

## Benalla Sustainable Future Group Strategic Planning Workshop

---

April 2022

### Draft Workshop objectives

- To reflect on the progress and development of Benalla Sustainable Future Group; including key achievements, and key strengths
- To identify the critical issues, and key opportunities for BSFG that need to be considered in the strategic plan for the next 5 years
- To identify key strategic Objectives for the next 3 – 5years and priority Actions for the next 12 - 18 months
- To clarify the purpose and vision for BSFG

### Key Strengths and Achievements

*The workshop participants reflected on the progress and development of Benalla Sustainable Future Group and identified a number of key achievements and strengths including:*

- Our Volunteer base
- The sense of community within the group
- Our engagement with school kids on the climate emergency issue
- We have survived and still operating
- The seeds that were planted are raising awareness
- Establishing networks
- The diversity of issues tackle, approaches taken, and membership
- Practical actions eg the bulk food cooperative
- Strong engagement with our community

### Key Opportunities and Critical issues

*The Workshop Participants reviewed the current operating environment noting the current trends and shifts that are occurring and identified a number of Critical issues and key opportunities for the Group to consider when developing the new Strategic Plan. These included:*

Key Opportunities	Critical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More media channels to get the message out</li><li>• Increasing trees and greening streets for cooler spaces</li><li>• A shift to a younger demographic with greater awareness of the issues</li><li>• Solar gardens/micro grids/virtual power plants</li><li>• Finding ways to give renters access to solar energy</li><li>• Build on the success of the bulk food cooperative and food garden</li><li>• Repair shop concept</li><li>• Knowledge sharing with new people to the community</li><li>• Push for localization for food and energy requirements</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The need for accurate, relevant, science-based information</li><li>• Increasing stress on peoples lives from the “consume more” model of living</li><li>• Harder to cover the basic needs for living (Maslow’s hierarchy of needs)</li><li>• Engagement with community leaders and building relationships with Government (all levels)</li><li>• Housing affordability</li><li>• Destruction of the natural environment, increasing issues with feral species and decreasing biodiversity</li><li>• Cost of power, cost of living pressures</li><li>• Disengagement with food/sport and the rise in obesity health issues</li><li>• Waste and the planned obsolescence</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on practical, small initiatives</li> <li>• Bike/pedestrian friendly urban centers</li> <li>• Focus on what we can achieve</li> <li>• Start where people are at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community planning – flood plans, disaster plans, resilience planning</li> <li>• Communicate a message of hope</li> <li>• Engagement with broad community</li> </ul>
--	---

## Our Vision

*The participants identified 6 key goals/objectives for the Benalla Sustainable Future Group. These form part of the vision for what the group wants to achieve in 10 years time:*

- Widespread adoption of Sustainable farming systems
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Connected and Engaged Community
- 100% Renewable and community owned energy
- Ecological, sustainable planning and development and Retro fits
- Greening and Cooling for our urban spaces

## Our Why

*Connecting with like-minded people,  
To use our collective skills,  
To act as good custodians for all generations, to ensure a future that is environmentally sustainable  
and liveable*

## Strategic Objectives/Goals

*The group identified 5 of the goals for actions and initiatives for the next 12 - 18 months. Group members nominated themselves into self organizing working groups to progress the actions.*

Strategic Objective	Initiatives/Actions for the next 12 – 18 months	Who
<b>Widespread adoption of Sustainable farming systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a series of forums and on-farm demonstrations</li> <li>• Connect and work with other like-minded groups on common goals</li> </ul>	Sandy <i>(And potentially John Paul?)</i>
<b>Connected and Engaged Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Community Hub Space</li> <li>• Develop a program of Community Events and Workshops</li> </ul>	Hub team:           Events team Kate                   Rachel Grace                 Lou Serenity Felix Jack
<b>100% Renewable and community owned energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a micro-grid project</li> <li>• Engaging and working with BRC to progress towards 100% renewable energy for Benalla</li> </ul>	David Kevin Peter Holmes

<b>Ecological, sustainable planning and development and Retro fits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and work with council on Sustainable planning and development options</li> </ul>	Peter M Rick
<b>Greening and Cooling for our urban spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase and learn from the Grubissa Court example</li> <li>• Develop a pilot park or street space</li> <li>• Develop relationship with council for urban cooling considerations into planning</li> </ul>	Karen Judy Christine Sue Kate Callum

## Appendix – Raw data

### Strategic Objectives/Goals

Strategic Objective	Contributing ideas	Initiatives/Actions
Widespread adoption of Sustainable farming systems	Agricultural community 100% regenerative practices – local food, local workers	Develop a series of forums and on-farm demonstrations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage Charles Massy to talk to local farmers</li> <li>• A series of on farm demonstrations to explain the changes necessary for carbon capture and storage on farm</li> </ul> Connect and work with other like-minded groups on common goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with other like minded groups to determine common goals</li> <li>• Create a list of groups already formed and what they are doing in this space.</li> </ul> Peer Support Program for Regen farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regen farmer peer support group with field days and guest speakers</li> <li>• DIY ecological monitoring on farms</li> <li>• Find Local farmers who want this and enable them.</li> </ul> Explore links with Bulk Food Co-Op and local producers eg the Strathbogie Local in Euroa
Ecosystem Restoration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a network with all the restoration demonstration sites and community working groups</li> <li>• Inventory of all the big things that are already happening – Winton Wetlands, Hospital, Arboretum</li> <li>• Community involved in growing plants</li> <li>• Support landcare tree planting days</li> <li>• Support the Winton Wetlands Friends group</li> </ul>
Connected and Engaged Community	Intergenerational engagement – kids, families, grandparents – contributing to a thriving community gardens and local learning hubs Localisation - Broad	Establish a Community Hub Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community hub space – produce swaps, workshop on skills, meeting space and kitchen</li> <li>• Identify inclusive, supportive, Community hub as education, demo hub</li> <li>• Venue to engage with the community</li> <li>• Bookclub/library eg Joanna Macy Active Hope</li> </ul> Develop a program of Community Events and Workshops

	<p>community buy in and action Improving and enabling connectivity – social and physical BSFG has a new name and new committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly pot luck dinners</li> <li>• Local nature connection events for children and families</li> <li>• Growing food workshop</li> <li>• Seed saving, composting, worm farm workshop</li> <li>• Pop up free events – dance, yoga, music, art</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholder Engagement and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a forum of key stakeholders and groups – who is growing food/interest in food</li> <li>• Invite student leaders to be engaged in climate action</li> <li>• Communication strategy</li> <li>• Gratitude wall</li> <li>• Confute actions eg recycle your batteries</li> <li>• Declare a comate emergency and call community to action</li> <li>• Create safe space for discussion about how we are feeling about the world – deep listening and support</li> </ul>
<p>100% Renewable and community owned energy</p>	<p>100% renewable energy for Benalla – Community/business owned 10 microgrids Solar charged city with charging stations Net zero achieved by 2032</p>	<p>Develop a micro-grid project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with RMIT Masters Student on developing a micro-grid pilot project</li> <li>• Organise Indigo Power to talk about how to create a micro-grid</li> <li>• Build and connect micro-grids for a bunch of houses</li> </ul> <p>Engaging and working with BRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with BRCC to increase Solar – on roof tops and a solar farm</li> <li>• Invite BZE to address BRC on reaching net zero</li> <li>• Seek out funding for installation of EV charging stations</li> </ul> <p>Seek new Convenor for REB</p>
<p>Ecological, sustainable planning and development and Retro fits</p>	<p>A sustainable subdivision – for multinational refugees that is affordable, mixed and mentoring A plan for development of Benalla with bike paths, controlled subdivision design, with a sustainable housing policy</p>	<p>Engage and work with council on Sustainable planning and development options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft climate action plan with council – focus on community transition</li> <li>• Planning that supports bike transport</li> <li>• Options for renters and older housing for energy upgrades and retro fits</li> <li>• Sustainable Housing design as part of Climate adaption plan</li> <li>• Creating a pilot of an “ecological” subdivision; a tiny house hub with community gardens; improved waste management</li> <li>• Improving subdivision standards via local variations to the Planning scheme</li> </ul> <p>Retro fit Advice</p>

	<p>Sustainable housing and land development</p> <p>There is no homelessness because of new housing model</p> <p>Every person/family in Benalla has access to food growing gardens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open house for retrofits</li> <li>• Retrofit advisory sessions</li> </ul> <p>Sustainable Living as Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrofit the art gallery and old school</li> <li>• Work on a sustainability short film</li> <li>• Start with a film on how it might work</li> </ul>
Greening and Cooling for our urban spaces	<p>Known as a tree city</p> <p>Food forests revegetation of verges and crown land</p> <p>Greening Benalla</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop alternative watering solutions</li> <li>• Assessment and improvement of water quality in Benalla Lake</li> <li>• Cut the curbs to direct storm water runoff to street trees</li> <li>• Develop an Urban Tree Planting program</li> <li>• Free trees to plant</li> <li>• Raise seed – free seeds</li> <li>• Donation/allocation of a number of plants per urban property</li> <li>• Urban forest plan for city of Benalla</li> <li>• Planting stands of native trees and shrubs on empty land eg Goodwin and Mackellar street</li> <li>• A tree planting month with free trees and Costa</li> <li>• Plant trees at schools and sporting clubs</li> <li>• Nature Strip project</li> <li>• Edible nature strips</li> </ul>
Expand Bulk Food Coop		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add fruit and veg trade to the food Coop</li> <li>• Expand the range of activities</li> </ul>

Poem from '*Optimism - Reflections on a life of action*' by Bob Brown

it's 3:23 in the morning  
and I'm awake  
because my great great grandchildren  
won't let me sleep,  
my great great grandchildren  
ask me in dreams  
what did you do while the planet was plundered?  
what did you do when the earth was unravelling?  
surely you did something  
when the seasons started failing?  
as the mammals, reptiles and birds were all dying?  
did you fill the streets with protest  
when democracy was stolen?  
**what did you do**  
**once you knew?**

Part of poem from "*Hieroglyphic Stairway*" by Drew Dillinger