

BRONWYN MCGRATH

Supermarket manager, born and bred local

Groundhog Day

You fill it and then you've got to fill it again



The supermarket is like a living, breathing thing. It's hectic from whoa to go. That's why it's like Groundhog Day — you go round and fill everything — and then you think, "oh well, it's time to go and do it all again". It is a bit of an extra nightmare at the moment — the warehouse in Sydney collapsed in the hail storm about six months ago. While it's being re-built our orders have been coming from interstate and sometimes it's been a bit hit-and-miss getting our orders.

We're very locally focussed and we employ about twenty-five people, some full-time and some casual. If people support us by shopping locally, spend their money in town rather than out of town, we can put back into the community and that's a good situation for everyone.

For example, if we're out of something you need, we can take your name and give you a ring when it comes in.

For people who need it we can home deliver. Elderly people or someone sick in bed at home can ring up and we'll take their order. Some people come in and do the shop and we deliver it later. It's not a service that we advertise but it is there if it's needed.

THE GREEN ARMY

Local environment and heritage conservation projects underway across Australia

Chloe Stuart

I've enjoyed making friends and knowing that we're helping to make a difference to the landscape. I think it would be fun if this led to a career in land management. Snakes aren't a big deal anymore we've seen so many snakes on the job so far. We've also come across many frog species.

Tiarnah Hodgkinson

I've worked before on the wetlands in Goulburn to regenerate the bush. I had a bit to do with that when I was a bit younger. Ideally I'd like to get into ranging or wild life conservation — along those lines. I'm interested in the fauna more than the plants, but it's all part of it I guess. We've adapted and overcome the snake problem, although I did step on a brown snake the other day — but it was pretty chilled, pretty docile — it was cool that day.

Nicole Polley

What the Green Army has meant for me is a job outdoors. I want to be a ranger, I'm an outdoorsy type of person. I come from a farm — we have a horse stud.



CHLOE, NICOLE AND TIARNAH.

SU AND KATH WITH SOME NEW PLANTINGS.



SU WILD-RIVER

Environmental activist

I have been an activist since I was in year ten, I led several then, about sexism and things like that and was into various movements, and I have been an environment professional since doing a university degree back when I was 20. I am 46 so it's been more than half my life dedicated to environmental activism.

Since I burned out as a grass root activist I have been more able to do professional work where you actually get something back. It means working inside the system rather than from outside.

But since I moved to Braidwood I have been able again to get into grass roots activism, I think because I felt such a strong connection to the place here. The community has made it possible to do a lot more volunteer work in the environment like 'Friends of the Mongarlowe River' for a long time, the local Greens and things like that.

I think Braidwood has the most precious and wonderful community with so many smart, educated, connected and creative people.

When I say creative, I don't just mean the artists, although I love the degree of artistic community here, but also

Down to earth

people being creative with their rural properties and with their houses — the way we get along even though we are very different. There is an amazing diversity in the community, and I think having kids at the local school really helps to bridge different views because you end up being friends on a regular talking basis with people who have different views and that's great.

I feel very lucky to have six acres on the edge of town with really deep topsoil, in the old granite country. We are doing a permaculture conversion on the top two acres, with grazing animals down the back, we are not really farming that, we have got orchards and a lot of fruit producing trees going in on the top two acres, and extensive vegetable gardens.

We grow them every year using no-dig garden techniques and just using permaculture principles. All the herbs we use every day grow right near the house and those you don't use every day grow further away. I have got a little bit of garlic, just like a lot of people, and chooks too.

Because I commute and I don't sell produce at this stage, the farming, the food production is really for my mental health [laughs]. We don't do more than we can manage easily but in the design of permaculture, each garden becomes easier to manage over time. It's working pretty well.

I have a strong survivalist instinct so I feel that what I am doing is learning how to grow food and putting in infra-

structure for the long term, out of a sense that the easy access to food and fuel and water is not something that I can expect is going to continue.

Braidwood is a great place to do this kind of endeavour, because so many other people are having a go at being self-sufficient as well. What that means is if my tomato crops fail, someone else's are OK and I can buy tomatoes from someone else, locally.

I'll be bottling all of my tomatoes and sharing information on how to save seeds and preserve food. I love it that there is a general interest and acceptance that it is a worthwhile activity. It is really fun just to talk about it.

My family here is me and my two children, Myrtle and Tally, they both go to Braidwood Central School and then there is Tim McCann to whom I got married earlier this year. Right now we have also got Kath McCann here, Tim's sister. She comes up about twice a year and spends the weekend. Kath is the permaculture designer for the place and she helps out with mulching and weeding, and steering us forwards, because it is not very much like the original plan. I guess we've got the bones from the original plan, but the actual detail is quite different from what it was on paper. We move forwards very organically, very much whatever comes along next is the right thing to do and so that's what we do [laughs]. Whenever Kath comes around the garden always looks fabulous for a long time.