

My Healthy Soil Project NEWSLETTER

19th August 2025

Can we make it? Yes we can!



The excitement was palatable despite the rain...or maybe it was because of it? Planting the seedlings in our Black Cockatoo pocket forest on **Saturday 2nd August** was a major milestone in our journey to learn how to restore above and below ground carbon and biodiversity using regenerative practices.

Around 50 people turned up in raincoats and umbrellas and after a moving Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Uncle Vaughn McQuire we were into it. I don't know whether it was the energy provided by Uncle Vaughn talking about connecting to Country or the anticipation of tasting some of the baked goods provided by volunteers but the planting was completed in less than an hour. It was great to see people of all ages participating and in particular the number of parents and their sons and

daughters involved. This was an opportunity for everyone to get their hands dirty and to bond with each other and mother nature.

Most people seemed to be on a natural high. As Deb, one of our regular volunteers said *"I was feeling on a high even the next day. It was such a positive, uplifting event and so nice to get out there and do something practical rather than getting anxious about all the negative things happening in the world."*

One of my highs was receiving a zealous high five from local resident Elliot who had been helping with preparing the compost and participating in the walking tours for the last few months. This is some of what Elliot had to say *"I think projects like these are really important, not only because of the direct impact on endangered species, but because it shows people that they're not powerless and there are things they can do to protect nature."*

And the journey continues. TTV's vision is to empower people to make pocket forests wherever they are, particularly in our Booja (i.e. the inner city). Contact us to join in on the fun.

Extra, extra. [Read all about it!](#)

Many thanks to Jens Kirsch who researched and wrote a highly informative article on the Black Cockatoo pocket forest which was given a two page spread in the Voice. [Check it out here](#). The article starts on page 11.



Next stages of the Black Cockatoo Pocket Forest

Stage 1 of the Black Cockatoo pocket forest has now achieved a major milestone of being planted. There will be other activities which will be required including maintenance e.g. weeding and

monitoring e.g. of plant growth and changes in biodiversity. There are also activities associated with the existing community food forest which need to be undertaken including making compost.

Stage 2 has two components including:

- 2a - Depaving and revegetating an old bitumen car parking area of about 150m2 about 50 metres to the east of the new planting and just to the west of the existing Tools n Things Library.
- 2b - Establishing an interpretative trail.

We will be seeking community input into both these projects so watch this space. If you would like to be part of the team of volunteers with these projects then please contact us.



Expansion of Alcoa operations proposed for Perth Hills and Mandoon-Helena River Catchment

While we are trying to do our bit to restore habitat for Black Cockatoos these are miniscule compared to the threats to their existing habitat. Emma Young from the West Australian reported on 31st July that [Alcoa's plans the 'number one extinction threat' to WA's black cockatoos](#) with a proposal to “clear as many as 150,000 potential black cockatoo nesting trees to expand operations through Western

Australia's northern jarrah forest." It also impacts habitat for numerous other conservation-significant species including the numbat, western ringtail possum and Carter's freshwater mussel.

This is the first time since 1961 when a State agreement Act was put into place that the public has been able to have a say on Alcoa's proposed expansion. There are numerous ways to make a submission:

1. Write your own submission (submit online, mail in or video options):

<https://consultation.epa.wa.gov.au/open-for-submissions/pinjarra-alumina-revised-bauxite-mining-p/consultation/intro/>

I've linked the short guide with key points to guide writing a submission [here](#).

2. Sign up to the comprehensive one being written here: <https://endforestmining.org.au>

To get a bit of spatial perspective to the extent of bauxite mining, have a look at this [Google map](#) and pan around. This just shows the recently mined areas.

Submissions close on **21st August**.

Coming events

When	What
Thursday 14th August 6.15-8.30pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	Meeting workshop: Black Cockatoo pocket forest planning (see above)
Monday 8th September 6.15-8.30pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	TTV Movie night - The World's Longest City Link here for details and registration
Tuesday 16th September 6am - 6pm Mollerin	The Tour of Natural Intelligence Farming Link here for details and registration
Wed 17th - Thurs 18th September 9am-6pm Optus stadium	Regenerative Food Systems Conference Link here for details and registration
Wednesday 17th September 5.30-9.30pm The Camfield	Nourish Perth: The Flavour of Nature Link here for details and registration
Saturday 20th September Times TBA	North Perth Community Garden Spring Fest & plant sale (see below)

North Perth Community Garden	
Monday 13th October 6.15-8.30pm Floreat Athena Clubrooms	TTV Movie Night - Breathing Life into Boodjar Link here for details and registration

North Perth Community Garden Spring Fest

Saturday 20th September 10am to 2pm

An event to showcase North Perth Community Garden and launch our new Free Community Seed Library. Come and celebrate Spring and the Noongar season of Djilba with us and see what we do in the garden.

A series of mini repeating workshops will run throughout the day on successfully saving and growing from seeds. Workshop participants will be given free materials & seeds to use in the workshop.

There will be a break in the workshops around 11am for the formal launch of the seed library and a talk by Dr Fatemeh Kazemi BSc, MSc, and PhD Lecturer School of Science at ECU on Water saving and sustainable gardening practices.

Transition Town Vincent members will also be on hand to discuss the My Healthy Soils project and the Black Cockatoo Forest project. We will also have some samples of FASERA biochar to hand out.

Come and celebrate Djilba with North Perth Community Garden and see what we do in our garden. There will be stalls from other similar themed groups and a small selection of plants will be for sale.



Other news

Last week was one where I visited a couple of sites to find out about regenerative farming practices and the benefits to the community. Both successfully use similar regenerative / permaculture principles in their operations.

Regenerative farming or agriculture is defined by Wikipedia “a conservation and rehabilitation



approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting biosequestration, increasing resilience to climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.”

North Fremantle Social Farm

The first site I visited was the North Fremantle Social Farm which focuses on sustainable, food production by the local community, for the local community. On an area of about 950 square metres they produce an abundance of healthy food, mainly vegetables, using compost they make to fertilise and build up the soil, improving its water holding capacity and biological fertility. It is also a hub for community activity and education with a small group of pre-schoolers there while we were visiting. It begs the question “*why are these types of areas not standard land uses in all neighbourhoods, especially in high density urban infill areas?*” Thank you to Fiona Blackham from the City of Stirling for organising this visit and the North Fremantle Social Farm for hosting us.

Ian and Di Haggerty, Australian(s) of the Year

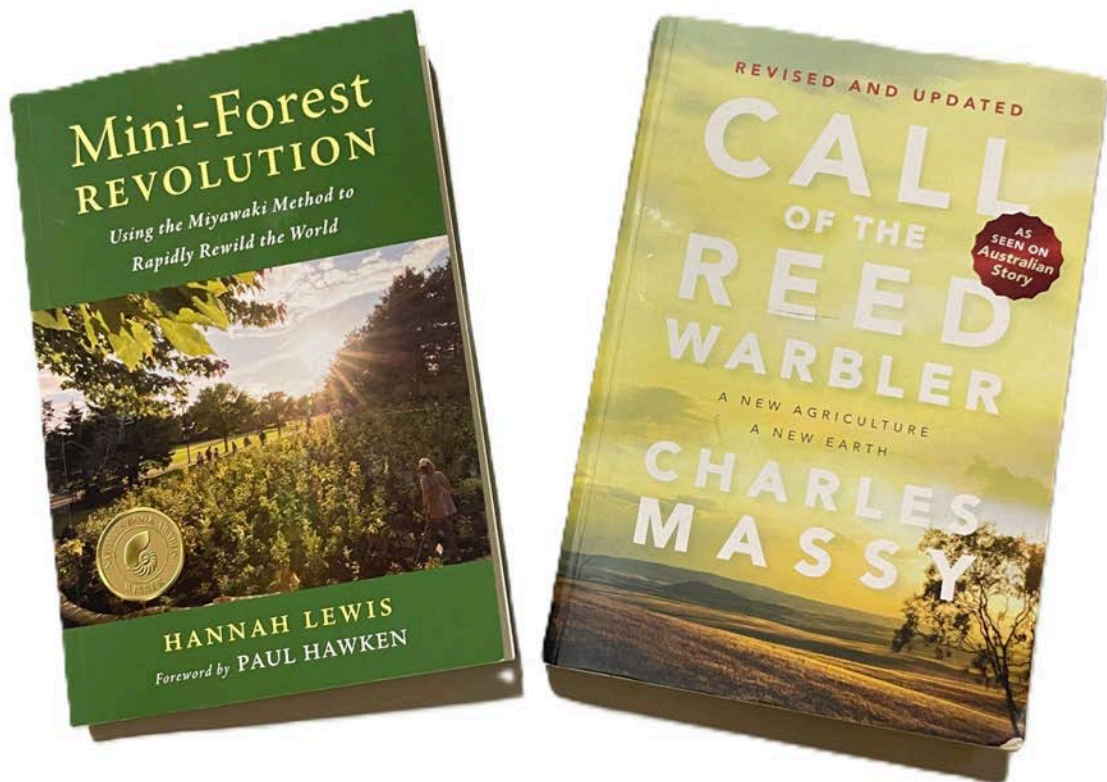
A few days later, myself and TTV member Steve Lawrence and friend Rob Macqueen visited Ian and Di Haggerty to find out a bit more about regenerative farming practices, for which they were awarded Australian(s) of the Year 2025 (Western Australia)(Rob was their accountant before retiring). For those of you who have tasted the yummy bread from Miller + Baker in Lake Street, Perth or the Wild Bakeries, you may already be aware that the grain is supplied by the Haggerty’s farm out at Mollerin, near the north eastern edge of Wheatbelt. Yes, it is traditionally known as low rainfall with an annual average of about 300mm, compared to Perth’s 730mm.

So what are they doing? Firstly they do not till the soil which ensures the roots and stalks from the previous harvest are retained in the soil providing food for soil flora and fauna and ensuring there is little erosion of the soil. They then make a type of compost tea from a combination of compost, worm juice, microbes, and molasses which they apply to the soil when sowing the crop. They also apply this as a foliar spray while the crop is growing. They do not use pesticides which ensures beneficial insects such as ladybirds and spiders keeping the pest bugs at bay. This combination of practices ensures nature is able to work its magic, with abundant beneficial microbes and mycorrhizal fungal networks doing the heavy lifting. This also restores and protects the soil, reduces costs significantly, optimises water availability for the plants, builds the topsoil and ensures healthy, great tasting chemical free food. All good for us and the planet. Oh, and their yields are comparable to conventional farmers.



There are a couple of opportunities to find out more about what they are doing including The Tour of Natural Intelligence Farming happening on 16th September and the Nourish Perth: The Flavour of Nature happening on 17th September.

Book reviews



Last month we showed the documentary Making a Mini-Forest by Angelina Lee which was narrated by Hannah Lewis. Intrigued as to who Hannah Lewis was I Googled her and found out she had authored a book called **Mini-Forest Revolution**, which got me very excited so I promptly ordered it. Both the documentary and Hannah's book follow a similar approach to explain the principles of the Miyawaki method by using case studies looking at different applications. In the book's case there is also a whole chapter called the "Mini-Forest Field Guide" which is of course very useful. What was also interesting to me was that another Transition Town group in Toulouse, France was referred to in the book as developing their own guide to making what they call a micro-forest. I've downloaded it and I believe that we could easily modify and localise it for our own purposes.

As I write this review, I am about to head off with a couple of friends to visit Ian and Di Haggerty at Mollerin, near the edge of the WA wheatbelt. In 2024 they were awarded Australian(s) of the Year (Western Australia) for their contribution to Regenerative farming. The Haggerty's are referenced in Charles Massy's book, **Call of the Reed Warbler** which I read some time ago but am re-reading in parts in readiness for my trip. While the Call of the Reed Warbler is about regenerative farming Charles also has a bit to say about urban regeneration and also references "Design with Nature", a seminal work by Ian McHarg which I read when studying urban and regional planning many (many) years ago. One of the other things I liked about his book are the chapter headings which read like quotes. "Make mistakes but don't do nothing" is a great one along with 'Listen to the land' and 'Design with nature'. This book is available at the City of Vincent library.

Back issues

All back issues of this newsletter can be obtained [from this page](#).

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