



Lower Georges River  
Sustainability Initiative

a booklet of ideas about

how some **people** are

# *getting greener!*

Sutherland Shire  
COUNCIL 

  
NSW  
Environmental  
TRUST

**CMA**   
Sydney Metropolitan  
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



**Hurstville**  
City Council



# The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative (LGRSI)

This booklet is a collection of examples of community groups undertaking a range of activities to become more sustainable. The purpose of providing these examples is to inspire community groups to come up with ways they can improve sustainability and encourage them to get involved in the *getting greener!* program to make these ideas happen.

The LGRSI project aims to improve the environmental condition of the Lower Georges River and its catchment.

The project will run until January 2012 and is funded through a grant from the NSW Government Environmental Trust.

The **LGRSI Steering Committee** guides this project, and its **members** include representatives from:

- Councils from Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland LGAs
- Georges River Combined Councils' Committee (GRCCC)
- Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (SMCMA)
- Community: Melina Amerasinghe (Oatley Flora and Fauna Society) and, Bruce Cooke (EcoChurch).

The partner councils have identified some ways in which they could be *getting greener!* within their own organisations, and are addressing these as sub-programs within the LGRSI project. to date four programs have been identified:

- more effective organisational arrangements within council;
- more effective urban water management;
- more integrated planning and integration of natural resource management programs between partners within the Lower Georges River (LGR) catchment; and
- more sustainable practices of community and business.

The Community Partnerships *getting greener!* program is a sub-program within the LGRSI project which aims to: SUPPORT community capacity to plan and act for sustainability.

*getting greener!* will support sustainability partnership projects which:

- are proposed and driven by community members living in the catchment;
- involve lots of individuals and groups in designing and delivering the projects;
- reach out and engage active participation from the wider community;
- highlight the link between daily household/business practices and their affect on waterways; and
- leave an on-going legacy of public benefit which is self-sustaining or requires few futher inputs.

# Strategy and Rationale: the underpinning ideas

Our focus is on adding value to the community and improving sustainability by working with the many community-based players already in existing groups, each with an existing structure, networks and membership.

We believe people respect what they create. Projects that are planned by the local community are more likely to be sustained after the initial funding has ended.

*getting greener!* provides for local community groups to identify, plan and co-deliver sustainability- and water-related projects in partnership with the LGRSI partner organisations.

## What is sustainability?

Sustainability is said to involve social, ecological and economic elements and to imply that current generations must meet their social, ecological and economic needs without compromising the potential for future generations to meet theirs.

## It is not clear how a sustainable world might look or how we might get there - *getting greener!* is a start.

Professor Peter Newman from Curtin University says:

“Community-based initiatives are essential for sustainability. They are not just helpful, they are essential. Sustainability is about tapping innovation for a future in our settlements that is much more resource-constrained, far lower in ecological footprint, yet resulting in much better places in which to live and work and play – all at the same time.”

He adds that,

“There are no experts in the simultaneous achievement of these sustainability goals”

and

“The solutions to these issues will only begin to be found if community design processes are at their heart – starting from the kitchen table and moving out into the neighbourhood, the city, the planet ...”  
(Sarkissian et al, p XIV\*)

\*Sarkissian, W.; Hofer, N.; Shore, Y.; Vajda, S. and Wilkinson, C. (2009). Kitchen Table Sustainability: practical recipes for community engagement with sustainability. Earthscan, UK.



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*getting greener!*



Lower Georges River  
Sustainability Initiative

# sustainable food

## The idea...

# Rooftop gardening

### Who did it...

Urban Habitat Chicago (UHC) a not-for-profit organisation in the United States fo America.

### What they wanted...

To demonstrate the viability of sustainable concepts and practices in urban environments through research, education, and hands-on projects.

### How they started *getting greener!*

UHC assisted an organics cooperative and neighborhood recycling centre to become more sustainable by developing a rooftop garden system to enable the production of fresh produce on site to be used for sale in the organics cooperative. After receiving planning approvals and testing different rooftop garden systems, UHC installed a rooftop garden which has produced a variety of fresh organic produce.

### What happened...

The project was a great success with a constant demand for the fresh produce and after four successful growing seasons, UHC trained a core group of volunteers to maintain and harvest individual rooftop garden plots. UHC continues to remain active in keeping the Rooftop Victory Garden a success.

### Where to find out more...

[www.urbanhabitatchicago.org/blog/getting-started-on-a-rooftop-agriculture-project](http://www.urbanhabitatchicago.org/blog/getting-started-on-a-rooftop-agriculture-project)



info source: [www.urbanhabitatchicago.org/projects/true-nature-foods/](http://www.urbanhabitatchicago.org/projects/true-nature-foods/)

## The idea...

# Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

## Who did it...

### Food Connect

Food Connect is a social business that works in collaboration with local farmers around Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide to deliver organic and chemical free food efficiently, affordably and equitably.

## What they wanted...

Food Connect Sydney's vision is to be a leader in making ethically grown food from local farmers accessible to any household in Sydney. Food Connect Sydney buys direct from local organic and chemical free farmers and packs it into three sized boxes - \$35-\$65. These are then delivered to a local host or "City Cousin" where subscribers come once a week to pick up their pre-paid box.

Fruit and Veg from Food Connect Sydney supports farming and local communities as it is:

- Fair : 40c in every dollar goes back to the farmer
- Organic : 96% of the produce is certified organic or chemical free
- Local : average food miles of less than 200km
- Direct : 96% of the produce is bought direct from the farmer
- Community driven : Local communities come together at their City Cousin

## How they started *getting greener!*

Food Connect began by building relationships with local producers and building a list of city folk who wanted to be able to reliably purchase local produce. This type of community food system one example Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and is popular in Japan, the USA and the UK.

## What happened...

Every week fresh regionally-grown produce is delivered to distribution points throughout the city, usually private households, community centres or workplaces, referred to as 'City Cousins', from here boxes of fresh produce are picked up by subscribers. The subscribers get a chance to meet and chat with City Cousin and like-minded locals, and can meet the farmers on farm tours.



## Where to find out more...

Sydney: <http://sydney.foodconnect.com.au>

Brisbane: <http://www.foodconnect.com.au>

Adelaide: <http://www.foodconnectadelaide.com.au>

info source: [www.foodconnect.com.au/category/news-n-events/](http://www.foodconnect.com.au/category/news-n-events/)

## The idea...

# Community gardens

## Who did it...

Carss Park Community Garden

## What they wanted...

Since 2008, Kogarah City Council has been working with a committee of local volunteers to develop and create the Community Garden on one of the bowling greens of the old Carss Park Bowling Club, Kogarah.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They investigated all the opportunities and risks associated with community gardens, and produced the Carss Park Community Garden Guide.

The community gardeners have constructed garden beds, a multi-function straw bale shed and installed rainwater tanks. Working bees are held twice per month. The gardens produce lettuce, bok choy, tomato, basil, corn, cabbage, spinach, beans, cucumbers, carrots and beetroot.

The gardens will soon include raised mobility and easy access beds, a herb spiral, and a teaching bed for the Narani Childcare centre.

## What happened...

The community gardeners' recommend the benefits of the community gardens as including the opportunity to:

- socialise with like minded residents
- share gardening knowledge
- learn new gardening skills
- cost save on grocery bills
- access fresh organically grown produce
- be part of a sustainable initiative
- participate in workshops including starting a bed from scratch, composting and grafting

## Where to find out more...

[www.communitygarden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/ops\\_manual\\_26aug08.pdf](http://www.communitygarden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/ops_manual_26aug08.pdf)



**info source:** [www.communitygarden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/ops\\_manual\\_26aug08.pdf](http://www.communitygarden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/ops_manual_26aug08.pdf)



## The idea...

# Community Food Access

## Who did it...

Food Fairness Illawarra

## What they wanted...

To encourage government, communities and business to work together to deliver programs that; allow people to enjoy seasonal, quality food from the region, educate people about the importance of a wide range of foods, in particular fruits and vegetables, to good health and to encourage an understanding of the importance of a range of foods, in particular fruits and vegetables, to good health.

## How they started *getting greener!*

A group was formed to coordinate the efforts of rural producers, health professionals, community workers and community-based advocates active in developing a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable food system in the Sydney region. Members includes people working in sectors such as; health and aged care, community services and welfare, local government, urban planning, agriculture and primary industries, community gardens, permaculture and organic food industries and organisations, food and hospitality industries, media, education, ethicists and religious organisations and concerned and interested individuals. Healthy choices should be easy choices for everyone.

## What happened...

They have held workshops, open days and fairs and a 'big picture' outcome has been that food security is recognized in the Wollongong City Council Social Plan and Business Plan. Wollongong City Council won a National Heart Foundation award for the innovative 'Community Food Access Project'.

## Where to find out more...

[www.healthycitiesill.org.au/publications/FoodFairnessIllawarraTermsofReference.pdf](http://www.healthycitiesill.org.au/publications/FoodFairnessIllawarraTermsofReference.pdf)

[www.sydneyfoodfairness.org.au](http://www.sydneyfoodfairness.org.au)



**info source:** [www.healthycitiesill.org.au/publications/FoodFairnessIllawarraTermsofReference.pdf](http://www.healthycitiesill.org.au/publications/FoodFairnessIllawarraTermsofReference.pdf)

## The idea...

# Urban Permaculture

## Who did it...

Northey Street City Farm Brisbane

## What they wanted...

A community group wanted to transform one hectare of a city park into a diverse and educational food forest to grow food, and cultivate community and sustainability awareness. They wanted to develop a demonstration site of sustainable urban living and to share this knowledge with others.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They created an open and accessible garden where edible plants from Australia and around the world are grown — fruits, nuts, vegetables, herbs and flowers. It has become an edible botanic garden and a vibrant community centre for those seeking sustainable solutions for their city and neighbourhood. It was designed and is managed by the community to meet local needs. The farm and its projects continue to change and evolve over time as new needs are identified.

## What happened...

Numerous activities have occurred at the gardens:

- food is shared amongst the workers and traded in the community;
- children delight in this wild adventure playground;
- paper making and other workshops utilise the on-site plant fibres;
- many young unemployed people are gaining hands-on training and permaculture accreditation through 6 month programs;
- university students have been undertaken on-site research;
- primary and secondary school groups regularly visit to participate in programs about the environment and urban sustainability;
- artists have facilitated community art installations; and
- the outdoor meeting spaces are also used for community tai chi, yoga, painting classes, childcare groups and discussion circles.

## Where to find out more...

[www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/3/gamble.htm](http://www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/3/gamble.htm)



info source: [www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/3/gamble.htm](http://www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/3/gamble.htm)

## The idea...

# Apartment Community Gardens

## Who did it...

### Eastern Suburbs apartment dwellers

The residents of an apartment block in the eastern suburbs of Sydney with a small area of communal garden space within their complex.

## What they wanted...

To develop an edible garden to grow food which could be harvested by all residents of the apartment block. Some residents were interested in gardening and others were happy to have garden produce available for use.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Removed weeds, built a series of terraced garden beds on the sloping block and planted them with a range of produce.

## What happened...

Non-gardening residents became involved in associated activities including using the compost bin. Through growing some of the food they eat the apartment dwellers became producers and not mere consumers.

## Where to find out more...

[www.pacific-edge.info/an-edible-garden-for-eastern-suburbs-apartment-dwellers](http://www.pacific-edge.info/an-edible-garden-for-eastern-suburbs-apartment-dwellers)



**info source:** [www.pacific-edge.info/an-edible-garden-for-eastern-suburbs-apartment-dwellers/](http://www.pacific-edge.info/an-edible-garden-for-eastern-suburbs-apartment-dwellers/)



# notes

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Lower Georges River  
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# sustainable actions

## The idea...

# Low Carbon Diet

### Who did it...

Sustainable Jamboree

### What they wanted...

Sustainable Jamboree is a volunteer-based community group from the Centenary suburbs of Brisbane whose goal is to engage residents to make simple and low cost behavioural changes in response to climate change.

### How they started *getting greener!*

Sustainable Jamboree participated in the Queensland Government's ClimateSmart Living program. This program allows community groups and individuals to make simple and low-cost changes to their everyday actions to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions they produce at home by 2,000 tonnes in just 30 days.

### What happened...

Sustainable Jamboree conducted two Carbon Diet workshops which provided climate change presentations and residents received guidance with household actions to reduce their carbon footprint. Most participating residents attended eco-team meetings that helped them to achieve around 5 tonnes per year in reductions.

"We're so glad people have fun at these workshops, without losing their sense of urgency about climate change." (Project Manager, Justin Clareburt)

Sustainable Jamboree engaged three local primary schools to participate in a Carbon Challenge. 87 families participated in the first Challenge at Jindalee State School and reduced emissions by a total of 440 tonnes per annum.

Several community groups got involved including the North West Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Association, Wynnum District Soccer Club, Toowoomba Regional Council, The Upper Condamine Landcare Groups and the The Rotary Club of Cooroy.

### Where to find out more...

[www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au](http://www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au)



info source: [www.sustainablejamboree.org/](http://www.sustainablejamboree.org/)

## The idea...

# 1 million women

### Who did it...

**Climate Coolers** is a not-for-profit, non-partisan women's organisation that exists to engage the women of Australia on climate change and drive practical action to cut greenhouse gas pollution.

### What they wanted...

To engage 1 million Australian women (1 in 8) in climate policy issues and practical action to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 1 tonne per annum each.

### How they started *getting greener!*

They provided a website on which women could register and then commit to activities to change environmental issues. People can select from a range of CO2 saving activities and then track their progress in achieving them.

Activities include:

- Saying 'NO' to wasteful packaging, plastic bags and bottled water
- Reducing the amount of red meat in your diet
- Reducing food wastage by managing food better every day
- Reusing everything you can and saving money by avoiding over-consumption

The 1 Million Women recruitment video is a great resource to introduce the campaign and women can get involved with simple, passionately driven grassroots programs - in schools, kindergartens, the workplace and in the local community.

To find out more about this program, please contact Natalie Isaacs:  
[natalie.isaacs@climatecoolers.com](mailto:natalie.isaacs@climatecoolers.com)

### What happened...

To date more than 18 000 women have committed to reducing more than 40 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide through making changes to their daily activities.

### Where to find out more...

[www.1millionwomen.com.au](http://www.1millionwomen.com.au)

info source: [www.1millionwomen.com.au](http://www.1millionwomen.com.au)

1MILLION ♀ women

women in  
climate  
change

national forum series

Adelaide 18 May

Perth 1 June

## The idea...

# Carbon Rationing Action Groups (CRAGs)

## Who did it...

Mount Alexander Sustainability Group

## What they wanted...

To see local people working together to find ways to reduce the carbon emissions from their household use of electricity, gas, travel and waste.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They used a simple template to calculate the last year's carbon emissions from a household electricity, gas, personal car and plane travel, and information on some aspects of food consumption.

## What happened...

They embraced the concept that people are most often motivated by doing things with friends or neighbours and have run several successful projects based on this idea, including:

- **Challenge to Change** - is a community change program which aims to demonstrate that households, businesses and councils can rapidly reduce greenhouse emissions to zero net by 2010 by working together.
- **MASG & Damascus College Have Worms** - Worm farms are produced by the local college and stocked with worms and then made available for sale to community members.
- **Low Energy Solar Display Home**
- **Local Food Production** - Demonstration community gardens have been established and awareness raised about the importance of reducing 'food miles' (the costs associated with the distances food is transported from the producer to the consumer).

## Where to find out more...

[www.masg.org.au](http://www.masg.org.au)



info source: [www.masg.org.au](http://www.masg.org.au)



## The idea...

# Adopt a Plot

### Who did it...

Bushcare volunteers in North Sydney

### What they wanted...

To protect key habitat areas for local fauna by engaging local residents in bush protection and regeneration.

### How they started *getting greener!*

The Cremorne Reserve Bushcare group were concerned that many local residents were not aware of the impacts of urbanisation on local biodiversity. A partnership between the Cremorne Point Bushcare Group, North Sydney Council and a bush regeneration contractor received an Australian Government Envirofund grant which enabled local residents to be engaged via a project launch party, and then by word of mouth.

The project provided two ways for local residents to participate:

- residents could commit to working three hours per month alongside a professional bush regenerator, or
- pay a donation to enable the employment of a contractor to complete the work

### What happened...

Participants were assisted by professional bush regenerators to:

- identify the range of weeds in the plot
- develop weed removal technique and use safe practises
- gain experience in identifying local native plants
- understand their actions are part of a long term natural regeneration process.

From heavily weed infested beginnings, the reserve is starting to make a huge turn around.

In its first year the project achieved:

- 26 plots 'adopted' by local residents of Cremorne Point
- 340 hours of weeding contributed by local residents
- 8000 sq. metres of bushland covered by the project
- 1200 native plants planted into Cremorne Reserve

Adopt a Plot has since spread to three other reserves in the area.

### Where to find out more...

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/3458-adopt-a-plot.asp](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/3458-adopt-a-plot.asp)



info source: [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/3458-adopt-a-plot.asp](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/3458-adopt-a-plot.asp)



*getting greener!*



Lower Georges River  
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# sustainability at home

## The idea...

# Transition Towns

### Who did it...

#### Transition Sydney

Transition Sydney is an umbrella group whose aim is to support other groups within the Sydney region to take practical action in their local areas. The town of Totnes in England became the first “transition town” in 2005. Since then, over 50 transition towns have been established around the world, including 17 in Australia.

### What they wanted...

Transition Towns aim to foster local community-driven solutions which raise awareness, connect like-minded people and experience, re-localise the economy, and re-skill community members, in response to the threats posed by Peak Oil and climate change.

### How they started *getting greener!*

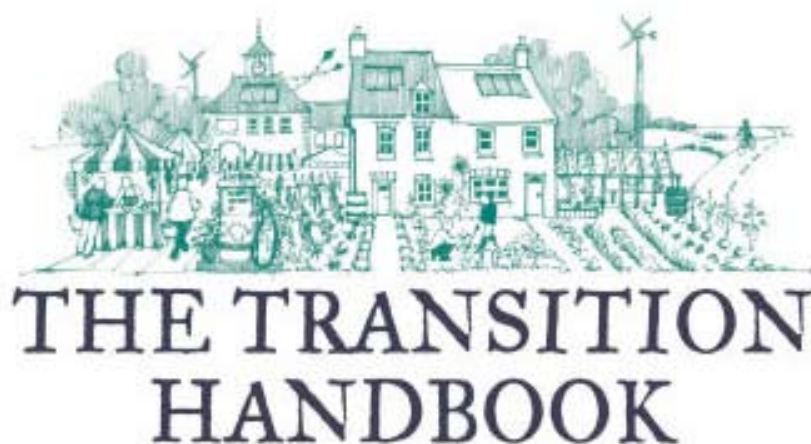
Transition Sydney provides a website for resources and as a meeting place for like-minded folk, who also provide presentations to community groups on the imperatives for transition and the opportunities for local action.

### What happened...

Transition Towns initiatives typically involve the formation of a core group which follows a model of community engagement which involves raising community awareness about peak oil, climate change and our carbon footprint. This is achieved through connecting with existing community groups, engaging with local government, forming sub-groups to look at what can be done in key areas such as food, energy, transport and health and undertaking projects which address these issues and build resilience within the community.

### Where to find out more...

[www.transitiontown.com.au](http://www.transitiontown.com.au)



info source: [www.transitionsydney.org.au](http://www.transitionsydney.org.au)

## The idea...

# Sustainability Street

## Who did it...

Willoughby Council

## What they wanted...

To encourage the community of Willoughby to put the idea of 'thinking global, acting local' into practice by providing a practical way of making a real difference in local streets and communities.

It is easy to get involved and create your own Sustainability Street by following the Sustainability Street manual called "It's a Village out there". The manual describes something that is "independently doable" by any local community.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Groups met at least six times over the year to learn about basic sustainability issues, share their knowledge and experiences, come up with some ideas for local action, and most importantly enjoy each other's company. Experts on a variety of topics were engaged to come along and share their knowledge. When a street has completed the basic sustainability meetings it makes the transition to wherever the collective group's imagination takes them... perhaps the street will continue to meet to work on a local sustainability project, seek grant funding for a community garden, catch up for social get togethers or just say hi as they pass each other on the way to the shops.

## What happened...

- Community-run workshops on - no-dig gardening, keeping chooks, solar power and hot water, rainwater tanks and carbon trading
- 'Sustainability Street' stalls at fairs and community events
- Wwritten regular columns in local newspapers
- 'Sustainable Street' parties where neighbours get together for BBQs with a sustainability topic

Results of the Sustainability Street groups' activities around Willoughby include:

- 40 households save over 187 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide each year
- 50% of households have become more sustainable after joining a Sustainability St group

## Where to find out more...

[www.sustainabilitystreet.org.au](http://www.sustainabilitystreet.org.au)



info source: [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Sustainability-Street.html](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Sustainability-Street.html)

## The idea...

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# GreenHome Lane Cove Champions program

## Who did it...

Australian Conservation Foundation ACF and Lane Cove Council

## What they wanted...

To move the Lane Cove community from knowledge into action! Lane Cove Council has provided annual sustainable living workshop programs to its community for 3 years, and there are a number of local community environment groups who have similar interests in creating a more sustainable Lane Cove. After a few years of educating the community about sustainable living, both the community groups and the Council have said that they want to engage more members of the community who would otherwise not come to a workshop or join a local environment group. So, ACF designed a new community Champions program that would move the community members from knowledge into action while, at the same time, engage new community members in sustainable living.

## How they started *getting greener!*

ACF invited community members of Lane Cove and surrounding areas to apply for an exciting training opportunity that has helped their community project ideas to come alive, helping to drive sustainability outcomes for the local area.

The ACF GreenHome team trained 14 people through a hands-on training program supported by a series of four workshops run by ACF. The workshop topics included:

- Facilitation: how to facilitate conversations and get the most out of working with others;
- Behaviour change and advocacy: understanding others motivations for doing things and how best to inspire change in others;
- Communications and Media: how to utilise media to raise awareness about an issue or project;
- Project Action Planning: step by step guide to developing community project ideas and creating an action plan.

**“...certainly we’ll continue to initiate projects that help people live more sustainability. We each have several on the go now and more coming in the pipeline.”** Barbara Khalia

**“I agree that the relationships that were built upon this workshop will be invaluable in the future and that we will be working together towards sustainability in our area.”** Cathy Cook

**“Thanks again for your terrific organization and energy in the GreenHome projects.”** Jon Johannsen

## What happened...

The 14 Champions organised themselves into 4 project teams based on shared passions and visions for local change.

The 4 project teams are:

1. The Solar Dream: to promote and assist whole streets to switch to solar power.
2. Lane Cove Public School Eco Transport Challenge: to reduce the number of students who travel to school by car.
3. Bob's Bin: to create an educational permaculture site for a local school.
4. Local swap meets and repair sites: to provide a regular platform for community members to swap unwanted goods such as toys, and teach people how to repair broken goods.

What was discovered was that the Champions already had some of the skills required to deliver their projects. What they lacked however was a platform by which they could collaborate and share their skills and knowledge with others.

Many of the Champions claim that the Program was most useful in building the necessary relationships with other community members, bridging the various local community groups and inspiring real action towards a more sustainable Lane Cove.

Whilst the workshops have finished, the Champions continue to meet to further develop their projects over the next coming months. Keep your eye on the community of Lane Cove for some seriously exciting results!

## Where to find out more...

[www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section\\_id=86](http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=86)



Helen and Rose, participants of the Lane Cove GreenHome Champions Program 2010

**info source:** [www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section\\_id=86](http://www.acfonline.org.au/default.asp?section_id=86)

## The idea...

# Sustainable living workshops

## Who did it...

Newcastle City Council – Blue Gum Hills Project

## What they wanted...

To engage the community and increase community capacity to live sustainably and to strike a balance between our busy lives and what our environment needs.

## How they started *getting greener!*

The Blue Gum Hills Arts and Environment Program ran from 2005 - 2008 across the suburbs of Maryland, Fletcher or Minmi. It provided information about sustainable living and demonstrated 'best practice', low cost solutions for residents to implement around the home.

They ran workshops on a range of sustainability topics and produced a newsletter and the Blue Gum Hills Neighbourhood and Sustainable Living Guide.

## What happened...

Increased awareness and community involvement in sustainable activities and increased community capacity to act sustainably.

## Where to find out more...

[www.ncc.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/39807/Sus\\_Living\\_Blue\\_Gum\\_Hills.pdf](http://www.ncc.nsw.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0009/39807/Sus_Living_Blue_Gum_Hills.pdf)



**Sustainable Living**  
in Blue Gum Hills (Maryland, Fletcher & Minmi)

April 2008

**Autumn Water Bug Survey**  
Wednesday 23 April

The Autumn Water Bug Survey for Blue Gum Hills will be held these school holidays.

Discover the fascinating water

**Get a copy of your local guide**

**The Blue Gum Hills Neighbourhood & Sustainable Living Guide is now available.\***

The guide has been written specially for the residents of Maryland, Minmi and Fletcher to assist you to

info source: [www.ncc.nsw.gov.au/environment/everything\\_water/waterway\\_projects/blue\\_gum\\_hills\\_project](http://www.ncc.nsw.gov.au/environment/everything_water/waterway_projects/blue_gum_hills_project)



## The idea...

# Sustainable Beauty

## Who did it...

Fairfield City Council

## What they wanted...

To reach a broad cultural audience by focusing on a popular topic of personal relevance to many people – personal care.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They approached local groups through existing partnerships with schools, volunteer groups and businesses to advertise a series of community workshops.

## What happened...

Natural Skin Care workshops were conducted which introduced the concepts of sustainability, product mileage, pollution, organic vs synthetic, homemade vs commercial, waste and landfill.

The workshops presented personal care products that:

- are simple to make
- are low cost
- contain no harmful chemicals
- use minimal packaging

Natural Cleaning workshops were also conducted. These detailed the use of natural ingredients to bring a sparkling shine to your home and avoid harmful household chemicals, improve indoor air quality, reduce water pollution and save yourself money at the same time!

## Where to find out more...

[www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/environment/TheWatershed/CommunityEducationProgram.asp](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/environment/TheWatershed/CommunityEducationProgram.asp)



info source: [www.aaeensw.org.au](http://www.aaeensw.org.au)

## The idea...

# Castlemaine 500 Cool Communities

## Who did it...

Central Victorian greenhouse Alliance

## What they wanted...

To “offer some practical action in the face of the looming spectre of climate change” for households in the Castlemaine township.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Invited every household in Castlemaine to participate in a series of workshops on different topics providing practical ways to reduce household energy bills.

## What happened...

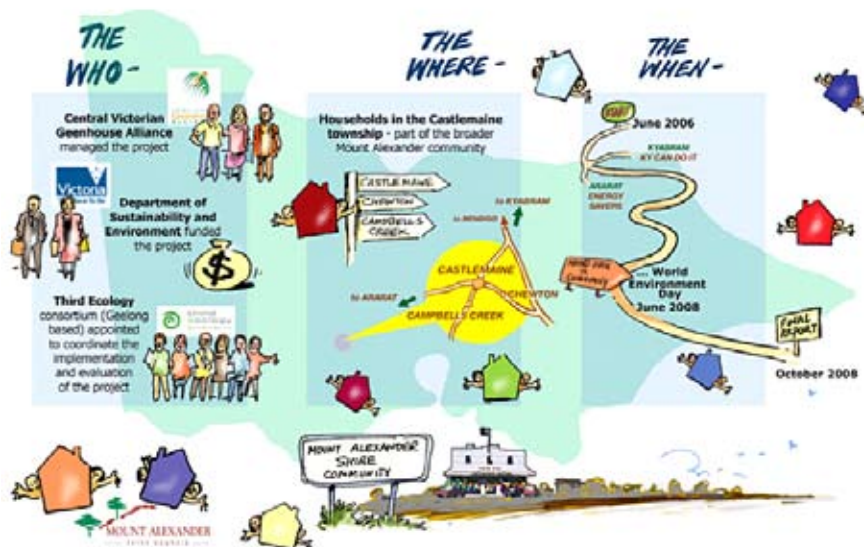
Over 40 different community events were conducted and over 1000 people were engaged at these events and 351 households were registered for the program.

The program completed:

- 345 Home Energy Assessment Plans;
- 220 signed Consent to Release energy data forms;
- 18 Energy Smart workshops;
- 118 Home energy assessments;
- 25 online Energy Smart workshops;
- 1 Community Leadership Program (with 4 full days leadership training with 16 people);
- 6 full days of further training with more than 30 people; and
- 1 Partner’s Program which involved: 30 local partnerships developed, 7 open community events involving 20 partners, more than 300 people, and over 30 meetings.

## Where to find out more...

[www.myhomemyplanet.org.au/index.html](http://www.myhomemyplanet.org.au/index.html)



info source: [www.myhomemyplanet.org.au/index.html](http://www.myhomemyplanet.org.au/index.html)

*getting greener!*



Lower Georges River  
Sustainability Initiative

# sustainable business

## The idea...

# Bioneers

### Who did it...

Founder Kenny Ausubel coined the word **bioneers** in America in 1990 to describe an emerging culture of social and scientific innovators who are mimicking nature's operating instructions to serve human ends while enriching the web of life.

### What they wanted...

To connect people with solutions and grow social capital for positive change by linking community networks on the local, regional, national and international levels.

Bioneers aims to foster connection, cross-pollination and collaboration by bringing together diverse people and projects within a broadly progressive framework.

### How they started *getting greener!*

Bioneers provide solutions-based education and social connectivity through the Bioneers national and local conferences and programs. Each year, Bioneers provides thirteen half-hour programs free to public radio stations around the world, featuring interviews and dynamic presentations from the Bioneers Conference archives.

### What happened...

Since 1990 Bioneers have held an annual conference - a gathering of scientific and social innovators who have demonstrated visionary and practical models for restoring the Earth and communities. The conference began in Santa Fe as a small, primarily regional event with modest national aspirations. About 250 people attended in the first year. The original conference focus was on narrower than it is today: ecological food and farming, biodiversity conservation (especially seeds), cultural diversity, bioremediation, and "Green medicine". After three years, the conference outgrew facilities in Santa Fe and moved to California's Bay Area. The 2009 conference attracted 3,000 attendees and a further 12,000 people participated via links on the internet.

### Where to find out more...

[www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org)



info source: [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org)

## The idea...

# Sustainable Business

### Who did it...

**Symmetry Sustainable Business (SSB)** supported by Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Liverpool local councils.

### What they wanted...

To improve business sustainability. A sustainable businesses consider its social and environmental place in the community, as well as its bottom line.

### How they started *getting greener!*

SSB is a unique sustainability enhancement program designed to improve environmental practices of small businesses. It's a project of the Centre of Excellence in Sustainability, dedicated to 'best practice' in sustainability and sponsored jointly by Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC), the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living (MCSL).

In addition to funds provided through Ausindustry's Small Business Entrepreneurship Program, MCSL, Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre (MBEC), UWS and MACROC have contributed in kind support for SSB. It is also supported by local councils – Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Liverpool.

Take a look at your business. Reduce costs and become more efficient. Be included in valuable marketing and promotion opportunities. Portray a positive business image, by improving your social and environmental performance. Find a future for your business. Develop an environmental edge for your business.

### What happened...

Since the roll out of the project in early 2008, 607 businesses have attended Symmetry information sessions, around 200 businesses were mentored, 84 businesses have attained Bronze accreditation and a further 30 have embarked on Silver accreditation.

### Where to find out more...

[www.makeitinmacarthur.com.au/articles/articlefiles/60-AusIndustry\\_Launch-Flyer\\_20Feb.pdf](http://www.makeitinmacarthur.com.au/articles/articlefiles/60-AusIndustry_Launch-Flyer_20Feb.pdf)



**symmetry**  
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

**info source:** [www.makeitinmacarthur.com.au/articles/templates/symmetry.aspx?articleid=60&zoneid=24](http://www.makeitinmacarthur.com.au/articles/templates/symmetry.aspx?articleid=60&zoneid=24)

## The idea...

# Sustainable Advantage

## Who did it...

Port Kembla Golf Club

## What they wanted...

Port Kembla Golf Club and Wollongong City Council wanted to participate in a program to help businesses battle climate change while improving their financial bottom line.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Port Kembla Golf Club and 13 other local businesses participated in the Sustainability Advantage program funded by the (then) Department of Climate Change.

They worked with Council to develop an environmental sustainability action plan. They identified that the majority of waste on the golf course was actually recyclable. The club has undertaken a number of activities as a result, including:

- monitoring energy usage, and reducing it by 4-5%
- monitoring their water usage and reducing it by 40%
- introducing a recycling policy, resulting in 8 tonnes of metal being sent to recyclers
- investigating a worm farm to recycle bistro waste and produce natural fertilisers for use on the course.

## What happened...

Port Kembla Golf Club won first place in the Sustainable Clubs section of the 2008 Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities awards.

## Where to find out more...

[www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/sustainabilityadvantage.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/sustainabilityadvantage.htm)



info source: [www.portkemblagolf.com.au/environmentalinitiatives.html](http://www.portkemblagolf.com.au/environmentalinitiatives.html)

## The idea...

# Ethnic Communities Sustainable Living Project (ECSLP) - Asian Restaurants Water Reduction

## Who did it...

Ethnic Communities Council of NSW

## What they wanted...

To encourage people from culturally diverse backgrounds to learn about, and take care of, their local environments at home, work and play.

The ECSLP aimed to:

- Promote awareness, knowledge and understanding about ways to live more sustainably
- Conduct educational workshops in community languages to promote simple yet practical ways on how to change to more sustainable behaviours
- Get people more deeply involved in sustainability issues by promoting community development activities
- Help build the capacity of councils to develop and deliver environmental education to ethnic communities

## How they started *getting greener!*

Bi-lingual educators offered face-to-face learning opportunities in the places where communities meet.

Workshops are designed to suit the needs of the community, and cover such topics as:

- Sustainable living
- Water conservation
- Composting and worm farming
- Recycling and reducing waste
- Stormwater
- 'Green cleaning'
- Protecting biodiversity
- Saving energy

## What happened..

Around 475 workshops were conducted which involved approximately 7,000 people from a range of cultural backgrounds. Through workshops, field trips, cultural events, community festivals, and arts projects, they learned simple and practical ways to live more sustainably.

## Where to find out more...

[www.livingthing.net.au/PP\\_Proj\\_5.htm](http://www.livingthing.net.au/PP_Proj_5.htm)

**“I have a responsibility to my community to help them to understand how to do the right thing, how to recycle properly and how to compost, in our own language”**

Soon Yong Yoo, Korean educator



info source: [www.livingthing.net.au/PP\\_Proj\\_5.htm](http://www.livingthing.net.au/PP_Proj_5.htm)





*getting greener!*



Lower Georges River  
Sustainability Initiative

# sustainable water

## The idea...

# Filtered water refill stations

## Who did it...

Manly Council

## What they wanted...

To be proactive in dealing with a growing waste and carbon emission problem - 75% of containers collected in waste are water bottles.

## How they started *getting greener!*

As part of its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint — Council plans to be carbon neutral by the end of 2010 — six wheelchair accessible filtered water bubblers have been installed along the Manly Corso that connects Ferry Wharf to the Manly beachfront. The bubblers provide Manly visitors with free filtered water!

## What happened...

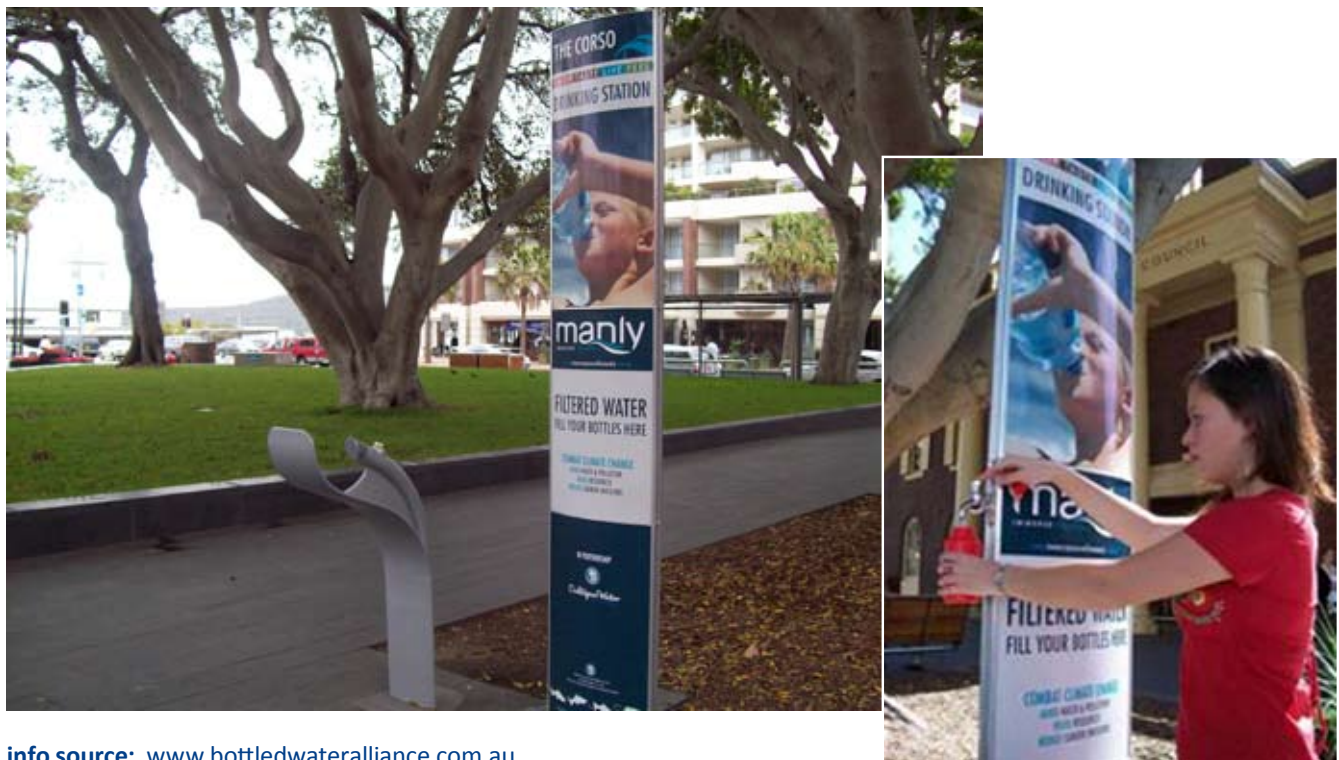
Manly Council research suggests that:

- The filtered water stations have resulted in 250,000 fewer plastic water bottles being discarded as waste; and
- 150,000 litres of water has not needed to be purchased.

## Where to find out more...

[www.manly.nsw.gov.au/Filtered-Bubbler-Project.html](http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/Filtered-Bubbler-Project.html)

[www.aquafil.com.au/pdf/Manly\\_Council\\_Filtered\\_Water\\_Project.pdf](http://www.aquafil.com.au/pdf/Manly_Council_Filtered_Water_Project.pdf)



info source: [www.bottledwateralliance.com.au](http://www.bottledwateralliance.com.au)

## The idea...

# Water Bottle Free Town

### Who did it...

Bundanoon - Australia's first bottled water free town

### What they wanted...

To have a bottled water-free town

### How they started *getting greener!*

A town meeting held in Bundanoon was addressed by Jon Dee, founder of Do Something, who set out the environmental and financial impacts of bottled water. Of the 356 people who attended, 355 of them voted in favour of a total ban on the sale of bottled water in the town.

“Whilst our politicians grapple with the enormity of dealing with climate change what Bundanoon shows is that at the very local level we can sometimes do things that can surprise ourselves, in terms of our ability to bring about real and measurable change that has a real benefit for the environment,” said Jon Dee, founder of Do Something.

### What happened...

The town's shops no longer sell commercially bottled water. Instead, refillable water bottles are sold and for a small fee, consumers can refill their bottles with chilled filter water in the shops.

Alternatively, people can fill their own bottles with free filtered water from public water fountains in the main street.

### Where to find out more...

[www.bottledwateralliance.com.au/en/Blog/Bundanoon.aspx](http://www.bottledwateralliance.com.au/en/Blog/Bundanoon.aspx)



**info source:** [www.bottledwateralliance.com.au/en/Blog/Bundanoon.aspx](http://www.bottledwateralliance.com.au/en/Blog/Bundanoon.aspx)

## The idea...

# The Cooks River Festival

## Who did it...

Marrickville City Council - Sustain - Cooks River Eco Fest

## What they wanted...

To hold a free community festival to strengthen the community, and celebrate and promote sustainability and the Cooks River environment.

## How they started *getting greener!*

The community and council in partnership, planned an outdoor festival in Steel Park, on the banks of the Cooks River. This free festival featured live entertainment, interesting workshops and displays, arts and information stalls with a focus on sustainability and the environment.

## What happened...

Ongoing community and council support and involvement has resulted in this very successful sustainability festival becoming an annual event.

The festival has grown in both size and popularity and now includes:

- Local and organic food, coffee and desserts
- Live music from local acts
- Interesting workshops and displays
- Arts and information stalls
- Interactive workshops
- Information stalls where you can learn about sustainable practices
- 'No-Dig' garden and rainwater harvesting demonstrations
- Instrument-making workshops
- Special guests
- Aboriginal storytelling and body painting
- Interactive children's activities
- Tours along the Cooks River
- Carbon footprint calculations

## Where to find out more...

[www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/sustain](http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/sustain)



info source: [www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/sustain](http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/sustain)

*getting greener!*



Lower Georges River  
Sustainability Initiative

# sustainability through culture, art and faith

## The idea...

# Cooks River Cultural & Environmental Partnership

## Who did it...

City of Canterbury Council and Mizaan Ecology

## What they wanted...

To engage community members who had limited contact with the natural environment and sustainability by undertaking revegetation works along the Cooks River. To support and recognise the valuable contribution the al-Ghazzali Centre group are making to the city's environment.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They established a working partnership between State and Local Government and the community community and delivered two wildlife and biodiversity workshops to more than 100 al-Ghazzali Centre members.

## What happened...

- 1800 volunteer hours from al-Ghazzali volunteers were donated
- 3,000 sq metres of land was re-vegetated contributing to a total of 6,000 sq metres of continual corridor and wildlife habitat along a reach of the Cooks River
- A DVD was produced about ethnic groups engaging with sustainability within a partnership with government.
- 4 volunteers became accredited bush regenerators.

## Where to find out more...

[www.alghazzali.org/resources/Cooks\\_River\\_Ecology\\_Program.pdf](http://www.alghazzali.org/resources/Cooks_River_Ecology_Program.pdf)



**info sources:** [www.alghazzali.org/events/cooks\\_river](http://www.alghazzali.org/events/cooks_river)  
[www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2352-news-column---16-february-2009-.asp](http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2352-news-column---16-february-2009-.asp)

## The idea...

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# Sacred Water

### Who did it...

Catholic Earthcare Australia

### What they wanted...

To play a part in helping protect the Earth.

### How they started *getting greener!*

Catholic Earthcare Australia has enthusiastically responded to protect the Earth through research, education and advocacy within the Australian context. Launches of Catholic Earthcare have taken place in all capital cities of Australia and many regional and country towns.

Catholic Earthcare Australia has worked with many of the Australian bishops in producing, launching and distributing letters and statements on Climate Change.

### What happened...

Catholic Earthcare Australia is piloting a sustainability initiative for schools, parishes, church organisations and congregations to achieve ecological sustainability.

Catholic Earthcare Australia has recently completed the publication which has been distributed to all catholic schools in NSW and Queensland.

The general aim of the project is to encourage schools to lighten their ecological footprint.

### Where to find out more...

[www.catholicearthcare.org.au/ASSISI.html](http://www.catholicearthcare.org.au/ASSISI.html)



info source: [www.catholicearthcare.org.au/ASSISI.html](http://www.catholicearthcare.org.au/ASSISI.html)

## The idea...

# Environmental Message Walking Track

### Who did it...

Burraway Wajad Traditional Owners Group Incorporated, Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council and North Coast Water funded by the NSW Environmental Trust.

### What they wanted...

To establish a 3km walking track downstream of the Shannon Creek Water Storage facility with interpretative signage, resting places, and demonstration plantings i.e bush food, medicinal and other use plants which will be labelled in the local Gumbainggar language and English.

### How they started *getting greener!*

The Environmental Message and Walking Track was constructed to educate visitors about the cultural heritage of the local Aboriginal people and the conservation of the area's natural resources. Six interpretive signs have been produced and have been erected along the walking track.

### What happened...

The Walking track was constructed and six local Aboriginal people were trained to Cert II level in Conservation and Land Management (CLM) modules and gained some related paid work experience.

### Where to find out more...

[www.envite.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=165#ET2](http://www.envite.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=165#ET2)



**info source:** [www.envite.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=165#ET2](http://www.envite.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138&Itemid=165#ET2)



## The idea...

# Community Art Project

## Who did it...

Marion City Council, South Australia - Footprints Community Arts Project

## What they wanted...

To promote sustainability at a community level through a Community Arts project.

## How they started *getting greener!*

They held a series of workshops that encouraged people to explore some tricky questions such as:

What does 'sustainability' mean in different cultures?

How do we sustain our own cultures?

How do indigenous cultures teach us to respect our earth?

## What happened...

Several projects have been developed including 'Habitat' and the 'Footprints' where a team of artists and musicians used recycled materials to create art with schools and community groups. These project have developeped and the theme of sustainability has become an integral part of council festivals.

## Where to find out more...

[www.marion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=142](http://www.marion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=142)



info source: [www.marion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=142](http://www.marion.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=142)

## The idea...

# Art Walk

## Who did it...

Bankstown City Council - Crosscurrents - Georges River Art Walk

## What they wanted...

To create and install a series of artworks along a walking track adjacent to the Georges River, to commemorate Bankstown's journey through history and key turning points which have contributed to its development as a multiculturally diverse and historically rich community.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Local artists were commissioned to create six major artworks celebrating significant stories, events and experiences along the Georges River and Prospect Creek, as well as Trail Markers that represent the boundaries of the first land grants along the river foreshore. Interpretive information has also been installed along the foreshore trail by means of interpretive shelters, which supplement the stories told by the artworks.

## What happened...

The Crosscurrents project will continue to provide stories of the Georges River and other river stories collected from local residents. There will also be continuing cultural events and interpretive programs aimed to promote the protection and conservation of Georges River and the surrounding natural environment.

## Where to find out more...

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XmrD-AX0cM&feature=youtube\\_gdata](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XmrD-AX0cM&feature=youtube_gdata)



info source: [www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/Crosscurrents---Georges-River-Art-Walk/default.aspx](http://www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/Crosscurrents---Georges-River-Art-Walk/default.aspx)

## The idea...

# Community Art Mural

## Who did it...

Shire of Kalamunda, Western Australia - 'Stain ability' Community Art Mural

## What they wanted...

To create a community art mural with the theme of sustainability to cover a large blank wall of a Service Station facility.

## How they started *getting greener!*

The Director of Community Development Kevin O'Connor said, "School age children from year one to year seven from two local schools took part in a series of drawing workshops with Perth mural artist, Paula Hart."

"The theme of the project was Sustainability and the kids were encouraged to think outside the square. Their designs were then scaled up into a mural, which now appear on the walls of the new plant room at the Gull Service Station in High Wycombe. Painting of the mural has taken place over the school holidays, with youth from the Forrestfield After School Care, and the general public taking part.

## What happened...

"The final result is a fantastic mural on site at the Service Station for all of the community to enjoy," said Kevin O'Connor.

## Where to find out more...

[www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/Visitorsbrnbsp/News/NewsItems/GullShireofKalamundaSustainabilityCommunityA.aspx](http://www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/Visitorsbrnbsp/News/NewsItems/GullShireofKalamundaSustainabilityCommunityA.aspx)



infosource: [www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/Visitorsbrnbsp/News/NewsItems/GullShireofKalamundaSustainabilityCommunityA.aspx](http://www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/Visitorsbrnbsp/News/NewsItems/GullShireofKalamundaSustainabilityCommunityA.aspx)

## The idea...

# Project Green Church

## Who did it...

Maroubra Junction Uniting Church

## What they wanted...

To make a difference and to take action at a local community level on environmental issues.

## How they started *getting greener!*

Discussions within the Church community identified a desire to take action on environmental issues and to make a difference to global issues of climate change by starting with their own environment.

Several initiatives were undertaken including:

- Sustainable Buildings – with the assistance of various grants and rebates, they fitted a water tank, grey water treatment systems and solar hot water heaters to the Church buildings, and they also switched to 100% government accredited GreenPower.
- Possession sharing - they purchased rechargeable battery operated lawn mowers and volunteers provide a free lawn mowing service to community members and they joined 'goget carshare' ([www.goget.com.au](http://www.goget.com.au)) to provide a communal car available for use.
- Skill sharing - they held skill sharing workshops including bike maintenance and home energy solutions. They have a regular "green testimonial" as a part of their church services for congregants to share their learnings about caring for the environment.

Partnerships with other groups- they worked with other churches and environment groups and were supported by Randwick Council to run a Clean Up Australia Day festival. They helped to form the South East Climate Action Coalition, a coalition of climate-concerned individuals and community groups in the local area.

## What happened...

The documentary DVD about Project Green Church has helped to spread the word about taking action on environmental issues. Other churches in Sydney and throughout NSW have been inspired to take similar action in their own localities.

## Where to find out more...

[www.mjuniting.org.au/Default.aspx?aCatId=766](http://www.mjuniting.org.au/Default.aspx?aCatId=766)

info source: [www.mjuniting.org.au/Default.aspx?aCatId=766](http://www.mjuniting.org.au/Default.aspx?aCatId=766)



other inspiring ideas towards  
***getting greener!***

**Sustainability in re-skilling**

[www.theoil drum.com/node/5226](http://www.theoil drum.com/node/5226)  
[www.transitionculture.org/category/great-reskilling/](http://www.transitionculture.org/category/great-reskilling/)

**Sustainability in fashion**

[www.refashion.com.au/](http://www.refashion.com.au/)

**Sustainability in theatre**

[www.thegreentheater.org/](http://www.thegreentheater.org/)

**Sustainability in drama**

[www.rouswater.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/drama\\_student\\_notes\\_and\\_lesson\\_plan%281%296262009134649.pdf](http://www.rouswater.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/drama_student_notes_and_lesson_plan%281%296262009134649.pdf)

***getting greener!***

is about getting started towards sustainability...

...sustainable pet care... sustainable transport - community car pooling...

...sustainable living trails - linking walking track networks between local parks...



Your sustainability ideas for *getting greener!*

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# getting greener!



## Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative

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This booklet is not meant to be a definitive list of all the possible activities one could undertake to promote sustainability, or a list of the projects which are 'eligible' for funding.

Rather, its purpose is to provide you with...

**a collection of activities and ideas to....**

**enthuse, encourage, inspire, inform,  
excite, enlighten, engage, empower,  
motivate and connect**

**community, council and business in...**

# *getting greener!*

For more information please contact:

**Colin Freeman**

(02) 9562 1703

0434 154 865

[cfreeman@rockdale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cfreeman@rockdale.nsw.gov.au)

[www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au)

Thank you to all for the inspiring ideas and images

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**Lower Georges River**  
Sustainability Initiative