



Cooranbong

Avril Lockton

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

Developed by residents of Cooranbong through the
Cooranbong Sustainable Neighbourhood Initiative

Supported by Lake Macquarie City Council



The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program

The Cooranbong Sustainable Neighbourhood Group

The Cooranbong Sustainable Neighbourhood Group, BETTER Cooranbong (Bringing Everyone Together To Empower Residents), consists of community members that live and work in the Cooranbong neighbourhood area. We are passionate about working with our fellow neighbours to make Cooranbong more sustainable and enhance our community.

We embrace the principles of democracy, inclusiveness, good governance, sound planning and sharing our skills and knowledge. New members are always welcome.

BETTER Cooranbong developed this plan to inspire, empower, and lead our community to a more sustainable future. It contains a range of community driven projects and actions that our community is passionate about and will strive to accomplish.

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to caring for the local environment and making a fair contribution to a sustainable planet. The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program is a bottom up approach which enables communities to develop their own neighbourhood sustainability action plan, implement actions that reduce their neighbourhood footprint, and increase their neighbourhoods overall wellbeing.

Growing a Sustainable Cooranbong – a methodology

In 2009, Council worked with representatives from the Cooranbong Community Services Centre, Cooranbong Chamber of Commerce and Avondale College to develop a Sustainable Neighbourhood Group in Cooranbong. Since then, BETTER Cooranbong has embarked on a range of activities to engage with our neighbours to deepen our understanding of Cooranbong, and discover the passions of Cooranbong residents and the aspirations they have for their community.

Over 200 Cooranbong residents have directly contributed their values, ideas, and energy into developing this plan by participating in a range of activities such as community workshops, information stalls, a community survey, and regular group meetings.

The actions in the plan have been prioritised according to community enthusiasm and their potential to reduce our individual and collective ecological footprint, and increase our neighbourhood's wellbeing.

This plan is a living document, belonging to the Cooranbong community. It will improve and grow as decided by the Cooranbong community, in light of changing knowledge and experience. BETTER Cooranbong, is committed to implementing this plan, and to monitoring and reviewing it annually.

Our Vision for a Sustainable Cooranbong

To preserve and improve the quality of life for Cooranbong residents and their natural environment

We want Cooranbong to be a place where:

- Everyone minimises their use of resources and has a smaller than average ecological footprint, by integrating sustainability into their everyday actions
- All residents are valued and strong community connections are forged to empower residents and improve community wellbeing; and
- Opportunities for our residents to attain skills, abilities, and knowledge are provided, enabling us to take action to achieve our vision.



Cooranbong – Our place

Cooranbong is located on the western side of Lake Macquarie, at the base of the Watagan Mountains



 Cooranbong Sustainable Neighbourhood



Cooranbong - Our Community

Our neighbourhood includes approximately 2,983 people in 1,012 households. Selected statistics from the 2006 Census are shown below

	Cooranbong	Lake Macquarie
A high proportion of people who volunteer	29% volunteers	17% volunteers
A high proportion of couple families with no children	43.7% no children	38.4% no children
A high proportion of people needing assistance with self care	9.9% needing assistance	5.4% needing assistance
A relatively lower average weekly income	\$843.10	\$922.00

The Census data indicates that the Cooranbong community has a very high proportion of residents who volunteer. It also highlights that a significant proportion of our population do not currently have family responsibilities. This combination of social circumstances will increase opportunities for our neighbourhood to work together to achieve goals.

The Census data also highlight that our neighbourhood includes a number of residents who may be at risk of social isolation and disconnection from our community. Many people in Cooranbong are older and need assistance with self-care, and therefore may be isolated from community life and social activities. These groups may have difficulty coping with natural disasters, responding to change, and participating in community life. Over the next ten years, our community will need to embrace these demographic groups to ensure they can participate and engage with community life. Integrating the actions set out in this plan with the wide range of existing services and networks in Cooranbong will help reach these residents.

Our Attitudes to Sustainability

The Community Attitudes Survey highlighted that the Cooranbong community are committed to reducing their ecological footprint, with a majority (>90%) owning a compost bin. Most households (>70%) also have water efficient appliances and fittings; home insulation; and energy efficient appliances. Respondents ranked 'saving money' as the most important motivator to improve their environmental behaviour, closely followed by 'a personal responsibility to do the right thing for the environment'. The most important issues raised by Cooranbong residents included urban development and urban expansion; air pollution; and the need for relevant infrastructure. The ongoing management of waste was also rated as important.

Get involved

Be a part of something positive. Find out about our current projects and activities, and how you can be part of this fantastic initiative.

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Cooranbong Neighbourhood Values

Value 1: 'We care for our community'

Residents of Cooranbong value their peaceful and friendly community. It is a place of natural beauty, with a strong sense of community spirit. Cooranbong residents are prepared to work together to strengthen community ties and maintain a friendly happy community.

Together we will...

- Strengthen community ties by creating opportunities for inclusion of all residents in community activities;
- Take part in civic life and public decision making, particularly on matters that affect our neighbourhood; and
- Support local business and tradespeople, welcome new neighbours and visitors, look out for our older residents and the children of our neighbourhood.

Value 2: 'We love our Environment'

Cooranbong is a place of diverse natural beauty. The neighbourhood contains four of the nine ecosystem types that exist in Lake Macquarie City, including Forest, Woodland, Wetland and Waterways. There are four endangered ecological communities in the Cooranbong Sustainable Neighbourhood area, including Freshwater Wetlands on Coastal Floodplains, Riverflat Eucalyptus Forest on the Coastal Floodplain, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on the Coastal Floodplain.

Cooranbong residents appreciate their surrounding environment and are taking steps to maintain and enhance the ecosystems in their neighbourhood.

Together we will...

- Understand the environmental challenges that may affect our neighbourhood now and in the future; and
- Maintain and enhance our natural assets.

Value 3: 'We are committed to reducing our footprint'

The majority of Cooranbong residents agree that the actions of the average person have a large impact on slowing climate change. Keeping this in mind, we are working towards reducing our ecological footprint and living sustainably. As a community, we can adopt lifestyles that enable us to meet our present needs and maintain a healthy environment for future generations.

Together we will...

- Take personal action to make our households more sustainable with respect to reduced energy, water, and fuel usage, reduced amounts of chemicals used in homes, reduced consumption and generation of waste;
- Become better informed on aspects of sustainable living including green energy, water and waste management, and passive urban design;
- Apply eco-friendly gardening principles to enhance the amenity of our properties; and
- Work together to create a sustainable community.

Value 4: 'We want to be prepared for natural disasters'

The term 'natural disaster' covers a range of effects from natural hazards including bushfires, flooding, drought, severe storms, earthquakes, tsunamis etc. Cooranbong residents have an appropriate level of concern regarding natural disasters, particularly bushfires and severe storms. Residents are committed to preparing for and understanding the risks to their community.

Together we will...

- Understand the risks to our community.
- Learn what we can do as individuals and a community to prepare for natural disasters.

Sustainable Neighbourhood Actions for Cooranbong 2010 – 2020

1. Community Wellbeing

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
Objective 1: To bring people together and maintain the village feeling			
1.1	Participate in the annual Cooranbong Heritage Day with displays for BETTER Cooranbong	BETTER Cooranbong LMCC Cooranbong Chamber of Commerce	Increased awareness of the Sustainable Neighbourhood group and activities that they are undertaking. Support local events which encourage community interaction
1.2	Develop a 'Love Cooranbong' Competition. Invite Cooranbong residents to submit an artwork, photograph or poem expressing why they love Cooranbong	BETTER Cooranbong LMCC Art Lovers Movement	Creating a sense of wellbeing and ownership of Cooranbong
Objective 2: Utilise public spaces and facilities			
1.3	Promote the use of existing footpaths and cycle ways	BETTER Cooranbong Avondale College Cooranbong Gazette	More people using footpaths and cycle ways. Community aware that the footpaths/ cycle ways exist and are accessible to all community members
1.4	Support the Cooranbong Chamber of Commerce to lobby Council for additional pedestrian footpaths and cycle ways	BETTER Cooranbong	Increased pedestrian footpaths and cycle ways in Cooranbong
1.5	Investigate the possibility of starting a walking group using Avondale walking paths	BETTER Cooranbong Avondale College Community Groups in Cooranbong, Cooranbong Retirement Village	Development of a walking group

2. Environmental Health

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
Objective 1: Creating awareness and improving Cooranbong's aquatic environment			
2.1	Lobby Council and appropriate state government agencies to install a fish ladder in Dora Creek	BETTER Cooranbong	Write a letter on behalf of the group lobbying Council and state agencies
2.2	Provide mini workshops (duration 30 mins) to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in Waterwatch 	BETTER Cooranbong	Educate the community on the benefits of the Cooranbong Waterwatch group
2.3	Keep the community up to date on the results of the Cooranbong Waterwatch group	Hunter Central Rivers Waterwatch LMCC BETTER Cooranbong	Submit an editorial to the Cooranbong Gazette on the Waterwatch program and the health of Dora Creek
Objective 2: Creating awareness and improving Cooranbong's terrestrial environment			
2.4	Host a community Information Night on 'Environmental Ecosystems and Values in Cooranbong'	LMCC BETTER Cooranbong Local residents with environmental knowledge	Community come together to speak about the environment in which they live – increased awareness of biodiversity in Cooranbong
2.5	Provide mini workshops (duration 30 mins) to discuss ways to create awareness in Cooranbong's terrestrial environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to create a Native Garden • Techniques for seed propagation • Habitat for Wildlife 	BETTER Cooranbong Local residents with environmental knowledge CEN	Increased community awareness and interest in terrestrial issues
2.6	Support Avondale College to plant native seedling raised on Avondale Campus	BETTER Cooranbong Trees in Newcastle Cooranbong Landcare Retirement Village	Help promote and assist in planting of seedlings during Spring. Increase native plantings in Cooranbong
2.7	Aid Avondale College to build and install nesting boxes for wildlife	BETTER Cooranbong Avondale College	The development and installation of nesting boxes

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
2.8	Host an informative Fauna Spotlight Event in Cooranbong.	BETTER Cooranbong Avondale College	Increased community awareness and interest in local native fauna
2.9	Investigate if there are any areas of public land requiring rehabilitation	Cooranbong Landcare BETTER Cooranbong	Work with Cooranbong Landcare and Council to develop rehabilitation plans for Council land.
2.10	Develop a wetland education campaign	CMA BETTER Cooranbong LMCC	Development of an education program which educates and creates awareness of the values of wetlands, particularly in Cooranbong
Objective 3: To improve air quality in Cooranbong			
2.12	Submit an article to the Cooranbong Gazette on the effects of wood smoke on air pollution	BETTER Cooranbong Cooranbong Gazette LMCC	Article published in the Cooranbong Gazette creating awareness in the community of the effects of wood smoke on air pollution
2.13	Keep up to date on Council's air quality results for Cooranbong	LMCC BETTER Cooranbong	BETTER Cooranbong Group informed of the state of Cooranbong's air quality
2.11	Support wetland rehabilitation at Avondale Campus	BETTER Cooranbong Avondale College	Improved quality of wetland areas within the Campus, contributing to overall wetland health in the area

3. Sustainable Living

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
Objective 1: To promote more sustainable practices to households			
3.1	Provide mini workshops (duration 30 mins) to discuss ways to create a more sustainable home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to save money on your energy bill • How to make your own low cost green cleaning products. • Composting and worm farms • How to create a no-dig vegetable garden • Water tank maintenance 	BETTER Cooranbong	Residents actively work towards reducing their personal ecological footprints through the reduction in energy usage, water usage and consumption.
Objective 2: To become more sustainable as a community			
3.2	Establish a Community Garden	BETTER Cooranbong Landcare Cooranbong	The development of a community garden in Cooranbong
3.3	Investigate the possibility of creating a street-wide vegetable swap.	BETTER Cooranbong	Neighbours sharing resources and reducing 'food miles'
Objective 3: Reduce the amount of litter in Cooranbong			
3.4	Participation in Clean Up Australia Day	Clean Up Australia Day BETTER Cooranbong	Increasing number of participants
3.5	Promote participation in Waste As Art to schools, community groups and the wider Cooranbong Community	BETTER Cooranbong LMCC Cooranbong Gazette	Number of Cooranbong participants
3.6	Submit an article to the Cooranbong Gazette on what you can and can't recycle	BETTER Cooranbong LMCC Cooranbong Gazette	Increased awareness in the community of what you can and cannot recycle

4. Natural Disaster Preparedness

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
Objective 1: Create a community that is aware of how to prepare for and respond to natural disasters			
4.1	Provide mini workshops (duration 30 mins) to discuss how to prepare for Natural Disasters in Cooranbong: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Bushfires • Preparing for Flooding 	BETTER Cooranbong RFS SES LMCC	Increased awareness in the community on how to prepare for and respond to natural disasters
4.2	Encourage residents and businesses to design Emergency Plans for Natural Disasters	BETTER Cooranbong SES	Increase in residents and businesses with Emergency Plans



Cooranbong's Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan is supported by:





Lake Macquarie
City Council