

Sustainable Living Armidale Inc.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 28th September 2023 at 6.30pm.

The meeting was held as a hybrid format at Kent House, Rusden Street, Armidale and by Zoom video-conference in accordance with clause 34 of the SLA Constitution.

Vision, Mission and Values

The vision of the association is:

A thriving, proactive, self-reliant community, with low carbon emissions.

The mission of the association is:

To raise awareness of the implications of climate change and the depletion of natural resources, to build networks, and inspire and empower our community to build a more self-reliant, resilient and sustainable future.

The association values:

- caring for the earth and caring for people
- empowerment
- inclusive, participatory and democratic processes, which value the contribution of others
- optimism and encouraging positive change
- inter-generational equity
- sharing of knowledge and resources

The main aim of the association is to pursue the vision, mission and values in the community of Armidale and district.

(SLA Constitution s 3)

Present: Helen Webb (Convenor), Jo Leoni, Iain MacKay, Elizabeth O'Hara (Zoom), Terry Manley (Zoom), Annette Kilarr, Sanaz Alian (Zoom), Pat Schultz (Zoom), Kate Boyd, Garry Slocombe and Andrew Lawson (Secretary).

Apologies: Tom Fisher, Patsy Asch, Bar Finch, Maxine Ross, Mahalath Halperin, and Viv Nano (Treasurer).

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 4th August 2022, which had been circulated in advance, were confirmed. Moved Helen Webb; seconded Jo Leoni.

2.0 Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3.0 Convenor's Report and Acknowledgement of Country

SLA Convenor, Helen Webb, gave the Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed members, and tabled her written report – see attached. Helen outlined SLA's Vision and Mission, as well as achievements and Action Group highlights over the past year.

4.0 Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2023

Garry Slocombe presented the SLA annual financial statement (on behalf of the Treasurer, Viv Nano), and Jo Leoni presented the financial statement of the Community Garden summarized below.

Total Income	18,617.27
Total expenses	5,599.68
Net Surplus	13,017.59
Assets – bank accounts and fixed assets	53,403.49
Liabilities (unspent grants funds)	3,158.31
Net Assets	50,245.18
Boomerang Bags	497.65
Coal Seam Gas	596.68
Community Garden	22,320.62
General	26,830.23
Total Equity	50,245.18

Donations received this financial year include:

- \$5000 Starfish Enterprise (May 2023)
- \$3000 Platypus Donation (anonymous) (March 2023)
- \$2051.10 Regional Australia Bank (RAB) Community Partnership Program (CPP) to SLA
- \$1478.30 RAB CPP to Community Garden (August 2023)

Financial reports accepted; moved Helen Webb, seconded Iain Mackay.

5.0 Election of Office Bearers

Andrew Lawson, acting as Returning Officer, declared all positions vacant, and invited nominations for the following positions.

- **Convenor:** Iain Mackay, nominated by Helen Webb, seconded Jo Leoni. There were no further nominations, Iain was elected unopposed.
- **Secretary:** Maxine Ross, nominated by Helen Webb, seconded Annette Kilarr. There were no further nominations, Maxine was elected unopposed.
- **Public Office:** Iain Mackay, nominated by Annette Kilarr, seconded Jo Leoni. There were no further nominations, Iain was elected unopposed.
- **Treasurer:** Viv Nano, nominated by Helen Webb, seconded Kate Boyd. There were no further nominations, Viv was elected unopposed.

The following positions and Action Group convenors were endorsed by the meeting to become members of the Co-ordinating Committee:

- SLAM & Web editor – Iain MacKay
- Transport – Tom Fisher
- Community Garden – Jo Leoni
- Wildlife Habitat – TBC after next meeting
- Climate Action – Annette Kilarr
- Armidale Local Food – Nikki

- Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining – Pat Schultz
- Renewable Energy, Education Advocacy and Community Health (REEACH) – Sanaz Alian
- Sustainable Death-care – Maxine Ross
- Sustainable Water Futures Armidale Group – Kate Boyd

It was agreed that the Peace Group be closed.

Meeting participants congratulated new Committee member and action group convenors and thanked outgoing members and convenors for their service.

6.0 Close of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:02 pm.

CONVENORS REPORT 01 JULY 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2023 – HELEN WEBB

Through ongoing and committed work of group convenors and members, much has been achieved during the year.

Changes during the year included

- Reduced frequency of meetings of SLA Coordinators Committee, with AGM held in August 2022, Planning meeting in September 2022 and
- SLA Coordinating Committee meetings held in November, February, April and June 2023. This has freed group convenors and members up to put more time and effort into group meetings and actions while still enabling key decisions to be made relating to funding and support for a variety of events and community interactions.
- The previous convention of monthly Thursday forums was diversified, with awareness raising, actions and celebrations being arranged for a variety of events and forums for dates and times that suited the organisers while the option for Thursday forums has still been available.
- Greater forward planning by convenors has helped to streamline funding approvals and support in advance from SLA for events and projects.
- New groups including the Renewable Energy Education Advocacy and Community Health, Sustainable Water Futures Armidale Region and Sustainable Deathcare groups.

SLA continues to sustain a healthy financial position and has provided funding to enable a range of sustainable living initiatives during the year, consistent with its mission and goals. Additional funds have been raised through events such as the Sustainable House Tour and through community garden sales, as well as donations the most significant of which was made by Regional Australia Bank Community Partnership Program, both to SLA and to the Community Garden. SLA is well placed to continue to support sustainable living initiatives.

I have been continually amazed and inspired by the hard work, initiative, creativity and perseverance of SLA's group convenors and members, as is evident from the details of the reports provided by each of the groups. I have provided a summary of group activities in the following table, seeking to present an overview of SLA initiatives.

Thankyou so much to all of you for your dedication and the wonderful example of community spirit that you provide. You continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, and through that, things may become possible.

I will be stepping down from the Convenor role this year and wish the new convenor, executive and co-ordinators ongoing meaningful impact on our journey towards a sustainable future.

Helen Webb

Convenor, Sustainable Living Armidale July 2021- June 2023

SUMMARY OF SLA EXECUTIVE AND GROUP ACTIONS FOR 2022- 2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

Table compiled by Helen Webb SLA convenor based on reports provided by convenors for the purpose of informing SLA membership re collective activities for the 2022-2023 period. Please read individual reports for full details.

Group/ Convenor	Summary of actions and aspirations 1 July 2022–30 June 2023
<p>Convenor Helen Webb</p> <p>Secretary and Public Officer Andrew Lawson</p>	<p>Through ongoing and committed work of group convenors and members, much has been achieved during the year.</p> <p>Changes during the year included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced frequency of meetings of SLA Coordinators Committee, with AGM held in August 2022, Planning meeting in September 2022 and • SLA Coordinating Committee meetings held in November, February, April and June 2023. This has freed group convenors and members up to put more time and effort into group meetings and actions while still enabling key decisions to be made relating to funding and support for a variety of events and community interactions. • The previous convention of monthly Thursday forums was diversified, with awareness raising, actions and celebrations being arranged for a variety of events and forums for dates and times that suited the organisers while the option for thursday forums has still been available. • Greater forward planning by convenors has helped to streamline funding approvals and support in advance from SLA for events and projects. • New groups including the Renewable Energy Education Advocacy and Community Health, Sustainable Water Futures Armidale Region and Sustainable Deathcare groups. • Andrew has continued in his commitment to providing prompt, detailed and accurate minutes of meetings and distributing and correcting these at meetings. Many thanks for his diligent work on behalf of SLA. He will be stepping down this year. A new secretary and Public Officer are to be elected at the AGM. • Insurance has been paid for the 2023-2024 financial year • Andrew has submitted the Annual Summary of Financial Affairs required for incorporated bodies and paid the \$50 fee to the NSW Government Fair Trading • Andrew will pass on the relevant documents and records to the new secretary
<p>Treasurer Viv Nano</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See treasurer reports - Balance Sheet as at 30/06/2023 and Profit and Loss Statements for the period from 1/7/2022 to 30/6/2023 • New format for entering finances and for reports has been implemented this year - thanks very much for assistance in this from Garry Slocombe <p>SLA finances held in three accounts –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings account; • Community account and • Community Garden account.

Group/ Convenor	Summary of actions and aspirations 1 July 2022–30 June 2023
	<p>Income derived from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • membership fees; • Donations: Community Partnership Accounts contribute to significant annual donations from Regional Australia Bank - this year \$2051 to SLA and \$1,286.68 to Community Garden - members banking with RAB are encouraged to choose this option; • Tours (Sustainable House tour) <p>Expenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance – changed to LandCare NSW insurer for 2021 2022 and 2023 • Donations where these are proposed by member groups and support SLA mission and vision eg to Armidale Tree Group for nest boxes in trees), community gatherings such as Black Gully Music Festival, climate cafe, market stalls. • Membership fees paid to organisations that are aligned with SLA Mission, Vision and Aims eg NCC and Climate Action Network Australia
<p>Web Editor Iain McKay</p>	<p>SLA website slarmidale.org – also use Twitter, Facebook (approx. 2K “Friends”), Instagram, Flickr, YouTube.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter (SLAM) sent every 2-4 weeks to about 700 signups • Posts are also uploaded to social media. • Events posted to Armidale Regional Council events page, eg ArmEvents, Facebook, SNEELCC, Knitting Nannas, Progressive Cinema. • Website runs calendars, forms, PayPal. • Working Groups can use the SLA website to advertise and report on events they are running. Ian has made a video and prepared an instruction-sheet for working group convenors on how to advertise events on the website. Others can post to the website if approved <p>SLA website summary for AGM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressions of interest sought for website redesign because our themed website has come to end-of-life, seeking <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 New Theme that retains our identity but modernises the communication of it, while retaining current plugins functionality or extending 2 Newsletter solution that feeds from our blog (basically a collation of the most recent stories) with an adhoc opening paragraph. We would love to have a calendar of upcoming events in said newsletter that is automated 3 Updated Search Engine Optimisation • Outcome: Unfortunately the cost of on option was prohibitive and the other proposal was too limiting. • Looking forward to updating the theme in house and trying a new handheld device newsletter this coming year. • New Yes and Water Action Group Pages added albeit temporarily for Yes

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<p>Annette Kilarr Climate Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We closed our X (Twitter) account and gained Instagram for a younger business audience. • The Climate Action Group was formed in the context of the severe drought and bushfires of 2019 and was part of the community call for Armidale Regional Council (ARC) to declare a Climate Emergency. The group's ability to engage with the community is enhanced by its close alignment with Climate Action Armidale, a 300- strong facebook group. • SLA representatives participated in the Climate Emergency Working Group of Council's Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee which produced the Framework for Climate Action which can be accessed via the SLA website https://slarmidale.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/A-Framework-for-Climate-Action-ARC-CEWG-Report.pdf . This was one of the document utilised for Council's Renewable Energy Action Plan adopted by Council in September 2022 • Actions prior to the Federal election embraced Strategic "Climate Action Now" signs, distributed as conversation starters to highlight the need to prioritise Climate Action specifically orientated around a just transition to renewable energy and acceptance of the science that current human actions are at the heart of climate change. • Two new groups have been set up as part of the Climate Action Group focussing on Renewable Energy and Water. This has enabled a more focussed response to these highly important and topical issues (see group reports following). <p>The Climate Action group's main three actions this year (independent of REEACH and SWAFG and besides letter writing by individuals) has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An on-going attendance at the PCYC end of month markets with "Climate Action Now", opportunity for climate conversations, sign up to connection and free-trees. We have been representing both Climate Action and SLA more broadly with various petitions and focus over the year including: Black Gully Festival, the Koala community art project and Autumn Festival, Armidale Coal Seam Gas and action against Santos, the Save our Styx group with NPA, Wildlife Habitat group, Sustainable Water Futures Armidale group and the Northern Tablelands for YES campaign. • Climate Action Group presence at the Black Gully Festival November 2022 included attendance, provision of information, workshops and Deep Time Spiral event at again with various groups • Climate Action Group enabled the Giant Koala Tableau community art creation, appearance at the Armidale Autumn Festival complete with Stayn' Alive Koala dancers and a Koalas and threats hub of stalls for the festival at Civic Park. The Koala tableau creation and surrounding events involved around 180 people from November 2022 to April 2023. Particular thanks to Garry Slocombe, Julie Collins and Gordon Cope. Groups that helped with koala stalls included SNELC, Wildlife Habitat Group, AURG, Armidale Secondary College, Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers, Armidale Tree Group and the Ban Bai Rangers <p>Save the date and participate in future planned events</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are currently planning for Black Gully 2023, Saturday November 11th . Volunteers needed to help or participate in an information stall, create an activity or provide a workshop or other event. Please contact Annette akilarr2@outlook.com any plans or ideas. EOI Closing October 10th.\ Potential for Autumn Festival involvement 2024 dependent on capacity and interest of members. For the future “Climate Action” plans to do some activities towards/ creative thinking about at Black Gully 2023 and/or hold a consolidation and “where to next” meeting in February 2024 which we will advertise <p>Some questions to think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is our local “Climate Action Now”???. Do we have one or is it just business as usual? What are our people on the ground thinking about renewables? How do we engage with concerns that the current Federal government is continuing with coal and gas? How do we put pressure on the upcoming Environmental protections law review. Is it just too hot to hard and too late? Are we going to run out of water again? Should we be more focussed on disaster resilience, community building, mental health and practical issues? What about the continual encroachment on the rights to protest? And if the Yes Vote doesn’t get up (or of course if it does) how do we support and continue to create better relations and opportunities with our indigenous communities Etc. etc.
<p>Annette Kilarr Comm-unications</p> <p>Housing Tour Mahalath Halperin and Patsy Asch</p>	<p>Liaison with Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group continues to monitor council meetings for issues relevant to SLA Other SLA groups have had meetings with Council (see reports) <p>Black Gully Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -held on 12 November 2022 and planned again to be held on 11 November 2023 Annette is SLA representative on the organising committee. SLA action groups are encouraged to initiate planning for stalls and possibly workshops. <p>NCC Picnic for Nature was held 30 October 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants performed the Koala dance at the mall markets on that date. <p>UNE Smart region Incubator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLA members participated in Clean Tech Future series <p>Group needs a person skilled in media and communications following the departure of Jim Vickers - thanks Jim for your skilled input in previous media liaison.</p> <p>Sustainable Housing tour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks to Patsy, Mahalath, Bar & Sanaz for a great job on the Sustainable Housing Tour held May 2023. Indicative income from sale of programs: \$1,640 (82 programs @ \$20 ea). Approximately \$300 in expenses. "Guided conversations" technique used to help engage participants in key sustainability features of each house

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<p>Renewable Energy, Education Advocacy and Community Health</p> <p>Sanaz Alian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus was on retrofitting older houses, rather than on new houses. • Suggestions from attendees on innovations for future events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital booklets, for purchase and download. - Access to the tour information earlier, to allow participants to plan their Sustainable Housing adventure. . <p>“I can do it” project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Energy Efficiency workshops provided by Armidale Regional Council arising from Councils 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration. • Builds on a project run by SLA in 2013 which also included workshops on pelmet and curtain-making (see Light Bulb Moments - Take Control of your Electrical Use and Costs publication on SLA website home page. • Grant partially acquitted through workshops already held but completion of project delayed by Coronavirus restrictions • Planned workshops targeting low income earners were cancelled due to insufficient registrations and an energy efficiency brochure is still to be produced. • Decision needed by Co-ordinating Committee re how to proceed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formed September 2022 in response to declaration of the New England Renewable Energy Zone and the deeper understanding needed regarding the urgent need to transition globally from fossil fuel sources to 100% renewable energy sources and what implementation of that really means on the ground • REECH is a sub-group of Climate Action Armidale and SLA. • Monthly meetings have been held to identify aims and goals and discuss various issues relating to the Renewable Energy Zone in New England (NEREZ). • Aims: Ply both and educational and advocacy role for our community and within the NE REZ • Goal: support a vision for renewables that will benefit our communities and their well-being, provide opportunities for us all to participate, and ensure that the REZ will be regenerative and enhance sustainability rather than follow an extractive industry model. • Strategy Session held to facilitate community organising around positive outcomes from the REZ & renewable energy projects Working with the Community Power Agency (CPA), our initial meeting was to get together and attend a Strategy Session. This was facilitated by CPA. Several other organisations in New England have also attended this session. • Initiating relationships with key stakeholders in relation to REZ One of our biggest achievements has been to start building relationships with various community groups as well as local and state government bodies which have an interest in the REZ. This has included collaboration with CPA and networking and/or collaborating with Uralla ZNET, NEV2030 as well as UNE SRI. We have had meetings with representatives from the Department of Planning and Environment as well as the Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) which is a

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<p>Armidale Action on Coal Seam Gas and Mining Pat Schultz</p>	<p>statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexities as to which jurisdictions each level of Government is responsible for is at best challenging to understand and at worst confusing and unhelpful. • In the past year, we have built relationships with the Armidale Regional Council and Local Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall MP. • Submissions were made to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ARC Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) that was placed on public exhibition in September 2022. - Draft Network Infrastructure Strategy for NSW prepared by EnergyCo. - ARC draft Renewable Energy Community Benefit Sharing Framework September 2023 • Submission currently being prepared to the AEIC Review of Community Engagement Practices (Survey and Submissions due 5.00pm Sunday 1 October 2023). Please feel free to complete the survey online at https://slarmidale.org/2023/09/19161 • A Renewable Energy Education Resource is being developed for Primary Schools year K-6. • The group has supported and participated in the New England Biodiversity Reference Group which has developed draft recommendations for EnergyCo and prospective developers in relation to biodiversity protection along planned development and construction of transmission lines • Plans for the future REEACH will be presenting a Forum at UNE SRI in late October or early November 2023 (TBC) titled <i>The New England REZ and the NSW planning system: An overview for landholders, community and non-planners.</i> • AACSGM continues to raise awareness of the need and act to try to stop any further expansion of fossil fuel extraction, in particular the proposed \$3.6 billion Santos coal seam gasfield and associated pipeline. This environmentally destructive plan for 850 CSG wells extends over 1000 hectares of the Pilliga State Forest and adjoining grazing land. AACSGM have liaised with and supported other groups, including Wando, The Pipeline Group, National Parks Association, Knitting Nannas Armidale Group (KNAG) North West Alliance and others working to protect the Pilliga forests. Santos have continued to progress towards a production licence. Actions by a variety of groups has been effective in slowing their progress by about 7 years • Pat continues to lead tag-a-long tours of the Pilliga (most recent September 2023). These tours highlight the values and beauty of the Pilliga State Forest, the largest most important remnant woodland in NSW, and adjacent forested areas and existing and future risks from CSG mining. Contamination of land and water from CSG mining has already occurred in this area and is highly likely to do so again causing infiltration of toxic chemicals into artesian water.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Mahoney, (member of Climate Action Coffs Harbour and retired ABC film technician) made a film about Tag-a-Long tours now available on SLA website: https://slarmidale.org/2023/09/18890 • On investigation in Pilliga Forest we have noted that the Whitehaven Underground Mine is venting methane into the environment. The Wando INC and AAGSG&M are continuing to investigate and campaign on this. • The Armidale branch of Knitting Nannas have been meeting under the SLA banner (we're all members of both organisations) and continues to bring community concern regarding the considerable adverse impacts of CSG and coal mining and deforestation to the attention of our local member, community and the media. We have delivered handwritten messages to Adam Marshall's office on the issue of the month, including Forest clearing, the Great Artesian Basin and many other issues. • The Inland Railway Narrabri to Narromine, routed to cut through the Pilliga forest, has been put on hold pending further progress along the Melbourne to Parkes
Wildlife Habitat Group Elizabeth O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Our campaign to halt Native Forest logging culminated in a presentation to Councillors on 18 September focusing on logging in the Styx Native Forest which was well-received (the opportunities of carbon sequestration sparked special interest) ◦ Ongoing involvement with Pilliga (from incursions of Inland Rail, Narrabri Gas Project) and Leard Forest ◦ Koalas 'Koalas Need Trees' campaign and many actions such as petitions especially associated with Great Koala Park • Innumerable representations and reports to Natural Resource Regulator, Armidale Regional Council and Environmental Protection Authority and submissions on a range of issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Little Llangothlin Reserve (a RAMSAR listed site) ◦ Statutory Review of NSW Environmental Protection and Biodiversity ◦ Federal 'Nature Repair' bill ◦ ARC's Active Transport considerations • Involvement in NCC activities including NCC Picnic for Nature 2022 (16 October- a picnic and 3 amazing walks) • Nature Play: Black Gully 'river habitat' activity; at WHG stall at Autumn Festival; contribution to Dumaresq Dam improvements • On-going plans for a Platypus (and Rakali) project • Publicising nature activities such as the Aussie1 Bird Count, Frog Search, reducing impacts of cats on Native Wildlife and other campaigns to control invasive species • Involvement with NE Biodiversity Reference Group and Guyra Landcare Group (with SNELC)

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<p>Sustainable Water Futures Armidale Group</p> <p>Kate Boyd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking with other groups including Northern Tableland Wildlife Carers, Armidale branch National Parks Association, Animal Welfare League • Walking Tracks- Springhill Lane, Gentles Lane • Our meetings are generally held six-weekly and the next is planned for Wednesday 4 October 2023; Updates were sent to the email list fairly regularly • Social media: facebook and website • I am stepping aside from convening Wildlife Habitat Group (effective from the inaugural meeting of a Platypus Group if this suits the AGM). • Many thanks all those who contributed through the year! • The Water group concept was instigated prior to a Tamworth water security Forum in held on 2/10/22 which was attended by a number of interested group members. Professor Stuart Khan spoke about alternatives to a proposed new Dungowan Dam and a Council officer explained how use of recycled water rather than potable water in abattoirs could meet Tamworth’s water needs. • Following two group meetings, 2 members presented the group's concerns about the Armidale Regional Council approach in planning for our future water needs (in particular purchase of Oaky River Dam) at the “have your say” session prior to the Armidale Regional Council’s meeting on 14 December 2022. A community water forum was requested. Council decided to proceed with purchasing Oaky River dam. • Name, aims and motto (<i>Seeking water security for people and nature</i>) were developed in early 2023 and can be found on SLA website: https://slarmidale.org/water. • Group members met with Mark Byrne (Council’s Manager of Water & Wastewater) and Alex Manners (Chief Officer - Assets and Services) for better understanding of council planning, issues, opportunities and constraints. • April- May 2023 Community Water Survey developed and promoted. 167 respondents provided feedback on community attitudes to water use, actions to conserve water and views on options for future water supply. Results included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - continued implementation of water saving practices by many residents; • - high level of concern re avoiding adverse impacts on people and ecosystems downstream when planning for regional water supply • - support for investigating improved catchment care, smart meters and purification of sewage for non potable use. • Public forum held on 6 June. Survey results presented and ARC representative Alex Manners provided information about Council’s water supply plans including buying and restoring Oaky River dam and building a pipeline to connect from the dam to Armidale's water supply. Council's focus in relation to this plan is to acquire additional capacity from a catchment outside Malpas dam catchment to help with water security in times of drought and to enable Council's aspirational regional growth of 10,000 people. Also, to provide alternative supply during the projected raising of Malpas Dam wall, during which the water level in the dam would have to be reduced to 50%.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission made to Council’s Operational Plan and budget. ARC agreed to add ‘Kempsey Shire Council and residents’ to the key stakeholders regarding water, and decided not to increase the fixed charge for water access as much as staff had recommended. Rejected group's other suggestions AR will delay developing a demand management plan until after new water supplies are available. <p>Thanks to group members</p>
<p>Community garden Jo Leoni</p> <p>Food Group Nikki Larder Jen Hamilton</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A mixed year for the community garden, some progress and some challenges. 2. Plenty of climate challenges – too wet, then too dry, too cool, and a frost just a week before Christmas! 3. We didn’t end up attending many of the Farmers’ Markets, partly due to a variety of health reasons and also because we didn’t have a lot of surplus produce. 4. On the other hand, sales direct from the garden definitely increased, mainly due to a large volume of silverbeet required by the Ezidi community! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council mulch has been unavailable since January, so by now our pathways could really do with some rejuvenation. • Great progress has been made in controlling, potentially eradicating, wild blackberry from the perimeter of the garden. • We built a new circular bamboo frame as a decorative trellis for climbing plants, replacing a frame that had served us well for several years but eventually fell apart. • It’s great to see a few more regular volunteers at the garden, those extra hands can really make a big difference. • Many thanks too to everyone who has come along to help at our regular working bees, your support is much appreciated! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting and varied activities over the last 12 months - the group accomplished quite a lot! • Some changes to membership • Two successful ‘community dinners’ were enabled by funding from the Public Health Network -Community COVID Reconnection Grant. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - with the Ezidi community in collaboration with the Vivace Festival and with support from Settlement Services International. 2 - a lunch at the Armidale Secondary College –a collaboration between Food Group and Armajun Aboriginal Health Service. The menu was planned by Mac Williams and Nicolette Larder, Jen Hamilton and Sujata Allan from food group assisted along with members of the local community and the ASC community. • Food, films and feelings: NERAM Jennifer Hamilton hosted a short film festival at NERAM in the name of Armidale Food Group and Community Weathering Station in concert with the Feed the Soul Exhibition. 15 people attended and five short films were screened followed by a short discussion about local foodways. It was a great success. Thanks to Iain for promoting it via SLA channels at the last minute!

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<p>Transport Tom Fisher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armidale Food School Armidale Food School was successfully piloted at Black Gully on November 12 th 2022. Food School (developed by Nikki Larder and Jen Hamilton) is a series of seminars that allows participants to engage in reflection and discussion across a number of key themes related to food practice including housing, time, coloniality, domestic labour and health. Morning sessions were well attended <p>Planning for 2023-2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning has begun for the 2024 Home Grown Garden Tour. We will part-finance the organising of this with money we have leftover from a PHN grant from 2022, additional SLA funding may be needed. 2. A school event like a cooking class / community meal cooked by school students, building on previous collaboration. Focus on the sustainable food side, combining thinking about nutrition. It also could be another class/dinner or farm tour. 3. Do one climate/health dinner linked to Armajun lifestyle medicine/diabetes reduction program but combine again cooking, recipe books and local food sourcing. 4. Workshops: as a complement to these three shared events (2 in the Aboriginal community, one more general), anyone in Food Group can propose and run independent workshops (like the no dig gardening plan). Best case scenario would be to loosely plan some in advance and potentially propose to SLA for a set amount of \$\$ for those in 2024. 5. Any other opportunities that come up during the year that we want to pursue. For example, Amy has students from Griffith uni for placement with Healthwise and we hope to be able to incorporate them into our work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For several years the Transport Group has been requesting that Armidale Regional Council (ARC): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) review and renew their active transport (walking and cycling) plans and; b) commit funding every year for bicycle facility maintenance. • ARC did commit \$20,000 combined with a State Government grant of \$80,000 to develop a new Active Transport Strategy. This ostensibly in 2022/2023, however, a draft Strategy is still to be publicly exhibited. • This year we drafted, workshopped and sent a submission to ARC for their Active Transport Strategy drafting process (please see attachment). The entire Strategy process is apparently being undertaken by external consultants. • Thank you to Dale Finch and Dorothy Robinson who contributed extensively to workshopping our draft written submission and who both attended a meeting with Council and the consultants to provide input into the Active Transport Strategy. • ARC did commit \$60,000 to bicycle facility maintenance in 2022/2023. It is certain they spent at least some of that re-surfacing a severely degraded section of the Creeklands Cycleway between Dangar Street and the pedestrian bridge aligned with Jessie Street. • They also began work rehabilitating some sections of the Kelly's Plains Cycleway in the rural area in the vicinity of Gentle's Road and Translator Road.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We highlighted to Council the Creeklands Cycleway section between Dangar Street and Dumaresq Street as the highest priority. We clearly stated any work on the Kelly's Plains cycleway was a lower priority than several other sections of the Creeklands Cycleway. • We also had some further correspondence with the Northern Tablelands MLA Mr Adam Marshall about the long-awaited strategic replacement of the entire regional NSW train fleet. . • No update of any significance was provided on this large-scale project, which is clearly years behind the original schedule. Although contracts were signed for the then \$2.8 billion project in 2019, as of August 2023, no delivery nor operational commencement dates had been specified. • Assurances have continued that carrying bicycles upon the new regional train fleet will be easier than the current restrictive arrangements. • After the success of the Ebike Expo 2022 (in March that year), Ebike Expo 2 is on Sunday 8 October (10:00am - 12:30pm). This event brings the two local bicycle shops to The Farmers Market to promote this fast-growing form of sustainable transport. The shops will bring a variety of Ebike models to a safe off-road space for interested people to look, feel and have a test-ride. • Thank you to Iain Mackay for doing all the organising and promotion for this upcoming event.
<p>Sustainable Death-care group Maxine Ross</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group continues to meet every 6 to 8 weeks with many lively discussions • Next meeting on the 13th October on sunday at a private home. • We are exploring how to form a resource group to best assist both the dying and other support at death time. There has been some positive discussion with Piddingtons. Three of us undertaking the Deathwalker training next April with Zenith Virago. • Group has explored training options with NSW Palliative care association. • Maxine is now a member of Australian home funeral associations. • Community mortuary or natural burial ground is desirable but no progress made to date.
<p>Northern Tablelands for Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with its constitutional valuing of inclusive, participatory and democratic processes that value the effort of others, SLA has participated in activities supporting Australian Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a voice.