
EXPERIENCE AN EDUCATION

Crystal Waters Eco-village, Australia

Presented by the Global Ecovillage Network (Oceania/Asia) Inc

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The Crystal Waters Learning Experience

Max Lindegger and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) have been running courses on eco-village design, ecology and permaculture for years, all over the world. These courses are now also available at GEN Oceania/Asia Inc's home base in the UN Habitat Award winning Crystal Waters Permaculture Village, in SE Queensland, Australia. The combination of course content and location means these courses offer something quite unique. The experience of living and breathing eco-village life whilst learning the techniques cannot be duplicated in a classroom environment. The beautiful surroundings, friendly residents, abundant wildlife and subtropical climate also add something special to the experience. Past students have written of 'life changing experiences', and it is clear from their later correspondence with us that this is no exaggeration.

Prof C Bergman from the Pacific Lutheran University (USA) said, "*Students returned from Crystal Waters enthusiastically praising the experience and what they had learned. Many testified to the ways in which the experience transformed them and their understanding of environmental problems. It is an excellent course.*"

The courses are designed specifically to meet the needs of each partner educational institution.



Why Crystal Waters?

What makes a course at Crystal Waters so very different from ecology courses offered by other educational institutions? A visiting Professor, on a tour of overseas academic institutions, said "*Once students are installed in those universities they may as well have stayed at home. The culture within universities the world over is much the same.*" Whereas in Crystal Waters they are immersed in an entirely different way of life, in a clearly Australian context, whilst still gaining the academic input required. Crystal Waters is well known for its groundbreaking work in sustainable living. Indeed the 1996 World Habitat Award commended the village for its "*pioneering work in demonstrating new ways of low impact, sustainable living*".

Teaching Space

The 'classroom' at Crystal Waters is huge - 640 acres (259 hectares)! A proportion of class time is outdoors, doing hands on activities. We strongly believe that students learn much more by *doing* a thing than just *hearing* about it. If we want them to be excited by a subject we need to let them experience why it's worth knowing. We call this 'muscle memory' and believe there is no substitute for it.

However, there is also a place for theory, and this is presented in our new state-of-the-art Education Centre. This building is designed to take advantage of passive solar



possibilities, and is built in environmentally sound materials. The rammed earth walls help keep the building cooler in the heat of midsummer, and warmer in the chill of winter mornings. A very large covered deck provides outside teaching opportunities. The building is powered by photovoltaic panels, which feed into the mains electricity grid. Students are able to monitor energy inputs and outputs via an interactive computer on site. The wet composting toilet system is leading edge technology, and students are able to see - and experience - that composting toilet systems don't *have* to be smelly or difficult to manage! Water is collected from rainfall off the roof, and all water is recycled to plants and trees.



Students are also able to visit a number of the many unique and creative eco-homes on Crystal Waters. There are many different styles of building here, from strawbale to rammed earth, pole house to mud dome. Residents have tried to avoid using such things as rainforest timbers or toxic chemicals in their homes, which has resulted in a great range of alternative techniques and materials being trialed here. The village features other innovations, too, as the whole development was designed according to Permaculture principles. A fresh approach was taken to such basic things as road width, camber, placement, and water run-off strategies, with some very pleasing and creative results. Important ecological issues relating to human interaction with nature can be clearly illustrated by real life examples on the property (not models in a laboratory).

Above all, Crystal Waters is a living, working, community, not just an idea. Life here is 'for real', not an academic exercise.

Accommodation

Students are usually housed in a combination of bunkhouse and cabin accommodation. There are other options available too, such as luxury private cottages or Bed & Breakfast establishments.



Extra Activities

We can arrange trips to:

- Beaches - world class, lifesaver-supervised white sand beaches.
- Fraser Island - a World Heritage-listed sand island
- Adventure Activities - Horse Riding, Abseiling, Mountain Biking, Kayaking, Trekking
- Popular tourist venues - eg Australia Zoo (home of Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter),
- Underwater World, Noosa Heads, National Parks, the famous Eumundi Markets

Need more information?

All our courses are structured to suit the particular needs of the participants. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your questions and requests. A background video on crystal Waters is available in NTSC and PAL formats.

