

Spotlight on the Hawea Grove Project

Another recipient of our Waste Minimisation Community Fund, the Hawea Grove Project is all about achievable sustainable living. Here we chat with Keith Stubbs, founder and filmmaker of the project and supporting webisode series - a case study on eco-building in the district – about how things are progressing.

Q: We love the idea of documenting an eco-house build from start to finish and sharing learnings for anyone with an interest to follow, what made you want to do this?

When we first purchased this piece of land, I looked around at many prefab options for smaller residential dwellings but found that a lot of them used petrochemical-based materials. What I perceived as being more “sustainable” due to less waste being produced on site quickly became very questionable to me, due to the unknowns around what goes into the prefab options and where/how they are being made.

Don't get me wrong, prefab dwellings may be great solutions but all the options I researched were not forthcoming with their material sourcing and manufacturing. That process made me wonder how many other consumers are making decisions with limited understanding.

Q: How has the community responded to your project so far?

Very positively! People genuinely seem interested to learn more about the building industry from a consumer's perspective. We had a local primary school do a project on eco building based on our first few videos. The students sent me a list of questions (some were very entertaining) which I answered via video. We do get the occasional social media comment with a little more scrutiny in it, usually because the viewer has taken something out of context or not watched the whole series.

Keith Stubbs on site at the Hawea Grove project.



Q: Congratulations on being one of the six recipients of the QLDC Waste Minimisation Community Fund for 2020, can you tell us how this has helped your project along?

Thank you. This fund has been a huge help as it's allowed us to put more time into the series and focus on areas that have no sponsorship opportunities, such as waste management, re-using and recycling. We would be doing these things anyway but now we can put more time into episodes focused around these topics. I'm particularly excited about the biochar kiln episode which will feature towards the end of the series.

Q: How did lock down affect the progress of the build, did you come across any silver linings?

Lockdown really just delayed everything for a month or so. Personally, I welcomed the time, enjoying spending it on the land in a more natural state and taking the time to learn about topics like embodied carbon and research different materials / suppliers.

Q: How can people tune in and get access to all the great knowledge you are discovering on The Hawea Grove build journey?

Each episode is published on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Just look up "Hawea Grove" on your preferred channel and follow along. We also publish each episode on our website haweagroove.nz, where you

can subscribe to our mailing list to be notified when new episodes are released. To watch the back catalogue, visit haweagroove.nz/category/episodes/

We welcome input and suggestions, so if there's an aspect about eco building you'd like to hear more about, please let us know.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone out there who is considering an eco-build but doesn't know where to start?

Consider why you want to do it primarily. Is it because you want an energy efficient home and low energy bills? Or is it because you are concerned for our environment and climate change? Those two things do go hand-in-hand to an extent, as energy efficient homes are better for our environment in terms of energy consumption (which NZ houses are historically very poor at). But if the cost of having an energy efficient home means lots of carbon emissions during the manufacturing process (particularly from overseas suppliers where the electrical grids are generally more polluting), is it worth it?

Once you've decided which one of those is more important to you, find an architect and builder who have the same values as you, and be clear on your objectives. Spend time researching designs and materials like hempcrete, and keep your floor plan as simple as possible. The more corners you have, the less efficient your home will be.



The Hawea Grove, Hawea.