

MACCY BIOCHAR MEMBER BULLETIN

No. 6 - March 2020

Published by maccybiochar. Edited by Brian Lewis.
Auspiced by the Macclesfield Community Association Inc.

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HELLO ALL.

Welcome to our 6th Member Bulletin.

Did you know that we are now just over 1 year old? The group began with the formation of the Steering Committee at a public meeting held in the Institute on the evening of Monday 22 January 2019.

Committee meetings are normally held once per month on the second Monday of the month in the Institute Supper Room starting at 7pm. All members are welcome to attend and take part in discussions and find out more about what we are up to.

HERE IS A SUMMARY of our plans and activities since the February bulletin:

- Biochar analysis;
- New Kiln;
- Mobile Kiln;
- New members;
- 2020 Job Campaign;
- Business Plan;
- Biochar for Beginners;
- Business/Fundraising Opportunities;
- Biochar Field Trials.

BIOCHAR ANALYSIS

We have received some results from ByGen as follows: The ash composition shows levels of **heavy metals (e.g. arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, copper, molybdenum, nickel, lead, antimony and selenium) are below detectable levels.** And the levels of 21 different types of PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon) are below detectable levels at <0.5 mg/kg. We are now waiting on the carbon analysis so that we can calculate our carbon capture quantities based on accredited measurements rather than estimates. Meanwhile we can be assured that our biochar contains no harmful contaminants.

NEW KILN

Manufacture of our new kiln by local fabricator Firth Engineering has been delayed. We are currently waiting for advice on the expected completion date. The combination of this new kiln with our original 2 small kilns should ensure a production capacity of 1000 litres of biochar per day of operation.

MOBILE KILN

A new mobile trailer-mounted kiln is also being planned that will allow us to offer a mobile service to landowners with burn heaps. The estimated cost is \$5000, based on a tandem trailer, liquid IBC, pump, hoses, and kiln. We have applied for an environment grant via the Mt. Barker council for this amount. If our grant application is successful we will offer the mobile service in the first instance as a free service to bushfire victims in the Adelaide Hills to help them deal with their burn heaps and make biochar instead of just returning the carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. **We have been advised by one well-known vigneron that this service would be most welcome.**

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new member John Perrett of Macclesfield. John has 40 or so years of experience as a landscape gardener specialising in rocks and stonework. Not only that but he owns a truck with a crane that he is willing to use occasionally on our behalf when we need it. Thanks John!

NB: If every member recruited just one more member we could boast a membership of over 60 and obtain some useful additional funds **plus** additional potential volunteers **plus** give us more credibility when applying for grants. So please put on your sales hat when you are out and about and have a spare member form with you at all times to put to good use. Simply print one off from the website. Or call me for a copy.

2020 JOB CAMPAIGN

We plan to start wood collection in the week after Easter and go through to the end of November. We are planning 1 collection day per week alternating between Tuesdays and Fridays. So there will be:

Tuesday Collection (once per fortnight). Team leader is Geoff Brockhouse. Mob: 0418 800 691.

Friday Collection (once per fortnight). Team leader is Kelvin Williams. Mob: 0423 198 345.

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Kiln operation, starting in May, is planned for alternating Wednesdays and Saturdays. So there will be:

Wednesday Batch (once per fortnight). Team leader is Brian Lewis, Mob: 041 148 0935.

Saturday Batch (once per fortnight). Team leader to be advised.

If you can volunteer your time once a fortnight for either wood collection or kiln operation please call the team leader for the day that would suit you best and advise him of your availability.

Team leaders will be responsible for:

- Adherence to covid19 precautions (social distancing and face masks etc);
- Risk assessment and prevention (personal protective equipment & clothing);
- Volunteer registration (name, time in/out).

HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATION

We have started a list of households, landowners and community groups who have tree litter to spare. Wood collection will start with them. Those of them who register with us will be allocated CO₂ offsets from the biochar we produce from their wood. This will help them to become carbon neutral.

If you want to be added to this list simply go to the website and look under <https://www.maccybiochar.com/summary> to register.

BUSINESS PLAN

No further progress has been made on the business plan. It requires some more work to assess the local demand for biochar in the various branches of agriculture and other industries where biochar has potential application. **Is there anyone who has some experience in this area who would like to advise us and/or assist with this? The draft plan is available to any member who is interested. Just call me for a copy.**

BIOCHAR FOR BEGINNERS

An informal training course was presented by Brian Lewis in the Institute Supper Room on Wednesday 18

March for biochar beginners. **Appropriate social distancing was observed and there was useful follow-on discussion and questions. Course notes have been emailed to all participants.**

BUSINESS/FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Biochar has numerous applications. While we are concentrating at present on production of raw biochar in bulk there are opportunities for community groups and local businesses to add value to our biochar and sell small packs for household or garden use. We invite expressions of interest from individuals and local businesses to collaborate with us.

BIOCHAR FIELD TRIALS

DJ Growers purchased a small quantity of our biochar recently to use in a field trial at an Adelaide Hills strawberry farm. We await the results with interest.

RECENT EVENTS:

Tuesday 17 March: Dung Beetles & Biochar. Mt. Compass. Arranged by Fleurieu Farming Systems. Presentations were made by Greg Dalton on dung beetle trials; and Melissa Rebbeck on trials of dairy production with biochar enhanced cattle feed. Several Maccy Biochar members attended as a result of which we have been **invited to demonstrate how to make biochar to the Cittaslow Goolwa group.**

COMING UP:

April: Start wood collection & receivals at site.
May: Start biochar production at site.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS at present are:

Brian Lewis – Chairman.
Kelvin Williams – Site coordinator.
Geoff Brockhouse – Team Leader
Kath Thurmer – Community Liaison.
Greg Marlu – Technical advisor.
Stephen Heading – Technical advisor.
Ivars Eglitis – Operator.
Meegan Semple – Viticulture liaison.

Enquiries: Brian Lewis. Mob: 041 148 0935.