

# SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS



## Annual report 2022



Sustainable Neighbourhoods is an initiative of Lake Macquarie City Council

## Contact us

Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance

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## Our vision: Neighbourhoods that are empowered to live sustainably



## 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
- increase community wellbeing and pride in our local areas.

We are guided by our values of participation, inclusion, collaboration, empowerment and shared responsibility.

## 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 that develop and implement their individual Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plans. The program has grown into 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 administrative services and a small amount of operational support.



# A message from the Chair

I was honoured to step into the Chair's role this year and witness the energy, commitment and creativity of our board members and local Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers.

Though the challenges of COVID-19 remain, our members continue to be connected with each other and their communities. This year, the Alliance board welcomed Anna Noon and Mackenzie Robson. We have already benefitted from their fresh ideas, advocacy and project involvement.

The Alliance board has been focused on delivering priority actions in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan, including:

- developing closer ties with Council
- strengthening links with local Sustainable Neighbourhood groups
- commencing the Business Supporters program
- renewing the Belmont Area and Sugar Valley Sustainable Neighbourhood groups
- refining and expanding our citywide projects and collaborations
- increasing our visibility through social media and media promotions
- contributing submissions to Council and other strategies and plans.

A number of Sustainable Neighbourhood projects have made considerable progress this year.

- The ReLeaf Lake Mac team is developing the Tree Trail at the Museum of Art and Culture, yapping. Community greening projects at Blackalls Park and Rathmines are now underway, and substantial planning for the Tiny Forest project is proceeding.
- Our volunteers planted trees at eight locations for National Tree Day and took part in Clean Up Australia.
- Reduce, reuse and waste reduction messages were emphasised at five Repair Cafe sessions, through the Plastic Free Cafes project, a worm farm workshop and three Waste to Art exhibitions.

We have been pleased to influence the development of Council's Urban Greening Strategy, circular economy initiatives, and continue to actively support other key measures to improve the liveability of the city and manage climate change. We continue to collaborate with a range of generous community partners and other groups to strengthen and share our messages.

On behalf of the Alliance board, I give sincere thanks to all of our amazing volunteers and supporters who deliver sustainable living campaigns and projects to communities across the city with great energy and enthusiasm.

**NICO MARCAR**

Chairperson

## 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 environmental issues, community participation and practical action.

As of June 2022, there are 173 Alliance members and 4782 subscribers to our major newsletters.

In the 2021-2022 financial year, we estimate our volunteers contributed more than 4600 hours, equivalent to a contribution<sup>1</sup> of more than \$160,000, or a replacement cost value<sup>2</sup> of more than \$204,000. The economic impact<sup>3</sup> of Sustainable Neighbourhood activities is estimated at \$1.28 million.

## Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups

There are 11 active Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups located across Lake Macquarie City:

- Cardiff Area
- Dudley
- Five Bays (Teralba to Blackalls Park)
- Greater Charlestown
- Pelican Area
- Rathmines Area
- Redhead
- Toronto Area
- Valentine
- Warners Bay Area
- West Wallsend District

## Board members

Nico Marcar, Chairperson  
Stephen Dewar, Secretary  
Jean McGarry, Treasurer  
Robyn Charlton  
Gabrielle Clappison  
Samantha Doove  
Mark Howells  
Anna Noon  
Mackenzie Robson  
Bruce Tozer

1. Equivalent contribution calculated at \$35/hour

2. Volunteer replacement cost calculator, [volunteeringqld.org.au/calculator](http://volunteeringqld.org.au/calculator)

3. REMPLAN impact report, total effect calculation, [remplan.com.au/economy](http://remplan.com.au/economy)



# Sustainable Neighbourhood impact 2021-2022



**576 volunteer hours in community gardens**

creating local food production, know-how and community connection



**49,300 digital reach** through our website, newsletters and social media



**210kg** of household items diverted from landfill by about **40 volunteers** at **5 Repair Cafe events** attended by **341 community members**



**600 reusable coffee cups** distributed through 36 Plastic Free Cafes diverting at least **6000 takeaway cups** from landfill

**\$1.28M in value** delivered to the Lake Mac community

**76 volunteers** at **8 clean up events**



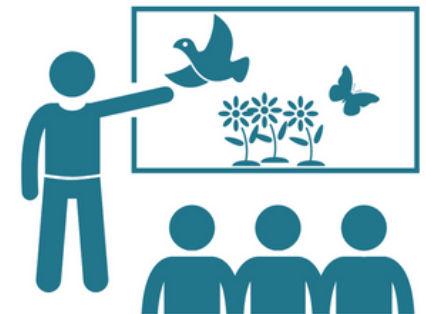
**4000 single use face masks** diverted from landfill



**105 volunteers** planted **620 native plants** to green our city at **8 National Tree Day events**



**1037 visitors** to 2021 **Waste to Art** exhibition with **48 artists** **58 artworks** across **3 locations**



**395 participants** in **6 engagement and education activities**



**811 respondents** to Sustainable Neighbourhood surveys



**advocacy** for sustainability and community

**4600 volunteer hours** in 2021-2022





# Thank you

## Members, volunteers and participants

We would not exist without the hard working volunteers who make Sustainable Neighbourhoods a reality. Many volunteers regularly and selflessly give their time, skills, knowledge and effort to create innovative projects that bring our community together, educate about sustainability issues and improve our environment.

We appreciate the time and energy you contribute and look forward to supporting you to continue the excellent work you are doing.

## Business Supporters

Thank you to our generous Business Supporters who have given direct financial support.

- French for Tuesday
- MCB Business Partners
- Tara Thomas Couples Therapy

## Grants and funding

- Hunter Water
- Lake Macquarie City Council

## Corporate and community partners

- Boomerang Alliance
- Children's University Australasia
- Hunter Community Environment Centre
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Lake Macquarie Landcare
- Neighbour Day

## Donors

- Pamper Care donors
- Plastic Free Cafe reusable cup donors
- Releaf Lake Mac donors



## 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 and networking and collaboration opportunities.

- Blacksmiths Public School
- Cardiff North Public School
- Catalina Conference Centre, Rathmines
- Centennial Coal
- Central Charlestown Leagues Club
- Charlestown East Public School
- Charlestown Wilderness Society
- Clean Up Australia
- Club Redhead
- Coal Point Progress Association
- Dudley Public School
- Glenrock Anglican Parish
- Holmesville Preschool
- Kahibah Post and Store
- Kahibah Public School
- Marks Point Sports Club
- Metrocycles
- Museum of Art and Culture, yapang
- Participating Plastic Free cafes and coffee vans
- Pelican Flat Public School
- Pelican RSL
- Teralba Bowling Club
- The Makers Place
- Three Bears Cafe
- Toronto Action Group
- Toronto Community Centenary Hub
- Toronto Community Garden
- Ultra Tune Toronto
- Upcycle Newcastle
- Various local businesses, Rathmines shops
- Warners Bay Girl Guides
- Women's Shed on the Lake
- Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre
- Yoga Place Cafe, Blacksmiths

# 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 170 volunteers. Meet new people who share your passion, gain 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, 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 newsletter and attend 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, community gardening, repair cafes, nature play and social events. Just book in and turn up on the day.

## Share

You can help us reach more people.

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

## Donate

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

Individual donations can be made via direct deposit or by other arrangement. Contact us to find out more. Local businesses can sign up as a Business Supporter on our website.

## 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, advocacy and other networks.

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

# Financial report

## Income and expenditure statement

Opening balance \$13,785

### Income, \$

Council assistance	3195
Donations	1059
Grants	20,236
Payment for service	1500
<b>Income total</b>	<b>25,990</b>

### Expenditure, \$

Insurance	3195
Pamper Care project	401
Project delivery	8571
Equipment	126
Fundraising	190
<b>Expenditure total</b>	<b>12,484</b>

Closing balance \$27,291



## Project balances 2021-2022

Project	Funding source	Balance 30 June 2021	Income 21-22	Expenditure 21-22	Balance 30 June 2022
Accumulated funds since 2011	Various	3872	0	0	3872
Business Supporters	Business Supporter donations	0	189	190	-1
Insurance	Council assistance	0	3195	3195	0
Plastic Free Cafes	2020-21 project donations	1250	0	1106	144
Plastic Free Coffee Vans	Council Community Environment Grant	0	2923	2765	158
ReLeaf Lake Mac banner	Public donations	0	170	126	44
Repair Cafe	Council Community Environment Grant	660	0	661	-1
Repair Cafe	Council payment for service provision	0	1500	706	794
Tiny Forest	Hunter Water Love Water Grant	0	10,000	0	10,000
Tree Trail at the MAC	Council Community Environment Grant	0	4225	0	4225
Worm farm workshop	Council Community Event Grant	430	0	431	-1
Cardiff Pollinator Project	Council Community Environment Grant	2060	0	1633	427
Dudley Nature Play project	Council Community Environment Grant	1051	0	0	1051
Blackalls Park planting project	Public donations	0	100	133	-33
Pamper Care project	Public donations	1113	600	401	1311
Charlestown Swim Centre Garden	Council Community Environment Grant	116	0	0	116
Styles Point planting project	Council Community Environment Grant	0	3089	0	3,089
Redhead EnergyWave	Council Community Environment Grant	2022	0	1137	886
Community Harmony Initiative	Council Community Event Grant	1190	0	0	1190
Nature Play Adventure	Council payment for service provision	22	0	0	22
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>13,785</b>	<b>25,990</b>	<b>12,484</b>	<b>27,291</b>