

# SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS Annual Report 2018





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# A message from the Chair

This year has been an exciting one of striving towards a more sustainable future. Sustainable Neighbourhood people, groups and network have engaged in an ever-increasing range of activities that have built greater community spirit, awareness and actions towards protecting and reducing damage to the environment of Lake Macquarie City.

To ensure that we are maintaining our progressive attitude and actions, we undertook, with Council support, a complete review of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program and developed a Strategic Plan for continued growth and effectiveness.

We welcomed the active Five Bays Sustainable Neighbourhood Group with their bold social initiatives on the western side of the Lake.

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance has continued to support local actions through advocacy, coordination, training, promotion, managing funds and assistance with risk management.

We developed significant policies to facilitate the development of community gardens, to allow greater community and individual access and participation, and to use social media effectively.

We facilitated, encouraged and supported the development of City-wide projects and activities, and the 'Go Plastic Free' campaign, to manage the transition from single use plastic bags, and the introduction of Repair Cafes around the Lake both were very successful initiatives.

We are not done and there is so much yet to do, but the Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers' positivity, perseverance and preparedness to act will head us resolutely towards our vision for the City in which we live: 'Neighbourhoods that are empowered to live sustainably'.

Colin Mondy  
Chairperson,  
*Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance*



Neighbourhoods that  
are empowered to live  
sustainably



## Our vision

Neighbourhoods that are empowered to live sustainably

## Our mission

Our work is to foster sustainable neighbourhoods and a healthy environment in Lake Macquarie

## Our objectives

To empower the community to reduce its ecological footprint, protect the natural environment, increase wellbeing and participate in public life and decision-making.

## Our values

We are guided by our values of:

- Participation
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Shared responsibility

## Our actions

reduce resource consumption (energy, water and waste); increase community involvement in protecting and caring for environment and place; increase our capacity to respond effectively to environmental threats; and increase community wellbeing and pride in our local areas.



# Background

Lake Macquarie City Council established the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program in 2008 to empower residents to act on local sustainability issues.

The program supports residents to form neighbourhood groups who develop and implement their individual Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan. The program has achieved a network of active, skilled and supported citizens who make a meaningful contribution to local community life and address local sustainability challenges.

In 2011, a group of Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers established the Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance to provide support to the growing number of members and groups across the City. The Alliance is an incorporated not-for-profit association that provides coordination, governance, resourcing, capacity-building, marketing and communication, and insurance and risk management for and on behalf of the Sustainable Neighbourhood groups across Lake Macquarie City.

Sustainable Neighbourhood groups are organised by volunteers, and financed through grant funding, collaboration and community fundraising. Council continues to provide direct support for the program, including provision of secretariat services and a small amount of operational support.



**Colin Mondy, Chairperson**



**Steve Dewar, Secretary**



**Jean McGarry, Treasurer**

## Our people Board members 2017-18



**Robyn Charlton**



**Gabrielle Clappison**



**Avril Lockton**



**Dot Seiffert**



# Volunteers

Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers are passionate about a range of environmental issues and recognise the importance of community participation and action.

Our volunteers are community leaders, contributing their time and expertise to improve their neighbourhood, care for their place and bring people together.

As of November 2018, there are 265 Alliance members, and 1187 subscribers to our major newsletter.

In the 2017-2018 financial year, we estimate volunteers contributed more than 3300 hours, equivalent to more than \$99,000 to our projects.

3300 volunteer hours  
equivalent to more  
than \$99,000



Cardiff Area



Warners Bay



Greater Charlestown



Five Bays



Valentine



West Wallsend



Toronto Area



Dudley



Pelican Area



Redhead



Rathmines Area



Morisset and Peninsula



Caves Beach-Swansea Area



Cooranbong

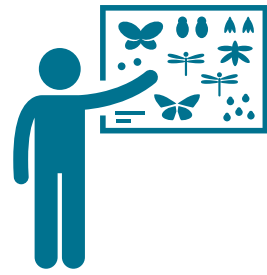
Sustainable  
Neighbourhood  
Groups

# Key projects 2017-2018



**219** events and activities

Repair cafes, sustainable living workshops, clean ups



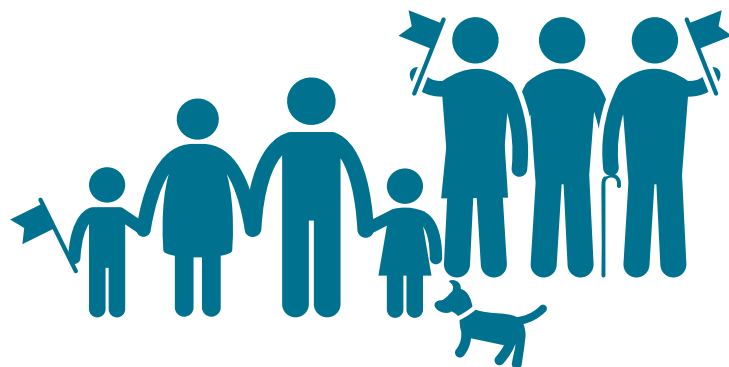
**2** community gardens

at Dudley and Holmesville creating local food production, gardening know-how and community connection



**3** nature play adventures

giving more than 100 children and their parents confidence and inspiration to appreciate our natural spaces



**22** community celebrations and projects

fostering community connection and resilience with more than 1600 people

**preventing plastic pollution and litter**

by implementing behaviour change initiatives



more than **300** people helped to switch to reusable shopping bags



more than **100** coffee cups saved from landfill through the Sustainable Neighbourhoods wash-up station



**Lake Macquarie repair cafe established** and running regular events



more than **400** people learned new skills

at sustainable living, education and skill-sharing workshops including making beeswax wraps, Boomerang Bags, wreaths and insect hotels, or learning about our local environment



more than **600** people saving items from landfill at two car boot sale events





# Case studies

## Nature Play Adventures

We have created a series of nature play workshops to help our community get back to nature, and give parents confidence to take their kids to natural places. Over three workshops children and their families have explored bush skills, fire, Indigenous connections and more. Activities included using whittling utensils, saws, pulleys, ropes, tape and binoculars; face painting with ochre, Indigenous dance, and exploring local natural environments.

Our Nature Play Adventures connect the community with local bushland areas, to aid in its ultimate conservation and protection, while providing childhood development and health outcomes. In the last year, the nature play adventures engaged with over 200 participants.

*"It is important for us adults to stand back and let children explore and discover the freedom to create and challenge themselves".* Niki Buchan, Early Childhood Educator



## Plastic pollution

A number of our campaigns aim to ensure that we, as a community, are avoiding single-use plastics, reusing and recycling where possible, and cleaning up our local environment.

We established regular Boomerang Bag workshops where volunteers have made more than 270 reusable bags from reclaimed fabrics, to be distributed, for free, in the community. We have recently started making reusable produce bags as well.

Our Bag Swap Stations are a unique initiative that provides free reusable bags to shoppers, particularly in small local retail centres. Customers are encouraged to take a reusable bag, when they forget their own, and to bring them back next time.

We engaged with more than 300 people at our education stalls to help shoppers switch to reusable bags and improve recycling and purchasing behaviours.

We regularly run clean-up activities. This year we removed 460kg of litter from our local environment.



# Case studies

## Community gardens

In 2018, we adopted procedures to facilitate community garden projects. In Holmesville, a disused tennis court has been turned into a thriving community hub with a refurbished meeting space and community garden. The group has hosted a range of talks and have established a series of garden beds for community use. This year the group obtained grant funding to build a shelter and seating to further improve the amenity of this increasingly popular site.

At the well-established Dudley Community Garden, monthly working bees and expert gardening talks continue to attract locals and gardening enthusiasts from across the region.

Both community gardens are increasing community wellbeing and connection, and developing a hub for resilience, food security and socialising. We estimate that more than 350 participants have learned about local food production, avoided food waste and participated in our community garden projects.



## Community harmony initiative

Sustainable Neighbourhoods teamed up with Council and other community organisations to create a welcoming event to build community harmony and friendship.

They invited the community to enjoy a picnic on the Toronto foreshore. Families and neighbours brought a picnic dinner and enjoyed a range of games and friendly company. The first Picnic in the Park was a wonderful success with about 110 constant picnic goers, and another 30-40 who ebbed and flowed.

It was lovely to see community members engaging and sharing food together, enabling families from across the Westlakes area to connect as a community.



# Thank you

## Members, volunteers and participants

We would not exist without our volunteers who are working to make Sustainable Neighbourhoods a reality.

Many volunteers regularly go above and beyond to create innovative community projects that are bringing our community together, educating each other about sustainability issues and improving our environment.

We appreciate the time and energy you are contributing and look forward to supporting you to continue to do the excellent work your involved in.

## Grants and funding

- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Hunter Local Land Services
- Keep NSW Beautiful/NSW Environment Protection Agency
- NSW Government Community Building Partnership Program

## Corporate and community partners

- Boomerang Alliance
- Bunnings Belmont and Glendale
- Hunter Water
- Lake Macquarie Business
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Lake Macquarie Landcare
- Upcycle Newcastle and Transition Newcastle
- Women's Shed on the Lake, Boolaroo

## Donors

- Pamper Care donations

## Local partners

We rely on the generosity of our local partners to operate and increase the effectiveness of our programs.

These organisations have assisted us throughout the year by providing meeting venues, networking opportunities and general support for our programs.

- Belmont Wetlands State Park
- The Canopy, Cameron Park Community Centre
- Cardiff Bowling Club
- Cardiff North Public School
- Catalina Conference Centre, Rathmines
- Caves Coastal Bar and Bungalows
- Central Charlestown Leagues Club
- The Church in the Trees, Morisset
- Club Redhead
- Coal Point Progress Association
- Lake Mac Libraries
- Redhead Community Library
- SEEN@Swansea exhibition space
- Teralba Bowling Club
- The Hub, Toronto
- Warners Bay Community Garden
- Warners Bay Sports Club
- Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre

many  
thanks

## How you can help

### Volunteer

We offer a range of roles to help lead and manage our projects. Join our team of friendly volunteers. Volunteer roles vary depending on your availability and interests.

We have regular opportunities to help on an ad hoc basis. For example, helping to set up at a workshop, participating in working bees, letterbox drops, fundraising barbecues, clean-up events, providing morning tea and more.

Specialist roles include media and marketing, bookkeeping, project management, event management, group leadership, advocacy, fundraising, volunteer recruitment and support.

### Participate

Subscribe to our eNewsletter and turn up to our events.

We love to see new faces and helping our community to try new things.

We offer a range of events from sustainability workshops, clean-ups, community gardening, repair cafes, nature play, and social events.

No need to commit to anything, just book in and turn up on the day.

### Share

You can help us reach more people.

Share our eNewsletters, social media posts and event opportunities among your friends, family and community organisations.

### Donate

We welcome donations to support our activities. We are a not-for-profit incorporated association and all funds we receive go directly to our operations and projects.

Donations can be made via direct deposit or by other arrangement. Contact us to find out more.

### Partner

We know community networks are at the heart of a sustainable future. We are keen to collaborate with local businesses, community groups, government organisations, sports clubs, special interest clubs, service organisations and other networks.

Partnering with Sustainable Neighbourhoods can align your organisation with our sustainable ethic, excellent reputation, and enthusiastic and effective community network.



# Looking to the future

Having recently completed the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan 2017-2023, we are looking forward to improving our reach and impact through a process of renewal and growth.

Our Strategy outlines four key strategic objectives:

## Impact

We make a measurable impact on the natural environment and community



## Visibility

Sustainable Neighbourhoods are highly visible and have an extensive public profile



## Volunteer support

We deploy our volunteer time and talents to achieve the best result for the environment and community



## Financial sustainability

We have reliable financial resources to sustain our activities in the long term



## Contact us

Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance



[sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au](https://sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au)



[SustainableNeighbourhoodsLakeMacquarie](https://www.facebook.com/SustainableNeighbourhoodsLakeMacquarie)



[admin@sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au](mailto:admin@sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au)



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# Our finances

## Profit and loss statement, 2017-2018 financial year

	Category	Amount
Income	Bank interest	\$2.37
	Council assistance	\$2938.10
	Fundraising (Pamper Care project)	\$835.00
	Project grants	\$19,317.00
	Local group loan	\$300.00
	<b>Income total</b>	<b>\$23,392.47</b>
Expenditure	Project grants	\$16,026.32
	Insurance	\$2719.37
	Local group loan	\$300.00
	Pamper Care project	\$89.88
	Wash-up station equipment	\$169.58
	<b>Expenditure total</b>	<b>\$19,305.15</b>
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$4087.32</b>

## Project and grant summary to 30 June 2018

	Project income	Project expenditure	Balance 30 June 2018
<b>Alliance/City-wide projects</b>			
Dog brochure - Council Environmental Sustainability Grant 2016 <i>Acquitted 2018</i>	\$946	\$946	\$0.00
Fundraising <i>Various since 2012</i>	\$3326.60	\$316.30	\$3010.30
Insurance 2017-2018 <i>Includes change of policy in April 2018</i>	\$2972.35	\$2923.20	\$49.15
Interest credit <i>Since 2012</i>	\$6.65		\$6.65
Repair Cafe – Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	\$2400	\$386.02	\$2013.98
Wash-up station equipment	\$169.58	\$169.58	\$0.00
<b>Dudley</b>			
Dudley Community Garden – Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	\$3000	\$1997.56	\$1002.44
Nature Play Grant – Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	\$2580	\$1528.78	\$1051.22
<b>Five Bays</b>			
Pamper Care Project - Fundraising donations	\$835	\$89.88	\$745.12
<b>Greater Charlestown</b>			
Flaggy Creek weeds workshop – Local Land Services Grant 2018 <i>Acquitted 2018</i>	\$1548.90	\$1549.40	-\$0.50
<b>Morriset and Peninsula</b>			
Eco Health Expo – Local Land Services Grant	\$2000	\$1940	\$60.00
<b>Pelican Area</b>			
Loan for Bunnings barbecue	\$300	\$300	\$0.00
<b>Rathmines Area</b>			
Rathmines Park – Keep NSW Beautiful Community Litter Grant <i>Final report submitted July 2018.</i>	\$4994	\$4200.03	\$793.97
Local Litter Check – Donation from Keep NSW Beautiful	\$500	\$500	\$0.00
<b>Wangi Area</b>			
Scarecrow competition – Council Event Grant	\$430		\$430.00
<b>Warners Bay Area</b>			
Nature Play Adventure - Local Land Services Grant	\$1000	\$398.82	\$601.18
<b>West Wallsend District</b>			
Holmesville Community Garden seating area – NSW Government Community Building Partnership Program	\$15,425	\$14,952.25	\$472.75
Holmesville Community Garden - Council Environmental Sustainability Grant 2017 <i>Acquitted 2018</i>	\$1856	\$1856	\$0.00
			<b>\$10,236.26</b>





Sustainable Neighbourhoods is an initiative of Lake Macquarie City Council.