

Trees in Newcastle Annual Report 2022-2023



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Our Mission

To protect and enhance local native vegetation and support people with a passion for plants through local provenance plant propagation and supply, revegetation, bushland regeneration, education, volunteer engagement and partnerships.

Our objective is to plant, regenerate, conserve, maintain, and protect native vegetation and bushland in the Lower Hunter region.

To achieve this, we must:

1. Encourage Public Institutions, businesses, communities and individuals to participate.
2. Facilitate community awareness associated with biodiversity and habitat protection.
3. Operate by the principles of cooperation and consideration for all others and the environment.
4. Remain independent with an apolitical focus and not ally our group to another faction.

Our Board

Josh Pryor (Chair)
Elise Briggs (Treasurer)
Leigh Gibbens (Secretary)
Jenny Robinson

Adam Cavallaro
Maya Guest
Karen Buckner
Karen Nichol
Thomas Michel



Chair's Report

Chair: Josh Pryor

Thank you and welcome to all our volunteers, staff and supporters! We rely on a network of environmentally conscious people to help us produce plants, put them in the ground, and improve social commitment to matters of sustainability and biodiversity.

Over the last few years, we have improved our facilities in a way that positions us as a leader of provenance production. With the shade house, a growing Nursery team, and a swathe of enthusiastic volunteers we continue to receive compliments around our high-quality stock.

In terms of organisational structure, we continue to improve the delineation between Board activities (risk, oversight, strategy) and Staff activities (operational matters), with the GM being the conduit of communication between these two entities. This is vital to maintain our regulatory compliance as a registered charity, and reduces the risk of poor accountability and insufficient risk management.



Matt Abercrombie at Tocal Field Days

Resumption of a General Manager position early in 2023 allowed us to take large strides forward in our organisational efficiencies. Matt Abercrombie joined us for just over six months before returning to the UK. Coming from a career in international land-mine tracking and management, he brought his analytical prowess to our humble organisation. He created systems allowing the Bush Regeneration team to be more effective than ever. We like to think he returned to the UK a little tougher with more awareness of the dangers of Aussie fauna!

A warm welcome to our new GM, Emma Graham, who brings similar IT and data analysis skills, along with substantial expertise in ecology and environmental rehabilitation. Emma has already made a buoyant impact on Staff, and the Board is thrilled she decided to join TIN.

I am particularly excited about **our increasing capacity in community engagement**. This important work tends to be pushed aside when we become busy with bush regeneration and stock production, but with new projects from National Parks & Wildlife and additions to the team, I see us making a big impact in 2024.

Staff and volunteers from all sections of TIN made the most of the post-pandemic environment this year, exhibiting and planting via many public events and projects, including: Tocal Field Days, Olive Tree Markets, World Environment Day at Glenrock State Conservation Area, Tiny Forest Project in Teralba, LLS Workshops, and River Redgum Project (as featured on Landline).

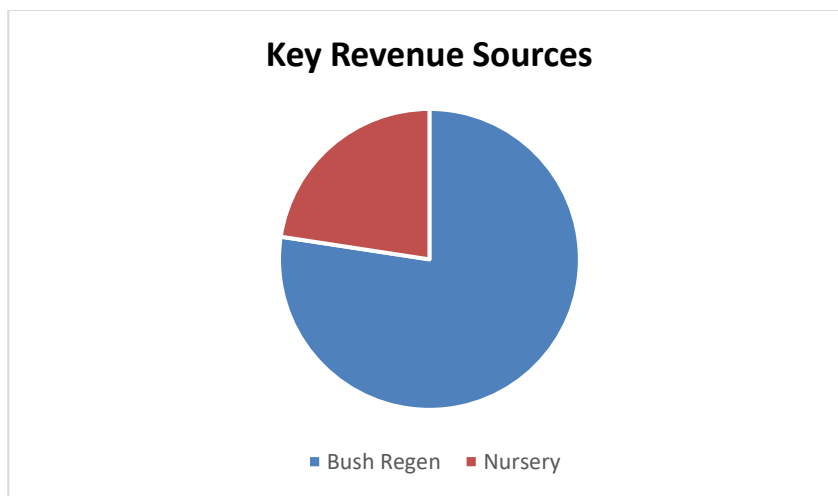
We even managed a few Saturday sales here at Redhead!

Finances

Financially, TIN is stable but continues to require close attention to ensure we are efficient and productive given current resources. The 2223FY was essentially break-even.

As a registered charity, we receive grants for assistance on certain items. Recently funds for an upgrade of the watering system in the shade house came from Hunter Water, and extra solar batteries and our new shade structure from NSW Government.

However, the key to our existence is the Bush Regeneration department. The increased work-rate in the last few months means we see a slightly higher than average earnings contribution from BR.



Bush regeneration is a growing industry, but also highly competitive. Our great reputation, our world-class nursery, and our charitable status give us an edge in the market. The challenges we face around the lead time in plant production are to be expected, nonetheless they complicate the process of continuous growth and matching supply to demand. With streamlined processes and a savvy General Manager, we can continue to win jobs and deliver them on time.

With a vibrant public profile we can implement a rolling Bush Regeneration recruitment program, as we tend to have a fair bit of natural turnover. Many of our previous regenerators have gone on to bigger things in the industry – a few of them are now our customers and one is on the TIN Board!

Lastly, I will recognise the contribution of Elise Briggs. Elise has worked for TIN in varying volunteer roles for years now, and she is moving away next year. That means she must step down as Treasurer.

But the work and deeds of Elise are greater than the official role, she is indeed our “treasure” as much as Treasurer. She fills in for the role of General Manager in many ways, when there is a gap, Elise fills it. I suspect we don’t know the full extent of how much we rely on Elise, but we are about to find out!

Elise, thank you for carrying so much and so many aspects of this organisation for so long.

Your emotional intelligence and business acumen has been a feather in our cap and a key ingredient of our survival over the last few tumultuous years.

Warmly, Josh.

Bush Regeneration

Chair: Josh Pryor

The Bush Regeneration team continue to represent Trees in Newcastle with high standards of work. The team was led by Matt Abercrombie until September 2023, who did a fantastic job in getting the team a variety of work, helping build our reputation in the industry in the Lower Hunter.

For the first time in many years and after many months of negotiation by the previous BR Coordinator, Siobhan Isherwood, the team is now contracted for major works with the local National Parks and Wildlife. NPWS not only regularly contract our team for high profile work at Glenrock, Dudley Beach, but also have contracted us to run volunteer workshops and community plantings in the local parks.



A couple of recent highlights in commercial contracts:

- Environmental Trust, Department of Planning and Environment for three years, to restore littoral rainforest in the Port Stephens area, and engage the local community with workshops.
- Port Stephens Council for another three years
- Newcastle City Council
- Singleton Council Cessnock Council
- Private contracts with local environmental companies and landholders.

This year regular 'Nursery Days' and barbecues have been held at our Redhead site to complete maintenance tasks, conduct in-house training and improve inter-departmental unity.

TIN provides a valuable pathway for people in the Environment and Sustainability sector. A core of experienced and committed bush regenerators provide the continuity and expertise required in this demanding industry. Thanks to Graham Callaghan, Kris McLean, Candice Rogers, Jake Wright, Thomas Palmer, Emelie Karlsson, Rachael Donnelly, Oliver Visser, Jen Robinson, Gabrielle Stacey, Siobhan Isherwood, and Kailah Slade.



The Year at Our Nursery

Nursery Manager: Jocelyn Barker

A very successful year again for the nursery-there have been infrastructure improvements, an increase in the number of volunteers and a rise in production and turnover.

Highlights

- The Oakey Creek Road Pokolbin Translocation for Cessnock Council. On Tues 1st Nov 22 a combined team of Nursery and Bush Regen Staff began the removal of propagating material from the road upgrade site for establishment at the Nursery. In September 2023 a total of 1,500 plants were dispatched and planted back onto the site.
- Newcastle Inner City Bypass, Rankin Park to Jesmond. In collaboration with Fulton Hogan construction company, Andrew Marsh collected specimens of *Tetratheca juncea* and Eucalypt seed before tree removal resulting from roadworks.
- The Broke Bulga River Red Gum Project in Conjunction with Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. On 21st March the first batch of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* left the nursery. The success of this project and Andrew Marsh's work continues to bring recognition for TIN.
- The Tiny Forest Project (ReLeaf Lake Mac): TIN has been involved in both the Teralba and Cardiff plantings with a total of 1,500 plants provided by the nursery for both projects.
- A further 5000 plants were dispatched for Foundation of National Parks and Wildlife (FNPW)
- We are now receiving grow to order contracts (April 2024) for Glencore and Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) as well as for Local Land Services (LLS) and ReLeaf Lake Mac. This is enabling a greater efficiency in our production schedules.
- National Tree Day 2023: Glenrock (Squirrel Glider) planting. A collaboration between NPWS and the TIN Bush Regen Team on the 8th June



Infrastructure

- Grant application successful from Hunter Love Water for an upgrade to our irrigation system. This followed a report from Doug Twentymen after he and Wayne Ingram (Technical Manager Netafim Australia) visited the nursery on 31st Jan and assessed the nursery setup.
- A wonderful shade structure between the Bush regen office and nursery office has been completed. With help from Phil Buckner two more lithium batteries have also been installed. This will significantly improve our operational capacity in winter. The project was possible through a grant from the State Community Building Grants program.

Community engagement

- Wollombi Seed Collection Workshop in March-presented by Jen and Shiralee.
- Tocal Field Day May 3rd 4th 5th 2023. This really was a huge effort by everyone-from board members, staff and volunteers. There has been a steady increase in enquiries and orders from people who visited our stall, indicating we have increased the geographical range of our profile. We also held stalls at Kitchener Bush Festival, Olive Tree Markets and the Living Smart Festival at Speers Point.
- Yasmine Catley, our local MP, visited the Nursery on June 30th and met with volunteers, staff and Board. Yasmin seems a very engaged local member and it has been very worthwhile her meeting TIN and putting a face to our operations at the Belmont Wetlands State Park site.



The year 2023 has once again seen a wonderful contribution and commitment by our core group of volunteers to the production levels and well-being of the nursery.

Andrew M, Andrew W, Anita, Ann, Cheryl, Chris, Dean, Diane, Debbie, Don, Dorothy, Elise, Ellie, Graham, Heather, Helen, Jim, Karen Buchner, Karen Nicholl, Kathryn, Kris, Jen, Lesley, Leigh, Louise, Phil, Maya, Micheal, Sue, Tracy, Trevor, Trevor Wolf and Vicki.

For our Staff, Shiralee Seaman and Andrew Marsh it has also been a huge year. There were many challenges and they showed great flexibility and innovation in keeping the nursery ticking along.

A celebration of former board member and Chairperson Ann Loughran's contribution to TIN, was held in early October, with the unveiling of a water pond, beautifully built by our volunteer Chris Kemmet. We also wish to thank the help and input from our present board members who give their time to nursery activities. Particularly those members who assist in our various retail events.



And finally, we bid farewell to Matt Abercrombie and thank him for his input as General Manager and we warmly welcome Emma Graham as the incoming General Manager.

Jocelyn Barker

Nursery Manager



Our Contact Details

Trees in Newcastle is located at the entrance to the Belmont Wetlands State Park:
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