



***Desert Creek House Inc.***  
802 Desert Creek Road - Numbugga  
BEGA - NSW 2550 - AUSTRALIA

Phone: ++61 (0)2 6492 8498

E-mail: [desertcreek@skymesh.com.au](mailto:desertcreek@skymesh.com.au)

Website: [www.desertcreekhouse.com.au](http://www.desertcreekhouse.com.au)

## **Peace! A warm welcome to Desert Creek House.**

### **What DCH is all about, plus a few practical instructions**

**The main principle at DCH is to be a place of warm hospitality. May your stay be a time of peace and rich deepening! We are aiming to deepen the meaning of community life, where each member is an important part of the whole. A spirit of service and growing community means that each one is invited to take part in all chores: each one is responsible for leaving the place as the next one would hope to find it. We prefer to operate on a system of donations instead of fixed fees (see here below on page 4). Read our pamphlet (the yellow ones on the entrance table). Feel free to take a few of them home and pass them on to those who might be interested in what DCH has to offer.**

#### **1) Meditation and silence**

- We want to centre our life on prayer and meditation, that is, the sacred dimension of life - its deep mystery - is at the core of our practice and sharing. Times of meditation and prayer at DCH are regularly set, in the morning and in the evening (see timetable). You are welcome to participate. You do not need to have had any previous experience in meditation. If you need to, a basic introduction to meditation can be given by us, outside of the set time. Please talk to us about it. Meditation is principally a time when one tries to remain aware of what is, in the present moment. You can try, at the worst you can be bored, but you will survive it! Silence has always something a bit frightening because we do not know what it will bring. We need a bit of courage to dare. It can change one's life. If you do not participate, please respect the practice of others.
- The meditation room is a space for silence (except for the readings from scripture and chanting of the office). You can sit there if you want to be by yourself in silence. Please respect this space of silence and peace: it is a very fragile quality!
- If you take part in a silent retreat, please understand that silence is not the result of an interdiction to speak but on the contrary a space for freedom, for being rooted in yourself and paying attention to what happens in your deepest inner self without the usual social obligation to others. Everything is organised in order to avoid distractions through everybody having easy access to meeting their needs, without having to ask any other person. At mealtimes, we serve ourselves. Please avoid eye contact and whispering. If you need to talk to us, find a way to do so without interfering with the silence of others. It is too precious and rare an opportunity to waste!
- We ourselves are Christian, yet hope to remain open to all traditions. We have received so much from other religions like Judaism or Islam or the Zen tradition of Buddhism. We do not practise an eclectic mix because we are remaining deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. This does and should

not, however, prevent us from being inspired and enriched by what we learned from other paths: Buddha is an inspiring figure, as is John the Baptist, too. For instance, we are inspired by Francis of Assisi and also by the Dalai Lama, and many others. Each religion leads to God. At Desert Creek House, people from other traditions are very welcome. We have a lot to share beyond our differences and being enriched by this diversity. God talks to each one in a different way. Each one is unique. The practice of meditation is an ideal way to share different paths, as it is silent and no concepts or dogmas get in the way.

## 2) Practical and technical aspects

- Please bring your own sheets and towels, if possible (we are on solar and tank water, i.e. there are less possibilities for using the washing machine constantly). In your room, before leaving, put everything back as it was, and clean the room in order to leave it for the next one in the state that you would wish to find it. May be you could clean also the landing or part of the bathroom, or a few windows. All the maintenance is carried out by the users, including ourselves. Yet, our energy is limited!
- In the kitchen you are welcome to help prepare the meals, set the table, clean up after meals. Do not be afraid of opening the cupboards in order to find what you need, as you would do at home. There is no dishwasher: washing up is a time for conviviality.
- If something is broken, doesn't work or is unsuitable, please let us know. Your experience and your impressions are precious because we might not use this space as you do. Your feedback is very welcome!
- We are on solar: there is enough power for use but none for waste. Please try to switch off two lights when you switch on one!! Switch the light off when you go out of a room. No appliance is to be left on standby. It is ok to recharge your phone, but please only for the necessary duration. No appliance producing heat: hair dryer or similar can't be used here.
- We have composting toilets. It is a great way to save water and to keep fertile resources which are usually wasted and mixed with drinking water which then becomes unusable, despite it being an increasingly rare resource. It is better to separate wastes at the source than to mix them and have to treat them with very costly means, not counting the necessary pipe infrastructure. No waste leaves this place excepting packaging and any material that cannot be recycled!
- For using the composting toilet: after use, just throw a quantity of sawdust equal to the quantity of solid matter left behind. Liquid does not need any addition. Please close the lid after use, as it helps the ventilation to run properly. For the same reason, please close the door when you leave the toilet room; the small ventilator cannot cope with strong draughts.
- We are on tank water. Please take short showers and think of others who want also to use hot water. Remember: showers use water (tank), heat (solar) and power (for the pressure pump): three things which are precious and rare. No bathroom is private; they are all to be shared. Feel free to use also the shower on the ground floor of the main house. Please leave them clean after use. When the sun is shining, the water heater is on solar only; when there is not enough hot water, we have to use a gas booster to get the right temperature for the water. In the first case, heat is free and renewable; in the second case, heat is produced out of non-renewable resources. Be then especially careful.
- The basic rule we try and live by is to live in harmony with nature. That means to integrate all our activities into natural cycles. We can only use what does not exhaust nature: water, heat, energy, wood... at the rhythm they are replaced by natural growth.

- Books are available for people staying here. You are welcome to take one into your room. Please put it back when you have finished with it from where you took it, or ask us where it goes on the bookshelf. Books must stay at DCH unless we have been informed and the book borrowed has been entered into the exercise book that is there for this purpose. Many of these books have been donated to DCH. All of them do not necessarily represent what we love the most. We try to offer diversity, food for thought, nourishment and challenge!

### 3) Longer stays at DCH

- If you want to spend some time at DCH, you are most welcome. You can have time by yourself, in silence or not, self-catering or sharing meals with us.
- We like people to stay at DCH to help us carry out major works of maintenance. We have often wwoofers (**willing workers on organic farms**) staying at DCH who are generally young people from overseas, travelling within Australia and who work for DCH against accommodation and food. We enjoy these kinds of exchanges that are based on generosity both ways; they offer a true opportunity for practising community life with people we have not chosen. This, usually, is for all a deep experience of sharing and discovering the other, which can only happen when spending a more prolonged period of time together. If you want to stay for a week or more, you are welcome. You can be involved in helping with the never-ending quantity of work to be done (maintenance, gardening, creation of something new). The stay is of course free, because people offer their time, effort and creativity. What a beautiful donation it is!
- We wish to create a community where members feel linked with one another in their search for meaning and in their spiritual life. We need each other's help to feel supported, to be challenged, to be enriched by diversity, to have the courage to live a different lifestyle because we know life is sacred, much more complex and deep than appears in its outward material dimension. Yet the importance of "incarnation" is an essential part of our discovery. Matter reflects the spirit and makes it visible. No-one alone is free, but one with another we can build a true community of life, a true solidarity and interdependency which reflects the fact that we are all one. This does not necessarily mean that we live together in the same place; but it does mean that we share our path and we feel responsible for one another.
- Each one has particular gifts and interests. You might want to prepare a retreat, a seminar, a concert or an exhibition and use the facilities at DCH for this. Please talk to us if that is the case.
- To enable community to take shape, we have to take care of the links between us. We have to nourish them by spending time together and daring to share what is more personal. Trust is an important dimension of life. It is an antidote to fear and a path to love. Sharing, whether it is on the material or the emotional or on the spiritual level, is the way to discover this form of trust and love. Of course each shares only what they want to and feel comfortable with. There are no indiscrete questions, only indiscrete answers!

**This place is financed only by donations.  
Donations are the only form of income for DCH.**

**We are practising here what is done in some Buddhist monasteries. There is no fixed fee, but donations are being asked for. What you donate when you leave will be used to pay for the stay of some other person who will come after you. In this way, money does not bestow any power to buy what one wants, but is in itself an act of generosity to benefit someone else. Donations make the running of the place possible. It allows people without financial means to participate who would not be able to afford it otherwise. Your generosity is the key for this form of solidarity and growth.**

There are three categories of costs at DCH:

- 1) The costs for the maintenance of the place is about \$6-8'000.- per year (not including new investments nor heavy work of replacement of deteriorated parts): they concern current buildings repairs, road maintenance, paddock slashing, wood cutting. These are constant costs that do not depend on how much the place is being used.
- 2) The costs for consumption of resources: water, power, wood, gas, food, material, etc. used by all of us. These are costs linked with the intensity of attendance.
- 3) The costs for the work involved in maintaining the place and preparing for the retreats or seminars. Most of the work is offered by volunteers or by us. Still, some work must be paid for, like for people working professionally for us: preparing the meals, major repairs or renovations; or for people coming from elsewhere: transport and fees for facilitators of retreats or seminars.

**Example:**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Count the number of days (not incl. nights) you spent at DCH:  | D .....         |
| Count the number of nights (not incl. days) you spent at DCH:  | N .....         |
| Count the number of meals you ate at DCH (incl. breakfasts):   | M .....         |
| Add these 3 numbers and it gives you   | -----           |
| the TOTAL (that is the number of units):   | T .....         |
| Multiply this total number of units by the amount you want   |                 |
| to donate for each of these units (day / night / meal):  | x \$ .....      |
| <b>(if possible between \$10.- and \$20.-/unit... or less or more)</b>                                   | -----           |
| <b>This multiplication gives the TOTAL FOR DONATION:</b>   | <b>\$ .....</b> |
| Example: 1Day + 2Nights + 5Meals = 8 units @ \$10.-/unit = \$80.- (or the same @ \$20.-/unit = \$160.-). |                 |
| <b>This is only an example! Feel free to do as you want.</b>   |                 |

The income needed to run DCH depends of course on how many people take part in seminars and retreats and how frequent these events are. Where a retreat leader is invited from elsewhere, there will be fixed charges accruing due to transport costs, fees and accommodation etc. and these will be divided up by the number of participants and shared.

- The system of donation is not a system which makes it cheaper (because costs are unavoidable). It makes it fairer. Think of what you would pay elsewhere. We try to remain as modest as possible: simplicity is beautiful, especially if basic comfort is ensured; it is the practice for harmony with our environment.
- Any donation is welcome to finance major works of maintenance for the buildings and garden or extensions, acquisition of material, etc.
- Leave your donation in the box near the entrance door. Cheques can be made out to “Desert Creek House”. Donations remain confidential; we do not know who gives what, unless you are the only one to attend.

Desert Creek House Inc. is a not for profit association, officially registered. ABN: 46 686 018 845.

Bank account at Horizon Credit Union:

Name: Desert Creek House. BSB: 802 124. Account number: 10 12 68.