

Outgrowing the status quo: bringing the new economy to the suburbs

Jacquie Dredge and Anna Schlunke

What happens when a supporter of the steady state economy meets a social activist? Having a strong combined vision of how the world should be we were frustrated that things have been moving away from this. Eventually we saw that the only path we could take was to get our hands dirty and start making the changes ourselves. We created the not for profit Panania Free Rangers because we want to simultaneously:

- Improve access to locally grown food
- Increase community participation in growing food
- Increase social cohesion and resilience
- Green the local streets, public spaces and yards
- Reduce material use and waste generation
- Increase access to local part time work and provide a democratic workplace
- Providing an example of a sustainable and ethical enterprise
- Advocate for sustainable and affordable housing

Panania is a suburb that is changing quickly in some ways and more slowly in others. The original fibro houses now sell for around \$1 million and are often being knocked down to build duplexes. Chainsaws are a common sound as trees make way for development and Council seems determined to sell off what they think is an excessive number of green spaces. There is a high number of retirees living in their own homes, and hoping to be able to stay there. The average Pananian is less adventurous than an Inner-Westie, and work and money worries seem to have consumed everyone's energy. Volunteering is down and stress is up.

When Panania Free Rangers started planting edibles in neglected parks and public areas there was plenty of support from the public but not from Council, who, in February this year, meticulously destroyed every plant.

Our paper will be on the story of Panania Free Rangers so far – the achievements, the failures, what was easy, what was hard and the surprises.

Conference Themes: Care, our relationship with the natural world, work and exchange.

Bio:

DR ANNA SCHLUNKE (CASSE NSW and PANANIA FREE RANGERS) is a chemical engineer who is interested in all aspects of a steady state economy. She splits her time between modelling the water and energy use of buildings; planting and lobbying for edible gardens and locally grown food for Panania Free Rangers; and Co-Directing CASSE NSW.

JACQUIE DREDGE (PANANIA FREE RANGERS) was a co-owner of a Jim's Mowing franchise then later became a single parent, casual child care worker, casual garden maintenance worker for the elderly and lifelong activist. Post social science/early childhood degree she has worked in aged and disability care.