



SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS Annual Report 2020



"Sustainable Neighbourhoods is a great way to build relationships with our neighbours and support each other in and outside the group." Jonathan



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"It's the best pick-me-up after work – knowing that I can get together with like-minded people, and that we are doing good in the world."
Katie



Our vision

Neighbourhoods that are empowered to live sustainably.

Objective

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

Mission

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

Values

We are guided by our values of participation, inclusion, collaboration, empowerment and 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 environmental and sustainability issues.

The program supports residents to form neighbourhood groups which develop and implement their individual Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plans. 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 support 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 activities are organised by volunteers and financed through funding from grants, 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.

"Volunteering is like saying Thank you to our neighbours, Council, government, the churches, schools and everyone here. Together we all make it quite a magic place." Greg



A message from the Chair

This year has provided the Alliance and the Sustainable Neighbourhood Network with many challenges. Through drought, bushfires and COVID-19, Sustainable Neighbourhoods has evolved and become stronger and more resilient, leading the way for a more sustainable future across Lake Macquarie City.

As the new Chair of the Alliance, I would like to thank outgoing Chair and Board member, Colin Mondy, for his knowledge, time, and wisdom as one of the original board members. Colin continues his commitment to Sustainable Neighbourhoods through the Redhead Sustainable Neighbourhood Group's bold energy initiatives.

This year we welcomed new members to the Alliance Board – Nico Marcar, Samantha Doove, Mark Howells and Amanda Herrald. Their fresh faces and ideas have assisted the Alliance Board to grow and move effectively through a challenging year.

We are pleased to be working closer with Council on a number of strategies and plans, including the Urban Greening Strategy, enabling the Alliance to progress a sustainable perspective for the future.

The cohesion and the collaboration between groups and individuals has been heartwarming, as our volunteers have embraced new ways of working together with online meetings and training opportunities. City-wide projects have continued with the Repair Café moving across the City, and the reduction of coffee cups and other single use plastics. Waste to Art was another success. We are excited to launch the ReLeaf Lake Mac campaign and are grateful for the social equity program, 'Pamper Care' which assists those doing it tough in the City, particularly while we are in crisis.

To our dedicated and committed volunteers, thank you for your efforts in continuing to assist the people of our City to adopt the Alliance vision of empowering us all to live sustainably.

Robyn Charlton

Chairperson, Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance



Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups

There are 14 Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups located around Lake Macquarie City.

- Cardiff Area
- Caves Beach - Swansea Area
- Cooranbong
- Dudley
- Five Bays (Teralba to Blackalls Park)
- Greater Charlestown
- Morisset and Peninsula
- Pelican Area
- Rathmines Area
- Redhead
- Toronto Area
- Valentine
- Warners Bay Area
- West Wallsend District



"I love that if you have an idea, everyone just supports you to make it happen." Sam



Our people

Our volunteers are community leaders, contributing their time and expertise to improve their neighbourhood, care for their place, and bring people together. Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers are passionate about a range of environmental issues, community participation, and practical action.

As of June 2020, there are 270 Alliance members, and 1437 subscribers to our major e-newsletter.

In the 2019-20 financial year, we estimate our volunteers contributed more than 7020 hours, with a value of more than \$210,690. Our projects and activities reached more than 10,620 people.

Board members 2019-20



Robyn Charlton,
Chairperson



Stephen Dewar,
Secretary



Jean McGarry,
Treasurer



Christine Aus



Gabrielle Clappison



Samantha Doove



Amanda Herrald



Mark Howells



Avril Lockton



Nico Marcar



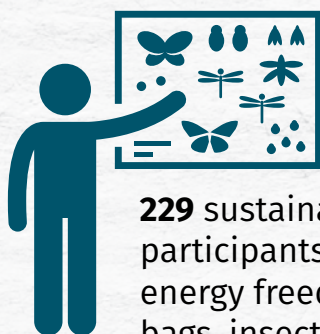
Key projects 2019-20



3 Repair Cafe events with 199 participants.
200 items repaired.



5800 visitors to the Waste to Art exhibition, with **87** artists creating **60** artworks.



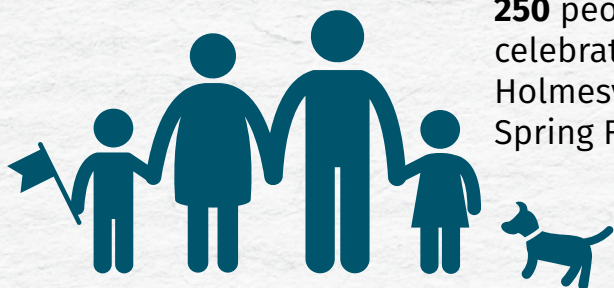
229 sustainable living workshop participants. Topics included: energy freedom, boomerang bags, insect hotels, native bird count, beeswax wraps, waste free Christmas gifts, t-shirt rug, green cleaning, valuing trees.



More than **230** volunteer hours dedicated to advocating for sustainability and community outcomes.



100 people assisted through Pampers Care Project.



250 people celebrating the Holmesville Spring Fair.



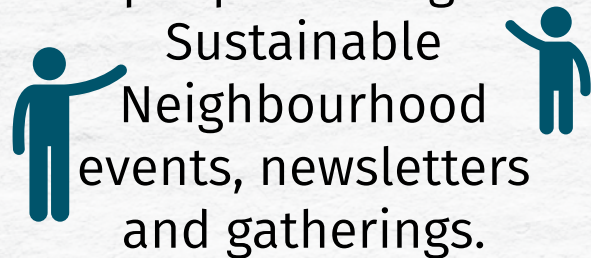
145 people at 2040 film screening



600 reusable cups distributed through 25 Plastic Free Cafes, saving **6000** takeaway cups from landfill.



Supporting each other and working together through over **110** community meetings and capacity building activities.



Reached **12,000** people through Sustainable Neighbourhood events, newsletters and gatherings.



Connecting, informing and educating our community through our **6800** Facebook followers and **2600** email subscribers.



4 community gardens at Charlestown, Dudley, Holmesville and Redhead, creating local food production, gardening know-how and community connection.



2780 people reached through engagement activities such as pop up stalls, bbqs, newsletters and the Toronto Picnic in the Park.

Plastic Free Cafes

With the help of a NSW Government Community Litter Grant, we engaged with 25 local cafes in Warners Bay and Toronto to offer affordable, quality reusable cups to their customers.

The project successfully distributed 600 cups to enthusiastic customers, along with educational materials about switching to reusables. Assuming conservatively, that each cup is used only ten times, we will have saved at least 6000 single use cups from ending up in landfill or littering our local environment.

As covid restrictions ease, we plan to work with café and the community again to reintroduce reusables, including education about contactless coffees.

Pamper Care

The Pamper Care Project has been distributing pantry items and personal care products to disadvantaged community members since 2017, with the support of the Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre.

This year, following the impacts of the summer bushfires, and now as the impacts of the global pandemic are increasing, the need for extra support for those most vulnerable in our community has become even more important.

The Pamper Care Project has attracted generous donations from community members, and has provided direct assistance to over 100 people this year.

Staying connected

As the summer bushfires and then the global pandemic have impacted us all, community connection has become more important than ever. Prior to COVID-19, we connected with 2780 people through social events, education activities and community celebrations.

The Toronto Picnic in the Park, Holmesville Spring Fair, the Redhead Village Newsletter and the Warners Bay Heritage project all built upon community spirit, created personal connections and helped keep our community strong.

We are continuing to enhance our connections through online and small group activities as we embrace the 'new normal' together.



Get involved

Volunteer

Volunteers are an invaluable part of our community and vital to creating a sustainable City. Join our friendly team of more than 270 volunteers. Meet new people who share your passion, gain some work experience or share your knowledge.

We offer a range of roles to suit your availability and interests. You can help irregularly. For example, helping to set up at a workshop, or participating in working bees, letterbox drops, fundraising barbecues or clean-up events, or by providing morning teas.

Specialist roles include: media and marketing, book-keeping, project management, event management, group leadership, advocacy, fundraising, volunteer recruitment and support.

Participate

Subscribe to our e-newsletter and turn up to our events.

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

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

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

"I enjoy the connectedness and sense of contribution I receive from giving back to my community. I have made new friends and am continuing to learn new things. I feel I can make change and that I'm not on my own." Jodie

Share

You can help us reach more people.

Share our e-newsletters, 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

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.



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 give selflessly of their time, skills, knowledge and effort and at times sacrifice 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 the excellent work you are doing.



"We encourage everyone to do a little bit, rather than the work falling on the same people all the time. It's a good way to challenge yourself a bit." Toni

Grants and funding

- Lake Macquarie City Council
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Environment Protection Agency

Corporate and community partners

- Boomerang Alliance
- Bunnings Belmont and Glendale
- Children's University Australasia
- Grill'd Charlestown
- Hunter Water
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Lake Macquarie Landcare
- Neighbour Day
- Niki Buchan Natural Learning
- 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 collaboration opportunities for our programs.

- Belmont Wetlands State Park
- Blacksmiths Primary School
- 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
- Charlestown Pool staff and management
- Club Redhead
- Coal Point Progress Association
- Lake Mac Libraries
- Marks Point Sports Club
- Pelican RSL
- Redhead Community Library
- SEEN@Swansea
- Swansea-Belmont Surf Club
- Teralba Bowling Club
- The Hub, Toronto
- Warners Bay Community Garden
- Warners Bay Sports Club
- Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre



"Our newsletter is a mainstay of community life. It keeps everyone up to date, and delivers important environmental messages." Colin



Our finances

Financial Report 2019-20

Income and expenditure statement, 2019-20 financial year

Opening balance	\$13,704
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Income

Council assistance	3250
Donations	1677
Membership and miscellaneous	133
Nature play activities	800
Project grants	11,290

Total	17,150
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Expenditure

Insurance	3350
Miscellaneous	41
Nature play activities	800
Pamper Care project	812
Project grants	9971

Total	14,974
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Closing balance	\$15,880
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Project funding

Project	Funding source	Project balance 30 June 2019	Income 2019-20	Expenditure 2019-20	Balance 30 June 2020
Alliance and citywide projects					
Fundraising	Various since 2012	3366	133	41	3458
Insurance	Council	0	3250	3250	0
Plastic Free Cafes	NSW Government Community Litter Grant	0	5790	4816	974
Repair Cafe Lake Mac	Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	1864	0	1054	810
Wangi Scarecrow Competition	Council Community Events Grant	430	0	0	430
Cardiff Area					
Cardiff Pollinator Plan	Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	3000	0	195	2805
Dudley					
Dudley Community Garden	Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	700	0	700	0
Nature play	Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	1,051	0	0	1,051
Five Bays					
Pamper Care Project	Community donations	889	1655	812	1,839
Greater Charlestown					
Charlestown Pool Garden	Council Environmental Sustainability Grant	1326	0	1210	215
Rathmines Area					
Rathmines Park Litter Project	Keep NSW Beautiful Community Litter Grant	795	0	795	0
Redhead					
Redhead EnergyWave	Council Community Environment Grant	0	3500	493	3007
Toronto Area					
Community Harmony Initiative	Council Community Event Grant	0	2000	810	1190
Warners Bay Area					
Nature Play Adventure	Payment for service provision and community donations	0	822	800	22



Sustainable Neighbourhoods is an initiative of Lake Macquarie City Council.