



GEELONG
SUSTAINABILITY

**Annual Report
2016**



Launch of the Sustainability Directory second edition

Geelong Sustainability Group Inc
Annual Report 2016



Our Mission

is to inform, inspire and connect communities to create a sustainable future and to protect our natural environment.



Vision



Zero carbon

Making buildings more energy efficient and delivering all energy with renewable technologies.



Zero waste

Reducing waste, reusing where possible, and ultimately sending zero waste to landfill.



Sustainable water

Using water more efficiently in buildings and in the products we buy; tackling local flooding and water course pollution.



Land use and wildlife

Protecting and restoring biodiversity and natural habitats through appropriate land use and integration into the built environment.



Sustainable transport

Encouraging low carbon modes of transport to reduce emissions, reducing the need to travel.



Culture and community

Reviving local identity and wisdom; supporting and participating in the arts.



Sustainable materials

Using sustainable healthy products, with low embodied energy, sourced locally, made from renewable or waste resources.



Equity and local economy

Creating bioregional economies that support fair employment, inclusive communities and international fair trade.



Local and sustainable food

Choosing low impact, local, seasonal and organic diets and reducing food waste.



Health and happiness

Encouraging active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and well being.

Our vision is for a world in which people everywhere can enjoy happy, healthy lives within the natural limits of the planet and in harmonious co-existence with wildlife and wilderness.

We only have one planet! Which is why we have adopted the internationally recognised benchmark for sustainability - the *One Planet Living* framework.



Geelong Sustainability Committee 2016

Back from left: Tim Adams, Vicki Perrett (Treasurer), Noreen Nicholson (Vice-President), Chris McGrath,
Front: Dan Cowdell (President), Alan Barlee, Margaret Peart, Vivienne Burke (Secretary) and Mik Aidt



A vital voice for the future

President's Report 2016

By Dan Cowdell

Geelong Sustainability has continued to inform, inspire, and connect our community throughout 2016. Our events and activities have showcased sustainable living at its best and engaged with thousands of residents across Geelong. This year has been a coming of age for the group reaching several significant milestones and truly establishing us as Geelong's leading sustainability organisation and a vital voice for the future of our region.

We ended 2015 with a major event, the inaugural Act on Climate Festival. This community festival empowered people to act on climate change to build

a better, safer, future for us all. The festival featured something for everyone with opening night keynote presentations, a market day at Eastern Beach and a film screening of *This Changes Everything*.

2016 began with the delightful Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia and the Sustainable Living Festival. We held stalls at the Night Jar Market and Pako Festa, where we joined the parade with Costa! Future Proofing Geelong wrapped up the Sustainable Living Festival with its Green Carpet Awards where Geelong Sustainability was recognised with four awards:

- Volunteer of the Year –

Mik Aidt and Tony Gleeson for the Sustainable Hour

- The Innovation Award – Vicki Perrett for Greener Living at the Geelong Show
- The LCGP Emissions Reduction Award – Dan Cowdell for the Act on Climate Festival
- The People's Choice Award – Vicki Perrett and Vivienne Burke for the Sustainability Directory Second Edition

Green Drinks was once again a monthly highlight, bringing our community together and engaging us with a wide range of topics drawn from the One Planet Living principles. Attendances were consistently 60+ with local food once again proving to be of vital interest in April with the Food Fair drawing a record



Dan Cowdell October 2016

crowd of 110 people. This year saw the launch of our New Website in a project that was over a year in the making and completed entirely by volunteer effort. The website now features all new content, living greener resources, a showcase of our projects and events, and represents a giant leap forward in technology with mobile optimisation and social media integration.

Renewable Energy remained a focus area for the Geelong Sustainability throughout 2016. Our community renewables crowd funding campaign in partnership with The People's Solar successfully raised \$13,000 and a 9.25KW solar PV system was installed in May 2016 on the roof of the South Geelong Primary School.

Our Community Owned Renewable Energy (CORE) Geelong task group has continued to make huge advances towards establishing a community solar investment project for

Geelong. The task group has worked diligently to investigate models, find potential host sites and muster community support for Geelong's first community energy project. A tour of the Hepburn Wind farm proved both inspirational and enlightening.

In September 2016 Geelong Sustainability received a \$48,000 grant through the New Energy Jobs Fund to conduct a scoping study for the CORE Geelong business case. The grant has provided vital capacity to undertake strong and diverse community and stakeholder engagement, to identify potential host sites around Geelong for future projects and to develop our community solar financing model.

Geelong Sustainability hosted its eighth Sustainable House Day in October 2016. This significant major event saw 1,900 visits to 14 open houses. Natalie and I opened our own home in Armstrong Creek this year and found it to be an extremely rewarding ex-

perience. Visitors showed a genuine thirst for knowledge and we felt the event helped many people make smarter choices for sustainable living at home.

This year Geelong Sustainability resolved to engage more effectively with key business and government stakeholders in the region. We are now members of the G21 Geelong Region Alliance and the Geelong Chamber of Commerce. We have committee representatives on the G21 Environment Pillar and the Barwon Water Environmental Consultative Committee. We have also partnered with the City of Greater Geelong on the Our Future project and we are founding partners of the Victorian Government's TAKE2 collective climate change pledge.

Geelong Sustainability is now the official sponsor of The Sustainable Hour on 94.7 The Pulse, every Wednesday at 11am and you'll hear our promotional jingle often on the radio station. We became a

Registered Environmental Organisation in May 2016 with *Deductible Gift Recipient Status* (DGR) and can now accept tax deductible donations to assist us with our work. We are keenly awaiting news of our application to become a charity.

Of course none of this would have been possible without our wonderful committee members, financial members, volunteers and supporters. Each committee member has dedicated countless hours towards our events, activities and projects. Strong leadership from the executive

committee has elevated Geelong Sustainability to a position of change maker in the Geelong community. Our financial members and volunteers have given us fantastic support throughout the year, truly getting behind all of our initiatives. I congratulate and thank you all.

This year was my last as President having stepped down to take on the Project Coordinator position for the CORE Geelong scoping study. It's an absolute privilege to be able to work for Geelong Sustainability and especially on a community

renewables project that has so many environmental and community benefits.

Being part of the committee over the past three years has been an incredibly rewarding experience and I've truly enjoyed my time as President. The work this group does and will continue to do is quite inspiring.

I'd like to wish our next President and the 2017 Committee all the best and I look forward to watching the next exciting chapter of Geelong Sustainability unfold.

**The inspirational Costa Georgiadis
at Pako Festa** February 2016



Photo by Phil Hines

Green Drinks – our monthly connection point

Green Drinks is a great way to learn about what's new and happening in our region and to connect with others working in the sustainability sector.

Green Drinks provides a relaxed setting where anyone interested in being part of Geelong's transition to a cleaner, greener economy can join us after work to find out what's happening locally and beyond.

We present a diverse program across the year with keynote speakers and informative presentations focused on key sustainability themes like Energy, Waste, Environment, Food, Water, Housing and Community.

During 2016, Green Drinks

hosted the stunning film *Melbourne Down Under*; met our local food producers during Eat Local Month at a *Local Food Fair*; talked about Climate Change in *Facing the Heat*; had our say in the consultation to develop a *Moolap Coastal Strategic Framework Plan*; considered Geelong's Future with *Insights from Denmark*; enjoyed the showcase for *Sustainable House Day*; considered what we could do in *Connecting Community*; raised funds to assist with refugee settlement in Geelong and wrapped up

the year with community energy *Repowering Geelong & Beyond*.

Green Drinks Coordinator, Vicki Perrett, extends her thanks to those whose ongoing efforts enable the smooth running of these popular monthly sessions:

Chris McGrath, Vivienne Burke, John Pearce, Dan Cowdell, Mik Aidt and Noreen Nicholson. Geelong Sustainability appreciates the ongoing support for our group provided by Richard Flanders from Beav's Bar.

connect

Green Drinks continues to attract significant numbers of people

Hear the latest news • Share innovative ideas • Create new connections



Community engages with sustainable living

Sustainable House Day provides an opportunity to see inside houses designed, built, renovated or retrofitted with sustainability in mind.

Geelong Sustainability has been coordinating this event with support from the City of Greater Geelong for eight years. This year we also assisted houses to open in Golden Plains Shire. Interest continues to grow – the event is becoming a real learning experience by providing something for everyone.

Visitors find inspirational ideas and practical advice from both home owners and local experts. At many locations, architects, builders, renewable energy experts and permaculture/gardening gurus were on site to provide tours and to share their knowledge and expertise.

National Sustainable House Day, held on 11 September 2016 had 19,000 visits to 154 open houses making it the most successful in the event's 15 year history with an average of 123 visits per house over a 6 hour opening time.

In the Geelong region, we had our biggest program ever with 14 open houses having 1,900 visits over a 4 hour opening period. We averaged 135 visits per house ranging from 30 visits at the Little River off-grid home to 240 visits at the compact affordable home at Ocean Grove.

Sustainable House Day requires a massive volunteer effort every year with over

90 people being involved in 2016.

Event Coordinator, Vicki Perrett appreciates the ongoing support of the event team - Vivienne Burke, Paul Savi, John Pearce and photographer, Phil Hines. In addition to our generous homeowners, Geelong Sustainability wishes to acknowledge our event partners - the City of Greater Geelong Environment Department and Future Proofing Geelong, as well as our event sponsors and the many industry professionals, tradies, suppliers, Geelong Sustainability volunteers and Sacred Heart College students who contributed to another great event.



Speakers at the festival's opening event November 2015 at Simonds Stadium

Positive climate solutions conveyed in festival spirit

The inaugural Act on Climate Festival was held over four days in November 2015. Geelong Sustainability hosted this community festival to empower people with ways to act on climate change.

The event showcased positive solutions to encourage the community to Act on Climate and help build a better, safer, future for all. The festival occurred at the same time as a number of global campaigns, events and initiatives in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Summit in Paris.

The opening night featured keynote speeches from prominent experts in the fields of climate change, renewable energy and economics. This was followed by an open air market showcasing practical responses to smarter living and an Act on Climate team

participating in Run Geelong. The festival was capped off by the film *'This Changes Everything'*, an epic attempt to re-imagine the vast challenge of climate change.

Geelong Sustainability wishes to acknowledge the contribution of project supporters Future Proofing Geelong and Sustainability Victoria. Festival coordinator Dan Cowdell extends his thanks to event colleague Mik Aidt and volunteers Angela Gilmore, Lauren Chambers, Cat Reupert, Amy Leith, Kathy Ryan, Chris McGrath, Dani Annawati, Lois Taylor, Peter Roupas, Chris Johnson, Dave Campbell, Natalie Cowdell, Paul Savi, John Pearce and Sue Kerr, as well as the GS Committee.



Sustainability and climate on local radio

Geelong Sustainability now has a voice on the airwaves. In August 2016, Geelong Sustainability partnered with the city's community radio 94.7 The Pulse, which – among other good things – means that its listeners will hear a radio advertisement for GS every now and then, and at least five times during each edition of The Sustainable Hour on Wednesdays.

Awarded for its consistent coverage of Geelong, Victorian and Australian climate change issues and packed with tips about sustainable living, building, planning, campaigns and current events, the show is in its fourth year and has an archive of 150 hours of radio with over 400 interviews in iTunes, attracting listeners not only in Geelong, but also around the world.



The Sustainable Hour is streamed live online on www.947thepulse.com from 11am to 12pm on Wednesdays. On radio, tune in at 94.7 FM. For listening from your smart-phone: subscribe to the podcast in iTunes or listen online at www.climatesafety.info/thesustainablehour





Crowdfunded solar for the kids

Our year-long journey to raise \$13,000 for a South Geelong Primary School solar system became a great learning experience

In 2014 Geelong Sustainability conducted a community survey to find out what our 1,400 members and supporters wanted us to focus our efforts on. Overwhelmingly the response was that Geelong Sustainability should work towards a Community Owned Renewable Energy (CORE) project for Geelong. A big ask and a first for Geelong – so we took it in stages.

First of all we formed a CORE Geelong Task Group to work out what might be possible and how we might do it. The Task Group found some partners and things started happening.

In April 2015, in partnership with The People's Solar, our first project was underway. We launched the first ever community renewables crowdfunding campaign in Geelong: to put solar panels on the roof of South Geelong Primary School.

Bendigo Bank supported the project with a donation of \$5,000 to the project

total and in May 2016 a 9.25kW solar PV system was installed. Needless to say, the school is delighted!

CORE Task Group organisers Mik Aidt and Dan Cowdell extend their thanks to Alex Houlston and Tosh Szatow from The People's Solar and Chris Barker from Bendigo Bank.

Special thanks must go to the school's Green Team – parents, staff and students who through fundraising activities such as classroom coin competitions, cake stalls, raffles and a solar obstacle course at the school's annual carnival helped to raise the \$13,000 needed for the 37 panel system.

"The energy we save will go back into the grid and the money we save on bills will be used to build bike storage, an orchard of fruit trees and potentially a chicken coop," said Ms Leanne Dowling, South Geelong Primary School's principal.





Investing in solar is a great idea for numerous reasons.

Join Geelong's energy revolution

Geelong Sustainability is at the forefront of the new 'energy democracy' movement, preparing the ground for the region's first community renewables

Following in the footsteps of ground-breakers like Hepburn Wind and Repower Shoalhaven, Geelong Sustainability is developing an iconic community solar project right here in Geelong. Our current focus is on the development of a community solar financing model for 30–100kW behind the meter solar systems.

The model will see community investors able to earn better than bank returns on local solar projects and solar host sites reaping all the benefits of clean, renewable solar power for zero upfront costs.

Interested?

We are currently seeking expressions of interest

from community investors and potential host sites.

This CORE (Community Owned Renewable Energy) project aims to encourage community participation and investment in renewable energy while also benefiting the environment with reduced emissions and establishing a revolving fund for investment in renewable energy projects and social enterprise into the future.

Our community energy project is founded on the desire for energy democracy and environmental leadership.

We want to actively participate in our energy future,

make renewable energy accessible to all residents of Geelong and take back control of our energy bills from big corporations. We want our community to take action on climate change and lead the way with practical, local projects that will help protect our environment and the future of our children and grandchildren.

While our project is currently focused on the development of a community solar financing model, to be followed by a series of 30 – 100kW installations, our ambition is to see the development of large scale community solar and wind projects in our region and even to set up a community owned electricity retailer.

Energise

Our visit to Hepburn Wind

It was inspirational to hear Taryn Lane from Hepburn Wind reveal how the first community-initiated and community-owned wind farm in Australia was established within the small community of Daylesford.

In May 2016 Geelong Sustainability members and supporters visited 'Gail' and 'Gusto', the two wind turbines at Leonard's Hill, to see first hand how a passionate community with strong leadership can achieve a multi million dollar wind farm project that rewards them with renewable energy now and into the future.

We were heartened by their journey of consultation and community engagement and not least from their ability to demonstrate to the community the economic, environmental and social benefits resulting from the project and finally to fund such an immense undertaking. As we climbed the small hill to the turbines it was immediately obvious why the site was chosen given the wind velocity.

Buoyed by the success of this community owned renewable energy model, Geelong Sustainability is eager to continue its own journey to establish the first community owned renewable energy (CORE) project for Geelong.



**Hepburn Wind turbines Gail and Gusto
- the pride of Daylesford**



Straw bale and off-grid

SPECIAL BUS TRIP

To compliment our Geelong Sustainable House Day program, we organised a special bus trip to visit two straw bale, off-grid houses on the Surf Coast. Twenty five keen participants enjoyed comprehensive and illuminating property tours and technical talks by the owners and builders at each home.



Guide to Geelong

Our Sustainability Directory showcases breadth of eco-businesses

The second edition of The Sustainability Directory was launched to a crowd of enthusiastic and environmentally aware local businesses and community organisations in late 2015.

This edition of The Sustainability Directory has doubled in size, with over 500 eco-businesses, community organisations and environmental service providers listed. It has expanded its geographic range to surrounding shires and includes

more categories to better align with Geelong Sustainability's vision.

The Directory highlights the breadth of environmentally aware businesses and organisations operating in the Geelong region. And as more and more people evaluate whether a business offers environmentally sustainable products or services, this directory will become an essential resource for purchasing decisions.

Copies are available at Geelong Sustainability events or from City of Greater Geelong Customer Service Centres and regional libraries.



Pledge to step in

TAKE2 is Victoria's collective pledge initiative to help keep the global temperature rise to under 2°C degrees.

It enables businesses, local government, community and educational organisations and individuals to take action on climate change.

Geelong Sustainability is one of more than 160 businesses and organisations and more than 20 councils and 1,000 individuals who

have signed on to the path towards a zero carbon future for Victoria by 2050. By committing to the TAKE2 pledge we are doing our bit to help Victoria reach zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. All Victorians are encouraged to TAKE2 – individuals, families, business, local government, community service organisations and educational institutions. By working together we can make a difference.

www.take2.vic.gov.au

Breamlea wind turbine
– still single after 30 years



GS Facebook page
955 likes



GS Discussion Forum
518 members



Sustainable House Day
618 likes
14,403 talking about



Sustainable Living Festival
848 likes

How do you like our new website?

Well, we did it! After many hundreds of hours of volunteer effort over the space of a year, the new Geelong Sustainability website went live on 15 August 2016, right on deadline.

While it was very much a team effort, massive thanks must go to Dan Cowdell and Guy Moodie without whose technical expertise and endless optimism we would never have been able to achieve this. Thanks also go to Sarah Jelly, Kristen Aitken, Kerry Amisse, Stephanie Asher and Rachel O'Brien who helped Dan and Guy with development and Vicki Perrett, Vivienne Burke and Noreen Nicholson who tested the site and wrote much of the content.

There are still little fixes, fine tuning and training going on, but this is such a fantastic leap forward for Geelong Sustainability - it's our new window on the world.

www.geelongsustainability.org.au





Geelong Sustainability and The Sustainable Hour received several awards at the Future Proofing Geelong Green Carpet Awards 2016 February 2016 at GPAC

Behind the scenes

We advocate for our community on a wide range of local and global sustainability issues.

During the past year we became a member of G21 Geelong Region Alliance where we were invited to join the G21 Environment Pillar. We also joined the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and the Barwon Water Environmental Consultative Committee.

We partnered with the City of Greater Geelong on the Our Future vision project and became one of the founding partners of the Victorian Government TAKE2 collective climate change pledge.

During 2016 we made major submissions to the Victorian government's Inquiry into Community Energy Projects and the Renewable Energy Target Review. We also submitted our views in relation to the National Clean Air Agreement and supported an extended West Wind Planning Application. Closer to home we were fully engaged with the Alcoa Point Henry 575 community consultation and we submitted an extensive document in relation to the Moolap Coastal Strategic Framework Plan.

Activate



Our new strategic plan

Geelong Sustainability is at an exciting stage in its development. Adoption of the One Planet Living framework has extended our scope and enabled us to embark upon even more ambitious projects. We have reviewed our mission, vision, past achievements and governance systems and developed a three year strategic plan - a roadmap for the way ahead.

Our new One Planet Living Action Plan received an overwhelmingly positive response from members when circulated to them in June 2016. The plan can be found on our new web-site.



Connected to Our Future

Geelong Sustainability is an active partner in developing a great future for Geelong

What makes a community great? What do we need to do for Geelong to be a thriving, inclusive and sustainable city in 30 years time? How do we meet the emerging needs of the community, whilst addressing environmental, economic and demographic changes?

The way we live is being impacted by four major global shifts:

- Technological development
- Climate change
- Global economic uncertainty
- Demographic change

Research into the best communities in the world show they are:

- **Connected** - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally through paths, roads

and public transport infrastructure, social networks and communication technologies

- **Prosperous** - strong and diverse businesses and employment across all community groups

- **Creative** - innovative, entertaining and vibrant

- **Sustainable and resilient** - environmentally, economically and socially

- **Designed for people** - easy and safe for all community groups to access the services, amenities and comfort they need

All of these components collectively contribute to making a community great.



About this report

Text, photos, graphic design and production by Mik Aidt and Vivienne Burke. Published by Geelong Sustainability in November 2016. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

Inform - Inspire - Connect

We are a dynamic and passionate community group focused on sharing information, building community resilience, advocating for the environment and supporting effective action.

Like many socially progressive community groups, we are convinced of the truth in Margaret Mead's famous quote *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

The science on climate change is very clear and there is no time to lose. We connect and collaborate with people and organisations seeking to create practical solutions and transition our economy.

Together we can achieve so much more!

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