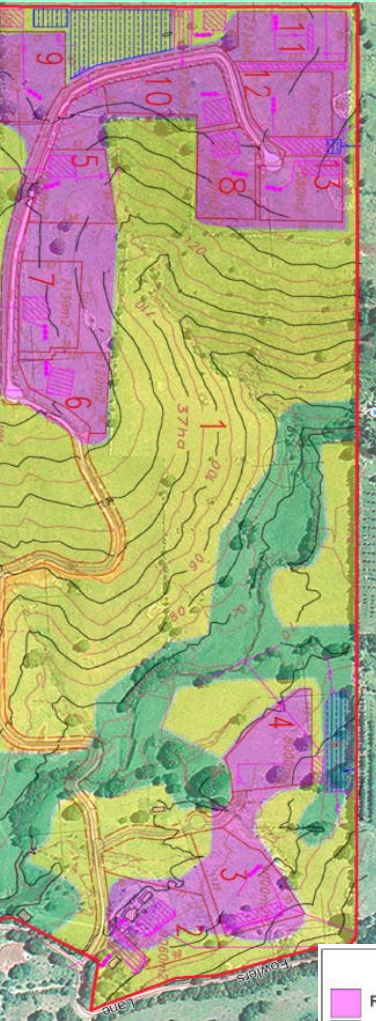




Jindibah Intentional Community

Brief Outline



Concept/Challenge:

To transform a 46 ha 90-year-old Byron Shire farm into a sustainable, 12-dwelling 'intentional community' that's innovative and contemporary

How?

- From 'Farm' > 'Multiple Occupancy' > 'Community Title'
- Distinct zones for Agriculture + Regeneration + Rural Living

Now?

- DA approved. Five existing households; seven in planning stages
- Privacy (av. 0.68ha x 12 individual lots), yet companionship and support
- Enhancing natural, economic and social capital (37ha community lot)

The new direction?

- 'D.I.Y. community development', by owners for owners





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Project significance

Background

Since the 1970s, a regional history of ‘intentional communities’ (Multiple Occupancies); 65+ in Lismore, 37+ in Byron Shire

Hairy predecessors

Original communities began post-Aquarius festival, Nimbin:

- **Inspired visions:** but chaotic development; financially feral; some socially challenged; disparity of personal contributions
- **A ‘tribal’ approach:** *ad hoc* building; e.g. overgrown caravans and teepees on peripheral farming land (...but cheap), yet keenly enthusiastic on environmental repair
- **30 years later:** some communities poverty traps with illegal dwellings, eroding infrastructure, and/or no access to financial assets

New approach needed

Need for a different perspective on social, economic and environmental realities: leads to the Jindibah concept of ‘DIY Community Development’ based on triple-bottom line principles



Wastewater Management Plan, Leg Alderson & Assocs.





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A new breed of community emerges

Contemporary environment:

High cost of coastal land and infrastructure

‘Best of both worlds’

- Combines modern housing designs with sustainable technologies
- Makes use of the best of the alternative communities, combined with professional financial management and structure
- Incorporates farm income with relaxed rural living
- Introduces technological innovation to facilitate working from home

Professional financial structure and management

Staged implementation of infrastructure, environmental repair and enhancement projects etc

Appeal to ‘sea-changers’:

Wanting escape from big city anonymity to live with direct human contact, in a rural setting – yet with “all mod. cons.”

Incorporating historic property features

Original stone walls the design model for new retaining walls; old dance hall sympathetically refurbished; dairy bails now a horse tack room and tractor shed



Original stone walls (bottom) the design model for new retaining walls throughout the community



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**Roles:
Who does what?**



*House designs by Edwin
Buivids
sympathetically blend into
surrounding farmland and offer
passive solar orientation*

Management committee: Resident shareholders. Makes day-to-day decisions. Ensures that the design elements of any activities (building, landscaping, land-use etc) are consistent with the vision for the property. Manages other team members (eg below).

Neighbourhood association: All Jindibah shareholders, who participate in larger level decision-making, community building processes and vision-setting.

Edwin Buivids: Architect who has designed 5 houses on the property (two completed; two more with DA approval). Ensures the visual design of homes is consistent and sympathetic, and that houses are designed to ecologically sustainable standards in terms of materials, passive solar orientation etc. with high scores in Council's House Energy Ratings for energy efficiency

Rob Doolan, Balanced Systems: Consultant planner. Prepared the community's comprehensive MO2CT application and liaises between the community and Byron Council during (eg) the process of transition from Multiple Occupancy to Community Title.

Greg Alderson & Assocs: Consultant engineers, designed the Council-approved 1.523km internal sealed roads and on-site wastewater management system.

Firewheel Rainforest Services: Detailed an Environmental Enhancement and Vegetation Management plan for the property, identifying revegetation areas and activities; advises on species selection, seedling provenance, weed control and plant maintenance.

Landmark Ecological Services: Flora and fauna assessment.



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Important or special factors

A community-driven model for D.I.Y.-development

-Long-term community members develop, manage and maintain the project

Strong connection with - and benefits for - the wider Fowlers Lane, Sleepy Creek, Bangalow and Byron Bay communities:

- Jindibah members initiated and set up a **wireless broadband network** for the Sleepy Creek catchment area to obtain a cheaper broadband connection, essential for home-based businesses

- Members actively involved in the **Fowlers Lane Community Group (FLCG)** since 1996

- FLCG created the **Fowlers Lane Local Area Management Plan (LAMP)** and liaised closely with Byron Council for seven years to upgrade Fowlers Lane itself.

-Without the **Section 94 contributions** of communities such as Jindibah, Council could not have afforded the long overdue Fowlers Lane upgrade

- Jindibah founders re-activated the **Rural Landsharing Community Association (RLCA)** of M.O.s to work with Byron Council to facilitate multiple occupancy communities upgrading to community title structure, potentially allowing for a major freeing up of capital for hundreds of people across the shire.

-A Jindibah member is an elected member of the **Bangalow Community Alliance**, a body established to help the Bangalow community act together for mutual benefit.





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Application of sustainability principles - Natural and built

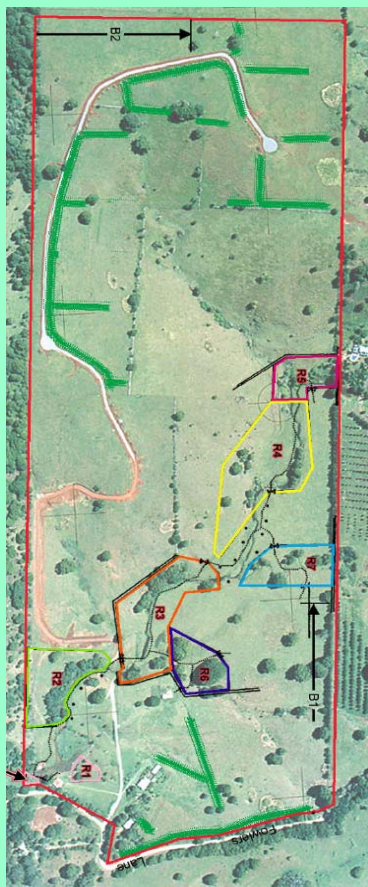
Each part of Jindibah has been designed with ESD principles in mind

The natural and built environments are designed to:

- maintain the **rural values** of the Fowlers Lane area, especially preserving the Sleepy Creek platypus-watching pools, and identifying and protecting other native fauna and flora
- protect the unique **farm environment** of Jindibah, including original farmhouse, old stone walls and a shed - a centre of local community life for 50+ years
- create **sustainable clustered housing**, per Council's 1998 Rural Settlement Strategy
- implement the systematic Council-approved approach to **on-site sewage management**
- implement a **revegetation program** to plant thousands more native trees, and
- expand and protect the current small areas of precious remnant **Big Scrub rainforest** vegetation

Onsite practical applications in place

- Solar powered electric fencing around revegetation plantings
- Contemporary onsite wastewater treatment systems installed for all new houses
- Re-use of dairy bails - now a horse tack room and tractor shed
- Sympathetic re-roofing of historic hall, a Bangalow icon, now the community centre
- Recycled wood: ex-RTA in bridge; recycled ex-steel railway sleeper under; one re-cycled house



Environmental Enhancement and Vegetation Management Plan by Firewheel Rainforest Services, identifies areas for riparian revegetation & buffers



Jindibah Intentional Community

Application of sustainability principles - Economic structure

Jindibah Farm Pty Ltd. is the commercial structure through which the management committee prudently manages the community financial assets, now confirmed through the sale of the last available community site

Proceeds from the sale of a majority of the 12 housing blocks:

- Returned to the community to fund infrastructure (sealed road, underground power 120m+; underground phone lines; wireless broadband network); asset enhancement (eg refurbishing the old 'dance hall' as a community centre) and future development works (eg continuing environmental enhancement regeneration projects, and community swimming pool)
- Ensures an adequate supply of capital to be used as a sinking fund for eventual replacement of infrastructure - such as re-sealing roads, pump and fence repairs etc
- Sound financial planning avoids some of the common financial problems of early multiple occupancy communities

The result?

Long-term sustainability, including the development of farming enterprises to at least cover property outgoings, and eventually return a small profit



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Application of sustainability principles - Social structure

The Founders' intention:

- To create a community reflecting 'Triple Bottom Line' principles
- Finding a sustainable balance between social, economic and environmental life
- Remembering that if it's not fun to do, it's probably not sustainable

The Challenge for members:

- To sustain themselves economically (the "me")
- To retain enough energy, integrity and common purpose to achieve community objectives (the "we")
- Community recognises conflict is a natural part of human behaviour, and requires management too

The Solution – community workshops:

- The community's social structure nurtured through quarterly half-day workshops for members
- The workshops introduce innovative Jungian-based methods for members to communicate, anticipate and resolve conflicts before they become destructive
- Also help members to find a balance between the "me" (my needs) and the "we" (needs of the community)



Jindibah Intentional Community

Interesting or unusual facts

Community orientation on Jindibah for the last 100 years

Jindibah, formerly a dairy farm owned by local Bangalow identity Harry Fowler OAM, a well-loved community leader and master sportsman

Harry Fowler

- built the property's **swimming hole** in the 1920s; initiated learn-to-swim classes for local children every summer before local public pools opened
- ran such **community activities** as riding for abled and disabled, old style dancing, scout camps, and soldiers' reunions in the property's open-sided hall
- hosted famous open-air **pop concerts** during the 1970s featuring Australian bands like Misex, Jimmy Barnes, INXS and Rose Tattoo

History

- Jindibah members created a **permanent exhibition** of the history of the property and Harry's life, launched on his 100th birthday in his old dance hall
- Jindibah members aim to stay true to the **community spirit** that Harry engendered on the property and provide friendship, service and opportunities for our wider community

