
Case Study VDP



Geoff

Geoff was seeking an ecovillage to live in when he signed up for the Village Development Program that Bruns Ecovillage was offering. Geoff joined because he wanted to live in an ecovillage in the Byron Region and liked so far what was offered. He didn't know much about Ecovillages but new he wanted to live in a way that wouldn't destroy the earth and also live in a way that revolved around community and raising children – as his was hoping to have some of his own children one day.

The VDP Experience

The five weekends Geoff attended of the VDP however changed his life completely. Geoff was thrown into the world of community, self-development and ecovillage design. Geoff was introduced to many different groups of people that had come together for the program. More than half were people who intended to live in the ecovillage. These people had the opportunity to include their values into the project, such as a group of dancers who created a residential cluster based on dance and meditation. Another group designed a residential cluster based on producing as much food as possible and another cluster ensured that the elderly people in the community were cared for to the end of their life. Geoff then realised how the ecovillage was trying to cater for a wide variety of people and beliefs but as a whole still had a common interest of sustainability and community. Geoff throughout the program was introduced to new ways of thinking and communicating. A big feature of the course was non-violent communication – a communication technique that ensured people's needs were met in a realistic and compassionate way. Geoff was already practicing some of this with the way he talked to his girlfriend and the results were amazing. Geoff was inspired by some of the great guest speakers and facilitators of the course that came from all over Australia to speak on a variety of topics of community living.

A number of people there were also there doing the course to apply it to other communities they were planning or joining. These people brought in their experiences of community and what they were planning to do. Geoff didn't realise all the possibilities!

Community Supported Agriculture, Sociocracy, Spiral Dynamics, Co-housing, LETS were all new concepts Geoff learnt on the course – he didn't even know these words before!

The best thing about the VDP however was Geoff developed some great friends in the course and decided to live in the ecovillage – with these great people he met. Together they would form a cluster and he was happy with the mix of ages and their common interest of growing food, meditation and yoga. They suggested a design of the common house that would reflect these things. There was some older people in the cluster and Geoff particularly resonated with Lee and was hoping he would be his mentor when it came time to live there.

Geoff left the VDP knowing it was only the start of his journey in community and his life at Bruns Ecovillage.

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