

# 8 STEPS TO MAKE A COMMUNITY MICRO-FOREST

## Tips for success

1. Find great people to form a volunteer micro-forest team
2. Break the process into small achievable stages
3. Have fun (laugh at yourself first), be imperfect and dare to try something new
4. Celebrate each stage
5. Allow 12 to 18 months to build a micro-forest.

## STEP 1 - Form a leadership team

There are seven worksheets that will help you through this step. If you do one worksheet every week you should have formed a team by the end of week 7.

Worksheet 1 - Start conversations in your community

Worksheet 2 - Start conversations with the wider community

Worksheet 3 - Hold your first meeting

Worksheet 4 - Develop a skills register

Worksheet 5 - Create social media pages

Worksheet 6 - Refine your mission

Worksheet 7 - Gathering site information - uses a site matrix to help you choose best sites

Download the worksheets from [www.climatefactory.com.au/resources/](http://www.climatefactory.com.au/resources/)



## STEP 2 - Launch a crowdfunding campaign

We've raised \$122,000 for four micro-forests between 2020 and 2022. So we must be doing something right. Each community is different, but the minimum we try to raise is \$20,000. And we try and raise the equivalent amount from grants.

Look at the successful crowdfunding campaigns we ran for the Downer, Watson and Holt Micro-forests on the Start Some Good platform. Also check the campaign for the Moruya Micro-forest on the Pozible platform. You are welcome to copy our text, but craft it so it reflects your community and your voice.

When preparing your campaign you will need to make a compelling story and ideally include professional photos and video.

Once you launch the campaign your leadership team will need to spend at least one day per week promoting/sharing campaign.

## STEP 3 - Community consultation

If you've got to this step, you've been successful in crowdfunding. Congratulations. Remember to celebrate with your team and followers.

If you are creating a micro-forest in a public space your local authority (usually your local council or in the ACT it's the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate) will want you to conduct a community consultation. That's to make sure that the community understand what your project is trying to achieve and who will maintain it.

Check local authorities' rules around what is an acceptable community consultation process. Then organise a facilitation session that sets out what the project is about. Ensure you invite all the key stakeholders. Allow participants to make suggestions on other features that could be incorporated into the design. In consultations The Climate Factory hosts we invite participants to vote on what's most important to them. In our projects, we incorporate the top three features the community voted on.



# STEP 4 - Landscape and water harvesting design

## Documents required by authorities

Find out what documents your local authorities require. They may ask for:

- a Landscape Master Plan at a scale of 1:200
- a Planting Plan
- a plant list (includes common names, species names, numbers and post sizes)
- Risk Management Plan
- Maintenance Plan
- Evidence of Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance

## Landscape requirements

Our community micro-forests comply with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles and include:

- 1500 native plants (tubestock or cells)
- open spaces with informal seating
- pathways
- pollinator patches

Engage a Landscape Architect to prepare the design to local authorities specifications. Preliminary designs are presented to community and feedback incorporated into final drawings.

## Water harvesting a method for future-proofing

You might consider saving money and ditching the water harvesting. That's okay if you live in a place that's likely to receive plenty of rainfall in the future. For many inland places the predictions are the climate will be hotter and drier. Investing in a water harvesting design and implementation will help future-proof your project.

To understand what water harvesting is about check out Brad Landcaster's water harvesting resources.

## Book a reputable contractor

Water harvesting design and implementation is not widely practiced across Australia.

Start holding conversations with earthworks contractors. Ask for recommendations and visit their projects. Once you are happy and have an agreed price get them pencilled in for a tentative start date with an agreed lump sum. For example, for one contractor, we pay \$10,000 to undertake earthworks and implement the water harvesting design. This fee covers insurances, machinery and additional materials for water harvesting trenches (sand and gravel).

## STEP 5 - Approval

Take a deep breath. This part of the project can take a mega dose of patience and persistence. Councils by nature are conservative and risk averse. If you were simply planting trees and shrubs they would be less cautious. But you are talking about digging up the ground and creating water harvesting trenches which many of them will never have seen.

- Find out the name and email address of the contact officer you will submit documents to.
- Befriend the contact officer - hopefully they will become your ally
- Get in writing the number of days or weeks approval might take. In the ACT it can take up to 60 days.
- Keep a record of all your conversations and emails with local authorities.
- Submit documents in one package via email.

Now wait.

## STEP 6 - Earthworks

We allow about two weeks for earthworks and about a week for the ground to settle prior to community planting.

- Obtain free Before you Dig documents online
- Engage a Services Locator to locate any infrastructure that could be accidentally dug up
- Install a temporary construction fence, toilet and signage about the project
- Letterbox local residents to know earthworks will be starting shortly
- Landscape Architect to superintend earthworks
- Take photos of progress



## STEP 7 - Community planting

There's a couple of different ways you can approach the community planting. You can aim to plant the entire 1500 plants over a long weekend (Friday to Sunday). This is an exhausting but satisfying approach. Or schedule planting 500 plants over a number of months. There's pros and cons with each approach.

As a rule of thumb, we aim to plant 500 plants per working bee of 2-3 hours with approximately 30 people. Any more than 30 people per session gets hard to manage.

- Decide who will manage the community planting (including plant delivery and hole digging) – will you outsource this job?
- Have you submitted documentation to local authorities regarding community working on public land?
- Ideally, the leaders main job is to promote these events, participate on the day (including meet and greet) and organise catering

## STEP 8 - Maintenance

The Miyawaki method of dense planting is reported to be maintenance free within three years. So we commit to local authorities that our volunteer groups will maintain the landscape for three years.

- Set a regular time during the growing season for working bees ie 4pm the last Sunday of the month to do a job, like speed weeding. Celebrate after 1 hour.
- Demonstrate good weeding technique (including effective root removal and protecting bodies from injury).
- Buy sturdy tools that can tackle weeding jobs and mulching jobs
- Identify weeds for your group so they know what is a weed and what is not a weed
- Is there a house nearby where you can store equipment – like hoes, rakes etc?
- What will you do with all the weeds you eradicate. Will you compost them on site, take them to a green waste facility or throw them on the grass so the mowing contractors mow over them?

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

**Book a free 30 minute appointment with Edwina Robinson.**

[www.calendly.com/climatefactory](http://www.calendly.com/climatefactory)