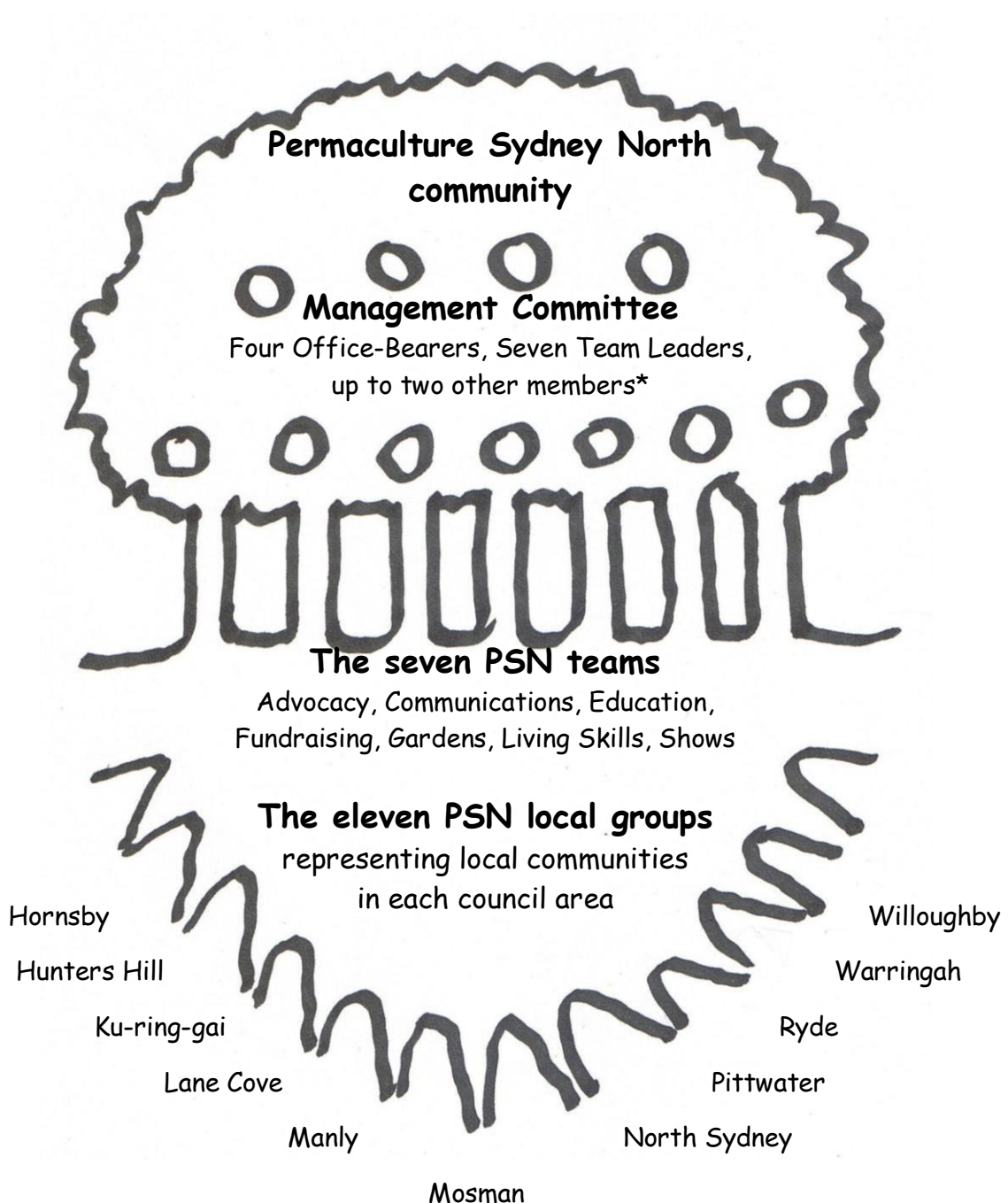
Permaculture Sydney

PSN has formed partnerships with Permaculture Sydney West and Permaculture Sydney South. We meet with these groups four times a year to discuss Sydney-wide issues, and work on major projects such as the Royal Easter Show, permaculture convergences and National Permaculture Day.

Our structure

The only way Sydney will become sustainable is through transforming streets and local communities, and the fundamental roots of our organisation is the Local Groups. These are important for generating local solutions, building networks and working with local government for smarter solutions.

Permaculture Sydney North's Teams are for learning and sharing knowledge across the organisation, and they run larger events to connect members across the organisation. The shape the organization takes, and the outputs PSN generates, depend on the quality of the input from the membership.



PSN Local Groups

Most of us don't know who grows our food, where they've grown it, how they've grown it or what has been sprayed on it. Often, the only thing we can confidently predict is that it was grown a long way away, and that it got to our local fruit and veg shop through a truck drive across the country, or even from overseas. The same could be said for clothing, and most other items you'd buy at the shops.

Growing numbers of people are uneasy about our dependence on these long transport lines, cheap oil, invisible farms and globalised markets. Many are realising that we need to **re-localise** our cities if we are going to be resilient to the impacts of rising oil prices, or the disasters that come with a warming planet.

Permaculture is a design system for self sufficiency and re-localisation, and PSN has set up Local Groups in each council area to help local communities come up with their own solutions and projects. The Local Groups are **auspiced** by Permaculture Sydney North, which means that they are covered under PSN's incorporation, constitution, management, administration and insurance. This means that the Local Groups are able to focus on their projects, and on re-building community at grassroots level.

If you want to connect with active permaculture people in your area, join or start a project, and learn about Permaculture by doing, then the Local Groups are a great place to start. You can find contact details for your Local Group Coordinator on the PSN Contacts Page at the back of this booklet. You can also read about the work that Local Groups are doing on our website: www.permaculturenorth.org.au



Bamboo workshop, Ku-ring-gai Local Group

PSN Teams

Advocacy Team

The Advocacy Team deals with public issues that affect PSN. It also considers public policy issues that involve or should involve the principles of Permaculture (for example, local planning decisions, establishing community gardens and so on). If you are interested in public policy decisions, in representation and lobbying and in bringing about social change, this team needs you.

Communications Team

This team's main role is to stimulate communication, information, and ideas throughout the PSN community. It does this through PSN monthly e-newsletter and the PSN website. If you can contribute to any of this work, please join the team that keeps our communication flowing.

Education Team

The Education Team informs and educates members and the public about Permaculture. This is done through running workshops, courses, tours, public talks, and the PSN library. This Team also produces permaculture info booklets and leaflets. It is also interested in raising the skills, confidence and knowledge of PSN members and in sharing information. If you like giving talks and educating others you will enjoy this team.

Fundraising Team

The Fundraising Team aims to provide the means for Permaculture Sydney North to achieve its objectives. It raises funds by selling products such as PSN organic seeds and educational show-bags, by applying for Government grants, and by organizing activities and events. Money raised is used for PSN projects and for other permaculture both locally and globally. It is also interested in building the wealth of PSN members through sharing of resources. If you are interested in creative ethical ways to raise funds & resources, then this team is for you.

Garden Team

The Garden Team works in both private and community gardens. It helps members to develop their Permaculture gardens, organizes working bees and coordinates the activities, people & resources needed. If you want to learn more about growing food, or improve your design or gardening skills, or if you just love gardening and helping others to develop their own sustainability, the Garden Team is for you.

Living Skills Team

The Living Skills Team members get together to learn a range of home skills such as preserving food, cooking, spinning, weaving, and how to make useful household articles like clothes, paper, rugs, and lots more. This gives members the opportunity to become more environmentally sustainable, energy-efficient and self-reliant.

Shows Team

The Shows Team designs and organises our display stands at public events such as Gardening Australia Expo, Organic Expo, GreenTech and the Royal Easter Show. These allow us to reach out to the community, to promote Permaculture and to share our passion. They also help us to gain new members and raise funds. If you would like to practise your creative garden design and construction skills, talk to the public, or just help arrange these exciting events, then the Shows Team is for you.



PSN contact details

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Other useful email addresses

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