

Trees in Newcastle Annual Report 2023-2024



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Overview

Our Vision

Healthy native vegetation to provide habitat for biodiversity in the Hunter Region in collaboration with a passionate and informed community.

Our Mission

Support and grow native vegetation and bushland by operating a high-quality nursery and a dynamic team of bush regenerators and educators.

Directors

Josh Pryor (Chair)
Leigh Gibbens (Secretary)
Andrew Botterill (Treasurer)

Adam Cavallaro
Maya Guest
Karen Buckner

Thomas Michel
Shelomi Doyle
Elise Briggs (Outgoing)



Chair's Report

Josh Pryor

Thank you to all our volunteers, staff and supporters! We rely on the enthusiasm of so many people to keep the organisation moving in the right direction.

It has been a wonderful year, with Emma well and truly finding her feet in the team, leading myriad improvements and winning hearts along the way. We found a new volunteer Treasurer who brings significant experience as a corporate Financial Controller. We have significantly improved our accounting standards, which reduces risk and improves reporting for the organisation.

This year the Board also developed a three-year Strategic Plan, renewing our vision and mission along with key pillars of strategic importance. The clarity reflects a big step up in professionalism.

It's an honour to work with you all!





trees
IN NEWCASTLE

Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027

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Our Mission:
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PROFESSIONAL BUSH REGENERATION TEAM

- Consistent outcomes for clients
- Reliable work ethos
- Excellent reporting and communication
- Systems and record-keeping
- Targeted upskilling and career pathways
- Encourage horizontal structures and ways of working



HIGH QUALITY PLANT NURSERY

- Intelligent application of modern technology
- Sustainable resourcing
- Data-informed seed collection considering climate change
- Innovative approach to retail and wholesale
- Healthy and resilient stock via adaptive management



THRIVING VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY

- Inclusive, dedicated, and socially diverse
- Positive and dedicated team
- Knowledge sharing and experience
- Workflow protocols and safety management
- Attract the next generation of volunteers



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Innovative delivery of energising education for everyday people
- Expand on our success in social media with highlights, tips, videos
- Influence policy through advocacy for biodiversity, conservation and
- Maximise regional funding opportunities

BEDROCK VALUES
Financially sustainable and legally compliant organisation that demonstrates the same harmony and diversity we strive for in the ecosystem.

GM's Report

Emma Graham

Thank you everyone for your support in my initial period as General Manager.

I commenced in the role in October 2023, taking the reins from my predecessor Matt Abercrombie. Matt had made some fantastic steps to formalise our processes, accounting and ensure the staff and volunteers of TIN had the resources they needed to complete our work. In my first 9 months as General Manager, we have built upon this work through the following.

- Improved accounting systems to facilitate better decision making.
- Adoption of a project management system to better document our work, share knowledge internally and provide regular reporting to our customers.
- Adoption of mobile reporting mechanisms for the bush regeneration team.
- Development of an asset management and maintenance system.



Trees in Newcastle has continued to forge partnerships with local government and non-government organisations in the past year. We have had the pleasure of working extensively with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Port Stephens Council, Hunter Local Land Services and City of Newcastle.

We have also worked with like-minded organisations such as Foundation for National Parks, The Groundswell Collective and many local Landcare groups. We have engaged with our local community through formalised community events and school incursions / excursions. And every sale day at the nursery, community engagement occurs through talking, listening and providing high quality advice to our customers.

As an organisation, we have begun to work more and more in an integrated fashion. Bush regeneration staff have assisted with community engagement events and regularly attend the nursery. This has allowed for knowledge sharing and increased seed collection for the nursery.

Nursery staff have attended bush regeneration sites to provide advice and collaborate on future orders. Strengthening the ties between all staff and volunteers, strengthens the fabric of Trees in Newcastle as a resilient grass roots, community organisation.

I am very proud to work for Trees in Newcastle and am excited to see where our collective future efforts take us over the upcoming year.

Bush Regeneration

Emma Graham

Bush Regeneration has had another busy year with consistent requests for our services.

The seven-member team has been extremely adaptable, adjusting to a raft of procedural changes to enhance our day to day management and reporting.

Our work has been diverse and includes:

- Maintenance weeding in bushland reserves in the Port Stephens and Newcastle area.
- Primary weeding, planting and maintenance weeding in development offset sites in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Maitland areas.
- Specialised planting in the Lower Hunter area for rehabilitation of Wollombi Creek, including long stem planting and conversion of pastures to habitat sites.
- Specialised weeding in highly sensitive sites under the Saving our Species program.

We are fortunate to have a team of passionate and multi-skilled individuals. In addition to their regular work, they have assisted with several community engagement events.

This year we have also established a bush regeneration leadership group. This group have taken on the challenge of designing and implementing day to day processes to ensure our work is conducted in a professional manner.

They are being provided with learning opportunities to develop skills in scheduling, site management, project management, managing people and reporting. They have also been spending a small amount of time at the nursery each week to develop their understanding of nursery operations and how these link to bush regeneration.

Finally, we would like to thank Kris McLean who took on much of the team leader role for the first 6 months of the financial year. Kris was instrumental in keeping the team running during the General Manager transition.



The Year at Our Nursery

Nursery Manager: Jocelyn Barker

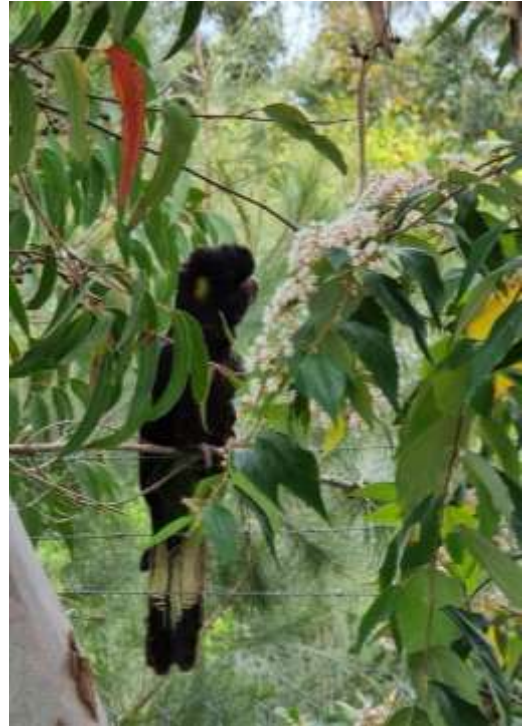
2024 has been a year of consolidation and expansion.

Projects undertaken and completed include:

- Upgrade to irrigation system so all nursery plants and propagating areas are under some form of automatic control. The only exception being a small area adjunct to the retail section.
- Upgrading the nursery internet capacity.
- Solar energy capacity has been increased and a monitoring app installed.
- Installation of a further water tank and pump.
- Expansion of protected seed germination area.

Larger orders dispatched:

- Groundswell Collective-plants supplied for five Tiny Forest Projects.
- Hunter Valley Operations.
- Local Land Services (LLS).
- Foundation National Parks and Wildlife (FNPWS).
- Bush Regeneration-supply of plants for Cooranbong and Squirrel Glider Glenrock Projects.



Other highlights:

- Continual growth of our revenue from the Friday retail sales.
- Translocation and propagation of *Tetratheca junicea* from Newcastle bypass construction.
- Continual success of Andrew Marsh's involvement in *E.camaldulensis* (River Red Gum) propagation and subsequent networking with the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, Saving our Species Unit (Dept Climate Change Energy The Environment and Water), LLS and Wollombi Landcare.
- Biannual Nursery Volunteer information session.
- Fruitful liaison with Gabrielle Stacey, Community Engagement Officer, has facilitated orders from NPWS to the nursery and our involvement in other community events.
- Workshop provided for a young group from Aspect Autism Spectrum Australia.

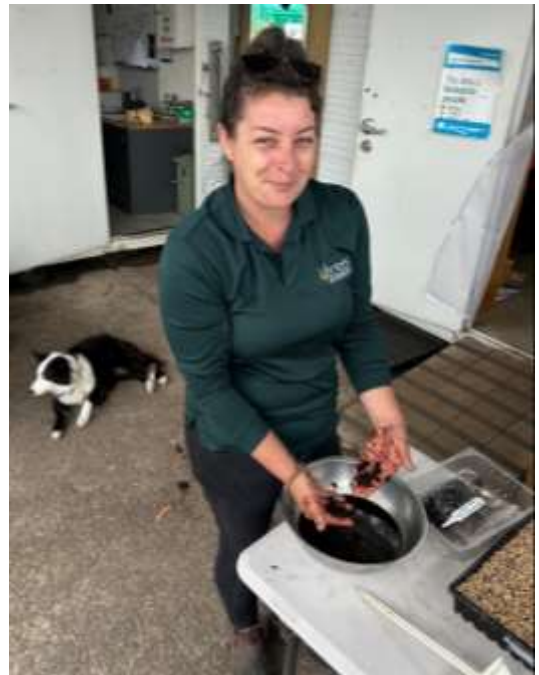
Future plans:

- Expand further the diversity of provenance stock for our retail section.
- Liaise with Royal Botanic Gardens and Lower Hunter Land Services regarding the propagation of Littoral Rainforest species.

Volunteers:

We currently have 35 active volunteers, with more people indicating they will attend our next volunteer information session. The loyalty and commitment shown to TIN and the nursery by these volunteers has been wonderful. This commitment can be in the form of initiating new infrastructure, keeping older pieces of equipment functional, assisting in the Friday retail sales or assisting in the production of high quality native plants. We are producing between 65,000 and 68,000 plants a year-the majority of which are produced by volunteers.

Finally, a huge acknowledgement to the drive and innovation of our staff members Shiralee Seeman (Nursery Assistant) and Andrew Marsh (Project Officer), who have made such a major contribution to our very successful year of 2024. The project management skills of Emma Graham (General Manager) have been very important to the nursery staff as we navigate production for the increasing numbers of larger orders.



Thanks to our volunteers for 2024:

Vicki Adams, Karen Buckner, Phillip Buckner, Anita Crumblin, Kathryn Fry, Leigh Gibbens, Heather Jackson, Ellie Johnston, Ann Loughran, Andrew Marsh, Graham Newell, Karen Nicoll, Michael Noonan, Dorothy Pritchard, Louise Ralston, Jen Robinson, Helen Rogers, Sheryl Stead, Trevor Wilks, Sue Whare, James Murdoch, Stephen Blacktop, Andrew Woolard, Madeline Druce, Tracy Kemmett, Dianne Sanderson, Debbie Quain, Ross Cockerell, Marta Rossignoli, Ian Gill, Craig Whitford, Ronnie Gash, Peg Clarke, Jennie Lin, Rosemary Baird, Fiona Niddrie, Anne Holmes, Christina Swinsburg, Jessica Moore, Margaret Ford.



Community Engagement

What an amazing year it has been for community engagement, with a significant increase in the events facilitated by Trees in Newcastle. This is largely due to Gabrielle Stacey commencing in the role of Community Engagement Officer. Gabrielle’s extensive experience and networks have opened up many doors for collaboration.

Highlights include the following events & activities:

- World Environment Day planting and Hickson Street at Glenrock Reserve in partnership with NPWS.
- Bitou Bash at Glenrock State Recreation Area in partnership with NPWS.
- Asparagus Fern workshops at Glenrock State Recreation Area in partnership with Foundation for National Parks.
- Mangrove removal workshops to support migratory shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary in partnership with NPWS.
- Planting for Green & Golden Bell Frogs in partnership with Port Waratah Coal Service and NPWS.

Trees in Newcastle was also successful in receiving a grant from Lake Macquarie City Council to establish native plant gardens at 5 local primary schools.

These events were delivered in partnership with The Groundswell Collective and provided both hands on education and provision of local plants from the nursery.



Our Contact Details

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