MICROFOREST COLLECTIVE

APPROVALS – STEP 5

MICROFOREST BLUEPRINT

How to get the rubber stamp on your project.

FOLLOW THE BLUEPRINT

After I built the Downer pilot microforest, I realised my journey would have been easier if I had an instruction manual to follow. That's why I've created this Blueprint to help volunteer community leaders build a microforest.

The beauty of the Blueprint is it's not just for making microforests. It can be applied to other regenerative public landscape projects, like a food forest, community garden, a birdscape, pollinator patch or native grassland.

This Blueprint will give you confidence, save time and prevent you from making costly and time consuming errors.

The Blueprint is divided into eight discrete steps. By following each step you'll build a team of like-minded, community-spirited volunteers and together you'll realise your dream of a neighbourhood microforest.

Not only will you build a microforest, you'll make new and meaningful relationships based on shared values and create a more connected community. That's powerful.

8 STEPS

The eight steps build on each other and are best followed in order. The steps are:

Step 1 - Build a leadership team
Step 2 - Raise funds
Step 3 - Community consultation
Step 4 - Design
Step 5 - Approvals
Step 6 - Earthworks
Step 7 - Community planting
Step 8 - Maintenance.

Edwina Robinson
Founder and Landscape Architect
The Climate Factory
Co-Founder and Chair
The Microforest Collective
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LEARN NEW SKILLS

Getting involved in a community-led microforest provides the opportunity to learn new skills.

Here's a list of skills you can develop during a microforest project.

- Community engagement
- Working with government
- Project management
- Event management
- Stakeholder management
- Volunteer coordination
- Grant writing
- Fundraising (including crowdfunding)
- Public speaking
- Team leadership

And it's your chance to learn more about:

- Native plants
- Pollinator plants
- Water harvesting
- Landscape construction techniques.

BREATHE

Take a deep breath.
Dealing with local authorities can be tricky. And sometimes it's easy to get frustrated by bureaucracy that bogs down revegetation efforts. Perhaps someone in your leadership team is methodical and unflappable, so leading Step 5 is a good job for them.

Get in touch with your local authority early to find out exactly what sort of documentation they require and how long approval will take. Ask for confirmation of what they need in writing. Knowing what's required and the timing will help smooth the approvals process.

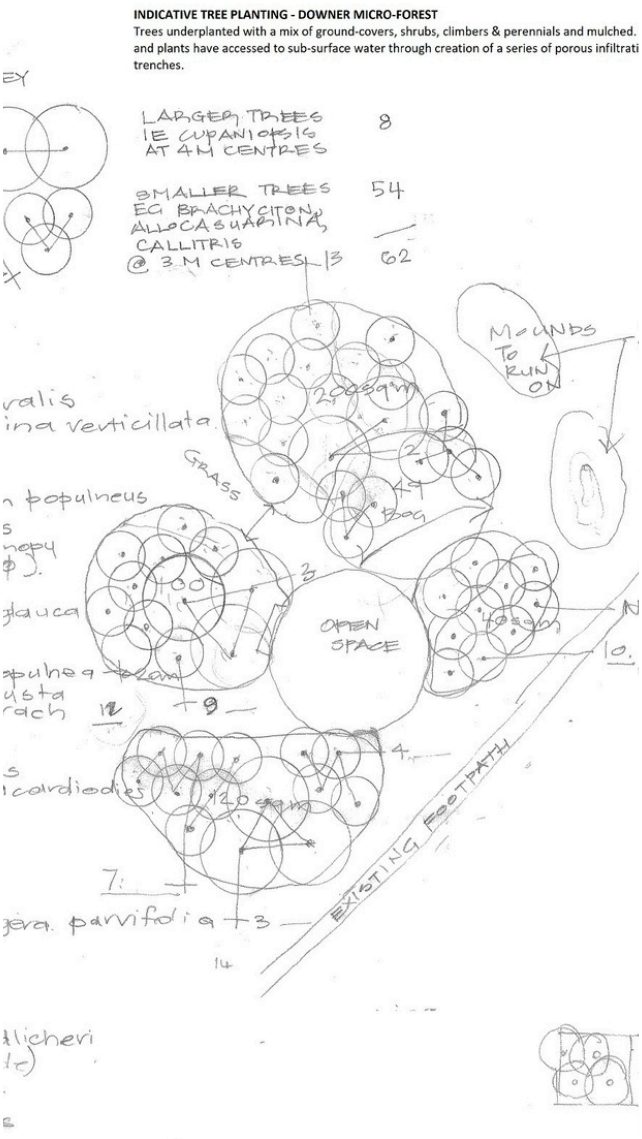
Local authorities tend to be risk averse. From our ACT experiences, local government lack a single point of contact and different sections request similar information.

When we first contacted the ACT Government about our proposal to build the Downer microforest in 2020 they were cautious. They hadn't heard of the Miyawaki method nor seen one built. They were also unfamiliar with the sub-surface method of water harvesting we proposed.

They requested we met on site to understand our drawings. Plus we needed to schedule additional meetings with tree personnel because of the 'unorthodox' Miyawaki-inspired approach of dense planting.

NOW WAIT

factor in a minimum of 20 business days for approval



Typically, in the ACT approval take 20 business days. Make sure you factor this wait in your project plan.

In Canberra applications are submitted to the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Directorate within ACT Government. It acts like a super big local council.

We built the Moruya Microforest on land managed by the Anglican Church. Their approval process was more streamlined - they asked us to submit a Risk Management Plan and an assurance that we would maintain the landscape for three years.

As well as the Landscape Plans by a qualified Landscape Architect, the ACT Government require the following four sets of items shown in the table over.

Types of documents

1. **Minor Temporary Traffic Management Plan** - this plan indicates where vehicles will enter and exit the site during the earthworks. Indicate on the plan where a traffic marshall will guide vehicles to and from the site.
Plus attachments required:

- A google map of the site, showing the location of construction fences
- A Risk Assessment Plan (see example provided)
- The earthwork contractor's Public Liability Insurance and Workers Compensation Insurance - to be supplied prior to work starting.
- Safe Work Method Statements supplied by the contractor - to be supplied prior to work starting.

2. **Application to use a public place** – this form is for all events and activities on unleased public land in the ACT and requires 28 days for approval.

Attachments required:

- Public Liability Insurance (either your Landscape Architects or see if a local community group will cover you for this aspect) - to be supplied prior to work starting.

3. **Works Plan** – provide a timeline and description of site works.

Attachments required:

- A Risk Assessment Plan - see example provided
- Site Map
- Flier for letterbox drop to residents - see sample letter
- Example of temporary signage to be fixed to site fence with contact details
- Contractor's Insurance and Licence

4. **Volunteer Group Activity Plan** – this plan sets out the goals and objectives for the volunteer group who will maintain the landscape. An example is given in Step 8 - Maintenance.

SAMPLE
Risk Assessment Plan for Microforest Installation

The project involves the construction of a sub-surface water harvesting trenches and a dry creek bed and creation of shrubs beds for 1500 climate-ready native plants.

Potential issue		**Mitigation measures**
Unexpected material found during earthworks.		• Undertake test postholes • If unexpected material found ie asbestos – stop work immediately and call relevant authorities. • If unexpected artefacts found call relevant representatives.
Risk to members of public from machinery.		• Works conducted inside 1.8 metal security fence • Spotter in high vis vest directs vehicles from road to site entry points and vice versa.
Risk of stormwater harvesting trenches failing.		• The stormwater harvesting trenches are an innovative yet simple solution to harvest stormwater and occasional irrigation water. The trench design is from a stormwater harvesting expert, (insert name) who has implemented numerous systems across (insert locations) • The landscape contractor is (insert name) who has built stormwater harvesting systems at (insert locations).

Risk Assessment Plan for Microforest Installation cont.

Potential issue		Mitigation measures
Dry creek bed a drowning risk.		The dry creek will be a maximum of 300mm deep and the water will dissipate after 24-48 hours.
Mowers unable to negotiate new landscape works.		All landscape works to conform to local authorities' design standards. Minimum 3.0m wide paths and offsets from existing infrastructure.
Plant not well maintained & authorities receive complaints about project.		The (insert name of group) community group will be responsible for maintaining the microforest for a period of at least 3 years from the last working bee.

SAMPLE COMMUNITY LETTER

Dear Downer Resident,

COLE STREET SWINGS PARK – UPGRADE STARTING SHORTLY

The Downer Community Park Conservation Group partnered with the social enterprise, The Climate Factory and the ACT Government to upgrade the Cole St Swings Park into a more attractive, cooler and child-friendly microforest.

This is a pilot project with 57% of the project funds contributed by the community.

Participants in a community consultation session identified: habitat, water harvesting and nature play as the most important elements to be incorporated into the landscape design. You can access project details at: www.microforestcollective.com.au

Earthworks will commence on or after Wednesday 19 August 2020 and the site will be surrounded by a construction fence during earthworks. Earthworks should take one to two weeks depending upon the weather.

Working bees are scheduled to plant 1800 native plants over spring and autumn.

Cheers,
(Insert Name)
Convenor
Downer Community Park Conservation Group
(Insert Phone)
(Insert Email)

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Want to learn more?

Find resources, guides and advice at
www.microforestcollective.com.au