

A scenic view of the Narara Ecovillage, showing a cluster of modern, multi-story houses built on a hillside. The houses are surrounded by lush green trees and vegetation. In the foreground, there is a grassy field with a few trees. The sky is blue with some clouds.

# Narara Ecovillage

Strategic Plan 2022-2030  
16 April 2022

**This Strategic Plan guides the activities of the Narara Ecovillage for the period from 2022-2030.**

## Values and principles guiding implementation of strategies

### ***Acknowledgement of Country***

We acknowledge indigenous elders and leaders past, present and emerging as traditional owners with a continuing connection to the land and seek the wisdom of their indigenous practices combined with science to ensure our stewardship of the Narara Ecovillage lands.

### ***Our place in Nature***

We acknowledge our unique humanness within an understanding and valuing of all plant and animal life, earth, water and air.

### ***Kindness***

We act towards each other with kindness.

### ***Embracing diversity***

We acknowledge that in the great world community of which NEV is a small part, people are of various ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, (dis)abilities, life experiences and embrace this diversity, seeking to learn from each other and work collaboratively to achieve our aim and objectives.

### ***Fostering collaboration***

We seek to foster collaborative understanding, collaborative problem solving and collaborative action in a manner that enhances commitment, cooperation, satisfaction and trust at the level of the individual as well as the group for the benefit of the ecovillage

## Vision, Mission and Aim

Our *Vision* is for an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable world.

Our *Mission* is to create a sustainable ecovillage as a demonstration of this vision.

Our *Aim* is to create a resilient and inclusive intergenerational community that nurtures collaboration, innovation and fun; to live with kindness, aware of our interdependence with others and the natural world; to learn and inspire others to live within the earth's ecological limits, drawing on indigenous wisdom and fostering regenerative environmental, social and economic practices.



## Summary of Strategic Objectives

1. That the Ecovillage increases biodiversity on its lands by 2% every 4 years, and by working with others, has a demonstrable impact on preservation and regeneration of biodiversity both locally and globally.
2. That by 2030 15,000kg of food are provided from the Ecovillage and our partners each year.
3. That the Ecovillage's ratings improve for cultural indicators which reflect our Aim; and for individual members' ratings for social capital: trust, collaboration, commitment and satisfaction.
4. That Narara Ecovillage households on average achieve a 75% reduction in net annual operational carbon emissions by 2030 when compared to the average for residences in Central Coast Council area in CY2020 (embodied carbon to be offset in 30 years of joining, as per our CMS).
5. That by 2030 the Ecovillage has a worldwide outreach for its work as a demonstration ecovillage, hosting 10,000 people at face to face events; 100,000 paid online interactions and reaching 1 million people through virtual and online means.
6. That by 2030 30% of the Ecovillage's annual operating costs are derived from contributions by regenerative businesses owned by and/or based at the Ecovillage.



# Strategic Objectives

## Strategic Objective 1

*That Narara Ecovillage regenerates biodiversity on its lands, increasing biodiversity by 2% every 4 years, and by working with others, has a demonstrable impact on preservation and regeneration of biodiversity, both locally and globally.*

### Rationale

Biodiversity comes from two words: “bio” meaning life and “diversity” meaning variability. Biodiversity is the variety of all living things; the different plants, animals, fungi and micro organisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form. Biodiversity is usually explored at three levels - genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. These three levels work together to create the complexity of life on Earth.

Globally, biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate. The immediate causes of this decline are habitat destruction (especially of forests and wetlands), massive use of poisons such as agricultural chemicals, global heating (and consequences like climate destabilisation and increasing extreme climatic events like bushfires and floods), persecution, the introduction of invasive species, and many man-made hazards. Underlying causes are human overconsumption and overpopulation.

Freshwater habitats are among the most threatened ecosystems on our planet. Their biodiversity is declining far faster than that of our oceans or forests. Narara Ecovillage is custodian of rainforest and eucalypt forest of high conservation value and a significant area of freshwater wetland.

### Strategies

1. Synergise with other strategic objectives to regenerate biodiversity through our land management (including building an ecologically resilient village);
  2. Strengthen a mindset of stewardship and inter-connectedness with Nature (including internal and external education; study and research; and creating a pleasant place for people that harmonises with Nature), providing practical advice and assistance to neighbours to regenerate biodiversity;
- Politically and through legislative lobbying, influence others to conserve and regenerate biodiversity.

## Strategic Objective 2

*That, by 2030, 15,000kg of food (such as fruit, vegetables, eggs, mushrooms, honey and preserves) are provided from the Narara Ecovillage and our partners each year.*

### Rationale

Food is central to life and control over food quality is vital for nutrition and health. Collaborative food production, including propagation, nurturing, harvest and supply, is a rewarding social activity with proven mental and physical health benefits. It is important for the resilience of the Ecovillage and to keep alive the knowledge of good food growing practices and the joy of growing clean, wholesome, nourishing food.



### Strategies

- Dedicate land for vegetable and fruit production and produce food on this land;
- Encourage planting of food plants (including bush food plants) in home and community gardens, encouraging householders to become food producers;
- Develop plans to increase labour supply to grow food;
- Develop circular food economy to maximise food quality and minimise waste, including composting and propagation, food production, provision of food through the Coffee Cart and Village Pantry, and minimization of waste in products and packaging;
- Look for and build resilient relations with local food production and distribution partners.

## Strategic Objective 3:

*That we improve the ecovillage's ratings for cultural indicators which reflect our Aim and also for individual members' ratings for social capital i.e., trust, collaboration, commitment and satisfaction.*

### Rationale

The society in which we live is currently subject to strains related to a reduction of public trust in government and institutions, the unequal distribution of wealth, a collapsing ecosystem, social media and the resulting fragmentation of society. These same strains affect Narara Ecovillage: we at Narara Ecovillage are working to provide a model containing solutions for how communities can work well together.

As a cohesive and effective community, we are best equipped to serve the world as individuals and as an ecovillage.



### Strategies

- Continue to build a sense of community by enhancing a common sense of purpose and identity in line with the ecovillage Aim;
- Continue to promote collaborative decision making that is inclusive and equitable;
- Foster the development of psychological flexibility so that people can better understand each other and develop an appreciation of diverse needs;
- Develop a graduated response to preventing and managing conflict;
- Support and build relationships with external individuals and groups where there are opportunities for synergy;
- Highlight qualities of kindness and enjoyment in our interactions and activities;
- Offer services and demonstration to local groups aligned with our Aim.

## Strategic Objective 4

*That Narara Ecovillage households on average achieve a 75% reduction in net annual operational carbon emissions by 2030 when compared to the average for residences in Central Coast Council area in CY2020 (embodied carbon to be offset in 30 years of joining, as per our CMS).*

### Rationale

Australia is party to the Paris agreement 2016 with the key objective to limit the increase in global temperatures to well below 2 degrees and pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5 degrees. The NSW Government endorsed the Paris Agreement and have developed The Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, the foundation for NSW's action on climate change and goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Central Coast Council's climate change policy aligns its operational and strategic planning with NSW State policy to transition towards a net zero emissions region by 2050. Combined with Council's Community Strategic Plan which commits to the UN's 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, Central Coast Council aims to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes. Narara Ecovillage is working to decrease carbon emissions at a greater rate than planned in the NSW and Central Coast strategies.



### Strategies

- Manage our energy and resource use for sustainability and self sufficiency to meet our aims and mitigate climate change across all sectors;
- Develop innovative systems and processes that support sustainability, security and longevity of our energy and other resources, to achieve net zero or close to net zero carbon emissions and waste;
- Influence the local community to take action on climate change



## Strategic Objective 5

*That by 2030 NEV Education has a worldwide outreach and is recognised as a demonstration ecovillage, living the ecovillage's regeneration principles with evidence-based research, hosting 10,000 people at face to face events, 100,000 paid online interactions and reaching 1 million people through virtual and online means.*

### Rationale

Narara Ecovillage's aim includes the desire *to learn and inspire others to live within the earth's ecological limits, drawing on indigenous wisdom*. Education is a lifelong process that all ages can engage in. Learning can be hands-on, face to face and interactive; online, one to one or at large workshops and events. People learn in many different ways. Education for Sustainability (EfS) is an educational approach that aims to help learners develop the values and the motivation to take action for sustainability – in their personal lives, within their community and also at a global scale, now and in the future.



### Strategies

- Share inspiring stories, pass on skills and experience to promote sustainability and regenerative environmental, social and economic practices, and indigenous wisdom;
- Manage the delivery of a range of educational experiences at the village (including funding/ pricing/ budget/ marketing);
- Develop and incorporate research & innovation into an education strategy inclusive of intellectual property and copyright with partners.

## Strategic Objective 6

*That by 2030 30% of the Ecovillage's annual operating costs are derived from contributions by regenerative businesses owned by and/or based at the Ecovillage.*

### Rationale

Without business income, all operating costs of the Ecovillage will need to come from Co-op Members, possibly with some income from adult tenants. A sustainable ecovillage needs to include businesses in which at least some residents can work, and from which the Ecovillage can derive income. Business-as-usual has been an extractive process, relying on nature as infinite bounty: this needs to be replaced by (at least) sustainable business (such as circular economies which reduce waste) or preferably regenerative businesses that replace more than they extract.



### Strategies

- Define and promote regenerative business models for NEV-owned, NEV-based and other businesses;
- Prioritise Collective Knowhow/ NEV Education to educate people within and beyond the village and promote regenerative practices.

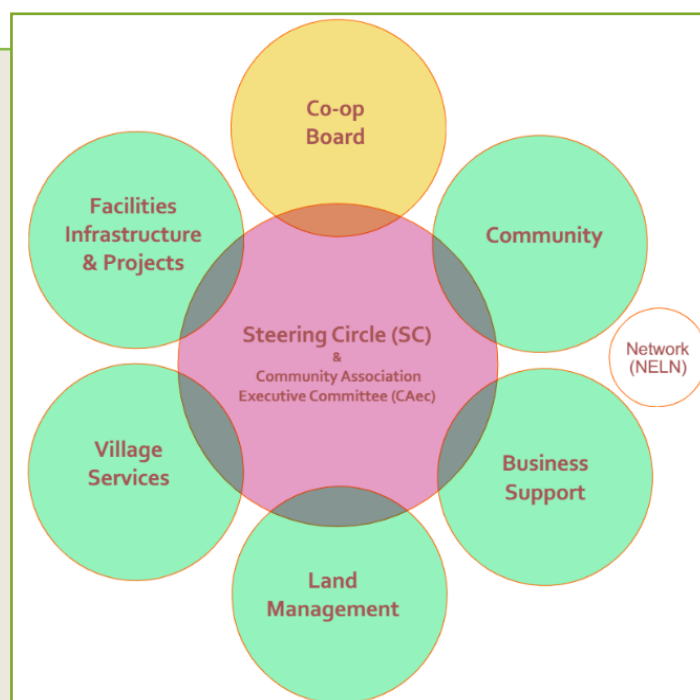
# Implementation, Measurement and Partnerships

For each objective, management arrangements have been put in place. For several objectives, measurement of progress will be challenging. For this reason, a list of potential partners has been developed to assist with designing programs to achieve our objectives, measuring our progress and potentially funding some aspects of our work.

**1. That Narara Ecovillage regenerates biodiversity on its lands, increasing biodiversity by 2% every 4 years, and by working with others, has a demonstrable impact on preservation and regeneration of biodiversity, both locally and globally.**

Work to achieve this objective will be led by the Flora and Fauna Conservation and Wildlife Research Working Groups of the Land Circle<sup>1</sup>. The Land Circle has consented to these Working Groups leading this work with support of the Land Circle and linking to all other parts of the village, ensuring there is acceptable co-ordination and communication between these working groups and the parent circle. Biodiversity education will be supported by NEV Education. NEV Water and NEV Power will be separately tasked with considering biodiversity and reporting on biodiversity impacts from their activities.

**Measurement of progress:** A baseline of studies of biodiversity in specific areas of the Ecovillage property in 2022 will be followed up by a further measurement of biodiversity in 2030. Annual reports will seek to document both biodiversity protection/ regeneration activities carried out and any impacts locally or globally on biodiversity. These milestone studies will be supported by a rolling programme of systematic and ad-hoc studies of biodiversity of the Ecovillage property, which will be analysed as required for reporting and adaptive management. Assistance from partners will be sought for measurement of changes to biodiversity.



<sup>1</sup> Narara Ecovillage has five operational circles: Land, Community, FIP (Facilities, Infrastructure and Projects), Business Support and Village Services. Leaders and representatives of these circles meet monthly with two representatives of the Board in the Steering Circle. The Board oversees all aspects of the Narara Ecovillage Co-operative. Narara Ecovillage has its own solar energy provider, NEV Power, and a water manager, NEV Water.

**2. That by 2030 15,000kg of food (such as fruit, vegetables, eggs, mushrooms, honey and preserves) are provided from the Narara Ecovillage and our partners each year.**

Work to achieve this objective will be led by the Food Resilience Circle, a sub-circle of Business Support, in close collaboration with the Land Circle and NEV Water. The Business Support Circle has consented to these management arrangements, and will assist in ensuring efficiency of the circular food economy and in measurement of achievements.

**Measurement of progress:** Monthly reports from Food Resilience Circle (incorporating Triple Span, eggs, mushrooms and honey) and monthly survey of householders, summed annually. Methods of measurement will be determined for measuring percentage of household consumption of food grown at NEV and by our partners, and quality of partnerships with local farmers.

**3. That we improve the ecovillage's ratings for cultural indicators which reflect our Aim and also for individual members' ratings for social capital i.e., trust, collaboration, commitment and satisfaction.**

The Community Circle will lead activities related to this strategic objective. Outreach activities will be supported by Narara Ecoliving Network (NELN). Close links will be needed with all circles and groups in the village so as to be able to develop the culture of the village. This objective, the related strategies and management arrangements were consented to by the Community Circle. Activities for each year will be developed by the Community Circle.

**Measurement of progress:** Biennial survey using professionally designed survey to ascertain ecovillage residents' and circles' scores on appropriate measures. The degree of improvement to be targeted can only be specified after the collection of baseline data.

**4. That Narara Ecovillage households on average achieve a 75% reduction in net annual operational carbon emissions by 2030 when compared to the average for residences in Central Coast Council area in CY2020 (embodied carbon to be offset in 30 years of joining, as per our CMS).**

Work towards this objective will be led by a new working group, the Carbon Emissions Reduction Coordination (CERC) Working Group, formed under the Facilities, Infrastructure and Projects (FIP) Circle. This objective, the related strategies and management arrangements were consented to by FIP. Domain of the Working Group and activities for each year will be developed by the working group with oversight by FIP. CERC will coordinate activities on this strategic objective with substantial input from NEV Power, NEV Water and other FIP working groups on green transport, waste management and building standards.

**Measurement of progress:** To be determined. External assistance from partners will be sought

**5. That by 2030 NEV Education has a worldwide outreach and is recognised as a demonstration ecovillage, living the Ecovillage's regeneration principles with evidence-based research, hosting 10,000 people at face to face events and 100,000 paid online interactions and reaching 1 million people through virtual and online means.**

NEV Education, a sub circle of the Business Support Circle, has consented to leading the work towards achieving this objective, and has consented to the objective and the activities to achieve this objective. The Business Support Circle has consented to these arrangements. All other Circles will be invited to provide technical expertise for selected NEV Education outputs.

**Measurement of progress:** Records of attendance at face to face events are already kept, with evaluations carried out to gauge participant satisfaction. This feedback informs future planning and is used to grow the network of training participants. Analytics from our website views and social media reach are tracked, recorded and analysed.

**6. That by 2030 30% of the Ecovillage's annual operating costs are derived from contributions by regenerative businesses owned by and/or based at the Ecovillage.**

This objective, the related strategies and management arrangements were consented to by the Business Support Circle. Activities for each year will be developed by the Business Support Circle in collaboration with NEV businesses.

**Measurement of progress:** Annual assessment of contribution of village businesses to operating costs. Definition of regenerative businesses to be developed/ adopted by the Business Support Circle.



# Partnerships



Narara  
ecovillage



Potential partnerships identified during the strategic planning process included the following institutions and groups:

- University of Wollongong: Sustainable Building Research Centre
- UNSW: [SMaRT Centre](#) (incl. [Microfactory technologies](#), [Sustainable communities & waste hub](#))
- UNSW: [Built Environment](#) (incl. [Computational design director](#), [Low Carbon Living CRC 2012-19](#))
- UTS: urban design and architecture
- [UTS: Institute for Sustainable Futures](#)
- Local markets for food, plants,
- Local ethical businesses
- Narara Valley High School
- University of Newcastle
- TAFE Colleges
- Central Coast businesses as sponsors
- Community Environment Network.
- Local Land Services.
- Central Coast Wetlands
- Narara Eco Living Network Kariong Eco-Garden
- Heart Foundation walking programs
- National Parks Association
- Friends of Strickland Forest
- Forest of Tranquillity
- Central Coast Council
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- NSW Nature Conservation Council
- Birdlife Australia
- Climate Council
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition
- Beyond Zero Emissions
- Local community groups
- Central Coast Sustainability Association
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition
- Waste not. Want not
- [Regenerative Songlines](#)
- [Darkinjung Land Council](#)
- [Girri Girra](#)
- [Firesticks Alliance](#)
- [NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group](#)
- [Permaculture Central Coast](#)
- [Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre](#)
- [Permaculture North \(Sydney\)](#)
- [Permaculture Australia](#)
- [Milkwood](#)
- [GAIA Trust](#) and [Gaia Education](#) (incl. the [Ecovillage Design Education Curriculum](#))
- [Global Ecovillage Network \(GEN\)](#) (incl. [GEN Australia and Oceania & Asia \(GENOA\)](#))
- [Australian Association of Environmental Education \(AAEE\)](#)
- [1Coast](#) videos and [1Coast website](#)
- Cleanaway - Waste Educators
- Central Coast Health EG [VEGEADVENTURE](#)
- [Central Coast Community College](#)
- [Regen Sydney](#)
- [The Co-op Federation](#)
- [Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals \(BCCM\)](#)
- [New Economy Network Australia \(NENA\)](#)
- [Australian Earth Laws Alliance \(AELA\)](#)
- [FairShares Association](#) and [Evolutesix](#)

This plan was drafted by Pip Atkins, Dave Burrows, Richard Cassells, Kat King, John Seed and Lisa Wriley from notes taken during the AIM discussions. Graphics by Bron Bassett.