

More about David Byrne

Purpose, vision and philosophy

David Byrne as the founder and principal consultant of Solutions for Sustainable Living brings together a lifetime of living passionately with Nature in this new consultancy service.

David continues to live his philosophy of living in unity and peace with the land and nature. This profound vision, given to him at just 6 years of age, created an abiding belief that he needed to contribute to the life-force of the land which returns life to him – a symbiotic relationship.

David's deep love of the natural world and passion for the environment developed in early childhood where he found great solace and learning roaming the woods in his native Ireland.

Born in the 1950's when environmental issues were unheard of, the child David intuitively questioned the sustainability of the world he inhabited. His querying pondered issues such as where the paper would continue to come from for the paper bags which were the norm at the time and why Ireland, which once held great stands of deciduous trees was now greatly denuded.

These questions were to form the basis of later decisions he made in every area of life and led to widespread explorations in sustainable living practices. It is this learning, knowledge and deep wisdom David brings to Solutions for Sustainable Living.

David is a lateral, visionary and solutions-focused thinker who combines his extensive and very diverse background with sound research to ensure creative solutions for a varied range of sustainable living and environmental issues.

Sustainable Land management

In the late 1970s David left city life with few resources and little money to undertake a bush lifestyle in Western Victoria somewhat akin to early pioneers.

The property was highly challenging and numerous previous farming ventures by others had failed. With issues of major water shortage and extremely degraded poor soil which was, in fact nothing but sand, answers were needed and quickly. Locating a stable water source, construction of specifically designed 'tank' dams were required to address the problem of the sand, development of sustainable food sources by enriching growing areas with the use of organic farming practices, installation of alternative energy systems were just some of the many challenges he faced. Always innovative, solutions saw him designing and building the power system for his 15 square home and surrounds for a total cost of just \$300! It was still functioning 20 years later.

David's competence and knowledge of building is based on practical, experiential learning and much research. Applying his skills, he created a comfortable, totally self-sustaining home for his new, very young family. Over a span of 10 years, David built the entire infrastructure on his first forty acre property, bringing rich life to land deemed by locals as 'impossible'.

The legacy left when he sold the property in 1990 was enriched, restored and productive land much of which had once been barren, a comfortable low-energy home and an infrastructure for sustainable low cost living.

Key to the success of his pioneering venture was David's deep 'feeling' relationship with the land which informed what could and could not be done on the property, what it needed and how best to work in a harmonious, symbiotic manner – life supporting life.

Entrepreneurship

To finance his pioneering venture, David turned his considerable entrepreneurial talents into the first of many highly successful business ventures. Converting otherwise 'waste' fallen timber on the property into a lucrative firewood supply business, David quickly financed his building activities. He later supported this with cattle rearing and market garden production which provided core supplies for his subsequent restaurant venture.

Further examples of David's entrepreneurial activities are illustrated under the *Community Development* section on this page.

In later years after relocating to Tasmania, David built a worm farm facility on his property which he later opened to the local community as a working model. He conducted guided tours and education on worm farm technology and became affectionately known locally as The Worm Man. Particular emphasis was on organic processes to enable building new and enhancing existing soils nutritionally and microbiotically thereby elevating production outputs to outstanding yields.



In recent years, David has commenced his second pioneering sustainable living adventure, the **Eslin Centre**

, this time in rural Tasmania. Grazing land has been converted to tree plantations which sit harmoniously alongside and in support of the preservation of the native forest on his property. Once again, he is building low-energy domestic and alternative accommodation dwellings and an associated supporting food production facility. To find solutions to low and sustainable energy requirements, David integrated various existing products and technologies to create a new super efficient low-cost energy lighting system using solar energy.

The Eslin Centre is built on the foundation of sustainability in all areas; holistic and organic land management practices, chemically free and organic gardening principles and low-cost, energy efficient power and water resources which use natural forces such as gravity wherever possible.

Community Capacity Building

David's altruistic nature saw him always assisting others. This led to deep involvement in his local communities where, through his community-development consultancy, plus in other not-for-profit organisations, David initiated, designed, raised private and public capital funds, led and managed major community capacity-building projects which have left a legacy of enduring, long-term sustainable effects on the local North Western Tasmanian society.

As an early school 'refuser' who found it easier to learn about anything which interested him, rather than traditional school learning, David well understood the challenges facing some 'underachieving' students in the school system.

Through his previous consultancy, Community Development Specialists, David founded, developed and managed the School Farm Learning Centre which was a nationally recognized initiative in educating students about worm farming, composting and key processes underpinning the establishment and maintenance of an extensive horticultural enterprise for challenged students.

Another initiative was the dynamic Creative Living Centre in Regional Tasmania where as the projects co-ordinator, David took an innovative alternative-learning approach to youth education. Action-based, experiential learning projects were developed in response both to specific industry needs and community issues in an economic environment which was severely depressed.

Such projects provided employment opportunities and empowered youth-at-risk to develop real-life practical skills in many areas that would impact their future options, choices and employability, projects which also contributed to the greater social cohesiveness. 'Making Community the Family' was the underpinning principle by which all actions and developments progressed.

Under the banner of the Creative Living Centre (CLC) David initiated many projects:

- Creative Paper Mills was developed as a hand-made paper cottage industry to create employment and as a community business. Today, 12 years later it is one of Burnie's key tourist attractions with national and international acclaim.
- The Burnie City Market was created to draw community together and provide an outlet for local youth produce that also allowed for business experience to be gained in operating alongside experienced stall holders. It afforded the development of skills in young people around marketing, selling, administration and business which developed and enhanced students capabilities and enhanced future job readiness.
- The Ability Focus Program addressed the needs of intellectually disadvantaged people by using tactile experiential processes (rather than intellectual) to discover their latent interests.

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- FernGlade Community Art Mural project was, at the time, the biggest single arts project undertaken in Tasmania. Today, some 12 years since its inception, it stands testament to the community pride installed by its creation. The project was designed to resolve the persistent issue of graffiti on eyesore industrial buildings set in the unique FernGlade Platypus Reserve by providing cultural and art learning opportunities for local youth.

Additionally, David has managed all-age emergency shelters for people-at-risk, co-ordinated unemployed youth services and practical skills workshops for disadvantaged youth and community work co-operative for pre-employment training.

David Byrne is also a qualified health practitioner specialising in body work and nutrition and has previously ran 3 practices in North Western Tasmania.

AND, David is a superb innovative chef, having owned his own restaurant in Western Victoria and can offer creative culinary fare and recommendations for local produce.

[Click here to contact David Byrne](#)