

Toronto Area SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN 2012 -2020



OUR VISION

To be proud of our neighbourhood, maintain and improve access to natural beauty and cultural heritage, promote sustainable growth and tourism, and foster a community of environmentally aware and active residents

Developed by the residents of Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay and Toronto through the Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group Initiative with the support of Lake Macquarie City Council.



The Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group

The Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (TASNG) comprises community members who live in and identify closely with the suburbs of Toronto, Carey Bay, Kilaben Bay or Coal Point through work, volunteering, friends, family or other means of connection. The Group is committed to implementing the Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (TASNAP), and to monitoring and reviewing it annually. A participatory democratic process was utilised with the support of Council to coordinate the development of the TASNAP and associated community projects.

Our aim is to support activities associated with the TASNG by:

- Establishing decision-making mechanisms that are inclusive and democratic
- Encouraging neighbourhood representation and participation
- Promoting and supporting Sustainable Neighbourhood projects
- Developing a regular review process of this Plan
- Increasing communication within the community and various community groups
- Encouraging residents to join Council sponsored programs

If you are interested in finding out about our existing projects and activities, becoming involved in any of the actions in this Plan or if you have ideas on how to improve our neighbourhood, the Group would love to hear from you. The TASNG meets monthly at the Coal Point Progress Hall, 197 Skye Point Road, Coal Point from 5pm - 6.30pm.

Contacts

Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Co-ordinating Group consists of an executive committee, Project Team Leaders and members. The Group can be contacted through the Secretary by telephone (02) 4959 1507 or email tasngsecretary@gmail.com.

You can also visit the website <http://coalpointprogress.blogspot.com> or see the Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance <http://www.sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/local-groups.html>

Lake Macquarie City Council contact is the Sustainability Engagement Officer by telephone (02) 4921 0333 or email council@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Awabakal people, the traditional custodians of our neighbourhood.

We pay respects to their elders - past, present and future - for memories, traditions, culture and hopes for this land and for Aboriginal Australia.

As we come together as a community, to plan for the future and wellbeing of our neighbourhood, we remember, that under our roads, homes, sportsgrounds and shops is, and was and always will be, the traditional lands of the Awabakal people.



1. Background

THE LAKE MACQUARIE SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAM

Reducing our ecological footprint neighbourhood by neighbourhood

Through the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program, Lake Macquarie City Council partners with its residents to plan and promote local action, enhance and protect their natural environment, reduce their ecological footprint and increase community connectivity and resilience. The Program enables residents to develop a vision for their neighbourhood, articulate local values, uncover neighbourhood assets and develop a local action plan to address neighbourhood challenges. The Program is about individuals and groups collectively taking responsibility to ensure that their unique environment remains sustainable for future generations.

THE TORONTO AREA SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVE

The Toronto Area is a vibrant community with a history of community action and environmental protection. In September 2010, a group of dedicated residents embraced the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program proposal and worked with Council to conduct a series of community engagement activities within the Toronto community. Further interest from the peninsula communities sparked the expansion of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Area to include Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay as well as Toronto. Engagement activities were designed to elicit content for the development of the Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (TASNAP). This Plan is a living document that will be reviewed and adapted on an annual basis by the Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (TASNG).

ABOUT OUR AREA

The Toronto Area including Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay and Toronto is the traditional land of the Awabakal people. The aborigines called the Toronto foreshore “Dera-bambah” meaning ‘rising ground’ and Toronto was “Pondee” meaning ‘overlooking view’. Kilaben Bay was “Killibinbin” meaning ‘unspotted bright shining’. “Puntei” meaning ‘narrow place, narrow neck of land’ is the name now given to the catchment creek of Coal Point and Carey Bay, (Rev Threlkeld’s dictionary p 84, compiled with the help of Biriban, his aboriginal friend and linguist).

Our area is situated on the north-western side of Lake Macquarie, the largest coastal saltwater lake in Australia – two and a half times the size of Sydney Harbour. The name Toronto was chosen by the Excelsior Land, Investment & Building Co. and Bank Pty Ltd. when it purchased a portion of the original land grant to Reverend Threlkeld that had been used for an aboriginal mission in 1887. By 1906 Toronto was still mainly limited to the triangle formed by Cary Street, The Boulevarde and the railway line. In the 1830s and 1840s the current centre of Toronto was the site of a prosperous farm with a variety of crops and many fruit trees including mulberry. Coal was first mined at Coal Point in 1841 by the Rev Threlkeld. By the late 19th century, ferries were running from Speers Point to Toronto. When the railway was extended to Toronto, a regular ferry service operated to Coal Point and Carey Bay. A steam tramway service linking Toronto to the Fassifern railway station was started in 1891. The subsequent railway service was replaced in 1993 by a connecting bus service. Toronto is considered to be the hub for public transport on the western side of Lake Macquarie.

Known for its natural geographic features, the Toronto Area contains five of the City’s nine ecosystem types including forest, woodland, waterways, wetlands and lake. As is the case with most urban bushland areas, the natural assets of this area are deeply treasured by neighbours but are unfortunately under considerable pressure. These pressures are brought about, for example, by urbanisation, over-development, coal mining in neighbouring communities and lack of awareness of property owners in conservation zones (i.e. garden escapees, logging and clearing of dead and sometimes living trees), thereby destroying valuable habitat.

Our area is characterised by its relaxed and outdoor loving, water-based lifestyle. The Lake foreshore with historic buildings, wetlands, reserves and bushwalking tracks as well as events like the Lake Macquarie Classic Boatfest, Carols by Candlelight and local markets attract a broad range of local, national and international visitors.



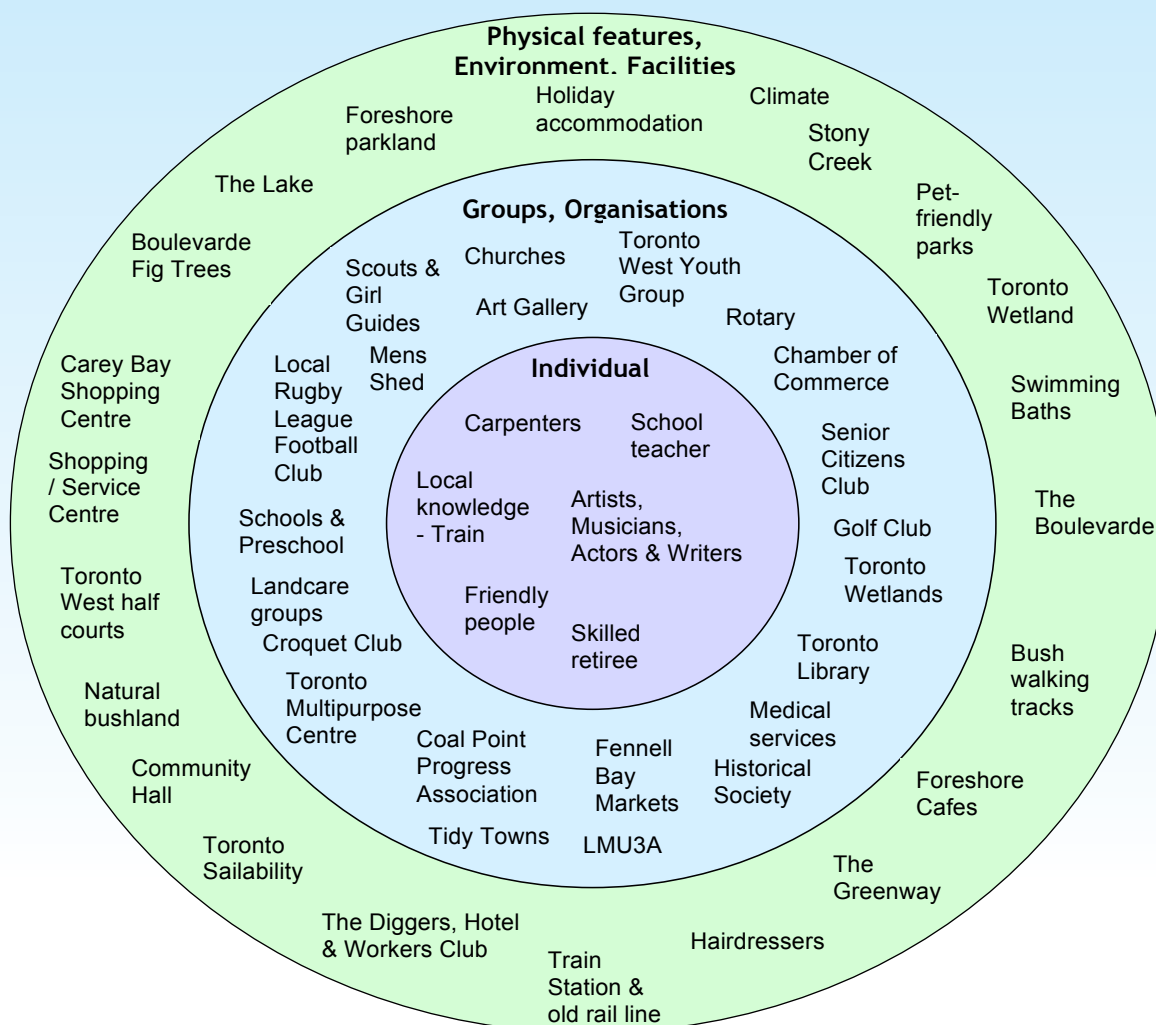
COMMUNITY PROFILE

From the 2006 Census, 9,124 people lived in Toronto, Carey Bay, Kilaben Bay and Coal Point in 3,686 households, with an average of 2.6 people per household. The average age of residents is 45 years, somewhat higher than the Lake Macquarie City average of 40 years. There is a relatively high level of home ownership and a relatively low level of unemployment. The number in the workforce in 2006 was 3,678. The majority of residents in the work force are professionals, and the major industry in the neighbourhood is health care and social assistance.

Our community is populated by citizens who show commitment to their place and have a strong tradition of community action and participation. Toronto was a winner of the 2008 and 2010-11 Tidy Towns Competitions.

TORONTO AREA ASSET MAP

Residents of the Toronto Area developed an asset map that identified local assets, resources, services and skills that can be used to turn the visions of the TASNAP into reality. The TASNG has further details and contact databases that will assist with the implementation of this SNAP. If you know of any other local assets that could be included please contact the TASNG.



2. The Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay and Toronto Sustainable Neighbourhood Area

Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group community projects will be focused within the Toronto, Carey Bay, Kilaben Bay and Coal Point Sustainable Neighbourhood Area shown in Figure 1 (map).

3. Toronto Area Community Vision

To be proud of our neighbourhood, maintain and improve access to natural beauty and cultural heritage, promote sustainable growth and tourism, and foster a community of environmentally aware and active residents

The Toronto Area Community Vision was developed following engagement with residents about community values and needs. Formal engagement between Council and the Toronto Area community began in September 2010 with the objective of forming a Toronto Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and to develop a local Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP). Community engagement has included a Community Attitudes Survey (March 2011), two workshops, meetings and youth activities. Improvement of walking and cycling path infrastructure is seen as the single biggest environmental and social issue for Toronto Area residents.

LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES OF MOST CONCERN TO RESIDENTS AS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE SURVEY WERE

- Protecting and improving the natural environment
- Having access to parks, lake foreshore, bushland and other natural areas
- Improving streetscape and stormwater systems through environmental design
- Reducing waste and energy consumption

RESPONSES FROM THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS FOCUSED AROUND SIX KEY AREAS OF ACTION

- Engaging in sustainable living activities such as community/backyard vegetable and native gardens, cycling and walking
- Protecting and enhancing natural environments including bushland, wildlife and the lake foreshore through initiatives such as Landcare and responsible pet ownership
- Fostering a safe neighbourhood
- Creating more opportunities for community interaction
- Reducing traffic noise, pollution and congestion and increasing sustainable transport accessibility such as public transport and electric vehicles
- Improving community facilities such as footpaths, cycleways, kerb and guttering, bushland tracks and access to public land



Figure 1.
Toronto Sustainable Neighbourhood Area.



TORONTO AREA COMMUNITY VALUES

The residents of the Toronto Area value our:

- Peaceful village atmosphere
- Lake-side culture and healthy outdoor lifestyle
- Magnificent natural environment and rich cultural heritage
- Convenient and diverse range of local services
- Enterprising community people
- Community's potential to keep the Toronto Area a special place
- Ability to make local decisions so that we can provide support for each other

4. Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan 2012 - 2020

The Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (TASNAP) 2012 to 2020 outlines the activities and projects of the Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group (TASNG) to achieve the neighbourhood vision. The Group is committed to realising the neighbourhood vision and strengthening community values through the implementation of these activities.

LIVING SUSTAINABLY

OBJECTIVE 1: Reduce reliance on motorised vehicles by identifying and enhancing safe and efficient connections for walking and cycling and identifying options for more efficient public transport

Actions		Outcomes
1.1	Promote public interest in cycling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify priority locations to make cycling a safer and more efficient experience through cycleway construction and/or better on-road access (e.g. around Coal Point and Toronto)• Identify key impediments to enhanced bicycle usage both for transport (commuting and shopping) and recreation through surveys and other means, and engage with Council to address these constraints• Promote the use of the Toronto to Fassifern Track for recreation and to link with trains• Engage with Council to improve cycleway signage, bicycle rack facilities, adequate lighting and encourage employers to provide showers where appropriate• Engage with Council to educate the public to be more sympathetic to shared use of roads with cyclists• Promote child bicycle education and maintenance• Initiate companion riders for leisure and commuting activities• Promote existing cycling and walking groups	<p>Reduced reliance on motorised vehicles (other than electric bicycles) and, consequently, reduce levels of atmospheric and other pollution (i.e. reduced ecological footprint)</p> <p>Improved health and wellbeing of residents who are able to enjoy the beauty of the natural and built environment of this neighbourhood</p> <p>Increased neighbourhood awareness of issues</p> <p>Better promotion of the use of available and potential pedestrian and cycleways infrastructure</p> <p>More school children encouraged to cycle safely to and from schools thereby relieving traffic congestion</p>



Actions		Outcomes
1.2	Make walking a desirable and safe experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to Council's City footpath strategy consultation to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and formalise public walking tracks and access points in the area and transpose to maps (hard copy and internet) Engage with Council and the community (e.g. Coal Point Progress Association) to seek funding to improve problem areas (e.g. insufficient verge on road along parts of Coal Point and Skye Point Roads, creation of pathways along sections of Brighton Ave, bushland tracks) and to improve signage Investigate better connections of pedestrian pathways and cycleways to bus and train facilities Make tracks safe with user-friendly access 	<p>Neighbourhood awareness and use of available and potential pedestrian and cycleway infrastructure promoted</p> <p>Reduction in energy use and transport costs</p> <p>Increased public safety and health</p> <p>A more friendly neighbourhood because of increased pedestrian activity</p>
1.3	Promote and encourage more efficient and effective transport options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Council, bus companies and community groups to audit and promote public transport use and availability in the area (e.g. greater use of minibuses, better options to transport bicycles on buses and trains) Facilitate a car-pooling project Facilitate and encourage improved access for people with a disability 	<p>Reduced carbon footprint</p> <p>Improved access to various transport options other than cars for more people</p>

OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce waste to landfill and promote recycling for a cleaner environment

Actions		Outcomes
2.1	Reduce the amount of computer components, printer cartridges and mobile phones ending up in landfill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the community including schools and residents on damage done to the environment of inappropriate disposal of computer components Supply containers/information sheet to local businesses, schools and wider community Provide drop-off bins in Toronto CBD to be collected by a local business to re-use/recycle Engage with Council and Chamber of Commerce to apply for funds for the above 	<p>Greater understanding by residents about the inappropriate disposal of computer and related components and increased adoption of recycling through provision of improved and convenient recycling facilities</p> <p>Interaction promoted between Council, business community and residents to achieve increased social benefit and an improved environment</p>



OBJECTIVE 2: Reduce waste to landfill and promote recycling for a cleaner environment

Actions		Outcomes
2.2	<p>Promote more sustainable and environmentally-friendly ways of disposing and recycling of waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit waste generation and recycling rates and promote a Community Waste Challenge to reduce waste Educate the public on what can be recycled and promote the use of own bags and fewer plastic bags Promote waste awareness and encourage reuse and recycle opportunities Engage with Council and Chamber of Commerce to initiate local clean up days and establish a local recycling depot Promote alternative options for general waste, e.g. Waste into Art Community Sculpture and remove offensive graffiti Organise mulching days Initiate a 'How to Recycle' youth project 	<p>Increased neighbourhood awareness, pride and cohesion</p> <p>Reduced waste production and increased recycling and reuse opportunities</p> <p>Youth engagement and community leadership fostered</p> <p>Cleaner foreshore, parklands and playgrounds</p> <p>More residents reuse their garden waste on their gardens with significant reduction of vegetation going to landfill</p>

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase opportunities for localised food production

Actions		Outcomes
3.1	<p>Establish a community garden in the Carey Bay-Toronto area for food production and plant propagation and where residents can come together to share knowledge and skills, socialise and grow food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with the wider community to generate interest Create connections within the community and like-minded groups (e.g. Coal Point Progress Association, Garden Clubs, Senior Citizens) Form a Community Garden committee/working group Engage with Council and potential sponsors to find a suitable site and to seek funds for resources such as tools and plant materials Plan garden layout Establish a demonstration garden at the Coal Point Progress Association Hall Hold regular meetings, tour existing community gardens and support the network of growers 	<p>More residents sharing their gardening experiences, working together and meeting socially in a valued community asset</p> <p>Increased local awareness and interest in community garden activities</p>
3.2	<p>Establish and support a local growers market and encourage seasonal swap of locally-grown food</p>	<p>Reduced need to shop for garden-grown food and lower ecological footprint</p> <p>Residents encouraged to share their knowledge on food production within the region</p>



PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE 4: Protect and enhance natural bushland in reserves and increase awareness of Landcare principles and practices

Actions		Outcomes
4.1	Plan and carry out bush regeneration in reserves in consultation with reserve managers and Lake Macquarie Landcare	Protection and preservation of local native vegetation and increased habitat for local fauna
4.2	Increase community awareness, interest and participation through distribution of information including Council and Community publications (e.g. 'Living on the Edge' and 'The Marvel of Mulch'), and articles in local newsletters (e.g. Coal Point Progress Association) and media	Greater awareness of weed problems and use of appropriate native garden plants and bush regeneration techniques
4.3	Investigate opportunities to increase appropriate signage to identify reserves, their assets and threats	Better community knowledge of reserve qualities and features
4.4	Prepare and distribute a brochure listing reserves and showing an appropriate walking path connecting all of them	More opportunity for the wider community to explore a special environment
4.5	Engage with Council for grant application to undertake and support bush regeneration activities within the community	More residents engaged in local Landcare activities

OBJECTIVE 5: Protect the health of the natural environment to enhance biodiversity values

Actions		Outcomes
5.1	Promote sustainable management of foreshore reserves by supporting any appropriate Council policy for management of dinghies left on reserves	More engagement of people in designing and erecting appropriate management devices and supervision of use
5.2	Audit and evaluate Neighbourhood Risk Management Plans for fire, storm and tsunami. Initiate neighbourhood preparedness education and awareness meetings	Greater neighbourhood awareness and cohesion resulting in safer community
5.3	Plan and initiate native planting days in consultation with the relevant land owners	Healthier foreshore, reserves, parklands and backyards
5.4	Hold habitat for native wildlife workshops with nest box building (birds, microbats, gliders)	Increased awareness of issues by residents More native wildlife in backyards
5.5	Establish health status for Stony Creek and Puntei Creek and increase awareness of adjoining property owners	Healthier waterways Fewer weeds
5.6	Hold workshops on garden escapees and weed control	Less damage by feral animals
5.7	Find out about what can be done to control of feral animals like foxes, feral cats and Indian Mynas	Better chance of survival for native animals



ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND PRIDE

OBJECTIVE 6: Enhance the appearance and atmosphere of our neighbourhood

Actions	Outcomes
<p>6.1 Reduce the incidence of graffiti and encourage alternative appropriate expressions of art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate graffiti removal events that have an intergenerational approach with the whole community working together Report graffiti to the Graffiti Hotline 1800 707 125 (free call) to enable assessment for the removal of graffiti, and promote the Hotline within the community Investigate graffiti removal initiatives undertaken in other neighbourhoods Organise and conduct a community street art program, which engages with the local youth community and establishes a sense of place and ownership: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Organise a mural project with local schools and youth groups Seek grant opportunities 	<p>Wide cross-section of the neighbourhood actively involved in removing graffiti and reporting incidences of graffiti</p> <p>Enhanced capacity for Council to remove graffiti from Council owned assets or public facilities in a timely manner</p> <p>Youth are actively involved in creating colourful and vibrant spaces that celebrates the community and contains appropriate messages</p> <p>Reduced incidences of graffiti</p>
<p>6.2 Organise an anti-littering campaign in the neighbourhood in conjunction with Council and local organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlist the support of programs such as “Don’t be a Tosser” and Clean Up Australia campaigns Seek grant opportunities Liaise with Council to ensure adequate and appropriate rubbish and recycling bins are available in public places 	<p>Residents take greater responsibility for reducing litter in the neighbourhood</p> <p>Cleaner neighbourhood surroundings for residents to enjoy</p>
<p>6.3 Ensure that community groups are well supported and in touch with each other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote a local neighbourhood directory for local groups in consultation with Council, Toronto Chamber of Commerce and Tidy Towns Committee Promote community events through fortnightly Lake Macquarie Interagency e-bulletins Organise and hold an open day as well as attend existing open days and festivals to showcase the groups within the neighbourhood Build connections with relevant community groups throughout the development and implementation of the Action Plan to work collaboratively and share appropriate resources Conduct regular Sustainable Neighbourhood Group meetings and promote through a range of channels (e.g. library e-newsletter) Liaise with Council and community organisations to improve the streetscape of the Toronto CBD Advertise and promote community activities through community and school newsletters and networks (e.g. Live Out Loud magazine, Coal Point Chronicle) 	<p>Residents are aware of and engage with local groups and community services to achieve common outcomes</p> <p>A strong relationship is established between the Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and other local community groups</p> <p>Local neighbourhood projects are developed and supported</p> <p>The community is empowered to express their views and participate in planning and decision-making in their local community</p> <p>The Toronto CBD is a thriving, livelier and cleaner business and community centre with local businesses and trades well supported</p> <p>Avenues for the community to promote local events and activities</p> <p>Residents are able to stay in touch with their community and find ways of meeting people with similar interests</p> <p>Avenues to provide residents with locally relevant information on a variety of issues including the environment and sustainability</p>





Actions		Outcomes
6.4	Support our community's young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a voice for young people in the neighbourhood • Find ways to engage with young people from local schools • Develop ways for young people to develop ideas and projects that they are interested in and are able to express some ownership • Engage with the Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council (LMYAC) to advocate on youth related issues in the area • Promote young people for inclusion in the LMYAC 	Stronger involvement and engagement by young people in the neighbourhood and recognition of their potential as future leaders in the community
6.5	Enhance understanding of our community's history <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a project to record local history and create signage and landmarks to recognise historical, cultural and environmental aspects of the neighbourhood through liaison with the Lake Macquarie and District Historical Society and the Lake Macquarie City Library • Build relationships with the local indigenous community to improve understanding of local indigenous history and culture 	<p>Better appreciation, understanding and care by residents about their natural and cultural environment</p> <p>Increased understanding and appreciation of indigenous culture and social history and improved relationships with the indigenous community</p>
6.6	Look into the feasibility of working with Council and community groups to create way-finding signage throughout the neighbourhood	Residents are able to navigate the community easily, safely and leisurely
6.7	Liaise with Council and community organisations for the upkeep of community facilities, parklands and reserves (see also Objective 4)	Residents are able to use community facilities, parklands and reserves safely
6.8	Enhance playground facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the use of playgrounds within the neighbourhood and report misuse or other issues to Council • Promote the creation of playground facilities for toddlers and preschool children within the neighbourhood 	Safer and wider use of playground facilities for children of all ages





Acknowledgements

The Toronto Area Sustainable Neighbourhood Group wishes to sincerely thank all those people who have been involved in the Sustainable Neighbourhood process in Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay and Toronto to date. Thanks are also extended to Lake Macquarie City Council and its Engagement Officers, Coal Point Public School, Coal Point Progress Association, Lake Macquarie and District Historical Society, Toronto Chamber of Commerce, Toronto High School, Toronto Tidy Towns and Toronto Diggers Club.

The knowledge, assistance and support of the community have been essential to the success of this Program and we look forward to continuing this journey with you all into the future.

Acknowledgement is gratefully made to the following for access to illustrative materials used in this and other publications of the TASN Group.

Margaret Berghofer of the Lake Macquarie and District Historical Society Inc.

University of Newcastle Cultural Collection.

LMCC Historical Photo Collection.

Some material in this publication has been used from Valentine SNAP - A Vision for Valentine (2011) and the Woodrising, Booragul and Marmong Point SNAP.

Special thanks to John Gill and Nico Marcar who with the assistance of Lake Macquarie City Council staff and the TASNG, prepared this SNAP for the Toronto Area Neighbourhood.

©Recycled Paper

Acronyms

LMCC Lake Macquarie City Council

The Alliance Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance

SNAP Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

TASNG Toronto Area (Carey Bay, Coal Point, Kilaben Bay and Toronto) Sustainable Neighbourhood Group

CPPA Coal Point Progress Association

