

To: ROBERT <roberttap@gen-oceania.org>
From: simonclo@nor.com.au (Simon Clough)
Subject: Re: Communities Conf in GEN Oceanea
Cc: peterh@nor.com.au

G'day Rob,

Here's a brief press release. I wonder if you could put it in the next GEN Newsletter.

Second National Intentional Communities Conference

Satisfying the needs of young people will be a key topic at the second National Intentional Communities Conference to be held at the Dharmananda community in far-north NSW from September 25-30. It has been estimated that up to 10,000 Australians live in intentional communities - communities where people live together to achieve goals such as reduced environmental impact, lower living expenses, greater social support and cooperation, and a more spiritual life.

Dharmananda resident, Simon Clough, said that at the first national conference serious concern was raised that with many members reaching middle age, some communities may only last one generation. "There is a need to appeal to younger people, possibly by re-examining legal structures and philosophies," Mr Clough said. "The creation of a national intentional communities organisation that could lobby for communities and perhaps provide financial backing for new communities, may also be a priority. Other national activities could include a system of inter-community visiting.

"The gathering will also focus on continuing issues such as communities and leadership, conflict resolution, and economic and environmental sustainability."

Mr Clough said the conference would be highly participatory, with everyone attending deciding the most important issues for discussion. He said organisers were particularly keen to hear from and involve young people. The conference is open to people living on intentional communities (rural or urban) or those who have made significant steps towards intentional community.

Intentional communities have been a part of Australia's history since time immemorial, with the most recent upsurge in the last 30 years. Many communities make a significant contribution to a variety of causes in their area, as well as showing the wider society how it's possible to live in an environmentally sustainable way and even create social harmony.

Camp on the Banks of Terania Creek

Organisers would like all participants to be present for the full five days of the conference to encourage the development of community during the gathering. The programme will allow plenty of flexibility for people to talk and share their experiences, and will be centred around a "cafe" to foster informal networking. There will be plenty of singing, playback theatre and music.

The Conference campsite will be on the banks of Terania creek with shaded and sunny sites available. September is one of the most beautiful months of the year, generally fine and warm with crisp evenings. Dormitory style tents will be provided for long distance travellers. Bush toilet and shower facilities will be provided. Most of the Conference proceedings, cooking and eating will take place about 150 metres away at Terania Learning Centre which was built by the Terania community nearly 20 years ago.

Dharmananda, the conference venue founded in 1972, is a rural land sharing intentional community of 260 acres (105 ha) situated next to Terania Creek, in the sub-tropical north east corner of NSW 30 kilometres north of Lismore. The community has 15 resident adults and 6 children. Dharmananda residents are committed to living sustainably with a herd of 25 Jersey cows, large gardens, orchards and chooks. The community is committed to the peaceful resolution of its conflicts and many members play an active role in social change.

Attending the Conference

Participation in the conference will be on the basis of a brief application detailing experience with intentional community.

Young people's applications will be given priority to encourage their attendance.

Pre-conference suggestions are welcome (by 15/8/98) for workshops, processes, or papers.

For further information contact Jennie Ireland on: 02 6688 6366 .

You can also contact the conference committee via e-mail on: simonclo@nor.com.au

Yours in community

Simon