



Swansea

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP)

Developed by residents of Swansea through the
Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Initiative

Supported by Lake Macquarie City Council
October 2011



The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program

The Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group

The Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group consists of community members who live and work in the Swansea neighbourhood area. We are passionate about working with our fellow neighbours to make Swansea more sustainable and enhance our community.

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

The Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group 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 happy sustainable planet. The Sustainable Neighbourhood Program is a bottom up approach which enables communities to develop the own neighbourhood sustainability action plan, implement actions that reduce their neighbourhood footprint, and increase their neighbourhood well being.

Growing a Sustainable Swansea – a methodology

In 2009, Council joined forces with the Swansea Advisory Committee to develop a Sustainable Neighbourhood Group in Swansea. Since then, we have embarked on a range of activities to engage our neighbours, deepen our understanding of Swansea and discover what Swansea residents are passionate about.

Over 300 Swansea 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.

Actions 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 Swansea community. It will improve and grow as decided by the Swansea community, and in light of changing knowledge and experience. The Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group is committed to implementing this plan, and to monitor and review it annually.

Our Vision for a Sustainable Swansea

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

We want Swansea 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.

Swansea Neighbourhood Values

Value 1: 'We care for our community'

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

Value 2: 'We are committed to reducing litter in our community'

Litter is not only an aesthetic problem for Swansea, but can also cause a wide range of environmental and health issues. Common litter items include small pieces of paper and plastic, fast food packaging, cigarette butts, food scraps, plastic bags and bottles. Litter can also include syringes, broken bottles, and toxic waste. Swansea residents are committed to reducing litter in their community, and maintaining a safe and beautiful place to live.

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

More than half of the Swansea residents surveyed agreed 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.

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. Swansea residents have an appropriate level of concern regarding natural disasters, particularly flooding and severe storms. Residents are committed to preparing for, and understanding, the risks to their community.

Value 5: 'We want to protect our community from sea level rise'

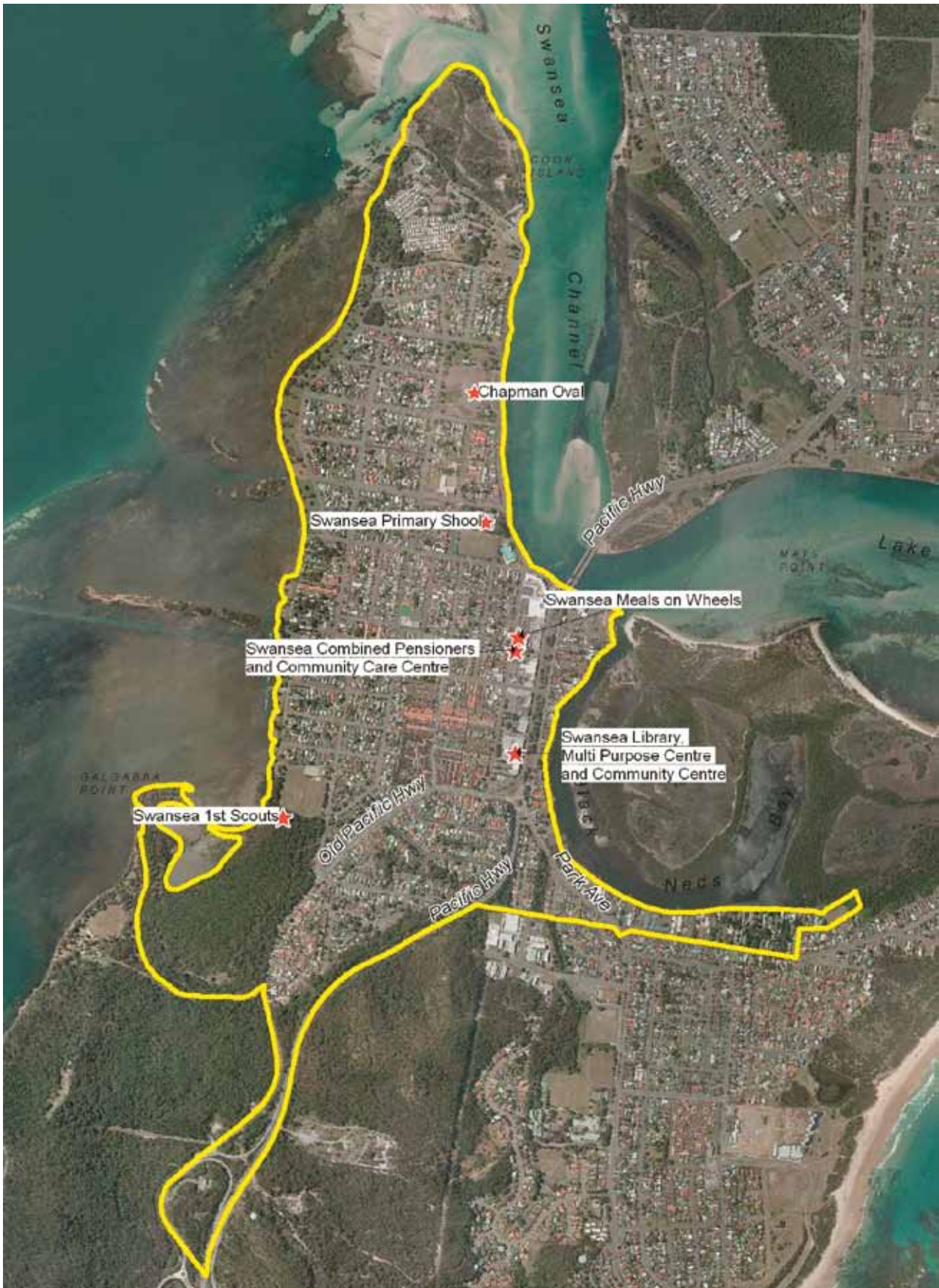
Scientists predict global sea levels will almost certainly rise by 0.59 metres by the end of this century. Further studies have also shown that levels on the east coast of Australia are likely to be higher than global averages, making a total predicted sea level rise of 0.91 metres by 2100.

As the ocean levels rise, Lake Macquarie will rise by roughly the same amount, so by 2100 the lake could be nearly one metre higher than it is now. If sea levels increase and the lake rises, then lake flood levels will also rise. Floods will not only be higher, but will probably occur more frequently due to a predicted increase in the frequency and intensity of storms.

In response to growing community concerns about climate change, Swansea SN Group has developed actions towards understanding and preparing for sea level rise in Swansea.

Swansea - Our Place

Swansea is located in the Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia, at the southern entrance of Lake Macquarie (see map). Swansea is located on the eastern shores of Lake Macquarie on the shores of Swansea Channel, the only waterway connecting Lake Macquarie to the Pacific Ocean.



Swansea - Our Community

Our neighbourhood includes approximately 4639 people in 1994 households. Selected statistics from the 2006 Census are shown below.

	Swansea	Lake Macquarie
A relatively older population	Median age 48	Median age 40
A high proportion of people living alone	35% in one person household	23% in one person household
A high proportion of people needing assistance with self care	9% needing assistance	5.4% needing assistance
A relatively high proportion of single parent families	21% of families	17% of families
A very high proportion of unemployment	13.3% of residents	6.7% of residents

The Census data highlights some opportunities to engage and care for our community.

Our neighbourhood includes a number of residents who may be at risk of social isolation and disengagement from our community. Many people in Swansea live by themselves, are older, 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 Swansea, will help to reach these residents.

The relatively large proportion of unemployed residents in Swansea may be the result of various factors.

The Sustainable Neighbourhoods initiative can provide an avenue to support these residents to connect and feel welcome in Swansea, reducing the potential risk of social isolation.

Our Attitudes to Sustainability

The Community Attitudes Survey highlighted the Swansea community is good at recycling (82%), and most (>80%) have water efficient appliances and fittings; insulation; and energy efficient appliances. The survey also indicates that Swansea residents are committed to take part in neighbourhood clean ups (73%), community picnics with information displays and children's activities (60%), and monitoring the health of the local environment (60%).

The most important issues raised by Swansea residents included littering, rising sea levels and air pollution. The quality of the lake and natural disasters were 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.

Robert Hughes	Chairperson, Swansea Sustainable Neighbourhood Group	0434 197 060
Emma Dawes	Sustainability Engagement Officer, Lake Macquarie City Council	02 4921 0126 edawes@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Sustainable Neighbourhood Actions for Swansea 2010 - 2020

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Objective 1 - To maintain positive community connections and wellbeing for all residents

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
1.1	Allow members of the community to feel involved in local activities and meet their neighbours through workshops, actions and media.	Local Swansea Community Groups Swansea SN Group Pelican Itch	Number of participants at workshops
1.2	Host a community picnic with displays for Swansea SN Group	Swansea SN Group	Number of participants
1.3	Keep the community informed about the progress of redevelopment of the Chapman Oval and allow local residents to provide feedback to the group about problems and their solutions.	Swansea SN Group LMCC Swansea Advisory Committee	Swansea SN Group members from the Swansea North area to listen to concerns of local residents and provide information to the co-ordinators group as it unfolds. Group also to let residents know of developments as they occur.
1.4	Investigate the possibility of developing a walking group along Swansea foreshore area	Swansea SN Group Swansea Community Groups Pelican Itch	Development of a walking group with interested Swansea residents
1.5	Promote and participate in the Swansea 2281 Day and local markets	Swansea SN Group	Swansea SN Group attendance at the expo.
1.6	Aid and support local community groups in Swansea	Swansea SN Group	Stronger connections in the Swansea community

Objective 2: To reconnect residents with their natural environment

1.7	Aid and support local Landcare groups in Swansea	Swansea SN Group	Develop stronger connections to Landcare groups in the area
1.8	Ask local businesses to sponsor an 'apartment' of nesting boxes for native fauna. Boxes to be installed in parks, schools, retirement homes etc.	Swansea SN Group Men's Shed Local businesses Local Schools	Nesting boxes installed
1.9	Raise awareness of: noxious weeds, important local flora and fauna and marine life	Swansea SN Group Swansea Landcare Groups	Increased awareness of locally important natural environments
1.10	Host a workshop on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native gardening • Backyard habits 	Swansea SN Group Swansea Landcare Groups	Increased awareness of backyard sustainability
1.11	Raise awareness for Swansea's important ecological communities	Swansea SN Group Swansea Landcare Groups OCCI	Increase awareness and appreciation of Swansea's local ecological communities

LITTER REDUCTION

Objective 1 - Increase the awareness of littering in Swansea

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
2.1	Provide the stickers for car – Don't be a Tosser	LMCC Swansea SN Group	Number of participants that take the stickers at events
2.2	Provide a newsletter article promoting Clean up Days including Clean Up Australia Day, International Clean up Day, and problems arising from litter (injured sea birds)	LMCC Swansea SN Group	Articles promoted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelican Itch Community Newsletter • Swansea SN Group Facebook Page • Swansea SN Group website
2.3	Promote the importance of Swansea as a habitat for local and migratory sea birds. Allow residents to understand that litter, especially discarded plastic, hooks and fishing line, can kill and injure sea birds and their young.	Swansea SN Group LMCC Fishing Outlets Fishing groups Pelican Itch	Photography competition for local sea birds
2.4	Conduct a survey to identify the main sources of litter, to help reduce at source and to aid in targeted education programs	Swansea SN Group	Results identifying the main sources of litter in Swansea
2.5	Involve school children in developing an anti littering campaign. Primary school children asked to develop anti littering posters to be made into signs to be put in the parks	Swansea SN Group LMCC Lake Macquarie Primary Schools	Keep Your Backyard Clean student sign competition. Development of anti littering signs designed by primary school children – creating awareness and ownership around littering issues.

Objective 2: Reduce the amount of litter in Swansea

2.6	Host a site for Clean Up Australia Day	LMCC Clean up Australia community groups of Swansea Swansea SN Group	Increasing number of residents participating
2.7	Host a site Clean Up Swansea Day	LMCC Swansea SN Group	Increasing number of residents participating
2.8	Work with Swansea McDonalds to develop a plan of action to reduce litter in Swansea	Swansea SN Group Swansea McDonalds	Development of a working program between Swansea SN Group and Swansea McDonalds
2.9	Lobby Council to pick up public bins more often especially in peak times	Swansea SN Group	Bins collected more frequently in high peak times
2.10	Lobby Council to have rangers patrol more often	Swansea SN Group	Rangers patrolling Swansea more frequently

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Objective 1: Promote more sustainable practises to households

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
3.1	Plan for a Swansea Community Garden.	Swansea SN Group Men's Shed Existing gardens Local gardeners	Discussions with Council regarding the process.
3.2	Host mini workshops on Sustainable Living Practices (Energy saving, Solar Energy, Green Cleaning, Alternative transport, vegetable gardens for rental properties and units)	Swansea SN Group Solar Energy providers	Increasing number of residents participating
3.3	Promote and participate in the Lake Macquarie Living Smart Festival.	Swansea SN Group	Swansea SN Group attendance at the expo. Number of participants.
3.4	Keep up to date with government subsidies on rainwater tanks, energy efficient appliances, solar hot water systems etc and bulk rate uptake for these devices	Swansea SN Group LMCC State Government Federal Government	Discuss with relevant agencies/ government bodies
3.5	Produce an article to promote awareness of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government subsidies • Sustainable practises • Protection of Swansea's natural environment • Noxious weeds • Swansea's bike tracks • Carpooling 	Swansea SN Group LMCC	Articles promoted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelican Itch Community Newsletter • Swansea SN Group Facebook • Swansea SN Group website
3.6	Lobby Council to develop a cycleway around Swansea peninsula and through Coon Island	Swansea SN Group LMCC State Government SAC	Development of a bike path around Swansea peninsula and through Coon Island

Objective 2: Promote more sustainable practices to businesses and schools

3.7	Promote the use of recycling bins to Swansea businesses	LMCC Swansea SN Group Chamber of Commerce	Increase in recycling bin uptake in Swansea
3.8	Promote sustainability practices to Swansea schools.	Swansea SN Group	Schools participate in sustainability programs
3.9	Run vacation programs during the school holidays with the Swansea Community Cottage, to promote sustainability actions with school children. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colouring in competition (sustainability focus) • Waste as Art • Hands on gardening 	Swansea SN Group Swansea Community Cottage LMCC	Number of children participating

NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Objective 1: Reduce the risk of harm to the community during natural disasters

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
4.1	Hold an Emergency Preparedness Workshop for the community	Swansea SN Group LMCC Police SES	Number of participants Emergency / evacuation procedures well publicised and understood by community
4.2	Develop a Fridge magnet for Swansea residents that provides information about what to do in an emergency	Swansea SN Group LMCC	Fridge magnet sent to all residents of Swansea
4.3	Put together a display for Swansea Library of an example emergency pack	Swansea SN Group LMCC	Display in Library Participants visiting the display
4.4	Promote awareness of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home flood proofing advice • Damage caused by driving on flooded roads • Promoting the Early Warning Network 	Swansea SN Group SES	Articles promoted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelican Itch Community Newsletter • Swansea SN Group Facebook Page • Swansea SN Group website
4.5	Promote volunteering for SES so locals can be trained in emergency procedures	Swansea SN Group SES	Increase in SES volunteers from Swansea
4.6	Encourage residents and businesses to design Emergency Plans for Natural Disasters	Swansea SN Group SES	Increase in residents and businesses with emergency plans

Objective 2: Increase the recovery time and lower the recovery costs after natural disasters

4.7	Organise a volunteers register for helping others after a natural disaster	Swansea SN Group LMCC	Number of participants on register
4.8	Promote those who help after events e.g. (DoCs)	Swansea SN Group LMCC DoC's	Articles promoted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelican Itch Community Newsletter • Swansea SN Group Facebook Page • Swansea SN Group website

SEA LEVEL RISE

Objective 1: Gain a better understanding of how future flood events will affect the built and natural environments

Action Number	Actions	Resources	Outcomes
5.1	Produce an article to promote awareness of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Council guidelines (development restrictions that may affect properties now and in the future) • Impacts of Sea Level Rise on insurance • Results from the Stakeholders and Consultants meeting (see 1.2) 	LMCC Swansea SN Group	Articles promoted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelican Itch Community Newsletter • Swansea SN Group Facebook Page • Swansea SN Group website
5.2	Host Stakeholders and Consultants meetings (including Telstra, Hunter Water, RTA, and power companies) to investigate what service providers plan to do about Sea Level Rise in Swansea.	Swansea SN Group LMCC Telstra RTA Energy Australia Origin Energy Hunter Water	Attendance of service providers at the meeting.
5.3	Host a Workshop on the Impacts of Sea Level Rise on insurance	Swansea SN Group LMCC Insurance Council of Australia	Attendance at the workshop
5.4	Maintain the community's interest in combating climate change by providing positive stories and achievements in the Pelican Itch, Swansea SN Group Facebook page, and Swansea SN Group website	Swansea SN Group LMCC DECCW Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency	Number of educational items

Objective 2: Reduce the impact of flooding and storm surge on the built and natural environments

5.5	Lobby LMCC, State Government and Federal Government to improve hard engineering works to prevent damage to the built and natural environment during flooding, storm surge/ king tides and eventually sea level rise	LMCC State Government Federal Government	Information gathered from all relevant government agencies and private enterprises that provide important community infrastructure to better understand the long term impacts. Installation of hard engineering works
5.6	Question Council about effects of dredging on flooding, flood release times and possible foreshore stabilisation use to report to Swansea SN Group for future action planning.	LMCC Swansea SN Group	Increased knowledge. Organise a speaker from LMCC to attend a Swansea SN Group meeting
5.7	Lobby Council to install one-way flow flaps at stormwater drains into the lake	Swansea SN Group LMCC	Installation of one-way flow flaps or similar





Lake Macquarie
City Council